TRUE LIE

Mithi knew she was lying. She had no option but to lie. She lied and lied and became a mythomaniac. One day she did not want to lie. But the mania would not leave her. Her mouth emitted a lie that her heart did not consent. She became frustrated as she was continually telling lies all the time when she could avoid doing so. One day, she went to a Babaji and told him to give her a remedy. Babaji smiled and said, “when you are tempted to lie, just imagine that the truth that you are speaking is a lie. You will do alright.” Next day, Mithi experimented it. Her father asked her, “Mithi did you take 200 rupees from my pocket?” Mithi replied, “YES.” And while she spoke yes, she imagined it were a lie! And yes, she got rid of the habit!

STORY SAYS, “Your thoughts make it true or false.”

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For comments if any please write in the box given below.

SHE WANDERS IN THE WILDERNESS

I am Pather Panchali

I roam in the wilderness of dawn

The mystic magic of the woods attracts me,

The silence of the grassy meadows lures me,

I have an existing exile in the region,

I know not any.

I don’t own your doubts about me,

I don’t care about your suspicions,

I am here to wander in the leisurely hours,

Feeling detached of all and sundry.

Why do you think I am?

Who do you think I am?

I cannot answer your questions,

For I am a response never tread upon,

All those that see me, feel none of my pangs,

They are just there to frown upon my torn and tattered land.

People call me dowdy, trollope and laugh at my misery,

Some even slap my urge to seek solace,

Some negate my identity,

Some call me unfairly keeping funny names,

And some insult me with their horrible words of disdain.

Yet there IS something that keeps me going,

And certainly this one thing helps me survive,

These wild plains I inhabit,

Keep me intact.

I sit and cry here for hours and they hold me tight in embrace,

They tell me everything would be alright, when I learn how to

fight.

They tell me ” YOU are an amazon” do not give up your strife,

For there will be a day when you will be rewarded for all that you sacrifice.

The right to be treated nicely is what I give up everyday,

And the woods restore my lost spirits comforting my soul each day.

I know not the language of the rich,

I know not the luxury of the privileged.

But the woods tell me they know I will earn it all some day.

So here I am treading amongst these forests,

Waiting for that one clear call,

That can lead me to my desired destination.

I am the pather panchali,

Thus I roam in the wilderness of the dawn,

In search of a divine messenger,

That can lead me towards the kindly light of the fair morn.

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For comments if any please write in the box below:

ROBOTIC THEATER

Two Robots were brought on the stage along with two actors. They were given the same dialogues as the actors. They spoke the dialogues with trained expressions duly. The actors were asked to speak the same dialogue. They looked at each other brought the emotions in and when it was time to begin, one of the actors forgot the second dialogue he was about to speak. So instead of that dialogue, he spoke another one and the other actor had to continue with the new idea as the previous dialogue had been changed.

Now, the entire presentation was changed on the part of the humans.

Next day, the programmed Robots were brought in. One of them encountered a technical error and could not utter the programmed dialogue. The other Robot kept quiet as it was commanded to speak only after listening to the dialogue of the first Robot. Now, the act came to an abrupt halt. Suddenly, both the Robots bowed down to the audiences and left the stage. They were programmed to do so ONLY after the presentation got over. But, they did it beforehand and went off stage. What made them act in spite of the mechanics?

None knows but conjectures are that there’s a sixth sense programmed in them which gets activated as soon as their technical glitch occurs.

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For comments if any, please write in the box below:

AND…THERE COMES A FOLKTALE

There was a Queen. She killed every 4th husband of hers. None knew the reason she spared 3 and killed the 4th one. One day, a mantri asked her the reason. The Queen replied, ” Every 4th MAN reminded me of my mother’s 4th husband who killed her. Mantri decided to stop the Queen. He brought a commoner for the Queen on her command to marry the 4th time after she killed her x 4th husband. She killed him. The mantri said, ” I consulted a sage. He said this man was the incarnation of your mother’s 4th husband. Now no longer is the need to kill anyone else.”

The atrocity stopped after that.

The commoner who was last killed was the chief of the Queen’s enemy who had encroached upon the territory to kill the Queen.

Since then every 4th day of the month, the people of the village offer 4 things to the Queen’s soul who happens to be their deity now and organize a festival in her memory.

It is that it is a day when everything 4 in number is honored. The fourth house, the fourth child, the fourth wife….and anything less than 4 is destroyed. Thus, those that have four houses, destroy the previous three, those that have three children, discard the 1st three and so goes with the wives. Three of them are divorced and 4th one remains.The Queen blesses this ritual. As she likes HONORING FOUR.

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For comments, if any, please write in the box below:

RIKSHAW DRIVER AND LADY– AN ABSURD PLAY (ONE ACT)

In the middle of LINTON road, a rickshaw comes and stops in front of the woman. She intends to hire it for going to a destination. The rickshaw driver looks at her and assents to take her to the desired stop.

Sc –I

Woman – Will you drop me at this address?

Driver- Yes madam. Please sit.

Woman- Be quick. I don't have time.

Driver- yes madam..

Woman- Thank you.

Driver- No thanks. I am there to take people to their desired stops. But…

Woman- But? Are you worried about your fare? Do not worry. I will give you cash.

Driver- No. I am not worried about money. I am thinking that YOU are going to give my your life.

Woman: What?

Driver- No madam. Nothing. I just said nothing at all. Don't worry. Come, it's going to be night soon and this road becomes quite isolated. It is not safe to be here for a long time.

Sc II

(The rickshaw starts with a jerk. The woman gets a strong jolt)

Woman- Oh! Driver what’s this? Be careful.

Driver- At times, it isn’t in our hands madam.

Woman-But it is in our YOUR hands only!

Driver- No. I have to take many abrupt decisions while driving. This was one of them. I did not intend to put sudden jerk otherwise. The road’s quite open to receiving jerks when we start off.

Woman- Whatever. Let’s go.

Driver (speaks softly)- Go. This word has the implication of going and when I am going, I have to be on the go and when I am on the go, none disturbs me. Get Set Go!

Woman- What are you muttering?

Driver- Nothing madam. Yes, you said go. But…

Woman- But what?

Driver- We cannot GO.

Woman- What! Just a moment ago you said you are ready to go and now you are denying.

Driver- I am ready to go madam. But not ready to go now.

Woman- What? What are you talking?

Driver- Just wait madam, wait for some time. We need to. Or else, it might get too late.

Woman- What nonsense is this? You said we must start off quickly as it might get isolated here soon and now you are telling me to tarry?

Driver- Life is unexpected madam. The clutch wire just broke when I gave the jerk.

Woman- Oh! Now it would be needless delay. Never mind. I will hire another rick.

Driver- Not possible madam. It is not going to be easy for you to get another vehicle here.

(She stands there and tries to call other rickshaws. None of them stops. Comes back to the same rickshaw driver. Stands there.)

Woman- Ok. I am waiting here. Be quick.

Driver- Am trying my best. At times things are not in our hands madam.

Woman- But the wire is in your hands.

Driver- But its intention to get repaired or not does not lie in my hands madam.

(After almost an hour’s time, he is able to repair the clutch wire)

Woman- Now let’s go. Enough of waiting here.

Driver- Yes madam. Sit inside the auto.

(As she moves towards the auto, her foot twists unexpectedly while walking and she cries in pain.)

Woman- Oh God! I did not notice this stone in the middle. My foot got twisted! I am feeling awful. I never did think anything of this sort would happen. Thought I would hire and auto and reach home quickly.

Driver- At times, life shows us what we do not expect madam. Do not worry. I will support you and help you to get in the auto. Come, lean on my shoulder.

(He supports her)

Woman- ok. Now finally should we set off!

Driver- Yes madam.

(He starts the auto and takes it off. The woman sits quietly in the seat at the back. He keeps driving.)

Woman –(calls her friend) I will reach in no time. Actually, I can explain (suddenly, there's a speed breaker and the rickshaw crosses it very quickly. Once again, she gets a heavy jerk.)

Woman- Drive slowly. Will you. Can't you see the speed breaker?

Driver- Madam. At times we are forced to drive quickly. You said you need to reach fast. I thought…

Woman- So that does not mean you drive haphazardly. Drive carefully.

Driver- Ok madam.

(Suddenly stops the auto)

Woman- What? Why have you stopped?

Driver- Madam. It is dinner time for me. I need to eat my food. You need to wait.

Woman- What?

Driver- yes.

Woman- But you drop me first then have your dinner. What are you up to?

Driver- Up to nothing madam. I am telling you one simple thing. I cannot drive ahead without my food. I need to finish my dinner. Wait in the auto. I will come in no time.

(She waits reluctantly and knows well that no rickshaw was

available in that area. He comes after almost forty five mins)

Woman- Now should we go?

Driver- If you ask me madam, it means you are taking my permit. I am nobody to decide.

Woman- But you are the DRIVER. Driving me is in your hands.

Driver- No madam. Driving both of us is in someone else's hands.

Woman- What absurdity is this? You drive take me to my destination.

Driver- You think you have a destination. (Laughs.) Everybody thinks so. But none has any.

Sc III

(She looks at him almost frantically.)

Woman- Why are you talking wierd?

Driver- Nobody makes any sense in the world madam. Especially lower class people like us, we often become senseless in front of everyone.

Woman- See right now it is not the time to check whether you are sensible or senseless. Now is the time to drive safely and help me reach my destination. I am wanting eagerly to reach at a place.

Driver- That's what I am doing madam. Helping you reach your destination.

Woman-With the kind of slow speed that you are driving, I do not think we will reach there ever.

(stops the auto. The woman looks at him irritatingly.)

Woman- Why did you stop the auto?

Driver- I need to get the CNG filled.

Woman- Listen, do it afterwards. I do not want to be late.

Driver- Madam. There is no fuel left.

Woman- What? Why didn’t you tell me earlier. I would not have hired your auto.

Driver- Madam, it will take 5 mins.

Woman- Ok.

(Gets the fuel tank filled. The woman waits.)

Woman- Now can we get set go?

Driver- Madam, wait. I need to get the change to give them money.

Woman- Wait, here I am giving you change. Take it. Give it to them. Let’s leave.

Driver- Ok madam.

(He makes the payment at the petrol pump. They start off and come at crossroad)

Driver- Madam. Two roads diverge. Which one to take?

Woman- The left one. Wait, perhaps, I would have to check on my phone. Ok , here it is the right one. That’s the direction it shows.

Driver- But madam, this road is very long. It will take time.

Woman- My mobile does not lie. It is the most convenient road it shows.

Driver- So I should take this one right?

Woman- Of course.

Driver- So be it.

(He turns right. The road continues and has many lanes. After some time the woman gets annoyed.)

Woman- What is this? Lanes after lanes?

Driver- Madam, I told you this road is long but you did not listen to me.

Woman- Now what to do?

Driver- Let’s go back.

Woman- Ok.

(He takes a reverse turn, in just a few mins, they come to a specific point where there is traffic jam)

Woman- O my God! We did not have it while we took this road, now where did this come from?

Driver- It is a procession that has just started madam.

Woman- We are stuck!

Driver- We are often stuck in the middle of roads madam.

(After almost an hour’s wait, the traffic heals. They move ahead.)

Woman- I wanted to reach there two hour before. Little did I know I would get so late!

Driver- We often do not know the future madam. But better late than never.

Woman- What do you mean?

Driver- Meaning, we would reach there some time, some day.

Woman- What? What are you talking?

Driver- Nothing madam. The fact of life. The crux of living this life is an eternal journey that never ends. Right?

Woman- Don’t be philosophical. I do not have time.

Driver- None has time. Time has everyone.

(Puts a sudden break. Stage goes dark. The next moment we see bright light on the stage and many people having gathered there.)

Person I – Oh sad, very sad the accident.

Person II- The autowala is dead.

Person III- The passenger?

Person I- Nowhere to be found.

Person II- Let us inform the police.

(They call the ambulance and the police who come and do the needful in the case.)

The next day, a woman stands in the middle of the LINTON road. She stops an auto, hires him.

Woman – Will you drop me at this address?

Driver- Yes madam. Please sit.

Woman- Be quick. I don’t have time.

Driver- yes madam.

Woman- Thank you.

Driver- No thanks. I am there to take people to their desired stops. But…

Woman- But? Are you worried about your fare? Do not worry. I will give you cash.

Driver- No. I am not worried about money. I am thinking that YOU are going to give me your life.

Woman: What?

(Next day in the newspaper. Linton road seems to be haunted. A driver with an auto is seen moving around and a lady comes and boards it. They both act as passenger and auto driver. After a while, people hear a loud shriek, an auto driver in the same locality is found dead.)

Lights off stage darkens. After a while there is light all around.

For any comments please write in the comment box below:

Garbage Free Society

Today’s Indian and Hindi cinema in particular seems the kind of garbage in and out- Irrelevant data producing irrelevant output. This general perception justifiably springs from the conspicuously lavish supply of extravagant violence and sex that’s become an inseparable part of the films we see today. Nonetheless, if the makers of films are supposed to be held responsible for displaying such content, I feel, the audiences are equally responsible for paying undue attention to such frivolous foolery that is not worthy of even an iota of today’s extremely busy minds that have much serious and deservedly important tasks to dwell upon. My question is “why do we even talk about such content?” The moment we see a sleazy or excessively violent film trailer, why do we not discard it from our vicinity instead of just investing our time writing critical articles, dislodging them or engaging in mass protests against them.

If banning a film could have saved our highly vulnerable youth extremely anxious to watch age restricted videos, we could have successfully been able to divert their concentration towards participating in intellectual activities rather than getting hooked to violate all rules of censorship under the pretext of modernity. Indeed it is the gusto of radicalism that provokes the younger generation of today to watch violence and sex that spoils their mind and deviates them towards unwarranted actions.

If juvenile delinquency is a major concern today, it is not because of only films, it is because of our inability as responsible adults to rationally explain the youth the adequate reason beneath our denial to watch such explicit content on Television. Yes, somewhere down the line we have failed as parents and guardians to make our children understand the detrimental factors of becoming susceptible to the addiction of such films and hence we see the generation today watches all the provocative material.

Imposing the rule of not watching Netflix or OTT platform will not help. The rules are supposed to be broken is the anthem of many such youths that are unregulated on account of the fact that they are misguided. Many a times, the working parents and guardians are too engrossed in their own problems to fathom the necessity of counselling curious minds.

It is not by stringent principles but by a forthright and sensitized counselling that the youth of today can be made to understand the need to focus on the ethically correct and age appropriate matter. Three four days back, I found a very young 8th standard student reading a novel that wasn’t compatible with his age. On asking, he told me that the book was given to him by a girl of his class and on further inquiry it was discerned that the girl had got it from one of her friends who happens to be outside of the academic organization. This means that the child is being persuaded to pursue something that

isn’t good for her. She’s influenced and does not even realize that someone has tried to intoxicate her with the wrong thoughts through a very indirect mode of approach.

Apparently, in today’s times, it has become very easy to spoil young minds by implicit method of exposing them to inapt literary and entertainment media. The reason these hypnotise young minds is that these vouch as tempting modes providing access to all that is apparently denied to them. The prohibited content is like a forbidden fruit that appears more irresistible and therefore getting carried away by it is evidently easy. Argument, altercation and stipulating precepts against watching the sensitive content does not make any sense and does not work. It is only a healthy and candid discussion with them that enables them to cultivate the understanding that they are not mature enough to get exposed to mature content.

When we advocate sex education to the youths of today for their safety, it must be ensured that they learn the subject with decency by appropriately highlighting the health hazards involved in the same. Similarly, the jeopardy of inculcating violent traits in nature by watching exorbitant violence needs to be adequately explained. Most importantly, these notions enter into the minds of those that have been honourably initiated into culture and tradition which endorses decency and sobriety.

It is my personal observation as a teacher that unless young people have very strong ethical values taught to them by their parents and guardians, they do not comprehend the benefits of living a sober life. This is true in case of every child because it is a blatant reality that children that do not have a proper guidance in their youth are directed towards delinquent behaviour very frequently. Teaching the worthiness of abstaining from matter that does not complement the age is the indispensable responsibility of the parents and guardians. The centres of education like the schools and colleges may

hold on value education classes but the primary teaching of ethics and principles certainly comes from the family; this fact cannot be dispensed with.

We cannot expect a clean society without attempting to clean it. Merely sitting comfortably on our chairs and critiquing a certain realm of enterprise will not help. It is our moral duty to ensure we guide our youth in the right direction rationally without dictating the dos and don’ts to them in an old school fashion. Today’s times I find the dearth of such matured adults that construe the need to focus all their energy and attention towards constructive ways of living life and becoming true mentors for the present day youth. What I find is a bunch of critics that raise a barrage of complaints against violent and sexually explicit content, burn effigies of celebrities or rant continually against them. The moment we mind our own business and not indulge in such foppery to avail media attention, we would make this world indubitably a better and safer place to live in. It is not by ruthlessly protesting and banning films but by educating our youth rightfully that we would ultimately gain immunity against such inappropriate content. It will not affect us anymore and therefore whether it is displayed or not displayed in front of us will make not a tinge of difference. We would not get susceptible to it in any way. **This is how we make a garbage free society, not by pouring out our anger against these content creators in a rancorous way.**

For comments (if any) please post in the box given below.

Surrealism as the means of escape in Girish Karnad's Hayavadana and Naga-Mandala

It is very easy to remain in the pragmatic world of apparent realities. Seeing is believing but if this were the ultimate truth, people would never have felt the need to escape the bondage of the so called empirical reality and plunge into a land of possibilities which does not comply with the parameters of tangible realism and yet has immense possibilities of excavating the depths of inner human psyche within which lies the unadulterated truth of their lives. What is the reason for the real world often becoming fake when it comes to projecting human conscience? It is because reality occludes people from presenting themselves as they are with their personal beliefs founded on unconventional notions that more often than not disregard the fundamental principles of propriety or righteous behaviour assigned to them. Girish Karnad's plays *Hayavadana* and *Naga-Mandala* explore deep recesses of human conscience that often remained unexplored by practical human efforts.

In *Hayavadana*, Padmini's secret desire is that she wants a man with a sound brain and a good physique instead of a weakly built Devadatta, her husband. In *Naga-Mandala*, Rani's secret desire is that she desires a loving man in her life instead of the tyrant husband she has in reality. Both these heroines are essentially tabooed by the society from expressing their wants openly and they are intelligent enough to comprehend the fact that crossing the boundaries of morality for them both would typify them as adulteresses. It is therefore that another world altogether different from the real one is recreated by both these women in which their desires are met, rather subtly but conspicuously. Moreover, despite the fact that they manage to fulfil their wants, they aren't stereotyped as illicit or

wrong in their conduct. This is the speciality of their created worlds that are far removed from the realistic life.

Padmini's world includes Kali, the goddess who wakes up suddenly from her sleep and grants her the incredible boon of a man with brain and brawn. This is actually impossible in reality. Nonetheless, when we read the play or watch it, we accept this improbability whole heartedly as we are somewhere aware that the deliberate use of surrealistic setting acts as an apt device to counter our expectations of a 'good Indian woman' who is known for her strong ethical values. When Kali makes an impossible phenomenon a reality with her trick Padmini does not have two men but has only one man with two distinct qualities of two men. This apparently magical reality is accepted readily by the us because we are indoctrinated so strongly to accept anomaly in imagination but not in our reality. It is therefore that educated readers and audiences of the play do not dismiss the story as absurd or unreal because there is no need for providing any official approval to the heroine for her conduct of desiring intelligent Devadattta and the able bodied Kapila as she has them both in one man because of a divine intervention. We are practically saved, I would say, from the onus of giving our opinions on the legitimacy of the choice. Similarly, when Rani makes love to a serpent disguised as her own husband in *Naga-Mandala,* we are absolutely free from being judgmental about her in any sense of the word. Rani is shown as an innocent village girl who hardly has the calibre to deduce the reality of the man who appears to her every night in the guise of her husband. It is so comfortable for the proponents of morality to convince themselves that Rani is to be acquitted from the blame of fornication. Thus, surreal acts as the device of escaping reality that is stringent and demands an absolute insistence on ethical conduct. While we know that Rani has a tyrant husband who does not love her and the serpent has brought a lot of love to her, we cannot apparently approve this extra-marital relationship of her. Nevertheless, it becomes a lot

easier to bypass the illicit element in the relation of the two if we accept the imaginary folk tale of the serpent lover as true.

The point here is, not only does surreal drama acquits the protagonists from the blame of disloyalty; it relaxes the recipients from the cumbersome task of giving an honest verdict for the two. As soon as the readers/audiences are released from this requirement, there germinates a whole range of viewpoints in relation to both these characters that are far removed from the idea of stringent categorization of good or bad. This is what the playwright Girish Karnad intends to execute in both these plays. He seems to provide us the luxury of freely interpreting Padmini and Rani as victims of patriarchy or shrewd creators of their own desired reality. Ultimately, this dual interpretation dismantles conventional bigotry in a very intelligent way without dismissing the ethical notions value education we study in our lives. Karnad does not undermine ethics and morals; he dislodges the fetish for these that often we have in our lives. In addition to this, he gives those the emancipation to liberate themselves from these notions completely who feel that they do not require them at all and their life is a personal matter in all its entirety. Thus, both these characters expose our expectations for an orderly social living as well as our keen desire to break the set concepts of ‘morally correct’. There is a Padmini and a Rani in all our lives who don’t want to comply with the rules but our reluctance to accept them in public is also a matter of perception in these plays. If we secretly support extra marital alliance, why don’t we have the courage to voice our feelings out in the open? Why do we have to have double standards in our lives promulgating loyalty in marriage on the one hand and carrying on a tacit affair on the other? Our perspectives of modernity are also challenged in the plays through the use of the surreal. We want the surreal as a means to escape reality of our misbalanced living that is both conventional and anomalous at the same time. Only surreal

can divulge these inner secrets and can be digested by the people today who superficially cling either to their culture or to unconventional ways of living. If Padmini and Rani were vocal enough to claim their likings, am sure people would have then(when these plays were published) and even today would have comfortably judged them as wrong. At the same time, it would have been done by the same people whose notions of ethics and propriety and very vague and far from being culturally sound. Unlike these people, those that cling to ethics strongly would have completely dismissed both these characters as inappropriate in their desires. Surreal prevents both these extremes and gives us thankfully some space to think and decide which school of thought would we like to belong to – the ethical or the modern and how.

For any comments please send in the box given below

Is Ethical teaching to students possible in the modern pragmatic times?

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Teaching is not just a method. It is a principle forming ethical code of conduct that students and teachers are inevitably required to retain in order that education becomes something more than just a curriculum driven enterprise. Today, times have changed and so has the value system being reformed which makes it quite interesting and challenging to balance the rightful morals and the modern alternatives on the part of both students and teachers. To adequately select the kind of valuable precepts to be followed and those to be

accurately negated for the higher good of futuristic learning which is far from being simply a matter of ‘obeying the fixed norms set by authorities is indeed an intricate choice to make.

The present day has shown us the theory of relativism which operates on the notions that ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are mere perspectives and there isn’t a hard and fast rule behind following or rejecting certain behavioural codes; the academic sector also not being excluded from the same. We know we have many who seem to be confused whether rules are meant to be followed or broken. That’s the tragedy of the modern times that we aren’t able to draw a visible and clear line between the dos and the don’ts in our lives. Consequently, we all try ways and means to adjust ourselves the way we can without being bothered about being essentially – ‘ethically’ correct. There isn’t anyone who could be straightaway blamed for the circumstances that have resulted on account of the modern man’s own lethargy of finding out the adequate distinctions between morally correct and incorrect. All we can do is simply state that the times have changed and so we need to accommodate ourselves with the altering times wherein teachers and students may take certain deviations from the stringent norms of maintaining a conventional –Guru-Shishya, Teacher-disciple relationship. It can be based on camaraderie rather than a pedagogic alliance between the two and the one who teaches and the one who learns both can be on the same platform; each learning from the other. There isn’t any harm of course in accepting this fact for this is the truth of today’s era that encourages equitable learning which rests on the principle of non-discriminatory teaching enterprise wherein the teachers act as mentors and facilitators providing the best of their knowledge and at the same time remain receptive towards accepting the points of view of their mentees.

Apparently, this is healthy and seems oriented towards

eradicating orthopraxy wherein the teachers dwell on the notions of stringent dominion and the students hardly get a chance to ask questions or engage in any healthy discussion that could enliven the concept of education as a holistic learning approach. In such an overtly adequate environment, it seems rather inconsequential to demarcate the teachers and the students as seniors and juniors or experienced and novice etc. These terms that are viewed as derogatory by those that regularly endorse teaching as the means of effacing teacher student difference and making the teacher an approachable entity rather than a formidable personality. Nonetheless, as the thin line of difference has been blurred, it now becomes very difficult to justifiably present the requisite of the need to treat teaching as a respectable profession and teacher as the one that deservedly ought to be revered for the contribution that one makes in the field of imparting education. The repercussions of this phenomenon are such that neither the teacher nor the student and not even the parents of the respective students are able to offer an appropriate wisdom on how teachers and students should be when they are in an academic setting. In addition to this there seems absentia of guidelines in the matter of interactions between teacher and student in the external environment outside the school.

It is under the pretext of being ‘modern’ educationists that teachers today at times dismiss the mandate of being ‘obeyed’ irrespective of the child becoming assertive or demanding or even at times irreverent in one’s demeanour. Ignoring under the guise of being receptive towards informal approach of the students in order to make them feel comfortable in one’s presence seems simply an excuse. It is universally acknowledged that a teacher ought to let one’s students understand that a certain code of conduct is supposed to be followed when one chooses to interact with an elderly and experienced mentor. A student often escapes the guilt of being impertinent with the teacher on account of one’s tender age wherein immature language lapse and unregulated mannerisms are

labelled as juvenile misdemeanours. A teacher on the other hand is responsible for the mistake a student makes while taking the self-respect of the mentor for granted.

Teaching is just not disseminating the information contained in the books. It is the onus on the teacher of ‘shaping characters’. This process is not only serious but also challenging. Not all the students are open-minded towards the process of ‘ethical guidance’. It therefore becomes inevitable for a teacher to identify the mental readiness of each student towards adopting what we term as ‘good manners’. Moreover, the difficulty is also on account of the fact that the contemporary society is heavily oriented towards promulgating the notions of pragmatism which unfortunately dispense with the requirement of including ethical values and principles of life. It is erroneously proclaimed by many so called modernists that being sensitized towards cultivating humanitarian virtues founded on the principle of emotions is a sign of weakness. Those people that get influenced by such misconceptions become hard hearted and focus only on attaining material success. That pragmatism is the only need of the present day and emotional thinking is a waste of time and energy is the most convenient theory adopted today. This is generally the belief of those that perhaps do not comprehend the rationality of being modest and courteous without which apparently there is no chance of establishing a healthy human society. Since the minds of the children are so impressionistic, they are the ones that get misguided by such wrong concepts and because they do not know the difference between being practical and being insensitive, these two concepts overlap and shape the deformed personality of many as we see them today.

Teachers have an integral role to play in this regard and even parents need to extend their support in the establishment of value education as a priority. Opted by many academic institutions these days, it is indeed beneficial to have a

course on righteous conduct that may enable the children understand the worthiness of being ethical in their attitude. Together with the students, today's teachers also need to undergo a vigorous training on retention of ethical virtues. Ensuring equity in their approach towards students that effaces distinctions of any kind based on either their academic progress report or their social stature is fundamental. Practicing the principles endorsed to the students in one's own life is another mandate that the teachers indispensably need to follow in order that the students develop respect for them; respect cannot be demanded, it is to be commanded is a well-known adage. Thus, value education is not to be myopically understood as another subject to be taught to the students. It is something that is ought to become a regular habit inculcated in the lives of the teachers first and then through them in the lives of the students in order to have clarity that we all strive hard today to achieve about the goal of the teaching profession.

It is very easy to state that the child is beyond control or discipline is not possible to be imposed as a rule in today's high-tech secular environment wherein students are smarter and more informed than the teachers as they are exposed to the techno-savvy world. The fact is that corrective measures are the right granted to every teacher and they need to be adopted as the means to bring about the change in the misinformed students that have been wrongly manipulated towards the ideas of liberty and secularism. The goal is achievable and is not something that is too far-fetched or larger than life to be experienced as a reality in our lives. Let us as teachers try our level best to strike a balance between ethical values and modern pragmatic concerns that demand constructive alternatives in the existing traditional systems of education. This balance is the adequate mode of making teaching something more than just a mundane exercise carried out as a professional endeavour offering lucrative benefits. The day when teacher learns to make learning a holistic experience for

a student and selflessly impart education retaining ethical values, this world will certainly have better citizens committed towards living a virtuous life. The teacher student relationship will definitely be exemplary of an amicable affinity between a true mentor and a responsible mentee.

For comments if any please send in the box below.

AGARBATTI – THE SEXUAL INCINERATION ON STAGE – SO ARRESTING!

Sexually Explicit Content – Well, the phrase itself provokes many intelligent communities to either hide their face behind the four walls of the house or to protest against it in loud volumes. I must say, the opening scene of the play AGARBATTI - (**Directed By:** Swati Dubey **Produced By:** Samagam Rangmandal Written by Ashish Pathak, the play has bagged four awards at Mahindra Excellence in Theater Awards META)is been so intelligently devised by the director that it resists both these reactions in the most convincing manner. The scene is brutal in its explicit provocation of sexual act openly but, in spite of the same, it forces admiration for the craftsmanship that works behind making such a sensuous implication bold and yet appreciable in its own right.

Women who are the major participants of this scene inviting and enacting sexual insinuations manage to extract the susceptibility that stimulates sexual urge and receptivity towards sexual matters in the feminine gender. The most significant part of the reality about women especially those in the conservative Indian rural areas (now I am not

generalizing here though) who despite being apparently uninitiated in the matters of sex, as the world knows it, display their repressed sexual urge through such innuendos. Primarily, this sort of depiction on the proscenium in front of an apparently cultured urban audience accompanies the predicament of these women being stereotyped as flagrant on account of the evident unconcern about propriety. The consideration that the lack of urban literacy in these ladies may provoke them to comply with blatant projections of the kind they choose to engage into in such private gatherings exclusively for women may or may not be the conscious level of acceptance in the midst of the educated audience. The same being represented in a rural set up amidst village audience also may not offer a neat solution for the participants. This is because, the onslaught of orthodoxy may not give it a fair chance to explain the social reality that forces the play participants to opt for such depictions that escape revering societal taboos against phenomenon like sex.

Witnessing the scene, it seems the director makes a bold choice; the one that lets him the freedom to outdo inhibitions that often mar the essence of the play despite an interesting script. That sexual acts do often have the potential to be synonymous with brutality is the implication one explicitly gathers when one watches the sexual act being symbolically represented through the means of an enactment and gives a feel of the supposed theme (Now I need to watch the play to comment more on this) this play perhaps would be dealing with coercion the women often encounter with respect to overbearing masculine tendencies. It is this very intent that makes the apparent sexual content in the scene worth watching (particularly for those that know its content) as it emblematically proclaims the reason to justify its inception on the stage. It works as a foreboding of a gruesome massacre that is perhaps supposed to occur next. However, for someone (as I) who has no knowledge of the subject matter on which the play is based nor has access to the entire script of the play,

this entire scene comes as a jolt for the manner and the extent to which a sexual intercourse is celebrated elevates curiosity to construe the reason that it has been done this way. Therefore, the scene appears relevant to those that know the reason and interests those that do not know the reason for the explicit proclamation of sex in the opening scene of this drama. This (I feel) makes it a justifiable attempt in spite of its radical nature and helps it survive the jeopardy of questions or objections that accompany a presentation of such an explicit kind. When you explicitly dramatize “let’s have sex” for the people, you are required to maintain a symbolic decorum which does not exclude the need to be barefaced. This paradox is a difficult challenge and to a great extent it has been managed very well by making women participants cover their visage (full/half) with veils that douse their brazen nature in spite of its openness- and it’s supposed to be so in conventional milieu(supposedly). Moreover, the mannerisms of theirs in terms of aping a sexual intercourse are well regulated in spite of the recklessness because every time you see the actor in disguise of a man attempting to assault, there is an obvious emphasis on the mode of representing it as a part of a dramatization than a realistic event. There is a dramatized attempt, extremely effective by the women to thwart him from the shameless act.

When you witness the entire dramatization, since it appears ‘dramatic’, it convinces that it is not ruthless in spite of obviously trying to show the ruthlessness that accompanies such acts which embody forceful subjugation of women. A well balanced attempt which certainly shows how tactfully a vigilant and responsible theatre practitioner can manage the repercussions that are invariably a part of such a portrayal which intends to upset many brand ambassadors of decency and propriety. Well, admitting the fact that sobriety is an essential responsibility to be observed in artistic endeavours, I also feel that the needful depiction of violence and sex may not be essentially curbed but rather could be

exposed taking full advantage of the scope that theatre offers; to dramatize the dramatic content. I felt, this scene is a vital to construe the relevance of histrionics that must be in close proximity with reality but not lose connect with the genre of “performance”. It is this distanced involvement of this scene with ‘realism’ that erases all issues pertaining to decorum instead of avoiding it entirely as a tabooed matter or criticizing its candour, watching it makes one rethink about the societal indifference towards certain realities that has ushered the need for art to penetrate into such explicit rebuttal of the so-called morality. As a result one cannot help but admire its intensity apart from anything else…therefore; the dramatized sexual havoc on stage appears so arresting!

For comments (if any) please post in the box below.
For more information on the play please visit:
Sources:
Agarbatti: The Play – http://metawards.com/plays/agarbatti

Beyond transience – Soulful sufi rendition

An ethereal experience–

Sufi singers are prolific artists illumining the possibility of uniting divine feelings with sublime love.

Vocalist Dhruv Sangari recreated the magical splendors of SUFIYANA culture with his vivacious serenity encompassing aesthetic beauty and reverential Indian ethics – magically interwoven.

For me, the program primarily effaced the Hindu Muslim divide as the singer so poetically inculcated the true feelings of divine invocation irrespective of class, caste distinction; a classic paradigm of the SUFIYANS who sing in praise of the lord. This ethereal composition he rendered ” chaap tilak” was not only one of the sweetest sufi chants of the eve but also indoctrinated me and my folks(parents) with the message of “ISHWAR ALLAH TERO NAAM”- Am sure it might have made the recipients rethink the concept of caste and class differences often acting as a hindrance in matters of spiritual escalation.

Sangari’s uniqueness lay in his profound explorations of the renditions he chose. Each musical composition preceded a explanation admirably detailed to entrench the specialty of the song chosen. This reflected the erudition of the artist; a mandate with regards to a performance that’s meant to be an IBADAT – A PRAYER to the almighty.

The open air theater of Darpana – NATRANI became the most adequate purveyor of the tools that assist such a presentation resounding the features of FOLK CULTURE. It was heartwarming to see people once again.having gathered in an open space (independent of covid fears fortunately) to listen.and get one glimpse of the talented artist. It replicated the village folk artistic tradition very well; of course the audiences were English speaking urban elite with.modern.western.attires – a stark reality of the urban.India today) I must admit that the organizers were pretty particular in their choices of apparels – Mallika Sarabhaiji in her traditional Indian dress and her accompanied trio too dressed similarly well; obviously one does expect the consciousness from.someone as distinguished as them.

I got the privilege the second time to be at Natrani. The first time I went was some 10

Years back when I saw,Rajit Kapoor performing Girish Karnad’s

monologue Flowers at the open air auditorium. It was an indelible experience and this one I had yesterday night revitalized my spirits and invigorated my soul to acknowledge the superiority of sufiyana art that's no less than.a means to elevate our material consciousness towards the possibility of experiencing BRAHMANANDA – spiritual delight which crosses the boundaries of transient earthly living and becomes an eternally pleasurable ethereal experience. A heavenly feeling that Natyashastra speaks about so rightfully when it endorses natya as a blissful process meant for redeeming the world from.sins. As Sangri rendered CHAP TILAK.sab cheen li re mose naira milake – the feelings of respectful admiration arose in my heart for an artist who chose a sublime melody of SUFIYANA sangeet which gives us a moment of realization " We love our lord too" not just worship him. Meerabai reverentially merged the feelings of adoration and invocation in her worship of Krishna. In the rendition I felt the same mood restored in me – self surrender to the lord I love and revere at the same time. Yes, it could be for someone close to us in fact anyone who we feel is inseparably in us – why only God? It was this intersection of divinity and earthly feeling of love that made the presentation so special, so heavenly.

I drank the elixir of sufiyana art sumptuously and though pressed for time wherein I couldn't listen to more than two melodious songs, I acknowledge my heart grew fonder.

Overall, I loved the performance and the night was indeed memorable with fine white lamps shining in the midst of the open air auditorium giving it the feel of a traditional Indian setting with oil lamps and lanterns adorning the environment making it look no less than a paradise. Natrani is a must visit and I would recommend it to one and all.that desire to relish classic art.

Last but not the least, its discipline is praiseworthy and noteworthy. We reached a bit late, gates were shut. Nonetheless, I must recognize their waiving of the stringent

rule for us and letting us enter which was indeed an insignia of an organization that is both adequately strict and endearingly loving.

Thank you Natrani for an unforgettable event that is sure to remain perpetually etched in my memory as an experience beyond the fleeting worldly domains of earthly concerns.

Review by –

Dr. Payal Trivedi

[For comments if any post below the article on the website.]

