



SHIFTS IN THE CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SELECT PLAYS OF BHASA SATHEESH KUMAR

ABSTRACT

A poet gets proclaimed or celebrated when he imbibes the necessary elements of culture in his work and presents them contemporaneously, without considering the time and space and it reveals his visionary spirit. Among the thirteen plays ascribed to Bhasa, this paper takes up for discussion the cultural variants in the two plays *Urubhanga* and *Karnabhara* and in which War is the prime theme which are the prominent two, among his thirteen plays. Since war itself is a conflict between two cultures, it is inevitable to adapt social deflections for the betterment of play. These deflections create new dimensions to the plot, characterization, dialogues and the overall atmosphere of the play. The social deflections in the plot increase the intensity of the play and help to create abundant, beautiful dramatic situations. The dialogues of the characters faithfully reflect the cultural life of the time. Dhrtarashtra's and Gandhari's dialogues touches on the feeling of parenthood and sense of honour of their son, apart from Royal dignity. Bhasa marked the heroic qualities of a valiant, when he gives advice to Durjaya. The same applies to development of characters as well. Poet explains the transfer of ideal things of culture to the next generation thorough Duryodhana and Karna. While adopting a particular culture of a society in to the drama, it impacts the characters and dialogues of it. There arises a cultural recycling process, especially In Bhasa's plays.

KEYWORDS

Bhasa- Urubhanga- Karnabhara- Cultural Variations

ABBREVIATIONS

1: Mbh - Mahabharata 2: Ubh - Urubhanga 3: Kbh - Karnabhara

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Variations in the Cultural representation

Analytical and Critical

Family is a social institution formed by the union of persons, where as society itself is a mode of the union of families. Thus society, moulded on certain lifestyle and rituals are based on certain value point, creates a life circle. This includes culture, which is developed and enriched in due course of time and transcends to generations beyond the limitations of time and space.

A poet gets proclaimed or celebrated when he imbibes the necessary elements of culture in his work and presents them contemporaneously, without considering the time and space and it reveals his visionary spirit. Among the thirteen plays ascribed to Bhasa, the renowned Sanskrit dramatist, this paper takes up for discussion, the cultural variants in the two plays *Urubhanga* and *Karnabhara* where war is the prime theme.

Since war itself is a conflict between two cultures, it is inevitable to adapt social deflections for the betterment of the play. These deflections create new dimensions to the course of the story, characterization, dialogues and the overall atmosphere of the play.

Urubhanga is one of the most popularised sanskrit plays of Bhasa. It's plot is based on 'Salyaparva' of the *Mahabharata* (*Mbh*). The central figure of the play is Duryodhana, who has fallen in the battlefield his thighs crushed by Bhima in the club battle. Balarama who is incited at this, wants to seek justice for Dhuryodhana. Asvathama, Dhrtarashtra, Gandhari, wives of Dhuryodhana and the son Durjjaya are the other characters of the play. Catharsis, the concept linked to the positive social function of a tragedy is a fundamental factor of this play. Moreover, Bhasa tried to explain the tragic elements of war and its consequences, which resulted in the destruction of a society.

The social deflections in the plot increase the intensity of the play and helps to create abundant, beautiful dramatic situations. For example, the entry of Dhrtarashtra and Gandhari to the battlefield is absolutely not in the original plot. Dhrtarashtra, who was born blind and Gandhari, who chose blindness because of her chastity, stand in front of their son Duryodhana, who was equal to being dead in the battlefield. When Duryodhana's sense of sight and his parent's sense of sound becomes on par with each other taking the play to the heights of dramatic illusion.

Customarily wives never ever come to the war place. But here the wives of Dhuryodhana and his son came near him which means the whole family is completely gathered together in the battlefield. The death of their brothers and other relatives formed a tragic circle around them. When parents, wives, children and other relatives approached the family head, the dying Duryodhana, it shows the strength of their family bond. It highlights the importance of giving care, support, prayer and consolation even at the time of death. Bhasa knows the significance of a family relationship and thus he picturises the tragic background along with emotional dialogues in his play.

The conversation of Dhrtarashtra and Gandhari touches on the feeling of parenthood and sense of honour of their son, apart from royal dignity, where as Duryodhana's words highlight heroism, lordliness and adherence or devotion to his mother. The words of Duryodhana to Gandhari is very much remarkable here:

नमस्कृत्य वदामत्त्वां यदपि पुण्यं मया कृतम् ।

अन्यस्यामपि जात्यां मे त्वमेव जननी भव । । (Ubh, Sloka 50)

Duryodhana consoles his wives telling them that he accepted his daring defeat heroically and the defeat would be a stepping stone to the success of others and so, on behalf of that, he asked them to feel proud of him:

भन्ना मे भ्रुकुटी गदानपिततिरव्यायुद्धकालोत्थितैर्

वक्षस्युत्पततिः प्रहाररुधिरिहारावकाशो हतः ।

पश्येमौ वरणकाद्वचनाङ्गदधरौ पर्याप्तशोभौ भुजौ

भर्ता ते न पराङ्मुखो युधि हतः क्विषत्रयि ! रोदषि । । (Ubh, Sloka 51)

वेदोक्तैर्वविधिरमखैरभितैरषिटं धृता बान्धवाः

शत्रूणामुपरिस्थितिं प्रयिशतं न व्यंसतिः संश्रुतिः ।

युद्धे अष्टादशवाहनीनृपतयः सन्तापिता नगिरेहे

मानं माननि ! वीक्ष्य मे नह्रिदन्त्येवंवधिनां स्त्रयिः । । (Ubh, Sloka 52)

Moreover-

श्लाघ्यशरीरभमिन्दीप्तहृदयो दुर्योधनो मे पति

तुल्येनाभमुखं रणे हत इति त्वं शोकमेवं त्यज । । (Ubh, Sloka 53)

Here, Bhasa marked the heroic qualities of a valiant, at the time when he gives advice to his son Durjjaya.

The eminent English dramatist William Shakespeare wrote that heroes always keep a uniform ideology at every point of time.

“Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once.”

Duryodhana maintains this heroism in his conversation to Asvathama as a cultural sign. When Asvathama came as a rioter by proclaiming a threat of war to the terrain, Dhuryodhana approached him restrainedly, and patiently. (Ubh Sloka 63) Even though this kind of an anecdote is not there in the base story, Bhasa created an imaginary ground by mixing the old and the new together as a kind of transposition of culture along the way.

Duryodhana's wives refuses to tie their hair as a symbol of lamentation. When Duryodhana gives stress to the above point, it shows he accepts the symbol of their culture:

पूर्वं न जानामि गदाभघातरुजामदिनीं तु समर्थयामि ।

यन्मे प्रकाशीकृतमूर्धजानरिणं प्रवष्टिदान्यवरोधजानि । । (Ubh, Sloka 38)

The scene where Balarama lifts *halayudha* (his weapon) commenting in a defiant manner that he would make Bhima a "ploughed furrow", explains the importance of farming which Bhasa literally considered as a prominent symbol of culture.

The cultural inheritance of respecting and honouring parents is transmitted to their son, Duryodhana, the central figure, through parental love. Through this, Bhasa explains the transfer of ideal things of a culture to the next generation. By advising Durjjaya to respect and obey Pandavas, Kunti and Panjali shows the nobility and greatness of culture- अहमवि पाण्डवाः शुश्रूषयतिव्याः, तत्र भवत्याश्चाम्भायाः कुन्त्याः नदिशे वर्तयतिव्याः, अभिमन्योरजननी, द्रौपदी चोभे मातृवत् पूजयतिव्ये । (Ubh,p.47) Duryodhana suggests other sources of love and respect to his son, even

though he laments about his own lose.

Balarama, who always opposes injustice, is a model representative of the culture. Fury of righteous indignation and self esteem made him feel grievous. Balarama as a righteous person has no hesitation to speak out the fact that, foul play in the club battle is not the right way to fight in a war.

Asvathama always take heroic decisions and shows the courage to stick to his decisions. He is a representative of a culture who believes that defeating the enemy through war is the right way. Duryodhana tries to conciliate Asvathama, but he was adamant on his decisions.

The plot of Bhasa's second drama, *Karnabhara* is a combination of several stories which lies scattered in *Mbh*. When the stories that happened at different time, are integrated together to a framework, it elucidates cultural coordination. Here the story line is "Lord Devendra appeared in front of Karna, who was getting ready for the battle field, to implore valuable, '*Kavacakundala*' for his son, Arjuna.

Devendra appeared before Karna when he was standing with his charioteer, Salya. But entry of Devendra is mentioned at the time of Pandava's exile in the forest in *Mbh*. According to *Mbh*, Devendra requested for *Kavacakundala* at the time when Karna was worshipping Lord Surya for his strength. But in this play this proceedings happened during the war. Devendra refused to take the valuable things offered by Karna and at last *Kavacakundala* was gifted to Devendra by Karna. In *Mbh*, before the entry of Devendra, there is a scene where Karna's father, Lord Surya appears and explains the facts to his son. But here in the play, these sequences were not mentioned by the poet. Bhasa adopted such methods of deleting proves that he wants to eulogize the qualities of generosity, and glazing personality of Karna.

In addition to this, Karna declines to receive the benefit of alms-giving through Devendra. But later due to the respect of Brahmins, he accepted it. Here we could notice another character of Karna, who was compelled to change his strong decision due to the influence of cultural marks. The changes made in the play moulded a special structure and strength to the plot.

Many cultured movements sparkle in Karna's dialogues. Karna decided to receive the benefit of his generosity and his belief that 'one will reach heaven or fame whether he succeeds or not in the war and these attitudes indicated the importance of generosity and his awareness about the war. (*Kbh*, *Sloka* 12)

Karna believed and specifically noted that the curse of Parasurama and prohibition against war by his mother were the major causes of his tragedy and he was a representative of this kind of a typical culture. (*Kbh Sloka* 8)

When Karna was picturised as a protector of values, Bhasa reminds the importance of keeping and protecting the values of cultural legacy. Karna's words, action, generosity and selflessness unify in a straight line. The characters like Karna give the effect of *Catharsis*. The qualities of generosity, firmness on promises, and alignment with loyalists are chances for the comparison among the readers. Constant behavior of the fighting heroes like Karna imparts strength to the play.

An ambience of war exists in both these plays. When dreadful war and war cry of military operations becomes the backdrop of the play, it picturises the war as a part of the culture of the people.

FINDING AND CONCLUSIONS

While adopting a particular culture of a society into the drama, it impacts the characters and dialogues of it. So there arises a cultural recycling process, especially in Bhasa's plays. When a writer transmits the hope, worries, problems and dreams of a community through their works beyond the limitations of time and space, there would be an integration of culture. Understanding and transferring the values and symbols of cultures through the literary works is the prime responsibility of each poet. No doubt Bhasa has done it in an impressive way.

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