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A KALEIDOSCOPIC CREATION OF URUVI IN KAVITA KANE'S NOVEL *KARNA'S WIFE: THE OUTCAST'S QUEEN*

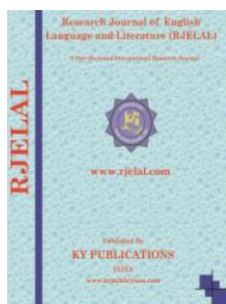
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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to highlight the outcast woman who is neglected in the society. The contemporary creative writers use the epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as the major source of interpretation. The character of Uruvi reflects the different shades of her life in the novel. Her love of Karna is the love at first sight. As the time passes her opinion about Karna is totally changed. She is entirely different type of creation who emanates out of the milieu of the novelist. The novelist presents her that adamant and loving wife would live on her terms and conditions. Her desire to change Karna is hoping against hope. In the end, she proves herself as a submissive wife when she comes to know that Karna will definitely die in the battlefield. Creating a tremendous character of Uruvi, the novelist justifies with various aspects of her life.

Key words - Mythical character, outcast, remolding, imagination, adamant, recreation.

Myth, folktales and fables are undoubtedly in the fitness of things to hammer views in the present day world. Consequently many contemporary creative writers effectively use these form to spread the gems of their creations. Nonetheless they are not imitating. With their own imagination, they are remolding much in own manner. The *Ramayana* and The *Mahabharata* are the two great epics serving as the major sources of interpretation and reinterpretation. The contemporary writers have taken these forms in their writings. With their own imagination they are remolding in their own manner. Though the character of Uruvi is not introduced in the *Mahabharata* but Kane befittingly create her in the novel. Our *Vedas* and *Puranas* are the expression of the man's domination and woman's secondary status. Some present writers,

viz. Amish Tripathy, Devdutta Patnayaka and Ashok K. Banker minutely gauge the depth of the woman in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and project them as relevant as the man character. The recreation is fundamentally imagination based. Kuntaka in the *Vakroktijivittam* has talked about- *Prakarna-Vakrata*, where a small incident is wide and deep-rooted enough to change the entire story and dimension.

The pictures of life, portrayed by the poets, are not faithful copies, accurately rendered in words. They are modified by a predominant imagination. They become striking by associated thoughts or images awakened by that imagination, or what they have the effect of reducing multitudes to unity. In this way imagination plays an

important role in transforming or changing the source material of the composition. Besides the invention of something new, he may significantly rearrange the source story. Now the poet also aims at introducing universal element in the source story. (205)

Kane is one of the emerging writers of today. Her main focus is on the outcast woman who is neglected in the society since the mythical time. Here the comparison arises of Urmila, Sita, and Uruvi. She is trying to give voice to the helpless one. Basically, she deals with the mythological characters in her writings. The novel expresses the different shades of her character and it shows a terrific blend of mythology and contemporary storytelling. In the starting of the novel, the writer describes the character of Uruvi. Being the princess of Pukeya, she has all the familial comforts. She has no liability or responsibility. She inherits the intellect from her father and attraction from her mother and emerges as an extraordinary child since the very beginning of her carrier. Since young age, the magical power to heal is an extraordinary feature of hers. In the creation of Uruvi, the novelist adds tremendous dimensions to her character. These terrific aspects lead to boldness, arrogance, adamancy, loving, intelligent and submissiveness on the one hand but on the other, she raises a voice against injustice also. The novel opens with the scene of archery contest among the warriors and Karna wants to take part but due to his low caste he could not do so. This injustice cannot be permissible from the point of view of Uruvi. Her love for Karna is a love at first sight. As she sees Karna she falls in love with her. Without knowing much of karna she is determined to marry him. This permeates the problem in the mind of the reader whether she is in love or totally infatuated.

The Personality of an Uruvi is an enchanting combination of beauty and love. Though she does not know anything about her but completely assured that Karna will accept her. Being a bold lady, she has no fear of criticism. As an intelligent girl, gives importance to the merits not to the caste or class. For the fulfillment of her desire she is ever ready to accept any hurdle or the consequences of

her choice. All this happens due to her love for Karna. As a famous saying goes on- everything is fair in love and war. She attaches such qualities with the imagination of her spouse as simple, intelligent and a man of principle. All these qualities, she finds in karna, the warrior. Though he is not equal in caste or familial status but she never cares for all these tags. Previously parents were against her decision but they understand later on the firm opinion of their daughter so they get ready in the last hour. Uruvi explains the logic of her choice for Karna as her life partner. She says: "In Karna she had found an appearance and personality so close to perfection that she could convince herself that her quest had been fulfilled. That man from nowhere had created a tumult in her heart each time he had strung his bow." (12) Because of these qualities, she considers Karna as her husband. Perception is different from person to person as the thinking of Uruvi is totally different from others. It is easy to fall in love but difficult to convince others. As a father, Vahusha cares for the life of his daughter and says: "Do you realize the consequences?" he muttered in utter desperation. 'Not for me, nor your mother, but for yourself. If you marry him, you will marry doom.' (18) Even than she never hesitates to pronounce, Karna her husband. She says "not to marry one without Karna. 'A good man trapped in a bad situation.' (18) The novelist uniquely describes the internal feelings of a girl as she is bold enough to take decision. Somehow father is trying to convince her by giving different examples: "Have you ever heard of any suta being offered a Brahmin or a Kshatriya bride? That was the reason why the princess of Panchala, Draupadi, rejected Karna at her swayamwara – for being a sutaputra, which makes him low in a social hierarchy." (19) The novelist is trying to present a change in the society that even in the earlier times also love marriages were acceptable. A daughter has a tremendous power of argumentation to convince her father. This projects the helplessness of her father. He fully understands the adamant behavior of her daughter so he is ready for her marriage. She says that "I will gain my life, my soul, I love him. I love him for what he is. I love him for what he will be." (24) She breaks all the social hierarchies to marry Karna. She is so

much in love with him that she is strong enough to lose everything to marry him (Monisha and S.P. Shanthi, 174).

Arjuna is also surprised of the choice of Uruvi. He says 'Is that her choice? A lowly upstart, a pariah, an unwelcome outsider?' His voice was glacial. (35) The problem of identity crisis reflects in the novel. Broadly speaking, according to the traditional point of view a girl has no choice to choose her life partner. In case of her, the traditional norms of the society do not play a definite role and she marries karna and she chooses Karna her life partner. Anyhow, Kunti and Krishna come forward and welcome her choice. If we talk about the different shades of Uruvi's character, emotionality is the dominant shade of her personality. The idea of leaving a parental home disturbs her because since her childhood she is living with her parents. There is a strong difference between the status of Uruvi and Karna but she is ever ready to accept him at any cost. Karna asks her: 'Why did you marry me?' he asked quietly, without preamble. Is this a game?' he rasped, a frown marrying his handsome features. 'A new ploy? Or were you forced into this marriage?' (40) Here she boldly asserts that it is not a game it is simply a story of love for him. Uruvi loves karna to heights. As a man of principles, karna wants that Uruvi should accept the family norms of a *Sutputra* as he cannot afford regal conveniences for a princess. To this Uruvi expresses her total resignation to the conditions and circumstances to her marital bliss.

It is the quality of the novelist to delineate Uruvi as an adamant and disciplined woman also. She has a power to raise a voice against social injustice. In the game of dice, when Pandavas were sacrifice Draupadi, she does not like the attitude of Karna and scold him for this wrong. She always has a desire that Karna will be her ideal hero. But after some time when all her dreams shattered and she at once decides to leave this place and go back to Pukeya. Here the novelist introduced the other shade of her personality. The main problem in her relation is the attachment of Karna for Duryodhana. He is never ready to leave the hand of Duryodhana as he has his own beliefs and customs. He says that previously, Duryodhana alone comes forward and

make him a king of *Angadesh*. Since then karna has the perception to remain sincere to Duryodhana to this, Uruvi says that Duryodhana is a man of self-interest and he uses Karna as a weapon. Somehow all her argument fails as he never changes his decision. He is completely dedicated towards Duryodhana: 'It was only Duryodhana who gave me this chance to do so. He made me a warrior, an archer and a king although the last I don't really like, frankly. The Pandavas did not give me any chances. And that's how it is-me with Duryodhana and Arjuna with Krishna.' (103)

As *Bhagavad-Gita* preaches a lesson of karma to man that one should be dutiful first and never think about the result. Uruvi is very sad because Karna is not ready to dissociate Duryodhana. She is internalizes. 'For years, I have worshipped you. You were everything to me. I believed in you. You were my god,' her voice broke. 'But now, after knowing what you did, and what you are capable of doing. I am shattered. I have died a little today Karna.' (118)

It is the fate of Uruvi, that after marriage she does not find any peace and comfort even for a single day. In the beginning she tries a lot to prove herself as an ideal wife. As the time passes she tries to convince Karna but she fails in her efforts. As a result, they separate. This decision she takes because she has a notion if she goes far away then karna might change his attitude to Duryodhana. It is a great distress to the parents who were to change their opinion in favor of his second error on the part of Uruvi. The father asks 'Are you sure you want to leave him?' (139) He asks further

Is this sort of a punishment you are imposing on yourself or is it a way of punishing Karna?' he asked sharply. Then, in a more kindly manner, he continued, 'Listen, child, do what your heart tells you, not your pride. You are too proud to accept that the person you so wholly loved could go wrong. Your judgment has taken a knock and you cannot bear the fall of your idol. But that was your mistake, nor his. Karna didn't ask to be your god'. (139)

The father of a girl is always contented if his daughter is happy with his husband. Now Uruvi is sad so Vashuka, her father, advises her not to leave the hand of Karna. Rather face the situation boldly. Momentarily, she is confused about the future course of action. The other reason of Uruvi's dislike or the relation of Karna and Duryodhana is that Karna still likes Draupadi. This liking is because of the easy forgiveness to Karna. At this moment Kunti consoles Uruvi with these words: "marriage is about working on what has changed, not what you once believed." (165) There are reasons that Uruvi has different opinion for Karna, it happens because there is communication gap between the couple. At last, Karna comes forward and wipes the dust of confusion and also the fears of Uruvi. Here Karna narrates an incident of his past, one day Bhoomidevi curses him squeezing some soil very hard. He describes the curse as fatal. *Bhoomidevi* then affirms that Karna would be helpless as a particular badly moment and he realizes well that he would be dead in the war.

Sometimes a single event transforms the life of a person as in the case of Uruvi. So far she has no idea of such prediction. Now she decides to stand with him. A strong studies of these two characters highlight the differences in their temperament also that they are great in their own domain. "While Karna was a warrior, Uruvi was a healer. The battlefield spelt two different connotations for them, two diverse worlds. For Karna, it was the sacred ground to fight for honor and truth; for Uruvi, it was a wasteland where the dead and wounded fell." (210)

Love and emotion have a great place in the life of a person. Money, power, self and high status cannot give real satisfaction to man. Though Uruvi has differences for some time but ultimately she is the wife of greatest warriors of the generation. She says that "I have only regret that he has wasted all the glory and pride for the wrong man." (210) Kane gives a height to the character of Karna also. In spite of all the glory and power he is not ready to leave the hand of his friend. He says- "Neither the whole world nor the biggest kingdom can make me either leave them or tempt me away from the bonds of their love. I cannot betray Duryodhana. He is the

only friend I have and I am indebted to him eternally." (253) the very bond of love between the two is the cause of his death. Uruvi tries a lot to save his life but ultimately she fails in her effort. Karna dies heroically and gets the *Gokuldhama* after his death. The lord *Krishna* appears in the form of *Vishnuavatar* at the last hour of his death. Then lord Krishna addresses Arjuna and explains the cause of his love for Karna. Since Karna is a *Daanveer* of a very high order so lord *Krishna* loves him more than Arjuna. This characteristic makes Karna immortal. Although Uruvi is unable to achieve much in life but now she would sacrifice her life for the betterment for others and her son, *Vrishakethu*. Here destiny plays an important role in her life like the Hardy's characters. Creating a tremendous character of Uruvi, the novelist justifies with various aspects of the character.

The novel enwraps the dusk of the day. Undoubtedly, the mythical times have the voices in favor of and against the social, political and religious norms interpretation of situations form double hue-negative and positive. The novel is a remaking of the life of Karna and his surroundings. In addition to that the novelist creates a central figure, Uruvi. She is well woven into the fabric of mythology. Nevertheless, the soul of the characters created in other epics or books of those days. Sita, Radha, Urmila, Draupadi or even Shakuntala never even dream of separation of their own-whatever be the marital hurdles or mishaps. Such woman proves only the followers of their spouse. Besides they never spread any negative thought or indulge in unwanted situation in their life. These unwanted situations are not their creations. Their faith in marriage is unquestioned. Here is Uruvi who indulges in the affairs of Karna and even deserts him. The reason is that she wants to fight for Draupadi who has implicit faith in the Pandava brothers. Similarly, Hidimba remains loyal to Bhim and her son Hhatotkach. Never does she, like Sita or Shakuntala, infuse uncalled for values in the views of her son. Mother and children are sincere and affectionate to their royal families. These woman are not weak but intelligent, caring and docile. No hardships would ever let them down. To face hardships in the woods and that too with the issues is not to match the

courage of but the extraordinary. Uruvi is entirely different type of creation who emanates out of the milieu of the novelist. Adamant and loving but she would live anywhere on her terms and conditions. Would fight for the social justice but soon be forgetful of that. Primarily she fights for Karna but later on she forgets her commitment to him and seeks a turn coat in him. Something much condemned in those days. Even the battle was disciplined to start in the wee hours of the day and finish by the sunset. Her desire to change Karna or any other gentleman of those times is hoping against hope. Now this is a daily affair but not then. Even then, the creation of a central figure in a mythical plot clearly suggests how the mythical woman characters are interpreted now. Uruvi suggests entirely a different chapter. Although to voice against mythical heroes is not recent among writers as the milieu makes the ideology. Mythical woman of heights is not home breaker or going willy nilly. The creation of Uruvi infuses the idea of revolt as many woman characters are given them by the creators.

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