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Loyalty and Betrayal in Baswaraj Naykar's play *A Dreamer of Freedom*

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Many writers have been interested in the theme of loyalty and betrayal from ancient Sophocles to Shakespeare and Modern playwright. Each of writers work or play relate to different aspects of mentioned theme. Yet the most critical question comes when loyalty and betrayal is accompanied with issues of life and death. At that point the real question is dropped, when it is justifiable to betray ones country and beliefs or when it is right to take a life in order to preserve ones honor.

Loyalty means faithfulness or a devotion to a person, country, group or cause. There are many aspects of loyalty such as Society, family subject, King, Religion, God Etc. It is observed that over the years the ideas has been discussed by creative writers, Sociologist, Psychologist and Philosophers. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines loyalty as 'allegiance to the sovereign or established government of one's country and also personal devotion and reverences to the sovereign and Royal Family'.

Loyalty is interpersonal i.e. a relationship between person as between lord and servant, parent and child or between two good friends. People may have single loyalties to just one person, group or thing or multiple loyalties to multiple objects. It may be constructed upon the basis of unalterable fact that constitutes a personal connection between the subject and the object of the loyalty. It is often equated to patriotism. Patriot exhibit loyalty but all loyal persons are not patriot.

On the other hand betrayal is the breaking or violation of a presumed contract, trust or confidence that produces moral and psychological conflict within a relationship amongst individual. Often betrayal is the act of supporting a rival group or it is complete break from previously decided upon. Someone who betrays other is commonly called a traitor or betrayer. It is also breaking of social contract. It causes distress and loss of trust. The most immediate effect of the betrayal is in the emotional impact on the person betrayed. When someone betrayed by someone it is highly like that he or she will not trust them again.

Baswaraj Naykar's play *A Dreamer of Freedom* contains all the main elements of drama and revolves around the theme of loyalty and betrayal. The play deals with the interesting life and struggle of Bhaskarrao Bhave of Naragund Kingdom of Peshwa Dynasty for freedom. It shows the conflict between Bhaskarrao Bhave and the East India Company authorities during 1857 war of Independence Naykar's play help us to understand the situation of our country during our struggle for freedom. He has blended fact and fiction in a wonderful way. The play is

a fitting tribute to the lover of freedom. Throughout the history man has formulated innumerable questions concerning loyalty and betrayal.

In the present play we have two sorts of roles played by the character. The characters are either loyal or betrayed to the king, family, society, religion, God etc. the characters who show loyalties are Bhaskarrao Bhave Virbhadranayaka , Yamunabai and Savitri, the dancer bhismsani and people of Naragund. Other group of betrayed characters are Raghopant, Banyabapu and Krishnajipant, Matenda and British officers Thomson. These characters have different causes of betrayal. The present paper aims to study the causes and various aspects of loyalty and betrayal of characters.

Bhaskarrao Bhave is the protagonist of the drama and was the last king of Naragund Kingdom. Like his father Appasaheb and grandfather Ramraya, he is loyal to the God and kingdom. He always thinks about the welfare of the subject. His grandfather Ramraya was the true devotee of God Venkateshwar and visit every year. He erected the temple of Venkateshwar in Naragund. He offers Pooja and Abhishek to God. Bhaskarrao Bhave also take darshan of Lord Venkateshwar every day before go for riding. He followed the principles and dharma of king. He is loyal and faithful to his wife Savitri and mother Yamunabai. His wife Savitri had no children so she gave permission to Bhaskarrao for another marriage but he refused to marry with another woman. Thus he is loyal to God religion and subject. Some of his men betrayed him and destroyed his glory of life.

Earlier Astrologer looking horoscope predicted that he has no progeny in future and told that -

“Sarkar, your horoscope indicates that a few people will try to deceive you in your life, you should be careful about them, you should not trust anyone blindly.”(P 29)

Raghopant Joshi, Banyabapu and Krishnajipant betrayed him because they were hoping to give their son to Bhaskarrao. But he decided to adopt the bright boy Krishnarao, son of Govindrao. He has also suspected that his own people have been conspiring against him.

Bhaskarrao Bhave was brave who rebelled against company Sarkar and British Government. He strongly protested Disarmament Bill and also opposed the doctrine of lapses. He waged war against the British Government to protect his glory and honor. He asked help from the neighboring king to defeat the British government. But his some men betrayed him and revealed the secret to company Sarkar and also mixed the oil and millet in gunpowder. He ran away from Nargund by understanding the critical situation of the state. Company Government searched him and arrested him, but again he escaped with the help of his loyal confidant and went to north to meet Nanasaheb Peshwa.

Another important character in the play that shows loyalty is Virabhadranayaka. He is one of the important administrators of Nargund kingdom and Bhaskarrao has much trust on the

loyalty of him. When he visited Kolhapur along with Bhaskarrao Bhave, he sundered the crossbeam with sword to protect the honor of the king. He did not like humiliated by bowing the head of Bhaskarrao Bhave on the gate. He says –

“Sarkar, I am only your loyal servant. It’s only my duty to see that you should not be subjected to any humiliation anywhere.” (P 41)

In the war, he sacrificed his life for protecting the palace of Babasaheb Sarkar. During the war a bullet hits virbhadranyaka in the chest. He applies wet mud to his chest and fights with his sword. When another bullet hits him he felled on the ground. Thus his heroic fight shows his loyalty to the king and kingdom.

Ramchandra is a servant boy in the palace of Babasaheb. When Babasaheb left the palace, he accompanied Babasaheb’s mother Yamunabai and wife Savitri. He gives company to bothin journey and remains loyal to them. He looked both in difficult situation. He brings water and fruits for them. They offered their jewelry to Ramchandra and ended their life throwing into the river for honor. Ramchandra returned to his home and told about the jewelry to his wife Janaki. Police arrested him for enquiry. His wife betrayed and told him don’t disclose the secret of gold even if you lose your life, you have to die one day or other. She loves ornament than her husband. Thus Ramchandra is loyal as a servant and husband but his wife betrayed from the religion of wife.

People of the Nargund Kingdom are also loyal to the king during the critical situation. In the confidential meeting invited by Bhaskarrao , farmers , merchants and administrators of Nargund shows patriotism by promising full co operation during the war time by offering soldiers , weapons, food grains etc.

Yamunabai is the mother and Savitri is the wife of Bhaskarrao. Both are Nobel lady and loyal to the kingdom. Savitri loves her husband to much, so she gives permission to Bhaskarrao for another marriage for the sake of children, but he refused to marry. She follows the religion of wife. She is loyal to her mother in law and ready to die happily with Yamunabai to protest honor.

Bhimasani a dancer from the court is loyal to her Guru Shrikeshav Prasad who took care after the death of parents of Bhimasani. He taught her the art of dancing and living. She supposes him equal to parents. When Bhasakarrao offers home for dancer she asked shelter for her guru also. Bhaskarrao was impressed on Bhimasani’s art of dancing and her beauty. He promised her to give shelter to her.

At the end of the play we meet two women Kashibai and Savitri. Both belongs to Nargund kingdom and lives in North. Babasaheb escaped from the prison of British and went to North to meet Nanasaheb in the guise of Sanyasi. He meets these two women there. They served food and shelter in his last days. Savitri marries with him and has children from him. Kashibai and Savitri show loyalty to king by helping him in critical situation.

The British officer Manson, Malcolm, Oglivy, Thomson and Frank Senator cleverly used the 'divide and rule policy' and weaned some of Bhaskarrao's officer to their own side. Banyabapu and Krishnajipant became victim of British policy and betrayed Bhaskarrao. Other people such as Moreshwar, Martanda, Dattu, Ramu, Raghopant Joshi, become pro- British people. The British authorities were selfish and cunning. They turn Bhaskarrao's men towards them by giving some offer. Mansion offered Krishnajipant and Banyabapu –

“Mansion: Gentleman if you help us to defeat your Babasaheb of Nargund, we shall give you half of the kingdom of Nargund and also treat you as the permanent friends of the East India Company Sarkar.”

These British officers were loyal to the company sarkar and strictly implement the policies of British government such as Disarmament Bill, Law of Lapses, No Permission for adoption etc. for their own benefit. The East India Company has trust on them and they behave accordingly.

British officers also betrays not for their government but in their promise or offer to the men of Bhaskarrao Bhave. Mansion promised to Banyabapu and Krishnajipant to offer half of the Nargund Kingdom to them but after the death of Mansion other British Officers are not ready to offer it, instead of that they punished them.

Raghopant Joshi has betrayed for Bhaskarrao right from the beginning and he was very greedy fellow. He hoped that his son would be adopted and become king of Nargund kingdom and controlling the administration. But Bhaskarrao decided to adopt master Krishnara. So Raghopant Joshi became very angry and betrayed him. He did not submit the amount of land Revenue to the treasury of Company sarkar instead of he submitted a letter of complaint against Bhaskarrao Bhave to the Collector of Dharwad that Bhaskarrao is harassing him and many other things. He has not returned to the kingdom and his wife and children are living in their parents' house. He also meets the British Officer and told many things and Secrets. Then the men of Bhaskarrao demolished his house. He came to the city at night and cried loudly and also cursed Babasaheb angrily –

“Oh! Bhaskarrao, you have made me rootless by demolishing my house. I will not rest contest until and unless I have avenged it. One day or the other I shall see that your kingdom will mingle with dust.”(P 51)

Banyabapu and Krishnajipant were clerks and in charge of Gun powder and magazine. Both became the victim of British officer's policy. Mansion promised to offer half of the Nargund kingdom, if they help British government. One of the causes of the betrayed was that Bhaskarrao Bhave was not adopting their child. Sometimes Banyabapu feels guilty of betraying the Bhaskarrao. He thinks that God Venkatpati will punish them.

When they received message from Mansion Saheb, they take permission from Bhaskarrao by telling lie that they have to do some private works. They meet Mansion of Manavall campus. During the meeting Mansion offers tea to them and asks about Bhaskarrao. He calls them friends of the company government. If they help company government they will get appropriate reward. Mansion sahib asked them to mix oil and millet in the gunpowder and render it useless. He promised to give half of the Kingdom of Nargund. He offered drink during night party. Both are pure Brahmins but they also betrayed their religion by drinking wine.

Krishnajipant looking at the preparation being made by Bhaskarrao Bhave thinks that he has to inform it to Mansion saheb. So he sent a servant Dattu to hand over a secret letter to Mansion. The treacherous men Banyabapu and Krishnajipant have rendered gunpowder dysfunctional by adulterine it with oil and millet. Both have eaten salt of Bhaskarrao but betrayed to him and escaped from the city.

Martanda, a Brahmin boy is loyal to his duty. Initially he delivered a letter of Nanasaheb Peshwa to Bhaskarrao. He is betrayed by revealing the secret. He informed Thomson that Babasaheb of Nargund will definitely wage a war on the company sarkar. He is waiting for the army of Nanasaheb Peshwa from North. He also informed to Mamledar Moreshwar that that there are nearly thirty golandaz., who have come from different places. Soldiers were practicing their art in the main place of Nargund. They have installed the newly brought cannon on the fortification of the palace and the rampant of the temple. They have brought the cannon from southern Karnataka. The officers of the Babasaheb have been buying huge quantities of rice and wheat for the soldiers of Nargund. Thus Martanda betrayed by revealing all secrets.

Naikar's play *A Dreamer of Freedom* reveals the different layers and aspects of loyalty and betrayal. The loyal and betrayal characters are opposite to each other in their intention. Though the play deals with the theme of loyalty and betrayal it is remarkable for the loyalty of many people.

Works Cited:

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