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Hegemony in “Vanara”

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Abstract

Anand Neelakantan is an Indian author, columnist, screenwriter, television personality and motivational speaker. He has authored eight fiction books in English and one in Malayalam. His debut work *Asura, The Tale of the Vanquished* is based on the Indian epics of Ramayana. His next book series, which includes “Ajaya – Roll of the Dice” and “Ajaya – Rise of Kali” are based on the epic Mahabharata and told from Kaurava perspective. Anand's books voice the suppressed party or the defeated party. His fifth book *Vanara*, the legend of Baali, Sugreeva and Tara also follow the same pattern of voicing the defeated side but has a strong voice for the underprivileged. Baali and Sugreeva – brothers, orphans – born in utter poverty and brought up as slaves. They belong to the ‘vananara’ tribe, the aborigines of the forest. The narrative starts exploring supremacy among siblings Baali and Sugreeva and develops into peer envy which has long been hatched for the hand of Tara. While the elder Baali is portrayed as valiant and credible his younger brother is crafty and secretive. We have ample instances of the so called Asura King Ravana's high-handed behaviour with the ‘vana-naras’ and was given back appropriately. The Deva Prince Rama on the other hand, nurtures the supremacy of Sugreeva over Baali by killing him hidden to make Sugreeva the King. Accidental occurrences feed fuel to the tragedy of Baali and the other characters slowly come out of the clutches of supremacy and oppression and have a different perspective towards life.

Keywords: race, civilization, suppression, supremacy, discrimination, hegemony, prejudice,.

Anand Neelakantan claims that he writes mythological novels. It is not in the truest sense as AnandNeelakantan writes in the very beginning of his books that he does not claim his writings to be based upon any religious sources. His escapes in the shadow that his are fictional stories and names and incidents might be coincidences. Even then, a reader who knows the stories of the epics spontaneously appreciates Neelakantan for the luxurious use of wit in his narratives. He is an adept in garnishing the entire scene with sarcastic expressions, though not very active at all times but lay hidden when the opposing characters meet. He chose his theme carefully. He got his audience right. He gave the mall. Anand Neelakantan's fifth book *Vanara*, the legend of Baali, Sugreeva and Tara is published by Penguin Random House and is a best seller. DAR films and KR movies have announced that they have won the film adoption rights and will be producing a multilingual film on *Vanara*.

The twin vanara brothers – Baali and Sugreeva belong to the forest. They were born poor and were raised as slaves, underwent all the hardships on earth to survive. Sandwiched between the everlasting wars between the Deva clan and the Asura clan, the vananaras lost