

A STUDY ON THE PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNAD AND VARIOUS SYMBOLS USED IN HIS PLAYS

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ABSTRACT

GirishRaghunath Karnad is regarded as one of the best dramatists in Indo Anglian literature, and is known for his adaptability. He is a cultural administrator, translator, critic, director, actor, poet, and dramatist, among other things. Karnad has received widespread appreciation for his complex portrayal of topics in his plays, which examine existential issues and the human condition. Karnad's use of a variety of dramatic devices adds to the innovative merging of Indian reason with western emotive culture in his plays. A careful examination of Karnad's emotional devices in his major plays reveals the playwright's elegant realism and inventiveness, and allows the reader to derive new meanings from the texts.

KEYWORDS: Literature, Human, Playwright, Cultural, Emotional

1. INTRODUCTION

All types of literature, such as theatre, fiction, and poetry, demonstrate the essence of living. Drama, which is essentially a community art, is possibly the most important genre of writing for gaining a thorough understanding of both the individual and the society. The origins of theatre in India can be traced back to the first century B.C.E. There are still Sanskrit drama documents from that time period. The Mahabhasya, written by Patanjali about the 4th century B.C., is a grammatical treatise that contains some of the first references to the evolution of Sanskrit play. Drama was once a part of everyday life in India, and was performed in the form of musical performances, dance, tableaux, and storytelling during festivals and special events. As a result, the many variants of it were employed by the upper echelon of modern society and persisted for many more seasons. The Persecuted: or possibly, Dramatic Scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindu Society in Calcutta, by Mohan Banerjee, was written in the nineteenth century and was a drama about the prevailing community methods and traditions in India (1831). Another reference point is Michael

MadhusudanDutt's play Is it Called Civilization (1871), which was written in Bengali and then translated into English. It is claimed that this play marked the beginning of Indian English drama in India.

Certain information on India's original, basic stage of theatre and play, as well as its evolution, is quite scarce. Though it is easy to argue that theatre started in India, as well as other cultures, through primordial magical, social, or religious rites, ritualistic dances, communal ceremonies, and festival celebrations. Old folk tales and ballads are thought to be types of oral tradition, and as they were passed down through the generations, they gradually acquired a distinctive shape.

GirishKarnad (1938) was among a group of post-independence playwrights who experimented with form in order to enhance the amazing strategy and then highlight the Indian sensibility. On the urban stage, Karnad honoured traditional ideals while exploring current subjects to portray contemporary society's

challenges. Folk norms such as masks, chorus, and spectacle, as well as the mingling of non-human and human worlds, provided him with the specialised independence to cater to the society's mental needs.

Karnad, who is now regarded as one of the most important writers in contemporary Indian theatre, has been writing plays based on mythology and history to address contemporary issues for the past four years. Karnad combines history with the present male challenge of estrangement, as well as the absurdity of the man predicament.

As a contemporary dramatist, Karnad uses motifs and symbols to portray his point of view. Contemporary English play, according to Jasbir Jain, "has had a number of interrupted periods of invention and visibility, as well as adopted itself to translated designs as well as recommendations passed from one culture to another" ("The Curious Journey" 25).

Karnad was born on May 19, 1938, in Matheran, a town near Bombay, to a family of Konkani Saraswat Brahmins from Mangalore. His adolescence was spent in a small village called Sirsi in Karnataka, where he had firsthand experience with the region's traditional folk theatre. This particular influence of the Yakshagana plays, which Karnad saw as a child, was crucial to his development as a playwright. In 1958, he graduated from Karnatak Arts College in Dharwad (Karnataka University) with a Bachelor of Arts in Statistics and Mathematics. Karnad earned his bachelor's degree in England and was a Rhodes Scholar at Magdalen and Lincoln colleges in Oxford, where he studied philosophy, political science, and economics (1960-63). In 1963, he returned to India and joined the Oxford Faculty Press in Madras. This

gave him the opportunity to read a wide range of publications both in India and overseas. This kind of impact left a permanent mark on his creative mind, and he rose to international prominence as a composer and translator of his plays into English. Priya Adarkar translated his first play, *Yayati*, into English, and then he translated it again after some time.

2. GIRISH KARNAD'S PLAYS: A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Girish Karnad is one of India's most well-known playwrights. He is a member of the Kannada theatre. Despite the fact that his plays are rooted in Indian mythology and history, they nevertheless express a good and recognisable Western philosophical sensibility. The contemporary male's existential crisis is communicated by prominent persons who are embroiled in intense mental and philosophical debates. Karnad has been accused of regressing into the past, according to Laxmi Chandrashekhar, a Kannada theatre academic. Nonetheless, the use of mythology in most contemporary literature validates and universalizes personal experience. In addition, I believe Karnad has been able to accomplish this.

Karnad's reputation as a dramatist was cemented with the release of *Yayati* in 1961 and, more importantly, *Tughlaq* in 1964. As a result, he released *Hayavadana* in 1971, *Angumalige* in 1977, *Hittina Hunja* in 1980, *Naga-Mandala* in 1988, *Tale-Danda* in 1990, and *Agni Mattu Male* in 1991. (1995). All eight of Karnad's plays were written in Kannada, and they have been translated into various Indian languages, including Hindi, the national language. *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, *Naga-Mandala*, *Tale-Danda*, and *The Fire and the Rain* are five of his plays that have been translated into English. The first three were published in India by Oxford University

Press, while the latter two were published by Ravi Dayal Publishers in New Delhi.

Karnad's debut play, *Yayati*, was written in 1961 and awarded the Mysore State Award in 1962. It's an existentialist take on the concept of duty design. It's based on a scene from the *Mahabharata* in which *Yayati*, one of the *Pandavas'* ancestors, is cursed with early ageing by his father-in-law, *Sukracharya*, who is enraged by *Yayati's* infidelity. If someone was willing to exchange their youth with *Yayati*, he might be able to break the curse. *Puru*, his son, is ultimately responsible for completing this task for his father. The drama addresses the crises that *Puru's* choice causes, as well as the dilemma that it creates for *Yayati*, *Puru*, and *Puru's* younger bride, *Positive Many Meanings*.

Dried-up bones of history resurface in the characters, and the pages, as well as the plot, are appropriately altered.

In 1972, Karnad got the *Bharatiya Natya Sangh's* *Kamaladevi* Award for his third play, *Hayavadana*. Its narrative is based on the *Katha Saritsagar* story, which was adopted by *Thomas Mann* in his short novel *The Transposed Heads*. It's a parody of the hunt for one's own identity on a planet rife with entanglements. *Kapila*, the 'male of body,' and *Devadatta*, the 'intellectual,' are exceedingly good friends. *Devadatta* marries *Padmini*, the town of *Dharampura's* most wonderful female. *Padmini* and *Kapila* develop feelings for each other. The two pals commit suicide. *Padmini* transposes their heads in an incredibly humorous moment with immense dramatic impact, supplying *Devadatta* *Kapila's* body and *Kapila* *Devadatta's!* It causes identity confusion, revealing the ambiguous essence of human disposition. The situation grows more difficult. They engage in a

duel and murder themselves once more. *Padmini* is a *Sati* practitioner. The play's storyline has a great humorous and sarcastic importance. The horseman's (*Hayavadana's*) quest for completion comes to a humorous and sorrowful conclusion. He develops into a complete horse, but the man's voice remains with him! *Vijaya Mehta* directed the performance in German, using the repertory of the *Deutsches Nationaltheater, Weimar*.

Naga Mandala by *Girish Karnad* is based on two Kannada folk stories that he learned from *A. K. Ramanujan*. It was directed by *Vijay Mehta* in German and was produced for the Festival of India in Germany in 1992 by the *Leipziger Schauspielhaus* in Berlin and Leipzig. As part of the thirtieth anniversary festivities of it's in 1993, it was performed at the Faculty Theatre in Chicago and then at the *Gutherie Theatre* in Minneapolis. *Naga-Mandala* was first published in Kannada and subsequently translated into English by *Karnad*. He claims *Naga Mandala* is based on two dental tales from Karnataka that I first read from *Prof. A. K. Ramanujan* a few years ago.

3. THE MARVELLOUS, THE MIRACULOUS AND THE UNCANNY IN THE PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNAD

The *Marvelous*, *Miraculous*, and *Uncanny* are commonly regarded as pixie happenings and events, or beautifully stated imaginative mind journeys produced by crude folks for their comfort despite perplexing conventional miracles. They do, however, point to the collective blind to humanity, as *Carl Jung* suggested. In truth, these concepts continue to have a substantial impact on our lives even as they are shaped by our lifestyles. They have a huge impact on our day-to-day lives. Our perceptions of wonderful and remarkable may

not necessarily imply the same thing, but they do reveal the more noticeable and unmistakably indicating true aspects of our lives. It's often argued that hypotheses require these concepts as much as these ideas require speculations, because if hypotheses enlighten the ideas, the ideas affirm the necessity to question speculations. Using various tools, a few controls have attempted to deconstruct the great, incomprehensible, and uncanny in order to find what it should be, a major motivator for it, how it works, and what its motivation is. These concepts are extremely constrained by the term myth. The components of the magnificent and extraordinary are said to resemble the components of myths in appearance. Here are a few examples that show how these notions are linked in a sympathetic way. E. B. Tylor, a pioneering English anthropologist, believes that myth and science are at odds. Myths, he claims, can't be branded incorrect or antiquated since they provide a personal purpose to ordinary events and cycles, as viewed by the myth-maker. There is vulnerability encompassing the meaning of myths since personal causes are neither predictable nor testable. It can also be consistent with the fantastic, phenomenal, and strange in this sense. Inexplicable does not necessarily imply unbelievable. On the other hand, it reflects a kind of reality that existed in our surrounding components. The words "magnificent" and "uncanny" are commonly used to describe things that are both inexplicable and nonexistent. However, it is far from the whole truth. If we take a quick glance, we will undoubtedly conclude that this is the situation. We suspected that many things were previously unfathomable to us, but that they are now within our grasp.

According to researcher Bronislaw Malinowsky, primitive people utilise myth to acclimate to

aspects of life that are beyond their control, such as natural disasters, maturing, and death. However, for Mircea Eliade, myth is not only an explanation, but also the traditional entertainment of a story that it conveys. As a result, the true purpose behind myth is experiential: the desire to experience heaven. "Myth so forms a compromise between the half of oneself that needs the appetites met inside and out and the side that would even not like to realise they exist," Sigmund Freud argues, as Robert A. Segal points out. Myth, according to Freud, has capacity because of its significance: myth releases oedipal desires by creating a story in which they are symbolically sanctioned. As Sigmund Freud put it, myth is experiential, and soothing the thoughts of wonderful and miraculous experiences is the same. They have a constant interaction between what is fake and what is real. The uncanny, according to Freud's description, "gets its horror not from something somewhat alien or mysterious but rather - surprisingly - from something weirdly identifiable which overcomes our efforts to distance ourselves from it" (Morris). Freud discusses how a writer can elicit an uncanny sensation in the reader by straddling the boundary between reality and illusion inside the genuine story. Todorov goes to some length in *The Fantastic* to distinguish his structuralist approach to dealing with this class from Freudian psychoanalysis; in any case, he shares many of Freud's decisions, particularly in ascribing artistic dread to the implosion of the clairvoyant limits of self and other, life and death, reality and illusion. Myths have always been a significant marvel in the world of literature. They are a never-ending source of inspiration for creative journalists. Myths, according to Jung, are expressions of the early stage pictures in the collective unconscious to man. First and foremost, man has experienced

certain encounters and has pictures of them in his memory. Because they are the most important images, they are referred to as models of aggregate obviousness.

4. **INDETERMINACY, INVISIBILITY, SILENCE AND ABSENCE IN THE PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNAD**

Karnad is a playwright who deals with existential issues. He is concerned about issues such as presence, the mission for equity, the search for personality, and detachment and disappointment. Humanism is declared the nobility of man by existentialism. Karnad creates a universe of people and explores their indeterminacy, invisibility, silence, and absence by presenting them in various situations. If we strip the characters down to their core, their interior quiet is strikingly transmitted. We sense their quiet, which most likely represents their assumptions. They are occasionally unable to make their own decisions. As a result, indeterminacy is a god-like component that appears in his various plays. These elements may be seen in almost all of the plays. In his plays, he uses myth, legend, and historical stories to portray present sociopolitical and social themes. In his plays, he addresses issues such as caste, heredity, religion, and sex. The characters describe their difficult lives in response to these contemporary challenges. It makes no difference whether the character is male or female. Both have internal strife, as well as differing tastes, assumptions, and judgments. We've obtained some information about whether fate is predetermined or determined by the character. Regardless, his heroes are actually restricted in poly-deliberate conditions in his plays. They go through a variety of conflicts and emotions. This is a sincere attempt to show how these people justify their indeterminacy, invisibility, silence, and absence in various

situations and incidents. Through a minor character named Bhagirathi, Tale-Danda emphasises the indeterminacy and silent fear.

"Bhagirathi: Why can't Basavanna see things in a different light? It's the same narrative in every Kalyan household. "Father vs. son vs. brother vs. brother"

Basavanna is chastised by Bhagirathi, Amba's next-door neighbour, for using his influence on children in Kalayan. Under Basavanna's influence, a growing number of young people are abandoning their castes and becoming Sharnas. Sharnas have faith in a caste-free society. It is a progressive way of thinking. Children have developed feelings of apathy and carelessness toward their caretakers. They have been ignoring their responsibilities to family members. As a result, each home in Kalayan has an uncomfortable impact and a lack of harmony. In each Kalyan family unit, genuine fights and disparities of assessment exist. This is the responsibility of Basavanna. Then, in a conversation with Jagdeva, Mallibomma reveals his suppressed anxiety and the lack of humanity in ostensibly upper-class society.

"Don't be silly, Mallibomma. I shouldn't have gone down this Brahmin Street in the first place. So you'd like me to come inside your home? "Thank you, but no."

Mallibomma is hesitant to take a stroll down Brahmin Street. How could he, an unapproachable individual, enter his home? These statements reveal the inextricable caste divide that exists in Indian culture. Individuals in society are unable to direct their own destiny. Their minds are filled with voids and thoughts of absence. This is a Brahmin household, Bhagirathi. Would you mind taking a step to the side to allow the women of the house to move

around freely? What are we going to do if you show up on our doorstep dressed like a mediaeval chieftain?"

Jagadeva reappears after a long absence. Mallibomma, a leather treater, joins him as well. He is well aware of his poor social status. As a result, he is cautious to saunter around the city, which is reserved for Brahmins. However, Jagadeva demands that he enter his home, and he is undecided about doing so. Both Jagadeva and Mallibomma have abandoned their castes to become Sharanas, academics in a casteless society and Lord Shiva's followers. Bhagirathi protests to Mallibomma's admittance because it is a Brahmin's home. She begs that he take a step back so that the women of the house can move freely and run various family errands. They won't be able to do anything if Mallibomma sits steadfastly at the door like a feudal monarch. Amba asks Mallibomma to accompany her into the house since her son Jagadeva will not enter until he sees him inside. After he leaves, her house will most likely be purified. At the underlying level, Rambhavati claims that Basavanna is determined, but she does not believe he is deceitful. She takes a different stance at that point, while conversing with King Bijjala. The King's misbehaviour irritates her. To control Basavanna, she is extremely evasive. She tells King Bijjala that his foolish and outrageous infatuation for Basavanna has perplexed her.

"Rambhavati: I'm perplexed by your obsession with that individual. Instead of tarring his face in public, he mocks your son in front of the world, and you let him into the inner chamber?"

Basavanna is named by King Bijjala as the reason for his departure from the court. On a regular happy day, he is rarely seen. The rumour

of a tense relationship between the King and the Treasurer is making the rounds. The King informs him that he has produced and sung tunes critical of his monarchy in Sharana meetings. After all of this, he hasn't reprimanded him or demanded that he hand over the keys. Basavanna now has to answer to the King. To be honest, Basavanna is aware of the meaning behind his activities, while others are in a state of invisibility. In the subsequent talk, he makes an attempt to clarify it.

"Basavanna: Sir, I trust my position is clear. I work in the Treasury not to please the King, but because the wealth belongs to the people, and the King has a right to it. However, no other member of the royal family is permitted to see it."

Basavanna, who values trust the greatest, is offended and responds that he acknowledged the Treasurer's office for failing to please the King. His sense of civic responsibility compelled him to visit the Treasurer's office. Individuals can benefit from the Royal Treasury's wealth. It cannot be used for the renowned family's personal expenses. The King is the overseer of Treasury and, as such, has a privilege over it, as the gatekeeper of individuals. No other member of the Royal family is authorised to enter or study it. All things considered, it becomes clearly evident to all others. Basavanna is adamant that the title of Yuvraj comes with responsibilities. Yuvraj is a term that implies that its conveyor should be capable of releasing specific tasks. It could also be an undetected item for members of the general public and the distinguished family. The enigma is solved in the meantime. Appanna, her true husband, discovers that Rani is expecting a child. He becomes outraged as a result of this. He is perplexed, to say the least. Currently, he requires

the services of the town's senior citizens to serve as judges. The concept of "taking ordeal" is reminiscent of a dream in this context. Rani's response at the halfway point is heartbreaking: "Why are you embarrassing me like this?" Why are you exposing me in front of the entire village? Why don't you just murder me? I would have committed suicide. But there isn't a single rope for me to utilise in this house."

Fantasy isn't just about fantastical events. Strangeness and discrepancy may be associated with dreams. The way Appanna interacts with Rani gives the character a sense of invisibility, stillness, and absence. Elderly residents of the town sit in judgement. The town's traditional test has been to make a commitment while holding a blazing hot iron in one hand or immersing one's palm in bubbling oil. In any event, Rani, as a Naga educated woman, insists on relying on the King Cobra. Every one of these items is absurd and strange, thus they all have these elements. Rani dashes over to the ant colony, dives into it, and pulls the Cobra out. "Yes, my spouse, and this King Cobra," I say. I haven't touched any of the male sex except these two. I've also never let another man touch me. Let the Cobra bite me if I lie."

From here on out, everything is a dream. The Cobra is currently sliding up her shoulders and spreading its hood over her head like an umbrella. The elders in the community exclaim that it is a miracle and that Rani is not a woman but a divine being known as a Goddess. They tumble to the ground at her feet. The crowd rushes forward to prostrate themselves in front of her. Appanna is completely perplexed. "Palanquin! Music!" shout the seniors. They put her in the cart by lifting her up. Appanna is located next to her at that time, as an afterthought. The couple is paraded to their

residence. Our country's ambition is for women to be regarded as either Goddesses or second-class citizens. Naga, who has brought Rani all of her happiness and greatness, needs to look inside her. As a result, Naga enters Rani's chamber. Rani is snoozing close to her partner, her head resting on his shoulder, and her child nearby. There's a big grin on everyone's face. Naga looks around the crowd and covers his face with his hands, as if he can't bear watching the spectacle. Naga's extensive dialogue on page 61 demonstrates the component of quiet and absence, in which Naga's intellect muse about numerous topics: "Rani! My queen! It's the scent of my nights! My dreams have come true! What are you doing in another man's bed?... No. This is unbearable for me. Someone has to perish. Someone must perish. Why should I not murder her? If I sink my fangs into her breast right now, she'll be mine forever.... No, I'm afraid I won't be able to. This King Cobra has devolved into a grass snake. I thought I could transform into a human from an ordinary reptile.... No! Her thighs, bosom, and lips belong to a guy who will always be a man. Every season, I shed my own skin. How could I possibly hope to keep my human form?... For the last time, I'll summon my magical abilities to grow to the size of her tresses. To becoming so skinny, so small that I may hide in them, play with them, and swim away in their murky flow....." ¶

The entire talk, which may be described as monologue, is energetic and relieves the stressed situation, at least in Naga's universe. Naga becomes envious as a person at the outset of the discussion. Likewise, he considers assassinating Rani. In any event, his demeanour shifts dramatically. Naga does not believe he is suitable for Rani. In general, as an observer, you may find all of these things incredible, because a reptile can think wonderfully while a genuine

individual acts like a reptile. Naga finally twists a braid of Rani's hair into a noose and places it around his neck, chokes himself, and a dead Cobra tumbles to the ground when Rani brushes her hair. Despite everything, Rani need the creation of the Cobra. The element of imagination reappears once more.

5. CONCLUSION

Girish Karnad is regarded as one of India's leading lights in the New Drama. Across the board, he is a filmmaker, an entertainer, a TV personality, and a playwright. This adaptability can be seen in the way he arranges plays. The play Hayavadana is a strange story that takes place in a magical and mythological universe. The truth is suspended, and the audience is expected to demonstrate their readiness to accept some far-fetched scenarios in order to appreciate the story. Thomas Mann has offered further counterfeit valiant dimensions in his form *The Transposed Heads* from which Karnad takes the subject from the myth of Hayavadana contained in *KathasaritaSagar*. According to him, man should strive to achieve body-mind unity within the natural cutoff points imposed by Nature. Despite its intricacies, Indian and Western audiences alike admire the play. Each read shows the many layers of life, its value, and ethics. The drama deals with a wide range of human emotions. It contains a plethora of positive notions. We are constantly preoccupied with meeting our common desires while keeping our internal eyes closed. We've never understood why satisfaction doesn't reduce the desire to finish anything. Satisfaction is, by all accounts, the goal of any surviving goals, yet the great majority seek happiness in a roundabout way.

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