



Thematic Study of the Selected Plays of Girish Karnad

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Abstract

Karnad is troubled by the contemporary man's existence, which he sees as too complicated and incomplete. The use of folktales is meant to draw attention to the absurdity of a and conflicts in today's world. As a result of the influence of western ideologies and systems of knowledge that take a multifaceted approach to human behavior, folk stories are being repurposed as vehicles for contemporary life. His view on the present is colored existentialism, reflective of a sea shift in how contemporary man thinks about the meaning of human existence and where it came from the postmodern practice of boundary dissolution has resulted in a universal humanity that bridges all civilizations. In the light bulb moment of confronting the other, European ethnocentrism was displaced. Similarly, the a priori delimitation of knowledge was reflected in the epistemic discourse of the Orient, with the Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948 proposing a split between the study of "facts" (nature and the physical world) and "events" (society and human values). The purpose of the research study named "Myth, Folk - lore and Reality in the plays of Girish Karnad" is to analyze the presence of myths in a few of Karnad's plays. It has five distinct sections. The "Introduction" chapter lays out the fundamentals of drama and Girish Karnad's impact on western playwrights. The field of Indian English drama didn't catch up to the others until the 1970s. Due to the absence of a "live theater" and "live audience," this situation has arisen.

Keywords: theme, technique, folk theatre, style

Introduction

Each piece explores a different challenge facing contemporary man. The connection between Yayati and Puru in Yayati is a metaphor for the dynamic between every father and son, in which the former expects the latter to make sacrifices for him and the latter's offspring pay the price. Our culture includes both the Rani of Nagamandala and Padmini of Hayavadana. They're disadvantaged by male chauvinism and rigid, unyielding societal norms like marriage. Because they did not challenge conventional gender roles, contemporary Indian women have become helpless victims. People are hurt whether they follow or break these norms of society. Current Indian leaders, like Muhammad Tughlaq in Tughlaq and King Bijjala in

Jaledanda, are alluding to in both poems. They are atheists who worship power rather than any higher power. They constantly have a mask on, and it varies with the circumstances. The fire and the rain are metaphors for the social and political issues that worry us. Political hypocrisy takes on the form of religious double standards. Karnad is deeply troubled by the contemporary man's existential predicament. The complexities of human interactions are at the heart of his heroes' pain.

This intricacy is amplified by the presence of socioreligious organizations. Characters in Karnad's work suffer from alienation because of the complex webs of connections in which they find themselves. They are always working to

stop their own personal isolation, but most of the time they are unsuccessful. Love and sex play a little role in their friendship. These universal drives can't be stopped by anything, not even strong religious convictions, rigid societal norms, or a wall of emotion. Karnad's plays have conflict that is not the classic kind, such as that between good and evil or vice and virtue or the individual and society. It's more of a mental than a bodily issue. The battle in *tughlaq* is not between the ideal and the actual, as in *yayati*, but between illusion and reality. The tension in *Hayavadana* is between the whole and the unfinished, making it a very distinct kind of storyline.

In *Nagamandala*, the play's protagonists engage in a power struggle between patriarchal and matriarchal perspectives. Just as the holy and the secular constantly swing back and forth in stories, so do orthodoxy and heterodoxy, wreaking havoc on the lives of people who stand in for society at large. Karnad's respect for history is not limited to traditional subject matter. His connection to heritage shows through in his approach to technique as well. The modern world takes its shape from mythology. He must, as a contemporary writer, navigate a dramatic form characterized by characterisation, arrangement of occurrences, and dramatic tension in order to exploit the incommensurable and incomprehensible.

The use of folklore highlights the irony of contemporary life with its basic drives and tensions. As a result of the influence of western ideologies and systems of knowledge that take a multifaceted approach to human behavior, folk stories are being repurposed as vehicles for contemporary life. This shift in contemporary man's perspective on human existence and its genesis is indicative of the influence of Marxism, Freudianism, and existentialism. It separates man from his metaphysical roots, calling into question the spiritual and moral ideals that restrain individual liberty. In this scenario, man is shown as a member of a human community who interacts and engages with other people. These contemporary ideas are shown to function inside the beliefs and philosophies that form the type of son relationships in Girish Karnad. It seems as if all the main characters suffer from existential

alienation, which leads them to behave violently and cruelly, and that their belief in god and religion is only a symptom of their hopelessness and neurosis. Karnad's past is a reflection of the present in terms of politics, religion, and society.

This intricacy is heightened by the Creative Commons Attribution License, which allows religious organizations to use the work. Characters in Karnad's work suffer from alienation because of the complex webs of interactions in which they find themselves and others. They are always working to stop their own personal isolation, but most of the time they are unsuccessful. Love and sex play a little role in their friendship. These fundamental drives are unaffected by any barriers thrown up by one's religious or moral convictions, one's societal or cultural norms, or one's own emotional blocks. Karnad's plays have conflict, although it is not the classic kind, such as that between good and evil or vice and virtue or the he society. It's more of a mental than a bodily issue.

The battle in *tughlaq* is not between the ideal and the actual, as in *yayati*, but between illusion and reality. *Hayavadana*'s storyline is unique since the conflict is unresolved and the story isn't fully formed. In *Nagamandala*, the play's protagonists engage in a power struggle between patriarchal and matriarchal perspectives. *Tale-danda* is a kind of storytelling in which orthodoxy and heterodoxy both wreak havoc on the lives of characters standing in for the social forces of the moment. There is a constant back-and-forth between the holy and profane in the Karnad's treatment of both fire and rain. His connection to heritage shows through in his approach to technique as well.

He draws the contours of modern life on the legendary canvas. He must, as a contemporary writer, navigate a dramatic form characterized by characterisation, arrangement of occurrences, and dramatic tension in order to exploit the incommensurable and incomprehensible. Current Research: An International Journal Current International Research Journal, article. For the purpose of forming the required shape, he investigates

tools from both his own country and the Western world. He takes risks by combining traditional and classical instruments. sutradhara (or bhagavata) of the supernatural elements combines with contemporary tools like light and sound to create an immersive theatrical experience. His use of non-conventional methods brings him closer to traditional Karnataka theatre at times, and closer to Brecht when he breaks the theatrical illusion by appealing more to logic than to passion. Karnad, with his use of prologue and epilogue, is reminiscent of contemporary playwrights such as Bernard Shaw. In Nagamandala's opening prologue, we see a man who is 'involuntarily' yawning while sitting alone in a temple.

Upon taking the stage, he addresses the crowd by saying, "I may be dead within the next few hours." Then, after a moment, he says, "Actually dead." I may pass away right in front of your eyes. Flames from the hamlet join him in the temple after he has sat in the gloom for a while. They tell each other tales about their families, setting the stage for the separation that will soon follow. The flames are mentioned briefly in the prologue, but they end up playing a significant part in the plot. The fire and the rain's prologue does more than just set the stage for the play's major events.

Re-Inventing Tradition Plays

Because of the wide range of characters and cultural settings in GirishKarnad's plays, the idea to use them to illustrate the concept of "humanities across cultures" came to me almost immediately. The idea for this paper, "re-inventing tradition," comes from the fact that most of his plays have several parts, of which "tradition" is the essence. The label "reinventing tradition" is appropriate given that Karnad sought to breathe new life into time-honored characters in his plays. His debut play, *Yahati* (1961), written neither in English nor in his native Konkani, yet vividly explores this issue. The play's popularity led to its translation into and staging in a number of other Indian languages; it told the stories of mythological figures from the Mahabharata, one of the ancient traditions and civilizations. By the time the National School of Drama staged Karnad's

Tughlaq, a gripping allegory on the Nehruvian period, he had already established himself as one of the country's most promising playwrights, fueling thoughts on traditional culture and, by extension, intrinsic humanity.

If myths can show how different societies are similar in fundamental ways, then Karnad has made excellent use of mythical and folkloric themes. References to Vedic literature, songs, dances, musical instruments, and the people who perform them appear often in his plays. Thus, ballads or simple tale telling, which functioned as customary riches, met the majority of the needs of the earliest theatrical forms.

Myth, Folklore and Reality In The Plays

The development of Indian English theatre is the subject here. There are significant differences between classical and European drama and modern Indian drama. Its conceptual and technical aspects are those of an experiment. While not directly deriving from any other theatrical movement, it has nevertheless established a new paradigm in the annals of international theatre by its re-examination of the past through the lens of present-day social and political concerns.

Myth And Reality in The Plays

India is often referred to as the Land of Myths because of its seemingly endless supply of Gods and Goddesses. Evidence from across time, space, religion, and dynasties shows that Indians have always yearned for the cultural benefits of stories and mythology. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, two famous Indian epics, have impacted the inclusion of mythological elements in Indian writing. Myth, in the opinion of G.S. Kerk, "appears to possess essential properties like their fantasy, freedom to develop, and complex structure." "Myth is primarily a certain kind of story," argues Northrop Frye. Myths feature events that can only occur in fiction; they exist in their own literary universe.

Traditional myths are stories that have been told from one generation to the next. Many of the stories from mythology have been adapted from other works of fiction. It's incredible how the Indian authors have turned seemingly little

details into key story points. Author Girish Karnad fits this description. Girish Karnad is regarded as India's preeminent playwright because of his efforts to revive India's ancient myths, traditions, and cultures by returning to their origins. Modern civilization is reflected in Girish Karnad's retelling of an old fable. It's important to recognize that he draws on myth not just for the good but also for the bad. His plays *Hayavadana*, *The Fire and the Rain*, and *Nagmandala* all include overt mythological allusions.

The central storyline of *Hayavadana* is based on an old Indian text called *Vetalpanchavimsati*, which is a part of *Somadeva's Kathasarithsagar*. It contains 25 tales about King Vikrama and his wife, *Vetala*. *Vetala* challenges the king to answer a mystery at the conclusion of each of these tales. Similar to *Hayavadana*, Thomas Mann's short fiction "*Transposed Heads*" deals with the dilemma of mistaken identity. Although "*Vetalpanchavimsati*" (India) advocates idealism, "*Transposed Heads*" (Germany) advocates materialism. Karnad, well aware of the poles between which these choices place us, seems to provide a humanist middle ground in *Hayavadana*.

Philosophical theory in the plays

In Europe, philosophical theory became a major movement following World War I. It's a defining trait of the modernist aesthetic. The cultural, intellectual, political, and social factors of the time all had a role in its formation. As a result of the devastation wrought by the two world wars, these groups were able to rise to prominence. In the West, people were starting to see no point in living since nothing seemed to matter. The current era is a "true glorification of Scientism," as seen by the prevalence of "angst" reminiscent of Kafka, "horror" reminiscent of Kurt, "despair" reminiscent of Sisyphus, and "defiance" reminiscent of Prometheus. Almost all contemporary existentialists show sympathy for the plight of man, who suffers from feelings of worry, despair, alienation, rootlessness, loneliness, hopelessness, wrath, and protest. In the modern day, man has lost any sense of "self" and connection to the material world.

Kafka's *The Castle* and Albert Camus's *The Stranger* both show man as an alien in his own

world, one who is helpless and alienated from his own culture and civilization. His outlook on life mirrors that of the characters in the "*Theatre of the Absurd*," which is characterized by a sense of fatalistic gloom and tragic isolation. Plays and books by Camus, Dostoevsky, Kafka, and Sartre all effectively portray this perspective. Norman Mailer, Ernest Hemingway, Iris Murdoch, Thomas Hardy, Graham Greene, Leo Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Harold Pinter, Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, T. S. Eliot, Pleneric Ibsen, Jean Anouilh, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and many other contemporary writers have also touched on existential themes. Notable Indian authors such as Sri Aurobindo, R. K. Narayan, Rabindranath Tagore, Arundhati Roy, K. N. Daruwallah, Nisim Ezekiel, Girish Karnad, and Asif Currimbhoy have depicted the struggle and dilemma of man in their works, revealing their own existential worries.

Many awards have been bestowed to Girish Karnad, who has worked as a director, playwright, scholar, screenwriter, and actor. Awards such as the Padma Shri (1974), Sangeet Natak Academy Award (1972), the Kamladevi Award (1971), and the State Award for *Yayati* (1961) are among his many honors. He also won the Sahitya Academy Award (1994), the Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award (1993), the President's Award for Excellence in Direction, and the Sangeet Natak Academy Award (1993). His plays were originally written in Kannada and he translated some of them into English. In three of his plays—*Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1972), and *Hayavadana* (1975)—the influence of Existential philosophy is particularly clear.

Conclusion

The study's overarching goal is to investigate these difficulties and demonstrate that the playwright is a talented native Indian who successfully indianized the literary genre of drama. This dissertation's last chapter, chapter six, provides a concise summary of the dissertation's core points and closes with some recommendations for further research in the field. An up-to-date list of references may be found in the appendices. Karnad has made it very clear that, for imperfect and ravenous humans, the wisest course of action is to find

common ground with oneself and one's surroundings. Because most people's attempts towards wholeness and perfection either fail miserably or wind up being hilariously absurd. Complete reliance on God is fruitless. What Karnad hopes to convey via these plays is that man should aid himself. Like Padmini and, eventually, Hayavadana, the characters in 'Hayavadana' look to God for answers to their troubles, only to have their confusion about who they are deepened by their reliance on the supreme being. In a similar vein, "The Fire and The Rain" serves as a warning tale about the abuse of divinely bestowed abilities. Knowledge without judgment may be very dangerous, as Karnad explains. The dreadful irony of vengeance's marvelous craft. The Rani case is a perfect example of a mythological Indian. While it is true that in mythology Naga takes on the form of Apanna, during Rani's virginity test he abandons her and goes out on his own, reflecting the traditional male perspective that women should not be subjected to such tests. Thus, Girish Karnad aims to demonstrate the impact of mythology on human culture via these plays.

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