

History Myths and Society in Girish Karnad's Plays: A Study

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Abstract

*Girish Karnad is well known modern Indian Playwright and is considered one of the foremost outstanding practitioners of the humanistic discipline. He had acted in movies, directed and produced movies, documentaries, and TVserials in Kannada, Hindi, and English. This dissertation may be a modest plan to study Girish Karnad as a contemporary Indian Dramatist. Girish Karnad is one of the fashionable playwrights who experimented with drama and created a replacement wave to Indian drama history. He is not only a Kannada playwright but also an acclaimed Indian writer who had a distinctive voice in the literary scenario. Karnad is additionally noted for his bold and courageous stand against the right-wing politics of India. He is a writer who travels beyond the boundaries of Karnataka, India, and abroad which created an exclusive space for Indian drama. He had an intellectual clarity of what is going to work or his purpose about the theme and sort of each play. This clarity made his plays popular both in India and abroad. Girish Karnad, being an ambitious person always had a thoughtful mind about literature and drama. He was fascinated by history, particularly Indian history which resulted in his most original historical plays *Tuglaq*, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, and*

*Tale Danda. On the other hand, he explored the realm of History, society, and myths which produced beautiful mythical plays include *Yayati*, *Hayavadana*, *Nagamandala*, and *Broken mirrors*.*

Keyword: History, Myth, Society

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historical plays Tuglaq, The Dreams of Tipu Sultan, and Tale Danda. On the other hand, he explored the realm of Folk and myths which produced beautiful mythical plays include Yayati, Hayavadana, Nagamandala, and Broken mirrors.

In this paper, the main objective is to find out the prominent aspects of the mythical plays of Girish Karnad—specifically on Hayavadana and Nagamandala. These plays are often taken as an ideal example for people Theatre."Sheelita das, who may be a scholar in her paper "Folk Theatre –Its relevance in Development Communication in India "describes the concept of folks Culture in a precise manner. It is as follows: Folk Theatre may be a composite kind in India with a fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic and ballad recitation, graphic and plastic arts, religion, and festival peasantry. Besides providing mass entertainment, it helps Indian society as indigenous tools of interpersonal, inter-group, and inter-village communication for ages. Folk theatre has been used extensively in India to propagate critical social, political, and cultural issues within the sort of theatrical messages to make awareness among the people. As an indigenous form, it breaks all kinds of formal barriers of human communication and appeals directly to the people (Das,3).

Before I go to the plays which I am going to discuss in this paper, it is better to understand the fondness of Karnad over Folk Theatre. He was both a playwright and a movie maker. He used the weather of folks not only in Drama but also in

Films. The film, Cheluvi is one of the hits of Karnad which is actually upon on a tale called "The Flowering Tree" which is based on a folk tale collected by A.K.Ramanjuam. It is reflected his love and interest in the folk culture. Karnad's plays also are strongly endowed with these principles of folks Theatre. For this, Karnad creates a plot that is so original and attached to the everyday life of rural people. The story roots of both Nagamandala and Hayavadana evolve from the folk's tales. The main plot of Hayavadana which Karnad used for the play is taken from a German folk tale called "Transposed Heads" By Mann ." the first source of "Transposed Heads" lies within the Sanskrit Vetala Panchavimsathi, 25 stories about king Vikrama and Vetala, the Goblin, which forms a part of Kshemendra's Brihat Katha Manjari and Somadeva's Kathasarit"(Ramani,257). Karnad combines the transposed heads plot with Hayavadana's story which is entirely his own. This added part is important because the play gets the title from it. Hayavadana story tells the story of a man with the head of a horse (Haya = Horse, Vadana= Face). Hayavadana's problem is the way to get obviates the horse's head. He goes to Kali temple and threatens to cut off his head. He falls at her feet and says 'Mother, make me complete'. She says, 'so be it' and disappears. This motif establishes a strong link between the Hayavadana story and the transposed head plot. In response to Hayavadana's prayer, make me complete, the goddess makes him a complete horse, not a complete man. And in addition to this Hayavadana still retains his human voice. Now Hayavadana becomes a complete horse. It also brings a

tremendous transformation in the very abnormal boy who has forgotten how to laugh.

Here is a story inside the play which is about Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini. Devadatta may be well-bred Brahmin intellectual and his ally Kapila, who is black and a hard worker. Padmini is that the wife of Devadatta. Once, the three of them were during a journey to Ujjaini, where Devadatta acknowledged that Padmini had a desire towards Kapila. He was so sad and decided to leave the place and reach near a Kali temple. At that point, Devadatta is reminded of his old promise that if he marries Padmini, he will offer his head and sneaks away to chop off his head. Kapila goes to seem for him, and upon discovering Devadatta's headless body is struck with grief. He decides to chop off his head too. The poor pregnant Padmini who went in search of them found their bodies and heads separate. With her prayers, Kali appeared again and asked Padmini to put the heads correct to their bodies. Padmini, in her excitement, accidentally switches the 2 heads when she replaces them. The two men are revived: one with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body, and therefore the other with Kapila's head and Devadatta's body, and thus the play takes up twists and ends up strangely.

Nagamandala, on the other hand, is based on two folk tales from Karnataka where Karnad collected from A.K.Ramanujan. He was also considerably influenced by the long speech of Anouilh, the French dramatist who supported the mythical idea of snake, naga. The play has multiple endings and this play is more

romantic and poetic than Hayavadana. In this play, like Hayavadana, there are three major characters, Appanna, Rani, and Naga. Rani is married to Appanna and he ill-treats her every day and locks up in the house the whole day. But when the root was added to curry, it turned to blood-red color, and scared of that, Rani spilled the curry in a nearby anthill, and a cobra drinks it. Naga develops love towards Rani and naga, taking the form of Appannabegan to visit her they share their love. He made her take ordeal to show her fault. Rani took the snake ordeal and Naga did not bite her.

Karnad may be a Sanskrit scholar who knows Puranas alright and he has the gorgeous power to merge it with the folk tradition. He never sticks on to the elitist Marga tradition in which Sanskrit Puranas take hold, but often deploys forms borrowed from folk traditions that constitute Desi tradition. He secularizes and makes the tightly bound Sankritpuranas to the down root level which makes the plays, especially Hayavadana and Nagamandala to move more interlinear to human beings. He breaks down the complex molecules of elite concepts of Puranas into simple ones. For this breaking down process, he uses Folk Theatre. Desi tradition and the myths are innate and indigenous to the people and thus help people to grasp ideas easier. He could achieve this equality only through Folk Theatre and Desi tradition.

In Nagamandala, the naga is a mythical symbol that is taken as semi-divine and deity power by the people which is that the quiet myth that is around

the society. Karnad twists this symbol by bringing romance to the naga and giving the god-like symbol, and human touch. This is the realism that is interweaved inside the myth. So, there is a disjunction between myth and creativeness of the playwright which Manu Chakravathy, a famous literary critic of Karnad in a speech labels as "creative disjunction". So, when this sort of disjunction occurs, the myth will evolve and develops from static to dynamic. Here, here happens the entire reversal of the constructed notion of God-human relationship. But here, Karnad is upholding humanness over godliness which shakes the religious concepts and challenges them. Only by using myths, this can be executed very well and Karnad used it wisely.

In Hayavadana, there is the character of Kali who is liberated from the tight bonds of Sanskrit Puranas. She isn't in the least bothered about devotees and their promises. This is also a shift from the normal idea of God.

She was a sort of a play played through her Father, Appannaand, therefore, the society. It is only through the relationship with Naga, she enters the realm of pleasure, happiness, and dignity. Even though it happened without the knowledge of Rani, she was ready to break the barriers of patriarchy. This play is often read as a feministic play that brings

the brave woman out of the play. Padmini, on the other hand, was a woman who courageously went out in quest of her love. Karnad and his plays are always mesmerizing people throughout the world and he made a distinctive voice in each of his plays.

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