

Postcolonial Conundrum in the Plays of Girish Karnad

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Abstract

Whenever we depict the new generation Play essayist Girish Karnad envisions us the social realities of our general public, we are reminded of his work. This paper contributes to the study of Karnad's plays from the standpoint of Themes and Techniques. The focus will be mostly on the Man-Woman connection and the grounds for differing points of view regarding the foundation of marriage in postcolonial society. We all know that Karnad is India's best living writer, whose journey from *Yayati* to *Boiled Beans on Toast* reflects the actual development of a truly "Indian Theater" that can be precise in its methods while also being open to contemporary issues.

Keywords: Postcolonial Issues, Girish Karnad, Post colonialism.

1. Introduction

Girish Karnad's rise to prominence as a playwright in the 1960s signalled the beginning of modern Indian playwriting in Kannada, much like in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, and Mohan Rakesh in Hindi. He was the recipient of the Jnanpith Award in 1998, India's highest scholarly accolade. Karnad has been writing plays for a long time, typically using history and mythology to address modern themes. He has received acclaim for his English translations of his plays. Girish Karnad is one of the most captivating playwrights in recent memory, and his plays have become a metaphor for the creative mind, growth, and craftsmanship. He was honoured with the Padma Bhushan and the prestigious Jnanapith Award. He was also honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award. Girish Karnad wanted to be a writer, but he had no choice but to become a dramatist. Karnad has a special relationship with Kannada theatre. Since the 1980s, significant progress has been made in the field of dramatisation. Furthermore, with the emergence of producers such as Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sarkar, and a few others on the scene, shows created in English in India have begun to gain international acclaim. This article offers observations on the topical and specialist aspects of Girish Karnad's plays. Based on this concept, a brief list of Karnad dramas is provided below.

1.1. *Yayati*:

It is Karnad's primary play, released in 1961. It decodes as an old fantasy from the 'Mahabharatha' set in the contemporary day. It's an existentialist take on the subject of responsibility. The plot revolves around the character of *Yayati*, "a young ruler who is loathed for his advanced age, and he avoids asking people, "Will you take my advanced age?" "Are you willing to accept my elderly age?" Except for his own child, *Puru*, no one acknowledges him. Finally, "the child matures dramatically, and the father regains his youth." *Yayati* found joy in a variety of places, but he is generally dissatisfied and is constantly on the lookout for new pleasures and satisfactions. He conflates fleeting common pleasures with long-term fulfillment, and he is always thinking about how to obtain them. Karnad deciphers an old theme in a modern context. The average individual today, like *Yayati*, is engulfed in the murkiness of material and erotic pleasures. He wakes up in a world where the old profound traits have all but vanished, leaving only the new otherworldly qualities to be discovered. Regular experts were surprised and irritated by Karnad's translation of the old dream about the trading of ages between father and child, but edified readers and pundits owed him a debt

of gratitude for its advancement. It was originally written in Kannada but has since been translated into English.

1.2. Tughlaq:

It was released in 1972 and is Girish Karnad's second play. It was also composed in Kannada, his native language, and afterwards transferred to English without the assistance of anybody else. To be honest, this drama is enough to ensure Girish Karnad a place among the Indo-Anglian playwrights. It is a play on the life and political career of the fourteenth-century Indian Sultan Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq. When it comes to producing artistic and emotional effects, Karnad deviates from history. The central theme of Karnad's film is to highlight the discrepancies in Sultan's perplexing character, who is both visionary and doer, dedicated and suspicious, liberal and ruthless, human and brutal. Barni, the intellectual antiquarian, and Najib, the pragmatic congressman, Tughlaq's neighbours, discuss two aspects of Tughlaq's personality. Aziz and Azam are two hard workers who take advantage of Tughlaq's ideal governmental difficulties to deceive him. Tughlaq has a sense of timelessness. It represents, maybe more than any other drama, the political state of befuddlement that followed the Nehru era of optimism in the country. This drama is notable for its polished and flawless skill, precision and conservatism, incongruity and weirdness, imagery and innovation, and incongruity and oddity. The cerebral profundity and intensity of the Tughlaq's personality have been defined. It has been translated into a variety of dialects.

1.3. Hayavadana:

Hayavadana is Girish Karnad's third and most effective dramatisation, published in 1975. It is a masterful presentation of the topic of the yearning for completion. The play's main premise is a good blend of a folktale from Somadeva's Kathasaristgara and Thomas Mann's long short story The Transposed Head. The Horse-Headman, a subplot in the play 'Hayavadana,' is Karnad's own creation. It functions as both a preamble and a conclusion to the play. Devadatta, a perceptive youngster, and Kapila, a tough man, make good friends. Kapila acts as a go-between for Devadatta and assists him in defacing Padmini. Padmini is drawn to Kapila after their marriage, which becomes undeniable during their trip to the Ujjain fair. Devadatta, unable to stand it any longer, removes his head. Kapila, who is astonished, succumbs to the same fate. Padmini's desire to reclaim the two men is granted by Goddess Kali. Padmini translates the two heads in her zeal. So she has a man with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body, as well as another man with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body. Padmini makes the decision to live with the person who is transporting Devadatta's head. She goes to the next man with Kapila's head a little time later. Both men fight and murder each other. Padmini surrenders 'Sati,' leaving her kid in the care of Devadatta's father at Dharma pura. The subplot is hilarious and has a surprising importance. The horseman's search for completion comes to a funny conclusion. He transforms into a whole pony. Girish Karnad, who is well-versed in both contemporary and historical dramatization, has used both Western and Indian dramatic tactics in this play.

2. Naga-Mandala

In 1990, Naga-Mandala was released. It was originally written in Kannada, but the author eventually translated it into English. It is crucial to note that the play's title is based on a snake-Naga Rani, the brave woman of the play who is shamed and condemned as a "prostitute" in front of the town elders, embraces the "Snake Ordeal," much like Sita who goes through the "Fire Ordeal," and emerges sound. She is nurtured in heavenly nature and is revered as a goddess by all. Appanna, her significant other, is aware of his errors and acknowledges her with all modesty and feelings of sincere remorse and penance. It's more of a people's play, a buddy piece, and a spin-off of Hayavadana than a work of remarkable invention. Naga-Mandala is a simple but satisfying novel that praises exotic nature through the eyes of a lady. The use of chorale and music are both respectable aspects of this presentation. All of the melodies throughout the play

are sung by the blazes. The blazes are likenesses of the town's females who gathered at the time to tell stories and sing tunes.

3. **Tale-Danda**

It's a Kannada drama that the screenwriter himself distributed in English in 1990. It examines Veer shivism a form of severe dissent and change growth in Karnataka during the twelfth century. It's an emotional depiction of the unwelcome problems posed by the Hindu narrative of the birth of the varnas. Karnad defies the varna narrative by making Bijjala, a Shudra and a stylist by rank, the lord of Kalyan. It is set against the backdrop of the Mandir-Mandal conflict, and the dramatization draws parallels between today's socio-religious, political, and economic states and Southern India in the twelfth century A.D.b

4. **The Fire and the Rain**

It is Girish Karnad's sixth successful show, released in 1998. It's a trans-production of Girish Karnad's Kannada play 'Agni Mattu Male.' In Karnad's emotional production, the viewer can see a support progression. It is based on mythology, for which the playwright drew heavily on an episode from the Mahabharata's 'Vanaparva'. It is described to the Pandavas as they meander across the land during their exile by the frugal Lomasha. Bharadwaj and Raibhya were two sages in the play's narrative. They had been friends for a long time. Raibhya, a wise guy, shared his home with his children. Sage Bharadwaj concentrated on his simple routines. Bharadwaj's son, Yavakri, believed his father did not receive the respect and recognition he deserved. As a result, he valued a protest against the world. He went to the woods and conducted 'Tapasya,' asking divine creatures for information about the Vedas. Indra appeared to him and tried to persuade him that he couldn't get the knowledge any other way. "Learning at the feet of a master is the only way to gain knowledge." Yavakri was resolved in any case, and Indra gave in to his desire. Bharadwaj counselled him, but he did what he needed to do. He inadvertently attacked Raibhya's tiny kid in a desolate location.

Yavakri's crime infuriated Raibhya. He conjured the Kritya' soul, creating a fair girl who resembled his daughter-in-law from one hair and an evil spirit from the other. He dispatched the two to assassinate Yavakri. In the likeness of the small girl in-control, the soul enticingly moved forward Yavakri and seized the urn with the water that rendered him risk-free. With a spear, the evil presence chased him and killed him. Bharadwaj hated Raibhya after learning of his child's death, saying he would pass on account of his senior child. Bharadwaj, stunned by his own folly, set himself on fire. Parvasu and Arvasu, Raibhya's two sons, were leading the sacred fire of penance to the monarch. When Parvasu was returning home one night, he mistook his father's dark deerskin for a wild creature and murdered him accidentally. He realised his error and set fire to his father. He returned to the conciliatory fenced in area after that. "Since you are not fit for playing out the penance alone, proceed to play out the penitential procedures authorised for Brahminicide. "I'll carry on the penance," he told his brother Arvasu. (p.35) Arvasu followed his younger brother's advice. "This man is a Brahmin executioner," Parvasu informed the King when he returned to the penance. He should not be allowed to access the walled-in conciliatory regions." Arvasu was thrown out (p.44). He returned to the woods and pleaded with the Sun God. He prayed to God to bring Yavakri, Bharadwaj, and Raibhya back to life, and to make Parvasu forget about his nefarious deed. When Yavakri resurrected, the deity admonished him to seek information in the proper manner. The Fire and the Rain tackles difficult issues and situations. It concentrates on a seven-part fire penance designed to persuade the divine entities to send downpour, and progresses through enchantment, murder, and treason to a climax that is as surprising as it is rationally resounding. Revenge, information's worthlessness, envy, and self-image are all woven throughout the play's surface. Karnad has successfully reworked the Yavakri legend in order to acculturate it and offer an all-encompassing picture. The image reveals that admiration is life's primary reclaiming power, and that man's internal conflict stems from a never-ending search for his own fixations.

When man abandons his fixations and embraces humanism, this debate must be resolved. Along these lines, the play is timely and transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries to blossom into a dramatisation with universal appeal.

5. **The Dreams of Tippu Sultan**

It's a political play that was released in 2004. Karnad wrote this play to commemorate India's 50th anniversary of independence. The Dreams of Tippu Sultan (Tippuvina Kanasugalu) by Karnad is based on the Tughlaq and Tale-Danda historical plays. It uses a variety of verifiable sources to provide persuasive depictions of the main characters. It handles a dubious hero who can be portrayed in significantly opposing ways, depending on the eyewitness' perspective, as a chivalrous figure of anticolonial resistance, almost identical to the Rani of Jhansi in one point of view, and a tricky, shaky, and, surprise, foolish antagonist in another. The image of an emergency in the play of commonwealth, both as a result of internal strife and the presence of a powerful outsider foe, conveys the very potential for application to contemporary issues that had made the historical backdrop of Tughlaq and Tale-Danda politically significant in modern-day India. In "Tippu Sultan," the author has faithfully recreated history, and the characters - Tippu Sultan, Haider Ali, Nana Phadnavir, Lord Cornwallis, Arthur and Richard Wellesley - are vividly depicted. Both the material of the subject and the depiction of characters have undeniable truth thanks to Karnad's creative intellect. Tippu's four dreams, especially the final one, reveal the mental activities of the hero's psyche while also imbuing the play with a poetical element. "Tippu Sultan" will be Karnad's most magnificent drama from now on.

6. **Bali**

The Atonement: It was released in 2004. It is a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's intelligence and awareness that Karnad recognised the need of peace to India's social and political survival. Offering creature penances to the god is a heinous crime. The conflict between the Brahminical request, addressed by the sovereign Mother, and the Jain Principal of Peace, addressed by the sovereign, introduces this notion. The act of providing smaller-than-expected puppets made of plastic to stand in for live creatures for a longer period of time. It's also unpleasant, and it ought to be given up. It demonstrates that savagery has taken the place of genuine viciousness in terms of intent. The sovereign Mother is traditional and traditional. She believes in strange rituals and rites. She is stupid and imposes her irrational wishes on various members of the family, including her in-charge, Amritamani, who addresses the voice of mental stability and reason, and her kid, the Lord. The ruler married Amritamani, a Jain, over the wishes of the royal mother, who despised her little girl for being rebellious and opposing respected family traditions. She chastises her daughter for marrying a Jain on a regular basis. The Mahout piques the interest of the sovereign, Amritamani, who admires him for his sincerity, pleasing voice, and calm demeanour. Her infatuation with the Mahout is not based on love or desire. She is a peace-loving individual who despises violence. She is taken aback when she sees a bird that has been wounded by Lord, who considers it a sign of his bravery. By marriage's festival of the report about her pregnancy, she despises her mother. She refuses to accept a penance of animals and birds as a penance to God. The sovereign mother, the ruler, and, surprise, the subjects all expect the subjects to pay penance, but she is vehemently opposed to the idea and dismisses it as absurd. She even gives her significant other advice. She disagrees with her significant other's assertion that her unusual birth cycle was caused by her disobedience of rites. When the lord tries to strip her naked outside, it reaches its pinnacle. She pushes the ruler and advances approaches the Mahout in an unruly manner. Finally, she sacrifices her own life and transforms it into actual penance. As a result, Bali-The Sacrifice serves as a spokesman for reason in the face of absurd rituals and practises.

7. **Wedding Album**

Karnad's *Wedding Album* is an Ultra Modern play on Indian customs and performances. It was released in 2009. Karnad uses his native tongue, Konkani, in this drama, which was first recorded in hard copy and afterwards transferred to English. The play's central theme is the celebration of marriage in the lives of metropolitan working-class families, particularly the Nadakarnis and Saraswat Brahmins. It brings the tribe together to demonstrate their strength and shared concern. Aside from that, it also depicts the family's long-hidden tensions and feelings of hostility. Vidula, a 22-year-old daughter of Dr. Nadakarni, is preparing for her planned marriage with Ashwin, an NRI in the United States. The play incorporates an Indian blessing as well as the contemporary state of innovation in India. It takes up the story's central position. The play comprises nine (9) scenes that introduce the traditional and modern digital worlds. It encourages us to examine the growing fundamentalism of Hindu working-class families, which is largely ignored in contemporary Indian social science scholarship. It's a humorous play that takes place in Dr. Nadakarni's front room. The discussions are thought-provoking and amusing.\

8. Boiled Beans on Toast

It is Girish Karnad's most recent play, released in 2014. The play's principal character is Bangalore, a pulsing life form brought forth by globalisation. The play reflects the fractured lives of its drifting population, which includes a diverse group of characters ranging from the struggler to the road brilliant survivor, from the humble community competitor to the upper crust. This is a city of crazy hopes and runaway expectations, of unhappiness and sorrow, of ecological catastrophe and fast-paced activities. A ruler's admiration for a dish of bubbling beans is claimed to have given Bengaluru its name. *Bengaluru on Toast* is a drama about a place that has evolved fast from traditional to modern times, from a small town to a massive metropolis. It is a representation of a city. The protagonist, Anjana Padabidri, weeps over the chopping down of the magnificent rain tree across the street, a tree for which she built her home. Dolly, a high-society battered wife with little to do, laments the concrete structure that is displacing trees all over the place. Prabhakar Telang, on the other hand, finds what she regrets to be energising. In the humble community in the Western Ghats from where he hails, he has only seen tall, glass-fronted constructions on TV. They spell out "guarantee" for him. The city's obscurity provides useful cover for Vimala, a family worker anxious for progress. In the city of 'Bangalore,' Girish Karnad's play is dynamic, with glimpses of lyricism, mercilessness, and laughter, as it manages a vast collection of individuals that come together, clash, and get snared or go after one another. Karnad notices these characters with a sense of incongruity, maintaining a notable goal perspective free of emotion. The drama does not include any nostalgia for a bygone era, nor does it take a moralistic stance against progress. With unblinking eyes, it checks out the existing fact. When Anjana's artist child, Kunal, paints Bangalore as a 'Major Black Hole,' Karnad allows himself to be judged for the first time. It's a clever construction and subject combination. "*Bubbled Beans on Toast*" belongs in a universe with a lot of misalignments. The play functions primarily as a writing ensemble, with the main issue being organised through long and short developments.

9. Monologues

'Broken images' and 'Blossoms' are two short monologues written by Girish Karnad. Karnad is in charge of new topics and frameworks. He effectively incorporates all of the play's highlights within the speech pattern. "Broken Images" picks up on a topic that has gotten increasingly thorny since India's independence: the legal concerns surrounding languages in Indian abstract culture. It also manages the English novel's popularity. The show is really well-known right now. It honours the display of originality in the plays from various Karnad plays. Mangula Nayak is the monologue's protagonist. She raises the issue of Kannada journalists abruptly switching from Kannada to English as a semantic medium. Journalists speaking in local dialects may condemn it, while Indian English authors legitimate it. The dichotomy between 'validity and guile' is discussed in this session. Girish Karnad returns to the cosmos of old stories in the following talk, "Blossoms." The key work in this classification is to focus on male craving

rather than female craving. Karnad presents the distinction between "adoration and obligation" in this speech.

10. Conclusion

Finally, we can say that with the growth of Girish Karnad's plays, there has been a rebound in light of a legitimate concern for show in English, which has gained tremendous ubiquity in India as well as global recognition. To be sure, Karnad's work can be interpreted as a real-life dream. This is the aftermath of colonialism. The plays of Karnad provided us a picture of a lady in post-pilgrim society. So Karnad is India's best-known living playwright, whose journey from "Yayati" to "Bubbled Beans on Toast" reflects the evolution of really "Indian theatre." Legend isn't merely a custom or a primary device in Girish Karnad's dramatizations. It's a technique for determining an advanced outcome in a typical situation. Karnad tries to establish a "rationalistic relationship between custom and innovation," which is a hot topic in modern Indian culture. Karnad does not use legends to their full extent. He receives a slew of legends and ancient tales that he considers significant. He contributes his inventiveness to the plots of these stories. His strength is his method of blending fantasies, legends, and personal accounts.

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