

A Study on Myths on Tradition and Modernity Reflected in Girish Karnad's Plays

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Abstract

Humanities across cultures now form a seamless corpus of knowledge interface thanks to postmodernist erasure of cultural borders. In the epiphany moment of facing the other, euro-centricism, which had previously prevented people from engaging with each other, was relocated. Since the beginning of time, India has had a rich history of drama. As old as Indian customs are, so is Indian theatre. This paper examines the crucial period of time that marked the shift in women's status in Indian society as seen in the modern era, when men experience identity crises and fight for survival while women transition from being obedient to being autonomous. This is because Girish Karnad exploits traditional tales through the lens of his contemporary conscience, presenting a stark clash between indigenous culture and modernity in his plays against the backdrop of mythology and history. The current paper compares Girish Karnad's five plays in order to describe the synthesis between tradition and modernity and his attempts to reflect contemporary reality.

Keywords: *Girish Karnad, Plays, Myths, Modernity, Tradition.*

1. INTRODUCTION

As an actor, director, thinker, and administrator, Girish Raghunath Karnad has taken many different roads and left his distinctive mark in a variety of industries. In his eventful career, Girish Karnad has played a variety of characters, but he has stated that his true identity is that

of a dramatist and a man of the theatre (Jain 56). He has been considered as one of India's greatest playwrights. Since the early 1960s, Karnad has played a significant role in Indian theatre, film, and television. He is one of the contemporary authors who transformed Indian theatre into a governmental entity. In his native Kannada, he creates plays and scripts. He also directs feature films and documentaries in Kannada, English, and Hindi, and he performs in prominent acting parts in Hindi and Kannada art films, commercial films, and television series. In 1938, he was born in Matheran, a town close to Mumbai. He was raised in Sirsi, Uttara Kannada, where he picked up the language and was exposed to a variety of dramatic productions, including "Natak Mandali" and "Yakshagana." On a stage known as the "Natak Mandali," troupes of professional actors would perform throughout the year as it travelled throughout the countryside. Girish Karnad, a young guy, was deeply influenced by the Natak groups' performances.

The notion to choose Girish Karnad's plays, which are a variety of distinct personalities portrayed with various backgrounds and cultures, therefore signifying different elements of mankind, quickly occurs with the theme "humanities across civilizations." The theme of this essay, "re-inventing tradition," was inspired by many components found in the majority of his plays, all of which have "tradition" as their central theme. Karnad attempted to give traditional characters new life; as a result, the phrase "reinventing tradition" is perfectly descriptive of his plays. This theme was present in his very first play, *Yahati* (1961), which was written neither in English nor in Konkani, his original tongue. The play, which followed the exploits of mythical figures from the Mahabharata, one of the oldest traditions and cultures, was an instantaneous hit and was translated into numerous other Indian languages and performed right away. By the time the National School of Drama presented *Tughlaq*, a powerful allegory of the Nehruvian age, Karnad had established himself as one of the nation's most promising playwrights, igniting notions about traditional culture and, consequently, inherent humanity through them.

Tradition is defined as "a belief, custom, or way of doing something that has lasted for a long time among a particular group of people; a set of these beliefs or traditions" by The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (776). Tradition is the inherited history that the writer has access to study and learn from, according to A.J. Cuddon's book on literary words and literary philosophy. Consequently, the author's native tongue, literary forms, codes, devices, customs,

and elements from numerous historical cultures. "Anything conventional is established, has frequently been attempted, and is continuously returned to," the author writes.

All authors started out with "some kind of tradition behind them, and every author in some way modifies or impacts that tradition, even imitating it." There are contrasts, even though certain poems by Keats could have been written by Milton and some by Dylan Thomas and Gerard Manley Hopkins, respectively (925). It is very difficult to categorise writers arbitrarily into different traditions, but it is possible to do so. For instance, we can distinguish between two traditions in English poetry: "(a) the native tradition, as exemplified in the work of Chaucer and the Scottish Chaucerian, Wyatt, Shakespeare, Donne, and most of the 17th century lyric poets, as well as Blake, Yeats, Browning, Eliot, W.H. Auden, and Ted Hughes One of the most popular playwrights in contemporary Indian English drama, Girish Karnad is a traditional-cum-modern writer whose major modern classics exhibit a synthesis of tradition and modernity. Girish Karnad is probably the first name that comes to mind when someone mentions Kannada theatre. If one examines his memories of various locations, he grew up in the little Karnataka town of Sirsi, which is close to Darwad. His plays have been shown for many years all across the nation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

RAJAN, PRIYA (2016) With a mash-up of Western and Indian cloak-and-dagger traditions, Karnad's plays respond to India's colonial past. Indian hot off the fire delivers a unique aesthetic threat of thumb from a tonne of Western theatre. In Indian plays, storytelling is the key to success rather than the course of events, and as a result, the audience is given a description of the time period as an alternative to how it would be represented in a genuine Western-style play. Indian plays serve as irrational representations of abstractions rather than as lifelike imitations. All of the plays involve a number of people using street theatrical props, such as beg, borrow, or steal curtains, songs, puppets, forging, parable seize a story deceit traces, and a contemporary individual writer. A dive into how his plays are confronting the reader to create the reader's one huge field, an approach that maintains anticlockwise and links everyone to his plays: dreams. Dreams have and had played a significant role in all of his performances. His girls' personal preferences are bizarre, showy, and cadaverous. The same way that blown snow supplies a clear explanation of when Lucy in the sky, a mutual diamond dealer or earth voter,

looks to be directed toward continuation without realising estrangements of care abounding by generality of perpetual motion. This challenges the status quo of the act, which was to seize the clear three blow the lid off angles.

D JEYANTHI AND C TAMIL SELVI (2017) Drama as an audio-visual presentation of a literary device has been a very potent and robust habit in subsequent writing. Indian drama has a history of stretching the exaggeration from Greece, Rome, England, and India to emphasise the fact that it has always been a sweeping tradition, highlighting and egg in one beer of justice commitments, send on a wild goose chase conviction, abstract tactics, and free to all and political changes in action for a cause exhibit to a march to a different drummer countries. The beginning palace of Indian myth can be dated back to the Verdict period. The dominating playwright and a proficient attorney of the alternatively blush arts are present in futuristic India's close yet unconquerable famed media. Garish is also the location of the dominant playwright. His plays are written in Kannada and have previously been translated into numerous languages until he is blue in the face. His own translators provided the English versions of his works. Through the application of his other action boob to artwork, training, the film business, and play, he has strengthened the Indian literary unmask. By all means necessary, the rarely enormous gift that he has withheld from the Indian English fable is his failure to play the card to preserve the mythological and cultural affluence of the Indian beyond. We disagree that he recapitulates the origins and seeks to pick up where one left off in the local community and tradition in his plays. India is a post-colonial nation with a ferociously complex subculture and colonial past.

NILESH SATHVARA (2016) Has an analysis paper been written on multiple plays that have been translated from top to bottom in both English and Indian on the writer or by everyone together in a lot with others. Performs naturally are laying full of open-minded contemporary Indian subjectivity in a challenge to the accumulation of ages restriction. His plays cut am a source of strength are perceived as representing the vaunt-grade Indian subjectivity eye to eye lessons, genders, and temporaries. Explores the few layers of subjectivity in not longer at the heart of effective the sub nominal and far-reaching but by from the modern-day Indian subjects. Abdominal organs the success story combines modernity with cuff learning through the characters' leaders' prognoses. He was also born in the nineteenth century and is a notable

Indian playwright, street musician, entertainer, cat o'nine tails player, and translator. He has received the India's most prestigious literary award, the Performer Award for Kannada.

MONIKA DHILLON (2015) her brother-in-law, the decide free ride, and her concerns that the daring study oneself to be reluctant about would be the subjects of the hardest attempt to contrast the deepest reaches. Manages her fullness of advantage and thoughts to build a private line between the public and the private many an ogle, leaving no room for interference by publicly disclosing the conflict between. She resides on earth and is a substance that is both whole in body and mind. In the turbulence of her superior unattractive work, her critics frantically fail to put adequate acceptances in their hearts for her. The final paper will get a peek of how revisits the Ramayana narrative and sees her tellurium or dot dealer in a lovely light. She becomes a reflection of the blood-stained desires, phoney residence of expenditure, and family-tainted mutual irrationality. Modernity, the Golden Rule, and novel are the three main facets of Indian play. That values continuity is where myths are created, reinvented, and maintained.

3. RELIGION AND VALUES

It has served as both a means of solace and a foundation for the believers' worldview. It began to have the upper hand in its related institutions, including politics, the family, and society. Modern sensibilities were developed by authors like Badal Sircar, Mahesh Dattani, Vijay Tendulkar, and Girish Karnad who placed more emphasis on the individual self and interpersonal relationships. They jointly brought about significant and enduring changes in the area of culture. Girish Karnad has bravely voiced his opinions on several forums. He has expressed his worries about the current racial and religious conflicts as a responsible artist.

Karnad humorously portrays the Hindu deities in his plays. The playwright aims to imply that perfection can only be attained through truth-acceptance and simplicity in daily living. Through the tales of Lord Ganesha, Kali, Hayavadana, Kapila, and Devadatta, Karnad illuminates the plight of contemporary man, who strived endlessly for the desired perfection but ultimately ended up being destroyed and erased. Nobody in today's culture is happy with who they are. Everyone has a mental image of what they want to look like or what they want their partner to look like so they can obtain a desired standing in society. As Hayavadana wishes to have a human face and join human society, he changes into a horse. Padmini wishes to combine

Devdatta's head and Kapila's body, but three people die as a result. Naga-Rani Mandala's yearns for a devoted husband. Through the transformation of a snake into a sexy nocturnal lover, her need is fulfilled, but this pleasure puts her in danger. The Queen in Bali-The Sacrifice wants a kid to shield him or her from criticism, but the child ends up participating in violence. The backdrop of the plays of Karnad is the rise of fanaticism. The Jain Queen's disgust at blood sacrifice highlights the harm that violence causes to a person's spirit.

Karnad has exposed the religious fervour and bloodshed associated with sacrifice by using the story of Jainism. There is no victor in this fight. Karnad forcefully challenges all of the outmoded customs and mindsets associated with Bali in Hayavadana as well. Karnad argues that human wants may be satisfied by human labour, and he mocks those who seek the assistance of gods and goddesses to complete even the most basic tasks. Karnad also makes brash criticisms of the archaic customs and attitude associated with Bali in Hayavadana. Karnad asserts that human effort, rather than divine intervention, is sufficient to provide human requirements. He makes fun of people who ask gods and goddesses for assistance with even the most straightforward tasks. Karnad challenges the dynamics of Indian socio-religious culture, which frequently downplays the spiritual side of religion while emphasising rituals in people's superstitious and egotistical beliefs. Karnad shows how even literate people hold onto superstitions. The daily prophecies, prognostications on news channels, live chats with astrologers, face reading, etc. are leading the youth astray by dragging them down a rabbit hole of absurd and unrealistic beliefs. He also reveals the hypocritical class of learned individuals who don't think twice about changing the sacred texts they revere for their selfish ends. Karnad also emphasises the concept of giving something up for someone else as another definition of "sacrifice." This interpretation relates to the play's central topic, which is that King gave up his religion for love but was unable to keep his promise to do so.

In Hayavadana, Devadatta beheads himself in front of the goddess Kali's temple because, like any other guy, he cannot stand the idea of his wife having an affair. In his plays, religion manifests as a negative force that terrorises and torments believers. The plays by Karnad depict religious conflicts and their effects. In addition to encouraging a re-view of history (and myths and folktales), Tutun Mukherjee notes Karnad's intention and the relevance of his use of religion in his plays: "These (Karnad's) plays are written against the backdrop of growing fundamentalism and communal frenzy in the country present individual endeavour towards

communal integration during epochs of violence" (Mukherjee 20). Karnad also discusses the disinterest of modern society in religious activities, the fast-declining values and traditions of our rich cultures, and the demolished temples.

The advancement of applied sciences led to modernity. The rise of freedom, individualism, and social philosophies in opposition to metaphysics and theology coincides with the emergence of the practical sciences. This has resulted in the development of new social behaviour behaviours. Modernity rejects all forms of dogma.

On the basis of reason and science, everything is evaluated. Power, youth, efficiency, and intelligence are the goals of modernity. It is not necessary to completely disregard and replace tradition in India in order to modernise society. No contemporary civilization can be claimed to be wholly traditional and wholly modern. Any society that intends to grow must have a constant connection to the past.

4. FAMILY VALUES AND A SENSE OF ALIENATION

Karnad skillfully illustrates several difficulties that have arisen in familial connections. Karnad opts to define modernity in terms of his own time period. The colonial cities and the introduction of English were both brought about by the British. Mahesh Dattani and Vijay Tendulkar, two of Karnad's contemporaries, have also addressed Indian family difficulties in their plays. The kinship system in families is evolving, according to Karnad, as it adjusts to the demands of industrialization. Karnad illustrates how patriarchy continues to have an impact on the institution of marriage. He also discusses how alienation between families is growing daily. He also discusses the plight of the modern guy, however he focuses more on female issues. The tales of Padmini, Rani, Queen, and Vidula highlight the plight of women in India's patriarchal society. All family affairs are to be dominated, managed, and regulated by male characters. Through his plays, Karnad demonstrates how gender discrimination is still a major issue in Indian households and how women have been devalued by receiving a subordinate position within the family as a result of conventional patriarchal conventions. Karnad illustrates how individualism and selfishness cause family discord. Another family norm that has turned into agony for many women is the prohibition against talking about family issues with those outside the family. Karnad illustrates how certain families treat women like prisoners in Naga-Rani Mandala's character. Women remain in violent relationships because of their anxiety

about being alone and alone. The predicament of women subject to the patriarchal order and tied by the institution of marriage, but whose spirits remain free, is sharply outlined in Karnad. He shows women battling against the harsh patriarchal rules. Rani in NagaMandala, Padmini in Hayavadana, and the Queen of Bali: The Sacrifice are depicted in traditional Indian social life, but they exhibit certain traits that modern Indian women also exhibit, such as the search for individuality and the desire to win equality in the household. He demonstrates that when it comes to actual life, feminism is a myth that only exists in books. According to Karnad, the majority of the time, couples choose not to separate, divorce, or get remarried out of respect for their families. Even if they are not a good match for one another, there is some pressure from the family to make amends and keep living together. Through his female characters, who are conventional yet conscious of their needs, rights, and unique identities in social life, Karnad provides a portrait of the modern woman. To uphold the reputation of the family in society, a wife must be devoted to her husband, according to traditional familial morality. However, both the male and female characters in Karnad have the guts to get what they want.

The majority of Karnad's plays centre on the idea of imperfection and the search for identity. A man becomes more individualistic as a result of the stresses and worries that come with living in a conventional society, and the increase of individualism results in feelings of alienation and isolation. There is a disconnect between a person's aspirations and accomplishments, as well as between who he really is and how he would like to be perceived. In the areas of gender and marital relations, Karnad is particularly concerned with striking a balance between tradition and modernity, as well as between personal and communal consciousness.

5. CONTEMPORANEITY: SEAMY-SIDE OF REALITY

The monologue Broken Images, which is set in the present, explores the current state of English versus Indian languages, a technology-driven existence, one's self and their image, and illusion and truth. The play explores the dilemma faced by Indian authors who use the English language as their medium of expression.

The dispute about using English in the play represents the central argument that has persisted in Indian literature since independence. English's adoption has been criticised as a betrayal of or disrespect to regional languages. It is true that writing in a global language like English

allows a writer to reach a larger audience. When English is used by non-native speakers, the language debate is quite prevalent. Karnad exemplifies how people might be critical of a regional writer's use of English. He demonstrates through this play that writing in the English language is not illegal. He demonstrates that for Indian writers, English may be a genuine form of self-expression. Broken Images' main conflict is a reflection of Karnad's early playwriting experiences. Karnad, who writes in both Kannada and English, holds a prominent place in the language issue. Karnad had continued to write Kannada plays for many years. But the vocabulary he used in his plays in the late 1990s indicates a change. For instance, he translated Hayavadana and Naga-Mandala into English. His native language of Konkani was used to write the English translation of the play Wedding Album. As observed in the instance of Karnad, the region is equally active in the two languages. He seems to have benefited from the English language's international recognition, like other contemporary Indian writers, without sacrificing his native Kannada.

Another topic covered by Karnad in the play is how modern writers are affected by technology, globalisation, and financial motivations. He makes the case that reaching a large audience and making money are valid goals for a writer, and that authors who write in their native tongue also take royalties and exchange their originality for money.

Through Broken Images, Karnad also illustrates how Indian plays in English have a subservient posture toward plays in Indian languages like Marathi, Hindi, and Kannada, as well as in the context of print genres like fiction. Karnad draws attention to the social insensitivity to the finer parts of art, particularly "Play," through characters like song, tale, writer, and Flame-2. He illustrates the playwright's predicament, which is the lack of an audience.

The issue involving children is one that has to be taken more seriously. Young people today are consumed by many forms of lust and lose sight of the reason for their being in this age of globalisation. One of the issues that parents today are dealing with is that of Vivan in the Wedding Album. Vivan's role in Karnad illustrates a moral failing in the younger generation. According to Karnad, parents are utterly oblivious of how their children are abusing the resources that have been provided for them.

Karnad shows how a man's egotism and self-centeredness are caused by achievement. People start adopting western culture instead of working to advance their own country, as Manjula

does when she criticises the design of her studio and contrasts it with other nations. He begins to gradually float away from his origins and true self. The dramatist depicts the desire of people for citizenship and long-term residence in American and European nations, as well as their pride in being labelled as NRIs.

The abandoned temples in Naga-Mandala and Hayavadana reflect the lack of interest in religion among modern men. The Karnad regrets how quickly the rich, ancient cultures of our country are losing their traditions and ideals to modernity. People aren't afraid to endanger the wonderful past in the name of comfort; for instance, religious buildings are pillaged, and idols are damaged or smuggled by some evil people. Karnad also brings up the age-old problem with girls that still persists in today's society. In Indian homes, girls are viewed as a burden.

We are moved by Naga Mandala to consider the terrible realities of the dowry system, which is typical in arranged weddings. One needs to be wealthy enough to satiate the boy's family's avarice in order to locate a good match for their daughter. A peek of how the allure of money can turn someone selfish is provided by Rohit in the play Wedding Album, and the story of Kurudavva's marriage in Hayavadana further supports the problem. In the chosen plays, non-human components like chairs, tables, masks, dolls, and the female chorus also present modern realities. Flames in Naga-Mandala expose the evil side of happy marriage, as a wife is subjected to everyday mistreatment and sexual harassment by her husband. Dolls, the Female Chorus, and Nata parody and make fun of India's changing social mores in the modern, developing country.

Karnad also makes the observation that people frequently congregate for amusement or curiosity at the scene of someone in difficulty. They remain motionless onlookers when someone is in need. They are too busy to assist others. In addition, Karnad depicts the contemporary realities of a person's never-ending search for identity as well as the contrasts between urban and rural life, purity and guilt, spirituality and materialism, the relationship between a man and a woman in their infancy, and life and death on a broad spectrum. He also discusses the cunning and hypocrisy of politicians. Karnad has depicted the worldwide predicament and the impotence of the entire system under the influence of the political guile of leaders who occupy the position at the forefront and do nothing for the people in a highly beautiful manner. Karnad discusses a wide range of modern challenges, difficulties, and

conundrums. Some are gifts of contemporary technology, while others are ancient. As a reformer, Karnad seeks to awaken the populace and mobilise them in a fight against injustice.

6. CONCLUSION

In addition to being a well-known modern author, Girish Raghunath Karnad is also well-known as a dramatist, actor, television artist, producer, scriptwriter, and director. Additionally, he has served as the Nehru Centre's Director, the Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Academy, and the Director of the Film and Television Institute of India. Numerous honours, such as the Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, and Bharatiya Jnanpith, have been bestowed upon him. He is the one who witnessed how the theatre's craft changed as a result of his experiences in Bombay and the west after moving from a little town like Sirsi. This exposed him to a wide range of performances, techniques, and practises, such as those used in Alkazi's adaptations, the staging of Strindberg's plays, and the work of several European playwrights. In plays like Tughlaq, Naga-Mandala, Hayavadana, and other works, he attempted to evolve this idea after realising that Indian theatre required a style that was more in line with the Indian environment.

Karnad can also be characterised as a modernist because of the way he attempts to depict the issues facing modern man in his plays using a classical worldview. His chosen works not only reflect Indian reality and current life, but also the challenges that face contemporary men. He gives several perspectives and ways of thinking on the same subject without passing judgement. The advancement of applied sciences led to modernity. The rise of freedom, individualism, and social philosophies in opposition to metaphysics and theology coincides with the emergence of the practical sciences. This has resulted in the development of new social behaviour behaviours. Modernity rejects all forms of dogma. On the basis of reason and science, everything is evaluated. Power, youth, efficiency, and intelligence are the goals of modernity. It is not necessary to completely disregard and replace tradition in India in order to modernise society. Any society's growth depends on its ability to keep a steady connection to its history. No modern society can be said to be both entirely traditional and entirely modern.

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