

## THEME IN THE PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNA



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### ABSTRACT

Chitra is a one-act drama that tells the narrative of Arjuna, the third Pandava, and how he came to Manipur on his travels as he was seeking to accomplish his penance. The play is based on the story of Arjuna. Here, he meets Chitrangada, the stunning daughter of King Chitravahan, who rules over this region. The king's sole child was a girl, and he had no other children who could succeed him as ruler of the realm. When Arjuna approaches the monarch to ask for Chitrangada's hand in marriage, the king presents Arjuna with a condition: the son that would be born to Chitrangada is required to be handed to the king so that he might succeed to the throne after the king's death. Arjuna gives in, and the couple eventually gets married. After some time,

Chitra gives birth to a boy, at which point Arjuna departs for Hastinapur. Tagore's play, on the other hand, makes several alterations to the narrative. Chitra is portrayed in the drama as the king's fiercely independent and brave daughter. She has the ability to defend the people who serve the monarch against burglars and other criminals. She carries herself in a masculine manner and is devoid of any romantic thoughts. But all changes when she meets Arjuna, and she immediately falls in love with him. She removes the manly clothing she was wearing and transforms herself into a lovely lady so that she might woo Arjuna. Arjuna can't resist the allure she exudes. However, Chitra does not make an effort to conceal her fierce and combative nature from him.

She shakes herself out of the voluptuous, soft, and timid form of beauty and finally reveals herself to Arjuna in her true form. She says to him, "and stands up straight then appeal to a man's eye?" She goes on to ask him if she would then appeal to a man's She is not a deity and should not be worshipped; she is simply Chitra. Arjuna

and strong with the strength of a daring heart spurning the wiles and arts of twining weakness, if I hold my head high like a tall young mountain fir...would she has no problem acknowledging her in her true, original form.

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**Keywords:** technique, theme, form, play

## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the play, Karna has just finished his training with Parshuram, his Guru, in the utilisation of the most powerful astras, and is getting ready to go. His Guru bestows upon him the most lethal of his astras while praising him for the unconditional love, adoration, and commitment he has shown to others. Karna, who has been abstaining from food all night, is now prepared to receive this astra. Purashurama gives Karna a lesson on how to utilise the Astra by killing a creeper with a blade of dried grass, which transforms into a mantra-weapon and kills the creeper in its whole. Karna is subsequently informed by Parshurama that the blade of grass transformed into a lethal astra, which caused the creeper to be killed. Karna is instructed by him in the usage of the lethal "Bhargava" astra, and he is warned by him that it should be used only for the goal of destroying the power intoxicated. Karna, one of the Kshatriyas, puts it on, and Parashurama says goodbye to him.

### **The Fire and the Rain, Girish Karnad, OUP, New Delhi 1998**

The story of Yavakri, which can be found in the Vana Parva of The Mahabharata, served as the inspiration for this drama. During the time when the Pandavas are away from their home in the forest, Lomas Rishi tells them this story. The play consists of a prologue, three acts, and an epilogue. It begins with the prologue and finishes with the epilogue. The word "Fire" in the title is a metaphor for several kinds of fire, including the fire of love, lust, and retribution, as well as the fire of treachery. The monarch is trying to appease the Rain God Indra by performing a fire sacrifice that would last for seven years. The ritual known as the "Yajdnya" is presided over by Paravusa, who also serves as its main prest. The priest Paravasu warns that all bad spirits will strive to obstruct the last oblation in order to mark the

successful completion of the 'Yajdnya,' and as the fire sacrifice draws closer to its conclusion, it is getting closer to its conclusion. Arsu, his brother, begs him to allow the performance of a play, which is a standard rite to carry out during this kind of occasion.

Plays like this are not intended to have Brahmins in acting roles. Even though Arvasu is a Brahmin, he is a criminal because he murdered his father, and because he is tarnished, it is possible that he may be given the opportunity to act. At first, the King is opposed to the idea of putting on a play, but Parvasu believes that if they do so, it would appease Indra and result in favourable weather conditions for them. The actor himself, Parvasu, was going to be there to attend the performance. After 10 years of intense penance, Yavakri, who is Parvasu's cousin, has returned with the global knowledge that he obtained from Indra. Indra bestows upon him the blessing just as Yavakri begins to sacrifice his limbs to the flames. He makes his way back, but not before plotting his vengeance on Parvasu, who has married Yavakri's ex-lover Vishakha. Yavakri ignores Indra's instruction that having knowledge requires having control of one's impulses and seduces Vishakha, which is something that is known to both Arvasu and Vishakha's father-in-law. However, fueled by the need for retribution, he makes the decision to punish Purvasu. The position of head priest should have gone to Yavakri's father, but instead Parvasu was promoted to that role. However, Yavakri is put to death by the Brahma Rakshasa that was brought into the conflict by Raibha, Purvasu's father-in-law.

## REVIEW LITERATURE

Born on May 19, 1938 Girish Karnad, who was born in Mathern, Maharashtra, is recognised all over the world for his work as a dramatist, poet, actor, director, critic, and translator. He is considered to be one of the brightest blazing lights in all of India. Karnad, when he was a young man attending Karnataka University in Dharwar, where he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics and Statistics in 1958, dreamed of achieving international literary acclaim. However, he believed that in order to achieve this goal, he would have to write in English. After completing his undergraduate degree, he moved to the United Kingdom to pursue further education at Oxford University. While there, he was awarded a Rhodes scholarship and went on to get a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. Not for his English poems, but for other things, he would finally earn the reputation he had always dreamt of having on a global scale. Instead, Karnad would earn his fame via decades of steady literary productivity on the ground of his birthplace.

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He possesses skills in a wide variety of areas. He is well-known for his work as an actor, film producer, and writer of plays. He is a modern writer, dramatist, actor, and film director working in the Kannada language. His films are in Kannada. He is the most recent winner of the Jnanpith Award for Kannada, which is considered to be India's greatest literary honour. There have been seven previous winners. Karnad has been writing plays for the past 40 years, and he frequently draws on history and mythology to address modern challenges. In addition, he is quite involved in the realm of Indian film, where he has worked as an actor, director, producer, and screenwriter and has been honoured with a number of accolades along the way. Both the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan were named in his honour by the government of India. He has previously been awarded the Rhodes Scholarship.

Oxford from 1960 to 1963 and a Bhabha Fellow from 1970 to 1972(Each year, the Rhodes Trustees select students from the following 19 countries and regions to receive a Rhodes Scholarship: Australia, Bangladesh, and Bermuda; Canada; Caribbean members of the Commonwealth of Nations; Caribbean members of the Commonwealth of Nations; Caribbean members of the Commonwealth of Nations; Germany; Hong Kong; India; Jamaica; Kenya; Malaysia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Singapore; South Africa; Uganda; United States; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. The greatest national contingent of Rhodes scholars comes from the United States of America. One of the primary reasons for Karnad's remarkable success as a playwright is that he has a complete and faultless command of the English language.

Kannada is Karnad's second language, despite the fact that his native tongue is Konkani. This is because Karnad's father worked as a health officer in North Karnataka. At first, he had aspirations of being a writer in English; nevertheless, he found that composing plays in Kannada intrigued him more. During his boyhood at Sisri, he was given a lot of opportunities to watch plays. When he was younger, he and his father would attend performances of Company Natak. The young Karnad accompanied the household staff to Yakshagana performances since his parents held the opinion that such plays were beneath their sensibilities. Karnad's plays clearly reflect the influence of both Indian and Western theatre in terms of the technical parts of drama, but it is also clear that Karnad has imbibed the most successful aspects of Western theatre. However, when he was younger he dreamed of having a career as a famous poet, but much to his disappointment, he ended up having a career as a playwright instead.

Girish Karnad has been in a huge number of movies playing a variety of parts, each of which

he has played with remarkable éclat. Additionally, several of his programmes have been aired. After he had finished his studies at Oxford, he moved back to India and settled in Dharward, where he was active in a number of different theatrical clubs. He collaborated with one of the most well-known stage directors in Kannada, Mr. B. V. Karanth. He was the main character in the movie Sanskara and had the starring part. The President's Gold Medal was awarded to the movie. Both he and Mr. Karanth had prominent parts in the subsequent movie, which was titled Vamsa Vriksha and was the product of their collaboration. Both the previous film, Vamsa Vriksha, and the one that came after it, Tabbaliyu Ninaade Magane, were honoured with the President's Award. Karnad earned the Golden Lotus for his work on Kaddu, which he also directed and for which he created the storyline. All of these movies are adapted from extremely well-known Kannada books written by renowned authors such as Dr. U. R. Anantha Murthy, Dr. S. L. Bhairappa, and Sri Krishna Alanahalli, in that order.

#### **NATION AND TWOMAN**

An investigation of the part that women play in society reveals that women have always been the pioneers of the country, playing a variety of duties from the domestic sphere to the political front lines. The remarkable contribution she made to the establishment of a prosperous nation is the reason why a great deal of importance is attributed to her. However, it is a sad reality that every nation in the globe has a history that has several examples of women being treated unfairly at some point in their past. Within their own families and throughout society, women are made to endure a myriad of different sorts of emotional and physical anguish.

Despite the fact that things are much better now than they were in the past, she is not given the credit that she deserves for the significant positive impact she has had on society. In order for a nation to maintain its level of empowerment over time, it must first empower its women. If a country's women are neglected during its development, it will never achieve communal or rational growth. If women are not properly informed, if they are not in safe hands, and if there is gender partiality in the workplace, then it will be impossible for the nation to advance and thrive. The first and most important step in empowering women is giving them the means to support themselves financially and defending their legal rights. Women who hold positions of authority are afforded greater opportunities for articulation and recognition within political and social systems. It is impossible to have a society that is equal and fair until there is an end to gender inequality as well as other distributions of power.

In certain countries, women are still seen as somewhat of a commodity. It is expected of them that they would complete chores alone, such as cleaning utensils and clothing. It is unacceptable to provide a woman or female kid with an education, and doing so is seen as a waste of both time and resources. Every action that they take should be sanctioned by the father or another male member of the household. A circumstance such to this is not only wholly undesirable but also represents a significant barrier to the expansion of a country.

Women have always had a large and important part in the family, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or culture, whether it be as daughters, sisters, wives, or mothers. This has been true throughout the millennia. They have been accorded a particular status among more enlightened cultures as a result of the function that they play. Even in societies with a lower level of enlightenment, women have, in spite of their subjection, been the primary arbiters, if not in word then at least in deed, whether consciously or subconsciously, of the manners and morality in the family as well as the safety in the home. (53, Jaya Kumar)

The fact that more males than women contribute to the formation and operation of a nation is an unavoidable and unchangeable reality. In her book "Writing Gender, Writing Nation," Bharti Arora examines the ways in which the role of woman is erased from the scene. She investigates, "Nations are typically considered as male entities, and the subjects of nations are seen as homogenous collectives that have been formed by the modern state infrastructure of citizenship, law, governance, etc." As a result, the majority of theoretical formulations of country have a tendency to disregard or delete the perspective of women on their nation.

The entirety of the discussion portrays women as weak beings who are unable to make it on their own in the world. The canonical literature only discusses male-dominated mainstream culture, in which women play a secondary or supporting role. Forbes reaches this conclusion based on her observations, which suggest that women are more committed to their responsibilities than males. She claims that the women's genetics places them in a position of subordination to their male counterparts despite the fact that they are all kind and forgiving. If they ever want to write, they are given themes that are easy and commonplace to write about. When it comes to canons and mainstreams, males are given preference, whereas women's abilities have historically been undervalued. Behind the curtain, there was a conversation taking on about the rights of women. She notes that subjects such as "fertility and family size; furniture, jewellery, and clothes; inheritance and property rights; and marriage and divorce were to a large extent overlooked."

Over the course of time, shifts have occurred in the position of women. Her position was

quite solid and had been held for a very long time. — On the other hand, it would appear that over the course of time, their prestige in the family as well as in society progressively started declining, and they were subjected to an increasing number of restrictions.

Women were given a place in society that was considered to be of a higher status from the beginning of the Vedic period until its conclusion. They shared the same status as their male colleagues and benefited from the same range of communal penalties as their male counterparts. This period is also responsible for the construction of the traditional Hindu idea of "shakti," which refers to the belief that women possess power. It is believed that the feminine forms of the ultimate and the approved Hindu goddesses already had shape in the Vedic times. These female forms eventually evolved to signify various womanly individualities as well as energy associated with the Brahman. Goddess Kali represents the destructive energy, Goddess Durga represents the protecting energy, Goddess Lakshmi represents the nourishing energy, and Goddess Saraswati represents the innovative energy. These ladies gained their independence at the same time as their boyfriends. Since the husband and woman made up two halves of the same whole, they were seen to be on an equal footing in every way, and they shared equally in the burdens of both religious and societal responsibilities (Indra 2).

## **NATION AND THE MAN**

Man has consistently demonstrated his capacity to colonise both earth and space. Knowing his greater goals, his height has stood erect since the beginning of time. He has a reputation for being a protector and a provider. He is all-powerful and capable of making choices. His rules are followed throughout the family. All of the masculine deities mentioned in the epics, shastras, and puranas—like Rama, Krishna, Lord Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu—perform great deeds and defend humanity from villains. The image of the man in Karnad has always been one of great strength, logic, and power. His Yayati is brimming with unquenchable ambitions, Pooru is obedient to an extreme degree, Tughlaq has a clear vision, Basavanna dreams of a casteless society, Devadatta is well-versed, Kapila is courageous, and Yavakri has unflinching confidence.

Man in Karnad is full of life and always seeks for the objectives of greater scales. He is the epitome of knowledge and reason. He depicts man in a variety of ways, but in every way, Karnad's man advocates the cause of societal advancement. He eventually understands his responsibility to help construct the nation, and he commits all of his resources to this goal. In

Karnad's plays, man is immensely materialistic and has all he needs. Although he attempts to accomplish loftier and seemingly unattainable goals, he also fails, he never loses hope or faith. According to G.D. Barche, "Man, even the clever and the wisest, fails, falls, and suffers."

This chapter outlines the role of man as a builder of nations who devotes all of his resources to creating a better civilization. Tughlaq, Yayati, The Fire and the Rain, Tale-Danda, Nagamandala, Hayavadana, and Bali are all studied in this chapter. The sacrifice made to reveal the male prowess that strives tirelessly to build a brighter future. In the two essentially historical dramas Tughlaq and Tale-Danda, Karnad uses the past to comment on the current state of Indian politics and to show how "history is formed" and "repeated." The drama Tughlaq is unique in its field. This play fabricates the concept of a perfect country and is rife with national pride. The Muslim sultan Tughlaq is always working to create a secular country. — At the beginning of his youth, Mohammad Tughlaq, who is the most intelligent and idealistic, assumes the wheel of command, full of enthusiasm and zeal and the heartfelt ambitions and desires (Barche 180). In his sincere efforts to realise his lofty aim of turning his country into a truly secular one, he sacrifices every necessity and nourishment. The kings that came before him never attempted what he wants to do. In the first seven scenes, he works to realise his ideal with an exceptional amount of tolerance and patience, but in the latter six scenes, he is depicted as a disillusioned, irate, and harsh ruler who exhibits great violence.

Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughlaq possessed exceptional vision and wisdom. He is a learned man who is well-versed in history, philosophy, math, and even medicine. He speaks Sanskrit, Arabic, and Turkish. In the beginning of the play, Tughlaq was a warrior, a thinker, an inventor, and a sign of peace. He desires to establish a utopia. I want to ascend to the tallest tree in the world and shout out to my people, saying, "Come, my people, I am waiting for you," he says. Tell me about your troubles. Share your joys with me. Together, let's cry and laugh, and then let's pray. Let's pray till our flesh flows and melts and our blood becomes air. Come! I'm eager to embrace each of you.

A group of Muslims and Hindus are seen having a serious discussion when the play first begins. God, what is this nation going to become? Every citizen with interest in sociopolitical matters is prompted by a rhetorical question in the play's opening exchange. This important query reveals a lot about the country's current and historical reality. It makes the readers reflect on how the country's position has changed from the past to the present, and not in a good way. Karnad examines the long-held opinion in a very appropriate way through this



elderly man who poses this provocative inquiry. Muslims found it astonishing that a Muslim Sultan could act modestly and with respect toward his Hindu subject. Karnad conveys the viewpoint of a younger generation that conducts less rigidly through the speech of a young man. The Sultan seems more relatable to the young man. An announcement of a ruling in favour of a Hindu is made in this scene. Here, the dramatist demonstrates the significance of impartial policies—policies that are unaffected by class, caste, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Tughlaq looks at Muslims and Hindus with the same eye. He makes an effort to uphold the principle of equality and gives the aforementioned Hindu, Vishnu Prasad, complete justice. He gives him a top position in his administration as well as 500 silver dinars. He wants to grant his "loving people" peace, freedom, impartiality, and progress. According to him, his subjects will follow the principles of justice as they are applied in his kingdom, regardless of strength or weakness, religion or belief.

## CONCLUSION

Eco-feminists frequently assert that treating all women equally would alter the environment. This drama can be viewed as a post-modernist work that examines how people's personalities can break apart. Order in the universe has been upset. A protracted drought turns the earth into a wilderness. The once-powerful nature cannot restore its capacity and tranquilly. In addition to combining and interacting with Indra, the dramatist also engages with his own characters. The rain imbues the land with earthy smells, embodying human virtues like passion, devotion, and honesty in a comforting way. In conclusion, we can state that although the characters in Karnad's plays have been skillfully defined, they retain their contemporaneity throughout the course of the action. They have an appeal that is both global and enduring, and they cannot be attributed to any particular time or location. Karnad's characters are recognisably human. Their issues don't just affect them; the whole neighbourhood is affected. The existence of a modern man is miserable due to the turmoil and fragmentation of the world today. He is constantly looking for his place in this world of limits and obstacles. He enters the realm of matter and materials as a result. His plays provide as a window into the plight of contemporary man. The life philosophy of Karnad, his nonviolent method, and his realism all serve as a lighthouse for illuminating the shadowy corners of human existence. His plays focus on the state of man and the nation in the modern world, with a particular emphasis on the human situation. As a result, the plays of Karnad have astounding societal significance for today. This study could be seen as a minor addition

to the body of criticism that has been done on the genre of Indian play in general and Karnad's drama in particular.

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