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KARNAD'S NAGA-MANDALA: A GRAMMAR OF LITERARY ARCHETYPE

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Abstract:

Mythic elements are prevalent in the works of Girish Karnad. In this paper, the author attempts to describe the intervention of myth in the Naga-Mandala of Girish Karnataka. The purpose of the study is to determine to what extent mythical concepts have been utilised by the playwright to depict sociocultural issues and social ills. Despite the fact that the play's conclusion is ambiguous, it is determined that the play's conclusion is still ambiguous. Not within the traditionalism of Indian epic writings and Hindu philosophy, but within the cultural context of the contemporary Indian woman who seeks to satisfy her needs and expectations.

Keywords: *Multiple Endings, Collective Racial Consciousness, Myth, Folktales, Pinda-daan, etc.*

Girish Karnad's creative genius is in putting together pieces of historical and legendary events to make a strong point. Karnad connects the past with the present, the archetypal and the real, by using the 'grammar of literary archetype.' Issues in the real world have parallels in myths and fables from the past. This gives new interpretations and insights into the theme and makes it stronger. Myths give us glimpses into people's lives and its mysteries because they go beyond the limits of time and space. They are an important part of the culture of the land and have different meanings that reflect the issues of today. Karnad believes in what Jung called the 'collective racial consciousness,' so he often looks to the past for information.

All of his dramas are literary explorations of the Indian cultural past – racial, mythological, legendary, and historical – but they have a strong resonance to the present. Using these tales, he attempted to illustrate the foolishness of humanity with all its primal passions and conflicts, as well as man's eternal strive for perfection. In this connection, Vanashree Tripathy has said: "Literature and Myth merely dramatize, heighten and highlight what is theoretically possible in nature and science" (Tripathi, 89).

Karnad dives deeply into classic mythology to describe the mental suffering and challenges of modern man. Karnad does not employ the myths in their entirety; rather, he uses only the bits that are beneficial to him, supplementing the rest with his creativity to create engaging narratives. His aim was not in reproducing ancient tales and traditions, but rather in representing them artistically. According to Jyoti Sahi, "Girish Karnad's art can be described as a vision of reality" (Sahi, 123).

Karnad himself has revealed that "Theatre can simultaneously be entertainment, political commentary and artistic statement and can be composed in traditional, realistic and postmodern forms Like masks worn by actors that allow them to express otherwise hushed truths, Indian theatre enables immediate, manipulative representations of reality" (Karnad, 331).

Myths and folktales in patriarchal societies portray primarily the male unconscious fears and desires and are patriarchal constructions that are male-centric. In these narratives, the experiences and



emotions of women are not emphasised. They shed little light on the fears, anxieties, and psychological problems of women. It is a noted accomplishment of Karnad that he evolves this male-centric folk tale in such a way that it becomes a depiction of the transitional encounter of man and woman.

Karnad's *Naga-Mandala* is focused on two oral tales from Karnataka as we know from what he says in his "Introduction" to Three Plays:

... these tales are narrated by women- normally the older women in the family-while children are being fed in the evenings in the kitchen or being put to bed. The other adults present on the occasions are also women. Therefore, these tales, though directed at the children, often serve as a parallel system of communication among the women in the family (Karnad, 16).

Playwrights with talent have uncovered mythological and legendary source materials and utilised them imaginatively. The idea of verisimilitude in drama was completely novel, and it was foreign to theatrical conventions. The plays of Karnad are substituted with myths and legends. When asked why he handled myths and legends the way he did, Karnad responded that his sole intention was to effectively relate the story: The borrowed tales are given a turn of the screw, as it were, which works wonders with his plays" (Chatterji. 36).

The play is about a selfish hero who has to pass a test set by his spouse in order to stay alive. Because of his psychological inadequacy, he and his wife can't understand each other or talk to each other. It's a danger to society and the family as a whole. Every man faces this ideological problem when he is a teenager, and he has to learn how to deal with it. Karnad's plays go into more detail about this.

The play, *Naga Mandala* isn't just about how hard it is for men to trust and love women. It also seems to be about how both men and women socialise, especially in India, where marriage is often the first time most people have had sex and loved someone. In India, the stages of growing up from childhood to adolescent years and then into adulthood are very different, and cultural and psychological relationships are very different from those in societies with fewer traditions. The play looks at how women and men become their own people and how they grow up to fit into the roles that traditional society has given them.

In folklore, a wizard or a serpent assumes the shape of the Prince, reaches the palace, and torments the lovely Princess who is imprisoned there. When the Prince discovers this, he kills the snake/magician, and the Princess then poses a riddle to him. If he does not respond, he must die. This existential problem is addressed in many ways throughout the folktale. In *Naga Mandala* both Rani and Appanna successfully adapt to their new families and communities. However, this is accomplished only after overcoming male egotism and an inflated sense of dominance over women. The novel ridicules the male idea that they have complete control of the body, passion, and morality of women using implications of family and ideals such as chastity.

Appanna's angry response to his wife's infidelity does not cause him to consider his own infidelity. The other villagers likewise disregard his transgression, but they highlight the marriage as an institution and the couple's reproductive function. The significance of family and offspring is established. The husband and wife race towards one another with a deeper sense of connection. As a result of being a future mother, the girl-bride obtains societal recognition. This stage of Rani's social integration in stills her with a new feeling of self-respect and value. This is an additional part of Indian cultural life that is noteworthy through its treatment of women. In Kiranth's words, "... an Indian



woman knows that motherhood confers upon her purpose and identity that nothing else in her culture can" (Kiranth, 57).

As a mother, Rani is seen in the last part of the story to be in command of the household with some authority and decision making power. Appanna even agrees to her rather strange demand that their son should perform an annual 'pinda-daan' in the memory of the dead snake.

In the play's alternative ending, the snake does not perish. Rani allows it to reside in her dark, long, and chilly hair. He lives with her within the family. The threat to male power as a husband and patriarch persists in close proximity, but resides mostly in the woman's imagination. The obedient and faithful wife may observe the social and moral code to the letter, but she retains recollections of her initial emotional and erotic encounters with the ideal lover.

These desires might either plague her or stay latent within her. Rani can firmly comprehend why Kappanna, the young man burdened by filial duty to his elderly and blind mother, runs away one night. He pursued his desire for a lovely woman. Though he rejected the seductive voice and presence of the dream girl, he was attempting to be a responsible son by carrying his elderly mother on his back. When the dreams get too potent, he is finally torn away from them. Rani has experienced these new cravings, the daydreaming and romantic fantasies, and she is aware of their power over social and moral obligations.

The distinctive difficulty of *Naga-Mandala* is that it exposes its own artistic limitations. In this way, the play is sensitive to its inconsistencies in terms of women's desires and the means of self-expression offered to them within approved. In fact, the play implies that these inconsistencies are at the foundation of all mythologies.

Thus, to conclude, multiple endings, a typical postmodern theatrical troupe, is Karnad's method of addressing the uneasiness that this might produce. It caters to the postmodern mind-set of the late 20th century, an example of which is *Naga-Mandala*.

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