

## INDIAN SENSIBILITY OF WOMAN IN THE PLAYS OF GIRISH KARNAD

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**Abstract:** *The current study paper seeks to scan the undetected elements in Girish Karnad's writings, who had proven their mettle and worked tirelessly to assert the sensibility of women and their issues in a patriarchal culture controlled by men. Personal, societal, bodily, emotional, geographical, and global strands are intertwined in the fabric of women's repression. A female is always represented as inferior to a man in Indian English literature—a symbol of husband's purity, faithfulness, and devotion. However, the structure of society has altered as a result of many political and social ideas. Women are expected to step out of their protective shells and assist their partners and maintain the conventional role forced on them, but this has not been welcomed by society. In the process, she was reviled and humiliated. There came the point when she needed to show off her abilities and establish herself. This declaration of women's sensibility might be seen as an expression of their issues in the world. Girish Karnad viewpoint on women's concerns reflects the realities of their social situation. Karnad concentrates on how patriarchal and male-dominated cultures oppress and enslave women, as well as how they are entangled and trapped by society's erroneous laws and standards. Karnad demonstrate the harshness of men who regard women as second-class citizens, restricting their independence and liberty.*

**Key Words:** *Sensibility, patriarchal, male dominated cultures and woman desire.*

Girish Karnad is a well-known actor, producer, director, and cultural administrator who holds a major position in IED (Indian English Drama). His plays address India's sensibility of woman, sociopolitical, and cultural issues. Karnad is known for his mythologies and tales, history, castes, rites, women's issues, cultural concerns, and humanism plays. Karnad revolutionized Indian English Drama by employing various techniques and models; boldly advocating and employing Indian mythology, stories, folklores, historical, sociopolitical, and present concerns are combined with Indian English and folk theatrical practices in order to decolonize Indian English Drama. His ideas expressed in prefaces, introductions to his plays, and interviews are cited in this work. Even the titles of Karnad's plays are appropriate and provocative; He emphasizes Indian topics and sensitivities of woman that are rooted in the country's cultural history that transcends time and space. The titles are based on a mythical-legendary-historical or folklore character or a modern socio-political situation in India. His plays are challenge plays in which contemporary social, cultural, political and woman concerns are handled via dramatic action, with the audience deciding on the final solution.

The title Hayavadana (1975) is derived from the Sanskrit words Haya (horse) and Vadana (head), and it tells the story of a man with the head of a horse. The premise of Hayavadana is based on a story from Somdeva's Brihadkatha Saritsagar, an ancient collection of Sanskrit tales transcribed by Thomas Mann in the Transposed Heads. Mann mocks life's mechanical concept, which distinguishes between body and soul and believes the head superior to the body, by posing a moral problem. Karnad is concerned with issues of human identity and relationships. Even reversing the characters' heads will not free them from the psychological constraints imposed by nature. Devadatta and Kapila are based on a narrative from the Vetapalan Chavimshika. Nonetheless, Karnad adapted it from The Transposed Heads, Thomas Mann's mock-heroic version of the ancient Sanskrit stories. The subplot — the horseman's desire for completion — is Karnad's own idea.

Devadatta, the thinker, and Kapila, the doer, are best friends. Padmini marries Devadatta. Kapila and Padmini develop feelings for each other. The two pals commit suicide. The comedic sequence in which Padmini transposes their heads is extremely important, as it gives Devadatta Kapila's body and Kapila Devadatta's. It muddles identities and makes things more difficult, revealing the uncertain character of human individuality. They engage in a duel before killing each other. Padmini gives a sati performance. Karnad goes into mythology to depict modern man's emotional anguish and difficulties. In Hayavadana, he is obsessed with the concept of incompleteness, depicting Devadatta, Kapila, and Hayavadana (horse-man) yearning for wholeness in a "mad dance of incompleteness" (57). Kirtinath Kurtkoti rightly commented that the play is a "world of incomplete individuals, indifferent gods, dolls that speak and children who cannot, a world indifferent to the desires and frustrations, joys and sorrows of human beings" (KK vii). Masks, curtains,

dolls, and the story-within-a-story are among the folk-theatre elements that transport the audience into a strange realm. In a characteristic move, Karnad's play begins where the 'Vetal' story ends. "Shubhangi S. Raykar analyses thus:

"In all his plays, Karnad takes this kind of leap from the original story and develops it further... this further development is the play of the artist's imagination, and it challenges the glib solutions offered in the original stories" (SRS 48).

The theme of extra-marital relationships is also treated, which develops complications and entanglement in human relationships.

Yayati (1961), Karnad's debut play, takes its title from the myth of Yayati, a self-consciously existentialist drama that appears in Mahabharata's Adiparva. The Yayati narrative has been rewritten in Karnad to give it new meaning and value. It's about accountability and human relationships. Yayati, the unheroic hero, represents wants, sensual pleasures, power abuse, and a disregard for life principles. The drama also addresses the fight of women in conservative Indian society for independence and identity. Karnad has said the following about the origins of Yayati's plot:

The story of King Yayati that I used occurs in Mahabharata. For a moral transgression he has committed, the King is cursed to old age in the prime of life. Distraught at losing his youth, he approaches his son, pleading to lend him his child in exchange for old age. The son accepts the exchange and the curse and thus becomes old, older than his father. But the old age brings no knowledge, no self-realization, only the senselessness of punishment meted out for an act he had not even participated in. The father is left to face the consequences of evading responsibility for his actions. ("Afterword" to Yayati, 73).

Karnad was unsatisfied with the customary celebration of the son's obedience; instead, he links the story to a real-life event. In the Mahabharata, King Yayati has five sons; after the older four refuse their father, the youngest, Pooru, succumbs to his pleadings. The story has been reconstructed by Karnad into an ironic play of discontent, futility, and death. Because Yayati is unable to suppress his desire for Sharmishtha, he invites the curse. Devayani had forewarned him of the grave implications of his actions. Pooru is a philosopher who accepts his father's curse and concludes the play in a state of stark befuddlement, unable to comprehend the meaning of what he has gone through. Due to his rejection of customary glorification of a son's "self-sacrifice" and, against the backdrop of love, jealousy, and ethnic tensions, Karnad's interpretation of the myth stands out as unique.

The unfortunate decisions that the young Prince and his bride Chitrlekha are forced to make. Devayani, the Brahmin Queen, Sharmishtha (the Asura Princess who is Yayati's adversary and slave, sage Shukracharya's daughter Devayani), and Chitrlekha, Pooru's new bride, all succeed in subverting the male society by asserting feminine rights and advantages. Chitrlekha emerges as a New Woman who resists all kinds of conventional taboos and oppression, openly fighting against them in order to make "room" for herself. Pooru's decision and Yayati's false rhetoric for the sake of dynastic grandeur are both condemned by her. She is a practical woman who faces practical challenges as a result of Pooru's decision. She, on the other hand, never caves to them and prefers to die. Karnad explains why he chose an ancient narrative in the prologue to Yayati:

"We turn to ancient lore not because it offers any blinding revelation or hope of consolation, but because it provides fleeting glimpses of the fears and desires sleepless within us. It is a good way to get introduced to ourselves" (6).

Naga-Mandala (1990) is a tremendously dramatic reimagining of two Karnataka folk tales. The title is appropriate and well-chosen for dealing with Naga's story and its metaphorical overtones. It is about a woman's subjugation in patriarchal Indian Orthodox society, as well as gender bias. The woman protagonist—Rani and Kurudavva, and other woman characters—are stereotypes of Indian women. Even though the play transmits two Karnataka traditional tales, Karnad goes into current socio-cultural issues, bringing them up to date. Rani has been trained to absorb male supremacy as part of an unseen plot to diminish and marginalize female status in society. She finds fresh ways to break free from women's long-held oppression. Rani is encircled by malevolent societal forces, and she feels helpless, alienated, and discouraged. Regardless, she never gives up and fights for her rights as a woman, a wife, and a mother. Karnad's solution appears unconvincing and unorthodox at first glance, deviating from the traditional manner of therapy. Patriarchy, socio-cultural customs, Rani's parents, Appanna, Village Elders, Naga, Dog, and Mongoose, and so on are all used to keep Rani exploited.

They remain on stage during the play, commenting and providing essential information. Act I opens with Rani married to a guy who was "rich, and his parents were both dead" (27); Rani's parents are unconcerned about Appanna's character and wrongdoings; they are equally guilty for her atrocities, and they never see Rani after their marriage. There is no welcome ceremony or bridal song. Rani says, puzzled. "Well, then, I will be back tomorrow at noon. Keep my lunch ready. I shall eat and go" (27). He ignores her, walks out the door, closes it, locks it outside, and walks away. She dashes to the door, which is shut. She is perplexed and unsure of what is going on. She can't even cry, so she sits in the corner of her room and talks incoherently to herself; weary, she falls asleep, sees dreams, and pleads for her parents. When Appanna arrives the next day, Rani tries to convey the sorrows of loneliness and garner Appanna's sympathy, but he dismisses her. He finishes his dinner and walks out the door, locking her up. The days progressed in this manner. Rani enters the kitchen mechanically, begins cooking, and converses with herself. Appanna is a philanderer who visits his concubine regularly, whilst she becomes a caged bird. Kurudavva is Rani's friend, and she agrees to support Rani despite the fact that she and her husband have no personal relationship. Rani is kept like a slave and confined as a caged bird; she is not allowed to speak to outsiders, and no outsider is allowed to speak to her. She is compelled to confront the Naga Ordeal despite her chastity and fidelity. Rani becomes pregnant over time. It's good news for her since it's the realization of a woman's dream. But her quest for motherhood identity is unfulfilled; instead, Appanna reacts angrily to learning of her pregnancy, as if he had never made love to her before. He's gone insane, calling her a strumpet and a whore, dragging her out of the home, and threatening to punish her severely for cuckolding him. Appanna openly challenges Rani's chastity and files a complaint with the local court, which is presided upon by Village Elders. Rani is put through an ordeal in order to establish her innocence. Rani finally accepts Cobra, who gave her love and motherhood: "You don't know how heavy you are. Let me get used to you....This hair is the symbol of my wedded bliss. Live in there happily, forever" (64). The fact that Rani accepts Naga as her own is a direct response to the extramarital affair. Even after marriage, only males had the freedom to concubine (as Appanna does). Women, on the other hand, are expected to adhere to a higher moral standard. Karnad himself commented: "They (tales) also express a woman's understanding of the reality around her distinctly; a lived counterpoint to the patriarchal structures of classical texts and institutions" ("Introduction" Three Plays 17).

The Naga- Mandala by Karnad reveals the processes that express and enforce power relations in society, as well as the social structures and institutions as hidden means of manipulating energy to establish and maintain man's supremacy and women's subjugation.

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