CONCLUSION

During the recent decades Indian Drama has manifested a significant independence of its own. I have successfully overcome the influence of the Western scholars. Dramatists like Girish Karnad though they displayed their indebtedness to Sartre, Albert Camus, Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Ioneso, Pirandello, depended more on retrieving Indian tradition and culture. Indian mythologies, folk tales have acted as perennial source of inspiration for the themes of Karnad. Taking pride in the intricate narrations of Mahabharata, Ramayana and other religious scriptures, Karnad has redrafted the very perceptibility of Indians. Though he has concentrated in ridiculing the conventional understanding of the important plays he has offered dialectical interpretations of many of the incomprehensible themes.

It is because of this significant quality, Karnad is considered as one of the great writers of the contemporary Indian drama. While Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar portrayed the problems of middle class, Girish Karnad took refuge in Indian myths and folk tales. By using these myths Karnad has portrayed the absurdities of life with elementary passions and conflicts. He has peeled the philosophical entanglements of mythological tales. He has rationalized and intellectualized the perceptability of
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mythological and folk tales. He has effectively portrayed the existential and teleological problems of the contemporary protagonists.

His protagonists are portrayed as alienated from the society. All his protagonists are misconstrued by the society as their understanding is above the comprehensive of contemporaries. In the age of fanaticism and intolerance, rationalism is considered as the only solution by Karnad. Karnad has offered a solution to the perennial dialectic tension between the outsider and society. The changes proposed and observed by subscribing to the conventions are considered to be the attempts to undermine the violent reaction of process of change. The protagonists in his play experience the tension between conventionality and modernity.

As the rational human being (man/woman) is alienated from the society, the interpersonal relationship of the rationalists is despised by the entire society. This makes the rationalists to distance themselves from the society. The desires and aspirations of the rational human beings are understood as erotic eccentric attitudes. The philosophisation and the intellectualization of the simpler aspects of life receive resistance from the society, unless it is theatrically performed. In achieving this end, Karnad surpasses the excellence of all the Indian dramatists. Hence, is the urgency in considering Karnadian Dramaturgy as the Post modern and Post colonial Dramaturgy.
Very much like the tales and stories, the origin of the myths can also be traced back to the primitive days of the human being. Though myth is always considered opposite to history and science, the truths of the human predicaments in reflects in the mode of fantasy and the importance of it in understanding the nature of the human being cannot be exaggerated. By performing a triple function, ritualistic, totemic and archetypal, myth formulates the collective unconsciousness of the people.

For the writer who has been trying to find out answers to many questions dogging the man the society, myth has been providing sufficient material to grapple with and to extract all that he can. Moreover the myths have been inspiring and provoking the creative impulse of the writer and driving him to analyse, question, counter, subvert their ideologies apparent and concealed by reworking or revisioning them. *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* in India and *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* in the west provided many myths which have been worked and reworked by the writers of man generations to suit the various occasions and junctures. Myths are generated even by the common people at times and poets, novelists and dramatists cast history into myth at times.

Psychologist like C.G. Jung observe that myths are related to the archetypes of unconscious. According to the ‘Collective Unconscious’ is the store house of eternal images which are the contents of collectively
shared substratum of individual unconsciousness. Myths are arch-narratives which feed into other types of oral and written narratives. They centre around sacred time and deal with elemental beings and happenings and they are related to dream and unconscious.

Mythopea, the creation of the myths has also been a characteristic features of the writers. Right from Kalidasa to Rabindranath Tagore, from Sophocles to Camas and from Shakespeare to T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats, writers have been using the mythological episodes for treating their highly personal issues and contemporary times.

The myth criticism is one of the most distinctive trends of the contemporary literary studies. A study of the use of myths by the writers sharpens the perception of its theme, structure and characters. Moreover, the study of the myth reassert the association of literature with the social sciences like sociology, anthropology and psychology. Myths are full of symbolic implications and they often become allegories reflecting the latent, esoteric wisdom of the people of different generations. Some times a literary work may transform into a myth after a period as a result of its extreme popularity.

The use of myths by the writers and the people of other realms of art like movies is a common phenomena of our period. The use of myth is more popular and universal by the playwrights. The development of the
dramatic structure because of the interaction between mythos and ritual provides a useful commentary to the even basic works like Aristotle’s Poetics and Fergusson’s The Idea of Theatre. The two basic forms of the Western drama, the comedy and the tragedy represent the life that asserts cycle and the life that represent the life that asserts linear respectively.

Modern Indian drama as well as the modern Indian English drama is the product of the classical India Theatre, medieval folk theatre and the western influence. Rabindranath Tagore, a synonym of the Renaissance in India is the first dramatist to set the tone of the contemporary drama. By using the myths like Chithra, Kacha and Devayani, Chandalika etc. he transformed the stage into a platform for the new enlightenment. It is Tagore who used the Bengali folk form ‘Jatra’ for his modern plays and thus paved way for the later dramatists like Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad.

Like Shakespeare, Girish Karnad seems to have never invented his plots. He borrowed the themes of his plays from different sources like history and mythology. He has a genius in selecting a suitable theme from the history and mythology and then transforming them into extremely new plays by means of his modern outlook and highly personalized creative touch. He creates his plays by creating a new mythology from the
fragments of available mythologies, by inventing some of them and also by creating a new mythology through the details of the contemporary world.

That Karnad’s has a psychological inclination to the influence of the myth is evident in the way he gets fascinated by the myth of Yayati he took as the theme for his very first play depicting his own anguish and anxieties of youthful days. Having reared in an intellectual circle influenced very much by the most popular philosophical trends of the period, he found expression to his existential dilemma in the myth of Yayati. As an individual preoccupied with the quest for meaning of the life and his need for selecting a course to achieve his own goals, he has to take up a decision at a crucial juncture. Karnad finds out that the myth of Yayati has ample material to analyse the conflict between the ambitions and responsibilities of an individual.

Karnad belongs to the modern writers who write earnestly for themselves and in the process reaches the readers / audience. He takes liberties with all the myths he chose for the plays and transforms many of them into archetypes. He delineates Yayati as a representative of the contemporary period who reaps the fruits of his toil and falls victim to his inmate hubris. In the hands of Karnad, the myth of Yayati is moulded into a hexagonal story of desire. It dramatizes the desire of an individual, Pooru, against the backdrop of the desires of all important characters of the
play, Yayati, Devayani and Sharmistha. The interesting thing about the nature of the man is that he tries to evade the consequences of his own action.

By focusing his attention on Yayati’s yearning for a sexual life and the traditional glorification of the self sacrifice of Pooru, Karnad assess the individual’s personal responsibilities and his relation to nature. He shows how an individual is torn between extremities, old age and youth; sensuality and psychology, mortality and immortality and existence and essence. In Yayati, Karnad in more preoccupied with the two important existential questions: what am I and what do I want. Though the myth deals with the angels, kings and rakshasas, all the characters are brought to the human level and their struggle to come to terms with themselves and with the outer world is similar to that of the twentieth century human beings.

All the characters of the play Yayati are the victims of their own choice. Yayati needs both Devayani and Sarmistha as his wives, Devayani wants to have Sharmistha as her servant maid, Sharmistha craves for a revenge against Devayani, Puru is very eager to prove his individually and Swarnalatha intends to be a loyal wife. All of them have to get disillusioned and disappointed consequentially.
Karnad meticulously traces out the various nuances of the human nature that often gets into a flux and changes rapidly. The plot of Sharmistha becomes a catalyst to make all the important characters of the play to encounter a terrible truth that almost tears than off. Fornication, Patricide and incest may not be extinct in the mythologies, but Karnad uses them as shocks to show the ultimate reality. Chitralekha’s intention of force Yayati to commit fornication, reveals the base qualities of the human nature. Like Graham Greene, Karnad never forgets the physical side of the reality. But when a human beings forgets the limitations of his nature and the power of the forces of the society overwhelming him, he has to be a victim of it. Chitralekha fails to grapple with the situation and hence suicide is the only resort for her.

Karnad is basically an artist who gradually travels from the individual to the universal truths. While discussing the individual’s existential problems, he depicts the havoc created by the barriers of the society like caste, religion, and gender. As a practicing dramatist he weaves many contemporary issues into the myth and makes the audience unconsciously to play a part in the development of the action of the drama very much like T.S. Eliot who transforms his audience into passive participants of the action of his play Murder in the Cathedral.
Karnad often introduces a fictitious characters into the myth to make things more striking. Swarnalatha, the maid of Devayani in *Yayati*, is conceived as an external manifestation of the existential trauma experienced by all the other characters. He provides a symbolical background to her to transform her into a symbol. She is the wife of a charioteer, who suspected her, tortured her and becomes a ‘worm’. Her attempt to forget her past is a kind of self deception thus becoming a double to Chitralekha. Thus Karnad is successful in writing an existential drama on the theme of responsibility. Another distinguishing feature of the play *Yayati* is that all the major characters of the play are evolved as archetypal as they represent the various aspects of the human predicaments.

The effort to turn to the sociological issues after dallying with the personal dilemmas, make Karnad to choose a theme from history. To present the disillusionment of his generation after loosing the initial euphoria of the Independence Movement and the gradual degradation of values in politics, Karnad found the life and ordeal of Mohammad-Bin-Tughlaq as the theme suitable for the next play.

The story of Tughlaq, a part of history, remains quite fictious in spite of many historical documents as many versions of his life are still in vogue. He is one among the many historical personages like Budha,
Ashoka and Chengiz Khan who are presented in diagonally opposite ways of historians and even now it remains a question whether Chengiz Khan is a hero or a villain. History is always written by the victorious people and so the credibility of many historical records is still doubtful. Visakhadatta’s *Mudra Rakshasha* is a play about the establishment or Moruyan empire in India, but the historical accuracy of it is not well established. Many of the historical plays of Shakespeare like *Henry IV* part-I and II, *Richards* and so on transform the historical personages into fictions characters to suit the exigencies of the plays.

Tughlaq is evaluated by the historian as a great scholar and great intelligent person but he is always referred as ‘Mad Tughlaq’ by one and all. Karnad realize that even a historian has to play with the shadows of the dead. The megalomaniac politician in Tughlaq makes him to be at strife with his statesmanship. The emergency declared by Indira Gandhi made Karnad to think of the conflict between higher ideas and the execution of them, individual and the role assigned to him by the society and the God and the rituals associated with the God. The individual’s over-confidence in his own abilities make him blind to the uncontrolled forces acting on him and thus fated to be dommed.

Karnad’s *Tughlaq* warrants a comparative study with Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Marlowe’s *Dr.Faustus* and Camue’s *Caligula*. That all of them
are extraordinary intellectuals far above their contemporaries and also that their innovative and often radical and even out of the way attempts to prove their superiority make them similar in the pursuit of their goals. In a way all of them are dreams who struggle hardly to realize them. But the problem with them is that they can not realize that nothing good can come out of evil. Above all, they have to face a grim conflict, not with the others, but with their own soul. Having failed to came to grips with the situation, they become eccentric, in same, hypocritical, short-tempered an even violent. The other conflict is between them and the superior force of the world and thus, like the contemporary man, then become lonely.

_Tale-Danda_, the other play of Girish Karnad based on the history has also the mythical overtones as Basavanna, the protagonist of the play, is almost defied and many of his miracles, which are beyond the comprehension as well as the approval of a scientific man, are in vogue even today. That Karnad chooses the story of Basavanna to respond to the Mandir – Mandal movements of the period (1989), reflects his approach to the modern stage. By choosing Basavanna, the reformer and Bijjala, the King as the two forces vying each other, Karnad brings out the conflict between the religion and the state. By taking many liberties with the history, Karnad almost transforms Basavanna into a mythical figure. The cast ridden Hindu society has provided a striking backdrop to the play.
dealing with the conflict between individual and the society. Karnad’s intention is to transform Basavanna not only as a historical personage who was a mystic, seer and revolutionary but also a pragmatic leader showing the right path to the contemporaries. He portrays Bijjala as an agnostic. Karnad presents their different approaches to the same issue and clearly discerns the humane nature of Basavanna and the hypocrisy of Bijjala.

_Tale-Danda_, presents the religious possessiveness of the people. Like Mrs.Killaman of Virginia Woolf’s Mrs.Dallaway, Jagadev is also an extremist in religion. He even resorts to violence to suppress the opponents. It is not logical to resort to violence simply because the other person has started it in the beginning. Thus _Tale-Danda_, is the critique of a sensible artist on the fantacism ravaging the entire world. It expresses the aspiration of a humanist to have a harmonious world in which the barriers like caste, creed and religion will be obliterated.

Having seen three or four versions of the story of Tipu Sultan in the form of folk plays in his childhood, Karnad has tapped another universal theme in the life of the King of Karnataka. The accidental finding of the diaries of Tipu in which he recorded his dreams, provided the necessary spring board for the creativity of dramatist. Tipu’s ambition to be an Alexander warrants a parallel to him in Dostoyevsky’s Raskalnikov in _Crime and Punishment_ who too wanted to be a Napoleon. The tragedy of
Tipu is that he has to vacillate between his humane temperament and megalomaniac political strategies. Thus Tipu also becomes an archetype who is the victim of the conflict between higher ideals and basic instincts, romantic vision and pragmatic approaches, visionary ambitious and survival strategies. He has to work hard up to the expectations of his father and struggle to put up a fight with a formidable enemy in English. Thus his father who has been his eluding ideal and English have been his grim competitors.

Tipu wants to play the game of politics but comes a pan in the monstrous game of politics. Having lost his way in the attempt to have a compromise between what he wants and what he has, many of his political strategies do not work out properly and a mistake is not simply overlooked in politics as he has to pay very dearly. His dreams reveal that he is a great statesman, but his political norms do not bring him nearer to his goals. Thus Tipu becomes almost a tragic hero whose tragic flow is the incompatibility between his ideals and passions. As all the other characters of the drama play the role of chorus, it is a play which comes closer to the norms of a Greek tragedy. Thus Karnad chooses Tughlaq, Basavanna and Tipu Sultan, the true important historical personages simply because all of them have the mythical dimensions and hence Karnad’s characteristic
fascination for the myths becomes more evident in *Tughlaq, Tale-Danda*, and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*.

*Hayavadana*, arguably the most popular play of Girish Karnad also makes use of the myth in an ingenious way. Taking a cue from Thomas Mann’s *Transposed Heads*, Karnad goes back to Somadeva’s *Kathasaritshagara* to pick out a myth to depict an eternal theme, the conflict between the head and the body. As a twentieth century dramatist who came under the formidable influence of Freud and Jung, two great psychologists, Karnad dramatizes the human psyche which is beyond logic and rationale. He moulds the old myth in such a way that the entire play becomes an image of the complexity of the human predicaments which can be interpreted in myriad ways. He makes it a typical existential play depicting the fleeting nature of the love, and friendship and shows how alienated the contemporary human being is. By presenting the collective consciousness of mankind, *Hayavadana* examines the superiority of the instincts over the intellect.

The human beings craving for the perfection and his yearning for the sense of belonging are presented in a way that is unique by Karnad. The invention of a new character, Hayavadana, the person with the head of a horse and the body of a man who craves to be perfect, highlights the central theme of the play and in the dramatization of the conflict of the
Dolls adds to the virtuosity of the technique. The name given to the characters in *Hayavadana* and *Naga-Mandala*, the other play in which the human psyche is artistically analysed, are more like proper names as they are all representatives or symbols. The play explores the obscure and unreliable nature of self which gets modified and recreated as it is not a definite one. As a person who years for the non-procured and who never gets satisfied with whatever she gets, Padmini in *Hayavadana* becomes an archetypal character.

*Hayavadana* is an example to show that Karnad is not preoccupied with the religious dimensions of the myths and it is not an exaggeration to say that all his plays deal with the myths but they always became more secular in their nature. Karnad’s aim is to present a “complex seeing” to present the psychological dimensions of the characters. He modernizes the myth in such a way that some critics interpreted it as a play dealing with colonialism also. Around the myth of *Kathasarithasagara*, Karnad wields the characteristics features of the folk, surrealism and even expressionism to make it a very modern play successfully.

*Naga-Mandala*, the companion play of *Hayavadana* is based on the folktales of Karnataka. But Karnad casts it according to innumerable myths associated with serpents in the epics as well as in folk literature. Though the play is labeled as a “story theatre”, a theatre whose action is
based on folktales, the very word “Mandala” reflects the spell it casts by reminding the myths. By using four narrative levels, Karnad creates a dream like atmosphere to depict one of the most fictitious tales in the form of a modern drama. He creates a peculiar situation in which the reality becomes a myth and myth becomes reality simultaneously. Many of the devices Karnad uses in the play, imputation of super human qualities to human beings and also to the non human beings, extraordinary ordeals and so on, it becomes at once a folk tale and a myth.

_Naga-Mandala_ is a powerful critique on the patriarchal society. Rani the protagonist of the play, is a victim of the dual moral code of the patriarchy. She remains passive till the end though her husband tortures her and even tries to penalize her by branding her as a bad woman. By using the myth the dramatist exposes the patriarchal values like chastity, virtue, fidelity and loyalty. It also exposes the ritual or a custom or an institution called ‘marriage’ which dwarfs the woman by forcing to be a chattal rather than an individual.

Karnad develops the action of the play cleverly by providing a realistic aura to the myth. The visits of Naga-Appanna to Rani during the nights, the husband’s suspicion, the fight between the mongoose and the snake, the trial of Rani in public, the vow she takes by clutching the snake in one hand – all these things not only provide a spell on the audience, but
also make them to think and to realize the cruelty of the patriarchal system. The plight of the woman, who was neither loved nor used by the husband and the person whom she loves became a mere spectator to her ordeal, is well dramatized.

Karnad never forgets to portray the psychic disturbance of his characters at a critical juncture the play focuses. The inconsistencies in the nature of the characters of the myths has been exploited by him to adopt his intended analyses and these. He always stands by the side of the suppressed and coerced and condemns the discriminations in the name of caste, creed and gender. The hallmark of his plays is that he makes them vehicles for worldly conflicts and also philosophical discourses.

There is no society without rituals and many rituals are associated with the myths. There are rituals at every juncture of the history and at every phase of the man and even the drama, as a genre, in considered as a form of ritual. Indian drama is always a close allay of religion and ritual. Karnad uses the rituals associated with myths as the themes for two of his plays *The Fire and The Rain* and *Bali: The Sacrifice*:

Bharatha, the saint who wrote *Natyasastra* points out that the performance of a play is also a *Yagna* and *The Fire and The Rain* deals with two yagnas, the performance of a play and the conducting of a yagna by the saints for the rains. The myth of ‘Yavakr’, Karnad has chosen for
the play, has ample material to present the bare realities of the nature of the 
man. Centering around the fire sacrifice, the play shows how a man is 
burnt by his own passions. The human being is always torn by the 
emotions like jealously, ego, lust and greed. He wants to be supreme and 
tries to procure it even through unethical and dubious methods. He has not 
been realizing the true meaning of love, respect and honour. In the course 
of avenging for the sake of his respectability, he gets torn and brings doom 
on to himself. He doesn’t realize that he has been running after the 
illusions and the eccentric thirst he has for self-satisfaction cannot be 
quenched. Life becomes meaningless when true human relationships are 
not established and happiness lies in self-denial and responsibility.

The way that the woman is used as a tool in the cruel political games 
is condemned in The Fair and The Rain. All the woman characters of the 
play suffer in the hands of the men though they try to help the men to 
recover from their traumas. Through Karnad uses a myth for his play, the 
characters of it resemble more like the Waste landers and Green Landers 
(the people of T.S. Eliot’s The Wasteland and Grahma Greene’s creative 
world respectively). Moreover Karnad clearly asserts that nothing good 
can be emerged from the violence and the most important thing for the 
harmony of the world is ‘love’, the true and sincere love for the fellow 
human beings Like Hayavadana, The Fire and The Rain is also a play of
naturalism in which the animal imagery is used to reflect the beastly nature of the man. The Brahmarakshasa appears at the end of the play is an external manifestation of the demonish nature of the man in general.

The new characters Karnad infuses into the myth reveal his intentions clearly. By juxtaposing the Brahmins and the tribal people, Karnad exposes the civilization and the culture the upper class people boast of. Nittila, the tribal woman in the play becomes a measuring rod to reflect the cruelty and barbarity of the upper class people very much like Huckleberry Finn in Mark Twain’s novel.

The conflict between Hinduism and Jainism which emerged as a revolution against the former provided the theme for the next play of Karnad, Bali: The Sacrifice. It gave Karnad another opportunity to analyse the human psyche which resorts to the sacrificing of miniature figures made of dough when the real animal sacrifice is denied. Thus the ritualistic practice of transforming actual violence into violence in intention is exposed in the play. By choosing the myth from the thirteenth century Kannada epic, Yashodhara Charite, Karnad illustrates the way that infidelity is forbidden in all religions. That feminism has been one of the underlying themes that run through the works of Karnad right from the very first play is amply established in Bali: The Sacrifice also, The other important themes of the play are the conflict between the individual
cravings of an individual and his social obligations and the existential struggles of the characters.

By introducing a character from the lower rung of the ladder of the society, a mahout, Karnad once again projects the difference between the rigid, psychologically dwarfed and traditional elite and the free, spontaneous and unconventional common people. The slow and steady evolution of Karnad’s use of animal imagery to present the physical side of the human being, an important feature of Naturalism can also be traced out. He uses the characters and situations as parallels and contrasts and often juxtaposes them to understand them perceptively.

Karnad, as a modern writer, understands the multi-dimensions of a truth and works hard to present as many of them as possible in his plays. He writes evens songs in the last play as he seems to have realized what Tagore asserts in his play *The Cycle of Seasons*: ‘poetry is easily comprehensible than prose’. Moreover, the songs almost become chants which enhance the ritualistic aspect of the play Bali: The Sacrifice. Karnad fully exploits the old myth and by taking many liberties with it, he moulds it in a way that it surprises the audience with many shocks and unexpected twists.

That Karnad has a natural and psychological inclination to the myths is quite evident in the study of all his plays translated into English. He
never invented a plot but he used the old myths for the contemporary debates and discussions and made all of them extremely modern by means of his highly individualized personal approach. As myths are only based on the memory of the people, he has the freedom to take liberties with it and he filled the gaps of the myths with his fiction and sometimes he transformed them into fiction that simply reminds the myth. He infused many fictitious characters into these myths to make his central themes more striking.

Karnad has chosen the myths from the Indian mythologies but his conception of play is quite modern, a synthesis of the oriental and the western moulds like those of Rabindranath Tagore. His use of myth demands a comparative study with those plays of O’Neill, Anouilh, Wole Soyinka, T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats. Though the themes are derived from the myths, Karnad makes them vehicles for the modern themes. Many of these myths are used as his critique on the contemporary sociological and political issues.

In all these plays, Karnad’s preoccupation with existentialism and feminism runs through as an under current though they many not be the major themes in some plays. He condemns the racial, religious, and gender discriminations whenever he gets an opportunity. The animal imagery which become more and more striking gradually in the later plays
reflect his inclination towards Naturalism. Karnad never allows the audience to forget that his characters are human beings though they are a part of the myths. He has no respect for the ethereal and impracticable ideologies and always asserts the limitations of the human beings. He always stands by the side of the undergo. He has respect for the efforts of the man to be a superior being physically, psychologically and even spiritually. By presenting a man what he is clearly and impassionately, Karnad makes the audience to think what a man ought to be.

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