

CHAPTER II

Textual Analysis of Girish Karnad's *Naga-Mandala*

A Text, as defined by Gerard Genette very minimally, “is a more or less long sequence of verbal statements that are more or less endowed with significance” (*Paratext: Thresholds of Interpretation* 1). Texts are parts of social events and the two causal powers which shape texts include social structures and social practices on one hand and social agents on the other. Further it is created by the peculiar use of language which under the pressures of literary devices is intensified, condensed, twisted or turned on its head (Eagleton 3). In this context, Norman Fairclough opines regarding the functions of the text:

Functional approaches to language have emphasized the ‘multi-functionality’ of texts. Systemic Functional Linguistics, for instance, claims that texts simultaneously have ‘ideational’, ‘interpersonal’ and ‘textual’ functions. That is, texts simultaneously represent aspects of the world (the physical world, the social world, the mental world); enact social relations between participants in social events and the attitudes, desires and values of the participants; and coherently and cohesively connect parts of the texts together; and connect texts with their situational contexts. (26-27)

This multi-functionality of a text has simply led to vast areas of textual genre categorization, which includes- novel, play, short story, documentary, poetry or a comic strip, so on and so forth. Among this long list of categories, this attempt focuses on the analysis of the three generic versions of the play *Naga-Mandala* by Girish Karnad which include the textual, theatrical and cinematic adaptation.

This section takes up the job to conduct a detailed textual analysis of the play *Naga-Mandala*. While defining textual analysis, Alan McKee writes, “When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text” (1). Academics performing textual analysis observe many methodologies which in most cases have been contradictory to

each other. Actually there has been not a single correct methodology which completely analyzes the text, as different approaches focus on different information regarding the text. Alan McKee writes in this context, “No approach tells us the ‘truth’ about the culture. It is important to realize that different methodologies produce different kinds of information- even if these are used for analyzing similar questions”(2).

After defining text and discussing regarding its functions and methodologies the next task in line is the textual analysis of *Naga-Mandala* by Girish Karnad. Girish Karnad, a celebrated playwright on the contemporary literary scene published *Naga-Mandala* in 1988 in Kannad language and later himself translated it in English. Before proceeding with the study of the in-depth intricacies of the play *Naga-Mandala* in this section, it is but obligatory to understand the setting and circumstances of the Indian Drama in those times to visualize the origin of this folkloric text. For better understanding a summarized description of the origin and development phases of Indian Drama in English has been provided.

1. A Kaleidoscopic view of the Genesis and Growth of Indian Drama in English

Genesis

Man has created literature and in turn, literature helps us to study, analyse and scrutinize man as a complex being. Literature majorly comprises of four basic genres - Poetry, Prose, Fiction and Drama, the last, being an audiovisual medium of expression which represent man and his doings most effectively. It is this dramatic field of literature which holds importance for this section of comparative analysis. The first step is to define the term Drama in context of early ages to the present times. In olden times, according to Bharata, in *Natyashastra* (editions of *Natyashastra*: KM, no. 42, Delhi, 1983) “when the peculiarities of life in a society are connected with certain gestures or when the actions of gods, *risis* and kings are represented on stage it is a dramatic play.” (qtd in Gupta 9). For Dasarupa (by Dhananjaya, with commentary of Dhanika, NSP, Bombay, 1928), “the drama is the imitations of situations. It is a show because it is seen. It is a representation due to the assumption of parts by actors” (qtd in Gupta 9). The current literary scenario defines Drama as an important literary expression whose grounds are rooted deep in cultural beliefs, empiric mode of knowledge and traditional

signs, on the one hand, and human ethics and emotions, on the other. Drama is measured as a genre that intends to explore the human way of life: his code of conduct, the anthropological structure of society, the progress of social organization, and the mimetic depiction of human life. It combines the qualities of narrative poetry along with those of visual arts.

These definitions clearly suggest the basic situational topics for dramatic display in the past and present along with the format of what is to be revealed to the public eye and what not, the consideration of how has also been important in a dramatic performance. The answers to this query of how can be traced deep in the texts of Bharata. As drama is an appropriate representation of men and their activities (*loka – vritta*, *anukarana*) which has to be shown live on stage, so accordingly Sanskrit terminology entitled drama with the generic term *roopaka*. *Roopaka* is that which gives form and employs all the sources of expression, viz., speech, gestures, movement and intonation. Every usage of particular source of expression can have different modes (*vritti*) of depiction in a dramatic performance. Bharata explains four main types: (1) where speech and poetry predominate (*bharati vritti*), (2) where dance and music predominate (*kaishiki vritti*), (3) where actions predominate (*arabhati vritti*), and finally, (4) where emotions predominate (*sattvatti vritti*).

In addition to answering what and how of dramatic display, the queries of why are resolved by attempting to judge the intentions behind a performance. Regarding the aim of drama, Bharata talks of different *Rasas* which become the important ingredient of the expression. It is the soul of the dramatic art or any other form of self-expression. According to Bharata, without *rasa* there cannot be aesthetic delight or appeal in the depiction. The components of *Rasas* include *bhavas*, *vibhavas* and *anubhavas*. There are almost eight or nine kinds of *Rasas*. A list by M.M Ghose includes-1) Erotic (*Sringara*) 2) Comic (*Hasya*) 3) Pathetic (*Karuna*) 4) Furious (*Raudra*) 5) Heroic (*Vira*) 6) Terrible (*Bhayanaka*) 7) Odious (*Bibhatsa*) and 8) Marvellous (*Adbhuta*) (qtd in Tiwari 24).

Bharata Muni summarises the entire perception of the dramatic theory in a verse in the sixth chapter of *Natyashastra*, which reads, “the combination called *natya* is a

mixture of *rasa*, *bhavas*, *vrittis*, *pravrittis*, *siddhi*, *svaros*, *abhinayas*, *dharmis instruments*, song and theatre –house” (qtd in Deepak 1).

After the definition, the next task is certainly to unearth the threads of origin of Indian drama. Hailed as the “Fifth Veda”, the genre of drama in India has had a rich and glorious tradition. A. B Keith opines “Indian tradition preserved in the *Natyashastra*, the oldest of the texts of the theory of the drama, claims for the drama a divine origin, and a close connection with the sacred Vedas themselves”(1).As such, the origin of Indian drama can be traced back in the Vedic period. This has been agreed upon even by Girish Karnad, a top-notch writer in Indian literary scene that the art of drama and concerned theories have their foundation in Vedic times. The “Notes” affixed to the text of *Agni Mattu Male (The Fire and the Rain)* reveal his ideas over the issue. Tracing the divine origin of drama Girish Karnad remarks:

On being implored by Indra and the other gods to provide such an instrument, Brahma, the father of universe, took the text from the *Rig Veda*, the art of performance from the *Yajur Veda*, the song from the *Sama Veda* and *rasa* (aesthetic experience) from the *AtharvaVeda* and created a fifth Veda called *Natya Veda* .(70)

It has been assumed that the dramatic practices of the ancient Hindus were completely developed much before the Greek drama came to its awareness. As such the Hindus of over 2000 years back had their own theory of drama. This deep rooted foundation made Indian drama a unique phenomenon on the literary scene.

Progress of the Indian English Drama

Indian English Drama saw its sunrise when Krishna Mohan Benerjee wrote *The Persecuted* in 1813, nevertheless the art of drama got its real existence in the year 1871 with Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s milestone play *Is This Called Civilization?* However the play lacked the necessary richness of quality but this attempt marked a beginning of a dramatic culture which has been since then an endless regime. Henceforth, enthusiastic playwrights in huge numbers have toiled hard to enrich and enhance the dramatic art and have tried to display the varied layers of India in all its manifestations ranging from—cultural, political, philosophical, religious and traditional. The pre-

independence era saw some stalwarts like Rabindra Nath Tagore, T.P.Kailsam, Harrinderanath Chattopadhyaya, Bharati Sarabhai and some others, who contributed substantially to the evolution and progress of Indian-English Drama. Drama of this era was more indigenous and regional both thematically and technically.

Post- Independence drama brought with itself a fresh creative consciousness which is more universal. Nothing is foreign to its boundaries. The perception of the writers of this age have been deeply influenced by many factors, ranging from history, ancestry, mythology, folk-lore, rituals, social beliefs and by servility to the invaders, initially the Muslims and then the Britishers. These connections to the precedent have been significant as they are the roots and soil, which provides sustenance and nourishment to the thought process of Indian authors. In addition to past reminiscences, the constant association with the Westerners has also provided a new way of life to Indian drama. Very conveniently, with passage of time, the Indian drama ingrained in its performance both associations from the past vivid culture and the alien technical and thematic elements. This trend of getting inspired from the ancient manuscripts and technically manipulating it in a new fashion brought in a very modern and wide-spread universal appeal.

To this unique blend of indigenous and western thoughts, the increasing translations of Indian drama into English led a further forging link between East and the West. This supplemented more substantially to the growing richness of contemporary creative consciousness. Writers like Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Mahesh Dattani and Girish Karnad prove to be the torch-bearers of this new resurgence of contemporary Indian drama. A collective theatrical tradition evolved by these writers have been free enough to delve deep into the waters of any stream of culture, folklore, history or legend to voice out a universal issue. The views of Neeru Tondon regarding these set of modern writers reads, “They have made bold innovations and important experiments, dealt with themes related to the present social scenario, in an effort to bring about social change, and a social cultural revolution to make the people aware of the need to revamp the present social structure and usher in a renewed and better social system” (59).

Out of this long list of influential contemporary writers, it is Girish Karnad and his work *Naga-Mandala*, which has been opted for this adaptation analysis. The analysis works on application of adaptation theory in different genres (Theatre and Cinema) in relation to the basic English text of *Naga-Mandala*. But before taking the narrative itself for analysis some biographical information about Girish Karnad has been stated.

2. Life and Works of Girish Karnad

Life-As one of today's brightest stars in the literary arena, Girish Karnad has earned valuable international acclaim not just as a playwright but also as a successful poet, actor, director, critic and translator. He is highly praised as the "Renaissance Man" and his goodwill is based on his inexhaustible creative genius that paved the way for revolutionary trends for modern Indian Theatre (Kalida and Rahmat). Born on 19 May 1938, in Matheran, near Bombay, Girish Karnad belonged to a semi-Marathi and semi-Saraswat community. His childhood years were spent in a small village Sirsi near Karnataka where he got ample chance to have first-hand experience of the indigenous folk theatre. He often accompanied his father to the company *Natak* performances but for the *Yakshagana* performances his company was mostly the servants. These early encounters with theatrical performances had a great impact on his mind as he writes " I loved going to see them and the magic has stayed with me" (qtd in Kundu 195). The technical aspects of his plays certainly reflect the influence of both the *Natak* performances and *Yakshagana performances*.

As a youngster, his earlier years were exposed to a lot of influences, as Rama Kundu writes:

He was exposed to a literary scenario where there was a direct clash between the western and the native traditions, between the new modernistic techniques, a legacy of the colonial rule and cultural nationalism, a bid for a return to and discovery of tradition inspired by search for roots and quest for identity (195).

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics and Statistics in 1958 from Karnataka University, Dharwar. After graduation, he went to England and

managed to get Rhodes scholarship from the Oxford University. He was further awarded Master of Arts Degree in Philosophy and Economics. From 1963-70, he worked for Oxford University Press, Chennai and later resigned in order to continue full-time writing. While living in Chennai he got associated with local theatre group, The Madras Players.

From 1974-75, he managed the post of director of the Film and Television Institute of India. He served as a Visiting Professor and Fulbright Playwright-in-Residence at the University of Chicago during 1987-88. It was during his residence in Chicago that *Naga-Mandala* (English translation) had its world premiere at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. Mean time in India, he was heading the post of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy of the Performing Arts which he managed from 1988-93. In 2000-2003, Girish Karnad served as director of the Nehru Centre and as Minister of Culture, in the Indian High Commission, London. Presently, he is residing in Bangalore, Karnataka and continuing his love for writing.

Works-His major plays include : *Yayati*(1961), *Maa Nishaadha*(1964)*Tughlaq*(1964), *Hayavadana* (1971), *Anjumallige (as Diven Snow, 1980) rewritten as Bali: The Sacrifice*(2004), *Naga-Mandala*(1988) , *Taledanda*(1990),*Agni Mattu Male (as The Fire and the Rain, 1995)*, *Tippuvina Kanasugala(The Dreams of Tipu Sultan 1997)*, *Flowers: A Dramatic Monologue* (2004), *A Heap of Broken Images*(2004) and *Wedding Album*(2009).

Girish Karnad's first play *Yayati* (1961) initially written in Kannada language, is an attempt to visually portray an ancient myth taken from "Adi Parva" section of *The Mahabharata*. Fortunately, the play was a great success and won Mysore State award in 1962. For a better and more recognition, the play was eventually translated into English. In depiction of king Yayati's life full of doubts and fears, Karnad centres the issues of caste and race, "reinforcement of the counter –Oedipal logic in filial relations" (Nayak 15), and dialectical communication between a father and his son.

A short radio play, *Maa Nishada*, is founded on Valmiki's *Ramayana*. Girish Karnad reincarnates the dramatic event of Sita's banishment by Rama through the narrative of a politically aware and existentially driven narrator. The episode

development in the play moves from washer man's harmful remark on Sita which ends up in his boycott by people and his family and his virtual repentance and final plea for forgiveness.

A customary world of folktales and creative usage of folk elements forefronts in texts of *Hayavadana*, *Naga-Mandala* and *Flowers: A Dramatic Monologue*. Based on Thomas Mann's English version of *Kathasaritsagara (Transposed Head)*, *Hayavadana* depicts the issues regarding the identity crisis but tries to resolve the complex body and mind riddle in a supralogical way. *Flowers: A Dramatic Monologue* presents sexual awakening of a priest, a victim of 'Whora –Madonna Syndrome' (Nayak 16). Conflict between pure and profane, ethical laxity and philosophical height becomes the emotional forbearing in the play.

Anju Mallige, meaning 'Sacred Jasmine' has been written in Kannada and published as *Driven Snow*, is set in the midst of England. In this bold attempt, Karnad tries to conjoin the themes of incest and nation inextricably. Bhagabat Nayak writes "the play is distinct for not dealing with a mythological past or a slice of history but the myth of regeneration-death and rebirth-and in the contemporary scenario blends well to produce a conglomeration of perceptions into the postcolonial consciousness" (15). Recreating the play in *Bali: The Sacrifice*, Girish Karnad again deals with the complex relationship between man and woman and explores the emotions of love, hate, jealousy, desire, betrayal and violence. Based on the Cock of Dough myth, the story of *Bali: The Sacrifice* forefront the issues of class conflict and interpersonal arguments.

In the series of historical plays, *Tughlaq* showcases not only historical theories but psychological traits and anthropological ideologies as well. Ranging the dimensions of *Vrttis* of Indian poetics Karnad explains the parallel working of existential propositions like egoistic and self-involved king on the one hand and futuristic quest of the being for becoming on the other. The binaural yet contradictory objectives are acknowledged through the text of *Tughlaq*. *Tale-Danda* was written when Mandir-Masjid and Mandal movements were in progress and as such the influence of class and caste conflict passages into the narrative of the story. Historical and political issues are handled along with the emotional forbearing. Last in the series of narratives with

historical preoccupations, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* presents the downfall of the Vijayanagar Empire in South India and rising of the British Empire in India. While illustrating the King's political discerning as a sad figure in India's modern history Bhagabat Nayak writes "Karnad deals with some aspect of the then Indo-British relation, fervent nationalism, reformative intention, fascinating and vulnerable sides, ironic dimensions as a traditionalist and nationalist of southern Indian" (17).

Style- Girish Karnad has continued to produce plays of superlative standards for the past four decades. He often used history and mythology to deal with contemporary themes. Om Prakash Budholia writes about Girish Karnad as, "he uses indigenous resources for the structural design of his plays and picks up Indian myths, metaphors and symbols to use these in such a way as to interpret the contemporary social and moral issues authoritatively" (*Girish Karnad- History and Folklore* 12). Ancient manuscripts like *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, *Yashodhara Charita*, *Kathasaritasagar* and other notable classical texts are allegorically used in his plays. In addition, he has revived the age-old practices of literature like "folk-lore, oral discourse and *desi* and *margi* theories in his structuration –instincts" (Budholia *Girish Karnad- History and Folklore* 12).

These ancient manuscripts give impetus to his instinctively born humanitarian zeal, which further initiates him to voice out the pain and miseries of the silenced majority through his works. His plays are the battleground for the unprivileged, unheard and unwanted lot who have been victims of the patriarchy or high class hierarchy. Karnad while depicting their sad and submissive situation brings in these docile characters new vigour to fight against the cold-blooded system and to improve their lot for a better and significant standing.

In the theatrical world of Girish Karnad, women married or unmarried are victims to denial, disadvantage, disgrace and dishonour in almost every walk of life. Krishnamayi revealing more about Girish Karnad in this context writes:

the playwright not only exposes the arbitrariness of the system where women are considered as "second sex", "other", "non-persona" but he also questions the way women are socialized to internalize the reigning

hegemonic ideology and degrade their own position to perpetuate the ongoing subordination and subjugation(1).

Patriarchal subjugation rob their chances to recognize and substantiate their in-born calibre and capacity as human beings.

As an actor, director and script writer Karnad has been a thorough creative to juxtapose his cultural baggage of tradition, culture and social milieu into the canvass of his plays. The past for Karnad is eternally alive and with his continued passion for the fossilised facts of the bygone ages, he has made a successful treasure hunt in his dramatic endeavours. History for him has always been helpful to analyse life and society, political tactics and secular principles.

Translations- As an attempt to gain a wider audience for Indian beliefs, and culture Girish Karnad translated not only his own plays but other plays as well. He translated Badal Sircar's *Evam Inderajit* (1974) in English and Mahesh Elkunchwar's *Wasansi Jeernani* and *Dharamputra* (2004) in Kannada. He has simultaneously written the script for the film *Samaskara* and also acted in the film in the role of Praneshacharya which won the national award for best film in 1971. He has directed, co-directed and acted in films like *Vamsha Vaiksha* (1971), *Godhuli* in Hindi, and *Tabbaliyu Ninade Magane* in Kannada (1977). He directed the films *Kaddu*(1973), *Ondanandu Kaladalli*(1978) and *Chomanadudi* in Kannada; *Utsav*(1984) and *Cheluvi*(1992) in Hindi. *Manthan*(1976), *Swami*(1978) and *Kanaka-Purandara* are considered as among the best art cinemas in Hindi. For a limited span of time he appeared in several TV serials including R.K. Narayan's *Malgudi Days* and *Turning point*. Associating with Madras amateur group, he worked as an actor, director and translator from 1963 to 1970. He enthusiastically participated in staging plays of Harold Pinter, William Wordsworth, Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett and translated plays written by Jean-Paul Sartre and Chekhov.

Awards-Girish Karnad's career as a playwright, poet, actor, director, translator, critic and as a cultural ambassador is a patent of his versatile brilliance. With much international acclaim his plays have been successfully staged in Europe and America. Some of his plays saw their translations into foreign languages like Hungarian and German. Apart from academic excellence he has received many honours and awards.

He received Mysore State Award for *Yayati* in 1962; Komaldevi Award of the Bharaitya Natya Sangh for the best Indian play for his *Hayavadana* in 1972. He got B.H.Sridhar Award in 1992, the Karnataka *Natya Akademi* Award in 1991 and 1992, Karnataka *Sahitya Akademi* Award in 1989 and in 1993 and Central *Sahitya Akademi* Award in 1994. Apart from these honours he has received Padam Shree in 1974, Padam Bhusan in 1992 and Jananpith, the highest literary award in 1999 for his remarkable contribution to art, culture, theatre and drama. (Naik *A History of Indian English Literature* 21-22).

Focusing on this sections concern regarding the textual analysis of the play *Naga-Mandala*, the study begins by tracing the origin of the said narrative. M.K. Naik provides a fascinating account of the origin and the making of *Naga-Mandala*:

In his preface to *Naga-Mandala*, Karnad says that the play is “based on two oral tales from Karnataka, which I first heard from Professor A.K.Ramanujan. He does not specify exactly which stories they are, but equivalent stories are found in practically every Indian language. The first is obviously the traditional tale of cobra turning into man at night and visiting a married woman; and the second is based on the popular belief that a night long vigil in a temple can ward off death.(*A History of Indian English Literature* n.pag)

With joining of these two folk- tales, Girish Karnad successfully portrays the alliance of art and imagination on one side and reality on the other. The play while comprising a Prologue and two Acts begins in a strange fashion where the Chorus consists of several Flames conversing with each other in a wrecked temple. The Author, hides behind the panel before the Flames enter the temple and is intrigued with the conversations among the Flames. This Man is an author who has been cursed to death for his poor writing and this day is his last chance to survive. Trying to escape the brunt of a sage’s curse, he is trying to stay awake and in this process the Flames unknowably help him. The Flames have stealthily escaped from different houses and share their experiences which are in reality observations on human faults and foibles. Through the personification of Flames, Karnad successfully centres upon the human conduct in the

present times which lack in finer human values, morality and respect. Greed, selfishness, cut-throat competition and sexual immorality prevail at large. The man named in the play as the Author agrees to listen to one of the stories by these Flames to fulfil his purpose of staying awake the whole night. (Anita Myles)

The central character of the story is a beautiful, young girl named 'Rani', meaning 'Queen' in English. However, unfortunately in contrast to her name her condition is nothing less than a servant. As a typical obedient Indian girl of her parents she marries a man without her choice or consent. Her marriage brings her no happiness but instead she becomes a victim of the unjust social order of male supremacy which obstructs all the channels that can provide her with prospects to achieve an individual, strong personality as a human being.

Rani's husband Appanna locks her up in the house while he himself spends time with his mistress. Rani longs for freedom from this inhuman and unkind treatment of Appanna. Her existence is exploited at all possible levels, sexually she is ignored, physically she is manhandled, emotionally she is trampled, intellectually she is muted and on the social level she is almost nonexistent. As a result, she is left with no voice or choice, a deserving right of a dignified member of the human society. Simone de Beauvoir in her much famous book *The Second Sex*, writes about the institution of marriage that "Marriage is not only an honourable career and one less tiring than many others: it alone permits a woman to keep her social dignity intact and at the same time to find sexual fulfilment ...she will open up her future, not by active conquest but by delivering herself up, passive and docile, into the hands of a new master" (352). However in the case of Rani's married life, her plight is miserable as a wife and also when she declares her motherhood arousing in both situations issues regarding her chastity and purity.

Change comes in the monotonous and pitiful life of Rani when a friend of her mother-in-law, Kurudavva, helps her in seducing her own husband. Kurudavva gives Rani a love potion which she secretly has to give to her husband. But, accidentally the potion is consumed by King Cobra, who instantly falls in love with Rani. The snake assumes the form of a loving Appanna in contrast to the atrocious husband at day and

starts meeting Rani regularly. The climax is reached when Rani becomes pregnant and Appanna questions her chastity. Her innocence is proved by virtue of the snake ordeal that the village elders put before her, and she is eventually proclaimed a Goddess incarnate.

Karnad's *Naga-Mandala* is a tale relating a deep psychological struggle of a woman set in orthodox Indian societal set-up. Thus, Karnad by reviving a folk tale is successful in recreating a discourse on the irresolvable anxieties between the male and female moralities. Further the study moves ahead with comparative analysis of the text of *Naga-Mandala* following the tenets of Sarah Cardwell's comparative theory.

3. Comparative Analysis

3.a. Generic Context

As mentioned earlier, for channelizing the process of adaptation analysis in context of textual approach of *Naga-Mandala*, Sarah Cardwell's theory; analysis on grounds of generic, authorial and medium-specific traits has been used. The first step while following Sarah Cardwell's line of thinking is to tag a text into a particular genre. Genre means the kind or stylistic characteristics of an artistic or literary work. The extent to which the text follows the conventions of a familiar genre appropriately makes it easy for the readers to draw conclusions. So in this regard while trying to figure out the generic creed of the play *Naga-Mandala*, mythical genre seems to be the most appropriate.

Myths and legends serve as a surrogate for Girish Karnad's works. For Girish Karnad, the concerns of the present age find their equivalents in the myths and fables of the past, giving fresh meanings and insights in reinforcing the theme. Girish Karnad jokingly explains to Meenakshi Rayakar in an interview about his handling of myths: "I am incapable of inventing stories" and therefore "I inclined towards, myths, folk literature and historical episodes etc" (341). Actually, Karnad belongs to that generation which sprouted at the threshold of post-colonial India. It was that segment of generation which was caught between the cultural as well as colonial past of the country. In a typically reactionary post-colonial situation, writing in the language of the colonizers was politically incorrect. But very smartly, Girish Karnad while adopting and adapting

the language of the colonizers made way for Indian drama to rise and shine. He did this by using the cultural baggage of myths and folk-lore in his work and thus gave Indian dramas the form and identity which is truly Indian.

Naga-Mandala is one such mythological play by Girish Karnad which is based on folk-tale and snake-myth. The text while using the essentials of myth and folklore questions the patriarchal codes of society and deals with modern perceptions of oppression and psychology. For the audience to expect a mythical perceiving of the play, the narrator himself in the guise of the character of Man informs in the Prologue that the audience, like the wedding guest of *The Ancient Mariner*, has to penetrate the world of fantasy and supernaturalism without any alternative. Including the major mythical motif of the snake other myths regarding chastity and magical root has also been used in the story. But before analysing the various myths in the play it is important to analyse the significance of myth, in itself.

Defining Myth

From ancient era to the modern times myth had always played a significant role not only in grooming an individual's psyche but also as an important conduct of the society. The literal connotation of the word "Myth" has always been incorrect. In normal day-to-day conversation myth represents something false, fictitious and far removed from reality or history. *The New Gresham Encyclopaedia of the World* describes myth as, "The word myth originally simply meant speech, then, in a narrower sense, a tale or tradition, particularly one handed down from pre-historic times giving in the form of a story about a god or hero, some ancient belief regarding the processes of nature, customs, or problems of cosmogony" (Rappoport 53). *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines myth as, "a story, handed down from olden times, especially concepts or beliefs about the early history of a race, explanations of natural events, such as seasons" (Hornby n.pag).

Precisely speaking, myth is not a discourse in the manner of history, but history narrated in the fashion of a discourse. It is nothing imaginary or unreal, but actual experience from the primitive times. In spite of all the clarifications, these definitions fail to fully nullify the confusion and uncertainty prevailing around the concept of myth.

As a result of its many connotations it has been considered under two categories : “true” myth which is known as sacred narrative and defined by its purpose only and “literary” myth which includes the stories of the ancient Greek and Roman Gods and heroes (Satish Kumar 4). This categorization originates from the generalisation that myth is frequently used in many arts but is not an art in itself. So as a limitless arena, it encompasses within itself along with the truth and fiction (literary).

In Indian context, this country has been a massive depot of myths and legends from ages. Renowned scholar, Laxmi Lal in her book, *Myth and Me*, rightly states “the Indian is Myth-born and Myth-fed” (xi). Indians are very religious and respectfully follow their age-old myths. The eminent Tamil essayist Neela Padmanabhan’s comments aptly apply for Indian’s regard for myths. She writes:

Indians are God-centred in their approach. Their concept for justice is drawn from faith in the divinity of man, and from the tenets of the epics, and the Puranas, the Vedas and Upanishads. The duties and the obligations as also the rights of each member of the family or the clan are defined by these ‘dharmik’ books...Literary trends in Asian nations, be it China or Japan or Korea or Malaysia or India, share the roots in tradition and religion, rely on them to solve conflicts. (217-218)

Such kinds of myths, legends and fables are easily found in Indian tales, dance, song, art and drama. Actually in every walk of life their presence as well as importance can be felt.

Basically there are four types of myths: Culture Myths, Ritual Myths, Nature Myths and Creation Myths. “Culture Myths” describe the stories regarding the brave hero’s serving mankind with new inventions, devices, arts and various other useful amenities. There are many instances when such an act led to great chaos, for instance Greek Prometheus stealing fire from the heavens, Adam and Eve stealing and tasting the forbidden fruit are acts which provoked grave punishment. “Ritual Myths” relate ceremonies concerning the age-old religion, in which man efforts to either win favour of God or pacify his fury. For-instance for bringing rains, *Inder Devta* is happy by various religious rites and offerings, for better education skills *Saraswati Mata* is appeased.

“Nature Myths” explain the reasons for natural phenomenon. The changing of the four seasons, day and night, rain and snow, thunder and lightning, storm and flood is explained through these myths. “Creation Myths” deal with the creation of the world, the origin of men and animals, and the birth of Gods, for instance, the story of Adam and eve, fables concerning the birth of Krishna (*Janamashtmi*), Guru Nanak Dev (*Gurpurab*) or Ganesha (*Ganesh Chaturthi*). In addition to these there are Philosophical Myths, Political Myths and Social Myths. (Nand Kumar 5-6)

The play *Naga-Mandala* falls in the category of “Creation Myths” because the alliance of the Naga and Rani led to a birth of a new life which becomes the issue of confrontation and chaos in the play. In addition to this, the mythical connotation associated with the image of Naga in Hindu scriptures is associated with *Shivji*, God of fertility, death and destruction. The other myths depicted in the play are regarding the magical root and conduct of chastity.

Myth regarding the Naga – The very title of the play *Naga-Mandala* suggests the prominence of the myth regarding the Naga in the narrative. The Naga myth operates as the centripetal force in the play as it suggests not merely the folktale element in the play, but also implies the deeper meaning in bringing forth the complex human psychological levels.

To begin with the title itself *Naga-Mandala* comprises of two easy words ‘Naga’ meaning serpent and ‘Mandala’ refers to a drawing of the serpent on the floor, “a tantric concept indicating inner concentration; a source of energy”(Babu 142). It basically refers to a kind of serpent worship (Ophiolatory) belonging mainly to the South-Indian areas and precisely to the erstwhile South Kanara district of Karnataka and some parts of Kerala. While performing this worship the participants while dancing attractively glides the serpent God onto his/her body. *Naga-Mandala* is performed by two groups of performers: the ‘Paatri’ who gets possessed by the serpent God and by ‘Naagakannika’ who is supposedly a female serpent. This character is also identified as ‘Ardhanaari’ who also dances and sings around the *Mandala* (serpent drawing, drawn on the floor with natural colours).

During the observance of this mythical rite, '*Paatri*' gets obsessed by the serpent God by dancing to the tunes of '*Dakke*' around the '*Mandala*' holding areca flowers in his hands. Once the '*Paatri*' is possessed, the serpent God talks through the '*Paatri*'. He acts as the serpent God answering to the people who comes to seek solutions to their problems. This affair is typically called '*Prashne*' which means question. The magnificence of such an occurrence is that along with fulfilling the religious faith it adjoins beautiful Snake Dance performed to the tunes of a traditional drum namely '*Dakke*' and a special instrument named '*Naga Swara*'. Further the beautifully laid '*Mandala*' adds to the attraction. All the people who attend the event are served with tasty traditional food. During *Naga-Mandala*, to satisfy every attendant, is the main aim of the ritual because if any of the attendees goes back dissatisfied with the event then the entire event is believed to be unrewarding. (Nand Kumar 136-152)

The origin of this Hindu ophiolatry can be traced back to the ancient Indus Valley civilization where enough evidences of Naga rituals have been received in the form of images on seals and terra-cotta pieces in the archaeological finds of Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and Lothal(Kaul 20). Even the etymology of the term Naga is suggestive of ophiolatry's non-Aryan native ancestry. Like the Sanskrit word *sarpa* – an equivalent of the Latin *serpens*, “crawling / creeping thing” – Naga is not of Indo-European origin, and “thus suggests itself as a borrowing from the native idiom of the people” in the area (Maury 167-169). This “prevalence of serpentine imagery and cult throughout the backcountry strongholds of age-old beliefs” is also symptomatic of ophiolatry's “autochthonous inception”. (Maury 166-167 Indeed, it seems that the “pre-existent religious prestige of the snake” contributed largely to the inclusion of serpent deities in canonical Hindu mythology (Maury166-167).

So the prevalence of the image of Naga and the rituals associated with it has been an ever-present part of the Indian mythology. Not only does this observance of the mythical rite of '*Naga-Mandala*' is prevalent in Hinduism but, an overwhelming iconography of the Naga worship becomes an integral part of Jainism and Buddhism also. Other religions like Christianity, Judaism, Celtic, Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Turkish, Islam and some Chinese civilizations share the common myth regarding the defeat of mankind because of a serpent (Kaul 16-19). The Old Testament

and even scriptures in Islam describe the story of Adam and Eve who were provoked by Satan (serpent) to eat the forbidden fruit and thus bear the anger of God. There are also myths about the weddings of Naga's and humans, and Martin.S. Day continues by saying that "countless serpentine interventions in human affairs traverse almost all the known themes about snakes and are often bafflingly ambiguous" (n.pag).

Transformation is a recurring feature in myths and legends, and is an integral part of the play. The Bible, the Epics, Puranas are replete with examples of this transformation.

This metamorphosis can be caused by different things and can prove good or evil.

Martin. S .Day writes in *The Many Meanings of Myth*:

Aquatic or terrestrial, snakes in myth display an extra ordinary range, such as fertility in the case of the Indian snake groves, joining tree and serpent as fertility symbols are often famed for aiding barren women to conceive, and secondly, for the healing purpose as the entwined snakes of the caduceus are still the world's best- known symbol of the healing arts. (n.pag)

Other than the ritual of '*Naga-Mandala*' there are many other myths associated with Naga which include, Naga as the creation of the water source, as guardian of the treasure houses and even as demigods capable of taking any form. There are three prominent Nagas in Hindu mythologies-*Sesa* Naga- Lord Vishnu lie on the bed of *Sesa* Naga and guards the whole creation. *Taksaka* Naga- he is one among the many Kings of the Nagas and *Vasuki* Naga- is related to Lord Shiva as his garland, anklet and armlet. Many religious festivals concerning Naga's include the '*Naga Panchmi*' day and *Shivratri*. On '*Nagapanchmi*' farmers do not plough their field. According to the legend, on this day a farmer who was working in his field accidentally killed the young ones of a snake. The furious, mother snake in order to take revenge killed all the members of the family except a married woman. The snake found her deep in meditation, worshipping Shesha, the king of Serpents. While the mother snake was waiting to kill her, she drank the milk kept as offering and was appeased and later admitted that she had killed all the members of her family. The lady went into a shock after hearing about the death of her whole family. In order to undo the harm, the mother snake gave her nectar, 'amrit' and asked her to put a drop on the lips of each of her dead

family members, and it restored them to life. Thus the snake worship continues on this very day which is believed to have occurred on the fifth of *Shravan* (July-August). Since then the Nagas are worshipped on this day. It is also believed that the Naga motif symbolizes a life moving towards perfection and male energy. The festival of *Shivratri* is also very important in Hindu religion. On this day millions of devotees pay their homage to lord Shiva to attain *moksha* and absolve their sins.

Indian scriptures have many examples to certify this profound prevalence of Naga myths. In a Tamil folk-tale *Alli Arasani Maalai*, Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, the god of preservation disguises himself as an aged snake charmer, transforms the love lorn Arjuna into a snake and takes him to the court of Alli, the Amazon queen who detests the very sight of men. Deluded by snake's beauty Alli begs the snake charmer to leave him with her for a few days. She takes the snake even to her bed chamber, being enamoured by his beauty and shrewdness. Krishna commanded Moodevi, the goddess of ill-fortune to keep Alli asleep for one full night. Arjuna removes his serpent form and embraces the queen in human form. (Balachandran 143-144) (Khatri 165)

In the *Mahabharata* Arjun, in a forceful situation, marries a snake-maiden Ulupi, whom he happened to meet in the underwater world, when he was taking a holy dip in the river Ganga. Iravat was born out of this union but Arjun never considered him his son. In the great war of *Mahabharata* Iravat volunteered to offer himself for sacrifice. The sacrifice was accepted, since the snake-born son was esteemed to be the only equivalent of Lord Krishna. (Khangai 6) Purnabhadra's *Panchatantra* narrates two fables regarding the majestic serpent. The first is about a Brahmin and the gold-giving snake, where a Brahmin worships the hooded species as the protector of his fields and wealth. The other fable concerns a snake-son born to human parents. The boy in order to prove that he was a snake in human form frequently entered and released the snake-hide which always remained inside the basket. Finally his father consigned the snake-hide in the *agnihotra* fire. The human form of the boy was retained thereafter. *Kathasaritsagara* (1063-1081 A.D) by Kashmiri poet Somdeva also recounts short fables like the 'jealous naga', 'the curse of a naga' which foregrounds the Nagas to be important denizens in Vedic scriptures. In another legend, the poet Gunadhya was

considered to be born of a human mother Sruthantha and a serpent father Kirteseha, the nephew of Vasuki. The serpent revealed their heavenly origin and promised redemption after the birth of a child. As promised, Sruhantha and her brothers were restored to their original state by the son of the snake, Gunadhya the poet (Vogel 166-172). The great holy Gods Lord Vishnu and Shiva are depicted always in the presence of the Nagas. The representation of these divinities provides universal philosophies of dense insight for mankind to control the malicious qualities of the serpent in oneself to attain the divine state.

The western literature Naga, the snake has been given a demonic portrayal. For instance, in John Keats, "Lamia", a snake is metamorphosed into a woman with the help of Hermes and she sexually initiates Lycius, a philosophy student of Corinth. His teacher Appollonius transforms the maiden back to snake by his intellectual cleverness and thereby shocks the youth to death. The tale is exceedingly ambiguous with a change in attitude and emotional focus. The reader is uncertain as to whether the disguise is demonic or the intellectual state of the teacher unjust. (K . Balachandran (144) (C. L Khatri 165)

So the catalogue of Indian and western mythology comprises heavy toll of examples situating tales relating the myths associating Naga or the serpent. Its existence is so pervasive that the mythical intentions of the play *Naga-Mandala* can be easily traceable in many mythological instances. The transformation of Naga (Appanna) from the cobra is also reminiscent of the myth regarding Satan changing into snake and again into Satan in Christian mythology. The only difference between the two is that Satan's transformation is guided by his ill-intention to misguide Eve, the mother of mankind whereas the Naga in *Naga-Mandala* transforms to help Rani understand true love and affection.

The myth regarding the Naga in the play also helps in revisiting the *Ahalya* myth. *Ahalya* myth situates in the legendary religious book of Hindus, *Ramayana*. In Valmiki's *Ramayana*, *Ahalya* is freed from the charges of chastity just because the folk mind fails to equate *Ahalya* as an adulterous woman and therefore she wins the tag of a superior chaste woman. It is Indra, the Zeus-like profligate who deceives *Ahalya* by

imitating as her husband, Gautama. Devising this mythical intention to the story of *Naga-Mandala*, Rani is given a clean-chit of complete innocence in a very similar situation. It is the Naga in the form of the husband Appanna who makes love to her. The readers know that Rani is an equal accomplice in this crime but it is her personal innocent consciousness that deny any such immoral act and so her mind and soul is free of any guilt. She believes that she bears her husband's child and does not suspect Naga's identity till the very end. (Anju Bala 4)

This act of Naga disguising as Rani's husband is based on the fertility rite. This is in fact an act by Naga to fulfil the desires and wishes of Rani. This act is a step toward completion of a sacred ritual, just as Northrop Frye mentions, "A ritual is a sacred manifestation of or an epiphany of a myth in action" (341). In other words, myth rationalizes or explains a ritual by providing an authority for it. For example, it is fairly common practice in India that on Fridays of certain month of the year, women perform the ritual of pouring milk on anthills inhabited by cobras. It is believed that married women propitiate the cobra to get over barrenness and unmarried girls to get good husbands. A ritual performed according to the rites set down in the sacred texts or even inadvertently could bring the same value and effect. Similarly in the play Rani's action of unknowingly pouring the milk with the magical root upon the anthill, the abode of the cobra makes the whole difference. The snake accepts the libation and falls in love with her and finally decides to visit her.

The birth of love in the serpent's heart for Rani in the play works as a source of filling the meaninglessness of Rani's life with happiness. For Rani the Naga (fantasy) is more pleasing and satisfying than her husband Appanna (reality). Naga is her expression of desire and also the fulfilment of her wish for love which she desires from Appanna. The Naga follows the footmark of the mythical version where Naga is worshipped as god of life and creation and not as evil to be detested. In the play, if Appanna is the demon then Naga is the charming prince in Rani's life. A source of new energy, the Naga represents the optimistic aspect, the carrier of a societal reform, breeding a transformation not only in the character of Rani but society at large. A representation of the true life force, Naga is the foundation as well as the conservation and rejuvenation of Rani's dull and morose life.

Naga utilizes the myth of life and fertility inherent in his genetics to train Rani about sex, sleep (*nidra*), food (*ahara*), and copulation (*maithuna*) which are common to man and animal. Naga as the phallic symbol executes as per his nature or *swadharna* and seduces Rani into sex. (Mukherjee 204). He comes disguised as her husband but he cannot change what he really is. While explaining the nature of sex to Rani he says:

Frogs croaking in pelting rain, tortoises singing soundlessly in the dark, foxes, crabs, ants, rattlers, sharks, swallows- even the geese! The female begins to smell like wet earth. And stung by her smell, the king Cobra starts searching for his queen. the tiger bellows for his mate. When the flame-of- forest blossoms into a fountain of red and the earth cracks open at the touch ... within everything that sprouts, grows, stretches, creaks and blooms- everywhere, those who come together, cling, fall apart lazily! It is there and there and there, everywhere.” (Karnad, “*Naga-Mandala*” 45)¹

The passage recalls the creation myth of Uranus and Gaea, and of Heaven and Earth coming together: of the first male and female, Purusha and Prakriti, Yang and Yin. It is this law of life that Rani is ignorant of. Just like the above passage is replete with images of sexual intercourse reaching organic climax. (Mukherjee 204) Naga’s description of the cosmic orgasm mesmerizes Rani so much that when the birds announce dawn, she comments, “Why don’t these birds choke on their own songs? Who has given them the right to mess about other creatures’ night?” (45).

Realistically, Naga represents the modern, new woman’s choice, the right to choose a life overcoming all obstacles to her happiness. He symbolizes the breaking of barriers, crossing of the lines that intend to imprison a woman and distance her from her surroundings as well as her own ‘self’. Naga actually initiates Rani on to the path of transformation. P. Gopichand in his review of the play writes that “Here the psychological need of the neglected Indian housewife in the twenty first century for love and sex becomes a modern myth of adulterous revolt in Karnad’s drama” (n.pag).

¹¹ The subsequent references from the text have been cited with page numbers written in parenthesis.

The love of Naga becomes the support system for Rani. In her dream- like- state, during long moments of isolation, Rani is blissfully intoxicated with Naga's love and throws all caution to the winds regarding her husband's contrasting behaviour. Stranger by day and lover by night, Appanna reflects the schizophrenic temperament of the typical male who is insensitive and selfish. Still a pinch of suspicion remains in Rani's mind, which is finally removed when she finds out that she is pregnant. Assured by her pregnancy she says, "I have definite evidence to prove I was not fantasizing" (50). The child within her finally proves to her that Naga's love is not an illusion but reality. (Keyur. K. Parekh 134-141)

Naga's union brought decisive transformation and change in Rani's character and attitude. Left to wither away in neglect and isolation by her husband, Rani blossomed like a beautiful flower nurtured by the love, care and concern of Naga. He represents everything that her husband should have been but was not. The emotional and moral support she receives from Naga makes her bold enough to assert herself. She becomes strong enough to answer back unnecessary advises, she chides Naga in a statement, "Don't ask questions. Do as I tell you. (*He is silent*)...I am not a parrot. Not a cat or a sparrow. Why don't you take it on trust that I have a mind and explain this charade to me?" (51)

When Appanna finds out about her pregnancy and beats her up accusing her of adultery, she fights back saying, "I swear to you I haven't done anything wrong!"(52) Pure at heart like Thomas Hardy's *Tess*, Rani emerges through this ordeal as the dominant character. However, the transformation of Rani and her emerging identity is actually the result of the emotional support and assistance she receives from the Naga. Anupma Mohan writes:

Rani's success is engineered throughout by Naga and although the sympathy of the audience is firmly with her, it is important to recognize that Naga paves the way not only for the restoration of her rightful place in the marital home, but also procures retributive justice for the erring husband.(6)

By the end of the play, Rani has travelled a long journey from innocence to experience. In the play the main transformation is of the cobra into Rani's husband Appanna. Into this transformation are woven the themes of patriarchal tyranny, female and male sexuality, chastity and adultery and it enables Karnad to present complex human experiences. This transmutation is responsible for the transformation of the character of Rani and Appanna. It is because of the love and support of the cobra that Rani changes towards the end of the play from a very weak, frail archetypal Indian woman to an extremely bold person, who tells her husband: "I was a stupid ignorant girl when you brought me here. But now I am a woman, a wife and I am going to be a mother" (51). Appanna is taken aback when she snarls at him "if you don't let me go, I'll". Appanna also changes and accepts his wife's superiority. "Forgive me I am a sinner, I was blind..." (59)

Even the trial scene of the play can be associated with very prominent Hindu myth of the serpent *Adhishesha* acting as an umbrella to Krishna, the new born. Similarly in *Naga-Mandala*, the hooded serpent elevates the heroine to the state of goddess. In mythology it marked importance of the birth of Lord Krishna while in the play it marks the birth of Rani's creative energies. In addition to inner initiation for the world she is a goddess as she has the privilege of having the hooded serpent on her head.

At the end of the play the serpent stops being a lover. He becomes a child and takes abode in Rani's tresses. Rani says softly to the cobra, "Quick now. Get in. Are you safely in there? Good. Now stay there. And lie still. You don't know how heavy you are. Let me get used to you, will you?" (64). Rani gives a permanent abode to the serpent on her head. She pats him with love and affection. Rani, the lady love of the serpent becomes Rani- the mother to the serpent and also to his offspring. This love inspired ascent can again be mythological traced in elucidations by Northrop Frye in his book *The Secular Scripture*, where the great example of the theme is Dante's *Purgatoria*. Dante is inspired by his love Beatrice to climb a mountain leading to the Garden of Eden. In making this climb Dante is returning to his own original state as a climb of Adam. This means that he is moving towards self-recognition scene. (51-52) The spiral ascent leads Dante and Beatrice to Beulah, the place of innocent love and

after reaching Beulah, Beatrice becomes his mother and Dante becomes a whimpering Italian child so the beloved becomes mother. This is the myth of the story within the story.

The play has effectively used the myth of Naga to bring out many revelations about the story of a wife and a husband. It has been only with the Naga incarnation that the story reaches its climax and without that the story would not have been able to get the required result. The Naga through his playoffs and tricky demeanour reveals the indifferent attitude of Appanna who exploits his wife days after days as a domestic servant. The presence of Naga helps in acknowledging the dire need of a wife for her husband's attention that she can go to any limits to win him. It surfaces the significance of the love, respect and trust in a husband-wife relationship which when breached leads to many confusions and complexities.

Myth regarding the chastity- Since the beginning of the Indian patriarchal system, chastity is one of the most dominating and yet hidden societal chain that has always confined women for decades. The conception of chastity aligns with another morose concept that for a woman to think about sex is evil and corrupt and the most important duty for them in life is to preserve their morality and chastity. Parents of a girl child always try to check and take care of the situations which are knowingly or unknowingly communicated to them. Loosing of a women's chastity is considered worse and irremovable social stigma.

In this stereotypical suffocating society where the concept of chastity is revered so much it naturally paves way for a poor and non-viable self-concept for a woman who becomes burdened under such unreasonable moralistic expectations. This rigid cultural belief regarding chastity is not without many deep seated reasons which include the socialization process, the influence of religion, mythology and the literature.

Socialization is a process of programming by society e.g., while sex is biological, gender becomes a social assemble. Whether an individual is male or female is determined at birth, but a "masculine or feminine" virtue becomes fixed by the society. Apart from biological sex i.e., - women's ability to menstruate, conceive and give birth – and men's capacity to impregnate, the traits coupled with masculinity and femininity

includes many societal interferences. In most societies, this socialization process of character formation may be different but in Indian society it has been continuing long in the orthodox fashion.

This socialization includes the criteria of Indian religion where boys are expected to be independent, brave and free while women are always caged, dominated and controlled. Girls are always trained to be submissive, obedient and of high character while no such standard bars exist for a boy. This is what makes Simone de Beauvoir say, “one is not born, but rather become woman” (*The Second Sex* 295). This procedure of teaching begins at birth and the lessons are re-enforced and revised on several instances.

Coming to Indian mythology it provides many such examples where women go to unthinkable extents just to protect their chastity. These examples are set standards for the conservative Indian society which always wants their women following this typical league of mythological ladies. The sacrifices done by Sita, Savitri or Rani Padmini in order to protect their chastity have made them ideal personification for the character of Indian woman. Typically, nothing less than this high degree of expectations bear in the minds of each and every men in the Indian society. Traditionally Indian terminology defines “good woman” as synonymous with good wife and good wife must be chaste, faithful and virtuous like Sita or Savitri. For both man and woman in Hindu society, the ideal woman has been traditionally personified by Sita who is portrayed in *Ramayana* as the quintessence of wifely devotion. As per the myth of *Ramayana*, Sita was subjected to the whims of her husband who abandons her only because of a commoner’s derogatory remarks. Rani Padmani was a queen who became victim of the physical lust of the dominant ruler of Delhi, Alauddin Khalji, so sacrificed her life, by jumping into the fire, to save her honour and Savitri was one who brought back her husband’s life from *Yamraj*(King of Death). All these highly idolised women from Indian scriptures laid their lives for their husbands and never involved in their self-concern as Dr S. Prassanne Sree writes, “In scripts and myths woman is always depicted either as a goddess or sub-human creator, never as A Complete human being” (185)

It has been with this benchmark of thoughts regarding the expectation of women's high character and morality that the apprehensions regarding fidelity and chastity becomes normally ingrained in the socio-cultural psyche. Further, this notion gets fanned up by the dirty politics of authority controlled by men for their privileged power. Sadly, for their own benefits, the orthodox patriarchal system authorize these biased unexplained beliefs in their favour easily by not only dominating women for ages but also by lowering down their image in the society. Men very unfairly command the values strictly for women and they, just like an obedient corn, follow the straight line, by observing meticulously what is dictated to them. It is seriously a patriarchal conception that men utilise to dominate and oppress women. Apparently, men have succeeded fairly in this manipulative notion for instance women who are raped or deceived by their lovers commit suicide but the same is not true about men.

Dr.S.Prassana Sree writes "the concept chastity is gender biased and proves to be more stronger than locks locked up by men"(185). This tradition has further survived through social psychology as well as individuals specifically through the social agents, the elders and the seniors in the family and society, mothers and fathers who ensconce same morals into their daughter's mind and consciousness from very childhood. Thus very easily all the factors of socialization, religion, mythology, literature have secretly joined hands to always subordinate women. (Amar nath Parsad, Kanupriya, 177)

Focusing on the text of *Naga-Mandala*, Rani is protected with love and care by her mother and father in her childhood but in her teenage years opposite to her thoughts, her father decides her marriage with a stranger without her consent. Unfortunately, her husband Appanna decides her fate to be lonely and loveless. She has none to talk with or share her miseries or to do anything to change her fate written by the dictates of men in her life. Rani suffers from severe repression and alienation. Confined and left alone without a single soul around her the whole day, she starts hallucinating. Her deepest need for affection, companionship and comfort finds way through her various dreams that disclose the severe state of dejection and despair that is going through her mind in her seclusion.

According to her desires, she fantasizes a lovable and affectionate Appanna with whom she spends happy time regularly. Actually this gentle Appanna is a Naga

incarnate who has fallen in love with Rani after drinking the love potion. Everything went on smoothly until Rani becomes pregnant with the child of the Naga. Until now, the real Appanna was entirely indifferent towards the whereabouts of his wife but now this shakes his manly demeanour. According to the societal codes, as discussed above a married woman should essentially stomach a child from her husband and any breach of this ethical code brings disgrace to her and the family members. But Rani, against the dictums of marriage, sleeps with Naga in the absence of her husband and loses her chastity and thus wrongs the concept of fidelity.

The unfair part of this condemnation imposed upon Rani is that the patriarchal culture has applied these fidelity values only for women to curtail their free will and movement whereas men have full right for extra-marital relations. Before this breach of conduct Appanna freely visits his mistress and is completely indifferent towards Rani. None in the society crop up to stop Appanna but when Rani's character comes under surveillance all the members of the society become highly furious. Appanna takes advantage of this situation of suspicion and cages Rani into a room. This confinement symbolizes "the chastity belt of the Middle ages, the reduction of women's talents to house, work and the exclusion of women from enlightenment and enjoyment"(Seetha 198) . There is a similar incident narrated in K. Radhai's research project in Bharathiar University on Girish Karnad where he provides instances from Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. Carvina has a very charming wife Celia and to protect her beauty from the worldly sight, he always locks her .When he sends her to spend a night with Valpone to fulfil his selfish interests, she refuses to do so. This instance exposes the hard fact that chastity is not merely regulated by men but is also a fair part of female psyche not only in India but all over the world.

Just like Celia who tries to protect her chastity in spite of not loving her husband, Rani also goes through the snake ordeal to protect her chastity from social derogation. In both the cases no such attempt was needed, Celia could have happily followed her husband's wish and Rani could have objected from the trial as for her the Naga is none but her husband. In both the cases more than social obligation, their own desire to prove their worth as a chaste woman comes to the forefront and pushes them to do the hard part. In this process Rani and Celia both grows out to be much stronger and

firm in mind and soul. Rani after confirming her chastity is proclaimed as a Goddess by the society and so she progresses from a simple, submissive girl into a confident and courageous lady.

The snake ordeal in *Naga-Mandala* also exposes that the concept of chastity is completely mythical. In case of Rani, though she is innocent by heart and soul but one cannot deny the fact of her physical chastity infringement. But when with the help of the Naga she passes the snake ordeal even her husband Appanna instead of attempting to know the reality goes spellbound. Instead of fighting for the truth he without doubting the entire proceedings accepts her wife as a goddess. This clears that it is society who is responsible for making and destroying cultural beliefs. When society proclaims Rani as a goddess, Appanna without a word also accepts Rani as his wife and a goddess. A.K Ramanujan discusses how the story “mocks the classic chastity test, the test of truth. In the Ramayana, Sita comes through the ordeal of fire because she is truly chaste and faithful. Here, the woman comes through the ordeal of handling a venomous snake only because she has a lover-it is her infidelity that is used to prove she is a *pativrata*, a faithful wife” (51).

Rani’s trial is like the trial of mythical Sita, Savitri and Draupadi who defied patriarchal authority by proving their chastity. Her test becomes a metaphor to mock at the male ego and gender superiority. Ultimately, she emerges victorious from the Snake trial to be hailed as a Goddess by the villagers who were to judge her crime. Society can never accept or come to terms with a woman strong enough to be assertive and independent, even if it does accept a woman as the leader; it does so grudgingly and after much ado. A woman can be a slave or a goddess but never an equal.

By the end of the play, Rani has travelled a long journey from a simple submissive girl to a confident courageous goddess. In this long tiring route to experience she succeeds in winning for herself a happy contented family life. However, since Rani, Appanna and the Naga are very much aware of their infidelity, the concept of chastity is unimportant in actual life. As the Story says, “it is something one has to live with, like a husband who snores or a wife who is going bald” (60). P. D Nimsarkar writes “Chastity and fidelity are misnomer, the values developed for the subjective

purpose but neither men nor women shall attach so much significance lest it render life full of complexes and problems” (135).

Myth regarding the magical root- In mythology and literature, the myth regarding the magical potion is usually created to heal bewitch or poison people. For example, love potions could make a person fall in love (or become deeply infatuated) with another (the love potion figures tragically in most versions of the tale of *Tristan and Iseult*, including Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*); sleeping potions cause a person to fall asleep (in folklore, this can range from normal sleep to a deathlike trance); and elixirs heal/cure any wound/malady (as in C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and The Wardrobe*). *Gosciny and Uderzo's* character Asterix the Gaul gained superhuman might from a magic potion prepared by the druid Getafix. Formation of potions of different kinds was a common observance of alchemy, and was universally associated with witchcraft, as in *The Tragedy of Macbeth* by William Shakespeare. (P.D Nimsarkar 137)

In *Naga-Mandala* it is Kurudavva who plans to give the magical root to Rani who would further serve it to Appanna in the hope of changing his nature into a loving husband. Kurudavva is Rani's mother-in-law's friend who wants to bring love and affection in the morose life of Rani. While Rani's attempt to apply this method is out of a positive thinking for enjoying her conjugal bliss, it results in complicating her life. The experiment of the magic root increases her existential queries with the thought that magic is the manoeuvring of psychic action.

In addition to the myth related with the magical root, even the character of Kurudavva has its spring in myths. Normally it was in villages that girls mainly from established families use to take help from the sorceresses to seduce the young man of their liking. The sorceress (equivalent to modern day *Pundits* and *Babas*) in ancient times often used to be picturized as an old and ugly lady living in an excluded den with involvement only in supernatural powers just as Rajinder Paul terms her as “ a female Tiresias of sorts- a village woman old and blind” in his review (2) . Usually people used to visit her with their problems and the problems were resolved by administering magical roots or food or eatables which can be easily served.

V.Rangan has drawn similarity between Kurudavva and *Kunti* myth. In order to devote her husband's attention towards her sister, *Madri*, the second wife, she shares the magical power, obtained from a mendicant, with *Madri* efficaciously. Analogous to this instance, in the play Kurudavva first used the magical roots to seduce a suitable husband for herself and later shares her magical roots with Rani for her to seduce Appanna. Kurudavva was born blind and nobody wanted to marry her. One day a mendicant came to their house and as she was lonely in the house, she prepared a lavish food and "served him to his heart's content" (33). Having delighted with her devoted service the mendicant gave her three pieces of root and blessed that "Any man who eats one of them will marry you" (12). As advised Kurudavva dishes up the root to a boy and he falls in love with her immediately. The marriage was solemnized in few days and Kappana was born of this alliance. Years later, when Kurudavva met Rani then she could feel her pain and misery and consequently to improve her pathetic condition she decides to pass on her magical roots to the grief-stricken girl. (P.D Nimsarkar 137)

Initially Rani was reluctant to follow the advice and magic craft of Kurudavva but Kurudavva persuades her intently and asks her to mix the paste of the root in the glass of milk. Rani in hope of her better future did likewise but the small root failed to seduce Appanna. Apprehending the gravity of the situation, that "this is no ordinary infatuations, may be she's cast a spell" (36), Kurudavva gives Rani a bigger piece of root asking her to mix the paste of it into the curry. On mixing the paste of the magic root in the curry, she is scared to see the colour of the dish changing into deep red. In instant stimulation, restlessness and dread of danger to Appanna's life, she empties the mixture into an ant-hill near her house. This may be an error of her destiny, "But, an error of destiny leads both of them, and, subsequently, the entire story towards literal disaster. Can we call this disaster a part of human destiny, or result of human error, or owing to a thirst is a matter of debate"(Dr.Gunjun Agarwal 5) .In its effect , the paste of the magic root quickly works on the Naga in the ant-hill and he falls in love with Rani.

Naga, the king Cobra, gets overwhelmed with Rani's beauty, exquisiteness and long black tresses on her head. As in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night*, Puck uses the love juice and insanity overcomes, similarly the root given by Kurudavva converts

the Naga into Rani's lover. For Naga, Rani seems to be like a *Yakshya* (Naga) woman. He comes as an incarnate Appanna and rescues Rani from her suffering. The Naga enters Rani's room through the drain of the bathroom during her sleep and pats her gently like a small child. Surprised initially with this strange behaviour of his loveless husband, Rani with passage of time gets used to this affectionate behaviour. This becomes regular practice and Naga visits her every night. Sympathizing with Rani for her dilemma, Naga here acts as a male sex surrogate in treating Rani of her frigidity. Their love continues for some days; however Rani does not know whether the alchemy of magic root has affected Appanna fully or partially. But she is sure that it has affected the chemistry of Appanna's love for her. In this context G.C Behera rightly views "this love between human and snake like that between Arjuna and Snake princess Ulupi, between Bhima and Snake Princess Nagabala romantically celebrated in Mahabharata is common in our myths preserved in collective consciousness, that lends credibility and comprehensibility to the story"(11). Both Appanna and Naga are two face of one man-one seen at day, the other at night who symbolizes the exploitation and double standard of man. The snake lover's magical visits to Rani in the form of Appanna after enjoying the love potion of magic roots, is determined by the familiar folk logic that beauty and innocence must triumph without the overt violation of norms. (G. Baskaren 226)

Apparently the myth of the Naga is the key myth in the story whereas the myths of chastity and magical root serve as complimentary myths. Other allied cum reference myths in the story like 'Ganesha', 'Flames symbolizing Agni' 'Devi' and 'Hanuman' are some other myths included in the story. *Ganesha* is the possible deity whose broken idol resides in the temple. *Ganesha* is a Hindu God who is always invoked before any enterprise and especially in the beginning of the book. In the play, Karnad leaves his identity concealed for the readers to have their own perceptions. The Flames in the play suggest the presence of mythical *Agni*. Edward Shils writes that *Agni* symbolizes "fire [...] the ever new beginning. As the bestower of immortality [...] acted as a mediator between gods and men" (65). In the play also Flames play the pivotal role as supernatural beings thus mediating between their creator God and the human virtues and vices. The myth of Devi highlights in the play when Rani is proclaimed as a Devi incarnate by the village elders after her snake ordeal. The disposition of a Devi as a

Hindu Goddess is divided into two central roles including both compassion and ferocity. Rani in the play justifies her role as a benevolent Devi characterizing love and affection. Another interpretation of the character of Rani as Goddess incarnate is that of *Lakshmi*. *Lakshmi*, as Edward Shils explains is Goddess of 'good fortune', is "not only universal mother of life in her benevolent life-increasing aspect, but more in her magnanimous wisdom-bestowing activities she is the entrance to transcendental life" (78), and a source of enlightenment. The snake ordeal can be parallelized with the symbolic 'beauty and the beast' myth. (Inam UL Haq 22)

Concluding by the statement provided by Inam UL Haq on the importance of myth in the play that "Rani has experienced some high density events that have brought about her hidden and inhibited potentials to the limelight, the myths have facilitated her multi-tiered empowerment as a complete subject from a split subject, a submissive girl to an assertive woman, a mother and lastly a 'goddess incarnate', channelized her transformation and her journey from innocence to experience is completed"(22).

3.b. Authorial Context

The next fundamental criterion in Sarah Cardwell basic theory to analyze adaptation process is the authorial context. This measure basically allows the audience to build up beforehand expectations even prior to the evaluation of the work. These expectations base their standards by studying of Author's life-history, prior works, reviews, his essential take on the society and literature and many other details about his personality. It basically explains the motive and reasons behind the writing. In the case of artists, inspiration always arrives from many social occurrences or some private feelings of personal agony. In case of Girish Karnad, his becoming a writer was an outcome of a remarkable agonizing journey of identity crisis, not merely of the Neo-Indian find for individualism but a personal quest for distinctiveness amidst the angst ridden life he lived. This find for self- distinctiveness became a hallmark for all his creations. In addition to this, all his works display a portion of life and society in the real world which suffers from inner vacuity and outer vanities. He while dealing with the present day realities in his plays, highlights the need of ethics on one hand and

negotiates it with essentiality on the other. An effort to connect the bygone moments and present lifetime often becomes a part of Karnad's writing.

His plays right from *Yayati* to *The Wedding Album* have a story line with which his audience is more or less familiar. He handles the plot in a very oft-repeated but highly suggestive manner of investing an old legend with a new meaning which has an urgent relevance to present day thinking about man and his world. His *Tughlaq* mythicizes history, *Hayavadana* is based on Vetala Panchavimsati; *Yayati* and *Fire and the Rain* have been derived from *The Mahabharata*. *Tale-Dande* is inspired by social reformist – Bhasavesvara, the Virasaiva. Whenever he confronts the complex realities of human society, his first task is to get help from old legends and basic scriptures to portray the crisis of the present times.

It is basically Karnad's childhood exposure to street plays in Karnataka villages and his familiarity with western dramas staged in Bombay which has induced him to retell the secular legends of India to suit the modern context. For Karnad every play is "contemporary" and thus by using the 'grammar of literary archetype', Karnad links the past and the present, the archetypal and the real. Inam UL Haq's reviews the writing process of Girish Karnad that "The artist takes on the role of the creator to retrieve, recycle and re-establish myths for the contemporary audience and, by applying his creative genius; he throws a lurid light on the social concerns prevailing in the society" (2). He never employs a myth in its wholeness but uses a portion of it which is useful and rest is complimented by the heights of his imagination to make an appealing story. As Suniti Kumar Chatterji writes that in the works of Karnad "the borrowed tales are given a turn of the screw, as it were, which works wonders with his plays" (36).

Furthermore, Inam UL Haq writes "Karnad's concern is the objective portrayal of myth serving as an integral part to the story of a woman overwhelmed in the quest for identity, empowerment and self-actualization, in a mechanized and constricting society." (2). The play leaves the audience to ponder on the concept of social laws which discriminate woman from men and which expects wife's loyalty even to her insensitive and cruel husband. For instance in the play Rani has to undergo trial in order to prove her innocence, but Appanna, the husband can easily indulge in adultery which goes

unnoticed. Like these many other issues raising feminist and cultural concerns have been discussed in the following section.

Feminist Concerns – Without doubt feminist issues flaunt as an integral part of Girish Karnad's writing. In all his major writings he successfully exhibits the portrait of an Indian woman who in spite of being bullied down by stereotypical societal set-up excels as a true fighter. He displays the soaring high and undaunted spirit of Indian women who is capable enough to unchain all the shackles of tradition and culture tied to her. These ambitious woman characters of Karnad have been successfully fighting to achieve equal rights in a male chauvinist society. Though loneliness and dejection always stand as barriers during this battle of sexes but still Karnad's women victoriously outclass in their different roles as a mother, wife or a lover.

Charging against the stereotypical notions of sexuality- Karnad attributes such a broad minded attitude regarding the issues of women that he never hesitated to ponder over many under the wrap women subjects. To begin with he effectively argues about a much sensitive concept of sexuality and helps in unveiling the women consciousness in this connection. For Karnad sexuality had a much superior and advanced implication. Tutun Mukherjee writes that Karnad discusses “women sexuality and adultery with such honesty, treating them as ‘normal’ human response and not as something sinful”(43). To Tutun Mukherjee, Karnad further reveals, “I used to know a married woman once who positively blossomed after she had extra-marital affair. If womanhood finds fulfillment in love that happens to be outside marriage, why should that be considered wrong? Radha's love for Krishna was such” (43). This means that for Karnad it would rather be a beneficial act if a woman gets enlightened by a socially offensive alliance. Such kind of liberal thinking in Karnad got its roots from his adolescent years which gave him many such memories that intimated in him high sense of equality of gender and free human relationship between opposite sexes.

In addition to his private experiences in the family life and conventional society Tutun Mukherjee reveals that Karnad has researched, “ a rich discourse on sexuality in Indian literary tradition –for instance, the works of Vatsayana, Dhanajaya, Dandin and the whole *rasa* theory-which middle class inhibitions make us repress. It is not as

though we need to commodify our cultural heritage” (36). As such all of Girish Karnad’s women along with bearing their roots in Indian myths and legends fight boldly against patriarchy, traditional customs and morality by employing the discourse of gender and sexuality.

In the play *Naga-Mandala*, Rani's pregnancy with the Naga’s child supplies the play with its most stimulating attempt of discourse on sexuality. As we all know Indian Vedas and scriptures declare that a woman going outside her marriage for physical relationship is considered hideous and evil and so it is always her prime duty to secure her chastity. Apparently, every woman as part of Indian society does accept this code of conduct without any queries or arguments. Nevertheless, Karnad through the story of Rani very cleverly strikes at the roots of this orthodox cultural construct. He not only provides Rani with a lover but allows her to get pregnant with his child and on top of it smartly gets Rani respectably accepted by the society as a goddess. Rani passes the snake-ordeal to prove her chastity and everyone gets what they want, the society a new goddess and Rani her much desired life with a loving husband and child. So Karnad through the portrayal of Rani, attempts to strike at the stereotypical conception of sexuality. He provides wings of freedom to this intimidated topic to explore at length emotions and desires of women.

Providing Panacea through dreams and fantasies- Moreover along with this charging against the clichéd notions regarding sexuality, Karnad provide Rani a panacea in the form of her dreams and fantasies through which she finds rescue from her miserable state. When Rani faces hard times with no love from her husband and no one to sympathize with her sad, lonely situation, Karnad allows Rani to find her happiness through dreams and fantasies. The concept of fantasy and imagination has been a vital component of literary writing, Sigmund Freud while commenting on the role of the usage of the element of fantasy in the literary world writes:

The unreality of the writer’s imaginative world... has however very important consequences for the techniques of his art; for many things which, if they were real, could give no enjoyment, can do so in the play of fantasy. (144)

The observations of Freud are very much relevant in the context of the writings of Girish Karnad. A lover of traditional tales, all the major works of Karnad deal with myth, folklore and magic. His works are richly impregnated by elements of facts and fantasy. Although fantasy deals with impossible and bizarre it provides an undercover display of the anxieties of the contemporary world. No doubt many agree that reality is cruel and harsh but the world of fantasy is always much happier and pleasing.

K. Radhai in his research project on Karnad while handling the element of fantasy explains that an important component of fantastical writing is levels of transformation. A fantasy leads to transformation or shape-shifting which need not always be physical but can also be emotional and psychological. Along with *Naga-Mandala*, the text of *Hayavadana* by Karnad also exhibits this format of transformation. In *Hayavadana*, shape shifting is instrumental, as it illumines the characters. The important shape-shifting is the inter-changing of the bodies of Kapila and Devadatta. In a fit of worry, in the Kali temple Padmini joins Devadatta's head with Kapila's body and both of them become a blend of both. Though in reality it is impossible for such things to occur, when it is shown to happen on the stage it amuses the audiences and takes them to an another fantasy world. Focusing on *Naga-Mandala*, there are transformations both at physical level – the flames supposing female voices; the story takes the form of a woman, the song transforming into a *saree* and the Naga takes the form of a man. In addition to these there are many emotional and psychic transformations. (Natesan Sharda Iyer 119)

To begin with the Flames in the story demonstrate human attributes and join in the temple to gossip about the different ways of life. Their changing form points out that the day of reality is over and the mysterious night of illusion and fantasy has taken its control. The different flames while recounting their stories expose a world of speechless and lifeless beings that converse and create a typology of practical characters. Through such character sketches, Karnad makes an effort to discover and portray the meaning of imagination.

Next we have the character of Story who takes in the form of a young woman and enters the temple. She is sad because it is useless to narrate her story to the flames

as they would be unable to pass on the same. In such an unsettling situation, the Author agrees to listen to the story of the young woman with a promise to pass on the story to the next listener. Karnad wants to highlight the characteristics of oral tales which are just like “travelling metaphors” and provides fresh additions with every new narration. (Svita Goel 117)

As the tale of Rani commences, everything gets transformed and created according to Rani’s capacity to fantasize. The Naga physically transforming into the form of Appanna and appearing only in the absence of real Appanna is indicator to the fantasizing tendency of Rani. It seems Rani is playing smart by trying to find answers only in her fantasies and ignoring facts completely and by doing such; she manipulates the whole story cleverly. The birth of a child may be a reality and the father could be Appanna but Rani assumes or imagines that it is the child of Naga. Appanna’s concubine transforming as Rani’s maid and Appanna changing from an arrogant person to a devoted husband all are instances of transformations directed by the fantastical imaginations of Rani. Finally Rani herself transforms from a submissive girl to a deity is also a big emotional and physiological transformation which may be part of Rani’s inventive fantasies, which she thinks have come true.

It basically goes to the artistic credit of the Karnad that human feelings like jealousy, love, hate, passion and revenge all together get articulated in the play through the woman’s fantastical vision. Basically, Karnad through this play prizes the fantasy world of Rani which gave her everything but he also gives an undercover approval for adultery and extra-marital relationship which seems a little hard for traditional Indian audiences to digest.

Assertion for gender equality- This effort by Karnad to help women unlock the gates of orthodox Indian constructs is part of his inherent concern for human welfare that drives him to strike a chord of concern for equality. For him both male and female are equal creations by God having equal caliber and worth. However, Indian women still are the major sufferers of the crisis of inequality and so suitably become fit a subject for Karnad’s writing. Whether married or unmarried, Indian women are subjects of different kinds of deficiency, disgrace, discrimination and discredit in every facet of life

in one form or the other. The dramatist not only unmasks the cruelty of the structure where women are regarded as “second sex”, “other”, “nonpersona” but also questions the way women are habituated through the course of socialization to incorporate the continuous hegemonic principles and lower their own status to maintain the state of restraint and repression. Patriarchal authority denies them suitable possibilities to recognize their inherent strength and capabilities as human beings. “Gender equality still remains a myth...the discussion of the relationship between man and woman has been prescribed by man not by woman. Man who is ruled by the mastery-motive has imposed her limits on woman. She accepts it because of biosocial reasons.”(Krishnamayi, 64-65)

Many plays of Karnad depict this suppressed position of women. Yayati is polygamous by nature and is married with many women. It is his dire lust for youth which changes Chitrlekha’s auspicious marriage day to her last day. In *Tughlaq*, the king’s mother is speechless when both the husband and son are killed by Tughlaq and he further orders to kill his step-mother by stoning her. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Vishakha is used as an instrument of experiment by her husband Parvasu and she is molested by Yavakri. Similarly, in *Naga-Mandala*, Rani is rejected by her husband Appanna and her position is given to a concubine.

This was not the position of women in early ages. In ancient period as the RigVeda describes “women were fully the equal of men as regards access to and capacity for the highest knowledge, even the knowledge of the Absolute or Brahma” (Mookerjee 1). In many religious scriptures and *Dharamshastras* woman is referred not only as a deity, but also an important part of man’s existence and progress, also called as ‘Adi Shakti’. The proverbial saying, ‘Yatra naryastu puhyante, ramante tatra devatah’(Dr. Sunil Mishra, Dr. Shweta Singh, Dr. Parul Mishra 346) conveys the message that God resides where woman is worshipped. In addition to her highly dignified position as ‘Prithvi’, she is given the role of an advisor, partner, slave, mother, friend guardian and seducer:

Karyeshu mantra, Karmeshu dassi

Rupecha laxmi, Kashmaya dharitri.

Bhojeshu mata, Shayaneshu rambha,

Shat karma yukta, Kula Dharmapatni. (Mishra, Singh and Parul Mishra
346)

Her creation is an amalgamation of the strength of all the Gods and she exudes the force of the purest form of energy. However with the passage of time, in later period, such glorious concept of woman vanished slowly and patriarchal domination lowered down her identity. Male dominated societal dictums have taken their toll on women and left them as second class citizens in desperate need of Gender Mainstreaming. Virginia Woolf asserts in *A Room of One's Own*, "Imaginatively, she's of the highest importance, practically insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover... but absent from history" (44). Indian literature is replete with examples where women have to face the brunt of societal taboos. Works of Mulk Raj Anand, R. K Narayan, Raja Rao and many other prominent writers provide lucid instances of Indian feminine roles which grow under the shadows of tradition from being passive to outright rebels.

Girish Karnad's *Naga-Mandala* is one such example where a naive girl experiences the life of hell because of her husband's insensitivity and disloyalty and towards the end she is proclaimed with the status of goddess by the same insensible husband and society. The story tells the tale of a common woman named Rani (Queen of her parent's house) who gets married to Appanna which literally means 'any man' just to be caged and locked. The patriarchal order utilizes marriage as an effective tool to repress as well as oppress women on various levels ---physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual and social. Toril Moi holds the view: "They have been victimized, intellectually, emotionally and physically by men" (67). In her father's house although she is loved and cherished but her individual identity and freedom never have any whereabouts. Following this trend, she gets married without her consent and is passed from one cage to another and none from her fatherly house ever comes to see her throughout the story. Just like many other Indian father's, Rani's father also considered marriage nothing but a financial deal, thereby ignoring other aspects of a meaningful alliance. "Her fond father found her a suitable husband. The young man was rich and

his parents were both dead” (27). The word ‘suitable’ is used satirically as Appanna; a disloyal and insensitive person is a complete mismatch for innocent Rani. Through Rani’s marriage alliance Girish Karnad explains a very common fact prevalent in Indian society, where women are considered as products and are passed on from one male head to another in the gamble of arranged marriages. Sudhir Kakar aptly comments on such a situation that “dominant psycho-social realities of a woman’s life can be condensed into three stages First, she is a daughter to her parents; second she is a wife to her husband (and daughter-in law to his parents): and third she is a mother to her sons (and daughters)” (57). It is through these three important relationships that a woman realizes herself.

After marriage, Rani is ignored; sexually, physically she is manhandled; emotionally she is trampled, intellectually she is muted and socially she is ex-communicated. Consequently, she is left with no individual voice or choice as a respectable citizen of the human society. Dr. Somveer writes in his article about the sad plight of Rani that “As a young girl, Rani has preferences and proclivities; desires and dreams, needs and necessities, but she has to suppress all of these in the face of stiff and strong hegemonic system” (*From Margins to Centre: Rani’s Journey in Girish Karnad’s Naga-Mandala 2*). Appanna’s inhuman instincts forefronts the very first day after marriage when he leaves to meet his mistress and locks Rani while saying “...I’ll be back tomorrow at noon. Keep my lunch ready. I shall eat and go” (27). Neither he discloses anything about his whereabouts and nor does Rani have any guts to question about his visits. The patriarchal setup has trained her to be polite and supportive; introvert and obedient, shy and forbearing in her marital life.

Rani undergoes an intense level of alienation and loneliness. As there is none who listens to her miseries, complete demolition of individual personality is expected. M. Rajeshwar observes:

In tradition-bound societies like India the repression one has to put up with is usually very severe and resultant suffering often assumes pathetic proportions for sensitive individuals. Among Indians again the women

happen to be the worst sufferers as the social norms and moral codes have been so framed as to be particularly disadvantageous to them. (141)

Sigmund Freud is of the view that subjugation of one's basic desires delivers an intense shock to the consciousness of an individual. As such repressed urges get their passage through dreams, fantasies and hallucination. Similarly, Rani, sufferer of intense alienation and loneliness, seeks refuge in world of dreams, fantasies and hallucination. She fantasizes about an eagle which takes her away from her sad world of loneliness to the company of her parents. Her dreams thus become the depiction of her innermost longings and desires.

At this critical stage in Rani's life, she does not shut the door behind her like Nora in *A Doll's House* but God opens a new resort for her and Kurudavva, a blind and aged woman comes to her help. The theme of resourcefulness is also depicted in Fahmida Riaz's short story "The Daughter of Aai" where village women are shown as "active collaborators" in each other's problems. A proverb by Charlotte Bronte in *Villette* aptly compliments Rani's situation:

Peril, loneliness, an uncertain future, are not passive evils, so long as the frame is healthy and the faculties are employed; so long, especially, as liberty lends us her wings, and hope guides us by her star. (qtd in Raina 2)

She offers Rani a magical root to win the love of her husband but unluckily destiny had some other plans for Rani as the events lead into an unexpected situation. Ironically, the magical potion wins in seducing a Cobra living in the ant-hill and the Cobra in the guise of Appanna, starts visiting Rani in the nights and finally impregnates her.

Rani's pregnancy supplies the play with its most dramatic portrayal of gender inequality. Karnad's ability here lies in his exploring out the moment of woman's fertility as at once an achievement of the patriarchal yearning as well as an acknowledgment of it as patriarchy's earnest danger. The disclosure of the pregnancy occurs twice in the play: the first is Rani's admission of her pregnancy to Naga, a personal moment, rendered as profoundly moving and yet also very anxiety-ridden.

Naga's reaction to Rani's revelation calls upon a usual dialogue of silence and humiliation. Rani's moment of feminine victory, as she sharply notes, is distorted by Naga to one of covert disgrace. The second confession occurs when Appanna finds out, and is an aggressive one, and this begins a public acknowledgement of the private desire and act. Through both revelations, Rani's own voice gets lost and her biggest achievement is turned into a failure. Instead of prizing the birth of a child in both the occasions Rani is subdued and restrained from any emotions of happiness or joy. In turn her purity is doubted and she is declared a culprit who has to undergo a public snake ordeal to prove her innocence.

Finally after proving her innocence through the snake ordeal, Rani is given the status of goddess by the village elders. Nevertheless, to lead a normal happy family life and being worshipped as goddess are two contradictory ideas and it is impossible to reconcile both. The base line remains that male clan either wants women to be inferior to them and serve them at their beck and call or is ready to revere them on a much higher divine status. But for the male chauvinist society to accept women as equal to them seems an impossible thought in this rigid orthodox ritualistic society.

Cultural Concerns- Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor defines culture as, “that complex whole of which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1). This definition carries with itself the entire terminology which suitably ingrains itself the defining elements of literature. In culture as well as literature, human is the centripetal force and so consequently both have been assisting each other with ample sources in every form. Just as human culture is unacceptable without literature, even literature is impossible without human culture justifying the inseparability of both the ideologies. Accordingly, creative writers since the dawn of the cult of writing have inherited culture in their works. No different, Girish Karnad has also been very curious about the relevance of various cultural perceptions and philosophies, historical circumstances, stereotypical beliefs which become an indivisible part of Indian civilization. This deep interest in Indian scriptures, legends, myths and folklore makes his works an ensemble of rich mythological traditions of the precedent times.

Sadly, these priceless cultural artifacts received heavy damages at the hands of colonizers who left indelible foreign influences that have led to extraordinary alterations in the social philosophy of the country. It is this reason that influences Girish Karnad and many more contemporary writers to make an effort to bring about a 'cultural renaissance' on the Indian literary prospect. He tries to collaborate through his writings those all old cultural relics along with a modern dramatic texture. This endeavor has rightly procured for him the title of the "Renaissance man" (Kalida and Rahmat) who has been treaded along by many other prominent writers of his age like Dharamveer Bharti, Mohan Rakesh and Vijay Tendulkar- , all of whom have given a new life to the Indian theatre. Svita Goel reviews regarding the writing process of this group of writers, "their return to and discovery of tradition was inspired by a search for roots and a quest for identity. This was part of the whole process of decolonization of our life-style, values, social institutions, creative forms and cultural modes" (204).

India is one such country where culture is highly cherished as something pristine and valuable. The hold of cultural traditions and beliefs are so strong that an individual human existence barely finds any personal space. This cultural stress along with the dilemma of existential existence voices out in the dramatic corpus of Girish Karnad works. Focusing upon *Naga-Mandala* it particularly seems to be projecting socialization process of both men and women in the Indian culture where marriage is most often the first experience of love and sex for most of the people. The play investigates the male and female growth into selfhood, and their adjustment with the social roles appointed for them by the cultural concerns of the society. Culture of a society, primarily of Indian society rests upon myths and folk tales which in an Indian patriarchal society are male- oriented and highlights the male unconscious fears and wishes. In these mythical stories, the desires and anxieties of the women hardly find any proper expression and *Naga-Mandala* is one such example of a mythical story. It is a significant work which argues about the important issue of female aspirations for social freedom and sexual satisfaction by confronting the commands of patriarchy and destabilizing the patriarchal formation of cultural and gender dialogue. In contrary to any particular racial discrimination, it is the entire feminine class which is the target of male bigotry and Rani being the lead character becomes the representative of it.

Including the subordination of a woman by male chauvinism instrumented through gender and culture constructs, Karnad also forefronts a brave display of feminine desire to challenge such typical prejudices. The struggle of Rani's does not end with mere challenging the societal code of conduct but she even succeeds in fulfilling her sexual desires and accomplishing dreams which lay dormant in Karnad's other female characters like Padmani in *Hayavadana* and Devyani and Sharmishtha in *Yayati*.

The subject of illicit relation outside marriage is a taboo in Indian culture and chastity is a high priced value in Indian society. However, in the play Karnad indirectly defends Rani's act of infidelity by stating it as a metaphor. Rani falls in love with the Naga, who visits her every night in the form of her husband Appanna. So during the day she is locked by her cruel husband Appanna whereas her caged emotion of love and passion finds release at night when the Naga comes to love and caress her. This overlapping of the identities between the Naga and the Appanna creates confusion among Rani and Appanna. The darkness of the night and the mystified identities provides Rani the chance to break the restrictions of patriarchy and implement her own discretion of accomplishing her feminine desires. Abhinandan Malas writes "Through Rani, Karnad challenges the patriarchal constructs of chastity and ideal womanhood that the women are made to follow only to serve the purpose of the male" (20).

Against the traditional dictates of Indian culture, Rani by the end of the play attains both sexual as well as social superiority over Appanna. The reality of her adultery doesn't let her down but accentuates her to the status of a Goddess and it is her husband Appanna who is in state of complete amazement. With passage of time her husband accepts the situation but it is Rani who longs for more. Fatima Sugarwala while reflecting upon the situation of Rani writes:

At the end Appanna worships his wife and accepts the child. Now he is at peace, he has resolved his differences, but Rani faces the dichotomy of her real and ideal self. She pats her hair, and tells Naga, 'This hair is the symbol of my wedded bliss, live happily forever.' She wants the love and the status of her wedded husband and she also yearns for the warm sensuous love of the Naga. (22)

As a morality play *Naga-Mandala* surpasses the negative forces and converts them into positive forces for the welfare of both animate and inanimate world. Magic converts into miracle when the village elders announce Rani as a mark of divinity for the manifestation of her supernatural sign. Rani's supernatural sign outlines wisdom codes and eventually wisdom codes become moral codes. Moral codes are often associated with tradition and aesthetics of the culture and wisdom codes becomes the basis for folk judgment which might appear irrational but provide aesthetic satisfaction. In the play, Naga's magical visits to Rani after consuming the magical potion is guided by familiar folk logic that beauty and innocence must succeed overruling the overt condemnation of moral codes. Though Rani commits adultery but neither wisdom codes nor moral codes dishonor her, instead she is proclaimed as a goddess. (Nayak 241)

Names are not given to the dramatic personae in the case with morality plays. These are figurative, supporting the mythical base of the play. The protagonist female character Rani is not just a name but as a label from the folk terminology. It describes any attractive woman as queen-like. Appanna is a figure personified of any man or everyman. Kurudavva is a blind old woman because she is experienced and mature with age. She is presented as blind because she is figurative presentation of Rani's unconscious mind. She becomes helpful in making Rani recognize her sexual longings by giving her magic roots to win over her husband's heart. Kappana, the dark one is haunted by a snake-woman (*Yakishi*), rising out of a well. His sudden departure from the play is quite baffling. The personifications of the story and the song are incredible. The story is personified as a young woman and the song as her sari.

Apparently, almost all the major leading ladies of Karnad confront the constructs of culture and gender in some way or another. Rani, Sharmishtha, Devyani, Padmani all are examples of revolt against tradition. Sharmishtha and Rani confronts against patriarchy, while Sharmishtha shares the male partner with another woman (Devyani) while, Rani gets involved with two male partners for realization of her needs.

3.c. Textual Context (Medium-Specificity)

Sarah Cardwell's third context is to do with medium specificity. Each medium, in contrast to another, has its individual nature which gets transmuted within its

particular realm for expression and exploration. This section focuses on the realm of the textual medium and allows studying the various parameters in context of analyzing a narrative textually.

Orality and Folk Elements

Girish Karnad in the formation design of his play, *Naga-Mandala*, deals with the oral tradition and folklorist lineaments. These particular narrative patterns help to delve deep into the inner structure of meanings and universal truths regarding human creation. For Girish Karnad these folklorist components worked to oxygenize his texts to procure strong indictments about the truth of life. He himself confesses in a conversation with Montushi Chakravarty that he cannot do writing without the help of such texts and asserts, “he felt incapable of inventing stories, he drew his plot from history, folklore, myths and legends” (183). Montushi Chakravarty correctly equates Karnad’s potential of renovating the pre-existing material, just like William Shakespeare, “into unique drama of human emotions and feelings” (183). As such his work encompasses all the needed characteristics of fantasy, magic realism, supernatural element and paradoxical nature of oral tales. Concerning *Naga-Mandala*, the play rests completely on folkloric elements. There is no dearth of the usage of fantasy, imagination, supernaturalism, and magic in the narrative. The very thought of a Naga or cobra imitating the character of Appanna, Rani’s husband is unbelievable but the playwright depicts him as an authentic human character which creates “willing suspension of disbelief”. In an interview with Tutun Mukherjee, Karnad refers to his usage of folkloric technique:

Naga-Mandala combines two folk-tales... When I heard the folktale, I was captivated. I wondered if a woman in such circumstance would commit a deliberate adultery? Would she accept the secret lover?...what kind of truths or half truths do we tell ourselves to avoid facing a stark and unpleasant reality? That was the inception of the play in my mind.”(42)

Brechtian Influence

Girish Karnad has confessed about Bertolt Brecht’s influence on his work. In challenging the traditional principles of drama, Brecht questions the value of

identification or empathy [*Enfuhrung* – translated ‘as to feel into’]. The theatrical alternative to empathy, according to Brecht, is alienation or estrangement (*Verfremdung*). Brecht wants the audience not to identify themselves with the characters, but to stand aback from them. Brecht assumes that only by abandoning empathy one can visualize the object and its associated reality in its real sense. Brecht also renounces the classical principle of pity and fear, “the twin-yoked classical cause of Aristotle’s catharsis” (Kundu 271), in favour of the process of alienation or estrangement. Instead of becoming emotionally involved in the stage action, the spectator should remain a dispassionate observer and judge. Brecht’s aim is to teach men to think, to shake or enrage them into revolutionary action against social injustice. (Rama Kundu 178)

No doubt, Karnad has been an ardent follower of Bertolt Brecht but still he does not fully exploit the Brechtian artifice in *Naga-Mandala*. The reason being that instead of employing Brecht’s technique of alienation effect, Karnad claims that the play does strike a departure by employing the emotion based world of traditional values. For the traditional Indian theatre all these fantastical conventions never existed. Karnad himself observes:

The theatrical conventions Brecht was reacting against – character as a psychological construct providing a focus for emotional identification, ‘the willing suspension of disbelief’ syndrome, the notion of unified spectacle – were never a part of traditional Indian theatre. There was therefore no question of arriving at an alienation effect by using Brechtian artifice. (qtd in Rama Kundu 178)

So in *Naga-Mandala*, Karnad attempts to achieve ‘alienation effect’ by deriving the material of the play from folktales, and also by using the non-naturalistic techniques of Indian traditional theatre – that is by mixing of human and non-human worlds as a distancing device which brings in the element of alienation in the play.

All these elements though Indian in source also matches the criteria of Brechtian style and thus collaborate to create the world of Brechtian dramatics free from emotion and sympathy.

Narrative Manoeuvres

Girish Karnad innovatively makes use of the doppelganger theme or the double self symbols. It has been utilised as Satish Kumar observes “to render the inner landscape of the mind or the passion, feelings, agitation and ecstasies of the heart and the soul of characters who deviate from basic human virtues and invite the wrath of God for their misdeed” (346). In English literature R.L Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Oscar Wild’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, works of E.A. Poe’s and William Wilson are constructed on doppelganger themes. In the play *Appanna*, Rani’s husband is cruel and insensitive towards her. He keeps her locked in the house while he himself spends time with his mistress. Rani, lonely and secluded longs for love and happiness. Then there is the entry of the Naga, who impersonating Appanna, visits Rani in the nights and satisfies her sexual and physical needs. Thus, Naga is the sensual and sexual self of Appanna. Thus, through the usage of the doppelganger theme, Karnad helps in unveiling not only the duplicitous personality of Appanna but of the entire hypocritical male world where women are treated as things without feelings and emotions. (C.L Khatri, Sudhir K. Arora 161-162).

Naga-Mandala interlaces the symbolic text relationship between two oppositional forces: the reptile and human being. In Indian mythology, the serpent is worshipped for its supernatural powers; it animates Shiva’s enchanted gyrations, and in them achieves its full expression. The power of serpent has become in *Naga-Mandala* as the metonymic metaphor. The term metonym stands for a name and as a part of any event or situation that encircles the whole of anything. The term metaphor as a figure deals with resemblance between two objects as Alexander Jamieson explains, “Metaphor is a figure founded entirely on the resemblance which one object bears to another. Hence, it is much allied to simile or comparison; and is indeed no other than a comparison, expressed in abridged form” (143) .Equivalently, the word Naga in the text of *Naga-Mandala* becomes a metaphoric representation amidst all events and situations. Broadly speaking, the generic group of serpent and serpentine in Indian mythology may be associated with man’s “Id forces”. This metaphor of snake contrives in one’s mind the yearning and the desire to be fulfilled. Similarly, in the story of Rani, Naga

associates with her inner desire and wish for a happy and generous husband. So the Naga imitates as Appanna and starts making cordial love visits to Rani.

The same Hindu tradition which have stories where the image of snake may be ominous at the same time also regards the myth of metamorphosis of a snake into a man or woman as not demonic. The Hindu myth removes *Naga-Mandala* far from demonic motif and elevates it in the direction of Eros vision. The Eros vision is presented in the fairy tales like *The Frog and Princess* and *A Little Mermaid* where the frog, beast, mermaid or the snake transforms into human being due to the influence of love and they all acquire their original form and characteristics only after they are adored by human lovers. This can be traced in instances like Lucias, the ass in *Apulius* becomes Lucias, the initiator of Isis and the wife of Bath's detestable lady becomes a beautiful lady. The assimilative feature of all these myths is the ascent of the hero or the heroine or the parental figures from a fallen state through the love and union with a beast.

Karnad using whole lot of myth, folklore and supernaturalism in the text of *Naga-Mandala* has thus led to produce a perspective of romance. This point of view is supported by Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism which rests on the theory of the universality of the grammar of imagination. In the process of creativity, the writer humanizes the natural world and naturalizes the human world. In Girish Karnad's *Naga-Mandala* the author performs both the activities and ascertains that nature will interfere in the human world, if injustice is done to an innocent person. As the world of nature interferes in the human world, the play can be called a "romance". The laws of nature are slightly suspended in romantic world. The mythos (or) plot and ethos (characters and situations) of the play reflect on this fantastic world of hidden meanings. (Northrop Frye 110)

Further the emerging issue is not merely of facts and fallacies but of their need and importance in certain contexts. For instance Rani in her days of misery and unhappiness looked out for solace in fantasies and make-believe world wherein there were many other options of resistance open for her. It is through her world of fantasy that she sought empowerment. Even the construction of Rani is not fixed or definite as the Story instructs Rani at many critical junctures. This narrative pattern according to

Rita Kothari “problematizes the authorial voice. It also implies that reader/listener is not given a story that pre-exists but one that is born of ‘creative cooperation’” (63).

Finally, *Naga-Mandala* practically exhibits the process by which narratives are provided a proper close as Frank Kermode writes about “the deep need for intelligible ends” (qtd in Surya Nath Pandey 63). When Rani finally is able to receive love and respect from her husband as well as the society around then the Story (a character narrating the tale of Rani) wants to exit immediately. However this is an unacceptable closing and the Man restricts her from leaving by saying that “there are too many loose ends” (60). The Story casually asks the Man to add on some details to provide an official ending, referring to the very basic feature of all narratives as Rita Kothari mentions “they are formed, modified and mediated in the process of communication” (63). The play calls for demolishing all limits, including those between author and the reader, the read text and the heard performance. (Surya Nath Pandey 62-63).

So, narratives become one particular form of scheme structure through which we make sense of the world. Hence they are holders of both societal authority as well as disseminative power. Surya Nath Pandey writes about Karnad’s tactic employed for the endings of his narratives, “the story of Rani questions such meaning-fixing closure in narratives. Closures seal possibilities and closed narratives become oppressive. Karnad prisms them open to show fissures and to facilitate an articulation of conflicts” (64).

In spite of all the arguments, it is agreed upon that closure is an aesthetic as well as emotional requirement. After the protestation raised by the Man, the Story tries to provide a proper ending to the tale by joining together the open ends. Changes are meted out with the story of the King Cobra to settle the disorder; the Naga dies in Rani’s hair and is suitably cremated by her son. Appanna is fully certain about his wife’s holy powers and they live a happy married life. Nevertheless, such post-scripting is not much influential and is unable to provide ample voice to many silences as mentioned in the story “headaches are swept under the pillow” (63). Many queries still creep up letting the threads of imagination to ponder over the situation for instance: what happens to Kurudavva? Does the author succeeds to fulfil the sage’s command

and is able to escape from death? Many such questions still lurk around the mind of the audience which need answers.

Modern Treatment

Naga-Mandala reflects a modern and contemporary dealing of Girish Karnad. He uses the standards and motifs of folk art like masks and curtains to project a world of intensities, uncertainties and unexpected closures. The various conventions- the chorus, the music, the disparate comic interludes and the mixing of the human and inhuman worlds- highlight a simultaneous depiction of alternative point of view. Deepak Dhillon writes “Karnad leaves the stage apparatus visible, presents synoptic announcements, and has narrator’s directly talking to the audience. All this compels the audience to respond to the action of the play intellectually and to question it, instead of responding emotionally and merely accepting it” (208). Through *Naga-Mandala* Karnad has made a successful attempt to depict the complexities and intricacies of the contemporary times.

Narrative Gaps

Narrative gaps are some missing details of the story which allows the audience to fill them according to their thought process. Further, it can also be various manoeuvres employed by the writer for the audience to use their imagination like the usage of supernaturalism, magic-realism or fantasy in the narrative. In both the cases it allows to create an alienation effect and provide the spectators a reality check of their being watching a drama. Deepak Dhillon writes:

In *Naga-Mandala*, Karnad attempts to achieve ‘alienation effect’ by driving the material of the play from folktales, and also by using the non-naturalistic techniques of Indian traditional theatre-that is by mixing of human and non-human worlds as distancing device which brings in the element of alienation in the play.(4)

A precedent for absent characters

An opportunity for commentary exists in the narrative of *Naga-Mandala* about certain narrative gaps. To begin with no human interference is depicted in the story. For

instance, despite the constant presence of Rani's parents in her fantasies they are completely absent from their much loved only daughter's life throughout the story. Rani, like a hurt child, dreams of a fairy land and in the seventh isle dwell her parents in a magic garden and an eagle carries her across the seven seas where she meets her parents and sleeps between her father and mother. The girl-wife is not yet a woman. In her second day-dream she wakes up to find a stag with golden anklets at the door calling out to her. She refuses to go. She is afraid to accept the invitation and the stag replies, "I am not a stag, I am a prince" (28). This could be seen as the rich husband trying to take her away. In her next wish dream, "... the demon locks her up in his castle. Then it rains for seven days and nights. It pours. The sea floods the city. The water breaks down the door of the castle. Then a big whale comes to Rani and says: Come, Rani, let us go..." (35). Rani's wait for her parents continues but she finds solace only in her fantasies and it is perhaps because of her need for any human association that she innocently accepts the Naga lover as her husband. Her story expresses her psycho erotic needs, which she does not fully understand.

In addition, there is absence of family members in the whole story. Though in case of Indian marriage ritual, lot of gathering and commemoration is involved but none visits Rani and Appanna on the day of their marriage or after their marriage to bless them. What happens to Kurudavva and her son rests in mystery as the story fails to provide full details about their whereabouts.

4. The Mechanics of Narrative

Moving on from the theoretical analysis, the next step towards better understanding of the nature of the text is the narratological approach of the time in the text. For this understanding, Gerard Genette's model of narrative theory is appropriately used. His categorizing tenets of order, frequency, and duration in the narrative presentation of story-time illustrate how narrative choices on the part of author can have considerably different rhetorical effects. Genette regards these narrative strategies as a kind of rhetorical figuration and gives them terms drawn from classical rhetoric (e.g., "prolepsis" for a flashing forward, "analepses" for a flashback). These figurations being an essential part of texts clarifies that the narrative time does not always follow

the sequence or exact speed of the normal time. Several popular classic fictions and detective mysteries have made this strategy familiar. For instance the text of Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*, works of Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie are not possible without flash-forwards and flash backs.

Accordingly the text of *Naga-Mandala* is analysed with regards to the Gerard Genette's concept of time which includes narrative figurations of order, frequency and duration.

4.a. Order

Order refers to the progression of events, or the plot which builds up a story. The plot may organize the events chronologically in a linear manner from beginning to end, or it may leap back and forth in time, assuming a non-linear arrangement. Gerard Genette himself explains:

To study the temporal order of a narrative is to compare the order in which events or temporal sections are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events or temporal segments have in the story, to the extent that story order is explicitly indicated by narrative itself or inferable from one or another indirect clue. (*Narrative Discourse* 35)

When the events in the narrative text follow the same sequence of order in reference to the events narrated in the story, the state of perfect temporal order exists. However, mostly the events of the story are reorganised in the narrative in different ways. Gerard Genette defines these narrative anachronies as “the various types of discordance between the orderings of story and narrative” (35). The general categories of anachronies are analepses and prolepses. Analepses are further subdivided in informative/referential, mystery-oriented, indexical and revelatory analepses and Prolepses to be further subdivided in suspense –generating and indexical prolepses. The important function of the informative/referential analepses is to support the clearness and intelligibility of the story, create the situational context, and act as character markers. Mystery based analepses make and maintain the mystery and foreground the component of causality, while indexical analepses work as indices and highlight main

themes. Lastly, revelatory analepses unmask the facts and have apparent thematic connotations. It is understandable that all the above sub-divisions have negligible boundaries so they often have a tendency to overlap. (Soultana Maglavera 12-13).

Talking about proleptic parts, their main aim is to generate anticipations in the reader's mind and thus to create suspense by pointing to expected events and conflicts that are to take place in narrative future. As Meir Sternberg aptly puts it, suspense "is sustained by the clash of the reader's aroused hopes and fears about the outcome of the future confrontation" (qtd in Soultana Maglavera 13). Gerard Genette believes that anticipation and suspense can be brought successfully together. For instance when the audience witness particular action, conflict or confrontation sequence described in the narrative present an automatic streak of suspense generates regarding a lack of information about the result of these actions and conflict. It is understandable that the outcome of these actions will be in narrative future. The practise of temporal expectation continues suspense by exciting the reader's curiosity and by urging the reader to read on in the hope of the desired outcome. Proleptic portions at some points also share indexical functions. While making ground for some upcoming event, they either help in depicting the inner state of a character (for instance in case of Tom in *Hard Times*), or they focus on the main themes (for instance, theme of fake appearances in *Great Expectations*). (Soultana Maglavera 12-14).

Focusing on the four different stories which make up the play *Naga-Mandala*, there are four narrative levels. The frame story contains three other stories, each one of them inside the previous story. On the first narrative level, the frame story tells of an Author whose plays are so dull and dreary that the audience often goes to sleep. For this offence the Author is damned to death unless he manages to remain awake for one entire night before the end of that month. The night of this theatrical performance is precisely his last chance. Audience hears his repeated laments "I may be dead within next few hours" (22).

The second and third narrative levels contain magical elements. The second is created by the gossip-type tales that a group of personified flames tell each other when they assemble at night, after their day's work end. The Flames decide to go to the same

ruined temple where the Author is moaning his plight. When he sees them arrive, he hides behind the column from where he closely listens to their stories. On the third narrative level, there is the tale told by one of the Flames who wants to be excused for arriving late. Her singularised tale is about a woman who knew a beautiful story but declined to share it. One particular day, the Story, taking advantage of the fact that the woman was sleeping with her mouth open, escapes and garbs herself into a young lady. The Story thus personified on the fourth narrative level recounts the life of Rani, the main character of the play.

Talking about the various anachronies, both analepses and prolepsis can be clearly and judiciously traced from the narrative text. To begin with analepses- the story begins with revelatory analepses where an author is seen lamenting over a curse by a sage in the past for his poor writing. This is the whole point of the presence of the author in the temple where he efforts to stay awake the whole night to save his life. The Flames visit the temple and discuss the different ways of life. The thematic issue of importance of tales being passed out from one generation to another is underlined. The various dreams of Rani where she fantasizes about an eagle personifying a beautiful prince freeing her from the cage of misery and in another where a stag approaches her to safeguard her are examples of referential /informative analepses. She dreams about her parents frequently and this not only reveals Rani's need for her parents love, care and protection but her situation of intense loneliness and dissatisfaction. The dream sequences of Kappana, where he sees a witch is example of mystery based analepses. Why and how he is under the spell of such dreams is not clear in the story.

The dreams of Rani also work as example of prolepses as it provides the audience to understand the delicate psychological state of Rani. To soothe herself from her sadness she tries to find happiness in dreams and it is this particular disposition of Rani that failed her from doubting the reality of the Naga. The vague and unclear dreams of Kappana also are examples of prolepses as they have an ominous mood. Kappana gets totally lost when he undergoes such a dream. It creates a proper setting for his ultimate disappearance from the story. The story of Kurudavva about her usage of the magical potion to win happiness in her life makes the readers anticipate similar results for Rani in near future. It also gives way to an important theme that God helps

those who help themselves. In the story it will be Rani herself who will be responsible for change in her destiny.

4.b. Duration

“Duration” is defined as the speed of the narration, the time it takes to tell the story. There is difference between an event and its narration which automatically clarifies difference between the discourse time and the narrative time, which becomes the two essential components of Duration. *Naga-Mandala* is a fast pace, close knit story without any long descriptions. The story time is about three and half months and the stage time cover ninety minutes but in contrast to this long narrative time, the discourse time is very less. A reader can read this play of 50 pages in almost two hours. All the sub-categories like a descriptive pause, ellipsis, scene, isochrony and summary are available in the story. A descriptive pause mainly refers to the opening of the plays which situate the audience to an unexpected new locale and setting. In *Naga-Mandala*, the play begins within a temple where an Author takes shelter to safeguard himself. Again with the story of Rani there is a point of descriptive pause for the audience. There are many examples of ellipsis in the story which establishes an opposite relationship between discourse time and narrative time. The narrative coverage of Appanna leaving the house and arriving the next day covers less discourse time. The long passionate nights of the Naga and Rani covers less narrative time. The fantasy ridden monologues cover less discourse time.

The scenes where both story time and discourse time join hands are also plenty in the text. For instance, Author performing different acts like running, jumping, lighting fire just to help himself stay awake, the dialogues between Rani and Appanna, Rani and Kurudavva etc. Rani undergoing the snake ordeal in front of the elders is also an example of a scene. Rani’s pregnancy and birth of a son is summarized in the story and even Kurudavva summarizes her story of seducing a husband for herself to Rani.

4.c. Frequency

The third form of Gerard Genette’s narrative temporality, which has gathered less of both critical and theoretical significance, concern with the relative frequency of the narrative events and the narrative segments that inform them. “Frequency” is

defined as to number of times an event occurs in a story. The three discriminating variants amongst this form of narrative tense include: “‘singulative narration’ (a single event is told at a single time); ‘repetitive narration’ (an event is recounted many times); ‘iterative narration’ (an event which occurs many times and is told only once).

There are many instances of singulative narration in the play. Author coming to the temple, the Flames describing their experiences are examples of single event narration. Coming to repetitive narration, the play offers enough illustrations, for instance Rani remember her parents more than once and tries to relieve herself from the pain of loneliness. The event of Rani trying to give the love potion to Appanna occurs twice in the play. In the first attempt Appanna loses his conscious and collapses on the ground. In the second attempt Rani gets so scared of the red colour of the curry that she spills the potion on the ant-hill where the Cobra lived. The normal routine of Appanna of coming in the day to take lunch and then leaving Rani alone in the caged house is repeated in most part of the story.

Point of view “Point of view” refers to the thought of the author behind the story. In the case of *Naga-Mandala*, Girish Karnad has consciously anchored in ancient theory and tradition of Indian theatre. The play reflects Karnad’s respect for the technical elements of theatrical art and also for the Indian tradition of storytelling, even though; he innovates and experiments by sharing twentieth century views. In *Naga-Mandala*, Karnad brings his drama into line with the changes occurring in Indian society and mentality.

His point is that Indian society at large is terribly puritanical and that most Indian men are embarrassed by women who are not entirely devoted to their men folk. As a result most Indian writers hesitated to opt for female characters as they were unsure of handling their suitable depiction. In such a scenario, Karnad in an interview with Aparna Dharwadker comments “In fact, Satyadev Dubey believes me to be the only playwright in the history of Indian theatre to have treated adultery as normal and treated adulterous women sympathetically” (“Performance , Meaning, and the Materials of Modern Indian Theatre” 358). But Karnad has been smart enough to

manipulate situations and language brilliantly so as to create ambiguity and a space of freedom for the readers and keep himself away from controversial allegations.

Focusing on *Naga-Mandala*, Karnad has used the apparatus of the play to demonstrate the inner strength of women who is capable enough to find solutions in the most gruesome situations. Karnad in this story provides Rani, the victim, the apparatus of fantasy and imagination to procure what she wants. Along with this, he while exposing the conservative societal gender discourse of the Indian society makes an assertion for gender equality. In spite of his resolutions being very clear about the story he deliberately leaves the story open-ended for the disposal of different strata of audience.

Summing up, this section works upon Sarah Cardwell's strategic guidelines for the textual analysis of Girish Karnad's play *Naga-Mandala*. Girish Karnad while examining the issues of adultery and chastity in the play, questions the Indian patriarchal moral code. Through the character of Rani he not only studies the issue of male-female sexuality in Indian society but also depicts an impressive journey of a woman from enslavement to empowerment.