EROS - A DRIVE FOR UNION

Eros, a Greek mythological figure, has with time evolved into a concept. It has come to be known as a life-force whose purpose is to form and create. It not only engenders life but also infuses energy in it. In Greek mythology he is one of the primal gods, he is the son of the goddess of love, Aphrodite, and husband of Psyche. He is a mischievous god who makes people fall in love. Aristophanes in his work *Birds* has talked about Eros’ origin.

At the beginning, there was only Khaos (Air), Nyx (Night) dark Erebas (Darkness), and deep Tartaros (Hellspit), Ge (Earth), Aer (air) and Ouranos (heaven) had no existence. Firstly, black winged Nyx (Night) laid a germless egg in the bosom of the infinite deeps of Erebas (Darkness) and from this, after the revolution of long ages, sprang the graceful Eros (Himeros the elder Eros) with his glittering golden wings, swift as the whirlwinds of the tempest. He mated (or fertilized) in deep Tartaros (Hell-pit) with dark Khaos (Air), winged like himself and thus hatched fourth our race, which was the first to see the light. That of the Immortals did not exist until Eros had brought together all the ingredients of the Okeanos (Ocean), Ge (Earth) and the imperishable race of much older than that of the dwellers in Olympos. We are the offspring of Eros; there are thousand proofs to show it. (685-704)

His equivalent in Roman mythology is Cupid, depicted in literature as a young and chubby winged boy with a bow and arrow, shooting the bow into the hearts of mortals and rousing their desires and making them fall in love. In Indian mythology, Kamadeva is the equivalent of Eros. *Kama* in the Sanskrit language means ‘desire’ or ‘longing’ and *Deva* is a heavenly god. Like Eros and Cupid, mentions Edgerton in *A Hindu Book of Tales*, Kamadeva is also a young and handsome winged boy, with a bow of sugarcane and arrows decorated with flowers. In India, he is worshipped for the desire of a beautiful and compatible spouse. Wilkins in *Hindu Mythology, Vedic and Puranic* describes him as:

Kamadeva, the Indian Cupid, is generally regarded as the son of Vishnu and Lakshmi, under the forms of Krishna and Rukmini, but he is also described as the son of Brahma. The latter account of his origin
arises probably from the following. In the Rig Veda, Kama is described as the first movement that arose in the One, after it had come into life through the power of fervour or abstraction. In the “Atharva-Veda,” this Kama or desire, not only of sexual enjoyment, but of good in general, is celebrated as a great power superior to all the gods, and is supplicated for deliverance from enemies. According to one hymn in the “Rig-Veda,” Kama is worshipped and said to be unequalled by the gods; according to another, he is the god of sexual love, like Eros of the Greeks and Cupid of the Latins. In the latter aspect he is thus addressed: “May Kama, having well directed the arrow, which is winged with pain, barbed with longing, and has desire for its shaft, pierce thee in the heart.” It is in this character that he appears in the Puranas. (262-63)

Kama is thus the Indian Eros. It is not only a God but is a goal of life. Indian doctrine of Purushartha which consists of four aims of life has Kama as one of its main aims. Kama is derived from the word ‘Kamana’ which means desire or wishes. But Kama is more than desire; it is a philosophy, and it includes everything that brings pleasure and a sense of fulfilment in one’s life. It is not only limited to sexual pleasures but to all the things that bring pleasure in life like art, creation, love, brotherhood, intimacy, friendship and beauty. Vatsyayana describes Kama as:

Kama is the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting, and smelling, assisted by the mind together with the soul. The ingredient in this is a peculiar contact between the organ of sense and its object. And the consciousness of pleasure which arises from that contact is called Kama.

When all the three, viz. Dharma, Artha, and Kama come together, the former is better than the one which follows it. (8)

Kama has a tendency to go berserk. Therefore, Vatsyayana cautions one to practice Kama in moderation. According to him, any action which conduces to the other aim of Purushartha should not be practised. Moksha is attainable only when the other three aims are in harmony with each other. According to Rod Stryker, “Every accomplishment has been sought for the pleasure it provides. We live in service to a
higher purpose, but along that path, there is the pleasure that we take from family and friends, art, love, and harmony in the world around us” (9).

Eros of West representing love and desire has gradually metamorphosed into a concept like the Indian Kama and has evolved into a life-energy in literature, philosophy, and psychology. Plato was the first one to philosophise it.

Plato in his work Symposium, through dialogues of seven men, defines Eros as a desire of self-fulfilment. By putting his words in Aristophanes’ mouth, he describes Eros to be a hunt for the lost half of oneself, a quest that is self-directed. Also through Socrates, Plato tries to philosophies Eros and tells that love takes the form of wisdom and beauty. It describes it as a force that moves towards perfection and divinity.

Freud has developed his theory of instincts, Eros and Thanatos, after being influenced by his predecessors Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche. Arthur Schopenhauer believed that the unconscious forces drive all men, and he named these forces collectively as, ‘The Will’ and gave Eros a central place in the matrix of all human motives. In the chapter The Metaphysics of Sexual Love, he defines the sexual impulses as, “The strongest and most active of all motives…It is the ultimate goal of almost all human effort” (Schopenhauer 533). Schopenhauer thinks of Eros as a prevalent exercise of Individuation. According to him, whatever the proximate aim of Eros might be, its ultimate aim is to achieve immortality. That could truly be attained by reproductive compatibility with the other. He says that the attachment between the two lovers is, in reality, a superficial conscious manifestation of an unconscious urge towards procreation and disapproved of it on the ground that this force “appears on the whole world as a malevolent demon striving to pervert, to confuse and to overthrow everything” (534). He was of the opinion that man could deny ‘The Will’ and be indifferent of the unconscious and strive towards the ideals of morals and intellect.

Friedrich Nietzsche agreed with Schopenhauer that men are driven by unconscious needs, in particular by a powerful sexual drive, but disagreed with Schopenhauer as far as severing oneself from the conscious was concerned. Nietzsche believed that it was impossible for all men, even those with higher rational capacity, to do away with the unconscious. Nietzsche believed that all men want to do more than just live; they want to increase their power. He replaced Schopenhauer’s ‘Will to Live’ with ‘Will to Power’. Everyone, from the weaker to the strongest, necessarily
strives for power, though the magnitudes and modes of that striving may vary. It is this background that he develops his philosophy of ‘Eternal Recurrence.’ Essentially, eternal recurrence is the hypothesis wherein things that have happened on Earth happen again and again without any change down to the minutest detail. Thus a person is called upon to live his whole life, again and again, not changing any event, any response, and any result. Nietzsche looks at this doctrine as a litmus test. For him, whosoever says a whole-hearted Yes to this offer without any hesitation is of a higher nature, a Renaissance man. In joyfully accepting recurrence one makes the most powerful affirmation towards life.

Later Freud conceptualised the fundamental unifying aspect of human nature by calling it sexuality. But later in 1920, when he published his book Beyond the Pleasure Principle reconceptualised his theory of drives. He reconceptualised the drive he called sexual before and developed it as a force which is an important phenomenon. He called it a deeper and an encompassing force, which has a tendency towards unification and development and named this force to be Eros or life drive. According to him, its purpose is to form a living substance into great unities, so that life may be prolonged and can be brought to higher development. According to him, Eros promotes unity, life, positivity, love, and procreation and with this he brought psychoanalysis into the Platonic tradition. In Platonic tradition, Erotic drives are not about bodily gratification but are about reaching beyond themselves

Thus, Eros with time has developed into the concept of Life-force. The famous writer of all times, George Bernard Shaw has been particularly interested in the biological side of philosophy and also spoke of ‘Life-Force’. Macintosh in The Origins of George Bernard Shaw’s Life-Force Philosophy summarises that the theory of Life-Force implying that the life is a vital force whose immediate purpose is to acquire new faculties and higher intelligence, but the matter is the enemy of life. Therefore, the ultimate aim of the Life-Force is to pass beyond matter that is, overcoming the limitations put forward by matter to achieve new powers and new faculties. When this is made, life’s individualised expression will become immortal. Thus, in Back to Methuselah, the ‘Ancient’ tells the ‘Newly born’ that their ultimate destiny is to become immortal. That is, to conceive a state of pure thought. He proposed that Life-Force serves not only man but the best interests of society.
With Carl Jung, Eros developed into an archetypal principle of mental functioning and analytical psychology. Jung had developed a theory of tensions of opposites, which become the core principle of his analytical psychology. In his theory, Jung gendered Eros and gave its opposite Logos. He made Eros feminine and Logos masculine. Susan Rowland in *Jung: A Feminist Revision* describes Jung’s Eros and Logos in detail. She mentions that Eros denotes connective qualities of feelings and relationships, while Logos is all about rationality. She says that Jung believed Eros to be the dominant mode of female consciousness which is likely to be dormant in men and associated with unconscious anima. Therefore, Eros becomes the psychological feminine, the main principle by which Jung fuses sex and gender.

Thus the concept of Eros is not limited to the romantic love; it is a force that leads to the discovery of passion and in passion thrive life. It is the source of all the creative energy. It leads the personality through growth. Whereas intellect is the result of the experiences from outside world, Eros springs from the inner realms of unconscious, which determines that the cycle of life keeps on rotating. Jung’s Collective Unconsciousness sees man’s unconsciousness as a product of whole humankind and this unconscious manifests itself in multiple forms of god or goddesses, and these gods have different forms and different names in different cultures of the world, but somewhere the underlying idea they all represent remains the same. They became archetypes that are metaphors, and that can be seen as embodiments of specific functions, and each metaphor can be personified by giving it a name. Through personification, archetypal criticism takes up a meaningful relationship with these gods and goddesses of the internal world of human beings. These gods and goddesses are present as archetypes in everyone’s psyche all the time. Some are dominant in one particular phase, and others are dominant in other phase and decide the course of one’s life in that phase of life.

Jean Shinoda Bolen, an archetypal critic says:

> The formation of Crystal was an analogy by Jung used to help explain the difference between archetypal patterns (which are universal) and activated archetypes (which are functioning in us): an archetype is like the invisible pattern that determines what shape and structure a crystal will take when it does form: Once the crystal actually forms, the now recognizable pattern is analogous to an activated archetype.
Archetypes might also be compared to the “blueprints” contained in seeds. Growth from seeds depends on soil and climate conditions, presence or absence of certain nutrients, loving care or neglect on the part of gardeners, the size and depth of the container and the hardiness of the variety itself.

Similarly, which god or goddess (several may be present at the same time) become activated in any particular woman at a particular time depends on the combined effect of a variety of interacting elements - the woman’s predisposition, family and culture, hormones, the other people, unchosen circumstances, chosen activities and stages of life.

(43)

In Indian culture, the archetype equivalent of Eros in Shakti Profile is Goddess Lakshmi. Lakshmi is one of the three major deities of Shakti profile. Shakti in the Indian ethos is the Mother-Goddess, source of all the energies. She is omnipotent and omniscient. In Indian philosophy, everything is energy, and everything emerges from energy. Science says that energy can neither be created nor be destroyed; it can only be transformed from one form to other. Shakti is the eternal source of energy. She is the creator, preserver, and destroyer. She is the one who keeps the cycle of life moving. Lakshmi, Kali, and Saraswati are the three devis representing three gunas of Prakriti. Mikel Burley in his book *Classical Samkhya and Yoga* says:

If we now consider the other two gunas, namely rajas and tamas, we see that the latter is represented as embodying such qualities as stability, inertia, limitation and boundness, while the former encapsulates the countervailing qualities of instability (mutability), mobility, expansiveness and unboundedness. It does not require a great leap of imagination to notice that each of the tendencies typified by these two sets of qualities is present to varying degrees in manifest phenomena, and that there may be something about the interplay between them that invariably accompanies manifestation. Davies has said of rajas that is ‘rather the cause of an impetus than the impetus itself, the moving force rather than the motion’ (1894: 38). I think this is right: it is the *capacity to move*, or (to use classical Greek terms) the *energeia* that makes the *ergon* (action) possible. Anything that was
completely static (immobile, inert) could not manifest, for manifestation itself requires some kind of impulse – nothing to constrain and delimit it – then the motion would be at risk of increasing towards infinite velocity in no specific direction (or, in other words, in all directions at once), which would inevitably preclude the integration that is necessary for anything to become manifest. (102)

Lakshmi represents the Rajas guna of Shakti, which keeps everything active within the cycle of Samsara. She is the preserver and makes sure that things keep moving. Lakshmi is the goddess that provides all the pleasures and magnificence of life. Therefore, she represents the Eros in Shakti.

According to ancient Hindu tradition, the creation proceeded from the womb of the primordial waters when it was churned, and most important of all the gifts was the appearance of Lakshmi. In the myth of churning of Cosmic Ocean, to extract the elixir of life, Asuras, and Devas, the force and counter-force decided on an enterprise to churn the ocean. It is to be noticed that ‘churning’ is ‘movement’ of rajas guna.

Mount Meru served as the Spindle, the serpent Anant-Sesha was the churning rope and the turtle Akupara was the steady base. In effect, the gods and demons, the bright and the dark forces of the universe, were using the shaft of Space and the beast of Time to churn the existence out of the shapeless substance of life.

Vishnu, the preserver, oversaw the entire project. The Devas and Asuras had to churn the ocean for hundreds and thousands of years before they could churn Lakshmi out, for without effort there is no reward. As they churned, Brihaspati and Shukra chanted hymns in the praise of the goddess. Constant friction because of the churning set the trees on Mount Meru alight. The winding and unwinding caused the serpent Ananta-Sesha to vomit out venom. Despite these predicaments, the gods and demons continued without a pause. Pleased by their determination to strive despite all the odds, Lakshmi emerged in her full splendour as Shridevi seated on a thousand-petalled Lotus. She looked at once like a nymph and a mother, gentle yet charming. Draped in a red saree, a diamond-studded, crown adorned her head. Jewels of every description adorned her body: armlets, bracelets,
anklets, nose-rings, necklaces of gold and silver, studded with sapphires, rubies, emeralds and pearls. All those assembled were stunned by the sheer magnificence of this goddess. Everyone rushed to welcome this beautiful goddess. With the Goddess came the innumerable gifts - the wonders of life. (*Lakshmi: 20*)

Lakshmi that appeared out of this churning was the ambrosia, the quintessence of the churning, who grants peace, prosperity, and life-energy. She is the Eros of life. In Tantric texts, Lakshmi acquires a supreme place as she is the provider of all the materialistic things that are needed to sustain life and provide pleasure. She is the provider of much-desired gifts; she is the goddess of Riddhi and Siddhi, Riddhi is the archetype of all the pleasures of life and Siddhi is the archetype of wisdom. Lakshmi is mainly worshipped in her eight forms that generally include Bhagya-Lakshmi, Vaibhav-Lakshmi, Santan-Lakshmi, Dhanya-Lakshmi, Gaja-Lakshmi, Vidya-Lakshmi, Dhana-Lakshmi and Vira-Lakshmi, each representing a manifestation of glory and various luxuries of life. Devdutt writes:

In the *Lakshmi Tantra*, the goddess says, “I am inherent in existence. I am the inciter, the potential that takes shape. I manifest myself. I occupy myself with activity and finally dissolve myself. I pervade all creations with vitality, will and consciousness. Like ghee that keeps a lamp burning. I lubricate the senses of living beings with the sap of my consciousness.

Lakshmi is the divine power that transforms dreams into reality. She is *prakriti*, the perfect creation: self-sustaining, self-contained Nature. She is *maya*, the delightful delusion, the dream-like expression of divinity that makes life comprehensible, hence worth living. She is *Shakti*, energy, boundless and bountiful. To realise her is to rejoice in the wonders of life. (*Lakshmi 9*)

The equivalent of Goddess Lakshmi in Greek mythology is Aphrodite. Aphrodite is a goddess of beauty and love and is known for her erotic, impulsive behaviour and imagination. She is also worshipped for providing fertility and fruitfulness. Like Lakshmi, she is also associated with gold. Paul Freidrich in his work, *Meaning of Aphrodite* relates that gold is linguistically connected to ‘honey’ and ‘semen’ which symbolizes Aphrodite’s relation to procreation. Like Lakshmi, her
mythical origin is also from the sea. Her conception takes place when Cronos cuts off his father’s genitals and throws them into the sea and the sperms in it get mixed with the sea and produce Aphrodite, as a fully developed Goddess. Shinoda Bolen writes, “The desire to know and to be known is what Aphrodite generates. If this desire leads to physical intimacy, impregnation and new life may follow. If the union is also or either of mind, heart or spirit, new growth occurs in the psychological, emotional or spiritual sphere” (225). Kamadeva is the son of Lakshmi and Aphrodite is the mother of Eros. The archetype of Lakshmi and Aphrodite is similar or one in the sense that they both are a representation of the mother-goddess in their respective cultures. And are divine because of their ability to produce and sustain life. These both personify nature’s bounty. They both are thus the embodiments of Eros as they bring with themselves both the promise and pleasures of life.

Eros is related to youth, beauty and fertility and the archetype of Lakshmi embody all these characteristics that represent desires of the world. Lakshmi is also known as the goddess of beauty and is called by the names Rati and Kamakshi. Rati is identified as the goddess of pleasure, beauty and carnal desires (Dongier 52). She is also the wife of the god of love and pleasure Kama, therefore, known as Kamakshi. Kamakshi in the Kamakshi temple of Kanchipuram is represented as sitting and has adorned sugarcane, bow, arrows made of flowers and lasso as her weapons. All these objects are symbolic of love and desire in the archetypal psychology. Sugarcane is symbolic of rasa or the sap of life and the arrows of flowers are symbolic of arousing five senses. When we first meet the women of Karnad’s plays, they all are brimming with life. They are beautiful and projected as desiring with a longing to expand and develop, becoming an archetype of goddess Lakshmi.

When Padmini in the play Hayavadana is first introduced, her beauty is described in the most sensuous way.

DEVADATTA (slowly): How can I describe her, Kapila? Her forelocks rival the bees, her face is . . . is a white lotus. Her beauty is as the magic lake. Her arms the lotus creepers. Her breasts are golden urns and her waist... I was blind all these days. I deceived myself that I understood poetry. I didn’t. I understood nothing . . . The Shyama Nayika---born of Kalidasa’s magic description-as Vatsyayana had dreamt her. Kapila, in a single appearance, she has become my guru
in the poetry of love. Do you think she would ever assent to
becoming my disciple in love itself? . . . If only she would consent to
be my Muse, I could outshine Kalidasa. I’d always wanted to do that-
but I thought it was impossible...But now I see it is within my reach.
(Karnad1:120)

Her beauty and sexuality are exalted when Devadatta compares her to the
women of Vatsyayana. Vatsyayana is considered to be the author of Kamasutra, an
Indian doctrine on human sexual behaviour. He has classified women in different
types and Padmini is one of them. “Padmini is Vatsyayana’s trope for a most
desirable woman, a paragon of beauty. Padmini with ethereal beauty and name
(lotus)-the sacred flower displays raunchy desires” (Tripathi 72). It is to be noted here
that Kama in Indian ethos is one of the four aims of human life, and it represents love,
emotions, and sexuality. Beauty is the most powerful archetype of desire. Beauty is a
desire for order and harmony. Buss in the book Evolution of Desire writes:

Beauty may be in the eyes of beholder, but those eyes and the minds
behind the eyes have been shaped by millions of years of human
evolution. Our ancestors had access to two types of observable
evidence of a woman’s health and youth: features of physical
appearance, such as full lips, clear skin, smooth skin, clear eyes,
lustrous hair, and good muscle tone, and features of behaviour, such as
bouncy, youthful gait...because physical and behavioural cues provide
the most powerful observable evidence of a woman’s reproductive
value, ancestral men evolved a preference for woman who displayed
these cues. (53)

Also, Padmini is another name for the Goddess Lakshmi.

Throughout history, she is referred to as Padma or Kamala, meaning
“lotus”. The lotus is a symbol of fertility and life, which is rooted in
and takes strength from the primordial waters of the unconscious, the
well-spring of symbols and soul guidance. The lotus represents the
fully developed blossoming of personality, the potential for wholeness.
Jung considers this flower as a mandala symbol, a manifestation of the
soul and wholeness of personality. (Bedi 79)
When Kapila asks Devadatta that where does she reside, the only thing Devadatta remembered about her home was a two-headed bird as an engraving on her door. “The door-frame of the house had an engraving of a two-headed bird at the top. I only saw that. She lifted her hand to knock and it touched the bird. For a minute, the bird came alive” (Karnad 1: 121). Kamat in her article *Gandaberunda- The Two Headed Bird* states that the two-headed bird in Indian mythology is called Gandaberunda. Dunkley in his article *In Greek Mythology, a Phoenix is a Bird that’s Cyclically Regenerated or Reborn* states that its origin can be traced in the ancient civilization of the past such as Egyptian, Sumerians, and Hittites. In Egypt, this bird is associated with fertility. In Indian Vedic Culture, it is associated with eternity as the two heads show the eternal movement. In Greek mythology, the analogous to this bird is Phoenix, which is a mythical bird that is famous for its cyclical regeneration. Therefore, it wouldn’t be wrong to call this bird as an archetype of life and Eros.

When Kapila goes to look for her house. He was confused to find the engraving on the door of Padmini.

Kapila: Now. This is not a double-headed bird. It’s an eagle—This? A lotus. This is—er—a lion. Tiger. A wheel! And this? God alone knows what this is. And the next? (In disgust.) a horse!—a rhinoceros. Another lion. Another Lotus! Where the hell is that stupid two-headed bird? (Stops.) What was the engraving I couldn’t make out? (Goes back and stares at it. Shouts in triumph.) That’s it! Almost gave me the slip! A proper two-headed bird. But it’s so tiny you can’t see it all unless you are willing to tear your eyes staring at it. (Karnad 1:122)

Karnad has given all the opposite symbols to describe the house of Padmini. Eagle symbolises sharp vision and an opportunistic mind. A lotus symbolises calmness and fertility. Lion in Indian ethos is the ‘vahan’ or vehicle of Goddess Durga, a warrior manifestation of Shakti. Lion has thus come to symbolise the courage. A wheel is an archetype of cyclical life. In Jungian Psychology, the house is an archetype of personality. The house is the representation of the personality who lives in it. The engraving of Gandaberunda on the door-frame of the house is a manifestation of the inner workings of Padmini, her dual nature. Jung has talked about the myth of evolution of a hero, which has a cycle of twins in it. According to Jung,
the archetype of twin represents opposites, but together they represent a whole. “Tantra explains,” Sally Kempton in *Awakening Goddess* says, “that the Goddess has two faces: two apparently opposite tendencies that we could call her the two gestures or the two sides of her dance”(47). She calls these two as The Face of Separation and The Face of Grace. She explains The Face of Separation as:

Your brain—powered by Shakti—is wired to show you that the world is outside you. It’s this feeling of separation from the world that makes everyone and everything we meet seem potentially desirable and threatening, an object to be conquered, swallowed, or retreated from. From birth until death, the brain endlessly throws up images, thoughts, ideas, and—especially—projections, convincing us that the things and people we love and hate are outside us and our welfare depends on getting these forces to gives us what we want. We become fully convinced that the pictures we see in our brain and interpret as reality are the final reality. This basic skew towards separation, the veiling of our fundamental oneness, is the work of Shakti as Mahamaya—the great illusion. (48)

And she explains The Face of Grace as:

The same Shakti who binds us by trapping us in the delusion of separation also liberates us from it. At moments she will wake us up, and once we know how to dance with her awakening force, the moments of awakening become more and more frequent. Eventually we learn to stay awake to the unity behind the diversity. That’s when we can begin to recognize the truth about the oneness of the physical world and the world of spirit. Without recognizing that the Goddess is in everything, we will tend to get trapped in one side or another of the spirit/matter duality. Either we favour spirit at the expense of the physical world or we get caught in the struggles and satisfaction of daily life without recognizing them as expression of spirit. (45)

These opposite symbols on Padmini’s door represent the twin nature of her psyche. But this double-faced bird is minute and can give one’s sight the slip. Therefore, to see the inner workings of Padmini’s mind, one has to put a lot of effort to understand her.
Karnad describes Padmini as throbbing with youth, freshness, vigour, and spirit. When Kapila first meets her he is amazed by her beauty, wits, and sharpness.

KAPILA (gapes at her. Aside): I give up, Devadatta. I surrender to your judgement. I hadn’t thought anyone could be more beautiful than the wench Ragini who acts Rambha in our village troupe. But this one! You’re right—she is Yakshini, Shakuntala, Urvashi, Indumati—all rolled in one.

PADMINI: You knocked, didn’t you?

KAPILA: Er—yes.

PADMINI: Then why are you gaping at me? What do you want?

KAPILA: I—I just wanted to know whose house this was.

. . .

KAPILA: Devadatta, my friend, I confess to you I’m feeling uneasy. You are a gentle soul. You can’t bear a bitter word or an evil thought. But this one is fast as lightening—and as sharp. She is not for the likes of you. What she needs is a man of steel. But what can one do? You’ll never listen to me. And I can’t withdraw now. I’ll have to talk to her family. (126)

Eros is the generator of Thanatos because life creates desires and with desires come pain, misery, and grief. Kapila sees the two-headed bird in minute detail which is the reflection of Padmini’s personality. She isn’t only beautiful but is a combination of opposites. Though Devadatta is attracted to Padmini, Kapila can see that Devadatta is not the right match for the sharp and Eagle visioned Padmini. Love brings with it anxiety and fearfulness, compulsion and inhibition and Kapila can see the despair for Devadatta in the form of beautiful and sharp Padmini in his life.

The archetype of Lakshmi is known for her reputation of fickleness and inconsistencies because of her association with both gods and demons. Padmini, an epitome of beauty and sexuality, is married to Devadatta, a Brahmin and a man of intellect. But his friend Kapila, who is physically strong, is also attracted to Padmini. Devadatta, according to Karnad, is no real name rather it is a formal mode of addressing a stranger. And Kapila simply means “The dark one.” Their names are thus archetypes in themselves, representing intellect and strength. Aparna observed,
“In the mythic genealogy of caste, first offered in the Purusha-Sukta, Brahmans emerged from Purusha’s head, and since then the supremacy of the head is firmly established in the Hindu tradition” (Dharwadker 1:25). That’s why Devadatta being a Brahman is an archetype of the head, mind, and logic. Logic suggests rationale, a set of principles which is guided by one’s consciousness. In contrast to Devadatta, Kapila is described by Karnad as an archetype of virility, sexual vigour and strength, representing physical attributes which fall under the domain of unconscious. Padmini enjoys the attention from both Kapila and Devadatta. She enjoys Kapila’s presence in her household and the battle of wits with him and is unconsciously enamoured by his manly beauty. She cajoles and manipulates Devadatta to agree for the Ujjain trip with Kapila.

Devadatta wasn’t happy about the idea of the whole trip. “DEVADATTA: Padmini, I’ve told you ten times already I don’t like the idea of this trip. You should rest- not face such hazards. The cart will probably shake like an earthquake. It’s dangerous in your condition. But you won’t listen” (Karnad 1:127). Her condition has another meaning beside her pregnancy. Devadatta had an understanding of the turmoil which the journey will bring; he was aware and could see the dangers of Padmini’s overactive Eros, and the faltering situation. He is what Carl Jung described as Logos to the Eros of Padmini. Walter A. Shelburn in his work Mythos and Logos in the Thought of Carl Jung stated that Jung equated Logos to the reason and consciousness whereas Eros to the imagination and unconscious. Devadatta tries to put reason in her but is rebuked in response. Lakshmi is represented as restless and fickle. She is known as Chanchala- means the restless one, her association with water means that it needs to be on the move always. Any attempt to cage her, stop her flow, will only bring stagnation and her wrath (Lakshmi 97).

The cart scene is of importance here as it brings out the unconscious Eros in Padmini to the forefront. “In archetypal symbolism, the carriage is a literal image, a conveyance that carries something from one place to another. Classically this sort of “carrying” conveyance is understood as the central mood of the psyche that transports us from one place in the psyche to another, from one idea to another, from one thought to another” (Estes 241). Also, the journey is from the middle of a forest. A forest is a place of darkness, unknown terrors, it is a place of untamed passions, wilderness, desires representing the ‘Shadow’ aspect where “the head is bidding
good-bye to the heart” (Karnad 1:133). The heart is the realm of *Kama* and the head is the realm of *Yama*. *Yama* tried to put his noose on the mischievous *Kama* but the desires were too strong and they broke away from its grip.

It is here when she first becomes conscious of her attraction for Kapila. Her Eros finds a way out in her aside where she celebrates the virility of Kapila in sensuous terms. “Padmini (watching him, aside): How he climbs- like an ape. Before I could even say ‘yes’, he had taken off his shirt, pulled his dhoti up and swung up the branch. And what an ethereal shape! Such a broad back: like an ocean with muscles rippling across it- and then that small, feminine waist which looks so helpless” (134). She looks at him as a celestial being, totally engrossed in his manly shape, his movements almost a dance to her. Devadatta, alongside the audience, feels the dawn of mutual passion between Kapila and Padmini, which is almost overwhelming, too difficult to control. He sees Padmini’s intense longing for Kapila. Padmini’s Eros had long been hidden from her own consciousness, but through this journey, the hidden pleasures found a way of sneaking out.

Padmini’s marriage to Devadatta is not out of love, but their marriage is between two important households, an educated Brahmin marrying a pretty girl. There is this unchallenged fierceness in Padmini that the gentleness of Devadatta couldn’t match. She needed a man like Kapila, full of passion and fire. He represents her animus, her wilderness. In the cart scene, her hidden instincts played themselves out; the archetype of Lakshmi was at work. As Lakshmi is fickle, she doesn’t stay with one for long. “Even her association with Vishnu came about because of her attractions to his many different forms and reincarnations” (Bedi 82). The Eros in her looked for something more than Devadatta’s intellect; it craved for Kapila’s vigour as he is her animus. For Eros isn’t a social construct, it is inborn, for it, the only right thing is that which helps it manifest its aim, and one of its aims is to attain union with one’s contra-sexual potential.

In the play *Naga-Mandala*, this inborn Eros takes the form of a Story.

NEW FLAME: Let me explain: My mistress, the old woman, knows a story and a song. But all these years she kept them to herself, never told the story, nor sung the song. So the story and the song were being choked, imprisoned inside her. This afternoon the old woman took her usual nap after lunch and started snoring. The moment her
mouth opened, the story and the song jumped out and hid in the attic. At night, when the old man had gone to sleep, the story took the form of a young woman and the song became a sari. The young woman wrapped herself in the sari and stepped out. (Karnad 1:250)

Eros is a drive to unite with things and people that can give it a value. The gagging of Eros gives place to Chaos. Edward. F. Edinger in the book Archetype of the Aplocalypse, says that mouth has a twofold symbolism. He explains it further:

One the one hand the mouth is a receptive organ, taking in edible, nourishing material to assimilate it and turn into one’s own substance. On the other hand, the mouth is the expressive organ that emits the creative world. It is that twofold reference which gives us the symbolic linkage between “food” and “word.”(95)

The Story was the food that the old woman had digested and she was supposed to regurgitate that “food” and turn it out of her mouth in the form of a “word.” Word is the symbolic of communicative knowledge. Before writing, the knowledge was imparted through oral traditions and lore. The storehouse of memories of knowledge was imparted to generations through stories. But the Story was gagged in the old woman of the house. The gagged Story is the archetype of Lakshmi. Lakshmi is derived from the Sanskrit word Laksh, which means aim and goal. The goal of Lakshmi is to activate the desires that unite with the Self. The gagged Story found its way out at when the old woman was sleeping. It is also said that caging Lakshmi results in stagnation and her wrath. That’s why, the gagged Story left a feud in old woman’s family before leaving.

The Story tells a story and it is the story of a young girl. Her name is not important because it is the story of every girl and each girl to her parents is a queen. So the name is Rani. Rani is another form of addressing the Lakshmi of the home. In Indian household, whenever a girl is born or a daughter-in-law enters, she is addressed as Lakshmi/Rani of the house. Rani in the play is described as a beautiful and young girl, owner of long and dark black hair. Long hair in women is a symbol of youth, fertility, and sensuousness: “For when her hair was tied up in a knot it was as though a black King Cobra lay curled on the nape of her neck, coil upon glistening coil. When it hung loose, the tresses flowed, a torrent of black, along her young limbs, and got entangled in her silver anklets” (Karnad 1:253). The imagery of black King
Cobra used by the author to describe the luscious hair of Rani is interesting here as Nagas or serpents are considered companions of Goddess Lakshmi, they are believed to have an uncanny relation with earth’s fertility and are considered to be guardians of Lakshmi’s grace. Also, it is believed that:

Ananta-Sesha, the divine serpent, served as a churning rope and suffered greatly to help draw Lakshmi out of the Ocean of milk, every serpent was rewarded with a gem. According to folk belief, these naga-manis located on the hood of serpents have the ability to cure any disease and fulfill every wish because in these gems resides the spirit of Lakshmi. (Lakshmi 58)

Rani is married to Appanna, but is neglected by him. She is an innocent girl who doesn’t know what to do to earn his love. All day long she misses her parents and cries. One day when she is sobbing in the kitchen, Kurudavva enters in her life. Kurudavva marvels at Rani’s beauty, “(She feels Rani’s face, shoulders, neck through the bars of the window.) Ayyo! How beautiful you are. Ears like hibiscus. Skin like young mango leaves. Lips like rolls of silk” (Karnad 1:259). Hibiscus is known for its delicacy, and its colours red and pink represents fertility. Rani is a delicate girl. The neglect from her husband has drained her emotionally. She finds solace in Kurudavva, an old woman with experience who becomes her mentor.

In Jungian psychology, the archetypal figure of the elder is sometimes called a “Senex” force. In Latin, Senex means ‘old man’. More properly, the symbol of the elder can be understood as the senescent force: that which acts in a way that is peculiar to the aged. In fairy tales, this aged force is personified by an old person who is portrayed as one-sided manner. Ideally, an old woman symbolizes dignity, mentoring, wisdom, self-knowledge, tradition-bearing, well-defined boundaries and experience...with a good dose of crabby, long-toothed, straight-talking flirtatious sass thrown in for a good measure.” (Estes 243)

Kurudavva is though blind but her son Kappanna, who carries her from one place to another, is her eyes. The depth of his vision can be seen from the remark when he says, “That Appanna should have been born a wild beast or a reptile. By some mistake, he got human birth” (Karnad 1:255). Kurudavva in order to solve the
misery of Rani shares with her, her (Kurudavva’s) experience and her secret root which can work magic in making the man slave of one’s charms. Kurudavva comes in the life of Rani as an archetype of mother, wisdom and earth. Herbs and roots are said to be earth’s wisdom. Lakshmi is also known as Dharani Devi, goddess of earth. Patricia Telesco in the book, 365 Goddess: A Daily Guide to the Magic and Inspiration of the Goddess says that the goddess Dharani is represented with symbols like basil plant (Tulsi), a medicinal herb, rice and seeds. All these symbols are representative of earth.

Kurudavva tells Rani that once she took care of a mendicant and cooked food for him and served him to his heart’s content. In return, he gifted her three pieces of a root saying, “any man who eats one of these will marry you” (Karnad 1:261). Catherine Yronwode in her book, Hoodoo Herb and Root Magic: A Materia Magica of African-American Conjure says that, herbs are important elements in hoodoo culture. They are put in almost all kind of things that arouse the five senses and that is why the in the South conjures are called root doctors as they put ‘roots’ on their enemies. In most parts of the country, ‘rootwork’ means hoodoo. Kurudavva’s roots had a power to ‘put roots’ on any man. She tells Rani:

Kurudavva: One day a boy distantly related to me came to our village and stayed with us. That day I ground one of the pieces into paste, mixed it in with the food, and served him. Can you guess which piece I chose?

Rani (working it out): Which one now? The smallest one, as the mendicant said? No, no, surely the biggest piece.

Kurudavva: No, I was in such a hurry I barely noticed the small one. The biggest scared me. So I used the middle-sized root.

Rani: And then?

Kurudavva: He finished his meal, gave me one look and fell in love. Married me within the next two days. Never went back to his village.

It took the plague to detach him from me. (261)

When Rani mixed the herb in the curry, it turned red; she got scared and in fear, she threw it into the ant-hill. The colour red is the symbol of desire, love, and passion; even the goddess Lakshmi is portrayed as clad in red saree. The magical
concoction worked, not on Appana but on the Naga in the ant-hill, thus the name Naga-Mandala. The magic worked on King Cobra, instead of Appanna. In Indian archetypal psychology, ant-hill is associated with ‘patala’, a realm below the earth, a realm of unconscious, a realm of Lakshmi, a realm of all the wealth, a realm of desires. A Serpent (Naga) is an archetype of energy, wisdom, sensuality, fertility and the unconscious. A Mandala (a geometric figure based upon the squaring of a circle around a unifying centre) is an archetype of desire for spiritual unity and psychic integration. Also, Jung says, “Because of the protection it implies, the magic circle or mandala can be a form of mother archetype” (FA 15). The composite image thus this Naga-Mandala produces is that of a circular motion of fertility and growth. Jaffe in *Symbolism in Visual Arts* defines the symbol of circle as:

Dr. M.-L. Von Franz has explained the circle (or sphere) as a symbol of the Self. It expressed the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man and the whole of nature. Whether the symbol of the circle appears in primitive sun worship or modern religion, in myths or in dreams, in the mandalas drawn by Tibetan monks, in the ground plans of cities, or in the spherical concept of early astronomers, it always points to the single most vital aspect of life—its ultimate wholeness. (266)

Appanna is the coiled serpent or unmoved Purusha that represents stillness and sterility. Prakriti is the way for one to see through the empirical self. Rani as an archetype of Lakshmi, stirs passion in him, makes him slither, and only a slithering serpent can shed its skin and renew itself. Appanna shed his sterility and moves towards Rani in the form of Naga. Prakriti doesn’t have any control over Purusha’s movement. It moves towards Prakriti because Prakriti arouses attention in it, and when Prakriti and Purusha come together, the union creates a flow of bliss or Eros. That’s why Purusha and Prakriti are assigned as male and female gender because love is the purest form of pleasure. Yantras in Indian ethos represent this archetype of union of opposites. A yantra is a form of ‘Mandala’ that symbolizes wholesomeness. Jaffe further mentions in *Symbolism in Visual Arts*:

Aside from the circle, a very common yantras, formed by two interpenetrating triangles, one point-upward, the other point-downward. Traditionally, this shape symbolizes the union of Shiva and
Shakti, the male and female divinities, a subject that also appears in sculpture in countless variations. In terms of psychological symbolism, it expresses the union of opposites—the union of personal, temporal world of the ego with the non-personal, timeless world of the non-ego. Ultimately, this union is the fulfilment and goal of all religions: It is the union of the soul with God. The two interpenetrating triangles have a symbolic meaning similar to that of the more common circular mandala. They represent the wholeness of the psyche or Self, of which consciousness is just as much a part as the unconscious.

In both the triangle yantras and the sculptural representations of the union of Shiva and Shakti, the emphasis lies on a tension between the opposites. Hence the marked erotic and emotional character of many of them. This dynamic quality implies a process—the creation, or coming into being, of wholeness. (267-268)

Rani in her innocence considers marital sex to be a sin, but Naga explains it to be a natural phenomenon in most sensuous terms. She is smitten by the Naga and likened to a bird which is hooked by Cobra’s sight. Naga is considered a phallic symbol. In some Indian myths, it can make a woman fertile like Yakshas. He introduced Rani to the world of pleasures, to the world of Eros.

NAGA: 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 the 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 the forest blossoms into a fountain of red and the earth cracks open at the touch of the aerial roots of the banyan, it moves in the hollow of the cottonwood, in the flow of the estuary, the dark limestone caves from the womb of the heavens to the dark netherworlds, 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 1: 276)

In the above lines, lies the crux of Eros, it is present in every form of life on the earth. Eros’ main purpose is to engender and create and make one see oneself in
the true sense. John in *Eros Ascending: The Life-Transforming Power of Sacred Sexuality* says:

> The human race desperately needs to remember that sex is a sublime creative force within us. It perpetuates the human race and is the ultimate condition of our human existence in the first place. There is a supernal intelligence behind sexual arousal, the true purpose of which is to create for us ecstatic experiences of our own divinity. (49)

Rani in her innocence didn’t know anything about it but heightened by Naga’s words and charms; Rani gave in to her new found instincts of eros. “Lakshmi is the patron goddess of adulthood and its corresponding developmental tasks. Her lover aspect brings an individual into a relational mode with a mate and psychologically into an inner relationship with one’s contra-sexual potential” (Bedi 79). In Jungian psychology, a women’s animus comes to life when she resurfaces from the ignorance of her desires. It draws them closer to the unexplored Eros in them, in the form of a lover, a stranger or a friend. Rani has matured and grown into a woman now. By using his erotic art, Naga has cured her frigidity. She waits for her lover and talks to herself.

Rani: Wait now. Don’t be impatient. It won’t be long . . . It will open out. Reach out with its fragrance.

(*Rushes into her bedroom. Wait tensely. Suddenly jumps up, breathes in deeply.*)

There it is . . . the smell of the blossoming nightqueen! How it fills the house before he comes! How it welcomes him! God, how it takes me, sets each fibre of me on fire! (Karnad 1:281)

When Naga doesn’t come for many days, she becomes anxious. Love is the desire that makes one anxious. It sprouts fear wherever it resides. Naga is the anima of Rani; it is the projection of her inner romanticism and separation from it makes her lovelorn.

RANI: All these days I was never sure I didn’t just dream up these nightly visits of yours. You don’t know how I have suffered. When I saw your scowling face in the morning, I would be certain everything was a fantasy and almost want to cry. But my real anxiety began as
the evening approached. I would merely lie here, my eyes shut tight. What is there to see after all? The same walls. The same roof. As the afternoon passed, my whole being got focused in my ears. The bells of cattle returning home—that means it is late afternoon. The cacophony of birds in a far-away tree—it is sunset. The chorus of crickets spreading from one grove to another—it is night. Now he will come. Suppose the nightqueen doesn’t blossom? Suppose it’s all a dream? Every night the same anxiety. The same cold feeling deep within me! Thank God. That’s all past now.

NAGA: Why?

RANI: I have definite evidence to prove I was not fantasizing.

NAGA: What evidence?

RANI: I am pregnant. (282)

According to Ernest Becker, “Man’s body was a “curse of fate”, and culture was built upon repression- not because the man was a seeker of sexuality, of pleasure, life and expansiveness, as Freud thought, but because the man was also primarily an avoider of death.

One represses the thought of death because one fear the oblivion and this repression is substituted in one’s psyche with a drive to grow and expand, to create something larger than oneself that can sustain its presence even after death. And one of the ways to make it possible is by reproducing. In Hindu World, to ensure one's rebirth, one has to reproduce a child.

Rebirth can only happen when an offspring or descendant left behind in the land of the living produces a child. Those who die childless have no one in the land of the living who can ensure their rebirth. They are doomed to stay in Put. That is why a son and a daughter are known as put-ra and put-ri in Sanskrit, meaning ‘deliverers from Put’. By producing a child, a living person not only repays his debts to his ancestors he also helps a Pitr escape from the land of the dead into the land of the living. (MM 75)

The female protagonists of the play Yayati are also the archetypes of Lakshmi. Sharmishta, Devyani, and Chitralekha all are embodiments of Eros. Sharmishta is a
princess of Rakshas clan and in Indian narratives, Lakshmi is also said to be obtained by Gods via Rakshas/Asuras. The asuras of Indian ethos are not demons of biblical tradition, but they are the half-brothers of Devas. The Gods fight them not because they are bad but “because the victory of the gods releases Lakshmi/Wealth/Prosperity hoarded by demons and hence supports life on earth” (MM 59). Sharmishtha is also a Green-World archetype. The archetype of Green-World women indulges in activities, in a set of beliefs and practices which link woman to nature (Goudge 101-102). These archetypes draw their power and self-sufficiency from nature. Lakshmi is the manifestation of Prakriti that is Nature. Lakshmi represents the bounty of Nature. She is the Dhanya Lakshmi Maa, related with fields, the greenery of Nature. Sharmishtha as a Rakhshi in the abode of greenery and nature is a law unto herself in her solitude. She is happy among the wildness of nature, among animals and in the company of other women. She tells Yayati:

I was a perfect rakshasa princess. Spoilt. Proud. But not too much. I liked being with other rakshasa girls and boys. Go singing and dancing with them under the bright moon. Weave garland of wild flowers for our festive games. Prance around in the river naked on dark nights, aware of the naked boys seeing us from the distance. (Yayati 19)

A Green-World archetype woman wanders, make friends, asks questions, she rides and hikes and explores and all these activities provide her with the liberated tone. It is with the lifelong alliance with the green world that a woman is able “to pass through and beyond Eros, absorbing its beneficence for the personality and yet remaining self-sufficient” (Pratt 126). Sharmishtha’s association with this green world made her grow and later helped her survive in the palace of Yayati.

Pratt says that in a woman, Eros is an expression of the Self. Though her Eros always suffers at the hands of society, she strengthens her Eros by bonding with other women. The friendships between women help them in their personal growth and development. It generates a unique energy which is quintessential to the women surviving in men’s world. Sharmishtha describes her friendship with Devayani:

Sharmishtha: Then Devyani came to my life. Devyani. She was unlike any woman I had met. She seemed completely unconscious of the fact that she belonged to a superior race. Actually let me confess, sir. She was equally affectionate to everyone in our tribe. It was I, as the
princess, who claimed her for myself. I wallowed in the privilege her equality endowed me with. I gloated. I flaunted her company in the face of other rakshasa girls. And she accepted all that with such easy grace. (*Yayati* 19)

Sharmishtha as an archetype of Lakshmi is restless and yearns for her independence from the slavery. She pleads:

I snarl because I want to retain a particle of my original self. I abuse and rave to retrieve an iota of it. It’s all useless of course. Scream as I may, I know there is no escape from the degradation. The louder I scream, the more I declare myself a slave. That is the point. I have decided to turn myself into a performing freak.

YAYATI: You are a very intelligent woman. I didn’t allow for that. (18)

Sharmishtha of the play *Yayati* is the other woman in Yayati’s life, but her wits and flattery seduced him. She is Yayati’s animus. She had a dual effect of delight and despair on him. She appeals to both his conscious and unconscious, as she reflects his personal animus, his idea of a perfect woman, who could be his physical, spiritual and intellectual partner. She is his Eros. She is to Yayati, what Plato describes as Symbolon. It can better be explained by the idea given by Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer has said that a strong passion arises when two people neutralise each other, just as a base and acid neutralise each other when they are forming a salt. The alpha male in Yayati gets attracted to the strong and feminine Sharmistha and the Eros sparks between the two. Together they both represent the concept of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, and Wilkins describes this concept in *Hindu Mythology: Vedic and Puranic* in the Indian context when he gives a description of Lakshmi and Vishnu as consorts.

Sri, the bride of Vishnu, the mother of the world, is eternal, imperishable; as he is all pervading, so she is omnipresent. Vishnu is meaning, she is speech; Hari is polity, she is prudence; Vishnu is understanding, she is intellect; he is righteousness, she is devotion; Sri is the earth, Hari is its support. In a world of gods, animals and men, Hari is all that is called Male; Lakshmi is all that is termed female; there is nothing else than they. (130)
Karnad introduces Devyani as the daughter of Shukra, the teacher of Asuras, known for his knowledge of Sanjeevani Vidya. Sanjeevani Vidya means the knowledge of rebirth, the secret of resurrecting the dead, restoring earth’s fertility, representing Eros. In some scriptures, Lakshmi is also called Bhargavi, daughter of Shukra. The whole episode of Yayati’s first meeting with Devyani is interesting, as it establishes Devyani as an archetype of Lakshmi. He first met her when she was thrown into a well by Sharmishtha and needed help. Lakshmi represents the abundance of water. Pot is her symbol. It is the archetype of female womb. A pot/well is associated with the fertility, bounty and a passage into the Mother Earth. Wells are considered holy as well as places of penetration into the unknown worlds of unconscious. Also:

The Devas release the Asura’s subterranean wealth. Surya, the Sun-god, coaxes plants to move towards the sky with his warmth and light. Chandra, the moon-god, causes the tide to rise and fall, helping in the harvest of fish and salt. Indra, the sky-god, hurls his thunderbolt, forcing monsoon clouds to release rain. Vayu, the wind-god, wears down mountains, forcing out rivers. Agni, the fire-god, melts rocks and releases metals. Together they draw Lakshmi out. (MM 90-91)

Interestingly, Devyani being thrown into a well by a Rakshasi and emerging out with the help of the king invokes the image of the Lakshmi.

Chritalekha is as a young, intelligent and an honest girl. She is the new bride, the Lakshmi of the house. Though an archetype of Lakshmi, she wasn’t spared from the treachery played by society on a woman. Pooru informs his father of all this when he tells him:

POORU: You know Chitralekha’s father had invited princes from all over the country and organized an archery contest for them. (Pause.) The contest had to be cancelled at the last moment.

YAYATI: Did it? Why?

POORU: Even I didn’t pay attention to the cancellation. If I had, I wouldn’t have accepted the invitation. The pretence of course was that Chitralekha would choose her own mate—the most gifted of the princes. But it had been decided long in advance that she should
marry the Bharata Prince, that she was destined to become the Empress of Aryavarta. They thought: Ah, well, a simple archery contest. It should be child’s play for someone from the great dynasty. Then they received reports about my skills and quietly dropped the requirement. There was an uproar among the invited princes, of course. But the family had made up its mind. Actually, they didn’t need me. They needed some male figure from this palace. A door-keeper’s statue would have done just as well.

YAYATI: Who has stuffed your head with such nonsense?

POORU: Chitralekha.

(Yayati stares at him, aghast.)

Yes, she told me. Who else? And why do you call it nonsense? That is the truth. From her birth, she has been groomed for this moment and when it arrives, what does she find? Me. Groomless me.

YAYATI: Surely she didn’t say that?

POORU: No, she did not. Actually when she was recounting all the confusion I had managed to create in their plans, she was laughing. Not at me. But at her own family. At their pretensions. Their eagerness to snare me. That is what I like about her: she is intelligent, loving, full of fun; but also honest and practical. She accepts me as I am, a fact to live with.

(Pause.)

But deep down, I can sense her disenchantment. She deserved someone worthy of her. Under the circumstances, I couldn’t have made a more felicitous choice. She wants a son. And so do I. (Yayati 37)

Chirtalekha is Karnad’s creation in the mythical play of *Yayati*. She is not present in the original myth. Karnad portrays her as an intelligent girl, who has a penetrating insight and is not a meek doll. Even though she is a princess, but her rank could not spare her the tricks played by patriarchy on her as a woman. But she is fun, loving and honest and desires to produce an offspring for the Bharata clan. This instinct to reproduce is one of the main aims of Eros, as it wants to keep the cycle of
life moving. Also, among many manifestations of Lakshmi, ‘Santan-Lakshmi: Goddess who grants Children’ is one.

The Queen of the play Bali: The Sacrifice is also an archetype of Lakshmi. Her name is Amravati. In ancient text, Amravati was considered to be the ‘abode of immortals’. 

Amrit in Sanskrit means Elixir for life, something that can make one immortal. It comes from the amalgamation of two words, ‘A’ and ‘Mrit’. Mrit is derived from the word ‘Mrityu’ meaning death and ‘A’ when prefixed to a word in Sanskrit it means undoing. Amrit is, therefore, an undoing of death; in a broader sense, it means to provide one with the energy to revive itself continuously. She is presented as a young, fertile and naive girl when she first meets King. Their meeting takes place in the garden of the palace. Garden in archetypal psychology is the symbol of paradise, innocence, and unspoilt femininity, it also symbolises fertility. Her innocence is visible from her conversation with King

KING: All right then, I’ll knock a bird down from the branch in the evening. Just for you. Don’t tell anyone. Otherwise, your parents will be furious. So will mine.

QUEEN: If you show me, I’ll let you pee on my rose bush. We can make babies.

KING: What’s that? Revolting!

QUEEN: Why are you pee ing here then?

KING: Because I haven’t had a pee since morning. The front yard is full of guests. So I came here. It’s got nothing to do with making babies.

QUEEN: It does too. That’s why no boy is allowed to come in here. How did you get in?

KING: I made a hole in the hedge and crept in.

QUEEN: You should have waited till you become my husband.

KING: Why?

QUEEN: My maid says that if a boy pees on the bush and then if a girl smells the flowers from that bush, that’s how babies are made. (207)

Queen of the play Bali: The Sacrifice goes through the same cycle of innocence and maturity as Rani of Naga-Mandala. Her marriage with King made her
explore her dormant feminine sexuality and desires. Now that she has matured and understood things better, she tells King about her pregnancy.

QUEEN: And Your Majesty has been urinating on my rose bush again!

KING: (almost shouting with joy): Really? You are sure?

(The Queen nods. Holds up four fingers.)

Four months? Four! Why didn’t you tell me all these days?

QUEEN: You know why. (Whispers) I waited till I was sure.

(He laughs delightedly. Kisses her all over. Then suddenly lifts her up and whirs her around.)

Please—Please—you’ll drop me.

KING (Plonking her down on the pedestal): Never! I love you. You’re pregnant! Pregnant! Oh, you’re beautiful. (207)

Julius in his book, Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex, criticises the idea of ‘Platonic Love’ associated with Eros, and says it is the product of both bodily instincts and to achieve something greater. He has associated Eros with both the ability to raise one from the carnal trivialities and at the same time with the force that brings two individuals together to procreate. In the ancient Indian philosophy, the woman was never the other. She was always the essential one. But with the emergence of monotheistic cultures like Jainism and Buddhism, celibacy became the only way to attain Purushartha. Therefore woman became a temptation to be avoided. Her open acceptance of her sexuality began to make society uncomfortable and unacceptable of her.

QUEEN: You could have taken another wife. You didn’t.

KING: Of course I didn’t.

QUEEN: Sometimes I wish you had.

KING: You did?

QUEEN: Yes, purely for child-bearing. Then I could make love to you—for its own sake- to make love. You don’t know how I have pined for that. And now I can look forward to it.

KING: You mean it will get better?

(They laugh and embrace.). (Karnad 1:211)
When a person has *Rajas guna* predominant personality, he/she always needs company and someone new to talk to. The people stricken by Eros need variety and sensation in life to keep their mind distracted. Eros has the habit of pulling a person down into the wheel of life by making a person restless. This restless can be seen in Queen as she goes to Mahout, even though she loves her husband.

MAHOUT: That’s all right. I like it. I like everything about the bed. Everything. That’s why I am good. I am good. Aren’t I?

(*No reply.*)

Better than your husband?

QUEEN *(reacts)*: How dare you!

( *The authority in her voice surprises him.*)

He is the best of men.

MAHOUT: Maybe. But what about in bed?

QUEEN: There too.

MAHOUT: Then why are you here?

QUEEN: You won’t understand that. (Karnad 1:195)

Maureen says, “The body is intelligent, it knows when it is hungry, thirsty, needs rest, wants to exercise, wants sex, doesn’t want sex, and is out of balance. Many of us, however, have been trained to ignore and override communication from our bodies” (Murdock 116). Eros is about experiencing one’s life to the fullest, to be present in one’s body and to listen to its demands, to respect one’s biological instincts and to adhere to its needs. Queen understands it truly when she confided her desires in King. Mukesh Jha in his paper *Personality: A Yogic Conception* remarks:

Passion expresses itself in a million different urges, desires, emotions and feelings, representing the two distinct categories; desires (thirst) and attachment. Human personality thirsts for the satisfaction of every desire that burns him down. Once the desire is fulfilled, a sense of attachment comes like vicious passions to smoother all the peace and joy of the mind. “Desire is our mental relationship towards objects, which have not yet been acquired by us and attachment is the mental slavishness binding us to the objects so acquired” (Swami Prabhupada 2003). The characteristic that indicates the predominance of rajas are
described as ‘greed, activity, undertaking of actions, restlessness – these arise when rajas is predominant’ (Gita, XIV, 12). The passionate seeking of life and its pleasure arises from the dominance of rajas. The fruit of rajas is pain. Rajasic action brings disappointment and dissatisfaction. (43)

Queen experiences this pain after her momentary pleasure with Mahout. She loved her husband but did away with the responsibility towards her husband that comes with the bond of marriage. She realises that her actions might have hurt her husband and she gets scared:

MAHOUT (aggressive): Are you saying I am stupid?
QUEEN: No, I’m not. So please don’t keep saying that. My coming here has nothing to do with my husband. He is a marvellous person—affectionate, gentle and trusting.
MAHOUT: And if he’s awake when you reach home now, what’ll you tell him?
QUEEN: I’ll say I’d gone out for a walk.
MAHOUT: In the streets? At midnight? And he’ll accept that?
QUEEN: Will you please let me go? Please. I’m really getting scared.

(Karnad 1:195)

Kama represents every kind of pleasure on earth. It is not exclusive to the love between a lover and a beloved but also manifests itself in other relationships. Queen-Mother’s Eros was confined in her maternal relationship with King and Queen was a threat to her only source of identity. Her bruised Eros began to express itself as a will to power. Vatsyayana has warned against over-indulgence in Kama. Impelled by her wild maternal instincts and unconscious will to power, her Eros began to cause trouble in the life of her son. To keep the wheel of her son’s lineage rolling, Queen-Mother wanted to make a sacrifice to her goddess, but her beliefs were against the principles of King and Queen.

MOTHER: You are denying me the right to my worship!
KING (firmly): No, Mother, I’m not.
MOTHER: You’re treating my goddess as though she were a cheap, tribal spirit. And you are cutting off my path to her.
KING: Try and be sensible, Mother. No one is stopping you from worshiping your goddess or from your own form of worship. But I am a Jain. My son will be a Jain—a Jain King. I cannot have his birth greeted with the infliction of death.

MOTHER: You were not born a Jain. You were born my son. But you betrayed me and my faith. Instead of choosing the woman and bringing her to your faith, you chose hers.

KING: I accepted the faith because I found truth in it and compassion for the world in pain. I don’t want to add to the pain. I will not let anyone do it. Certainly not in the name of my son.

MOTHER: He is my grandson too. I too have prayed for him. For me, he is the gift of my goddess.

KING: A king can follow only one path and I have chosen mine.

MOTHER: My feelings don’t matter to you. It’s mother, ranting and raving all around as usual. (Karnad 1:214)

Queen-Mother under the influence of her Eros, as a matter of fact, was unable to make any real sacrifice. Her desire for power didn’t make space for other’s beliefs; they remained in their primitive state resulting in bringing problems in the personal life of King.

Nittilai is Karnad’s creation in the play The Fire and the Rain as she doesn’t exist in the original Yavakri Myth. She is the Karnad’s mouthpiece of the most basic of ascetic teachings. Though she belongs to the low-caste hunters, her compassion, love, and sacrifice make her rise above all the Brahmins in the play. She is an archetype of Lakshmi in the sense that she favours wholeness and production. For her, the goals of universal welfare are more important than individual profits. This sense of abundance is an important characteristic of the Lakshmi archetype. Lakshmi is the life-force aspect, and that builds the need for an inner sense of sufficiency. She is blessed with this sense, and she questions it in Yavakri. She asks Andhak: “My point is since Lord Indra appeared to Yavakri and Indra is their God of Rains, why didn’t Yavakri ask for a couple of good showers?” (116). “Actually, I want to ask him two questions. Can he make it Rain? And then, can he tell when he is going to die? Just
two. What is the point of any knowledge, if you can’t save dying children and if you can’t predict your moment of death” (117). Sally Kempton in *Awakening Shakti* says:

The major ingredient of happiness is a sense of sufficiency. Satisfaction—a primal Lakshmi feeling state—is the felt sense of having enough. In a society where we are trained to consume voraciously, many of us have lost the ability to recognize the feeling of satisfaction. Just as we get indigestion when we eat past the point of physical satisfaction, so too when we go on acquiring for the sake of having more and more and more, we lose access to the inner feeling of “enough.” Being in tune with Lakshmi is not necessarily about having more, or spending more, or looking better. It’s about feeling the fullness and satisfaction that comes with the sense of sufficiency. (94)

Eros is not limited to romance or sex, but it includes the growth of all, empathy, creativity, a sense of abundance, deep friendship and soul connection. Nittilia constitutes all these characteristics of the mother-goddess. She represents nobility, maternal instincts and like a mother she serves, nourishes, and feeds all those who are needy and starved and from all these characteristics, she gets an inner sense of sufficiency. Her inner sense of self-sufficiency also comes from her closeness to Nature. She belongs to the class of hunters. Annie Welch in her book *The Cavern’s Wise Woman: The Bear Goddess* comments:

Hunting is often thought of as nothing more than savagery towards wildlife. Modern people have taken it to be an emotionless affair, a blood-laden camping trip if nothing else. However, hunting is for many cultures and many Pagans to be a more complicated and sacred process; including the emotional challenges that come with taking life, than many people in our modern suburbia allow. While many people hunt for pure sport, many cultures believe that the hunt is not just about procuring meat, it even goes beyond the acquiring of only what we need. It is an ancient tradition in and of itself, a connection not only to one’s Ancestors, but also of the connection and interaction with the sacredness of nature.

There is immense wisdom to be learned from taking just one hunt, and the loss of the life of the animal. Here it is an experience that many
Pagan hunters have – being a part of nature, having a hand in it, and learning about life through its death is a deeply spiritual event. (30)

Her deep connection with Nature because of her class made her develop a spirit of friendship, kinship, and love. She respects a life more than the rules and regulations. She hasn’t run away from her husband because she doesn’t like him but because Arvasu would have died without her and her family wouldn’t have approved of her going and serving Arvasu. Therefore, she ran away.

NITTILAI: I’ve run away.

ARVASU: From your husband?

NITTILAI: From my husband. From my family. From everything.

ARVASU: Oh!

Why? Didn’t you like him? Did he beat you?

Nittilai: I liked him. Very much. He’s always smiling. I might have been happy with him.

(Pause.)

If any other girl had done what I’ve done, I’d have been the first to thrash her in the village square. But when I heard what’d happened to you- (151)

She rises above her personal desires and cares for Arvasu as a friend. She becomes the archetype of Arogya Lakshmi. When Lakshmi was churned out of the ocean of milk, Dhanavantri rose with her. He is the god of health, who brought Ayurveda which is the Indian science of health and longevity. This form of Lakshmi is known as Arogya Lakshmi. “Arogya-Lakshmi represents that aspect of Lakshmi which bestows good health on a family” (Lakshmi 50). Like a mother, Nittilai nursed Arvasu back to health. Actor-Manager tells Arvasu:

I didn’t save your life. She did. I only found you. You were lucky that she turned up soon after and it’s she who’d been nursing you. Mopping up your vomit, wiping your bottom. Like a baby. I’m greatful to her because my babies were starving when she came and now they get a bite to eat every day. (157)

Nittilai saved the village from the inertia of death and kept the cycle of life in motion by taking care of the diseased and by providing food to the starved. She is the
energy that awakened the children of Actor-Manager from dread and starvation and provided health to Arvasu for functioning normally.

Whereas Nittilai’s Eros was intact, Vishakha’s Eros was starved. Vishakha gave into Yavakri because she was Eros starved and not sex starved. There is the difference between the two. Eros is the desire that becomes the reason of connection between two people. Eros weaves a network of associations. A brief connection with her husband left her empty of love, affection, and connection. Yavakri rekindled that need for connection in arid Vishakha. She says, “The moment I heard you say you were hungry for words, I knew it was too late to go. I couldn’t walk out on you after that. I had lost the initiative—missed the moment of decision. Because I know that hunger well, Yavakri. That’s why I should have gone back without saying a word to you” (Karnad 2:121). Joy E. Corey in Divine Eros says, “The human spirit needs to be loved and to love, in order to maintain the body that houses it. In time, with no one to nurture and feed the spirit, the heart which is the very source of one’s existence both ontologically and existentially, stops beating” (121). When Yavakri entered in her life, her starved Eros took hold of her body. She tells Yavakri, “I’ll give you the knowledge Indra couldn’t give you. My body—” (123). She looked for erotic fix in the bodily sex with Yavakri but this momentary sexual failure resulted in her ethical failure.

Alexander in his work, The Human Eros says, that in human beings, “there is a deep-seated drive to exist with a sense of meaning and value.” (140). He further mentions that a human being seeks fulfilment on many levels, be it friendship, creativity, love, and beauty, when all these are accomplished, a man flourish. When these desires remain unfulfilled; a man withers. For the fulfilment of these, a man can suffer and bear the loss of one’s life. This radical impulse to thrive in life is named ‘Human Eros’ by Thomas. He further says:

When this drive is frustrated or negated, resulting in the sense of loss of any meaning or value to our existence, it readily becomes transformed into a highly destructive power which may be directed outwardly or inwardly. One of the primary aims of civilization is to secure conditions whereby this Eros can develop, and it is the function of reflective intelligence in particular to address the crises which
threaten it in order to avert its transformation into a drive for annihilation. (141)