PREFACE

The thesis "The Twain Shall Meet: An Interpretation of Girish Karnad's Works," aims at a close analysis of Tughlaq, Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala, Tale-Danda, and The Fire and the Rain. The thesis also focuses its attention on the major themes of the plays and the theatrical techniques employed by the playwright. Not many playwrights have won theatre reputation in India as Karnad. His plays are powerful and impressive. They have established him as the best of the new generation of Indian playwrights. Apart from numerous awards and titles, he had won the prestigious Jnanpith Award also for his contribution to Indian English theatre.

Indian English theatre has a long and rich tradition. It is basically dance oriented. Because of the British impact, Indian English theatre has failed to establish itself as a genre. Theatre personalities like Karnad attempted to have a blend of the Eastern themes and Western techniques. The thesis emphasizes on this aspect and the scholar attempts to make a thorough study of the blend of the Eastern themes with the Western techniques in Karnad's plays.

Indian drama in regional languages and the drama in English translations have marked a remarkable growth. Several plays written in regional languages have been translated into English. As a number of such plays exist, the scholar can assess and evaluate the Indian drama in its totality. This evaluation
attempted by the scholar shows the evolution of Indian English theatre. The translations have established a link between the East and the West, the North and the South in India and contributed to the growing richness of contemporary Indian English drama. A study of Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, and Karnad shows that they are the symbols of the new resurgence. They have made bold innovating fruitful experiments and new directions in Indian English drama.

The First Chapter, "Introduction," is the preparatory phase of the thesis. The emphasis is on Karnad: The man and the writer. In this chapter, the scholar has also attempted a brief account of Indian English drama since Rabindranath Tagore. The scholar examines Karnad's contribution to Indian English theatre keeping in mind the contributions of Tendulkar, and Sircar. This chapter contains a survey of Karnad's works with brief comments. It also studies the growth of Karnad as a dramatist.

The Second Chapter, "Major Themes," is seminal to the thesis. It elucidates the major themes of his plays. Karnad has shown the Indian stage as to what depths the mythical themes could be used in order to recreate a contemporary consciousness. In Yayati, Karnad retells the age-old story of Yayati and Puru. Karnad's originality is in his working out of the motivation behind Yayati's ultimate choice. Karnad is concerned with the consequences of shirking responsibilities. Tughlaq, an unusual chronicle play presents the most
intelligent and idealistic king, who grows alienated and desperate. The play has overtones of betrayal and existentialism. *Hayavadana* poses the problem of human identity in a world of tangled relationship with a search for completeness. These are all universal themes. *Naga-Mandala* deals with male chauvinism, the oppression of women, injustice done to women by men and the concept of marriage and chastity. *Tale-Danda*, a contemporaneous and socially relevant play discusses the ugly social deformity of the Hindu society. *The Fire and the Rain* takes Karnad's quest for truth ahead. The philosophical content of the myth blossoms into a drama with emotions of love, despair, jealousy, and loneliness. Karnad's plays have two constantly recurring themes - the experience of human isolation and a search for positive value in life and human relationship.

In Chapter Three, "Theatrical Techniques," the scholar examines Karnad's presentation of myths, legends, folk tales or history with dramatic point of view. When Karnad found the existing dramatic forms inadequate to express himself, he was compelled (him) to find a new form. In order to translate his thoughts into the terms of theatre, Karnad has examined all the aspects of folk and classical tradition. This Chapter deals with the synthesis of the East and the West in order to create a new form. Karnad evolves a symbolic form out of the archetypal and mystic experience and it leads to a living response to life and its values. This chapter also deals with Karnad's use of theatre to put forward his search for
truth. This chapter examines the Western as well as Indian techniques adopted by the playwright to make his plays more theatrical and meaningful. The East-West blending is very prominent in his plays except Naga-Mandala. The scholar examines the playwright's use of the system of signals into sight and sound to the spectator. This technique is adopted to illustrate the actor-audience relationship. Karnad is a keen follower of the rules of Natyashastra by Bharata. He makes use of his childhood experience with Yakshagana and many other folk-theatre devices in an exhaustive manner, while powerfully exploiting Western techniques like Brechtian alienation, existentialism, features of Absurd drama and so on. Contemporaneity in Karnad's plays manifests itself, through his operative sensibility, a new meaning to the past.

The Final Chapter, "Summation," estimates Karnad as a master craftsman. It also sums up the arguments that have been introduced in the earlier parts of the thesis. The chapter highlights the multi-faceted personality of Karnad, the artist, thereby throwing open various new avenues for further research.

Regarding the format of the thesis, the scholar has kept close conformity with the mechanics of writing outlined in MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 3rd ed. 1989. Appendix I is the full text of the scholar's interview with Prof. Parasuram Ramamoorthy, an actor, producer/director of Karnad's plays in India and abroad.
The scholar could not watch / see / witness all the plays of Karnad as they are not staged in India often, as they are in abroad. Yet the scholar has in mind; a few he has seen.

Karnad's contribution to the growth of Indian English theatre and Indian English literature is significant. It is only in Karnad theatre one finds natural and powerful blending of the East and the West. Karnad has been the most widely acclaimed of the new Indian playwrights. And the twain do meet in his plays.