Dramatic Tradition

(1) Girish Karnad and the principles of Natyasastra

(2) Assimilation of Western Techniques and style

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(a) Girish Karnad and the Principles of Natyasastra

Contemporary Indian drama has a host of great playwrights like Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad. These leading playwrights are regional writers, they write their plays in their own regional language and later transcreate them into English. Thus, though they come from different regions and from different theatrical background they pave a way for a new 'national theatre'. Together they have enriched the Indian theatre, and in Karnad's words have produced, "the best plays in thousand years."  

Karnad, the author of Tughlaq, Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala, Tale-Danda, The Fire And The Rain writes in Kannada and translates his plays into English. With his transcreations he emerges as a symbol of the new vibrant energy that has entered into contemporary Indian English drama. Karnad has made a sincere effort towards giving a new meaning to Indian English drama by bringing out significant plays in English. These plays have been translated and performed in different languages and have contributed to the enrichment of the contemporary theatre. No other playwright has the credit of translating and performing his plays in so many languages. Karnad’s achievements have been possible due to his dramatic genius and his creative imagination, which is completely Indian. He admits,
"My three years in England had convinced me that Western theatre had nothing to offer us."²

Karnad was brought up as a child in a small town in Karnataka. It was during this period that the Indian dramatic traditions became a part of his personality. He used to see the plays performed by troupes of professional actors called Natak Companies. This had a deep impact on the young Karnad. He also saw the Yakshagana performance, though both these forms were in their declining period. Karnad observed minutely the basic characteristics of these dramatic forms and which is seen in his application to the plays. Karnad saw theatre again when he moved to Bombay for his post graduation studies, which was a thrilling and an elevating experience for him. He saw Strindberg’s Miss Julie and was fascinated by the way inner feelings were exposed and he also saw the new technology of the theatre. He soon got a scholarship to go abroad, but this created tension in the family. His family members were troubled with the thoughts of his food habits, marriage even his settlement. It was in the midst of these tensions, he found himself writing a play. To Karnad’s surprise the play was written in Kannada, his childhood language. The story he took was from a myth in the Mahabharata, the myth of Yayati. The king was cursed of old age in the prime of life. But unable to bear the curse thrusted upon him, he searches for a young man willing to give him his youth in exchange for the curse. He asks his son for the favour, who agrees and ultimately becomes older than his father. The play ends with Yayati’s repentance on self-realization. The play has tragic overtones though Karnad has stuck to Indian tradition on grounds
of plot and characterization. Karnad has taken a plot from a myth and the hero is a legendary figure, not a contemporary one as in accordance with the Natyasastra. After the play, Karnad could clearly realize that the play was simply an escape from his tension. Myths reflect the phase of life he was going through while going abroad, his anxieties and his resentment. The play indicated what Karnad also says that the play, "had nailed me to my past," and that "we have strong tradition in mythological and historical plays" and further adds that, "this tradition has a tremendous potential". He further adds that, "most myths have strong emotional significance for our audience."

During his three years in England he saw a lot of theatre but found himself strongly rooted in his own tradition. He took the subject matter for his next play Tughlaq from medieval history and the protagonist was a famous historical figure. Karnad attempted to fit the play into the structure of the Natak Companies. A company play consisted of a mechanical alternation of "shallow" and "deep" scenes. The shallow scenes were played in the foreground of the proscenium stage against a drop curtain, which usually showed a street scene. The scenes were devoted to low comedy, which kept the audience occupied while the set was being changed in the deep scenes behind the curtain. In the deep scene the entire stage space was used to present elaborate palaces and gardens in which heroic characters displayed emotion in lofty rhetoric. The form that he borrowed from the company Natak fitted well to the subject of Tughlaq.
In Hayavadana, Karnad showed his deep knowledge of the Indian dramatic tradition. It is of great importance that in the choice of his study material and the form to cast it in dramatic mould, Karnad has followed the tradition. He takes legendary, folklore and historical material for his themes. Karnad bases his play Hayavadana on one of the stories in the Kathasaritsagara, an ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit. The play begins with a prayer in honour of Ganesh, the traditional deity of our Indian theatre. In order to suit his thematic material Karnad employs those devices, which have been used in the epics, the puranas and the folklore performances. Karnad's childhood experience with the Yakshagana, traditional theatrical form of Karnataka, is reflected in the technique of Hayavadana.

From the traditional story in Hayavadana, Karnad comes to folklore material in Naga-Mandala. Based on two folk tales of his own region, Karnataka, the story was narrated to him by his teacher, friend, poet, scholar and folklorist, A.K.Ramanujan. Karnad with a wide canvas of inter-wined situations has reflected upon Indian beliefs and habits. The play is replete with Indian day-to-day talks and beliefs.

As Karnad comes forward with his latest play, The Fire And The Rain he is established as a writer making sincere efforts towards the enrichment of Indian English drama. The rich heritage of Sanskrit theatre had by now remained unattended by dramatist. Karnad returns to the rich tradition of Bharata's Natyasastra and the other art forms of folk theatre. That Karnad is firmly attached to the roots of Indian culture is established through his play "The Fire
And The Rain." Karnad gives information to his readers regarding the birth of drama in the play itself. The actor manager approaches Parvasu and tells him how Brahma created the fifth Veda, Natyaveda i.e. drama after combining relevant material from the four Vedas. It was handed over by Brahma to Indra who, in turn passed it on to Bharata, the creator of Natyasatra. The actor manager continued and asserted that the performance of drama might prove to be helpful to please lord Indra apart from the Yajna. Karnad’s acquaintance with the Natyasatra can be seen in this play. Through the play, Karnad also shows that Yajna or fire sacrifice and dramatic performances have striking parallels. The Yajna was an important rite performed in the Vedic age. Similarly dramatic performance brought on the earth by Bharata as produced by Brahma and assigned the position of fifth Veda is of equi-importance. Both involve careful actions performed by human beings in order to come to a successful completion. Bharata and Kalidasa have suggested the closeness of drama and religious ritual. Karnad quotes Kalidasa, who talks of theatre as,"the desirable fire sacrifice of the eyes, (Kantam Kratum Chakshushham)".3

In the play, as the rains pour we realize that the gods were pleased with the ultimate sacrifice by Arvasu and hence Nittilai’s humanity wins over everything including the seven yearlong sacrifice. Thus the dramatic performance succeeds in bringing rains, which the fire sacrifice failed to do. This leads to the conclusion that dramatic performance might prove more successful in pleasing the gods.
According to Abhinavgupta, the highest goal of drama is the realization of the purusharthas namely, dharma, (which implies spirituality), artha,(which implies political and economic power), kama( meaning sexual inclination) and moksha ( which is final liberation from human bondage). Karnad concentrates on the four purusharthas. The two saint characters Bharadwaj and Raibhya are sages, who, for the supremacy of knowledge, deviate from the path of “dharma” and follow “adharma”. The fire sacrifice symbolizes, “artha”, i.e. political and economic gains. Yavakari is involved in fulfillment of his “kama” with Vishakha, wife of Parvasu. These characters deviate from the moral standards and thus create a world of havoc and are left to repent. They do not find the path of moksha, i.e. liberation from human bondage and become victims of their own misdeeds.

Karnad revives the ancient tradition by the use of myths. These myths run parallel to the contemporary situations and society. The characters represent how modern man has blindly followed political and economic gains without caring for dharma. He is thus denied of moksha and is ultimately left to bear the hellish world he has created for himself. Karnad believes that myths can be used to show parallels between contemporary situation and antiquity.

According to the Indian traditional dramatists, a play should present a basic mental state and it occupies a central position in the play. Karnad’s plays present few mental states; whether it is Padmini’s state of mind in her search for completeness (Hayavadana), Muhammad’s frustration and his state of dilemma
(Tughlaq), Apanna and Rani in their state of development of personalities (Naga-Mandala). Karnad's plays like Sanskrit drama, centre around a set of emotions and the actions follow according to them. There is more emphasis on presentation of emotion rather than action. Karnad's plays are meant for an audience who seeks aesthetic pleasure.

The purpose of Sanskrit drama is not merely entertainment but the preservation and encouragement of morals and standards in the society. The drama itself originated out of this need of moral upliftment, which is necessary for the healthy growth of a society, and for the attainment of human goals. There are four goals which have been recognized for the pursuit of human life by the Indian society from pristine time namely, dharma (religious merit), artha (wealth), kama (object of love), moksha (final emancipation). Karnad powerfully uses myth for the depiction of morals in order to achieve the goal of upliftment of moral standards of the society.

Karnad's theatre is deeply rooted in the Indian dramatic tradition as framed by Bharata in the Natyasastra. The characteristics of Indian imagination as subject matter, myths and legends, karma and rebirth, caste and language are all the features illustrated in his plays. Karnad's theatre symbolizes the classical Sanskrit theatre and marks the birth of a new Indian theatre and is thus rightly designated as the "theatre of roots".
REFERENCE:

2. Karnad, Girish, Theatre in India Dacdalus. Pg. 337.
3. Ibid. P. 334.
4. Karnad, Girish. The Fire and the Rain Notes Pg. 69.
8. Ibid. p 14.
11. N5, VI, Pg. 113.
13. Ibid, 110.
(b) Assimilation of Western Techniques and Style

Karnad's theatre is rooted in the Indian tradition. It is also noticed in his plays that he imbibes western techniques and forms. He says that, "the major concern of the Indian theatre in the post-Independence period has been to try to define its "Indianness" and to relate itself to the past from which it was cut off". At the same time Karnad, with his contemporaries of the post-Independence period paved a way for a new theatre. In the post independence period, apart from the other activities, the Govt. of India encouraged theatrical activities in India. English dramas were staged and Indian writers came face-to-face with the modes and techniques of the Western dramatists.

Karnad seems to draw his influence of the west, from his readings of the western writers during his school and college days, and during his stay in England. In England he saw the performances of Brecht's, Life of Galileo and Good Person of Setzuan and was greatly influenced by it especially the technical aspect of the play. Shaw, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Anouith, and O'Neill influenced Karnad in his college days. Western drama had its rebirth as a social and literary force during 1880-1900. There were many significant changes in theatre, and acting became a respectable profession. The development of the theatre was a universal one; many writers came forward with their work. Andre
Antonil in France, Otto Bahn in Germany, Stainslavsky and Tolstoy in Russia were pioneers in the field. Ibsen started as a writer of historical and romantic plays. His problem plays of the middle phase like *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts* and later dramas of symbolic and psychological realism aimed at photographic picturization of reality. Chekhov, however, carefully tried to be natural. Long monologues or characters replaced the dialogues. Chekhov also spread his actions over several years or at least several months. Realism also appeared as a form to the giants of modern dramatists. Symbolist writers like, Materlinck in their plays created a particular an atmosphere on the stage through lights, shadows, sound effect etc. Through this the audience is made aware of the unseen and supernatural. Strindberg appeared to have revolutionized the stage with his expressionistic-realistic plays. He concentrated on a selective mode of presenting inner reality, mingling facts with fantasy, picturising the landscape of the mind, showing inner conflicts, dramas, reveries and hallucinations all shown directly to the audience. There are flashbacks and sudden shifts in time, which take the audience back and forth. Sets are functional and not photographic, spotlights are used imaginatively, and background music enhances the impact of the dialogues. Symbolism is used not only on sets but the characters are shaped as symbols. Expressionism, as an art form was a movement that began in Germany before World War-I. It also influenced O'Neill, Rice, Odets, Williams and Miller in America. This technique enables a dramatist to depict “inner reality” and to communicate to the audience.
Shaw stands apart as a playwright from these tendencies. Bernard Shaw wrote problem plays discussing contemporary topics. For Shaw ideas were most important. Shaw has been one of those playwrights who reacted to the changes in the social order, took the social cause and pleaded for the poor and the downtrodden. In the 1940’s and 50’s there were two dominant movements-Epic theatre and the theatre of the Absurd. Epic theatre was the brainchild of Bertolt Brecht. The general outlines of the theory of epic theatre are framed in the notes to the opera-Rise and Fall of the Town of Mahagamy. Epic theatre is usually termed as non-Aristotelian since it negates the sequence of time. Brecht created a ‘scientific’ theatre that would inspire the audience to bring about socio-economic and political change. Brecht did not want theatre to remain merely as demonstration. He wanted his audiences to realize possible improvements for the world and also to realize what makes the world what it is and one’s role in the process. The theatre of Brecht has emotions, but reason is dominant. In epic theatre actions produced with arguments and it investigates man rather than simply embodying him.

Brecht does not agree with Aristotelian concept of epic. In the notes to The Round Heads and the Pointed Heads, he states that, “certain incidents in a play should be treated as self-contained scenes and raised by means of inscriptions, music and sound effects, and the actors way of playing above the level of the everyday, the obvious and the expected.”

Brecht is opposed to the Aristotelian theatre where emotions of pity and fear are aroused and then purged off leading the spectator
to a balanced state of mind. This leaves the spectator empty of reason; he identifies with the protagonist and grasps a false image of reality. Brecht recommends a theatre where the spectators are turned to be observers and thinkers. "In Epic theatre the stress is upon why the event has happened, what caused it and how it can be prevented from happening again."

In order to achieve this, Brecht suggests the concept of Verfremdungseffekt or Alienation effect. According to Brecht it is a theatrical alternative to the classical principle of pity and terror. The new theatrical device for artistic treatment of subject matter does not turn the spectator hostile towards drama by breaking the illusion. Rather it is a new way of judging and explaining things and situations. He employed various devices to create Verfremdungseffekt or Alienation effect on the stage. Brecht uses short scenes, scene in itself that is to say that the scenes have a total identity and a particular line of thought and action. He employs narration, prior announcement of the contents of a scene that is enacted, and from this he develops the use of chorus and songs to interrupt and comment on the theme. Brecht usually takes up a known story and in order to prevent the audience from bothering over mere development of plot, he sometimes tells the story in advance with the help of play cards, storytellers and songs. Brecht uses simple language of his own tongue and does not favour the use of figurative and bombastic language. He shifts the play in space and time with an aim to detain the audience emotionally from the character while other devices encourage it to weigh the issue carefully. This makes the audience contemplate on the problem dramatized on the stage
and how altering social, political and economic situations can solve it. Brecht's theory of Epic Theatre is illustrated in its most significant form in the Life of Galileo (1937), The Good Woman of Setzuan (1938), Mother Courage (1941), Punctil and his servants (1948), and Caucasian Chalk Circle (1948). His plays, produced in a variety of styles, have been successfully staged in India. Brecht's play have received an overwhelming response and popularity in our country. Indian writers and directors have successfully presented his plays freely by employing the devices of their own traditional theatre. These facts establish the relevance of Brecht and his theories and techniques for the Indian contemporary playwrights, as only he has made them realize what potential does our Indian tradition upholds.

Karnad along with Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh has been one of the generations of playwrights, which emerged after India won freedom. Karnad is aware of the problems faced by the post-independence writers, and he says that they, "had to face a situation in which tensions implicit until them had come out in the open and demanded to be resolved without apologia or self-justification; tension between the cultural past of the country and its colonial past, between the various visions of the future that opened up once the common cause of political freedom was achieved." Indian playwrights were attracted by the novel modes of writing in the west and to cope up with the new challenging situation they turned towards the western modes of expression and techniques. They turned towards west to learn something new, and
western drama provided the means to explore into human existence and deeper knowledge of reality.

By the time Karnad started his career as a dramatist, there was no established theatrical tradition for him to frame his work on. Moreover the Parsi theatre in spite of its enormous success for the past seventy years collapsed in the 1930's and the Sanskrit drama, which flourished between 200 B.C. and 700 A.D. remained merely for the elite and sophisticated audience. Karnad says, "To my generation, a hundred crowded years of urban theatre seemed to have almost nothing to hang on to, to take off from." 7

Though brought up in the light of the rich tradition of Indian theatre, Brecht’s influence made him aware of the imaginativeness and power of the Indian theatre. He admits that, “Brecht’s influence received mainly through his writings and without the benefit of his theatrical productions, went some way in making us realize what could be done with the design of traditional theatre”. 8 Although It is true that all aspects of Brecht influenced Karnad, he is rooted deeply to Indian tradition and he discovers all the aspects in his own theatrical tradition and uses accordingly. He is a playwright with thorough and complete knowledge of the practical needs of the theatre. He is modern in disposition and technique with deep knowledge of the Indian tradition and can transform any situation to provide aesthetic satisfaction.

Karnad has used the myth of Yayati for his first play; the ready-made frame of the plot provided him opportunity to define his own uncertainty and insecurity. The period during which he wrote
the play was an extremely tough time for Karnad, as he had to decide between his career and parental responsibilities bestowed on him. His parents were not convinced that he would be back once he went to England for his studies. Young Karnad was extremely puzzled over the situation. King Yayati had exchanged his old age with the youth of his youngest son, as his elder sons had denied doing so. Karnad was surprised to note that the myth became relevant to the circumstances he was undergoing. He says, "At the time of writing, I had seen the play only as an escape from my tensions. But looking back I am surprised how accurately the myth reflected my anxieties, my resentment at the elders who seemed to be demanding that I sacrifice my future for their peace of mind." The anxieties and the situation reveal the anxieties and the sensitive issue prevailing in the society, the generation gap, which produces tension and misunderstanding amongst the individuals.

His second play Tughlaq is a classic in the gallery of Indian drama on account of its range, setting, plot and the precise exercise of the theatre technique by the playwright. The play is an authentic and sincere effort of the playwright to portray the sad and tragic events in the life of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. He was certainly, "the most brilliant individual ever to ascend the throne of Delhi but also one of the biggest failures". It was due to his confused and tortured self and his corrupt nature that the country plunged into violence, bloodshed and devastation. The early sixties, as Karnad felt, mirrored the situations of the fourteenth century. There was gradual degradation of ethical and moral norms and the people were disillusioned. They did not value the independence they
had got. Moreover the political situation during the period was corrupted to its depth. Tughlaq's character is highly symbolic of the dual character of the present day politicians who can go to any extent in their thirst for power.

Karnad's third play *Hayavadana* is based on a tale from the Kathasaritsagara. It moves within the framework of personal relationships. He deals with the question of human relationship and uses various modes; the mythic, the symbolic, the narrator and the chorus to deal with the theme of incompleteness.

His play *'Naga-Mandala'* is based on two oral tales from Karnataka. Karnad has not completely based his play on Brechtian technique of epic theatre but he claims that the play strikes a departure from the emotion-based world of traditional values. He observes, "the theatrical conventions Brecht was reaching against-character as a psychological construct providing a focus for emotional identification, the willing-suspension-of-disbelief syndrome, the notion of a unified spectacle-were never a part of the traditional Indian theatre. There was therefore no question of arriving at an alienation effect by using Brechtian artifice. What he did was to sensitize us to the potentialities of non-naturalistic techniques available in our own theatre". The play comments on the paradoxical nature of oral tales and the tale of Rani, who is treated as dumb member both in her father's house and in her husband's house as well. The empty house with Rani locked in is a portrayal of the condition of woman, and symbolic of the restrictions imposed upon them.
Karnad has made use of the folk tales and the 'mixing of human and non-human worlds' as a distancing device, device which brings in the element of alienation in the play.  

*Naga-Mandala* a play within the play, begins with the "prologue". The characters in the prologue narrate the play, in which are the main characters of the play proper, and the story they narrate is the sub plot of the play. Karnad uses the features of epic drama through the use of chorus and music. In *Naga-Mandala* the flames sing all the songs. At night several flames enter the temple, giggling, talking to each other in female voice. In the course of time, during the play they interrupt and give comments. According to Karnad "the mixing of human and non-human worlds permit the simultaneous presentation of alternative points of view, of alternative attitudes to the central problem "and thus provided proper setting for complex seeing".  

His latest play, *The Fire and The Rain*, is based on a myth from the Vanaparva of The Mahabharata. The playwright has used the devices of prologue or epilogue, even masks; play within the play on the framework of a known myth in India.  

It's true that Karnad has been influence by western writers and especially Brecht. A study of his plays shows that his ideologies and his mode of writing have influenced Karnad most. Karnad is of the view that Brechtian technique is not necessarily needed since we have it in our own tradition. These plays are therefore placed on the framework of the Indian traditions deriving a few inspirations from the west. Karnad's drama depicts the crisis of human identity and
analyses contemporary reality. This in turn enhances and thus provokes us to think and does not allow us to forget the stage show and remain satisfied. With this novel approach of dramatic writing Karnad has given a new light and meaning to Indian English drama. Simultaneously it has also brought into light the Indian tradition and its potentialities that could be thus focused on.

Karnad the playwright has, excavated the Indian imagination from Bhasa through Kalidasa to Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar, and elevated it to the filament of world drama with a vital infusion from the double plot of William Shakespeare, the comic genius of Molare, the social problems of Henrik Ibsen, the dramatic lyricism of Anton Chekhov, the naturalism of John Strindberg, the symbolic expression of Eugene O'Neill, the epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht, the religious quest of T.S. Eliot, the mythical and historical re-interpretations of Jean Anouilh and many more.
(c) Serious Drama Versus Entertainment

Literature holds three important kinds of values: it vitalizes language; it makes for entertainment and relaxation and it tells of things related to humanity, which we have not known otherwise. At the same time it connects the reader to life. At first literature may simply mean something written in black on white pages. But it acquires meaning once the black letters are recognized by the readers as words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. It is here he would realize the experience offered by literature. Literature is to be enjoyed and it serves for relaxation. Though it brings distraction from the monotony of work and strain of day-to-day activities, but it does not offer an escape. Rather it takes us out of the tiresome and weary routine, and leads us to an understanding of the living world, of which we form a part. The reading of good literature brings him close to the real world.

"There is nothing no knowledge, no skill, no science, no art, no yoga, no activity-that is not seen in drama.

Poetry is the highest form of art and drama is the highest form of poetry. Drama is the product of a civilized and cultured society. Drama in India originated out of the need for entertainment. The gods approached Brahma to create an object of diversion, (Kridaniyka) as the people of that time were addicted to sensual pleasures and were under the spell of desire and greed and thus brought upon misery and sorrow. So Brahma created the Natyaveda or fifth Veda, which would serve not only the function of
entertainment but also of instruction. Thus, the drama as Bharata mentions is an artifice just like a toy. Its sole purpose is to provide amusement and instruction to the people.

Referring to the functional aspect of drama, Bharata says,

"This teaches duty to those who go against duty, love to those who are eager for its fulfillment, and it chastises those who are ill-bred or unruly, promotes self-restraint in those who are disciplined, gives courage to cowards, energy to heroic persons, enlightens men of poor intellect and gives wisdom to the learned."

This gives diversion (vilasa, which literally means play or pleasure) to kings, and firmness to persons afflicted with sorrow, and (hints of acquiring) money to those who are earning it, and it brings composure to persons agitated in mind"

"This will relate to actions of men, good, bad and indifferent, and will give courage, amusement, and happiness as well as counsel to them"

"It will also give relief to unlucky persons who are afflicted with sorrow and grief or over work, and will be conducive to observance of duty, as well as, to fame, long life, intellect and general good, and will educate people"

Thus, Bharata gives equal weightage to instruction, as well as, entertainment. The Indian concept of drama has rather been serious as compared to the western concept. Indian concept of drama is the production of an emotional delight, a pure and elevated pleasure. Bharata believes that drama instructs through entertainment, and entertains through instruction. When a
playwright desires to give some instructions, he does not simply give away emotions, but represents it through action and injects it into the heart and mind of his audience. The basic difference between Indian and Western concept can best understood in the light of the conception of sex life. While in the west, sex is simply a pastime, merely a means of entertainment; materialism takes the place of feelings. But the Indian concept is entirely different, sex or kama forms one of the purusharthas and fulfils the function of nature. The purusharthas are the four ethical goals of human existence: dharma, artha, kama and moksha. 'dharma' is related to the spiritual inclination, 'artha' to that of political and economic power, and 'kama' implies sexual or aesthetic gratification, 'moksha' is release from the cycle of birth and death. 'sex' or kama forms one of the goals to achieve 'moksha' and it fulfils the function of nature.

Karnad’s plays are in agreement with nature. They are rational and authentic. His plays, contain values which are purely Indian. *Yayati*, his first play in which he moulds the myth according to the purpose, depicts the theme of responsibility. Karnad has reinterpreted an ancient myth of The Mahabharata making it acceptable to modern audience. With the character of Yayati, Karnad instructs his reader with the eternal truth that a man is what he makes of himself. And he has delved deep into self-knowledge and self-awareness. Yayati sheds his old age to his son Puru for his satisfaction of sensual pleasures. His next play project’s man’s longing for completeness and perfection. Through *Padmini*, Karnad presents man’s unfulfilling desire for
completeness. He has presented a comprehensive picture of the human being. In his next play Tughlaq, with the central character as a historical figure, Karnad has given the message that man should learn from history. Since he is a writer of modern sensibility, he has also presented contemporary situations. Tughlaq projects the events during the reign of Muhammed bin Tughlaq. Through events and actions the audiences is not only entertained but also instructed. The psychology of the characters presents the emotional state to the readers. Muhammed bin Tughlaq faces the consequences of his actions, the very Indian theme of 'Karm-fal'.

In Naga-Mandala, through the oral tales, a very serious drama is constructed. An important socio-cultural aspect has been covered, i.e. of the institution of marriage. Men and women when enter into marriage chords are supposed to understand their responsibility as husband and wife. Rani and Apanna are married and through a series of events in their life they reach a state of maturity to live a harmonious life. Naga symbolizes masculine power and the love and care a husband is expected to bestow on his wife. Through the emotions and in-depth exposure of the feelings of the characters, the audience is subjected to a sort of instruction. Similarly in his play Tale-Danda Karnad has probed into the evil side of caste system in the Indian society. It seems, Karnad feels that the job of a playwright is not simply to present the bright side of life but also to focus on dark side. This makes the audience think, and is also instructed simultaneously.

The Fire and The Rain, his latest play has now been released as film with the name 'Agnivarsha' in the year 2002. This explains
the relevance of the play in the present scenario. The play was not written with the sole purpose of giving some light amusement, nor the playwright wrote the play because he had free time. But Karnad has written the play because he saw the myth, on which the play has been constructed, relevant to contemporary situation. The play instructs its readers the consequences of knowledge without maturity, without experience. Parvasu and Yavakari are blind for the attainment of artha, Vishakha in the urge for kama has neglected the social norms. The fear of brother against brother, son against father and the conspiracy, jealousy, which follows it, has been presented on the stage. Karnad has established through the conclusion of the play that, the feelings of humanity and mercy are the building pillars of the society. Arvasu forgives his brother Parvasu, and it is due to Nittilai’s and his kindness that the Indra is pleased, and revives all the culprits and showers rain on earth.

Karnad does not believe in the superficial depiction of life, his plays have a substantial and potential future.
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2. Karnad, Girish, Theatre in India Daedalus. Pg. 337.
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