CHAPTER III

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Yayati

_Yayati_ is the first play written by Girish Karnad. Karnad was just twenty-two years old when he presented his own interpretation of the play _Yayati_. This play established Karnad’s reputation as a dramatist in Kannada literature and launched him on his celebrated career in the Indian theatre. _Yayati_ has been translated into many Indian languages and has continued to be performed all over country. Priya Adarkar translated Girish Karnad’s Kannad play _Yayati_ into English. But Karnad was not happy with this translation and he translated his own play _Yayati_ into English.

The theme of _Yayati_ is taken from the first chapter of the _Mahabharata_ ‘Adiparva’. In Puranik lore Yayati marries Devayani and also takes Sharmishtha an ‘asura girl’ as his wife. Devayani is a daughter of sage Shukracharya. Yayati’s relationship with Sharmishtha infuriates Devayani and in her anger and jealousy Devayani goes to her father Shukracharya. Shukracharya curses Yayati of senility and decrepitude. But however there is a saving clause, if Yayati is able to persuade someone else to bear the curse on his behalf then he would enjoy everlasting youth. Yayati, who is indulged in the sensual pleasures, asks the people of his kingdom and at last in desperation to his sons exchange their youth with him. Only Pooru, the youngest son willingly offers his youth in filial devotion. Yayati promptly accepts Pooru’s offer. He remains young while his son turns into a weak and senile man. Yayati forsakes his life of sensual delights only after indulging in it for a thousand years. Karnad adopts the mythical story of _Yayati_ as the plot of his play. He adds new characters to deepen the commodative richness of his drama and gives it a contemporary appeal.

_Yayati_ is written in the style of Yakshagana and due to the tradition of
Yakshagana either Sutradhara or the Chorus is to enter on the stage. *Yayati* opens with Sutradhara and he is addressing the audience. “Our play this evening deals with an ancient myth. But, let me rush to explain, it is not a ‘mythological’. Heaven forbid! A mythological aims to plunge us into the sentiment of devotion.” (Prologue to *Yayati*) The Sutradhara also adds, “Our play has no gods. And it deals with death. A key element in its plot is the ‘Sanjeevani Vidya’ – the art of reviving the dead, which promises release from the limitations of the fleeting life this self is trapped in.” (Prologue to *Yayati*)

The play begins on the day when king’s son Prince Pooru is returning home after many years of absence. He has successfully completed his education in the hermitage under renowned Gurus. He is married to Chitralekha, the Princess of Anga. Devayani, the beloved daughter of Shukracharya is married with Yayati before two years when the play begins. Yayati: Listen; is that a question for now? We have been married two years. (Karnad 14)

At the opening of the play Swarnalata and Devayani are talking about the behavior of Sharmishtha. Swarnalata is attendant of Devayani. Being very angry, Swarnalata abuses Sharmishtha.

Swarnalata: That spiteful whore – I would have torn her hair out if you hadn’t stopped me. Taught that fiend a proper lesson. The rakshasi. You heard us, madam. Did I say a word against her? All those dirty insinuations. (Karnad 7)

Devayani as well as Swarnalata are disturbed by the way of talking and behavior of Sharmishtha. Sharmishtha was once upon a time Devayani’s friend but now she is her slave. From their dialogues the audience/readers know that Pooru is coming with his bride. When Swarnalata exists Sharmishtha enters. Sharmishtha is born in a ‘Rakshasa family’ and she is aware of it. She all the time mentions that she is an uncouth ‘rakshasi’ in a Kshatriya palace ruled over by a Brahmin queen. Though Sharmishtha is born
as rakshasi, she has beauty, education and wealth. She got everything except birth. She is jealous of Devayani because Devayani’s credit is her father knows Sanjeevani spell. That’s why Sharmishtha loves Devayani. According to Sharmishtha, Yayati loves Devayani because Yayati lusts for immortality. And Devayani’s father has art of Sanjeevani. Sharmishtha talks to Devayani in such a manner that Devayani is yielded to anger. She wants to slash the tongue of Sharmishtha.

Devayani is a very beautiful woman and that is the reason behind Yayati’s marriage with Devayani.

Yayati: Because you are the most beautiful woman I know. And at that moment you were an apparition of the kind I had never seen before: dirty, disheveled, ravishing. All at once. (Karnad 14)

Not only Devayani and Swarnalata but also Yayati are disturbed by Sharmishtha’s comments. Yayati knows that Sharmishtha’s way of behaviour is unfamiliar to Bharata family. When Yayati threatens Sharmishtha to expel from the palace she tells Yayati that she can’t go anywhere because the palace is her home. And her father has given Devayani’s father his word that Sharmishtha shall be Devayani’s slave. She also knows that slavery transfers a person into an animal, a domesticated animal and once ready to act is destroyed due to slavery.

Sharmishtha tells Yayati, “…. I know, there is no escape from 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.” (Karnad 18)

Sharmishtha brings turmoil in the life of Yayati. It is because of her that Devayani falls into the well and Yayati appears on the scene and saves her. Sharmishtha explains how she had in fact worshipped Devayani during the days of their shared childhood. Devayani seemed completely unconscious of the fact that she belonged to a superior race. Sharmishtha loved and was proud of Devayani’s friendship. Sharmishtha’s narrations of the past things
indicate how much she is disturbed in present because no one tries to understand her. Everyone knows that due to her Devayani falls into the well but nobody knows what made her to do the act. Sharmishtha advocates her act and narrates the incident to Yayati which took place when Devayani and Sharmishtha went for swimming to the lake. After swimming they lay on the bank to dry their hair but accidentally their blouses were exchanged. Sharmishtha was disturbed by the comment of Devayani, “You poor people. You only have to get into a piece of Arya attire. And you start fantasizing.” Sharmishtha felt utterly despoil and she grabbed her long, loose hair dragged her to a well nearby and pushed her in.

Sharmishtha has come to the conclusion that there won’t be happiness in her life of the palace because she has to serve Devayani as a slave. Her father has given her a vial of lethal poison and she tells Yayati that she was thinking of killing Devayani but now she has decided to kill herself. Yayati does not allow her to drink the poison.

Later, this poison is drunk by Chitralekha.

In the second act of the play, Sharmishtha takes revenge on Devayani by making Yayati to flirt her. In mythology, Sharmishtha is already married with Yayati and Pooru is the son of Sharmishtha. But Karnad has put the things in different manner. In Karnad’s Yayati, Pooru is not the son of Sharmishtha. But he is son of another rakshasi who has passed away when Pooru was a child. In mythology Sharmishta is already married with Yayati and in Karnad’s Yayati she is just a slave to Devayani.

Due to the sexual relationship of Yayati with Sharmshtha, Devayani becomes very angry and she wants to prove her superiority to the daughter of the Asura race. It leads to a complex clash. When Devayani comes to know about the relationship, she suggests Yayati to expel her from the place and to this Sharmishtha reacts, “me his concubine? You must be joking. Yes, I got him into bed with me. That was my revenge on you. After all, as a slave, what
weapon did I have but my body? Well, I am even with you now. And I am free. I shall go where I please.” (Karnad 29) There is no other alternative to Yayati than to marry with Sharmishtha. This rages more anger into Devayani to such an extent that she pears the marriage thread from around her neck, snatches pieces of jewelry and throws them. She asks Swarna lata the whereabouts of her father, Shukracharya. She joins her father who is resting in the ‘Shambhu shrine’ and narrates him the things happened. When Devayani exits Pooru enters.

Pooru is Yayati’s beloved son who has stayed away from the palace for a long time and now he is back with his bride Chitalekha. When Pooru comes back, certain questions are raised in his mind. He asks Yayati about his mother. Yayati tells Pooru about his mother, “…. She seemed one of the gentlest, most loving creatures one could imagine. Everyone loved her and I married her. She gave me a son and I made her my Senior Queen. And then, suddenly she changed. She started to scream and curse as though she had gone mad, when actually she hadn’t. Very lucidly, she would explain to me her plan –which was to make life intolerable for everyone in the palace…… It was in her last few moments that she told me the truth. She was a Rakshasa woman and the Aryas had destroyed her home and hearth. She was bent on vengeance and the inferno she had created was her way of celebrating her success. She had made sure that the crown prince of the Bharatas had Rakshasa blood in him. The Aryas would be ruled by a …." (Karnad 39-40)

Pooru is a half-caste. His blood is a mixture of Aryas and Rakshasa family. Sharmishtha informs that after Devayani’s narration, Shukracharya has placed a curse on Yayati that he will lose his youth and become decrepitude by night fall. Yayati holds Sharmishtha responsible for all these things. Yayati is worried about his fate because he does not want old age or decrepitude so soon. Sharmishtha suggests Yayati that no one can escape old age. She requests Yayati to accept it and go away from the city with her. She assures
him about her accompaniment. Yayati reacts, “Solitude? What are you talking about? I don’t want solitude. I can’t bear it. I want people around me. Queens, ministers, armies, enemies, the populace. I love them all. Solitude? The very thought is repulsive. If I have to know myself, Sharmistha, I have to be young. I must have my youth.” (Karnad 43)

Yayati does not want to lose his youth. The play *Yayati* is based on the theme of responsibility. Yayati himself is responsible for his downfall. But he hesitates to take the responsibility of the things which have come to him as reactions to his actions. Pooru is sent to convince Shukracharya to take his curse back. In act three of the play, Pooru returns from Shukracharya and informs Yayati that the curse will not have its effect on Yayati if a young man admits to take it upon himself and offers his youth to Yayati in exchange.

Yayati is cock-sure that any young person will be ready to accept his curse. But Pooru informs him that no one is ready to do so. If someone accepts the curse, Yayati is ready to give a lot of wealth to the person. Pooru also suggests that Yayati should accept the curse and behave as Sharmishtha suggests. At last Pooru tells Yayati that he is ready to sacrifice his youth for his father.

Act IV opens with the acceptance of old age by Pooru. Swarnalata and Chitralekha are sharing their views. Chitralekha has found a pendant from the marriage thread of Devayani. Chitralekha tells Swarnalata about her maid at her mother’s home. She wants to know more about Swarnalata’s life. Swarnalata tells Chitralekha that her husband has left her and gone away as he was tired of life. As Swarnalata is telling more about her married life there is thunderous eruption of the drums and conch shells. It indicates the arrival of Pooru. Swarnalata informs Chitralekha about what Pooru has done. “The Prince, madam. Young Pooru. Your husband. He has agreed to take on his father’s old age. That’s why these revelries, madam, this flourish and funfare... these, these...” (Karnad 55) To this Chitralekha reacts that she
should not cry because she thought that Pooru was an ordinary man. But now Pooru has proved that he is an extra-ordinary man.

As Pooru is to enter, Swarnalata exits. Pooru tells Chitralekha about what has happened. But Chitralekha tells him that she is privileged about Pooru. Chitralekha picks up a lamp and brings to Pooru and she is terrified as she sees Pooru in old age and screams. After listening to the screams of Chitralekha, Swarnalata enters. Chitralekha collapses on the bed. Chitralekha requests Swarnalata to say anything to her and Swarnalata tells her about her relationship with her husband.

The King Yayati comes to meet Chitralekha by listening to her screams. Yayati tells Chitralekha as she is an educated woman, versed in the arts, trained in warfare; she has to display more self-control. She has to behave like Anga princess and Bharata queen. If she behaves boldly, the people will be grateful to her. To this Chitralekha says, “I will not let my husband step back into my bedroom unless he returns a young man.” (Karnad 61) But Yayati tells to Chitralekha that as it is the palace of Bharata’s he can order her not as her father-in-law but as her ruler. He also reprimands her about the vow she has taken during the marriage. Chitralekha blames Yayati because he has pushed his son into the funeral pyre.

Chitralekha: I did not push him to the edge of the pyre, sir. You did. You hold forth on my wifely duties. What about your duty to your son? Did you think twice before foisting your troubles on a pliant son? (Karnad 62)

Later Chitralekha shows him two things which she finds there. One is pendant and another is vial of poison. Yayati requests Chitralekha to help him in the situation. As Yayati has taken Pooru’s youth, now it is the responsibility to accept everything that comes attached to it. She has married Pooru for his youth. For his potential to plant the seed of Bharata’s in her womb. As Pooru has lost it, the responsibility goes to Yayati. Yayati blames Chitralekha and calls her a beast. When Chitralekha comes to know that Yayati cannot return
her husband back nor can he accept her logic. She picks the vial of poison and swallows the poison. At the time Sharmishttha and Swarnalata rush in when Chitralekha collapses down. Sharmishttha leaves Yayati by saying goodbye to him because the foundation of the glorious future of Yayati is based on a woman dead, another gone mad and a third in the danger of her life. Yayati is transformed when he sees the dead body of Chitralekha.

Yayati:... I thought there were two options –life and death. No, it is living and dying we have to choose between. And you have shown me that dying can go on for all eternity. Suddenly, I see myself, my animal body frozen in youth, decaying, deliquescing, turning rancid. You are lying on your pyre, child, burning for life, while I sink slowly in this quagmire, my body wrinkleless and grasping, but unable to grasp anything.” (Karnad 68)

At last Yayati accepts his old age by embracing Pooru. Pooru once again becomes young but he has lost his beautiful bride on the nuptial night when he was to meet her. Yayati is the story of a king who longs for eternal youth. He is involved in sexual pleasures in such an extent that he does not hesitate assert the youth and vitality of his son. Yayati is the representative of the modern man who is self-centered

Girish Karnad’s plays are concerned with the life of modern man which is very complex and not complete in it. He employs the old tales to focus on the absurdity of modern life with all its elemental passions and conflicts. In the hands of Girish Karnad, the folktales become vehicles for modern living. Being influenced by Marxism and Existentialism there is a fundamental change in his outlook.

The interpersonal relationship in Yayati is very complex. Being the king, he is allowed to marry with many women. He has many wives and many sons. In the play itself his three wives are referred to, one is Pooru’s mother, then Devayani and at the last Sharmishttha. Generally, the queens do not
object the king’s remarriages and ex-marital relationships. Then the question is why does Devayani object Yayati’s ex-marital relationship with Sharmishtha? The answer is perhaps the race because Sharmishtha belongs to Rakshasa cult and the relationship of a Bharata king with a woman coming from Rakshasa community is highly objectionable. Yayati likes and loves beautiful women; he does not bother about their cult. He marries Pooru’s mother because she is beautiful. He loves Sharmishtha too but he hesitates to share the responsibility of his love.

He is afraid of alienation because when he is suggested by Sharmishtha that he should accept the old age and go elsewhere in alienation, he does not like the suggestion. When he is cursed by Shukracharya, he thinks that anyone will accept his old age in exchange of wealth. He uses the men and women around him as his pawns. At the end of the play he is found taking the name of his son, exchanging his youth with Pooru’s old age. But this happens only after the death of his daughter-in-law, Chitralekha.

When two women come together and talk about the third person either they are jealous or they talk in negative way about the person. Swarnalata and Devayani, when they talk about Sharmishtha, they blame Sharmishtha for her behaviour.

“Karnad’s *Yayati* reveals the afflicted consciousness of a broken man like Yayati who tries to find a meaning in existence. Out of sorrow and humiliation Yayati is unable to understand the meaning of life till he is rid of old age. But contrary to his expectation Chitralekha’s suicide leads him to expiate his desire. He projects the image of an existential character and shows that no man has the courage to choose whole-heartedly either right or wrong. He is himself an amalgamation of self-evasion and vanity, self-condemnation and humility. Thus, there is an eternal quest for meaning and value, freedom and truth that can sustain us in this chaotic and apparently meaningless world.” (Dr. Jyoti Gupta and Dr. Sushama Sharma 36)
Devayani and Sharmistha are very close friends. One belongs to Brahmin community and other belongs to Rakshasa. Before her marriage with Yayati, Devayani was in love with Kacha. Sharmishtha has inferiority complex whereas Devayani is full of superiority complex. When Devayani and Sharmishtha were taking bath and their blouses exchanged Devayani passed the comment that simply by wearing the Arya attire one cannot change his/her caste. When Devayani comes to know about Yayati’s relationship with Sharmishtha, Devayani wants to prove her superiority to the daughter of the Asura race. Devayani is very proud about her race. Even she underestimates Kshatriya queens. “Added to that, in Karnad’s *Yayati* is Sharmishtha’s awareness that unjust and cruel treatment was meted out to her not only because of her gender but also because of her race and culture.” (B.Yadav Raju 83)

The interpersonal relationship in between Devayani and Sharmishtha is based on master-slave relationship. Sharmishtha is aware of her slavery. She knows that she is beautiful and educated. But her slavery has turned her into an animal. She knows that she can’t spew out nectar because she is a Rakshasa woman. Devayani leaves Yayati, goes to Shukracharya and makes him to curse Yayati. But it is Sharmishtha who promises Yayati to accompany him if he accepts the old age. And she keeps her promise. In that way Sharmishtha is a faithful woman though she is blamed by Swarnalata and Devayani.

Although Pooru belongs to Bharata family he is not proud of his ancestors. He is half-Aryan and half Rakshasa because his mother was Rakshasa. His mother was the most beautiful woman who came into the life of Yayati. But she dies in Pooru’s childhood. It is Chitralekha to whom he marries and brings to the palace. On the very day his father is cursed by Shukracharya. He is so obedient to his father that he accepts the cursed old
age of his father. At last he has to lose Chitralekha. Pooru and Chitralekha are punished despite no fault of theirs.

In the main plot, there is a sub-plot and that is about Swarnalata and her husband. When Swarnalata is introduced to Chitralekha, Chitralekha calls her as ‘Swaru’ which she dislikes because her husband used to call her as ‘Swaru’. Later on she tells her story to Chitralekha. A poor Brahmin teacher used to visit her house after dark to teach her. He used to stay there for night with the family and leave early next morning. Later when she is of age, she is married off. Her husband used to call her ‘My Swaru, my darling Swaru.’ But when he comes to know about the teacher he starts suspecting his wife. The struggle goes on in his mind; he can’t sleep, keeps on tossing and turning in his bed and is always restless. He knows that Swarnalata is innocent but he takes revenge on himself by indulging in women and in drinks. But he hates himself. At last Swarnalata decides to help him to come out of it. When she admits that her teacher had seduced her, he gets deep sleep and on the very next day, he disappears, never to return.

Human Relationship

In Yayati, as the play is based on a myth, the family concept is used in a broad way. In the myth the kings were allowed to have many wives and in Yayati, Yayati marries many women. He has many sons but it is Pooru who willingly accepts the old age of his father and willingly offers his youth as filial duty and devotion. In myth, the sentiments of the kings and queens are not shown like common human beings. Yet, the mythical characters are also full of sentiments. Devayani would have accepted any other woman as co-wife but she dislikes Sharmistha as she belongs to Rakshasa community. Father-son relationship in the play is remarkably stressed. A father without observing any duties expects his son, his daughter-in-low and his wives to do the consigned duties. As a father, Yayati is failed and as a son Pooru is passed.
Sexual Relationship

In *Yayati*, sexual relations are also significant because Shukracharya curses Yayati due to his illicit relationship with Sharmishtha. Yayati has many queens and the complexity in the relationships is due to these sexual relations. Devayani was in love with Kacha. But as Yayati saves her life, she has to marry him.

The subplot of the play moves around the character of Swarnalata. Her husband thinks that before marriage Swarnalata was in love with her teacher. In order to take revenge on her he indulges himself in many women and drinks. With a single affair of his wife Swarnalata’s husband is disturbed. But he does not think of Swarnalata and her mind, what would have happened to her by his many affairs? In mythology women’s freedom is curtailed and the same happens in Karnad’s *Yayati* also. The male characters suppress the women. Only Chitrakekha thinks in a rational way.

Pooru is married with Chitrakekha and the young married couple has arrived into the palace. On the nuptial evening itself Pooru accepts the old age of his father and when he regains his youth Chitrakekha is no more. Though marriage is the stamp of the society on the sexual relationship in between man and woman and though Pooru is married with Chitrakekha, the sexual relations cannot take place.

Power Politics

Yayati craves for power, for youth. When Sharmistha suggests that Yayati should accept the old age and go into solitude, he is not ready to sacrifice his throne. He loves his youth and throne and is ready to sacrifice anything for his youth. He sacrifices his son’s youth for his own.

The struggle in between Devayani and Sharmistha is also for power. Devayani does not want that Sharmistha should enter and encroach on her relationship with Yayati. Devayani tells Sharmistha, “I will not be able to sleep a wink while his hands caress your body.” (Karnad 33)
Devayani is angry with Sharmishtha because she is worried about her influence on Yayati. And Yayati is a symbol of power. At the end of the play the father in Yayati is awakened and he hands over all the power to his son Pooru and goes in solitude with Sharmishtha.

**Violence**

Karnad’s *Yayati* is based on the responsibility of a person. It is based on the sentiments of the man. Class-distinction and the caste distinction take the society to violence. Sharmishtha, being disturbed by the comments of Devayani, pulls her with her long hair, takes her to a well and throws her inside. Sharmishtha’s behaviour is violent whereas Devayani’s words are violent. In order to take revenge on Devayani, Sharmishtha seduces Yayati. Being psychologically disturbed by Sharmishtha’s behaviour Devayani goes to her father and makes him to curse Yayati. Pooru’s acceptance of old age is responsible for the death of Chitralekha. The most violent thing in the play is Chitralekha’s death.

Karnad has created Chitralekha’s character on his own. It is due to Chitralekha’s death Yayati’s mind changes. Otherwise in the myth it is mentioned that, “Yayati forsakes his life of sensual delights only after indulging in it for a thousand years.” (B. Yadav Raju 80)

**Techniques used by Karnad in *Yayati***

Girish Karnad has written a prologue to his first play *Yayati*. In the prologue the Sutradhara enters on the stage and addresses the audience. The Sutradhara tells the audience that the play which is to be performed deals with an ancient myth but it is not a mythological play because a mythological play aims to plunge us in to the sentiment of devotion. The plot is to move around Sanjeevani Vidya but no gods are there in the play.

At the end of the fourth act once again Sutradhara enters on the stage and tells the audience that just like Sanskrit drama the play must have happy ending and he tells –“Pooru ruled long and wisely and was hailed as a
philosopher king” (Karnad 70)

Karnad wrote this play on existential lines. When he wrote *Yayati*, he was under the influence of Sartre and Camus. The story which he read in Adiparva of the *Mahabharata* influenced him and made him to write the play. In his interview with Rajinder Paul he says, “I was excited by the story of Yayati, this exchange of ages between the father and the son, which seemed to me terribly powerful and terribly modern. At the same time, I was reading a lot of Sartre and the Existentialists. This consistent harping on responsibility which the Existentialists indulge in suddenly seemed to link up with the story of *Yayati*” (Rajinder Paul 113)

**Use of myth**

Karnad has taken the plot of the play *Yayati* from the first chapter of the *Mahabharata* in which Yayati is cursed by Shukracharya and Sharmishtha’s son Pooru rescues Yayati from the curse. *Yayati* is a play on the theme of responsibility where Yayati himself is not ready to shoulder his responsibility. At last he accepts it, after enjoying youth for one thousand years. In Girish Karnad’s *Yayati*, he accepts it only after the death of Chitralekha.

“Karnad’s *Yayati* retells the age-old story of the king who in his longing for eternal youth does not hesitate to usurp the youth and vitality of his son. Karnad invests new meaning and significance for contemporary life and reality by exploring the king’s motivations. In the *Mahabharata*, Yayati understands the nature of desire itself and realizes that fulfillment neither diminishes nor eliminates desire. In the drama, Karnad makes Yayati confront the horrifying consequences of not being able to relinquish desire; and through the other characters he highlights the issue of class, caste and gender coiled within a web of desire.” (B.Yadav Raju 18)

Karnad’s originality lies in working of the motivations behind Yayati’s choice. In Karnad’s *Yayati*, Yayati recognizes the horror of his own life and
assumes his moral responsibility only after symbolic encounter of Chitralekha. Chitralekha is Karnad’s own creation. In the *Mahabharata*, Yayati recognizes the desire itself and realizes that fulfillment does not diminish even after a thousand years.

**Plot**

Girish Karnad is a playwright who gives stress on existentialism. Particularly in his plays *Yayati* and *Tughlaq* when he wrote *Yayati*, he was under the influence of Sartre and Camus. The main plot of the play is taken from the first chapter of the *Mahabharata* – Adiparva. Yayati, the king of Kuru dynasty is a mighty, invincible hero of the play. He is indulged in sexuality and wishes himself to be ever young. His lust for youth makes him to marry Devayani whose father Shukracharya knows Sanjeevani Vidya. But in a fit he molests Sharmishtha. For which he is cursed by Shukracharya that he will lose his youth and become decrepit. However when Pooru visits Shukracharya the intensity of the curse is minimized. If anyone is ready to exchange his youth to Yayati, he could enjoy the everlasting youth. Pooru, the youngest son of Yayati accepts Yayati’s old age and his wife Chitralekha commits suicide. The death of Chitralekha awakens Yayati’s rational and he exchanges his old age from Pooru.

Though the plot is taken from the *Mahabharata*, Karnad has taken liberty in showing the relationships and he adds some new characters like Chitralekha. In his interview with Tutun Mukherjee, Girish Karnad says, “My attempt was to emphasize the calm acceptance of grief and anguish. Pooru’s old age is a sudden transformation and not the eventuality of life. It brings no wisdom and no self-realization. It is a senseless punishment for an act he has not committed. I was also intrigued by the idea that if Pooru had a wife, how would she react? So I introduced Chitralekha. Every character in the play tries to evade the consequences of their actions, except Sharmistha and Chitralekha.” (Tutun Mukherjee 31)
Karnad has introduced another subplot in the play. The episode of Swarnalata and her husband is an additional plot which comments on the suspicious behaviour of male community.

**Actions**

The actions around which the play moves are the curse of Shukracharya, Pooru’s acceptance of old age, Chitralekha’s suicide and at last Yayati’s acceptance of the curse. There are some actions which are narrated in the play. Sharmishtha’s throwing Devayani in the well, Shukracharya’s curse, Swarnalata’s husband’s behaviour—all these actions are not shown on the stage but those are narrated. But these actions are very significant because these are the causes of the further actions.

The action of drinking a poison on the stage is a melodramatic action. There is a good relevance in all these actions which lead to the final action of the play that is the old Yayati takes Sharmistha and goes in isolation.

**Characterization**

The characters are no doubt interesting and realistic. Yayati is the king and symbolizes a person who is interested in sex and lust. For his carnal desires he is ready to sacrifice the happiness of his own son, Pooru.

Devayani symbolizes the superego in mind of women who come from upper class community whereas Sharmishtha is representative of lower class community. The main theme of the play is responsibility and when father hesitates to shoulder the responsibility it is the son Pooru who is ready to shoulder it. Pooru is punished for his no fault. The severe punishment is given to Chitralekha either she has to accept the old husband or to end her life. She accepts the later. Chitralekha and Swarnalata are the characters who are aware of their rights and to some extent they oppose the male superiority.
Characters

Yayati

Yayati is the central character of the play around whom all the actions of the play move. He loves beautiful women and least pays attention to the cult where from these women come. He loves Devayani and marries her. He marries Pooru’s mother who comes from Rakshasa community. He is also attracted to Sharmishtha who also belongs to Rakshasa cult. Yayati is responsible for his own degradation. It is he who irritates Devayani and when cursed he shakes off his responsibility. The death of his innocent daughter in law brings change in him.

Devayani

Devayani is the daughter of Shukracharya who knows ‘Sanjeevani Vidya’. She loves Kacha but being saved by Yayati, when she was thrown in a well by Sharmishtha, she marries Yayati. Being born in a royal family she is too proud of her birth and she insults her close friend, Sharmishtha. Sharmishtha’s relation with Yayati makes her to return to her father. In the Mahabharata, Yayati goes to the forest in the company of Devayani and Sharmishtha. But Girish Karnad in his Yayati does not mention anything about Devayani when Yayati accepts his old age.

Sharmishtha

In Karnad’s Yayati, Sharmishtha plays very significant role because due to Yayati’s indulgence in Sharmishtha, Devayani is disturbed. Even Yayati holds Sharmishtha responsible for the illicit relationship. It is Sharmishtha who throws Devayani into the well. Everybody curses Sharmishtha for her act but no one takes into consideration the reactions of Sharmishtha after the incident. She is a rational and wise woman. She tells Yayati that no one can escape from old age and requests Yayati to accept old age and if he does, she promises to accompany him. At last she keeps her promise.
Pooru

The youngest son of Yayati lives for many years away from the palace. All the time he overbears the tension of his family in his mind, because, in the Ashram he is told about the wisdom and bravery of his ancestors. He is disturbed with the same type of expectations from him by gurus. He is a straight forward, sensitive person. He returns with his bride to the palace on the very day Shukracharya curses his father. When all the youths of kingdom deny accepting the old age of Yayati, Pooru accepts it. Perhaps it is the love of a son to his father that makes him to accept the curse of father. All these actions lead his beloved wife Chitralekha to death. Crime is committed by Yayati and Sharmishtha and punishment is given to Pooru and Chitralekha. And that is irony of fate.

Chitralekha

Pooru describes Chitralekha as ‘intelligent, loving, full of fun; but also honest and practical.’ Karnad has taken the theme of the play *Mahabharata*. There is no mention of Chitralekha in the *Mahabharata*. She is Karnad’s own creation and she is the most sympathetic character in the play.

Swarnalata

Swarnalata is introduced by Karnad for the implementation of his subplot in which he wants to show how men suspect the character of women. She is representative of an oppressed woman.

Language

Karnad’s *Yayati* is written in the Yakshagana form and Karnad uses glorified and celestial language for the Sutradhara. For Swarnalata and Sharmistha, Karnad uses colloquial language. Except Chitralekha all three women characters use abusive language. But Sharmishtha’s language is more sharpened than that of Devayani and Swarnalata.

Use of Drums

In *Yayati*, Karnad has used the beating of the drums in a significant
manner. Beating of the drums indicates the arrival of Pooru with his bride. The first beating of drums takes place in act two. This drum beating is mark of happiness of the people due to the arrival of Prince with his bride Chitrallekha. In the act four once again there is beating of drums which indicates the arrival of Prince Pooru. But this Pooru is changed as he has accepted the old age of his father. The beating of the drums in *Yayati* adds dramatic effect to the play just like Eugene O’ Neill’s *Emperor Jones*.

**Tughlaq**

*Tughlaq* is the play which brought name and fame to Karnad. It was written in 1964, in Kannand language and has been translated by Karnad in 1970. Alyque Padamsee requested Karnad to translate into English and it was staged by Theatre Group, Bombay and it was a great success. National School of Drama (NSD) got it translated into Hindi and later it was produced in Bengali and Marathi. Vijay Tendulkar has translated *Tughlaq* into Marathi.

*Tughlaq* is based on the historical character of Muhammad Tughlaq who ruled India in the 14th century and he was called mad Tughlaq. Girish Karnad in his play has shown him as a man of opposites, the ideal and the real; the divine aspiration and the deft intrigue. He is what he is in spite of his self-knowledge and an intense desire for divine place. The conflict of the opposites begins with the first scene. The old feel that Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq is leading the country downward. He is not behaving as human being and he is not working according to tenets of Islam. It is an insult to Islam but the young think that the country is in safe hands and Sultan is working properly. During his reign the Muslim are asked to pray (Namaz) five times a day. Earlier they did not observe this payment of the Koran and in no other reign was the Koran read so openly and commonly. The Muslims and Hindus are living together. It is Muhammad-bin-I-Tughlaq who has exempted Hindus
from the Jiziya tax. Tughlaq is an idealist and he wants to treat Hindus as human beings but in reality Hindus also dislike it because they suspect the intention of Tughlaq. He wants justice and brotherhood in his country. He wants justice to work in his kingdom without any consideration of might or weakness, religion or creed. He craves for equality, progress and peace.

But in reality his idealism is caught in a farce. Aziz, a Muslim dhobi disguises himself as a Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad and files a case against the Sultan as his land is confiscated by the state. He demands compensation for the loss of his land and the privation. And to the great surprise his suit is considered seriously and the Kazi-I-Munalik declares that the Brahmin’s claim is just. The Brahmin gets his land back and he is paid 500 dinars. Tughlaq wants to prove that there should not be any differentiation in between Muslims and Hindus. But the old Muslims call this action a falling and the Hindus smell a trap in it. The Sultan and the Kazi are satisfied with the decision but they don’t know the person who is benefited is not a Hindu, but a Muslim.

Tughlaq is an idealist and he wants Hindu-Muslim unity. In his reign everybody should be treated equally in the eyes of law and to prove this, he has taken various decisions.

Muhammad: My beloved people, you have heard the judgment of the Kazi and seen for yourselves how justice work in my kingdom without any consideration of might or weakness, religion or creed. May this moment burn bright and light up our path towards greater justice, equality, progress and peace—not just peace but a more purposeful life. (Karnad 3)

The Sultan announces that he is taking a new step to bring above Hindu-Muslim unity. He wants to transfer the capital in his empire from Delhi to Daulatabad. He rationalizes his decision and says,

Muhammad: Delhi is too near the border and you as well know its peace is
never free from the fear of invaders. But for me the most important factor is that Daulatabad is a city of the Hindus and as the capital it will symbolize the bond between Muslims and Hindus which I wish to develop and strengthen in my kingdom. I invite you all to accompany me to Daulatabad. This is only an invitation and not an order. Only those who have faith in me may come with me. With their help I shall build an empire which will be the envy of the world. (Karnad 3-4)

Tughlaq’s plan regarding the change of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad is reasonable to his own mind but he fails to convince his subjects. He does not take into account the emotional attachment of people to their native soil when he proposes a change of capital involving not only the shift in the administrative machinery but also of the people.

Muhammad proudly tells his step-mother that he has solved one of the most famous problems in chess which even the noted chess-players could not solve. But the step mother who really loves him is worried about his sleep because the Sultan does not sleep at night. Muhammad answers that he is worried about his subjects and this worry does not allow him to go to sleep. He loves the people of his reign.

Muhammad: Come. My people, I am waiting for you. Confide in me your worries. Let me share your joys. Let’s pray laugh and cry together and then, let’s play. Let’s pray till our bodies melt and flow and our blood turns into air. (Karnad 10)

Muhammad’s struggles are mounting. Sheikh Imam-Ud-din is turning the people in Kanpur against him whereas his boyhood friend Ain-ul-Mulk has revolted against him and is marching on Delhi with his thirty-thousand soldiers whereas Muhammad hardly has six thousand soldiers. Najib informs Muhammad that the Sheikh closely resembles him. Muhammad is a crafty politician. He invites Sheikh Iman-ud-din for preaching the people. Muhammad knows that the Sheikh dislikes him and if he is given chance he will talk only
against him. Muhammad announces a meeting and invites people to attend the meeting but nobody turns to the meeting.

The reality is though Muhammad has announced the meeting and invites people he sends his soldiers to manage the situation and nobody is allowed to attend the meeting. His soldiers threaten the people and if someone comes out of the house, the soldiers beat him. When the Sultan realizes a political and religious danger to his crown from the most revered Saint Sheikh Imam-ud-din he humiliates the Sheikh in meeting. The Sultan is a crafty politician and a hypocrite despot. Ain-ul-Mulk comes to the battlefield and on behalf of the Sultan the Sheikh is sent to take the message of peace to Ain-ul-Mulk. The Sheikh is dressed in royal dress, standing on a gorgeous elephant and looking almost like the Sultan. He goes there as the royal envoy to make peace. But before he can do so the trumpet is sounded which is a signal for attack. At once soldiers pour out of the surrounding him and attack Ain-ul-Mulk and his army. They in turn take the Sheikh to be the Sultan and shoot so many arrows at him and soon he is dead. After the battle when the Sultan comes back he explains to his step-mother and others the cause of the Sheikh’s death and his great grief. On the contrary, he also tells that he has pardoned Ain-ul-Mulk and sent him back as Governor of Avadh.

A revolt is growing against the Sultan. The Sheikh’s, the Amirs and the Sayyads are preparing themselves to pull Sultan down from his throne. Ratansing, Sihab-ud-din and others are meeting secretly and thinking of the rebel. As soon as the rebel rises to attack the Sultan, personally and twenty Hindu soldiers hidden behind the curtain attack the rebels and there is general massacre.

As the order of shifting the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad is given to the people they move on to Daulatabad according to the commands of the Sultan. Thousands die on the way and many people suffer with various diseases. Cries of lamentation resound in the atmosphere. There are rogues
like Aziz and Aazam who deceive the people and thrive on the suffering of the people. They make a lot of money.

Another mad decision is taken by the Sultan that he introduces copper currency in the state and more than that he declares the value of copper currency will be equal to silver currency because he has read about the currency of China, where the paper-notes are treated as currency. But people take undue advantage of the Sultan’s policy and they demand silver currency in exchange of copper currency.

The Sultan becomes spiritually lonely and is tortured within. He becomes more frustrated when people call him ‘mad Muhammad’. His most trusted friend Najib is killed by his step-mother. Najib is poisoned by the Sultan’s step-mother. When the Sultan comes to know that his step-mother is responsible for Najib’s death, Muhammad orders to arrest her and she should be stoned to death.

Barani, the historian informs the Sultan that Ghiyas Uddin Abbasid is coming to Daulatabad. In reality he is Aziz in disguise with Aazam as his follower. When he reaches Daulatabad, he is given a royal welcome and public prayers are resumed from that moment. However the people starve and they want food and not prayers; there is a lot of shouting and crying. When the soldiers try to silence them, they are attacked. In this way large scale riots begin in Daulatabad and thousands of people are killed in it.

Aazam is bored by deceiving of the people. He wants to stop these things but Aziz refuses to do so. Aziz manages that Aazam is to be killed. It is a general rule that a culprit should be punished. Aziz is a crafty man and he claims to be a true disciple of his Majesty, the Sultan. The Sultan is impressed by his craftiness and decides that he will be sent to the Deccan as a powerful officer. Tired and exhausted the Sultan falls asleep on the throne. At the time of public prayer a servant tries to awaken him, but soon gives up the effort. The play ends as Muhammad suddenly opens his eyes and looks around dazed
and frightened as though he cannot comprehend where he is. Has he gone mad?

In Tughlaq the interpersonal relationship is based on politics. Tughlaq loves his subjects and he is all the time worried about the people of his reign. He is not interested in his personal life. He is not even married. He wants that Muslims and Hindus should live together happily in his kingdom. He loves justice, equality, progress and peace—at least he says like that. He shames the throne by devious means—killing his father and brother during prayer time though one is not sure about it. This leads to lack of credibility among his followers from the time he shames the throne. No one trusts him and he never trusts anyone. As he kills his own father and brother his mother does not talk with him. He is alienated from the society. “Not only is Tughlaq alienated from the society in which he lives, he is also estranged at the interpersonal level from the individuals around him. His interpersonal alienation manifests itself in two ways. First of all he is shown to manipulate people for his own purposes, treating them as objects and not persons. Secondly he is unable to establish meaningful communication with others and is seen to be play-acting continually.” (Christine Gomez 115)

The Sultan uses his political pawns in a proper way and throws them away when they are useless. He is seen as an ace-schemer who manipulates Sheikh Imam-ud-din to act exactly according to his plans. Both of his enemies Sheikh Imam-ud-din and Ain-ul-Mulk are killed in a single stroke. He uses persons as objects. His relationship with others is very little genuine.

The family concept is totally collapsed in Tughlaq as it is more based on power and politics. Power is at the centre of the play and the Sultan uses religion also for his power politics. The Sultan uses power and makes the people to behave as he likes. The Sultan makes people compulsory to pray five times a daily. He knows the art of projecting a public image of impartiality. He does well for the people no doubt but he wishes to be known
for and wide for having done well. And for the same purpose he announces that Vishnu Prasad a Brahmin from Bikaner has won a suit against the Sultan himself.

On one hand he invites the Sheikh to deliver a public speech and on the other hand he manages that no one should attend the Sheikh’s speech forcefully. He uses the power of his soldiers and prevents the people to attend the public speech. Sultan uses his power and tactics to kill his enemies. He even uses his power to kill his own step-mother. “With regard to his relationship with his mother, Tughlaq is already estranged from her, as she believes him guilty of patricide and fratricide. More significantly in scene ten the betrayal of his stepmother takes place to whom he has been very close. He condemns her to death by stoning in public when she confesses to having his close adviser Najib murdered.” (R. Ratna Shiela Mani 145)

The Sultan has given orders and made prayers compulsory but during the prayer he kills his father and brother. “History has it that Muhammad Tughlaq had killed his father and brother in order to become the Sultan of Delhi. The charge of murder may or may not be true, for history draws heavily on conjectures. However, the playwright only casts a shadow of doubt of parricide on Tughlaq. Admitting that it was a pre-planned murder, the question arises how the elephant went amok exactly when prayers were offered, and dashed against the wooden pandal resulting in its collapse and the instant death of the reigning Sultan? There is room for doubt in that allegation.” (K.K. John 127-128). The Sultan kills or murders a man calmly and enjoys the feeling of guilt.

Ratansing: I have never seen an honest scoundrel like your Sultan. He murders a man calmly and then actually enjoys the feeling of guilt. (Karnad 28)

As the play is based on politics, intrigue is the part of the politics. Tughlaq is a great tragedy of intrigue. And in the play there are three types of
intrigues. First, the intrigues of the Sultan against his nobles and even against the royal family, second, the intrigues of even trusted courtiers and nobles against the Sultan, third, the intrigues of the nobles against each other.

1) Tughlaq comes to the throne through an intrigue against his father and brother in which they are killed. Sheikh Imam-ud-din who calls Sultan as a disgrace to the throne as he has killed his own father and brother. The Sultan manages to kill the Sheikh by sending him as the messenger of peace to Ain-ul-Mulk.

2) The trusted courtiers and nobles too hatch a number of intrigues against each other. The stepmother is displeased with Najib and ultimately gets him poisoned. The Sultan arrests her and punishes her in a cruel manner. Sihab-ud-din is a trusted friend and courtier but he is misguided by his adopted brother, Ratansing. Ratansing works as a spy and Sihab-ud-din is killed.

3) The nobles too conspire against each other. Ratan Singh is the adopted brother of Sheikh Sihab-ud-din but he is vindictive and wants to have his own revenge upon him. The fact is that Sihab-ud-din’s father has killed Ratansing’s father and usurped his Jahangir since then Ratansing has been planning his revenge and he does take his revenge through treachery.

Tughlaq’s struggle begins with his assumption of power as the Sultan of Delhi. His enemies want to swoop down him from his throne. The chieftains of Delhi, the Amirs, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, and Ain-ul-Mulk are the powerful personalities who have started a propzy war against the young Sultan. What Tughlaq does to them is his self-defense. He has to preserve himself, his ideals, his visions, his dreams and for that his own survival is important. Young Sultan’s interest is in the secular India where Hindus and Muslims would live in perpetual amity and brotherhood. For him humanism is more important than religion. But Tughlaq’s opponents are all mean of wasted interests. Ain-ul-Mulk is interested in capturing the throne of Delhi.
chieftains of Delhi want power because with it they want to make the state subservient to Islam. But Muhammad Tughlaq has gone beyond the caste system and religion also. For him religion should play a positive role in human life, to enhance the progress and happiness of the people. “This is the bone of contention between the Sultan and his opponents. So, clearly, at least in the initial stage of the play, the conflict is between two ideologies, two attitudes. The theme turns tragic only when the young Sultan refuses to dance to their tunes, and decides to defend his ideals and visions.” (K.K. John 128)

Another distinctive feature of this play is its exploration of man’s search for power. Tughlaq motivates the action of the play. Every sequence, every act originates from his desire for authority and the total power. “His interest and aspirations revolve within the emitting circle of power, the rest of his human impulses dry up, the needs of his being become distorted; his erudition and intellect turn out to be instruments for use in the politics of power, its stratagems and counter stratagems. He says, “No one can go far on his knees. I have a long way to go. I can’t afford to crawl. I have to gallop.” (Veena Noble Dass p.94)

Aziz is representative of the persons who are self-centered and can do anything for money and power. Born as a Muslim dhobi, he disguises himself as a Brahmin Vishnu Prasad. He files a suit against the Sultan and wins also. Aziz is a cunning Dhobi and he assumes several disguises in the play. His story runs parallel to that of the Sultan Muhammad and he claims to the Sultan’s most faithful follower. He is cunning and treacherous. He is a kind of caricature of the Sultan. He is the best representative of utter failure of Tughlaq’s administration in which good people suffer and the cheats like Aziz are rewarded. His character is a satire on the working of democracy in which more emphasis is given on merit but in practice mischiefs person and
troublemakers are rewarded. On the contrary, the virtuous people have to face exploitation and frustration.

He is both intelligent and imaginative. He is very poor and has no future before him. He pulls the Sultan by disguising himself in various robes. His disguises reveal the irony of human existence. To please the Sultan, Aziz, pretends to be both, Muslim and Hindu. He tries to rise higher and higher by exploitation of the poor. Politics is goal of his life. He says to Aazam -

Aziz: You are a hopeless case, you know. Pathetic! You’ve been in Delhi for so many years and you’re as stupid as ever. Look at me. Only a few month in Delhi and I have discovered a whole new world Politics! My dear fellow, that’s where our future is Politics! It’s a beautiful world – wealth, success, position, power –and yet it’s full of brainless people, People with not an idea in their head. When I think of all the tricks I used in our village to pinch a few torn clothes from people –if one uses half that intelligence here, one can get robes of power. And have not to pinch them either –get them! It’s a fantastic world! (Karnad 50)

Aziz is bold and fearless. He advises Aazam not to steal the counterfeit coins. When the Sultan recognizes that he is the cheat and he has been befooling him with his masquerade, the series of chaining clothes, instead of punishing him, appoints him an officer to his army in the Deccan. Aziz is representative of the persons who crave for power and ready to do anything for it.

Violence in Tughlaq

The play Tughlaq is packed with intrigues, machinations, bloodshed, terrible murders, Violence and horror. There is a long chain of deception and violence. Seven to eight major characters are killed and countless people die while they excel.

The Sultan creates the situation in which his father and brother are killed. He invites Sheikh Imam-ud-din and sends him to meet Ain-ul-Mulk as a
messenger of peace. Both of these characters who were headache for the Sultan are killed in a single stroke. The Sultan is a crafty politician. When seven to eight Amirs, Sayyads and Sheikhs are about to assassinate the Sultan, some twenty Hindu soldiers rush on behind the curtain and arrest the conspirators. After his Namaz is over the Sultan kills Sihab with his own hands. The conspiracy is climax in the play. The Sultan becomes very violent and vicious. The conspirators are beheaded and their bodies are hung for people to see.

The step-mother of the Sultan is of a diabolic nature and she manages to poison Najib, a trusted advisor of the Sultan because, she holds him responsible for the Sultan’s degradation. When the Sultan comes to know about her deceitful nature he orders her death sentence by stoning. Thus in the play there is fratricide, patricide and matricide. “His kingdom transfers into a kitchen of death and he becomes the lord of skin.” (S.T. Kharat 42)

The capital is shifted to Daulatabad. This unfortunate decision of the Sultan makes him unpopular. Thousands of people die of hunger and starvation. Those who oppose the Sultan’s orders are killed. He kills even on suspicion.

Aziz and Aazam kill Ghiyas-ud-din. A lot of bloodshed is shown on the stage and at the same time it is narrated also. The audience watches evil acts and violence on the stage because a predator lies hidden in every human being. It is Artaud who mentions, “The use of cruelty was means of effecting a sort of therapy for the soul.” (Artaud 29)

India was conquered by the Muslim by the power of the sword and Islam was imposed even on unwilling Hindus were treated as second class citizens in their own country. They were called ‘Kefirs’, or infidels and those who did not pay Jiziya tax were ill-treated and brutally punished. Religious bigotry prevented on a large scale and Hindus constantly lived in fear of their
lives. It was in the fourteen century that Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq came to the throne and he tried to alter all this.

Many of the critics are of the opinion that *Tughlaq* is a political allegory. Girish Karnad, while writing this play was struck by the parallelism between the reign of Tughlaq and contemporary history. Tughlaq is a powerful personality but he is disintegrated within a short span of twenty years and the mood of frustration at the end of the Nehru era. Karnad himself states, “I did not consciously write about the Nehru era and equally applies to development of politics since then. But I think, well, that is a compliment that any playwright would be thrilled to get but it was not intended to be a contemporary play about contemporary situation. I think if one gets involved with one’s characters or one’s play then it should develop into some kind of a true statement about oneself. I think a play can be only as contemporary as the playwright is. If the writer does not have contemporary convictions or is not committed, the play will not be contemporary. You cannot be fashionably committed or fashionably involved. If you are involved, the issues will come which if you are not involved don’t emerge.”

In the play *Tughlaq* power and politics is linked with religion. The Sultan wants that in his reign Muslims and Hindus are to be treated at equal level. This is political ideology of the Sultan. And in order to prove this he gives justice to a Hindu Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad.

The sheikh Imam-ud-din, a religious figure is involved in politics. He gives public speeches and tells the people how the Sultan is bringing blot to Islam. He accepts the request of the Sultan to serve as his messenger and dissuade Ain-ul-Mulk from the folly of turning against the Sultan. The Sultan requests the Sheikh and tells him if the war takes place only Muslims will die. Muhammad: Because I want peace. I am willing to make peace but how can I do it? I don’t even know why he has turned against me. He won’t even see my official envoys. But he will see you. He respects you as every
Muslim in India does. He will trust your word. That’s why I’m asking you –will you please go as my envoy and dissuade him from this folly? Please Sheikh Sahib, I’m not asking you only for my sake but for all the Muslims who will die at the hands of Muslims if there is a war. (Karnad 23)

Sheikh Imam-ud-din accepts the suggestion of the Sultan because he loves Islam. The Sultan has managed to kill Sheikh Imam-ud-din in such a way that nobody would suspect him. Here the religious leader becomes a prey to the dirty political game of Tughlaq. The Sultan kills his brother and father during the time of prayer (Namaz). The prayer time is used for murder. Prayer halls are being polluted with discussions on politics. The prayer in the play is diseased at the source of the political ascendancy. He has made a law that the Muslims have to pray five times a day. The Koran is allowed to be read in the streets and every religion is to be equally respected.

The word prayer is repeated several times and it reverberates through the play. But it is polluted at the very source, and so it no longer has the epicasy of prayer. Religion makes it incumbent for the people to pray. Ambition for power and money vitiates prayer and religion. Prayer is used as a means to an end and not as an end in itself. The play Tughlaq combines religion and politics of an idealist. It aims at showing that idealism of the ruler will fail and will ruin the idealist. Tughlaq fails because he tries to mix politics with religion. Tughlaq is estranged from the religion followed by those around him.

“Tughlaq’s alienation from traditional religion arises primarily from the fact that he is an existentialist in his religion and therefore inevitably comes into conflict with the orthodox believers and fundamentalists in religion.” (Gomez 116)
Techniques Used by Girish Karnad in Tughlaq

Use of History and Historical Figures

Girish Karnad is mainly interested in the folk theatre and the Company—Natak tradition. The play Tughlaq is deliberately written in the convention of the Company Natak. In Company Natak all scenes are divided and alternated between deep scenes and shallow scenes. The shallow scene is usually a street scene and is kept for comment. While the shallow scene is on, the deep scene is prepared for, a garden, a palace whenever the sets are being changed. While the set change is going on, in the shallow scene, the audience enjoys comedy and when the curtain opens the audience see palace on the stage. Karnad has minutely studied the presentation of play on the stage and he has written Tughlaq to satisfy the needs of the theatre presentation.

The play Tughlaq is a historical play. A historical play seems to be a contradiction in terms. History is dependent on truth and the events of the past are presented in it. On the contrary, art requires imagination and fancy. It means that the writer of a historical play must use the facts of history with discretion to suit the needs of his drama. He must be faithful to the events which have taken place in the past. While maintain overall truth to history the playwright has to deviate from the facts of history. He has to introduce new characters in the interest of dramatic effectiveness. The character of Tughlaq is taken from history. Tughlaq explores the character of one of the most fascinating kings to occupy the throne in Delhi. Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq ruled for twenty-six years, a period of unpatrolled cruelty and agonizing existence for his subjects.

Karnad first read of him in Ishwari Prasad and was fascinated by the emperor Tughlaq. Karnad in his interview with Tutun Mukherjee says, “History was used as a positive concept to analyze life and society by the Muslim historians. So, I thought, why not give history a try as a tool to interpret our life and times? I started some research; read some history. As I
have described in my introduction to the Three Plays (OUP), when I read about Mohammed bin Tughlaq, I was fascinated. How marvelous this was, I thought. Tughlaq was a brilliant individual yet is regarded as one of the biggest failures. He tried to introduce policies that seem today to far-sighted to the point of genius, but which earned him the nickname “Mohammed the mad” then. He ended his career in bloodshed and chaos.” (Girish Karnad Interview 35)

In _Tughlaq_, a historian may find lapse with regard to the accuracy of the facts of history and with regard to the historical Sultan’s character but he will have no dissonance and disagreement when it is asserted that Karnad has made use of Sultan’s characters to suit his theme that an idealist ruler cannot remain idealist if he is ambitious of perpetrating his own power. Karnad uses the Sultan only as a background to make the people understand, judge and interpret contemporary reality. His purpose is to show that in true history, faces change but forces don’t. Karnad’s own _Tughlaq_ should be studied to find parallelism between the realities of the fourteenth century India ruled by the Sultan and the twentieth century democratic country governed by a Prime-Minister and his colleagues in the Cabinet. Karnad’s own statement which is quoted by U.R.A. Anantha Murthy in his Introduction to _Tughlaq_ should not be taken with a pinch of salt.

“What struck me absolutely about Tughlaq’s history was that it was contemporary. The fact, that he was the most intelligent king ever to come to the throne of Delhi and one of the greatest failures also. And within a span of twenty years this tremendously capable man had gone to pieces. This seemed to be both due to his idealism as well as the short –comings with him, such as his impatience, his cruelty, his feeling that he had the only correct answer. And I felt in the early sixties India had also come very far in the same direction the twenty year period seemed to me very much a striking parallel.” (U.R. Anantha Murthy VIII)
Karnad visited the most renowned historian Mr. Ishwari Prasad and discussed with him the details about Tughlaq. He read other historical resources also like Ziaud-din Barani’s *Tarikh-a-Firuz Shahi*, Al Marshi’s *The Mashik-al-Absar*, Ibn-e-Battuta’s *Travels* and Badoni’s *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*. Though Karnad uses all these resources while writing his *Tughlaq*, he delegates from history which is necessary for artistic and technical purposes. Karnad has done his best to create the atmosphere of mutual distressed, frustrated idealism, orthodox, convention ridden faith, communal in tolerance, religious bigotry, treachery and sedition, rampant corruption, soaring prices, natural calamities plague and famine, the Sultan’s unmitigated blood thirstiness and his final disillusionment.

Tughlaq was a great scholar, idealist and visionary. Of all the Sultans who had hither to occupy the throne of Delhi, he was the most learned and accomplished.

He also invited non-Muslim scholars for discussion. He used to have discussions with Muslims, Hindus, Jain scholars, Buddhist Monks and Hindu thinkers. He was liberal in matters of religion. Due to his liberal and rational religious views the orthodox theologies like Zia-ud-din Barani through him a non-believer in Islam. But Ibn-i-Battuta informs us that he constantly urged people about the performance of obligatory prayers.

Even the enemies of Sultan recognized his learning and scholarship. Sheikh Imam-ud-din is a staunch critic of the Sultan but he also praises him. Imam-ud-din:….. You are one of the most powerful kings on earth today and you could spread the kingdom of Heaven on earth. God has given you everything —power, learning, intelligence, talent. Now you must repay his debt. (Karnad 20)

**Plot**

By no means can the plot of *Tughlaq* be called Aristotelian. The playwright has flaunted the unities of time and place. The action of the play
takes place first of all in Delhi in the year 1327, then from the road from Delhi to Daulatabad and lastly in and around the fort at Daulatabad five years later. The unity of action implies that all the episodes in the play must be knit together to form the whole. Not a single episode or incident can be removed from the structure without a loss. In *Tughaq*, there are many superfluous incidents e.g. the episode of Aziz and Hindu woman and the episode of Aziz with a family containing six illegal children. Many scenes regarding bloodshed and murders are narrated and not shown directly on the stage. Only the gruesome murder of Sihab-ud-din is enacted on the stage. The stepmother of the Sultan is shown being dragged by the soldiers.

In Greek plays, the episodes regarding murders, bloodshed and other horrorful actions are narrated and are not shown on the stage. Karnad weaves the story of Aazam and Aziz with the main tragic story of Tughlaq. Karnad has become successful in creating suspense in the play by keeping in abeyance the happy fate of Aziz. Though he cheats the Sultan, instead of being killed or tortured, he is rewarded by the Sultan. Girish Karnad uses suggesting method in developing the plot of *Tughaq*.

Karnad has skillfully woven the plot. He knits together the comic story of Aziz and the tragic tale of life of Muhammad. Many critics are of the opinion that *Tughaq* is a political allegory based on Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru’s era and it comments directly or indirectly the plans introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru. *Tughaq* deals with the last five years of the reign of Tughlaq. And whatever else we need to know we learn from what others tell us of him. This has been done in the interest of dramatic effectiveness. The dramatist introduces tension and conflict which are essential for plot, in the very beginning and all the events and actions of characters intensify conflict until it reaches the climax.

The subplot related with Aziz and Aazam runs parallel to the main plot. It is employed for the purpose of burlesque. In other words it is introduced in
the way of ridicule. And in order to achieve the target it was deliberately written in the convention of the company Natak.

**Action**

Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq* is based on a historical figure of Tughlaq who reigned Delhi more than two decades. The play is full of actions. On one hand Tughlaq is involved in achieving the throne and on the other hand Aziz is involved in deceiving the people. On the parts of both, they are deceptive and commit intrigue to achieve the objective. Aziz disguises and deceives the people whereas Tughlaq observes cunning ways to destroy his enemies. When the play begins the characters are talking about the Sultan. The Sultan is a controversial character. Some people talk in favour of him whereas some people blame him. The murder shown on the stage, the bloodshed reported and how the people died in their journey to Daulatabad from Delhi; all these actions lead the audience to suspect the wisdom of the Sultan.

**Characterization**

Being very skilled in the art of characterization Girish Karnad’s characters are of various types. Karnad has introduced a politician like Najib, a historian like Barani, the religious like Imam-ud-din, the thinkers like stepmother, friend turned foe like Sihab-ud-din, the comic like Aziz and Aazam. In *Tughlaq* the characters are not either all the good or all bad. They are a mixture of opposites, vices and virtues and best example is the Sultan. The common men of the country hold contradictory opinions about him. The old find him irreligious, anti-Islam and a romantic whereas the young people call him truly religious human and an idealist.

Karnad’s art of characterization is based on the principles of life which is an amalgam of contrasting elements. In the play also a number of characters are seen who present contrast. The Sultan himself is a contrast to all the people of the state –the idealist against the practical human beings. Najib and Barani also are contrasting characters. Najib is a politician whereas
Barani is a historian. Barani has faith in courage, honesty and justice while Najib mocks at these words. Barani’s way of thinking is different. The contrast, in the thinking of Aziz and Aazam enhances the interest of the play. Karnad makes the story of Aziz and Aazam run parallel to that of the Sultan.

Characters

Tughlaq

The Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq is the central figure of the play, *Tughlaq*. He is the protagonist/antagonist of the play. Many of the critics are of the opinion that Karnad’s Tughlaq is caricature of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. He is very intelligent and works very hard for the people. He becomes successful to kill Sheikh Imam-ud-din and Ain-ul-Mulk in a single stroke. This double-facedness of Tughlaq can be compared with modern politicians.

Barani

Barani plays significant part in Girish Karnad’s plays. Karnad has used historical background while writing *Tughlaq* and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*. In both these plays he has used a fictional historian named Barani. His character is contrast to Najib who is a politician. To him history is not made only in straight crafts; its lasting results are produced in the ranks of learned men. Like Najib, Barani is also the favourite of Sultan but unlike Najib, he is an idealist. He is a good man and sees goodness in everyone. He is a moderate and temperate. He does not want violence. He praises the Sultan’s generous and kind deeds and does not approve of his killings and murders. He is a scholar historian standing for the virtues of life. He is a simple, good and an honest advisor to the Sultan completely unaware of intrigues and treachery.

Sheikh Imam-ud-din

He is a holy character of India who defies the Sultan and meets his death by being caught in the trap of the Sultan. He is a bold and courageous man and is a great fiery speaker. He boldly tells the people that Muhammad is a murderer of his father and brother. The Sheikh is a man of courage and
integrity. He warns Sultan against making verbal distinctions between religion and politics. But he is trapped by Muhammad in his plan and he is killed in the battle.

**The Step-mother**

The Step-mother of Tughlaq is the only important female character in the play. She is worried about the health and welfare of Tughlaq. She is worried about his late nights. As she dislikes many of Tughlaq’s advisors, she requests Barani to promise her not to leave the Sultan – ever – whatever he does. She comes to the conclusion that Najib is responsible for the killings in the state. She manages the murder of Najib and for that Tughlaq gives order for her being sent to prison and stoned to death. The Sultan loses a good advisor.

**Language**

Karnad's handling of language and of dialogue is quite effective in *Tughlaq*. “He has chosen English to reflect the idiom of the language of character. A Karnad sentence often performs two or three functions at once. It sheds light on the character spoken about and it furthers the plot. It almost functions ironically in conveying to audience a meaning different from that conveyed to the character” (P. Bayapa Ready p.151)

Tughlaq does not want to crawl but he would like to gallop and this is reflected in his assertive language. He is aware of his loneliness and all the time he thinks of his god and his subjects.

Muhammad:..... But I am alone in my life. My kingdom has millions – Muslims, Hindus, Jains. Yes, there is dirt and sickness in my kingdom. But why should I call on god to clean the dirt deposited by mean? (Karnad 20)

The language used by Muhammad is very poetic also. He has also read literature in various languages. He says,

Muhammad:..... I still remember the days when I read the Greeks– Sukrat who took poison so he could give the world the drink of gods, Aflatoon who
condemned poets and wrote in comparably beautiful poetry himself - and I can still feel the thrill with which I found a new world, a word I had not found in the Arabs or even the Koran. They tore me in to shreds. And to be whole now, I shall have to kill the part of me which sang to them And my Kingdom too is what I am-torn in to pieces by vision whose validity I can’t deny. You are asking me to make myself complete by killing the Greek in me and you propose to unify my people by denying the visions which led Zarathustra or the Buddha. (Karnad 21)

There are examples of verbal irony in the text. The ironical language of Karnad makes the play more interesting.

Muhammad:... They couldn’t bear the weight of their crown. They couldn’t leave it a side. So they died senile in there youth or were murdered (Karnad 11)

_Tughlaq_ is notable for its poetic value. The Sultan uses language which appeals directly to the mind and intellect of the person.

Muhammad:..... My kingdom rejoices at the arrival of your gracious presence. We have waited for years for this joyful moment...... Your Holiness, and our sins have become shadows that entwine round our feet. They have become our dumbness and deprived us of prayer. They have become the fiery sun and burnt up our crops. Now the movement has come for me and my people to rejoice. Only you can save me now, your Holiness, only the dust of your feet on my head can save me now-..." (Karnad71-72)

Karnad uses different language for different characters. The characters of Aziz and Aazam are created by him for groundlings and the language used by these characters is also of lower strata.
Hayavadana

Karnad has used oral and written folktales in his plays Hayavadana and Naga-Mandala. In his note to Hayavadana he writes, “The central episode in the play –the story of Devadatta and Kapila –is based on a tale from The Vetalapanchavimshika, but I have drawn heavily on Thomas Mann’s reworking of the tale in The Transposed Heads and am grateful to Mrs. Mann for permission to do so.” (Karnad, Note to Hayavadana) Hayavadana is based on a story taken from Kathasaritsagar, an ancient collection of stories. As interest in past remains an integral part of the living culture of India, Karnad is involved in the past. In his lecture Karnad said, “Maybe I cannot invent plots. I go in for stories that are exciting; I think these are better stories than I will be able to botch up. At least in this want of originality, I am perhaps as good, or as bad, as Shakespeare... One thing more, I turn not only to myths, legends and history, but also to folklore. In fact, what attracts me most is the archetypal folk tale; with no fact already there. I find in it all the scope of flirting with ideas. I find the great advantage of being able to subvert the traditional, even classical beliefs. Since folk tales make fun of everybody – rulers, priests, even gods, everything is taken in good humour.” (L.S.Gill 18-19)

Karnad keeps at centre the psychological thesis of the modern man at the centre while writing the play. His protagonists always suffer and the root cause of their suffering is the complexity of human relationships. His characters suffer from alienation and they are alienated from themselves and the people around them.

Hayavadana = Haya means ‘Horse’ and Vadana means the ‘Head’. It is the story of a person who is having human body and horse’s head. While writing the play, Karnad has observed the form Yakshagana and he presents the play in semi-classical manner. The play moves around three characters – Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila. Two stories are intermingled together by
Karnad in his play *Hayavadana*.

When the play begins a mask of Ganesha is brought on the stage and kept on the chair, Pooja is done and the Bhagavata sings verses in praise of Ganesh. After the invocation of the god, Bhagavata narrates the story of Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila. But the actor interferes the Bhagavata and he narrates him about the incident in which he has seen a man with horse’s head. Actor is followed by Hayavadana and when asked he tells his story.

Hayavadana: My mother was the Princess of Karnataka. She was a very beautiful girl. When she came of age, her father decided that she should choose her own husband. So princes of every Kingdom in the world were invited—and they all came. From China, from Persia, from Africa. But she didn’t like any of them. The last one to come was the Prince of Araby. My mother took one look at that handsome Prince sitting on his great white stallion—and she fainted.... She said she would only marry that horse.... So ultimately she was married off to the white stallion. She lived with him for fifteen years. One morning she woke up—and no horse! In its place stood a beautiful celestial Being, a Gandharv. Apparently this celestial Being had been cursed by the god Kuvera to be born a horse for some act of misbehavior. After fifteen years of human love he had become his original self again.... Released from his curse, he asked my mother to accompany him to his Heavenly Abode. But she wouldn’t. She said she would come only if he became a horse again. So he cursed her... He cursed her to become a horse herself. So my mother became a horse and ran away happily. My father went back to his Heavenly Abode. Only I—the child of their marriage—was left behind.” (Karnad 8-9).

Bhagavata advises Hayavadana to go to religious place and he will be recovered. He blesses him-
Bhagavata: May you become successful in your search for completeness.

(Karnad 11)

And he turns to the main story, he starts singing. In original Kannada
play Karnad has used songs but in the English version he translates some
songs and others he has given prose rendering. Karnad uses even female
chorus in his play.

Kapila and Devadatta are the citizens of Dharmapura and they are the
best friends. Devadatta is the only son of Brahmin Vidyasagar and Kapila is
the only son of the iron-smith Lohita. Devadatta is very popular for his writing
and he is known as one of the most intellectual persons of the city. Their
friendship is narrated by Bhagavata.

Bhagavata:..... The world wonders at their friendship. The world sees these
two young men wandering down the streets of Dharmapura, hand in
hand, and remembers Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna
and Balarama. (Karnad 2)

Devadatta is fallen in love with fifteenth girl and he tells his close friend
Kapila about her. Devadatta narrates the beauty of the girl.

Devadatta: How can I describe her, Kapila? Her forelocks rival the bees, her
face is.....

Both:..... is a white lotus. Her beauty is as the magic lake. Her arms the lotus
creepers. Her breasts are golden urns and her waist.....” (Karnad 13)

Devadatta compares the beauty of the girl with Shakuntala of Kalidas.
Kapila searches for the beautiful lady, Padmini and the marriage takes place.
But before marriage Devadatta tells Kapila, “.... Kapila, with you as my witness
I swear, if I ever get her as my wife, I’ll sacrifice my two arms to the goddess
Kali, I’ll sacrifice my head to Lord Rudra...” (Karnad 14)

Kapila tells Padmini that Devadatta the only son of Brahmin Vidyasagar
is in love with her and wants to marry her.

Bhagavata comes on the stage and tells the audience that the marriage
takes place. He says “... The old friendship flourished as before. Devadatta – Padmini –Kapila! To the admiring citizens of Dharmapura, Rama –Sita – Lakshmana.” (Karnad 19)

After the marriage six months have gone and Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila go for the picnic. Kapila drives the cart and Devadatta and Padmini sit in it. Padmini is intellectually attracted towards Devadatta whereas Kapila’s strong body is liked by her. On their way Padmini shows her fascination for the Fortunate Ladies flowers. Putting off his shirt Kapila climbs over tree and fetches flowers for Padmini. As they are tired, they stop their journey. Kapila knows about the temple of Rudra and that of Kali. Kapila changes the plan to go to the temple of Rudra. Though Devadatta is tired he wants go to the temple of Kali. Kapila has no choice but to accompany Padmini. Devadatta, agonized, walks to the temple of Kali. Then he prostrates himself before the goddess and begs for her forgiveness. As he has forgot his word to offer his arms to her. Carried out the promise he beheads himself. When Devadatta is missing, Kapila and Padmini start searching for him. Following his footprints Kapila succeeds in locating Devadatta dead in the temple of Kali. Bewildered at the sight and frightened by the social slander Kapila too picks up the sword and beheads himself.

After a long waiting Padmini goes in search of Devadatta and Kapila and finds both of them dead. She also picks the sword and when she is on the verge of killing herself the goddess tells her to join the heads of the dead to their respective bodies and press the sword on their necks to bring them to life. She does so. But soon she finds that she has mixed up the heads and joined the head of Kapila on the body of Devadatta and vice versa. Seeing each other with a new combination Kapila and Devadatta laugh but after it both of them claim to be Devadatta. Kapila says that Padmini is carrying a baby of his body whereas Devadatta says that the head is said to be the sign of man.
In the Act second Kapila has run away into the forest and Devadatta is staying with his wife Padmini. The new changed Devadatta is liked by Padmini too much. She says fabulous body – fabulous brain – fabulous Devadatta. But Padmini is missing the strong smell which Devadatta’s body had when they come back from the temple of Kali.

Karnad uses two dolls in order to comment on the things taking place in Devadatta’s house. The dolls also talk of the pregnancy of Padmini, then about her son and the family atmosphere in a serious and non-serious way. After some days Devadatta is completely changed to his original self. Padmini has given birth to her son. After Devadatta goes for Ujjain fair to bring new dolls Padmini talks to her son and romantically refers to the place where Kapila has disappeared. Bhagavata enters and his conversation with Kapila informs audience about his residence and activities. With her son in arms Padmini succeeds in locating Kapila in the forest. In her opinion she is a looser and Kapila and Devadatta win. She also accuses Kapila of torturing himself needlessly. She also tells that she is responsible for the mixed up of their heads. After the request cum challenge, Kapila raises his head and looks at her. Caressing his face with her fingertips, she rests her head on his chest. Kapila lifts her up and takes her “behind the trees”.

Holding a sword in one hand and in the other two dolls Devadatta enters. Bhagavata informs him that Padmini has been there for the last 4-5 days. Devadatta asks Kapila if he loves Padmini and answering him affirmative Kapila proposes that they should live like the Pandavas and Draupadi. But later he himself withdraws it. Both of them agree on one point that is “we must both die.” And in a dual both are killed. Padmini hands over her son to Bhagavata and ask him to give it to the hunters and tell them it was Kapila’s son. And after five years he should be handed over to father of Devadatta as his grandson. By doing namaskar she gets ready for Sati.

The story of Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila has come to an end but
Hayavadana appears on the stage. Hayavadana appears as a complete horse but the human voice has not left him yet. When Hayavadana laughs, the son of Padmini who is of five years and looks sad also starts laughing. When Hayavadana laughs with the child, he loses his human voice and he turns into a whole horse. Bhagavata thanks Ganesha and he is joined by Hayavadana, Kapila, Devadatta, and Padmini.

The theme of the play *Hayavadana* has two aspects, a socio-cultural aspect and a metaphysical one. At both the levels it shows the conflict between two polarities. U.R. Anantha Murthy in his note on *Hayavadana* states, “The play exposes the audience to a significant theme like ‘incompleteness’ in a comic mode... the play tries to create an illusion in us that the hate determines the being of man.” (Murthy ii)

Karnad’s *Hayavadana* is the interminable quest for perfection. The human relationships in *Hayavadana* are also complex. The very concepts of the rational and the physical are intermingled together in the play. The multiplicity of characters and their psychic circles are responsible for a complex pattern of human relationships. A comprehensive picture of human beings in search of perfection and completeness is presented by Karnad in his *Hayavadana*.

“Devadatta, the only son of the learned Brahmin Vidyasagar is very fair in colour and unrivaled in intelligence. He is in love with Padmini who is as beautiful as Shakuntala of Dharmapura, hand in hand, and remembers Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna and Balarama.” (Karnad P.2)

The friendship in between Devadatta and Kapila is very close and they are ready to do anything for their friendship.

Kapila:... Don’t you know I would do anything for you? Jump into a well or walk into fire. Even my parents aren’t as close to me as you are. I would leave them this minute if you asked me to”. (Karnad 12)
Devadatta:....How fortunate I am to have a friend like him. Pure gold.........

(Karnad 15)

Devadatta ;.... Kapila isn’t namely a friend –he’s like my brother. One has to collect merit is seven lives to get a friend like him. (Karnad 21)

Devadatta says that Kapila and Padmini are two pieces of his heart and Kapila has a heart of gold.

But this friendship faces crises when the heads of the friends are transposed. Both of them claim to be Devadatta. At last a person having Devadatta’s head and Kapila’s body gets Padmini as his wife and he is identified as Devadatta. There is a question that whether Padmini transposes heads accidentally or purposely? Because she likes Devadatta’s intelligence and Kapila’s body as it is very powerful.

Padmini becomes successful in getting celestial bodies Gandharv –fabulous body –fabulous brain –fabulous Devadatta. But this cannot linger for long time because day-by-day Devadatta turns to his original shape. On the contrary, Kapila (Kapila’s head and Devadatta’s body) who has run away into the forest, once again, becomes physically powerful as he was in the past. Padmini craves for perfection and she likes Devadatta’s head on Kapila’s body. She gets it but it results not in perfection but in failure.

Probably what Karnad tries to reveal through Padmini is the predicament of a modern, free and bold woman who is torn between polarities, a woman who loves her husband as well as someone else for two different aspects of their personalities. Padmini, after the exchange of heads, has felt that she has the best of both men, but slowly reality surfaces. She has the capacity of complete experience. (Pranav Joshipura 203)

Devadatta being a Brahmin is very intellectual whereas Kapila is the son of Lohita who is an iron smith. Padmini is a daughter of businessman. In the play these three characters are coming from three different families having different cultures. But the most common factor is love-relationship.
Devadatta loves Kapila and Padmini, Padmini loves Devadatta and Kapila and Kapila also loves Devadatta and Padmini. It is Kapila who suggests that they should live like Pandavas and Draupadi but later he himself discards the suggestion.

The names of the father of Devadatta and father of Kapila are mentioned but they are not shown on the stage. While Kapila runs to the forest, with his transposed body, his mother and father die. But after the death of Devadatta, Devadatta’s father still lives because at the end of the play, Devadatta’s son is to be taken to Dharmapura where Brahmin Vidyasagar lives. Both, Devadatta and Kapila love each other and this love is more sincere than their love to their family members.

In Karnad’s plays sexual relationships are very complex and in Hayavadana it is at the centre. Hayavadana narrates how his mother felt in love with a great white stallion, who was originally a Gandharv. Hayavadana is the result of the marriage of a stallion and a human being. In case of Padmini, she loves Devadatta, married to Devadatta and is pregnant. But her pregnancy has not minimized/decreased her sexual attraction towards Kapila and later she gets the body of Kapila. At the end of the play there is union in between transposed Kapila and Padmini.

Power Politics

Devadatta belongs to Brahmin community and he is intelligent. Having felled the mightiest Pandit of the kingdom in debates on logic and love, having branded the greatest poets of the world with his poetry and wit, Devadatta is as it were the apple of every eye in Dharmapura. He seems to overpower his friend Kapila who is physically strong. Here, intellectual power overbears the physical power. He treats Kapila as his assistant. Kapila also agrees that in the company of Devadatta, to some extent, he is changed otherwise his condition would have been no better than an ox.

Padmini is the most powerful character in the play. She craves for
perfectness. She can be compared to Hayavadana as Hayavadana himself craves for completeness. But there is difference in their attitudes. Hayavadana himself wants to be a perfect but Padmini wants a perfect companion. Hayavadana becomes successful to some extent because he wants to be changed in a total human being but at least he is changed into a total horse. But there is frustration on the part of Padmini. She becomes successful by using her power in getting the perfect man but after some days she comes to know that even Devadatta with Kapila’s body is not perfect.

Power corrupts basic human relationships. If politics is taken as power structured relationships or arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another and since the essence of politics is powered, the play of power politics would work towards domination and imposing of one’s will on others. In *Hayavadana* power politics is used by Devadatta in order to win Padmini. It is psychological warfare. Kapila is totally under Padmini’s spell throughout the trip. He is eager to please her. He runs of to get the Fortunate Ladies flowers, climbing a tree and brings a hip of flowers for her.

When the heads are transposed the politicking for the power to posses Padmini’s heart starts. But Kapila is defeated. Though Kapila is defeated by Devadatta in argumentation Kapila once again becomes the centre of attention for Padmini. And Padmini returns to the forest in search of Kapila.

**Violence in *Hayavadana***

In Karnad’s plays though the themes are taken from myth violence is the integral part of his plays. In *Hayavadana* also violence is found but this violence is based more on sacrifice. In Indian mythology violence is at the base because the civilizations have to struggle for their own existence. For overpowering the other civilizations, the war took place. A lot of bloodshed takes place in myths like *the Ramayan* and *the Mahabharata*. In the play *Hayavadana*, Hayavadana wants to get freed himself from his horse head. Many times it is found that he himself and other characters try to put his head
aside. But it brings pain to Hayavadana.

In Karnataka, the people promise the god or the goddess to sacrifice their heads after completion of their pledge. In Hayavadana, Devadatta promises Lord Rudra and Goddess Kali to sacrifice his head and hands respectively. But when he visits the temple of Kali, he sacrifices his head to Kali. Even Kapila sacrifices his head to Goddess Kali not because of promised but for his friend who sacrifices his head.

At the end of Devadatta, Padmini, Kapila episode, a dual takes place in between Devadatta and Kapila. Both of them know that they should die now. There is only one solution to the critical problem and that is the death of both, Devadatta and Kapila. So they kill each other. After their death Padmini takes the decision to perform Sati. Thus, violence in Hayavadana is more religious.

**Techniques**

**Myth**

Karnad is attracted to the myths, histories, and folk stories for personal reasons. This autobiographical dimension is indubitably evident in Yayati, Tughlaq and Hayavadana. Next, he is excited by the universal characteristics of certain recurrent archetypes – problems, characters, situations, themes and so on. Hence, the personal and the social, the past and the present, commingle in Karnad’s plays which will ever remain relevant to mankind.

The story of Hayavadana comes partly from Thomas Mann’s story titled “Transposed Heads” and also on the stories in “Vetal Panchavimshati” and “Kathasaritsagar”. Karnad’s play in a characteristic way begins where the Vetal story ends. In “Vetal Panchavimshati” Prince Dhavala marries Madansundari, the daughter of a king named Sudhapata. One day Svetapata, Sudhapata’s son proceeds to his own country along with his sister and her husband. On the way, they come across the temple of goddess Gauri. Dhavala goes into the temple and pays homage to the goddess. Through
some urge he cuts off his head with a sword and presents it to the goddess. As Dhavala does not come even after waiting for some time, Svetapata goes inside and when he finds Dhavala has cut his head off, he also offers his head to goddess. When Madansundari, after a long time, enters the temple, she sees the dead bodies lying before the goddess. And in great grief she begins to cut off her own head but the Goddess Gauri appears and asks her to shape their heads on their shoulders. But in excitement the heads are changed. Vetala’s question is who is Madansundari’s husband? And the king answers “of course the person with Dhavala’s head on his shoulders.”

Each of these stories posses a riddle at the end, which the Vetala challenges the king to solve. A modern source of the plot of Hayavadan is Thomas Mann’s narrative, The Transposed Heads”. Mann who got the story from Zimmer changes and elaborates it further making it a vehicle for the expression of his favourite idea, namely, the ironic confrontation between opposite in human life. “If Mann’s aim was to stress the ironic impossibility of uniting perfectly the spirit and the flesh in human life, Karnad tries to pose existential ideas like problem of ‘Being’ and the metaphysical anguish of the human condition.” (M.K.Naik 137)

The practice of going back to mythology is not totally new in Indian English drama. The playwrights before Girish Karnad, have drawn stories from mythology and interpreted them a new. Karnad also realizes that the relationship between theatre and mythology is very close. As the function of theatre is to reflect society, best signified in myths and the best reservoir of it is epics. Time is generally divided into present, past and future and the division exists only on a conscious level. At the subconscious or unconscious level, there is no such compartmentalization. That’s why myths being the representatives of our subconscious and unconscious mind never get old.

Some critics have accused Karnad of writing with western audience in mind and of using themes and techniques that might shock or startle the
Indian viewers. But this doesn’t seem to be true as far as *Hayavadana* is concerned. Karnad wants to illustrate man’s universal predicament in new twentieth century awareness. As banal methods would not do for the purpose, as the established myths were found insufficient, he invented a myth and dramatized it. The play has certainly become provocative. But that is what a good drama should be. Karnad has successfully drawn our attention to what we usually tend to forget in our accustomed pursuits of dangling the carrot before the asses. (Pranav Joshipura 201)

**Plot**

The plot of *Hayavadana* is based on the story of “Kathasaritsagar” and the *Transposed Heads*. In *Hayavadana*, Karnad combines two stories together. There is a main plot and there is a subplot. And the title of the play *Hayavadana* goes to the subplot. The meaning of Hayavadana is a man with horse’s head. Karnad presents in detailed way how this Hayavadana takes birth. He tells the origin of Hayavadana. Hayavadana’s mother was princess of Karnataka. Many suitors are invited. An Araby prince arrives on a stallion and Hayavadana’s mother falls in love with the white stallion. And Hayavadana is the product of her marriage with the white stallion. Hayavadana is thrown into this world neither in the form of a beast nor a human being. Padmini’s son also becomes totally withdrawn from the world. The inanimate dolls are his only companions. When he meets Hayavadana, his innocent smile makes Hayavadana a complete horse and Hayavadana’s laughter makes the boy forget his past and his regressive tendencies.

The main plot of the play deals with Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila. Devadatta a Brahmin scholar, with the help of his close friend Kapila marries Padmini. After the marriage they arrange a picnic. Kapila is also to join them. Padmini has already shifted her liking from the head of Devadatta to the body of Kapila. Devadatta is also aware of Padmini’s interest in Kapila but he cannot convey to Kapila in a straight forward way that he is no more welcome...
in his house. Nor does he clearly restrict his wife from talking and meeting Kapila. During the picnic Devadatta surrenders his head to Kali so does Kapila and the heads are transposed by Padmini.

Padmini gets her husband in a new form. He has got an intellectual head of Devadatta and strong body of Kapila. But even this combination of perfection does not make her happy forever because her new husband day-by-day takes the original shape of Devadatta. Once again she searches for Kapila and goes to the forest in his search. When she meets Kapila, she requests him to let her rest her head on his chest. At last we find Padmini gets changed Kapila also. But no one is satisfied. When Devadatta comes to know that Padmini is with Kapila he throws the doll's which he has bought for his son. He is not ready to share Padmini with Kapila as Draupadi was shared by Pandava’s. Both of them come to the conclusion that they should die and they kill each other whereas Padmini performs Sati. For five years Padmini’s son was kept in jungle and the last scene takes place after five years when Hayavadana gets the total form of a horse and Padmini’s son gets his smile back.

Action

*Hayavadana* is the combination of two plots and the actions in the play take place simultaneously. The meeting of Padmini and Devadatta and Devadatta’s falling in love with Padmini, is the significant action where the main plot begins. The marriage takes place and the next scene opens after six months and Padmini is pregnant. A trip to Ujjain is arranged by Devadatta and Padmini and Kapila is to join them. Kapila’s skill of driving the cart, his physical movements, his bringing of the Fortunate Ladies flowers, his broad back like an ocean with muscles, rippling across it attract the attention and mind of Padmini to Kapila. Now for her he is like a celestial being. Her attraction towards Kapila, perhaps, makes her to commit a mistake of transposing the heads.
Devadatta’s returning home with Padmini and Padmini’s happiness with changed Devadatta is a significant action in act second. Kapila has discarded himself in the forest. Devadatta cannot maintain his body for long time. He comes to his original shape. Two dolls are bought by Devadatta for his son to play with. These dolls’ comments are very effective for the dramatic element. When Devadatta visits Ujjain fair for bringing new dolls, Padmini searches out Kapila from the forest and meets him. A significant action of dual in between Devadatta and Kapila takes place in which both are killed. Padmini’s performance of Sati indicates her love for Devadatta and Kapila. Hayavadana who is in search of his completeness gets the complete form though not as a human being but as a horse. In Hayavadana, there are five people who crave for completeness and their actions are meant for the search for completeness. 1. Hayavadana, 2. Devadatta, 3.Kapila 4.Padmini and 5.Padmini’s son.

Characterization

Karnad’s play Hayavadana is mainly concerned with the treatment of theme in it. So he has not given priority to characterization but the characters of Hayavadana are no doubt interesting and realistic. Devadatta is representative of intellectual people and is gifted by god =Devadatta. Kapila stands for the physical force. Kapila= iron and Padmini= petals of Lotus which is mark of beauty. She is the central character and is the most assertive and interesting. She represents the women who hanker for a perfect man who has the qualities of head and body. She is also the mouthpiece of the playwright. She wants a man with Devadatta’s intellect and Kapila’s body, she gets it but yet she is not satisfied.

Characters

Devadatta

Devadatta symbolizes intellect or head in the play. He is a scholar as well as a poet. He has introduced art and literature to his friend Kapila. But it
is striking that nowhere in the play he indulges in poetry. Bhagavata and Kapila mention about his intellectual power but physically and emotionally he is a weak person. He is in the habit of falling in love with girls and Padmini is the sixteenth girl. He is a passionate lover of beauty. Though he is intelligent he can see only the pristine beauty and fails to know the woman in her.

Though Kapila is his best friend he starts burning with jealousy because he knows that there is some hidden bond in between his wife Padmini and Kapila. Devadatta possesses an active head and a passive body. And that is the main cause of his suffering. After acquiring the body of Kapila, Devadatta remains a victim of suffering he cannot maintain the muscular body of Kapila. He loves Kapila and Padmini both but no one makes him happy. His peace of mind is disturbed by Kapila whereas Padmini starts taking interest in the body of Kapila. Devadatta does not have any evil desire against Kapila. But at last unwillingly he challenges Kapila for a dual because the moral problem can be solved with the death of the two.

Kapila

If Devadatta is a man of intellect, Kapila is a man of body. They belong to two polarities – two extreme ends. If Devadatta is a ‘Pandit’, Kapila is a dumbo. He is the bosom friend of Devadatta and looks dark. No one can rival him in the deeds that require physical strength and skills. He has a strong body and rippling muscles. He is innocent like a child and he is an exact opposite of the scholar, Devadatta. Despite their differences there is very close friendship in between them. The people call them Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna and Balarama.

It is Kapila who manages the marriage in between Devadatta and Padmini. There is a secret bond in between Kapila and Padmini. Padmini becomes instrumental in changing the personality of Kapila. The man of muscles gets fascinated by her beauty and he always hops around her. His sincerity towards Devadatta becomes his weakness. He fails to assert himself
because he does not like at all to trouble Devadatta. He loves Padmini but at the same time he dies in the temple, he also kills himself because he fears facing the society. When Padmini goes into the forest in order to meet Kapila, he advises her to return to her husband. It shows his deep understanding.

Padmini

Padmini is a beautiful girl whom Devadatta compares with Shakuntala. She is like a lotus torn between two polarities. Padmini represents a modern woman. Who is bold, free, quick and enthralling? In presence of Devadatta, she does not hesitate to praise Kapila. What matters much in the play is Padmini’s desire for perfection. She wants an intelligent, physically powerful person. Her fascination for a perfect man makes her to put the head of Devadatta on the body of Kapila. Though she gets fabulous Devadatta, she cannot be happy for long time because Devadatta starts losing the tenor of his muscles. When her search for a complete man is over, she becomes happy only for time being because Devadatta starts getting his original form which is not liked by Padmini. At last Padmini is defected because the changed Devadatta also can not succumb the requirements of Padmini. She returns to forests in search of Kapila and becomes successful in convincing Kapila for sexual relations. Even Kapila also starts suggesting Devadatta that they will stay like Pandavas. But it is discarded. After the death of Devadatta and Kapila, Padmini performs ‘sati’. Karnad, through the character of Padmini, suggests that every human being craves for happiness but no one is perfect.

Hayavadana and Stage Performance

In Karnataka, Yakshagana is very popular and Girish Karnad is highly influenced with the techniques used in Yakshagana. When the play begins Bhagavata who is the Sutradhar of the play arrives on the stage. The role of Bhagavata / the narrator is like that of chorus in Greek drama. Bhagavata and his companions play the role of chorus. Girish Karnad has introduced female chorus in the play, Hayavadana. Bhagavata is the Sutradhar who knows past
of the characters, comments on present and gives the hints about what is to happen in the future Bhagavata can talk directly to the audience. In fact he is the link in between the audience and characters of the play. It is Sutradhar who begins the play. And it is Sutradhar who closes the play. In between the beginning of the play and end of the play many things take place and Bhagavata comments on the happenings which take place in between the beginning and the end of the play.

**Songs**

Karnad wrote *Hayavadana* in Kannada and while writing the play he used the style of Yakshagana. In Yakshagana, there is a lot of folk music, folk dance and folk songs. In his Kannada play he writes many songs and those are put in the mouth of lady chorus. But in his English translation instead of translating his poetry into English, he has paraphrased those songs. Still we find there are some songs translated by Karnad in his English play. The opening of the play is more attractive due to Bhagavata’s singing the verse to praise Lord Ganesha. Invocation to muses and prayers to celestial Gods is an outstanding characteristic of Indian Folk theatre. When the heads of Devadatta and Kapila are transposed all three characters sing a song happily.

What a good mix!

No more tricks!

Is this one that

Or that one this?

Ho !Ho ! (Karnad 35)

Even the act two opens with the song of Bhagavata. Padmini sings lullaby for her son. The songs sung by Bhagavata add theatrical effect to the play. Padmini’s son behaves himself as a dumb and deaf but at the end of the play he sings a song when Hayavadana gets a total form of the horse. Even the female chorus sings in the second act. Bhagavata in *Hayavadana*, the Sutradhar in *Yayati* are the devices derived from the classical drama in India.
Language

Girish Karnad is an extremely innovative playwright. And his stay in London for three years made him to take interest in Western theatre. He is closely acquainted with Indian culture and English language. The very title of the play Hayavadana is Sanskrit. As the play is written in Yakshagana style, many Sanskrit words are used by Karnad e.g. Vighneshwara, Vakratunda Mahakaya, elephant headed Hermbha. In the beginning of the play the language spoken by Bhagavata and the actor is simple and comic. This language is meant for groundlings. Devadatta is born in a Brahmin family and the language he uses is sophisticated and the language of the learned man. Due to the friendship with Devadatta, Kapila speaks sophisticated language. This language has become poetic.

Kapila: I give up, Devadatta. I surrender to your judgment. 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 into one. (Karnad 16)

Karnad has used also ironical language.

Padmini: Listen, my father could be a servant in this house. Or the master of this house could be my father’s servant. My father could be the master’s father, brother, son – in – law, cousin, grandfather or uncle. Do you agree? (Karnad 18)

The dolls introduced by Karnad in Hayavadana are quite amusing and they use slang language.

Doll II: She wants new dolls.

Doll I: The whore.

Doll II: The bitch

Doll I: May her house burn down.

Doll II: May her teeth fall out. (Karnad 51)

As Hayavadana is based on the folk theatre, Yakshagana and in case of
theme based on myth, the language of Girish Karnad fulfills the requirement of the play. *Hayavadana* brought most auspicious award to Karnad and that is Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award.

**NAGA-MANDALA**

Girish Karnad’s *Nag -Mandala* is published in 1990 and effectively raises the issue of the exploitation of women. *Nag -Mandala* is based on two oral folk tales from Karnataka. Karnad has heard them from his friend, guide and guru Prof. A.K.Ramanujan. During his stay at the University of Chicago as visiting professor, he wrote it. Then he translated it into English and produced at the University theatre at Chicago. Mythical stories about ‘Naga’ who can assume shape of any man or woman are available in different versions. *Nag -Mandala* begins with a prologue. ‘Sutradhara’ tells the audience that he is required to keep awake for the whole night to save his life. At that time, he sees some flames entering into the ruined temple and one of the flames starts telling the story of Rani.

Rani is the heroine of the play who is a very innocent girl. To prove her chastity, she has to go through ‘snake ordeal’. She comes out of the ordeal unscathed. Then she is called as ‘divine’ and accepted as ‘goddess’ by the people of the town as well as her husband Appanna. In this play, Karnad exposes the male chauvinism as well as oppression and injustice done to women under the patriarchal structure. Patriarchal structure has invented and accepted ‘chastity’ as a value. It is expected that, everyone should follow it. Especially for women, it is a kind of compulsion to observe this value faithfully. It has a very powerful cultural value. The women characters in literature who observe this value faithfully are glorified by the writers. If any woman violates these values she is looked down upon. Every man and woman or mother and father teach their daughters to obey the values and norms set by society. Amongst these values, chastity is considered to be of great
importance. For women, chastity is more important than life. They can sacrifice their life for chastity because the society respects and honours only chaste women. To prove their chastity, they tolerate any kind of injustice, physical harassment and violence done to them by their husbands.

Rani is the only daughter of her parents. She gets married to Appanna. Appanna takes her home when she reaches womanhood. She arranges for his bath as well as serves him lunch. After lunch, he locks her into the house and goes to his concubine. Being alone in the home, her condition becomes miserable. She is not mentally matured and craves for parental love and affection. She is mentally tortured in this way. When for lunch, Appanna comes to home; she talks only few words.

Appanna: Look, I don’t like idle chatter. Don’t question me. Do as you are told, you understand? (Finishes his meal, gets up) I’ll be back tomorrow for lunch. (Karnad 7)

When Kurudavva and Kappanna come to Rani and talk affectionately with her, Appanna does not like even that.

Appanna: She won’t talk to anyone. And no one need talk to her. (Karnad 14)

Later he brings a dog so that no one should come again to meet her. It shows that Appanna does not want Rani to talk with others or come in contact with others so that she would get information about him. On one hand, he enjoys extra-marital sexual pleasures, but does not allow her to enjoy even the affections of others. He is so merciless that he cannot understand her need of affection and love for the growth of her mind. She is confined to the house and household wok. This shows how women’s talents are reduced to housework. Rani is afraid of escaping into a fantasy world created by her. Rani tells Kurudavva,

Rani: I am so frightened at night, I can’t sleep a wink. At home, I sleep between father and Mother. But here, alone – Kurudavva, Can you help me, please? Will you please send word to my parents that I am, like
this, here? Will you ask them to free me and take me home? I would jump into a well –if only could -- (Karnad 11)

The house of Appanna symbolizes a house where a newly wedded bride comes and there is no one who can understand the problems, difficulties of the girl and left alone to face them. Emotional support and love is the need of every girl who leaves the parents’ house and comes to her husband’s. It is by her husband first that she expects the understanding of her feelings and emotions. Though Appanna cannot complete his duties of being a husband, Rani is a typical wife who does not want to harm her husband. She even pours the curry mixed with the root paste out, in the anthill, so that it should not create any harm to the health of her husband. Appanna is a typical husband, who beats her for such a small thing as going out of the house. He is a male chauvinist. He believes that whatever he thinks and does is always right and he has the right to do so.

When Naga starts coming to meet Rani, at night, Rani gets astonished by his behaviour. She cannot understand how a rude person behaves so gently with her. Even when Naga kills Dog and Mongoose, he has scars on his body and her husband Appanna when comes at home during day, he has no scars. She realizes it but does not ask questions either to Naga or to Appanna because both have told her not to ask any questions. Questioning her husband is made a taboo. In the patriarchal system, women are taught to listen to their husbands. They have the right to take the decision and women are expected to follow it. The same thing happens with Rani. Rani mutely follows the instructions given to her by Appanna and Naga without any question. She accepts the duality of her husband because what she needs is love and affection which she gets at least at night.

When Appanna discovers that Rani is pregnant, he gets infuriated. He kicks her and curses her.

Appanna: Aren’t you ashamed to admit it, you harlot? I locked you in, and yet
you managed to find a lover! Tell me who it is. Who did you go to with your sari off? (Karnad 33)

It is very surprising that Appanna has an extra-marital relationship and yet he expects faithfulness from Rani, his wife. It questions the patriarchal moral code which demands faithfulness of a woman to her husband but not from husband to his wife. Appanna is openly engaged in adultery. He is not even ashamed of it. The people know about it. But nobody objects him. Nobody believes in the innocence of Rani. They do not ask questions to Appanna, about his extra-marital relationship with a harlot. No one asks him why he has not given the rights of a wife to Rani. The partiality of the elders is exposed. The elders who are doing justice do not ask questions to Appanna. It shows the discrepancy between our social and legal system. Joshipura Pranav writes, “The name Appanna means ‘any man’ and it is a way comment on any man who tries to enforce chastity on his wife, while he himself indulges in extra-marital relationships.” (Joshipura Pranav 260)

Even Naga also suppresses Rani’s reason and intuition so that his identity not to be revealed. He has a patriarchal authority.

Naga: (seriously) I am afraid that is how it is going to be. Like that during the day. Like this at night. Don’t ask me why.

Rani: I won’t. (Karnad 23)

As well as, he tells her not to go out of the room when he comes and goes.

Naga:... Listen, Rani. I shall come home every day twice. At night and of course again at mid-day. At night, wait for me here in this room. When I come and go at night, don’t go out of this room, don’t look of the window --- whatever the reason. And don’t ask me why. (Karnad 25-26)

It shows how the power in the patriarchal society, enables the men to suppress the rationale and intellect of women and make them remain ignorant so that they get the freedom to do whatever they want. The order
of Naga is followed by Rani so faithfully that she never comes to know the real
identity of Naga.

Rani even goes through the snake ordeal though she was afraid of it. At the end, she finds courage and confidence for her child and comes out triumphant. It is a very significant aspect of Indian women. In the words of Sudhir Kakar, “An Indian woman knows that motherhood confers upon her a purpose and identity that nothing else in her culture can”. (56)

At the end Rani gets the power of taking decisions and then also as an ideal wife she asks permission from Appanna. Though Appanna has become a devoted husband, she never orders him.

Rani:…. A cobra. It has to be ritually cremated. Can you grant me a favour!
Appanna: Certainly,
Rani: When we cremate this snake, the fire should be lit by our son.
(Karnad 44)

Srilatha Batliwala in her article “why do women oppress women!” writes,

“Since the beginning of civilization, every society has lived by certain values and beliefs which are cleverly transformed into immutable truths. In reality these ideologies are specifically created and disseminated to justify the inequalities and injustices of prevailing social structure and thus protect the rights and privileges of the powerful.”

Men, through the institution and social system try to exert full control over the body and virtue of women and this attitude is ridiculed by in this play. The men do not give love and trust to the women in the family. There are very few relationships here in the play but they show various aspects of man woman relationships. Rani is a young girl who is loved a lot by her parents. Appanna takes her home when she reaches womanhood. She completes the wifely duties of making arrangements of bath and preparing lunch for him. She is locked inside the house and never allowed to go outside
and also not to talk to him also. She is not allowed to talk to anybody other
than Appanna. She needs parental love from him but she can’t get it. He says
that he does not like idle chatter.

For women their relationships with the men are of great importance
because they give women an identity e.g. daughter of someone, wife of
someone and then mother. Motherhood gives women respect in the society.
In this play Rani has only one person to relate with i.e. Appanna, her husband.
But Appanna does not give any importance to Rani. He gives her treatment of
nonentity. Appanna does not consider her as his wife. Appanna does not care
about his duties and responsibilities as a husband, but Rani has no grudges
against him. He does not think about the ill-treatment given to Rani by him
but asks for judgment for her adultery. He represents male chauvinist.
Appanna’s relation with Rani is incomplete in the same way as his relation
with his concubine. He cannot justify any relationship. When Rani proves her
sanctity through snake ordeal, Appanna accepts Rani and her child knowing
that it is not his child. He subdues and becomes a devoted husband.

Here society and social relationships are also of great importance
because Nag- Mandala is a story of two young persons. Appanna and Rani are
married to each other. When two young persons enter into married life they
have to change themselves. Lot of changes they have to accept. Rani and
Appanna at the beginning are unable to accept the changes. The married
couples have to mold themselves according to the roles appointed for them
by society. These are the social rules that they have to accept and fulfill.
Hence, sometimes they have to make adjustments with the follies of each
other. At the end, Appanna is fully aware of the fact that he is not the father
of Rani’s child, accepts her. Here, the society makes him realize his
responsibilities or we can say force him to fulfill his duties as a husband and as
a father. They both work together in the interest of the family and society by
keeping away their personal feelings, dreams and desires.
When we think about the relationship of Rani and Naga, he is other man for her but she is unaware of it. Naga is more caring than Appanna. Due to the influence of the root he falls in love with Rani but his attitude is very gentle. He slowly makes his advances towards her. First he tries to make her comfortable in his company because she is afraid of her husband.

Naga: I will go and sit there. Away from you. Will you at least sit then?

(Karnad 19)

He wins her confidence, asks about her parents and tries to make her speak frankly.

Naga:... Good, Relax. Tell me about your parents. What did all of you talk about? Did they pamper you tell me everything --- (Karnad 21)

He makes her realize that he will not come close to her until she allows him. Here, the decision is dependent on Rani only.

Naga: No, let’s say, the husband decides on the night visits. And the wife decides on the night visits. So I won’t come at night if you don’t want me too. (Karnad 22)

The gentleness and warmth of Naga makes her happy in his company. She does not realize what Naga is doing to her until he completes love-making. He cures her of her frigidity and cares her like parent.

Violence

Psychological, physical and verbal violence is seen in the play. From the day, Rani comes with Appanna she is neglected by him. He has assigned duties to her which she completes. She even does not get time to enjoy the company of Appanna as Most of his time he spends out of his house. Though married, Rani is not mentally matured and hence, she still needs the parental care and affection from her husband. But Appanna does not realize it. Rani is locked for the whole day and so unable to understand Appanna’s behavior. She goes through psychological stress and alone in the house, she creates a make-believe world in which she escapes. In the fantasy world, eagle takes
her to a new world where her parents wait for her and they caress her.

Rani: ‘where are you taking me? And the eagle answers: ‘Beyond the seven seas seven isles. On the seventh island is a magic garden and in that garden stands the tree of emeralds. Under that tree, your parents wait for you.’ So Rani says: ‘Do they? Then please, please take me to them–immediately. Here I come.’ So the Eagle carries her clear across the seven seas…. (Karnad 7)

Rani feels that she sleeps with her Parents at night because she is very afraid of being alone at night, she even tells about the fear to Kurudavva.

Rani: Then Rani’s parents embrace her and cry. They kiss her and caress her. At night she sleeps between them. So she is not frightened any more. Don’t worry, they promise her. ‘We won’t let you go away again ever!’….. (Karnad 7)

When Kurudavva and Kappanna come to meet Rani, Appanna realizes it. So he brings a dog at first so that no intruder will come there. But Naga kills the dog. Then Appanna brings a mongoose. It only can live for one day because Naga kills it also. Mongoose seems to be given better fight than Naga because after that fight for fifteen days Naga does not come to meet Rani due to the wounds.

When Naga comes to meet Rani in the form of Appanna, Rani cannot believe it. She feels that she is gone mad or she has seen a kind of dream. The reason is Appanna who comes in the day and Appanna who comes at night have a lot of difference and it is almost difficult to understand and believe that one can have such a dual nature.

Rani: (To herself) His visit last night-- I assumed I must have dreamt that. I am certainly not dreaming now. Which means I am going mad. Spending the whole day myself is rotting my brain. (Karnad 22)

Though she gets puzzled by the behavior of her husband, she never asks him any question because his love and care was enough for her. When
Appanna comes to know about the pregnancy of Rani, he hits her.

Appanna: I swear to you I am not my father’s son if I don’t abort that bastard!

Smash it into dust! Right now –(Drags her into the street. Picks up a huge stone to throw on her. The cobra moves forward, hissing loudly, drawing attention to itself. Rani screams.) (Karnad 33)

He uses very disgraceful language because his male ego cannot tolerate Rani’s adultery.

Appanna: Aren’t you ashamed to admit it, you harlot? I locked you in, and yet you managed to find a lover! Tell me who it is. Who did you go to with your sari off? (Karnad 33)

Or

Appanna: Open the door! Open the door- you whore! All right then, I’ll show you. I’ll go to the village Elders. If they don’t throw that child into boiling oil and you along with it, my name is not Appanna. (Karnad 33)

When Rani tells Naga about her being pregnant she receives a cold response from him which she has never expected. It becomes now the question of her child and hence she courageously asks him about his changing behaviour. She feels helpless.

Rani: .... Why don’t you take it on trust that I have a mind and explain this charade to me? Why do you play these games? Why do you change like a chameleon from day to night? Even if I understood a little, a tiny bit--- I could bear it. But now – something I feel my head is going to burst! (Karnad 32)

Till the Snake ordeal takes place, Rani goes through psychological and emotional trauma. The situation is much more complex and delicate for Rani because now, it is not the question of only hers but of her child and her social status as a woman. She asks him

Rani: Why are you humiliating me like this? Why are you stripping me in front of the whole village! Why don’t you kill me instead? I would have killed
myself. But there’s not even a rope in this house for me to use. (Karnad 33)

It seems that the situation becomes more incomprehensible for her and she is tired of it.

**Myth**

The play *Nag-Mandala* is based on two oral folk tales from Karnataka. Karnad has heard them from Prof. A.K. Ramanujan, his friend and guru. Though not exactly mentioned which these tales are, it seems that the first one is in which the Cobra can assume the form of man at night and visits a married woman. Second is the belief that a night long vigil in a temple can ward off death.

Prof. A.K. Ramanujan has collected many folk tales and their variants. They exist in different regions and in different versions in our country. Through the folk tales mostly the male unconscious fears and wishes are represented. Woman’s feelings and experiences do not get adequate expression in the tales. Hence, it becomes difficult to understand the psychology of women. According to Karnad, women tell these stories to their children while patting them to bed or while doing household work. In the presence of children and women, they gave expression with their own point of view which otherwise remains unrecognized. According to Girish Karnad, “These stories represent a distinctly woman understanding of the reality abound her, a lived counterpoint to the patriarchal structures of classical texts and institutions.” (Karnad 17)

The title of play is based on Naga (Snake). In Hindu mythology, Naga represents several images. In south India, many houses have their shrines which have a grove reserved for snakes where there are lots of trees. Snake symbolizes strength of man. They are sometimes portrayed as handsome man as half man and half Cobra, it is considered/ believed that they can assume the form of any man or woman. Many people worship Naga (snake),
as well as the people believe that snake/Cobra can fulfill the wishes of the people. In the play also, Rani, neglected by her husband Appanna, gets everything which she would never have expressed openly. She gets a devoted husband, a son and a lifelong maid. It is due to her lover (Naga) who fulfills all her wishes and leaves her life when she becomes happy with her husband Appanna.

Due to this interesting story, the Sutradhara also remains awake for the whole night and saves his life. Now, he has to pass the story on according to his promise made to the ‘story’. It also shows that an artist is bound to represent his art as well as the tradition of storytelling from generation to generation to be carried out. Many devices used in folk tale or mythic patterns are included in the play e.g. supernatural elements, superhuman qualities, magic elements i.e. paste of root, extraordinary ordeals etc. All these elements help in increasing the reader’s interests, as well as they are the need of folk tales.

Plot

The play Nag-Mandala is based on two folktales. It starts with a prologue where a story-teller is in a ruined temple alone. There is not even a statue of any God or Goddess. A mendicant has told the story-teller that if he wants to save his life then he has to remain awake for a whole night in the month. The whole month has passed away and that is the last night. The Sutradhara when asks the reason, the mendicant informs him that he has written plays and due to them the people are changed. In this way, he has offended the sleep of mass people which in turn becomes the curse of death for him.

At the same time some flames enter there in the temple and start chatting and giggling when a new flame enters. She tells the story of an old woman and story which has escaped from the mouth of the old woman. Story enters there and starts telling a story of a girl named Rani. Rani, Rani’s
husband Appanna and Naga and these are the three main characters in the story. It is a story in which Rani is neglected by her husband, due to magical root Naga (Snake) falls in love with her and comes to meet her every night in the form of Appanna, she becomes pregnant and she has proved her sanctity by Snake ordeal.

In *Nag-Mandala* also, there is ‘play within- a play’ like *The Fire and The Rain*. The two plots are connected to each other, beautifully interwoven by the playwright. Both the plots are complete and interesting. The elements of surprise and suspense are induced in the play. There are two ends to the play. First told by the ‘story’ and second suggested by the playwright/storyteller because he finds some lose ends in the play. The story of Rani dramatizes man’s attitudes towards women in the patriarchal system. Lack of trust, infidelity, lack of communication all these are the reasons of breaking families. The play shows the importance of family, marriage and society. The story of Sutradhara shows that an artist has no other choice than presenting his art. It is a question of life and death for him.

**Action**

Girish Karnad by his own outstanding dramatic genius has emerged as the most significant playwright of the post – independence Indian literature. Many critics have appreciated him for his plot construction, characterization, song, spectacle, symbolism, use of myths and folk tales, reinterpretation of history, technical innovations and so on. There is pervasive and profound concern for man in Karnad’s plays. He does not believe that the world has been created for man to conquer and abuse it. Karnad aims at an ecological vision in which man and all creatures as well as inanimate objects would leave in coexistence. He has returned to the past mythical, historical and oral tales for his themes as well as characters and situations. In *Yayati*, he has used Adiparva as the source and for his play *The Fire and the Rain* he uses Vanaparva.
Characterization

In this play, there are only five characters amongst them Rani, Naga and Appanna are the major characters.

Characters

Rani

Rani is the heroine of the play. She is very innocent girl. She represents traditional Indian bride. Though Rani reaches puberty she is still like a child and seeks the love and affection of her parents. Her husband cannot emotionally or morally support her. She cannot understand the nature of her husband. She is an obedient wife and hence though Appanna behaves rudely with her, she never thinks of harming him. She represents an ideal wife. She believes in the values associated with the idea of ideal wife. She believes in the institution of marriage and though being afraid goes through snake ordeal to prove her innocence and chastity. She is a kind of wife who if needed can end her life but do not cause any disgrace or harm to her husband.

Gradual progress in the character of Rani is found. At the start she is a meek girl, then becomes discerning wife and at the end, comes forward as a caring mother. When Rani expects a child, she becomes brave and confident and shows the courage to go through any test. Simplicity, devotion, sacrifice, faith, tolerance are the characteristics of Rani.

Naga

It is a very complex character. Naga is the snake god of Hindus and the story of Naga is based on the folk tale regarding the snake god. The tale has as nearly as forty variants. It is believed that he grants all the wishes of his devotees. He is capable of assuming any form of man and woman at his will. In the play also he grants all the wishes of Rani, his beloved. With love, care, affection and tact he cures the frigidity of Rani. It is because of Naga that she gets everything which she never expresses before anyone openly. She gets a
loving, caring and devoted husband, a son and her husband’s concubine becomes her servant for life time. Appanna’s heart also gets filled with love, respect for Rani. Compared to the other characters Naga attains a much higher status and respect in the minds of reader. Naga protects Rani and fulfills the duties of a husband. The society accepts Rani due to Naga only and at the end sacrifices his love for the sake of Rani. Once she starts living a happy married life, he withdraws from her life. Naga shows that love does not mean self-seek ing or self possessing but it means giving something. When he feels pangs of love for her and wants possess her, realizes that it is wrong. She is a human being and so she will spend her life with a human being. He sacrifices his love to ensure her a normal conjugal life. As there are two ends—first the end of the story and second end told by the Sutradhara. The first end is told by the story. Naga gives everything to Rani and Rani gives him the honor of being father of her child. It is whether because she comes to know the reality or in the sense of gratitude is not clearly stated.

Rani: We are not important. But our son is the blossom of our family. He has been saved. He has been given the gift of life by the Cobra, as by a father. (Karnad 44)

In the second end told by Sutradhara, Rani saves the life of Naga, gives him shelter in her long tresses. In the words of Santosh Gupta,

“The danger to male authority as a husband and patriarch lives on constantly, at close quarters, but mostly within the woman’s imagination. The dutiful and loyal wife may observe the social & moral code entirely. Yet within her life the memories of the perfect lover who had given her first emotional and erotic experience.” (254)

Rani during her relationship with snake lover realizes the meaning of love. So, the character of Naga is very mystic but at the same time very interesting and enlightening also.
Appanna

Appanna is husband of Rani. Appanna means any man or we can say everyman. His parents are no more and he is their only son. He gets married to Rani and brings her home when she reaches to womanhood but deprives her of her rights of love, care and affection. He shows male sense of superiority. He has an extra-marital relationship but does not feel ashamed of it.

Khatri C.L. writes, “He is an epitome of male assumption of keeping full control over the body, sexuality and virtue of woman through the misuse of institution of marriage and family.” (Khatri C.L. 78)

But after the snake ordeal the situation completely changes and the indifferent husband is subdued. Transformation takes place. He forgets his ego and knowing that he is not father of her child, gives her respect and honor. He compromises with the society and rules of society.

Kurudavva

She is a blind woman but plays a significant role in Nag-Mandala. Her connection with Rani is that she is the friend of Appanna’s mother and hence, mother like and the other connection, she gives Rani a magical root so that Appanna will get attracted to her and she will win her husband from the concubine, but events take place in a different way and Naga falls in love with Rani.

She is the first one to talk affectionately to Rani. She cares for her and hence gives the magical root but events take place in such a way that Kurudavva has never expected and she never comes to know because she is in the grief of losing her son.

Kappanna

Kappanna is the son of Kurudavva, the blind woman. Kappanna means dark one. By complexion, Kappanna is very fair but she names him Kappanna because she is blind and in her world there is only darkness. He is haunted by
the specter of a woman, whether she is a snake woman, Nagakanya village
girl or Yakshi or anyone else, no one knows Kappanna comes into Kurudavva’s
life, due to the magical power and with the magical force, mysteriously he
disappears from her life.

As Santosh Gupta has interpreted it,

“He was pursuing his dream of a beautiful woman. Though he resisted
the alluring voice and presence of the dream girl, trying to be dutiful son and
carried his old mother on his back, finally he is pulled away when the dreams
became too powerful. Rani has gone through these new desires, the day
dreaming and fantasizing about love and she understands their power over
other social and moral duties.” (Gupta 254)

Kappanna’s sudden disappearance raises the curiosity of the readers
but as the story tells it is the story of Rani and not of Kurudavva and
Kappanna.

Language

The play moves at a fast pace. Simple English has been used by
Karnad. The dialogues are very clear and language used by the playwright
suits to the rustic folk tale. Symbolism is used in the play but the language
used do not cause any harm to it.

Figurative language has been used by Karnad when he describes Rani.

“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.”

Here simile has been used by Karnad. In the same way when
Kurudavva describes her, she says,

“... Ayyo! How beautiful you are. Ears like hibiscus. Skin like young
mango leaves, Lips like rolls of silk. How can that Appanna gallivant around
leaving such loveliness wasting away at home.” (Karnad 11)

As well as when Rani goes for the snake ordeal, the language of Rani
saves her and her child’s life. The result could have been different if the
words are not used in the way.
Rani: Since coming to this village. I have held by this hand, only two.
Appanna: (Triumphant) There. She admits it. Two she says Two! Who are they?
Rani: My husband and....
Appanna: And-say it, who else?
Rani: And this Cobra.

(Suddenly words pour out.)
Yes, my husband and this king Cobra. Except for these two. I have not touched any one of the male sex. Nor have I allowed any other male to touch me. If I lie, let the Cobra bite me. (Karnad 39)

Here, the skillfully used language becomes the saviour of Rani. If she had made any mistake, then he snake would have bitten her.

The play starts in a ruined temple where the Sutradhara tells the audience about his predicament. Meanwhile some flames come there and start gossiping. A new flame enters there and narrates the story of an old couple. It is a story of revenge by the story and song.

“My mistress, the old woman, knows a story and a song. But all these years she has kept them to herself, never told the story nor sung the song. So the story and the song were being chocked imprisoned inside her.... The moment her mouth opened, the story and the song jumped out and hid in the attic.... The story took the form of a young woman and the song becomes sari.” (Karnad 4)

Here, the flames metaphorically represent women of the village who have gathered in the temple to tell tale and sing songs. The story as a woman wraps the song i.e. sari and comes out of the room of the old woman’s husband’s room and so takes the revenge. It shows that if the folk tales are to be kept alive then the tradition of passing on the tales from the one who possess it to the listener is to be kept alive. _Nag- Mandala_ indirectly suggests
that song is an integral part of any story as well as if someone knows a story, and then he must tell it to someone else. The song which is titled “Songs of the Flames” has been used by the playwright when Rani and Naga come close to each other and the love making starts. It is used twice in Act II.

**Songs**

**Song of the Flames**

Come let us dance
Through the weaver bird’s nest
And light the hanging lamps
Of glow worms
Through the caverns in the ant hill
And
Set the diamond
In the cobra’s crown ablaze
Through the blind woman’s dream
Through the deaf mute’s song
Come let us flow
Down the tresses of time
All light and song. (Karnad 30)

In this play, Karnad exposes the male chauvinism as well as oppression and injustice done to them under patriarchal structure. It can be seen as a feminist play with a difference. Khatri C.L. says, “I call it a feminist because it raises feminist issue- child marriage, exploitation of wife at the hands of husband, double standard of the society as well as of the law operating in it. Again it exposes effectively the hollowness and injustice of patriarchal family system.” (Khatri 68)

Girish Karnad suggests that development and empowerment of women is necessary for social transformation. The play shows the importance of emancipation and empowerment of women.
Girish Karnad has been recognized nationally and internationally as one of the pre-eminent playwrights in contemporary India. He has served as the Director of the film and television institute of India, chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akadamy and director of the Nehru Centre, London. He is an awardee of Jnanpith, India’s highest distinction for lifetime contribution to literature and the arts.

Girish Karnad uses history and historical characters in order to comment on the contemporary situation of India. Karnad writes in the preface of his play, “I wrote *Tale-Danda* in 1989 when the ‘Mandir’ and the ‘Mandal’ movements were beginning to show again how relevant the questions posed by these thinkers were for our age. The horror of subsequent events and the religious fanaticism that has gripped our national life today have only proved how dangerous it is to ignore the solutions they offered.” (Girish Karnad’s Preface of the play *Tale-Danda*)

When Babari Mosque was demolished by Hindu people, the Indian philosophers, literary figures and people who believed in Indian culture were disturbed. It was a great blot on India’s history. The foundation of Indian society is based on the caste system in it. Manchi Sarat Babu writes, “The Hindu society consists of four recognized classes called ‘varnas’ and one unrecognized class called ‘avarnas.’ They are Brahmans (priests, poets, teachers and ministers), kshatriyas (kings and warriors), Vaishyas (tradesmen), Shudras (craftsmen) and the Panchamas (menial workers). Shudras and Panchamas toil and produce wealth which people of higher classes enjoy. According to a Hindu myth, the four recognized classes emanated from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet of Brahma, the God of Creation respectively. Such myths and literature created and perpetuated by Brahmans, seek to justify the social hierarchy and sanction their superiority.” (M. Sarat Babu 45)
Though India is divided into many religions, castes and creeds, all Indians live together happily. India is known for her secularism. But the demolition of Babari Mosque raised certain questions in the minds of Indian secular thinkers. Some peculiar traits in Hinduism disturbed the thinkers and in order to react against these traits in fifth and sixth century B.C. Jainism and Buddhism were established. In the same way in 12th century Lingayatism was established by Basavanna (Basaveshwar). This movement drew all sections of society in its hold including Brahmans to cobblers. *Tale-Danda* tells the story of a community settled in a small kingdom in the 12th century. While introducing the play Karnad explained that the specific year he has concentrated on is 1168 A.D. The year marks the ascendance of Basavanna; a saintly person involved in Bhakti movement in Karnataka. He was the spiritual leader of his followers. And the followers of Basavanna are called ‘Sharanas’.

Basavanna’s appeal and his secular teachings encouraged more and more people and they turned to his devotees. The meaning of *Tale-Danda* is the death by separating the head from body because Tale is equal to head and Danda is equal to punishment. In Karnataka, there is a custom to sacrifice the head to the God after fulfilling the goal or as a punishment. (In *Hayavadana*, Devdutta and Kapila sacrifice their heads). Basavanna in his speech always says that he will sacrifice his head. So the title is dedicated to Basavanna’s pledge. The central characters of the play are Jagadeva and Basavanna around whom the play moves. Jagadeva is highly influenced with the philosophy of Basavanna and he is practicing it in his real life though his parents do not like it. He has friendship with Mallibomma who is a son of a tanner, Kariya. In the traditional society not only his father but other members of the society object his friendship with Mallibomma and the tanner boy’s entry in a Brahmin house. But Jagadevaa takes his friend to his house.
Jagadevaa: This is my friend Mallibomma. He is the son of a tanner. And I am taking him inside our house. Are you satisfied? Come on, Mallibomma.

(Karnad 10)

Jagadevaa has become a staunch follower of Basavanna and follows the philosophy of the Sharanas. He is not worried about his father’s illness and he has physically as well as mentally sacrifices his family life. Jagadevaa has come to see his father Sambashiva Shastri who is on his death-bed. Shastri is, though on death-bed, worried about his post-death ceremonies. He tells the people to attend to his wife’s hair and her head has to be shaved closely. His son should be there for the cremation.

Sovidevaa, the son of King Bijjala goes to the treasury in order to audit the accounts of the treasury. Sovidevaa wants his rights because his step brothers have received their claims but he has not been given anything. Sovidevaa’s checking of accounts of treasury is disliked by Bijjala. He calls his son, a son of a whore. He beats his son as the punishment for his deed. He even tells the maid Eeravva to bring a sari and blouse piece for his son. He holds his wife Rambhavati responsible for turning him into a royal eunuch.

Bijjala believes in the faithfulness of Basavanna. He trusts his loyalty. On the counterpart Bijjala hates his son and treats him like an enemy. He tests the skills of his son by using the parameter of Kallappa. Bijjala blames Rambhavati for giving birth to a rat like Sovidevaa.

The play *Tale-Danda* is based on the caste system in India. Bijjala is all the time aware of his origin as he himself is coming from barber community. Through Bijjala, Karnad comments on casteism in India.

Bijjala:….. One’s caste is like the skin on one’s body. You can peel it off top to toe, but when the new skin forms, there you are again: a barber – a shepherd – a scavenger! …. (Karnad21)

Bijjala likes Basavanna because it is Basavanna who treats him as a human being. Because he wants to eradicate the caste-structure, wipe it off
the face of the earth and annihilate the Varna system.

Basavanna gathers the people from all the community and he has established an ism based on equality of all the castes and creed. Basavanna has composed a verse –

Do not steal.
Do not kill.
Do not ever lie.
Do not rage….. (Karnad 21)

Though Basavanna’s philosophy is based on casteless society, Bijjala is worried about its future.

Bijjala:..... Birth, caste and creed mean nothing to you. But don’t you delude yourself about your companions, friend. If you really free them from the network of brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, uncles and second cousins, and let them loose in a casteless society, they will merely sputter about like a pile of fish on the sands and die!.... (Karnad 27)

The people of Kalyan have started believing in the miracles of Basavanna and they visit him and request him to help them to tackle with the problems they are facing. People have started believing in Basavanna as the incarnation of Lord Shiva. Day-by-day the number of followers of Basavanna is increasing. As Basavanna has started the ‘Bhakti Movement’ the fire sacrifices and animals slaughtering before many gods have been stopped. Basavanna believes in the philosophy of non-violence and he dislikes the treatment given by his followers to the Jains. In Basavanna’s house many devotees gather.

Manchanna:..... Food for all the devotees that flock there, day and night.

Gifts. Clothes. How can he afford such lavish hospitality? His affluence is a source of dismay to the whole city. (Karnad 31)

The influence of Basavanna on Sharnas is increased to such an extent that they say “.... Basav is Shiva! Shiva is Basav!” (Karnad 33)
Basavanna is not against the religious rituals which are to be observed after the death of someone. Jagadevaa, though he is a sharan observes all the rights and rituals which are to take place after death of his father. Jagadevaa suspects Basavanna’s intentions and he even claims that though he works very seriously for the upliftment of Sharanas, the credit goes only to Basavanna. He calls Basavanna as a manipulator.

Jagadevaa:.... You are a manipulator. A clever, conniving, trickster. (Karnad 38)

But Basavanna places his palm on his head and asks him to utter a mantra Om Namah Shivaya. The people of Kalyan love Basavanna to such an extent that when they come to visit Basavanna and cannot meet him so they throw stones at Jagadevaa’s house.

The action of the play moves faster when the issue of the marriage of Sheelavanta, a cobbler boy with a Brahmin girl, Kalavati. The marriage is based on the philosophy of Sharanas which is based on casteless system. So there is no question of ‘Anuloma’ (hypogamous) – the higher caste man marring a lower caste woman; and ‘Pratiloma’ (hypergamous) – a marriage of lower Varna man with a higher Varna woman. But in the traditional society Pratiloma marriage is not tolerated and most of the time that ‘woman’ is ex-communicated from the society. The parents of bride and bridegroom are Sharanas. Sheelavanta, though a cobbler’s son, is a virtuous boy and Kalavati loves him. But the cultures of two persons are quite different. Kalavati cannot tolerate the smell of the tanned skin which is used for making shoes. When the issues are taken to the Basavanna, he suggests them to think about the matter seriously. He says, “The orthodox will see this mingling of castes as a blow at the very roots of the Varnashram dharma. Bigotry has not faced such a challenge in two thousand years. I need hardly describe what venom will gush out, what hatred will erupt once the news spreads.” (Karnad 45)

It is difficult for Basavanna to accept the radical change in the society
because in his opinion, they have ‘a long way to go’ and in the name of Sanatan religion, a lot of bloodshed will be there if they take a revolutionary step. After a long discussion as a Sharan boy is marring another sharan girl, Basavanna gives permission. When Bijjala comes to know about the marriage, he suggests Basavanna to stop the marriage. He threatens Basavanna, Bijjala: You know perfectly well the higher castes will not take this lying down. The wedding pandal will turn into a slaughterhouse. The streets of Kalyan will reek of human entrails. (Karnad 55)

Basavanna is not afraid of the threat given by the King and the marriage takes place.

Sovidevaa with the help of the cunning plans of Damodara Bhatt commits treachery with his father Bijjala and mother RambHAVATI. And they are put in a closed chamber. Before putting Bijjala in a closed room, Sovidevaa even kicks Bijjala. On the other hand, the wedding of Sheelavanta and Kalavati takes place because King Bijjala has not paid any attention to the marriage. Basavanna knows this and he expresses his thankfulness to the king. But other Sharanas are astonished with the reaction of Basavanna. He suspects that Bijjala is expelled from his throne and treacherous Sovidevaa has become the king. The mad Sovidevaa who is too angry with the marriage starts atrocities on the helpless people of Kalyan. The king’s soldiers arrest Haralayya and Madhuvarasa and take them to the city-square and pluck their eyes with iron-rods, bind their hands and feet to elephant’s legs and drag them through the streets. Sheelavanta’s mother, after seeing her husband’s body runs down the street screaming. Sovidevaa uses his power to do injustice to the sharnas. They are like Jagadevaa, Mallibomma, Rachappa, and Kalayya attack the palace. Jagadevaa stabs king Bijjala and later he kills himself.

In Tale-Danda, Karnad comments on socio-religious issues as well as on interpersonal relationships in a family. In a secular country like India, the
society is divided into many castes, creeds and religions. Karnad is aware of the fact that not only religion but also the caste system is a threatening fabric in Indian society. In the play Tale-Danda, Karnad concentrates on the family relationship also. Jagadevaa is much more worried about the movements of Basavanna than his father’s illness. Though his father is on death-bed he is involved in Sharana’s movement. But when his father dies, he observes all the post-death rituals by inviting Brahmans to his house. As a son, he involves himself in post-death rituals such as shaving his head, wearing religious thread and recitation of mantras. Jagadevaa is the only son of Sambashiva Shastri and he is involved in a movement in which all the castes and creeds are equally treated. He is the representative of Brahman class. The Sharana’s movement started demolishing the social deformity of Hindu society. Jagadevaa is concerned more with Sharanas than his family members.

Rambhavati, one of the favourite queens of King Bijjala is a princess of the Hoysala Dynasty and Sovidevaa is her only son. Bijjala feels grateful to Basavanna and his followers because Bijjala is a barber by caste and it is Basavanna and his men who treat Bijjala as a human being.

Bijjala:….. In all my sixty-two years, the only people who have looked me in the eye without a reference to my lowly birth lurking deep in their eyes are the sharnas: Basavanna and his men…. (Karnad 21)

Bijjala knows that people of higher caste do not respect him properly. He loves his son Sovidevaa but detests his unprincely behaviour. He favors the sons of his other wives, local lords but does not consider Sovidevaa for any title. Sovidevaa resends this greatly. The approach of Bijjala and that of Sovidevaa to Basavanna are quite different. Sovidevaa is not happy with Basavanna and he dislikes his philosophy. As a lot of money is spent on the hospitality to guests by Basavanna, Sovidevaa suspects that Basavanna has stolen money from the royal treasury. But he fails. When Bijjala comes to know that Sovidevaa has suspected Basavanna and check the accounts for
eleven days, Bijjala is very angry with Sovidevaa and he beats his son.

As a reaction to the treatment given by Bijjala, Sovidevaa commits treasury and puts his own father and mother in a closed part of the palace. A son takes revenge on his father by committing treachery and becoming a king. He even kicks his father. At last Bijjala is killed and Sovidevaa is declared as the king of his land. Not only Sharanas but foreigners and free thinkers are also expelled from the land. He becomes the soul-king of Kalyan.

Sovidevaa:….. From this moment all Sharanas, foreigners, and free thinkers are expelled from this land on pain of death. Women and the lower orders shall live within the norms prescribed by our ancient tradition, or else they’ll suffer like dogs. Each citizen shall consider himself a soldier ready to lay down this life for the king. For the king is God incarnate! (Karnad 101)

Gangambika is Basavanna’s wife and all the time she supports Basavanna in his movements. Whereas Savitri, Jagadevaa’s wife is worried about Jagadevaa all the time.

Many people of Kalyan are turned into strong supporters of Basavanna. They have forgotten their castes and creeds and they are ready to do anything for Basavanna. For Sharanas, ‘God is Basav and Basav is God!’ The intricate relationship in between Basavanna and his followers is like of Guru and Shishya relationship. Even King Bijjala supports the movement of Basavanna by not taking action against him. Bijjala’s son Sovidevaa imprisons his father in the palace whereas it is Basavanna who tries to rescue king Bijjala from the hands of his own son.

The Sharanas have changed their behaviour due to the influence of Basavanna. The downtrodden have changed their lifestyle. Though the lifestyle of these persons is changed, certain questions remain unanswered. In *Tale-Danda* Haralayya, a cobbler, says, “My wife and I became ‘Sharans’ gave up meat and alcohol and our ancient gods. Now when our children ask
us: ‘Why then are we still stitching the same old scraps of leather?’ What can I answer? If my son decides to change his vocation will the weavers accept him? Will the potters open their ranks?’ (Karnad 48)

In Karnad’s plays, the interpersonal relationships are not based only on the sex of the person but also on the caste of the person. Vanashree Tripathi writes, “Basavanna’s followers desiring an immediate overthrow of values entrenched in the Hindu laws erected by Manu centuries ago fail to understand his doubts.” (Vanashree Tripathi 97)

**Power Politics**

Girish Karnad, after his *Tughlaq* wrote this play *Tale-Danda* which is based on power-politics. The play is based on the historical background of India. Indian society is divided into many religions and castes. The division of the society into four classes has helped the Brahmans and kshatriyas to overpower the other classes. In *Tale-Danda*, Bijjala is the king but he is aware that he belongs to lower class. His birth in a barber community disturbs him.

Bijjala:….. For ten generations my fore fathers ravaged the land as robber barons. For another five they ruled as the trusted feudatories of the Emperor himself. They married into every royal family in sight. Bribed generations of Brahmans with millions of cows. All this so they could have the caste of kshatriyas branded on their foreheads.” (Karnad21)

Bijjala supports Basavanna but Basavanna’s Sharan movement is disliked by Sovidevaa, Damodara Bhatt and Manchanna Kramita and other Brahmins. Bijjala’s treatment disturbs Sovidevaa as he is not treated by his father just like he treats his step-brothers. Sovidevaa is hearted for his father and his love for power makes him to avenge his father and puts him in the prison. Once he gets the power he uses it for crushing down the movements started by Sharanas. He gives orders to use the force in a vehement way to crush the Sharanas.

Basavanna and Bijjala try to use their power for the upliftment of the
Sharans and of the untouchables because anyone, belonging to any class, any religion, any caste, and any creed can join and participate in the activities run by Sharans. The very principle theory on which the movement is based is equality, and all are treated equally. Every Sharan has given power to participate in the discussion. In the article ‘Tale-Danda, Evils of Varnashram’, Vanashree Tripathi writes, “as the court politics grows deeper and more sinister, in the contest for power, Kramita proves himself to be unscrupulously Machiavellian. He beats the more conscientious Bhatt in taking charge of the situation. At the most opportune moment he puts forward a strong argument in favor of striking fear in the masses by annihilating the entire community of Sharanas. With cold calculated cynicism, he determinedly goes ahead with the programme that he recalls had precedence in history”. (Vanashree Tripathi 100)

Violence

In Girish Karnad’s plays violence is one of the significant aspects dealt at various levels. The title of the play Tale-Danda itself suggests the violence. The demolishing of Babari-mosque created darkness in the minds of sensitive people. It challenged the secularism of India. The consequences of demolishing of Babari-mosque were the bomb blasts in Mumbai. The institution of caste, independent of the government is a powerful factor in the survival of Hinduism. During 1168 in the city of Kalyan a man called Basavanna assembled a group of poets, mystiques, social revolutionaries and philosophers. Basavanna’s contribution to society can be compared with that of Swami Ramanand Tirth and Saint Kabir. These persons established their own sect in order to abolish caste among their followers. In order to comment on the Post-Babari issue Karnad takes the help of history and he uses Basavanna’s characters from history as his mouthpiece. The Varnashram system is part of Indian society. One who tries to make the experiments with the traditional system he is punished severely.
The reason behind the violence in *Tale-Danda* is the marriage in between a Brahmin Sharan girl and a cobbler sharan boy. This wedding leads the society to a great violence because the in charge King Sovidevaa and his assistants like Damodara Bhatt and Manchanna Kramita dislike the decision. The Sharanas challenge the traditional varnashram system whereas Damodarbhatta, Sovidevaa and other Brahmins are the supporters of this system. Damodarbhatta embodies the doctrine of the exclusive superiority of the Brahmins. He could never compromise with the idea of mingling of the lower castes with the upper.

Damodara: Indrani, the Rig Veda tells us that the four varnas flowed out of the Primordial man the Brahmin from the head, the shudra from the feet. So what we have here in this wedding is the desecration of the body of that purusha. (Karnad 63)

The philosophy of Damodara irritates Sovidevaa and he tries to trash the Sharanas who are following Basavanna’s principles. Gundanna narrates, “It’s harrowing! A while ago-the king’s soldiers arrested Haralayya and took him to the city square. They also brought Madhuvarasa there – And then – then – as the city watched –they plucked their eyes out –Plucked out their eyes with iron rods –bound them hand and foot and had them dragged through the streets –tied to elephants’ legs –Ayyo! How can I tell you? –Torn limbs along the lanes, torn entrails, flesh, bones –They died screaming!” (Karnad 90)

Power is also the reason behind violence in *Tale –Danda*. Sovidevaa wants power, so he puts his parents imprisoned in the palace. He even beats his father which is his avenge on his father because he was beaten by Bijjala when he checked the Basavanna’s accounts of treasury.

Every full night, Goddess Dyamavva of the Banyan Tree speaks through Haralayya’s mother. She has said rivers of blood will flow if the marriage takes place, human limbs will rot in the streets. To believe in such things may
be a superstition but the same thing takes place in the play.

Jagadevaa, a Brahmin turn into a sharan, rages a war against the king and his followers. At last we find that he stabs king Bijjala and he plunges the dagger into himself. This is self-sacrifice of Jagadevaa. At last the reign of terror comes to power and Karnad’s play *Tale-Danda* proves that without violence any revolution cannot take place.

**Techniques Used by Karnad in *Tale –Danda***

**Plot**

Karnad while writing *Tale-Danda* was disturbed by the ‘Mandir’ and ‘Mandal’ issues. In Indian Society casteism plays very significant part. Many Saints and Philosophers tried their best to eradicate untouchability from the society. The formation of Buddhism and Jainism is the result of undue practices in Hinduism. Basavanna a twelfth century saint, who is also called as Basaveshwar formed a new sect called Sharanas and many people from the society right from down trodden to Brahmins join the movement.

Mallibomma, Kakkayya, Haralayya, Sheelavanta and other many more persons coming from down trodden class joined the Sharan movement. A Brahman character like Jagadevaa is practicing the philosophy of Sharans in literary way. He is ready to sacrifice his own life for the movement. He is not worried about his family members. He does not care about his old suffering father who is on his death bed.

Sovidevaa, a son king Bijjala dislikes the movements of Sharans. He hates the intercaste marriage of Kalavati and Sheelavanta and with the help of Manchanna Kramita he gives the orders to the Soldiers and crushes down the movement.

The play *Tale-Danda* is a clash in between the traditional orthodox minded people and the people of progressive views like Basavanna who want to establish a society based on secular philosophy.
Action

Karnad has written *Tale-Danda*, a play which is divided only into scenes and not in acts. In the very opening scene, Sambashiva Shastri is on his death bed and calling the name of his son. Jagadevaa’s entry with his friend tanner, Mallibomma indicates that the forthcoming scenes are about the caste system. A type of intensity is raised in the mind of the audience and both of them talk about the movement which Basavanna has started. King Bijjala abuses his son and gives clean chit to Basavanna. The treatment given by the father to son will result into imprisoning of the father by the son. One action is reaction to the other action. Son takes revenge on his father and he does not hesitate and feel shameful for his activity. The marriage in between a Brahman’s girl and a tanner boy is the result of Basavanna’s preaching. But due to this marriage lot of problems arise. Sovidevaa increases atrocities on the people. Haralayya’s and Madhuvarasa’s eyes are taken out; they are tied to the leg of an elephant. The most violent acts are narrated and are not shown on the stage directly but the assassination of king Bijjala by Jagadevaa, the beating of Bijjala to his son Sovidevaa, are shown on the stage. Even the death of Basavanna is shown in symbolic manner on the stage.

Characterization

*Tale-Danda* is a play based on the philosophy of a saint Basavanna. Basavanna wants to create a sect in which all the people of various communities should join. The characters of *Tale-Danda* may be divided into supporters of Basavanna and apposers of Basavanna. Brahmins like Damodara Bhatt, Manchanna Kramita, and Sambashiva Shastri do not like the movement whereas Brahmins like Jagadevaa. Madhuvarasa support the movement most of the people who join the sect are coming from downtrodden class. *Tale-Danda* is a play mainly based on Basavanna’s life, his philosophy and the impact of his philosophy on the society. Karnad has put Basavanna at the centre of the play. With his philosophy even a Brahmin boy like Jagadevaa
and a Brahmin girl like Kalavati are influenced. Jagadevaa has thrown himself into the movement devoted him and he is not worried about his father’s health. It is Jagadevaa who forgets the principle of non-violence taught by Basavanna and kills king Bijjala. He commits suicide. At the same time Basavanna realizes that his movement is failed and he dies heart-broken. King Bijjala compares the character of his son, Sovidevaa with Basavanna. Bijjala is proud of Basavanna. He praises Basavanna and says, “Basavanna wants to eradicate the caste structure, wipe it off the face of the earth. Annihilate the Varna system. What a vision! And what prodigious courage! And he has the ability. Look at those he has gathered around him: poets, mystics, visionaries. And nothing airy-fairy about them, mind you. All hard-working people from the common stock. They sit together, eat together, argue about God together, indifferent to caste, birth or station. And all this is happening in the city of Kalyan –my Kalyan!” (Karnad 21)

Women Characters

Most of women in the play come across as intelligent and sensitive. Rambhavati, king Bijjala’s wife is an affectionate wife and mother and she shares with her husband his concern with the matters concerning the court. Her condition indicates that the woman of higher status or of high-class were still typical, docile, interested in their own business. Her position can be understood from her following words,

Rambhavati: Do as you wish. Just don’t upset your father, that’s all. He Takes out his bad temper on me and I’ve just had enough. (Karnad p.15)

King Bijjala holds Rambhavati responsible for his son’s arrogance and over bearing behaviour. Sovidevaa also treats his wife in a brutal way. He remembers her when it suits him otherwise he spends his days with a prostitute. Lalita, the mother of Kalavati is reluctant to agree to the marriage of her daughter, but her resistance fails because there is no impact of her saying on her husband though her objections are practical and justified.
Savitri, Jagadevaa’s wife is the most tortured and victimized woman in the
play. Jagadevaa does not treat her as a human being. When she visits the
place where Jagadevaa is practicing martial arts, he refuses even to see her
face. Gangambika, Basavanna’s wife is a woman who enjoys a better position
than the other women. As she is socially related to the movement of her
husband she gains love and respect of her husband. Kalavati is a Brahmin girl
who has taken a revolutionary decision to marry a cobbler boy. She cannot
bear the smell of the tanned skin but as she loves Sheelavanta she is ready to
face the consequences which the cobbler’s boy that brings change to the
society. The society cannot change suddenly. Day-by-day, one should hope
that more Kalavatis will take birth and Basavanna’s dreams will come to
reality.

“Women of all strata in Tale-Danda are made to suffer the trauma
resulting from men’s actions. Sapped and Sopped by the callous disregard of
patriarchy their condition clearly indicates the difficulties their gender
encountered in the historical past daring to transcend privately or individually
the mundane, materialistic man-made constructs.” (Vanashree Tripathi 117-
118)

Basavanna’s philosophy of equality has made the untouchables like
Mallibomma, Gundanna, Kalayya, Kakkayya, Haralayya, and Sheelavanta to
participate in the movement. These characters are ready to sacrifice their
own lives for the movement. Karnad while writing the play Tale-Danda uses
different types of techniques to make his play more interesting. As he is
brought up in Karnataka, he is well-acquainted with folks like Yakshagana.
For his themes he either takes the help of history or mythology. In Tale-
Danda he uses the history of Basavanna and comments on the contemporary
issue.
Music

Karnad uses music very aptly in Tale-Danda. When the marriage of Kalavati and Sheelavanta takes place the music of marriage that is wedding music begins to play. But Sovidevaa and Damodara are disturbed with this music. In between eleventh scene and twelfth scene drums are heard in the distance and provide the bridge to the next scene where the intensity of atrocities is increased and a lot of noise is created in order to show the intensity of the violence. In the last scene of the play a lot of drum sound is there in order to show how women and children are given bad treatment by the soldiers and the screams of women and children are heard as drums are beaten more forcefully, screams fill the skies.

Songs

In order to comment on Basavanna’s philosophy Bijjala tells his wife Rambhavati about the song composed by Basavanna. It goes as...

Do not steal.
Do not kill.
Do not ever lie.
Do not rage…. (Karnad p.21)

When Basavanna compares himself with the Sharanas he says,

I don’t have in me
Bhakti enough
To equal a sixth
Of a mustard seed. (Karnad 30)

It indicates that Basavanna compares himself to the sharnas and in his opinion Sharanas have more bhakti than himself. In the opinion of Basavanna, a temple is only a structure of brick and mortar and it is also a monument to stupidity. He says,

“The rich
Will make temples for Shiva.
What shall I,
A poor man,
Do?
My legs are pillars,
The body the shrine,
The head a cupola
Of gold.
Listen, O lord of the meeting rivers,
Things standing shall fall,
But the moving shall ever stay.”  (Karnad36-37)
King Bijjala tells Basavanna the philosophy of life and he says that this verse is also composed by Basavanna.
“He who runs is not a warrior.
He who begs is not a devotee.
A warrior shouldn’t run.
A devotee shouldn’t beg.
I’ll not run, I’ll not beg,
O lord of the meeting rivers.”  (Karnad 86)
Girish Karnad uses songs wherever he wants to be economical in his expressions. More than that, these songs add aesthetic beauty to the play.

Language

*Tale-Danda* tells the story of a community settled in a small kingdom and the characters presented in the play belong to mofussil area. In the play the characters come from higher class community as well as from lower class. The language used by the outcastes is rather different than the untouchables.

Kalyani: Go on, Sheela, touch their feet. Don’t stand there like a was doll –
Haralayya: He’s grown into a proper buffalo. Still needs to be told everything.
(Karnad p.43)
Sheelavanta: I don’t want to hurt her. Don’t want to ruin her life. They’ll
tease her tomorrow, call her a ‘cobbler’s priestess.’ (Karnad47)

The language used by king Bijjala is not suitable to a king. He uses abusive language and abuses his own son.

“Where is that son of a whore?

“Aren’t you ashamed to hide under a woman’s backside…”

“Eeravva, Sari and a blouse piece for our son”

“You have turned him into a royal eunuch.” (Karnad 17)

Karnad uses Sanskrit also when the king arrives. The description of king is done in Sanskrit.


Karnad is a multi-lingual person and his acquaintance with Sanskrit is manifested in the play. But in case of Basavanna, he has purposely made him to use a common language.

“Basavanna assembled a congregation of poets, mystics, social revolutionaries and philosophers. Together they created an age unmatched in the history of Karnataka for its activity, courageous questioning and social commitment. They believed in the equality of sexes and celebrated hard, dedicated work. They opposed caste system, not just in theory but in practice. They used the language of common man instead of Sanskrit and talked to people about God in the language they could understand. In Kalyan, the sharnas movement gave impetus to Kannand and that further challenged the supremacy of Sanskrit which was the prerogative of the elite.” (Vanashree Tripathi 92)
Varnashram and Tale – Danda

Basavanna (Basaveshwar), a spiritual leader who was social reformer formed sake of Sharanas and thousands of economically oppressed lower castes joined him. Not only lower caste people but also the people from Brahman community joined him. The Indian societies, particularly Hindu people, are divided into four classes. The Brahmans ruled over remaining castes for years together. The division of the property is also based on caste system. Most of the land is owned by the upper class community so the downward community is economically backward. Basavanna started movement for the upliftment or the oppressed people. His happy and secular teachings encourage more and more people to embers the faith of Sharanas. Their prose and increasing fear among the members of upper castes is being overwhelmed. It results into Kalavati; a Brahman daughter is given in marriage to Sheelavanta, a cobbler’s son. This creates an exclusive situation in the society and Sovidevaa, a son of king Bijjala takes advantage of it. He throws his father in prison. Sovidevaa punishes the parents who are responsible for the marriage. Due to this Jagadevaa, Basavanna’s disciple is enraged and decides to take avenge. He kills the imprisoned and helpless king Bijjala and commits suicide. At last Basavanna realizes that the movement that he has started has gone berserk so he dies a broken- hearted man.

The Fire and the Rain

The play The Fire and the Rain is published in 1998. It is a transcreaction of the Kannada play of Girish Karnad’s ‘Agni Mattu Male’. There is a sustained growth found in Karnad’s dramatic production. His performance as playwright goes in an ascending order. When Tughlaq published, it was considered his best play and now The Fire the Rain is called as Karnad’s best play. The play is based on the myth of Yavakri taken from ‘Vanaparva’ (Forest canto) of The Mahabharata. It is a tale told by the ascetic
Lomasha to the Pandavas. *The Fire and the Rain* is symbolic and allegorical play. It dramatically presents the conflict between good and evil. The play is cast into a Hindi feature film, ‘Agnivarsa’. While exploiting myth, his intention does not seem to be to talk about the problem of his age but the problem of human being as a whole. In the play, Karnad has found communion with the past to discuss the present situation of the world. The play deals with the theatre-life, Vedic rituals, tribal life and most importantly man-woman relationship.

The play begins with a prologue, and the play is divided into three acts and ends with an epilogue. The prologue begins with the ritual of a seven year long sacrifice held by the king to propitiate Indra, the God of rains. The King conducts the fire ceremony and as Paravasu is the chief priest of the fire-sacrifice. Politics and power politics pervades in the play. Raibhya and Bharadwaja are brothers. Raibhya has two sons, Paravasu and Arvasu while Bharadwaja has only one son i.e. Yavakri. Raibhya and Bharadwaja, both are learned persons and they both have spiritual powers. Yavakri, wants to take vengeance from the family of Raibhya as he feels his father, Bharadwaja has to lose the recognition and honour that he deserves due to Raibhya and Raibhya’s family. Hence, he goes to the forest to do a penance to gain ‘The Knowledge of Absolute’ from Lord Indra. He returns from the forest after ten years and tells everyone that he has got ‘Universal Knowledge’. But in this gain he has to lose his love that is Vishakha who is now married to Paravasu, Yavakri’s cousin and Raibhya’s son. Due to these reasons he wants to take revenge on Raibhya and his family. With the power of this Knowledge he makes a plan and accordingly molests Vishakha. He also brings the fact to the notice of Raibhya, Arvasu and Paravasu. Raibhya becomes angry and creates the demon Kritya to kill Yavakri. Vishakha tries to save the life Yavakri.

Vishakha: You mustn’t stay here, Yavakri. Go to your father’s hermitage. Immediately. Please!
(No reply)

My father-in-law has found out everything--- and he is bent on destroying you.
(Pause)

Yavakri, he is calling up the kritya---

Yavakri: He is? I am flattered. To invoice the kritya spell is to engage one’s full powers. That he should choose this instrument of death for me. It is certainly an honor.

Vishakha: Go to your place, Yavakri. Father-in-low said you would be safe there. Please. Hurry.

Yavakri: Don’t be afraid, Vishakha, I was expecting something like this. You see this water... I have consecrated it.

(He points to the water in the kamandalu)

A drop of this water and the Brahma Rakshasa will become numb. Powerless. Uncle’s entire threat will turn into a farce. You needn’t have bothered-- but now that you are here, stay and see for yourself. (Karnad 21-22)

The knowledge he gets from Indra becomes the reason of his pride. His comments and his acts show that he believes that now he has the power to challenge anyone, even Raibhya. When Yavakri plans the conspiracy against Raibhya’s family, Vishakha becomes a part of it unknowingly. Paravasu becomes the chief priest of fire sacrifice but his father Raibhya also wants to become the chief priest of the fire-sacrifice. When Paravasu tells Raibhya, king’s preference as a chief priest was only to Raibhya, but because seven years is a long time span and hence they choose Paravasu. Raibhya’s reply is

Raibhya: I see, so you measured my life span, did you- you and your king? Tested the strength of my life line. Well, the sacrifice is almost over and I’m still here. Still here. Alive and kicking. Tell the king I shall outlive my sons. I shall live long enough to feed their dead soul…” (Karnad 29)
Vishakha, daughter-in-law of Raibhya is also aware of the fact that Raibhya wants to become the chief priest. It is reflected through her dialogues.

Vishakha:... Something died inside your father the day the king invited you to be chief priest. He’s been drying up like a dead tree since then. No sap runs in him. (Pause)

On the one hand, there’s his sense of being humiliated by you. On the other hand there is lust. It consumes him. An old man’s curdled lust. And there’s no one else here to take his rage out on but me. (Karnad 32-33)

Even Paravasu kills Raibhya intentionally. He feels that Raibhya has killed Yavakri just to disturb him from the fire sacrifice.

Paravasu:... He deserved to die. He killed Yavakri to disturb me in the last stages of the fire sacrifice. Not to punish Yavakri but to be even with me. I had to attend to him before he went any farther. (Karnad 33)

It shows that, there is an unspoken fight that was going on in between father and son for supremacy.

There is an essential difference between Yavakri and Paravasu. Yavakri wants to please Indra so that he is blessed with Universal Knowledge and he will become supreme in the family. On the other hand, Paravasu being the chief priest of the fire sacrifice not trying to propitiate Lord Indra or seeking blessings from him but wants to show him that he is in equal position with the Lord.

Paravasu: One can practice austerities like you fool, Yavakri, to coerce the gods to bend to one’s will. Stand in a circle of fire. Torture oneself. So many techniques, all equally crass, to make the gods appear. And when they give in, what do you do? Extend the begging bowl: ‘Give us rains. Cattle. Sons. Wealth.’ As though one defined human beings by their begging-- I despise it. I went because the fire sacrifice is a formal rite. Structured. It involves no emotional acrobatics from the participants.
The process itself will bring Indra to me. And if anything goes wrong, there’s nothing the gods can do about it. It has to be set right by a man. That’s why when the moment comes I shall confront Indra in silence. As an equal. For that, it is essential that one shed all human weakness. Be alone. Absolutely on one’s own to face that moment. Become a diamond. Unscratchable. (Karnad 31-32)

Arvasu, simple and innocent person has to go through a lot of difficulties though he never deserves them. He has very simple and straightforward dreams about his future life. Unaware of the politics that is going around him, innocently just for the completion of his duties, he becomes a part of the conspiracies or it would be better to say a victim of the conspiracies. Vishakha and Nittilai both female characters, become victim of male domination. Vishakha has to obey her husband and father-in-law. Nittilai also has to accept the decision of her father. Nittilai suffers from double marginalization on the basis that she is from Shudra caste. It is expected from both of them that they should lead their life according to the will of their father and husbands. They take the control of the life of the female characters. Vishakha who is from a Brahmin family and living amongst the learned person cannot challenge the male domination. She is living a meaningless life. Nittilai’s situation is some what different as she is from hunter family and hence, she has very little chance to challenge male domination. Nittilai has to get married to a hunter boy and Vishakha becomes a kind of instrument in the hands of Yavakri and Paravasu. In the words of Jayalaxmi “one cannot help noting that the male oppressors are all imprisoned in their selves, victims of their own narrow pursuits in life and the women become inevitable victims of power struggle. Hence, Nittilai and Vishakha have little or no option left than to reconcile or challenge that oppression. In the process, both under stably meet with a tragic end.” (Jayalaxmi 255)
There is a touch of jealousy and ego to the power politics that pervades in the play. Though Raibhya, Paravasu and Yavakri are learned one, their condition becomes more and more miserable and wretched towards the end. P. Jayalaxmi writes,

“The nature and purpose of knowledge attained by men like Raibhya, Paravasu and Yavakri leads neither to disciplined life dedicated to common good nor toward the Absolute Brahman. Characters such as they stand as instances of life and energy wasted in pursuit of personal gain.” (Jayalaxmi 257)

Variety of human relationships are seen the play. Raibhya and Bharadwaja both the brothers love their families. Hence, their sons Paravasu, Arvasu and Yavakri are members of a family, but lack of love, respect and understanding is found in their relationships. Bharadwaja becomes happy that Paravasu is selected as the chief priest of the fire sacrifice but Raibhya is not. Raibhya being the father of Paravasu should have proud about his son but the situation is exactly opposite. Raibhya feels it to be a kind of humiliation that he has to face due to Paravasu. On the other hand where Bharadwaja has the greatness to congratulate Paravasu for his success but his son Yavakri feels insulted. He feels it to be a defeat of his father, Bharadwaja. It is his deep love for his father he decides to take revenge on Raibhya and family. Yavakri molests Vishakha, plans conspiracy just for the love for his father. But Paravasu kills Raibhya, his father because he thinks that Raibhya invoked kirtya and kills Yavakri to disturb him. There is a play within-a-play which dramatizes the archetypal fratricidal strife between Indra, Vishwarupa and Vritra. Indra treacherously kills Vishwarupa. These relationships show rivalry between father and son, brother and brother. In The Fire and the Rain complex man-woman relationships are found. Vishakha who is married to Paravasu and lives a blissful life for whole one year but during this period she is used as an instrument for experiment by Paravasu as if she is emotionless
Vishakha: Yes, father was happy. I was married off to Paravasu. I didn’t want to but that didn’t matter. The night of the wedding, my husband said to me: ‘I know you didn’t want to marry me. But don’t worry. I’ll make you happy for a year. And he did. Exactly for one year’. ….. He plunged me into a kind of bliss I didn’t know existed. It was heaven ——-here and now—— at the tip of all my senses. Then on the first day of the second year of our marriage, he said, ‘Enough of that. We now start on our search.’ And then—-it wasn’t that I was not happy. But the question of happiness receded into the background. He used my body and his own body, like an experimentation, an explorer. As instrument in a search. Search for what? I never knew. But I knew he knew. Nothing was too shameful, too degrading, and even too painful. Shame died in me. And I yielded. I let my body be turned inside out as he did his own. I had a sense he was leading me to something. Mystical? Spiritual? We never talked. Only the sense pervaded the air.” (Karnad 16)

In this way, Paravasu uses Vishakha as a search for something which she never knows. On the other hand, Raibhya who is jealous of Paravasu’s success physically exploits Vishakha, his daughter in law. His frustration and anger gets expression in exploiting his daughter-in-law.

“Raibhya is less a father, more a man who could not tolerate a failure either for the love of a lady or failure in other realms of life.” (Manoj K. Pandey 88)

Vishakha has experienced various aspects of man-woman relationship. The relationship between Vishakha and Yavakri is very intense. He in the quest of universal knowledge cannot forget his forms of love, Vishakha.

Yavakri: The day I decided my penance was over I fell down in a dead faint. I don’t know how long I was in that state. It was terrible exhaustion, the pain of sheer relief. And when I opened my eyes, do you know the first
thing that I thought of? Ten years ago I had come to your house to bid goodbye. And you led me quickly to the jack fruit grove behind your house. You opened the knot of your blouse, pressed my face to your breasts they turned and fled. I stood there stunned. The trees were loaded with fruit. Many were ripe and had split open and the rich golden segments poured out. The sweet sick smell of the jack fruit, the maddening hum of fly, the smell of your body. Ten years later I opened my eyes and I know I was hungry for that moment.” (Karnad 14)

Vishakha has the claims of loyal wife because she waits for Paravasu, fulfills her wifely duties. But when Yavakri returns after ten years, she is unable to resist Yavakri’s planned seduction. But she adopts the maternal role with the turn of events. When she dedicates herself to Yavakri as a sexual object her attitude is motherly.

Vishakha: I was so happy this morning. You are so good. So warm. I wanted to envelope you in everything that I could give. It was more as a mother that I offered my breasts to you. (Karnad 24)

Whereas Vishakha-Yavakri’s relationship reflects the physical and sexual aspects of man – woman relationship, Paravasu-Nittilai’s exposes the spiritual and innocent aspect of man – women relationship. In the words of Manoj K. Pandey

“Whereas Vishakha is learned, sophisticated and morally degraded, on the other hand, Nittilai’s is pure, innocent and without any sophistication. And for her it is a relation which is important not the type of relation.” (Manoj K. Pandey 92)

Hence, when she runs away from her husband and family to help Arvasu she wonderfully shifts in her relation with Arvasu.

Nittilai: Arvasu, when I say we should go together-- I don’t mean we have to live together-- like lovers or like husband and wife. I have been vicious enough to my husband. I don’t want to disgrace him any further. Let’s
be together--- like brother and sister. You marry any girl you like. Only please, Arvasu--- spare a corner for me. (Karnad 42)

It shows that Nittilai is very sensible. She has the wisdom to change herself according to the demand of situation. When she returns to Arvasu, her intention is not, to cause any disgrace to her family but only to care Arvasu in the situation of crisis. It is reflected through the dialogues of actor manager.

Actor-Manager: I don’t know what you are to her. Not that I want to know. Any fool can see you two belong to different worlds. Anything’s possible in these troubled times. So I won’t comment — But your name’s on every tongue in this town and they are mostly trying to spit it out. 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’s been nursing you. Mopping up your vomit, wiping your bottom. Like a baby. I’m grateful to her because my babies were starving when she came and now they get a bite to eat every day. Where she gets food from I don’t know--- but she knows the woods. We would have moved out of this town the day the old man died, except that we’ve become dependent on her. For food. For nursing. For laughter. We’re just waiting to leave with her but she won’t budge till you’re better. (Pause) Something about you worries me. She’s a good girl. Don’t hurt her.” (Karnad 45)

Nittilai is sensible as well as sensitive also. She knows her responsibility towards the group of people she is living with. Her taking care of children of actor manager shows that she knows how the social relationships are to be maintained. When at the end, Arvasu selects the release of Brahma Rakshasa and the rain begins, it is the triumph of Nittilai’s wisdom and sensibility, humanity.

In the words of Manoj K. Pandey

“Nittilai is as innocent as Miranda of Shakespeare’s The Tempest and as wise and enduring as Viola of The Twelfth Night of the same playwright.
She accepts her predicament without any resistance. She accepts it not because she is powerless but because she is endowed with broader vision of human relationship. She is above the petty personal interest.” (Manoj K. Pandey 93)

**Violence**

There are various types of violence i.e. physical, psychological, sexual, social etc. In the entire play, much violence is seen like false knowledge, bloodshed, jealousy, pride and betrayal. In the play, *The Fire and the Rain* the characters like Raibhya, Yavakri and Paravasu crave for supremacy and power. They have their desires and dreams and when they are not fulfilled, they get frustrated. The frustration creates violence. Jealousy, anger and ego are the reasons behind all the incidents that take place in the lives of the characters of the play. Yavakri wants to show everyone what he is capable of. It is the inward wrath that makes him behave treacherously. He goes to forest for penance for the sake of Universal Knowledge but his aim is something different. In his words,

Yavakri: *... This obsession. This hatred. This venom. All this is me. I’ll not deny any thing of myself. I want knowledge so I can be vicious, destructive!* (Karnad 23)

He never lets the past go. He always holds it somewhere in his heart.

Yavakri: *The past isn’t gone. It’s here inside me. The time has come to show the world my father’s son is capable of. This is my moment.* (Karnad 23)

Raibhya frustrated, due to the success of his own son tortures his daughter-in-law and kills Yavakri for molesting her but in turn is killed by his own son Paravasu. He also behaves treacherously with his younger brother Arvasu and tells him to complete the penitential rites for Raibhya. Arvasu performs the rites but when returns back to the sacred site gets astonished by the rude behaviour of Paravasu. Arvasu becomes the victim of the
conspiracies.

There is also a form of emotional violence that is betrayal. In the beginning Vishakha is betrayed from her lover Yavakri and when he returns back after completing the penance, they come together but once again get separated when she realizes that Yavakri has used her as a weapon in his vengeance. Vishakha who is married to Paravasu lives a blissful life for one year and then separates from him for seven years. In the play, Nittilai and Arvasu both are separated from each other and that too twice. First when Nittilai’s father takes the decision of her marriage and second at the end of the play, she is killed by her husband and brother.

Misuse of knowledge in the play causes a lot of destruction. Yavakri, Raibhya and Paravasu all are learned but they do not use their knowledge in the proper way. In a way, Karnad has commented on the present situation. In the words of Dr. Mrs. Gulshan Das and Ms. Tanjeem Ara Khan—“Ascetic Lomasha in the myth imparts knowledge to the Pandava’s and Karnad imparts it to the world by rewriting it. He finds the myth very relevant to the contemporary society. Misuse of knowledge which is rampant now-a-days is leading the world towards destruction. Writer has adopted the myth to make it a medium to warn the society.” (Das G. and T.A. Khan 199-200)

In the comparison, the characters of Arvasu and Nittilai though not being as much learned as Raibhya, Paravasu and Yavakri are more humanistic. It is the humane concern lacking in there. Vishakha and Nittilai both are the victims of male control in the play. Because of the social system they have to go through a lot of psychological, physical and emotional violence. Both have to get married to a person whom they don’t love. They live their life according to the will of their father or husband. They are not given the right to take decision about their life. Their life partner cannot understand the emotional trauma through which they both are going. No one wants to know
their views, and the reality. One mistake makes them guilty and all the sacrifices and adjustments they made become negligible. It is a kind of injustice on their part.

Physical violence is also seen in the play in the form of physical torture and bloodshed. Vishakha is physically exploited by her husband, Paravasu, her lover Yavakri and her father-in-law Raibhya. By following the order of Paravasu, people beat Arvasu and throw him out of the precincts of the fire sacrifice. Kritya kills Yavakri, Raibhya is killed by Paravasu. Paravasu enters the burning pavilion and Nittilai is killed by her husband and brother. All these things and incidents show that not only any single character but also all the major characters are going through physical, psychological, emotional and sexual violence. It cannot be said that any single character is responsible for the destruction. Arvasu though seems to be very common at the beginning comes out with uncommon characteristics at the end.

**Myth**

The myth is taken from the *Mahabharata*. There are innumerable tales in the *Mahabharata* and myth of Yavakri is one of them. It is found in ‘Vanaparva’. In the narrative of Paravasu, Arvasu and Yavakri, Karnad found the plot of *The Fire and the Rain*. The play also dramatizes one more archetype and that is the archetype of fratricidal strife between Indra and his brothers Vishwarupa and Vritra. In the myth, Indra kills Vritra to become supreme in power. The mythical tale is taken from ‘Rig-Veda’. Karnad in this play has exploited the myth of Yavakri. With the help of this myth he brings into light the age long antagonism between father and son.

“Karnad exploits myth because myth has spiritual health, because they connect past, present and time to come in reference to human relationship. They probe at something which is not prey to time. This is the second play in which Karnad exploits myth, other being the first play *Yayati*. (Manoj K. Pandey 87)
The play has several thematic threads and they run parallel. The different threads are beautifully woven together by the playwright and hence, the play becomes very interesting. Karnad has also made certain changes in his plot as against the original episode. The character of Nittilai is introduced to show how caste boundaries oppress people. There is another alteration made by the playwright to make the symbolism stronger. In the *Mahabharata*, when Yavakri violates the sanctity of Vishakha, the lake dries up. But in the play, the land is afflicted with draught for ten years. The original episode ends with the release of Brahma Rakshasa. Though the myths are taken from diverse sources, Karnad has selected elements required for his play and worked on them so that they will suit his purpose. Unless one has the knowledge of the background, context of myths, it will be difficult for one to be able to interpret the purpose of the playwright. The matured artist, Girish Karnad has used the myths in very appropriate manner. The legend of Indra, Vritra is intertextual with the myth of Arvasu and Paravasu.

P. Jayalaxmi writes, “Karnad’s mastery lies in his successful weaving of the contradictions and dilemmas that the myth from the *Mahabharata* glossed over. He re-interprets and re-presents the myth with definitive statement in the context of the present”. (P. Jayalaxmi 261)

Though there are certain differences between the original episodes and the play beneath the superficial differences, there lies a principle and reality which is universal. The underlying reality principle remains there always.

**Characterization**

Major characters in the play are Raibhya, Arvasu, Paravasu, Vishakha, Nittilai and Yavakri. The characters are beautifully depicted.

**Raibhya**

Raibhya is the father of Arvasu and Paravasu, brother of Bharadwaja. He is a learned man. Raibhya cannot tolerate his failure at any level. Raibhya even gets frustrated by the success of his son Paravasu.
Yavakri

Yavakri is the son of Bharadwaja and cousin of Parvasu and Arvasu. He cannot forget the injustice done to his father. The anger and the wrath makes his condition so miserable that he makes a plan of taking revenge on Raibhya’s family which eventually turns into his own death.

Paravasu

Paravasu the elder son of Raibhya is a learned and appointed as the chief priest of the fire sacrifice. He wants ‘to shed all human weakness’ to become ‘a diamond unscratchable’. Paravasu is the symbol of supreme ego. Paravasu is the real villain of the play. He uses his wife as an instrument in his search, kills his father and puts the blame on Arvasu. A priest can never do such heinous act of telling his brother to perform the penitential rites which are meant for him. But his devilish act reaches to the peak point when he tells the people to throw Arvasu out of the precincts. His self-immolation seems to be an easy escape from facing the consequences of his actions.

Vishakha

Vishakha, daughter in law of Raibhya, former beloved of Yavakri and wife of Paravasu, becomes the victim of male control. She has to repress her emotions and desires. She never gets the freedom to talk to her husband. Yavakri leaves her for his quest, and then Paravasu also discards her. It is only once she takes a decision when she empties the ‘Kamandalu’ of Yavakri. She has seen different aspects of man-woman relationship. She has no identity of her own.

“Her dominant psycho-social reality remains only with three male as a woman to Yavakri, as a wife to Paravasu and as a daughter-in-law to Raibhya.”

(Manoj K. Pandey  92)
Nittilai

She is a very pure and soft hearted girl. She loves Arvasu for his simplicity and his humanism. Her character is more impressive than the male characters because she has the ability to recognize the goodness in people around her and she is above her petty interests. Nittilai has her own identity which she herself has created.

“In The Fire and the Rain Nittilai’s innocence never goes off, it remains with her and mellows into profound philosophy of life.” (Manoj K. Pandey 86)

Her character progresses towards self-definition. She makes as harmonizing influence on the life of the people around her. It is her sensibility and philosophy of life that raises Arvasu to a great height.

Arvasu

Arvasu, the younger brother of Paravasu is a kind of contrast to him. He has human passions, human kindness which are not found in the character of Paravasu. Immature at the beginning of the play, Arvasu gradually attains the maturity and it is reflected through his selection of release of Brahma Rakshasa. Lord Indra is pleased by his decision. It is the triumph of his simplicity and sacrifice of love. Arvasu transcends the limitation of ego. It is the triumph of good over the evil. Karnad’s portrayal of the characters in the play is rich. The fire sacrifice in the play is symbolic. It is the process of lifting man’s soul to the highest state and that is of self-realization. Self-immolation of Paravasu can also be called as a form of self-realization. The play conveys the lesson of humility.

Language

The language and dialogues of Raibhya who is a superior intellectual are very abhorrent. He calls Vishakha “a roving whore” and ‘a buffalo that’s been rolling in mud.”

“You whore. I could reduce you to ashes turn you into a fistful of dust with a simple curse. But let that husband of yours handle you. […] Let him
Yakshagana

In the west coast of Karnataka, there is the gorgeous folk theatre Yakshagana, which means music of the heavenly yakshas. It is an operating dance drama and is over 300 years old. Its temperament is Tandav, full of valour, anger and terror. Its songs literary compositions set to a distinct type of music-were sung and danced in temple courtyards and village squares. The themes are taken from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Puranas. Mythological heroes, gods and demons people the stage. All the plays have battle scenes, even those dealing with marriage and diplomatic conditions. Yakshagana expresses the energetic spirit of the landscape. The play starts at nine in the evening and lasts all night. The Bhagavatha (director and singing chorus) sits up stage holding tiny symbols. And he is accompanied by three instrumentalists; one plays on drum, one on a pipe and one on a Chande (a barrel like drum). The image of Ganesh is worshiped by actors in the dressing room where it remains throughout the night. The opening song by the Bhagavatha is also in praise of Ganesh. Ganesh is never impersonated. He is not a character; he is the deity, to be worshiped. After the prayer, the Hanumanayaka (Buffoon) enters. He plays the announcer, the messenger, the servant- anything. The Bhagavatha sings in praise of the audience. The Bhagavatha and the Hanumanayaka quote ancient scriptures, linking their folk tradition with the classical. (Balawant Gargi 145)
References


