FOLKS THEMES IN GIRISH KARNAD'S NAGAMANDALA

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Annotation

According to the development of Indian English Drama a view point stands out. Most of the Indian playwrights felt the need for the play which would interpret old mythological stories to suit contemporary situations, and also the need for history so as to interpret the present. For that they have been using the ancient tradition of Sanskrit drama. The theatre in independent India shows a welcome change of a group of young directors who have been able to create a better theatre. Girish Karnad, a contemporary playwright has also used myth, history and tradition to create new plays. Girish Karnad is a man of the theatre. He has been actively associated with the stage and has written play with an eye to thus production. His plays have been quite successfully on the stage. Karnad's plays are for both reading and acting. It is not only good literature but also good theatre. Karnad plays are good example of a well-made play, which has an absorbing story, an intricate plot, a logical dialogue, an impressive spectacle, a beginning, a middle and neatly tide-up ending. This action is to be found not is the manipulated plot but in the inner struggle of the characters.

Keywords: Mythology, Sanskrit, Folk-Lore, Rituals, Religion, Nagamandala: Summary

Folklore belongs to the oral tradition. In this pre-literature, masks, dances, speeches, songs, music and dramatic imitation are found. Rituals also take place, which involve speaking of the sacred text, learned and passed on by word of mouth. This folk art arose as a drama for a simple audience and developed as the oral tradition of social delight. It arose spontaneously like a flower.

The oral form of the culture has no authentic origin and the written form. This folk art has special importance in relation to mythology. Mythology is still a part of the living culture in India, particularly in rural India. Indian Gods are deeply rooted in the day to day life of Indian rustic and they are more a fact then fiction to them. The characteristics of Indian folk theatre is essentially mythological themes and character borrowed from epics, puranas and religious books appear as living of folk theatre.

In a folk drama the narrative is fictional and filled with realistic events. The line between belief and disbelief varies from culture to culture person to person. The interaction between animal and human beings often takes place in folk dramas. Proverbs, expansion and riddles are the parts of folk drama. The folk stage is a developed form of drama belongs to rural areas. In the beginning the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha* were shown on stage. The Charanas sang the songs of these epics with the accompaniment of dance and music in the temple yard or at house of religious minded people. The entire meaning of the epic ballad was rendered by dance. The Sanskrit language could not be understood by the simple folk audience. Thus the regional language became the medium of these plays.

The dance and music were adopted by the traditional popular theatre of India where the regional language becomes the spoken language. The gesture and mimicry along with dance became the popular style and was adopted by the folk theatre. Classical Abhinaya is more important to this dance-drama type of folk theatre. The meaning was expressed through song, music and rhythm. The characters speak through these elements of folk theatre. There are a variety of forms in the folk stage. They differ from region to region. They are Kathakali of Kerala, Kuchipidi of Andhra Pradesh, Bharatha Nattyam of Tamil Nadu, Yakhshagana of Karnataka.

The story of Naga-Mandala is taken from two folk tales narrated by A.K. Ramanujam to whom the play is dedicated. Karnad in his introduction to the play says that Naga-Mandala is based on two oral tales that he has heard from A.K. Ramanujam.

This play contains all the convention of the Yakshagana tradition with a modern outlook. This play contains the main-plot (borrowed from folk tales) and a sup-plot (created by Karnad). The sup-plot deals with the belief that flames have an existence of their own.

To fulfil the requirements of the epic theatre, Karnad incorporates this myth into the play and gives the flames a female role and the man the function of chorus. The episode of Kappanna and the blind Kurudeva parallels the main plot of Rani-Naga-Appanna.

Make believe is a common factor in folk plays. In *Naga-Mandala* the dramatists take us to the make –believe world with all the folk techniques. So many incidents occur in this play which is in the line of make-believe. The cobra transforms itself in to the human form and also enters the dresses of Rani for it convenience. The flames can get together in the temple yard to gossip about their masters and mistress. The story is the character can be formed out of the stories and songs, which are locked inside the old lady. Yakshini can run away with Kappanna, the strange roots can influence the real life of human beings by its strange quality.

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theatre. Karnad plays are good example of a well-made play, which has an absorbing story, an intricate plot, a logical dialogue, an impressive spectacle, a beginning, a middle and neatly tide-up ending. This action is to be found not is the manipulated plot but in the inner struggle of the characters.

In ancient days, themes were taken from folk, epics and Purnas with same common dramatics rules. In the modern times this tradition had been continued though under the influence of the modern west, most of the modern playwrights follow the western, techniques and so their plays were western influenced. But Karnad's plays prove that his prime idea is to stick the ancient classical and Sanskrit tradition.

Karnad's technique in Naga-Mandala is of storytelling. He introduces farce of the beginning of the play. Heavily dependent on folk culture, the men at the beginning of play indulges in soliloquy that is accepted in the folk theatre.

Both are in its thematic and technical strategy, *'Hayavadana'* have thus an important lesson to offer to the modern Indian playwright. The lesson simply is that if he aspires to march ahead, he can only do so by going back first only a return to its roots in ancient Sanskrit and Indian folk-drama can revitalize this art. According to learned the relevance of folk stage cannot be confined only to village people. He finds no difference between the classical drama with all the conventions and the folk stage.

In Indian there has been so much of identification with the animal world that even the smallest of species has been elevated for its quality. A common strain visible is the symbolism of Naga worship. To the Hindu, Naga represents closeness with lord Vishnu. Like that the Yakshini, horse has significance in Indian Mythology. Hayavadana, the half human being with to horse's head resembles the mythological demon, Hayagreeva.

In *Naga-Mandala*, the snake, Naga is a symbol of fertility. We have proof for this in the mythological part and in the present rituals of the people. For the Naga –the people celebrate Sathurthasi Pooja. The importance of this pooja is that woman asks for the boon from this snake-good for safe childbirth. It clears the importance of men and women. They worship the ideal of Naga or snake located beneath the Neem tree. One of the regional names for this snake-God is Nagendran. This god is utilized by the playwright as a symbol. It symbolizes the motherhood of Rani. She becomes a mother with the help of Naga.

Feminism is another important aspect which Karnad tries to present in his plays. The readers and the viewers are exposed to the psychological depth in the woman characters of his plays. All the women are governed by love. The domination of love creates the conflict in *Hayavadana and Nagamandala*. Women are treated like a parrot in the cage. Morality is symbolized by the cage. Women in this play try to break the traditional shackles that suppress them and prevent there from entering individuality. In *Naga-Mandala* Rani is literally locked up inside and she is not aware of the outside world. Karnad is deeply agitated by the present social problem. He tries to release the women from the shackles of the moral codes. He manifests the new realism. We introduce, these ideas, not directly but through the use of myth, folk and ethics. He uses these themes as his guidance to escape from the attack of society. In this play Rani is the mother of Naga's son and wife of Appanna. She hides this fact from every one. Here Karnad tries to hide behind the evil of folk traditions to expose the adultery and thereby he overcomes the viewer's possible revulsion

In *Naga-Mandala*, Rani even though locked up inside the house, knows the Hindu and Dharma knows that the people will not allow her to live with Naga. So she hides her illicit relation with knows the Hindu drama Naga. In the eyes of society she is a pure woman, a Goddess but she only knows that she has lost her purity of ideal womanhood of she comes out with the truth they will not allow her and Naga to live together. Since it is a dumb creature involved no one could investigate the truth so she asks the snake to climb up into her tresses. The predominance of love for Naga makes her to do. So she is happy and wants the audience to be happy about that ending. Rani proves that the caged bird too can attain individuality. Her decision to live with the Naga is the punishment she gives to Appanna. Since Devadatta is a loving husband, Padmini is unable to

make such a decision like Rani, a timid women steps forwards and shows to the world what real feminism means. Indirectly Rani takes revenge on her husband Appanna. But the unconvincing immortality is balanced by the folk-tradition since it is folk- lore, the audience too does not treat this immortality very seriously.

The Dolls in *Hayavadana* and the Flames in *Nag-Mandala* also share this model of characterization. Music helps to create a proper atmosphere to the action and create a particular mood or decoration. According to Karanth songs of folk theatre have the satirical and making tone. It is more effective than verbal language.

Girish Karnad uses mythical and historical themes to highlights the problems that confront modern Indian society at various levels. The influence of Yakshagana, the Sanskrit dramaturgy and western traditions are seen in his plays. University and experimentation are presented in his plays.

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