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Research Proposal for Ph.D

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Myth as a technique in Indian theatre Grish karnad: A study

Theatre is a living art form and therefore, changes continuously. The origin and development of theatre in India may be broadly divided into three phases. The first is marked by the high - quality Sanskrit dramatic literature, imaginative staging style as well as a profound theatrical reflection as in Bharatha's *Natyashastra*. The second phase being after the decline of the classical Sanskrit there and the emergence in all regional language of India varied forms of popular but innovative theatre, marked by the transformation of the classical theatre in the changed socio-political conditions. The third phrase consist in the encounter of Indian theatre with the west in the nineteenth century, causing the growth of a new kind of theatre in urban centuries, weakening links with tradition and intensifying the urban-rural divide.

The roots of the theatre in our country are certainly very old and deep. Theatrical expression of some kind has been, since primitive and mythic ages, an integral part of Indian life. At the same time, it has undergone wide-ranging, fundamental changes during the last two to three thousand years. Broadly speaking, we can say that for a few centuries theatre formed part to the life of common people as ritualistic music and dance, storytelling and tableaux on special occasions. Subsequently, its different forms crystallized, were adopted by the upper strata of society and continued as Sanskrit drama and theatre.

In this new phase, play of different kinds, styles and artistic excellence were written in Sanskrit, the language of literary expression at the time. Many innovative and often highly sophisticated styles of the presentation of those plays were also developed. This burst of energy was not confined to creative exploration, dramatic writing and staging. It also found expression in a very serious and systematic original thinking about almost all theoretical and in *Natyashastra*, a comprehensive treatise or compendium on the dramatic art by Bharata Muni, unparalleled anywhere in the world. In these plays many elements of traditional performance scripts have been incorporated at many levels of imagination and artistic quality frequently in a very effective manner.

For instance, most of these plays have a flexible structure in which various threads of the story or the dramatic action are linked together by a narrator called *sutradhara*. *bhagavata* or *vachaka*. There is also an interesting variety in the use of this device.

In Girish Karnad's *Hayavadhana*, the *bhagavata* carries out a number of functions of the singer-narrator, linking various episodes, commenting on the action, enactment of small roles. In *Mahanirvana* by Satish Alekar, the central character of the play himself is the *sutradhara* and he carries out both these roles with great ease.

In Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghashiram kotwal*, the *sutradhara* is an extremely witty, humorous and attractive character, who while linking the dramatic actions from beginning to end underlines the meaning of the play. In the play single performer play by Saoli Ghosh, *Nathavati Ananthavat*, Draupadi is not only its central character but also its narrator, commentator, and coordinator. In *Rasgandharva* by Mani Madhukar, many characters act as *sutradhara* or commentator on different occasions. All these elements reveal altogether a new horizon of the contemporary Indian dramatic writing. It is so more necessary to consider that an external

conflict of an individual and the explosive climax produced by its increasing intensity is an inevitable or the only method of building up dramatic action.

By a sensitive and careful use of the traditional methods, many other ways of constructing a powerful play will become possible and many new areas and levels of the individual and social reality and experience will find expression in plays.

One of the foremost dramatists in India, Girish Karnad was born on May 19, 1938 in Matheran (Maharashtra). A multi-faceted personality, Karnad has earned international praise as a playwright, poet, actor, director, critic and translator. A Konkani by birth, his initial schooling was in Marathi. As a young man studying at Karnataka University, Dharwar, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Statistics in 1958, Karnad dreamed of earning international literary fame, but he thought he would do so by writing in English. Upon graduation, Karnad went to England and studied at Oxford where he earned a Rhodes scholarship and went on to receive a Master's degree in philosophy, politics and Economics.

He would eventually the international fame he had dreamed of, but not for his English poetry. Instead, Karnad would earn his reputation through decades of consistent literary output on his native soil. After his return to India, Karnad worked with the Oxford University press at Chennai. He left the job in 1970 to become a full-time writer. Even before that, his very first play, *yayati* (written in Kannada, and not his mother tongue Konkani), written in 1961, was a hit. The play in which chronicles the adventures success was immediately translated into several Indian languages. *Tughlaq*, Karnad's second play, written in 1964, is perhaps his best known work. *Hayavadana* is based on *Transposed Heads*, a story by Thomas Mann. Among his other well-known works are *Naga-Mandala*, *Taledanda* and the latest *Odakalu Bimba* (A Heap of Broken Images), inspired from T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Wasteland*.

According to K.R.S. Iyenger," In all his three plays (Yayati, Tughlaq and Hayavadana)- be the theme, historical, mythical or legendary-Karnad's approach is modern, and he deploys the conventions and motifs of folk art like masks and curtains to project a world of intentions, uncertainties and unpredictable denouements. And all his plays are conspicuous for the deft employment of irony and crisp dialogue.

History and myth helps Karnad for his achievement in Indian theatre. Therefore, the researcher is going to attempt a study on how the Hindu myth and history had a great influence in Indian theatre.