

A Note on the Proposed Thesis

Girish Karnad is one of most significant Indian English playwrights who creatively and critically appraised Indian realities using a unique mode of enframing them by myths, legends and history. Each of his plays analysed an issue concerning humans in general and Indians in particular. *Hayavadana* explores the theme of a wholesome being, an identity that comprises the binaries, namely the intellectual and the physical. The dramatist uses indigenous art forms to postcolonially look at Indian realities. His *Nagamandala* explores Man-Woman relationship through ritualistic theatre raising issues of patriarchy and gender identities. *Yayati* using an ancient tale as a relevant frame, Girish Karnad studies the theme of responsibility particularly in the context of familial pressures. *Tughlaq* is a play which deals with the high ideals of the Nehruvian Era and how those ideals remain unrealized. Using the fourth wall theatre space for his plays, Girish Karnad showcased the effectiveness of the indigenous theatre forms with regard to the treatment of Indian themes though they have universal resonances.

Badal Sarkar is one of the preeminent playwrights of the contemporary times. Having a strong socio-political commitment, Badal Sarkar wrote plays whose meaning heavily dependent upon the stage spaces on which they were performed. Rejecting the conventional fourth wall realistic theatre of the nineteenth century, Badal Sarkar created a unique aesthetics of drama, which he termed Third Theatre. His plays *Evam Indrajit* makes a significant departure from the fourth wall theatre in which the gap between the acting area and the spectating area created a distance between the play and the audience. In other words, plays belonging to the fourth wall theatre presented constructed realities which had to be observed with an aesthetic distance. For Badal Sarkar such a preoccupation with theatre was a facile exercise. He firmly believed that the actors themselves must have an emotional connect with the characters they portrayed which was the source of genuine sensitizing.

Sarkar also expected his audience members to have the same emotional connect with an acute self-consciousness. In other words, they did not lose themselves in the artistic world but made theatre a site for dialectical thinking which send the audience home with an acute awareness of the socio-political conditions of which they were apart. He moved away from the proscenium theatre to explore other possibilities for putting on the boards his plays. So he created what is called, the 'Anganmanch' and 'Muktmancha' from close door interactions to interactions in open spaces to examine and interrogate the living conditions of people. This paper titled, Invigorating stage spaces: A study of Badal Sarkar Third Theatre, will deal with the Third Theatre with particular reference to the stage spaces in order to show the theatre spaces became hugely political as it became a place for debate and concrete social action. Besides the theory, the paper will site instances from his plays, to argue how the themes in the plays and the theatre space on which there was performed are well integrate.

The thesis will make a comparative study of the creative output of Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar to show both these playwrights have uniquely responded to the socio-political-cultural issues in India.