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Dramatic Genius of Girish Karnad: A Critical Appraisal

Mudasir Ahmad Shah
Research Scholar,
Department of English,
University of Kashmir.

Abstract:

Indian English Drama is still a genre in its infancy. Despite this, India has produced some great dramatists who have attained a great repute worldwide and Girish Karnad is also one among them. Girish Karnad belongs to the formative generation of Indian playwrights who came to maturity in the two decades following independence and collectively reshaped the Indian theatre as a major national institution in the later twentieth century. As Postcolonial and peripheral writers receive increasing worldwide attention, a critical appraisal of Girish Karnad's plays becomes at once compelling as well as worthwhile. Today the theoretical focus remains on such issues as cultural identity, nationhood, anti-colonial resistance and how these have played a pivotal role in shaping the writings of present times. So the aim of this research paper is to present the overall contribution of Girish Karnad to the Indian English Drama. It reflects the technicalities and thematic concerns of Karnad's plays. It shows the influences that went a long way in shaping his dramatic imagination. It also shows his attachment to Indian past—myths, history, folktales—and contemporary reality which enrich his dramatic oeuvre. In his representation of myths Karnad telescopes on to those selected moments of cultural and historical crisis when individual choices had to confront the burden of culture and the way those choices effected socio-cultural transformation. Karnad re-contextualizes the sources of his plays in order to provide analogues for contemporary times when similar choices require to be made by an individual or community. In historical plays, he suspends the disbelief of the readers and generates a new fondness for the protagonists in it. He uncovers and discovers the contemporary consciousness in the history. He does not take history as an autonomous entity. As a lover of historical personalities in Indian history, he has projected their whims, temperaments, eccentricities, objectives, peculiarities and also their popularity. He perceives history not only full of the events but also full of ethics, discourse, universal laws and ideologies—as tools to liberate mankind from bondages, sufferings and perils. Karnad has also concentrated his dramatic imagination on modern man's Postcolonial situation and existential anxiety. He projects life and society in the contemporary world which suffer from internal vacuity and external vanities

Keywords: Postcolonial and peripheral writers, socio-cultural transformation, cultural identity, dramatic imagination, historical crisis.

Girish Karnad is a living legend in the arena of contemporary Indian English Drama. Karnad was exposed to a literary scene where there was a direct clash between Western and native tradition. It was India of the fifties and the sixties that surfaced two streams of the thought in all walks of life—adaptation of new modernistic technique, a legacy of colonial rule and an adherence to the rich cultural past of the country. Karnad's dramatic repertoire includes *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1964), *Tale-Danda* (1990), *Hayavadana* (1971), *Naga-Mandala* (1990), *The Fire and The Rain* (1994), *The Dreams Of Tipu Sultan* (1997), *Bali-The Sacrifice* (2002), *Frightened Jasmine* (1977), *Flowers* (2004) and *Broken Images* (2004). His dramatic archetypes are shaped on the Yakshagana and Bayalata conventions—regional sources—and forms of *Natyashastra*—traditional source. In this context, Babu says, "Karnad makes use of

myth, folktale, legend and history. He also exploits the elements of Yakshagana, Bayalata and Folk Theatre in *Hayavadana*" (Babu 1999: 80). The themes of his plays are taken from the labyrinth of vast multicultural subcontinent of India and the dense thicket of Indian psychology, sociology and anthropology. He draws the source of his plays from myths, legends, folktales, history and his contemporary reality. He reworks with these sources and makes them almost alive and true. In this context, Nayak (2011: 5) says, "[His] plays have Indian settings and potential thematic values based on Indian philosophy, sociology, religious beliefs, psychology, historical developments, myths legends and folk-lore".

Karnad gives subjective interpretation to the events and inscribes the socio-cultural, philosophical, political and empirical specificities. He presents Indian culture and tradition in his plays, and combines the worlds of reality, fantasy and universality of human knowledge. In this context, Mukherjee (2006: 17) aptly says, "In Karnad's plays, the worlds of reality and fantasy or illusion meet in such a way that poetry is created". He always draws the wealth of his dramatic knowledge from the past, weaves them in the present and makes them desirable for the future. Nayak (2011: 6) remarks, "Karnad has the association of sensibility with the indispensable past, immediate present and impending future. In his modernist approach, he makes them his repertoire in contemporary discourse". His dramatic imagination is highly charged with humanistic thought, secularist ideology, nationalist commitment, cosmopolitan spirit, traditionalist approach and modernist hypothesis.

In his plays, Karnad exemplifies the transformative practices of his generation and carves out a distinctive place for himself with respect to the subject matter, dramatic style and authorial identity. His plays are meaningful texts with important qualities in varying degrees, approaches, and are serious commentaries on life and society. His plays express his deep commitment to Indian Drama in terms of the text and performance. An objective analysis of his plays reveals that they cover "philosophical and religious beliefs, historical developments in Indian sociological settings, and its cultural transformation" (Nayak 2011: 6).

In his representation of myths, Karnad telescopes on to those selected moments of cultural and historical crisis when individual choices had to confront the burden of culture and the way those choices effected socio-cultural transformation. Babu (1999: 238) rightly points out that in Karnad's plays, "[M]yths, legends and folk forms function as a kind of cultural anesthesia and they have been used for introducing and eliminating, in our racial unconsciousness, cultural pathogens such as caste and gender distinctions and religious fanaticism". Karnad re-contextualizes myths in order to provide analogues for contemporary times when similar choices require to be made by an individual or community. His plays have an Indian sensibility and style. Nayak (2011: 7) says that Karnad is "microscopic to the values and morals in the myths, favourable to the folklores for their relevance and holistic about the historical hassles". While reworking with the myths, he reveals the human mind when it failed to distinguish between the fact and fiction, virtues and vices, and warns the future generations to remain cautious and careful in human relationships, personal whims and temperament, obsessions and ambitions.

Karnad recreates some mythical stories of his choice with universal overtones and operates them in almost all spheres of life. These myths envision him the welfare of human beings and harmony in the society. As myths are the collective unconsciousness, their significance never dies. As a conscious dramatist, Karnad prefers myths, parables, legends and folktales because they provide immense scope for the life. He presents myths in human conditions and links the present with the archetypal. Maya (2001:68) rightly remarks:

Karnad links the past and the present, the archetype and the real. Issues of the present world find their parallels in the myths and fables of the past which

lend new meanings and insights through analogy, reinforcing the theme. By transcending the limits of time and space, myths provide flashes of insight into life and its mystery. They form an integral part of the culture consciousness of the land, with their associative layers of meaning, their timelessness and relevance to contemporary issues.

Karnad's refuge in myths enables him to present the absurdity of life, conflicts, and individual's eternal struggle to achieve perfection. His plays that are based on myths include *Yayati* (1961), *The Fire and The Rain* (1995) and *Bali- The Sacrifice* (2004).

Yayati is Karnad's landmark contribution to Indian Drama. It is his first play in which he delineates the pervasive philosophy of existentialism. He takes the myth of Yayati from the *Mahabharata* and presents the "[C]onflicting philosophies, physical, emotional and psychological repercussions of his characters in an attempt to integrate his creative enterprise on duty and responsibility, existence and essence, and the ethics and aesthetics" (Nayak 2011: 28).

Karnad has given this traditional tale of King Yayati a new meaning and significance highly relevant in the context of the life today. He makes some alterations by introducing Chitrlekha as the wife of Puru. When Puru becomes old and loses vigor and vitality, his wife cannot bear this loss and commits suicide. Chitrlekha's protest in the play for this exchange of youth is an attack on male chauvinism and patriarchy. Yayati stands for modern man overwhelmed by worldly desires, sensual pleasure, and irresponsible exercise of power and utter forgetfulness of the everlasting values of life. Yayati recognizes the horror of his own life and takes his moral responsibility. Murthy says, "*Yayati* is a self-consciously existentialist drama on the theme of responsibility" (Online). This play also deals with the issues of class and caste division. Issue of women subordination gets highlighted in the Yayati's treatment of the women in the play. Raju aptly remarks:

Karnad makes Yayati confront the horrifying consequences of not being able to relinquish desire; and through the other characters he highlights the issues of class/caste and gender coiled within a web of desire.

(Raju 2006:81)

Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain* (1995) is based on the myth of Yayakri taken from the *Mahabharata*. It is a play full of symbolical and allegorical overtones and is a dramatic representation of quintessential conflict between good and evil. Dharwadker (2006: xvi-xvii) remarks that in this play, "Karnad reimagines the world of Hindu antiquity and constructs a story of passion, loss, and sacrifice in the context of Vedic ritual, spiritual discipline (tapasya), social and ethical differences between human agents". The play presents the celebration of fire with Vedic rituals for the appeasement of the divine and peace and happiness of the mankind. But, Karnad also associates the aesthetics of Brahmanism with the mind-game of egocentricism. In the play, fire-sacrifice is taken as a central metaphor to underline activities like academic study, love-making, reading epics and marriage. Karnad develops the story of the play from the original myth with some digressions and presents society's sage-old attitude towards women and low castes. It is also based on the theme of responsibility. Girish Karnad's success lies in discussing modern problems with the help of an ancient myth.

Karnad's *Bali-The Sacrifice* (2009) is an ethical thesis that questions the validity of Rigvedic practice of animal sacrifice in Hindu rituals. In this play, he presents India's conflicting religious and cultural ethos. He has selected the thirteenth century Kannada epic *Yashodhara Charite* and offers a fresh perspective on social, moral and religious structure of

an individual's faith. He also examines an individual's private involvements in love, sex and passion for the gratification of his public life. In an interview, he says:

Bali worried and excited me...It deals with the idea that violence is pervasive, lying just beneath the surface of our everyday behavior and is often masked by a conscious effort. It also posits that human thought, intention and action are interlinked. It debates the Jain notion that intended violence is as condemnable as the action itself...The play debates the conflict of faith.

(Mukherjee 2006: 49)

The play presents a great philosophical thinking on the Indian tradition and ideological contents about values, moral conflicts and dilemmas. The play becomes a sight for struggle between personal authority and popular culture of cruelty. Nayak (2011: 79) aptly says, "Karnad uses the context of the play with a hint at a positivist and exclusivist possibility of all ideologies and necessary human bonds in human relationships". Karnad negotiates between the culture and need based ideology in their functional relevance and philosophical thinking.

As mentioned earlier, Karnad also draws the source of his plays from folktales and gives new meaning to these tales to suit his purpose. Folktales deal with the natural and cultural phenomenon of a society. It establishes an oral tradition to make us understand the treasures of culture. Karnad's use of folktales is based on traditional beliefs and practices and they carry the answers to the contemporary socio-cultural problems and inequalities in terms of caste, class, gender and exploitation. They also establish the interdisciplinary study of religion, ethnic, cultural and various other aspects of life. In this context, Dharwadker (2006: xxix) says:

The ideology of urban folk drama thus manifests itself most consciously in the treatment of femininity, sexual desire and power: although the challenge to patriarchy is not absolute, women in folk drama find the means of exercising an ambivalent freedom within its constraints, unlike their urban counterparts.

Karnad reworks with the folktales which is a new trend in Indian English Drama. In the presentation of tradition and conventions in India, he revitalizes them for the better purpose of life.

In *Hayavadana* (1971), *Naga-Mandala* (1985) and *Flowers: A Dramatic Monologue* (2004), Karnad has reworked with the folktales of Karnataka with new meanings and contemporary relevance. As he transforms the oral tradition into the presentational form on stage, he popularizes them with the narration of human predicament. The plot of *Hayavadana* is from Somdeva's *Brihat Katha-Saritasagar*. Karnad has also borrowed from Thomas Man's retelling of the same story in the *Transposed Heads* in order to develop the sub-plot of the play. It is the theme of incompleteness and an individual's yearning for completeness and perfection that pervades the play. It is this yearning that makes people restless in this ordinary existence and makes them reach out for extraordinary things. In the main plot, there is the story of the transposition of heads and in the sub-plot is the story of *Hayavadana* ('Haya' means horse and 'Vadana' means face) which means a man with the face of a horse.

Hayavadana poses a problem of human identity in a world of tangled relationships. The 'non-naturalistic' form used by Karnad in this play takes him close to Brecht's 'Epic Theatre', as both make extensive use of songs and music. In both these forms, there is linear and loose plot construction avoiding climax and revelation. In Karnad's play, actors wear masks and action is presented largely through 'miming'. This helps in making the audience think about the problem in a more detached manner. It helps us to ponder over, and respond

critically to what is being presented on the stage rather than taken over by emotions. Karnad has himself acknowledged the influence of Western writers, and in terms of form, his debt to Brecht's 'Epic Theatre' cannot be denied. In an interview, he says:

I read the basic Western canon- the Greek plays, Shakespeare, Shaw, Brecht, Sartre, Camus. Brecht's technique influenced me a great deal in the earlier years. I remember *Life of Galileo* and *The Good Woman of Szechwan* vividly.

(Mukherjee 2006:34-35)

It is important to mention that Karnad does not draw wholly from 'Epic Theatre'. Devices used by Brecht are also present in Indian 'Folk Theatre' tradition, from which Karnad draws heavily to universalize his themes.

The theme of the *Hayavadana* has socio-cultural aspect as well as metaphysical one. Raykar (1999: 177) aptly says, "To me, the theme of the play has two aspects, a socio-cultural aspect and a metaphysical one. At both levels it shows the conflict between two polarities (namely Apollonian and Dionysian) as the vital truth of human existence". This play can also be studied from post-colonial point of view. The predicament of Padmini, the female protagonist, can easily be compared with the predicament of a 'Modern' woman. Karnad has described various problems faced by women and questions social conventions.

Naga-Mandala is also one of the best plays of Girish Karnad. This play depicts the man-woman relationship in their conjugal life. Karnad came to know about the two stories while going through A.K. Ramanujan's works on folktales. The first one is the traditional tale of a cobra turning into a man at night and visiting a married woman, and the second is based on the popular belief that a night long vigil in a temple can ward off death.

Naga-Mandala is a powerful portrait of the agony and anguish faced by both men and women in their development into adult roles. It also deals with social adjustment of an individual in a society where he is given little space for self-development and independence as a being. Gupta (1999: 250) rightly says, "It is remarkable achievement of Karnad's play that he adapts this 'man-oriented' folk tale in such a manner that it becomes the representation of the experience of man and woman in the psychologically transitory phase".

The male conception of keeping full control over the body, sexuality and virtue of woman through the institutions of family and values like chastity are mocked in the play. Rani, the female protagonist in the *Naga-Mandala*, can be seen as a metaphor for the situation of a young girl in the bosom of a joint family where she sees her husband in two different roles—as a stranger during the day and as a lover at the night. In this play, Girish Karnad cuts below the surface to reveal the burning core of mental or spiritual reality. The main concern of the playwright here becomes centered on human beings in combination, interacting, entering into one another's lives and becoming part of one another. Girish Karnad rightly says, "The energy of folk theatre comes from the fact that although it seems to uphold traditional values, it also has the means of questioning these values, of making them literary stand on their head" (Karnad 2007: 14). In this play, too, he has used folk theatre conventions like the chorus, the masks, and the seemingly unrelated comic episodes, the mixing of human and non-human worlds, to present alternative points of view or alternative attitudes to the central problem.

Flowers: A Dramatic Monologue (2004) is Karnad's first dramatic monologue written in English. Drawing a traditional world of folktales in the play, Karnad presents the story of a very introspective, chauvinistic and confessional priest who is marked for his endearing innocence and love for his shriveled wife and a sensuous courtesan. The play is based on the legend of Veeranna who belongs to the Chitradurga region of Karnataka. In the play, we see

that the married priest has been passionately in love with a mistress to whom he takes the offerings from the temple after the evening prayers. In this play, Karnad delves into the priest's mind which oscillates between "the rational and the intuitive, the empirical and the transcendental" (Nayak 2011: 126). He recasts the legend as a conflict between religious devotion and erotic passion. Karnad mingles the spiritual with the carnal and confirms the power of the priests worship. In this context, Dharwadker (2006: xxxii) says:

Karnad... recasts the legend as a conflict between religious devotion and erotic love, undergirded by the priest's guilt at his daily betrayal of his wife... The miracle of Shivalinga confirms the power of the priests worship and marks him as one of the chosen, but it also ends his life.

The priest's sensual consuming of the courtesan's body leads him to his self-discovery. His mental landscape is marked with the imagination of sacred and profane, which exists as parallels, not as continuities or interactive practices. Karnad says that the play expresses "respect for those who have faith. It is also the story of self-realization and penance" (Mukherjee 2006: 54). One can say that in Karnad's plays the folk tales are not mere gossips of the common and illiterate masses but they make audience aware of India's tradition and culture. This dramatic monologue opens several other layers of meanings and raises "questions about the nature of power and belief and about the relationship between power and sacrifice" (Jain 2007: 351).

Karnad has not restricted himself to the Indian myths and folktales only but has also turned to the Indian history as the source of his plays. History has fascinated his creative imagination. It provides him the elements of psychoanalysis, political praxis and revolutionary concepts. In historical plays, he suspends the disbelief of the readers and generates a new fondness for the protagonists in it. He uncovers and discovers the contemporary consciousness in the history. He does not take history as an autonomous entity. As a lover of historical personalities in Indian history, he has projected their whims, temperaments, eccentricities, objectives, peculiarities and also their popularity. He perceives history not only full of the events but also full of ethics, discourse, universal laws and ideologies—as tools to liberate mankind from bondages, sufferings and perils. In this context, Nayak (2011: 139-140) says, "Awakening his dead protagonists from their fossilized selves, he reverberates them with his ideological genomes in post-colonial speculations". One can say that he scrutinizes his protagonists, their political, diplomatic, psychoanalytical and revolutionary concepts as an objective and transcendent commentator. Analyzing some periods in the Indian history and the prevalent situation at that time, he makes us understand its importance and relevance in the present. *Tughlaq* (1972), *Tale-Danda* (1993) and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* (2004) are the plays in which history has been examined.

Tale-Danda is a historical play and depicts the conditions of north Karnataka in the twelfth century. Karnad has projected a socio-religious movement during the time of Kalachurya dynasty. This movement was stated by sharanas—devotees of Lord Shiva—who opposed idolatry, temple worship and caste system in Hinduism.

Karnad retrospects the history in its sordid prospect and presents the mystery of caste and religion in Indian social dynamics. The play has been written in the backdrop of growing extremism and presents an individual's attempt towards communal integration during an epoch of violence. In an interview, Karnad says:

I wrote *Tale-Danda* in 1989 when 'Mandir' and 'Mandal' movements were beginning to show how relevant the questions posed by these thinkers were for our age. The horrors 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.

(Quoted in Nayak 2011:141-142)

Karnad has not only shown the inter-religious conflicts but has given vent to the intra-religious conflicts as well. He has not prescribed any magical balm for the ills and evils of the society but makes us understand that the parentage, caste and religion are not the right canons to judge a man in a multicultural society like India. Shukla (2006: 290) rightly says, “The major theme of Karnad’s *Tale-Danda* is that of deconstruction of caste and religion to arrive at its real, proper meaning and to restructure the same for the benefit of the society and the country”.

Karnad’s *Tughlaq* (1972) is a historical play that has been acclaimed by critics for its wide depth and range. It is a rich work of art and lends itself to various interpretations at different levels. Nayak (2011: 139) rightly says, “For [Karnad] history is no longer a static background for his play; rather it is timeless, alive and absurd in its entirety”. In this play, Karnad explores the paradox of Mohammad bin Tughlaq, the medieval Muslim Sultan, whose reign is considered to be one of the biggest failures of the Indian history. It is not an ordinary chronicle play, but a very imaginative reconstruction of some of the most significant events in the life of a great king. It has the historicity of fact and textuality of history in its Postmodern and neohistoricist discourses. In this play, Karnad evolves macro-historical schemes like the power affection, social relations, political reasons and conservative thoughts in its structure. Attention has been paid to the political theme of the play as the play reflects the political disillusionment of India after Independence. Karnad says:

In a sense, the play reflects the slow disillusionment my generation felt with the new politics of Independent India: The gradual erosion of the ethical norms that had guided the movement for Independence, and coming to terms with cynicism and real politik.

(Karnad 2007: 7)

The play also has the theme of power-politics and communalism. It is the reprocessing of the past with emphasis on the political and social needs of the present.

The Dreams of Tipu Sultan (2004) is based on the history of the eighteenth century India. The play presents the status of Tipu, his psychology and the struggle for peace. It also shows his strategic resistance when the princely states were struggling for their individual hegemony, and the British were consolidating their empire. Karnad has analyzed history from Postcolonial perspective and has presented his ideological polemics and objective point of view into the then socio-political paradigms. His aim seems to highlight Tipu’s visionary zeal, political strategies, battle field maneuvers, modernizing impulses and the populist trade and commerce policies. In this context, Dharwadker (2006: xxiv) says:

Karnad also casts his protagonist in multiple and contradictory roles—as a beloved ruler, legendary warrior, loving father, and visionary dreamer, but also as the Machiavellian schemer who plots with the French against the English, the defeated soldier who enters into humiliating treaties with the enemy, and the gullible commander who is eventually betrayed by his own side.

Karnad has shown the fearless warrior as the dreamer of peace and progress who yoked ethics with economics. He adds human dimensions to the figure painted into the fading murals of history. In this context, Nayak (2011: 183) says, “The play appears to be a historical

teleology in colonial taxonomy. Karnad has attempted his best to defend Tipu's marginalized status in his patriotic past and needy present in a post-colonial perspective dousing all colonial bias". Karnad was inspired by Tipu's secret diary in which he had recorded his dreams and also by folk ballads on him in Karnataka.

This play is a complex poetic rehabilitation of Tipu Sultan. In the portrayal of this legendary Sultan, Karnad presents India's firm colonial resistance and crisis in polity due to its internal dissensions and presence of powerful alien adversary.

Apart from myths, folktales and history, Karnad has also concentrated his dramatic imagination on modern man's Postcolonial situation and existential anxiety. He projects life and society in the contemporary world which suffer from internal vacuity and external vanities. *A Heap of Broken Images* (2005) and *Wedding Album* (2009) have their grounding in the "technology-affected and culture-infected Indian society" (Nayak 2011: 187). *A Heap of Broken Images*, like many of Karnad's plays, was first produced and then published. The play presents a complex debate on technology and language. Karnad makes us understand that language is the sign that identifies a person, defines a culture and unites a society or nation. The play also presents Karnad's impression about the tremendous technological advances. He wants to point out that language usually speaks man but now technology speaks man. Technology plays the role of a character in this play. In an interview, he says:

When I returned to Bangalore in early 2009, I realized the extent to which technology pervaded and affected our lives. To me technology was not depressing at all. This was the age of image. We need to understand its aesthetics and use it.

(Mukherjee 2006:53)

The title of the play has been taken from T.S.Eliot's poem the *Wasteland*. Karnad seems to be pointing towards a similar socio-psychological break down in human communication and relationships in the face of overpowering ambition and greed. The play is exceptional for its use of technology and explores the psychological and ideological dimensions of the characters. Mukherjee aptly says:

A consistent preoccupation of Karnad has been to explore the hidden depths of human mind. Karnad's plays invariably demonstrate the playwright's enduring interest in and sensitive inquiry in to the causality of human behavior.

(Quoted in Jha 2009: 159)

Karnad's *Wedding Album* (2009) is a landmark production and presents a Brahmin family where parents are worried for the marriage of their daughter and son in an arranged way. Karnad presents the conflicting situation that arises due to the different ideologies of the parents and their children. He has given a peep into the modern Indian society and makes us aware about the horrors of Postcolonial and Postmodern hybridity. The play gives a clear picture of the 'self' and 'psyche' of the family members and exposes the glory and gravity of secrets in middle class life. It shows a tussle between the traditional values and modern values, as younger generation is buffeted by aspiration to easy prosperity, dreams and phantasms. Nayak (2011: 207) aptly says, "[T]he playwright presents marriage, culture, tradition and Hindu values which are affected by the postcolonial dynamics".

Wedding Album appears a family drama which demonstrates the anxieties, worries, ambition and prospects of love and marriage in middle class people. The play shows fragmented characters and presents crises in their lives because of the influence of materialism, modification of culture and technology. It shows the loss of cultural and moral

values which create turmoil in life. The play also shows the evil impact of multimedia on the younger generation who in the name of career prospect and material success get attracted to its evil designs. The playwright as a great custodian of values, culture, ethics and tradition does not seem to like the entry of the multimedia in an individual's private matters. All this gets reflected through Vidula—a female character in the play—who visits internet café with the plea of playing video games and listening to the sermons of Swami AnangaNath. But what she does there is to chat with the unknown boys in order to masturbate her feminine energy.

Girish Karnad's contribution to Indian English Drama is incredible. He enunciates his ideas from various sources and writes plays with higher ideals and philosophy. He analyses the state of mind of his protagonists and makes a deep study of human behavior, social consciousness and psychological effects. Karnad is deeply rooted in Indian culture and tradition. Through his creative imagination, he explores the treaded and un-treaded floors of human psyche. He tries to rejuvenate the contemporary life in his choice of themes, mingling of contemporary politics and history, and ancient myths and contemporary reality. He valorizes past in his plays and makes it a powerful tool for the expression of his ideas.

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