

THE CINDERELLA OF INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE: A STUDY OF INDIAN DRAMA IN ENGLISH

Deena Jana

Research Scholar, Department of English, K L Deemed to be University, Vaddeswaram,
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India, jana.deena25@gmail.com

Dr. Choudaraju Neelima

Associate Professor, Department of Engineering English, College of Engineering,
Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation, Vaddeswaram, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India,
drneelima@kluniversity.in

ABSTRACT

Indian English drama is one of the most underdeveloped and neglected genres in Indian English literature. Despite the far more substantial input of Krishna Mohan Banerji in his *The Persecuted* (1831), Indian drama in English never saw the kind of massive growth such as poetry or fiction experienced. The main hindrance seems to be the intrinsic relationship between drama and theatre. Different from poetry or fiction, drama needs stage, actors, and an audience for its embodiment. The paper deals with the historical development of Indian English drama, with a special focus on playwrights like Girish Karnad. His works like *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, and *Hayavadana* evolved as a blend of traditional myths with modern existentialist concerns, much akin to the works of Sartre and Camus. His use of folk conventions, synoptic announcements, and self-referential theatrical techniques recalls the Brechtian model of alienation, which demands intellectual engagement instead of passive emotional response.

Keywords: Indian English Drama, Girish Karnad, Myth and Modernity, Theatrical Techniques, Brechtian Alienation

INTRODUCTION

Indian drama in English is the Cinderella of Indian English literature. A recent bibliography of Indian writing in English lists as many as separate titles under poetry, under fiction and under drama.

Early Beginnings of Indian English Literary Forms

Actually, the three forms of poetry and drama began their careers around the same time, with Henry Derozio's *Poems* (1827) and Krishna Mohan Banerji's, *The Persecuted* (1831) respectively, while the first Indian English novel - Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Raj Mohan's Wife* appeared only in 1864.

Rise of Fiction vs. Stagnation of Drama

Since then, the 'pocket theatre' has clearly has already produced masterpieces like *Untouchable*, *The Serpent and The Rope* and *The Guide*. Why has Indian drama in English been unable to grow similarly and bear rich fruit?

Drama's Dependence on Theatre and Audience

Several factors are responsible for the growth of drama. There is the fundamental problem of the relationship between drama and the theatre - a relationship, which constitutes advantage and a limitation for drama vis-a-vis other literary forms.

The Essential Role of Performance in Drama

Drama is a literary art in which the written word of the playwright attains complete artistic realization only when it becomes the spoken word of the actor on the stage and through the medium reacts on the mind of the audience. A play, in order to communicate fully and become a living dramatic experience, thus needs a real theatre and a live audience. Of all writers, it is truest to say of the dramatist; 'He must communicate, or he will die'. It is precisely the lack of these essentials that has hamstrung Indian drama in English all the time.

Historical Glimpse into Indian Theatre During and After the Raj

A glance at the development of drama in India during and after the Raj is instructive. The first theatre in Bombay, the Bombay Amateur Theatre, was built in 1776. The plays presented here were 'in the main the comedies of the later Georgian playwrights. In all Karnad's plays, the main themes such as mythical, historical or legendary - Karnad's speech is modern. He uses the conventions and motifs of folk art. Like masks and project, a world of intensities, uncertainties and unpredictable. He rightly believes that 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. The various conventions the chorus, the music, the apparently unrelated comic interludes, the mixing of the human and the non-human simultaneous presentation of alternative points of view. Like Bertolt Brecht, Karnad survives to break the 'illusion' of the theatre by which the spectators become so engrossed in a play that they forget, for the time being, what they are. Therefore, like Brecht, Karnad leave the stage apparatus visible, presents synoptic announcements, and has narrators directly talking to the audience. All this compels the audience to respond intellectually to the action of play and question it, instead of responding emotionally and merely accepting it.

Karnad's interpretation of the familiar old myth on exchange of ages between father and son seem to have baffled and even angered many of the conventional critics. But to other, who are trying to root their contemporary concerns in old mix. Karnad's unheroic hero Puru is the challenging experience. Karnad places the individual at the center of his picture of the world and shows that each man is what he chooses to be or marks himself. In his psychological exploration, the playwright shows an impressive insight and introduces concepts, which greatly extend the area of moral self-knowledge and self-awareness. Karnad has indeed read wisely Sartre, Camus and other. Girish Karnad has given this traditional tale a new meaning and significance highly relevant in the context of life today. The symbolic theme of Yayati's attachment to life and its pleasures as also his final renunciation is retained. Karnad's originality lies in working out the motivations behind Yayati's ultimate choice. In *The Mahabharata*, Yayati recognizes the nature of desire itself and realizes that fulfilment does not diminish or finish desire.

V.S. Khandekar, the eminent Marathi novelist, also used the Yayati myth in his novel, *Yayati* published in 1959, received several awards such as Government Award (1964). In his novel, Khandekar made Yayati a representation of modern common man who in spite of receiving much happiness in life, restless and discontented. The mythical Yayati ran after sensual pleasure. Khandekar's Yayati runs after all kinds of materialistic pleasures, cars,

bungalows, bank accounts, beautiful clothes, dance and music. Though the tale is taken from Puranas, Khadekar's Yayati is a modern man. The existentialists like Sartre and Camus put a great stress on of responsibility. In an interview, Karnad says:

I was excited by the story of Yayati, this exchange of ages between the father and son, which seemed to the change between powerful and terribly modern. At the same time, I was reading a lot of Satre and Camus existentialists. This consistent harping on responsibility which the existentialists indulge in suddenly seemed to link up with the story of Yayati (Rajinder 113).

"Forgive me, Mother. You fulfilled the deepest craving of my life- you gave me Padmini and I forgot my word. [...] Here Mother Kali [...] My Head. Take it" (Hayavadana 28). This play, Yayati, emerged out of his sublimated protest against his being suffocated by the responsibilities thrust on him by his parents.

Tughlaq received acclamation and Karnad was recognized as a promising playwright. The play was translated into other Indian Languages. It presents Muhammad- Bin-Tughlaq, the eponymous and enigmatic character, who keeps to changing his roles. He thinks that he alone can rule his kingdom ideally. So, he gets his father and brother assassinated in a contrived accident and inherits the kingdom. He is a great scholar and visionary. He is caught in the game of power. He plays the role of Rescuer in order to feel powerful. Though favorite role is the Rescuer, he shifts to the other roles of the Drama Triangle, Persecutor and Victim. He effects several reforms which, he thinks, will benefit his people. He announces equality of justice to the second anniversary of his coronation. Aziz takes advantage of it and, in the guise of Brahmin named Vishnu Prasad, files a suit against the government after buying a land from a Brahmin with a back date. He is offered five hundred silvers and also a post in the Civil Service as compensating for the loss of his land. Tughlaq feels overwhelmed about his success in implementing is deal. He addresses his people and says, "My beloved people, you have heard [...]. Later this year the capital of my empire will be moved from Delhi to Daulatabad" (*Tughlaq*12)

He is thus blind to how some people like Aziz exploit his reforms, which therefore fail to reach the intended people. And people are not happy at all about his rule. A Hindu, for example, does not commend his removal of jiziya tax and condemns him for hypocrisy. We didn't want an exemption! Look, [...] I' know you are a Hindu, but you are also a human being well, that makes me nervous (*Tughlaq* 2)

Aparna Dharwadker aptly points out in *Authors Introduction* written by Girish Karnad, "Tughlaq's madness and tyranny- the only qualities his subjects attribute to him - are thus forms of powerlessness posing as power" (Karnad 19). And M.K. Naik compares Karnad's Tughlaq with Camus's Caligula and finds the fiasco of power in both of them. Tughlaq can also be compared with Tendulkar's plays, especially with *Ghasiram Kotwal* where power game is very intense. Muhammad plays the rescuer while Ghasiram becomes the persecutor to exercise power. Steiner says, while explaining how and why people play these roles "Having been in powerless position, we make ourselves feel better by taking, and assuming power over others as Rescuers or persecutors" (Stein 13).

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN THEATRE AND DRAMA

India, an ancient country known for its variety of climates, customs, languages and literature, has a long and glorious dramatic tradition of its own. It is, of course, difficult to trace the origin of the Indian theatre and determine the exact date of its commencement. Though there are controversies in this regard among scholars, we may guess that the classical Sanskrit Drama probably originated from the folk theatre of the country as a sophisticated form and, in course of time, both went on barrowing from each other and developed. Whatever the original of the classical drama, the existence of Bharata's '*Natyasastra*', a treatise on dramaturgy, which is said to belong to the third century A.D. is a clear proof of the existence of drama in a developed form in at least five or six centuries preceding it and the art of drama was given the status of Veda. The great author prescribes not only the stage worthy things which are both entertaining and didactic, but also the satisfaction for the audience. The most interesting point which Bharata makes concerns his experience in his first production of playhouses for subsequent performances according to the required intensity of auditory and visual aspects. Any way it is this comprehensive treatise of Bharata that gives us an idea of the early Indian theatre. Commenting on India English Drama, K R SrinivasIyengar say:

Modern Indian dramatic writing in English is neither rich in quantity nor, on the whole, of high quality. Enterprising Indians have for nearly a century occasionally attempted drama in English-but seldom for actual stage production.(Iyengar 226).

As Kalidasa says, drama is mainly meant to be performed ("Prayagapradhana"). In the classical Sanskrit Drama itself, we came across Bhasa who was ahead of his times in this practical aspect. The success of a play is to be judged only on the stage

Drama is a composite art in which the written word of the playwright attains complete artistic realization only when it becomes the spoken word of the actor on the stages and through that medium reacts on the mind of the audience (3)

For successful communication, the playwright will have to exert utmost care in the presentation of themes and in employing models, techniques and dialogues as well as the language suited to the purpose.

Girish Karnard' Contribution

Girish Karnard is one of the foremost playwrights of the contemporary Indian stage. He has given the Indian theatre a richness that could probably be equated only with his talents as an actor -director. His contribution goes beyond theatre, he has directed feature films, documentaries and television serials in Kannada, Hindi, and English and has played leading roles as an actor in Hindi and Kannada art films, commercial movies and television serials. He has represented Indian in foreign lands as an emissary of art and culture. Karnard was born at Matheran near Mumbai, in 1938. Karnard's early childhood was spent in Sirsi in a Maratha-Kannada cultural milieu. Recalling his early years, his words about his frugal upbringing. The ply past time his brothers and sisters must have listened to the stories by the night lamp.

At seven or eight in the evening it felt like midnight. So, we read or told stories, fairy tales and mythology. Mothers recounted stories. Father exaggerated the machismo. The jungle stretched into the horizon. Ghosts, spirits, animals from the tales took on a realism that was larger than life. I have never bothered

what tale to invent, I dip into my mind, into our culture.
(2003:4)⁴

Karnard has been a humanistic writer. His profound humanism is portrayed in all his works. Karnard's profound humanistic concerns are mirrored in all plays.

The salient features of Karnard's humanism in his works are:

1. Deep concern for man, especially the weak and oppressed.
2. Return to the past and reinterpretation of the past mythical, historical and oral stories.
3. A determined demystification of the dominant beliefs and practices.
4. A sympathetic understanding and affirmation of this ephemeral life.
5. Contemporary social relevance.

Karnard does not believe that the world has been created for man to conquer and abuse it. What Karnard aims at is an ecological order in which man and all creatures as well as inanimate objects would live in harmony. He wants to emphasize that society in its present form cannot live by ill will, enmity, destruction, hatred, and so on. With this perception in the backdrop, Karnard has focused his attention on the downtrodden and lesser privileged of the society. He has written the plays with this in mind and they invariably speak for the women and the people at the ground level. The humanistic approach is evident from its glory.

The rich wealth of folklore told and retold amidst the frightening darkness of the surrounding jungle transported Karnard into a world where snakes spoke like man and the gods changed forms. While in the company of his parents, he occasionally watched performances, enacted by the 'Nataka', what really drew him was the versatility of the folk performances. This left a deep impact on Girish Karnard as a dramatist. Karnard studied the western literature and came in touch with the Western drama and the Western theatre native traditions and learnt many things from them. Karnard had his education at Dharwad and then Mumbai, where he obtained master's in economics and secured a Rhodes scholarship. After his return from Oxford he joined Oxford University Press, Madras, an Assistant Manager and later as the Manager. His artistic achievements as a gifted actor, producer, director and writer were recognized and he was awarded Padmashri in 1974. In the same year (1974) he was appointed Director of the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. In 1987, he went to U.S.A as a visiting Professor to the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Between 1988 and 1993, he served as a Chairman of SangeetNatakAkademi, New Delhi. In 1994, the Karnataka University awarded him the honorary degree Doctorate. Karnard is truly a man of multifaceted creative genius.

During his formative years, Karnard went through diverse influences. He was exposed to a literary scene where there was a direct clash between Western and native tradition. The magic of theatre inspired his creative imagination. Since his early adolescence to maturity, his international exposure and contacts as a scholar, actor and writer expanded his vision as a playwright and producer, who could organize personal experience, cultural memory, belief and desire into a well-made play, endowed with classical, popular and contemporary components. It was India of the fifties and sixties that surfaced two streams of thought in all walks of life—adoption of new modernist techniques, a legacy of colonial rule and adherence to the rich cultural past of the country. Karnard's position was akin to that of John Dryden, the 17th century British dramatist, who while writing his plays, had to choose between the classical tradition and native tradition. The norms had been set rigorously by Aristotle, the second was a more

liberal, native approach that was practiced by Shakespeare. Dryden evaluated the merits and demerits of both the traditions in his famous critical treatise '*Essay on Dramatic Poesy*'(15).

Karnad was fascinated by the traditional plays. He has a fine knack of turning the historical events or mythological stories into fine plays. He gives a new dimension to the old stories related to mythology or history. He is also deeply interested in indigenous folk tales and folk plays. His first play *Yayathi* reinterprets the ancient myth of The Mahabharata in the modern context. It is an existentialist drama. It is based on the theme of responsibility. While the theme and language were typically native, the play owed its form, not to numerous mythological plays he watched, but to western playwrights whom he had read. While the subject matter was purely native and traditional, the form and structure were essentially western. Karnad writing of the *Yayathi* without any premeditation, set things straight was to writer plays, not poetry which he aspired to write, and that the sound his inspiration was native stuff, history, mythology and folklore. Even the age of twenty-two, he realized that he could not be a poet, but a playwright. Until he wrote this play, Karnad fancied himself a poet. During teens he had written poetry and had trained himself to write in English greatest ambition of my life was to be a poet, 'says Karnad. By then was in college he wanted to write in English, become a novelist and become internationally famous. There have been more poets and more novelists, but these have been very few playwrights and very few good plays. Karnad further realized that the art of a poet or a novelist was easier than that of a dramatist.

As he says:

The subject that interests most writers is, of course, themselves and it is easy subject to talk about, but you know it is always easier if you are a poet or a novelist because you are used to talking in your voice. You suspend your whole life talking as a writer directly to the audience. The problem in being a playwright is that everything that you write is for someone else to say (6)

A playwright has many problems. What is upsetting for a playwright is the total lack of plays in India, although the company '*Natak*' tradition made a major contribution that flourished since the early decades of the eighteenth century. Where does the playwright look for the sources? And why does one write plays at all? Questions Karnad. There is hardly any theatre in the country. Karnad got into films in an effort to find the right kind of a living audience. And perhaps to earn his livelihood, Karnad has always found it difficult to find a suitable, rich subject for writing plays. For instance, after writing *Yayathi* all kinds of books are read in an effort to find a plot, some plot that would truly inspire. He read the history of Kannada literary by KirtinathKurtkoti and learnt from him that Indian history has not been handled by any Indian writer the way it has been done by Shakespeare or Brecht. Greatly impressed by this statement, Karnad went through a book of Indian history. And when he came to *Tughlaq*, he said,

Oh! Marvellous. That is what i wanted." That was a subject in tune with the times. In those days' existentialism was quite in fashion. Everything about *Tughlaq* seemed to fit into what Karnad had surmised from KurtKoti.(7).

He felt that in *Tughlaq* he had hit upon a fantastic character. He realized that he had absorbed this character and it was growing in front of him. *Tughlaq* was the most extraordinary

character to come to the throne of Delhi; in religion, in philosophy, even in calligraphy in battle, war-field, and all other areas. He was unsurpassable; no other ruler could match his capability. Writing on such a subject seemed challenging and rewarding.

Karnad's *Tughlaq* bears several resemblances with Shakespeare's Richard III. Like King Richard, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq is temperamental and whimsical. Events in both the plays center around the eccentricities of their protagonists. Again, like Shakespeare, Karnad presents the historical events and complexities of the time with perfect objectivity of a true historian, throwing upon them the beautiful coloring of art. He exhibits without concealment the weakness of the King's character but spares no pain to evoke our whole-hearted pity for him in his fall, *Tughlaq* had a tremendous success with the reading public and it achieved greater popularity on the stage as actors have liked to do the role of the emperor. As opposed to the first play, Karnad wrote this one in the convention of the company Natakas.

The form of the play, Karnad was not interested in Jean Anouilh. He divided the play into scenes in the indigenous fashion of the 'Natakas'. The political chaos which Karnad depicts in *Tughlaq* reminded many readers of the Nehru era in Indian history. Karnad finds this similarity accidental. Says, he did not consciously write about the Nehru era.

I am always flattered when they tell me that it was about the Nehru era and equally applies to development of politics since then. But, I think, well, that it is a compliment that any playwright would be thrilled to get, but it was intended to be a contemporary play about a contemporary situation. (7)

The publication of *Yayati* in 1961 and especially of *Tughlaq* in 1964 established Karnad as a master dramatist. Subsequently he published *Hayavadana* (1971), *Angumalige* (1977), *Hittina Hunga* (1980), *Naga-Mandala* (1988), *Tale-Danda* (1990) and *Ani Mattu Male* (1995), Karnad wrote all his eight plays in Kannada; these have been translated into major Indian languages including *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, *Naga-Mandala*, *Tale-Danda* and *The fire and the Rain*- have been translated into English. The first three of these have been published by Oxford University Press in India and the remaining two by Ravi Dayal publishers, New Delhi. This self-reflexive introduction offers a good starting point to understand the cultural context for Karnad's works, particularly his *Naga-Mandala*. In the author's introduction

The playwright is clearly not only speaking for himself but for an entire generation of playwrights. This was the first generation, as he points out, which came into maturity after India's independence. This was the first generation that inherited the legacy of Nehruvian India, it had to understand the idea of 'Indianness' (8).

For this, these playwrights were required to negotiate the tensions between the pre-colonial past, its colonial inheritances and its national futures. It is the struggle between the "attractions of Western made of thoughts and our traditions" that constituted the historical text of his plays, according to Karnad. As dramatist Girish Karnad is an existentialist. Existentialism implies consciousness of the self in the world of living experience. It is an attempt to reaffirm the power of the self to deal with experience. It also implies problems of selfhood, search for identity, isolation frustration. Existentialism vindicates the individual despite his limitation and failures by insisting that he can transcend reality in his own

consciousness. It affirms the dignity of Man. “Existentialism is humanism” Karnad’s three plays are existentialist. They are related with the theme of responsibility and the search for identity. *Yayathi* is a play on the theme of responsibility. *Tughlaq* deals with the search for identity. The sultan first of all tries to find his identity in high handed dealing and imaginative plans and when he does not succeed, he resorts to murder and blood -shed. In *Hayavadana*, too, Girish Karnad deals with the theme of the search for identity and human relationships.

There were a variety of theatre and performance traditions that prevailed in new independent India. Karnad himself recalls the ‘Natak’ companies or the commercial dramas that toured the countryside and staged plays. His childhood memories also include ‘Yakshagana’ – a traditional performance found in many parts of Karnataka. As Karnad moved to the city he was also introduced to modern theatre, which focused predominantly on the adaptations of Western plays. Then there was also the Parsi theatre which was very popular before cinema made its inroads. None of these could however become the cultural expression of a modern India. In Karnad’s estimation, the regional and traditional theatre continued to rehearse old stories and myths. They were not commentaries of emergent India. The Parsi theatre and other company drama were single-minded in their pursuance of commercial interests. Thus, they repeatedly put on stage tired and formulaic spectacles and ‘action’. The adaptations of western plays by the modern urban theatre did little to foreground India realities. Thus, the basic concern of the Indian theatre in the post-independence period was, according to Karnad, an attempt to define its ‘Indianness’.

Karnad discovered that the mythologies, folklore and other traditional forms offered ‘a ready-made narrative within which I could contain and explore my insecurities’. However, he notes there was ‘no dramatic structure in my own tradition to which I could relate myself’. It is from this dilemma that the new theatre that used themes of folk and mythology emerged. These plays did not set out to mindlessly reuse form which belonged to another period in history. Instead, folklore and mythology were used to reflect the nation’s history and the challenges of its contemporary life. This was adapted to forms, which borrowed heavily from Western modes of theatre and performance. Nevertheless, these plays staked claim, through their use of folk and mythology, to being explicitly ‘Indian’.

There have, however, been many criticisms against the modern ‘folk’ theatre of the kind that Girish Karnad belongs to. It has been suggested that these playwrights had generalized their personal anxieties and projected them onto an entire nation. Most of them had moved out of village communities and had become part of the new India that made it seek the essential core of the nation in its rural parts. In other words, it is suggested that the theatre they forged as a result of their quest for Indianness, did not work for all sections of society. Secondly this theatre spoke only to a thin slice of urban middle class. Often enough, watch in these plays became the leisure activity of that class of people who wanted to project tastes that were different from that of the ‘masses. Popular cinema, for instance was ‘passe’ for this class of people. The modern ‘folk theatre’, in fact, constantly distanced itself from cinema. It also dissociated itself from theatre traditions that it regarded as populist and low grade. In fact, one could read Karnad’s scathing criticism of Parsi theatre in the author’s introduction’ as a case in point. Finally, there was the re-casting of the ‘folk’ to talk about all issues and concerns of contemporary India. It has been pointed out that, in effect, this put in place a predetermined structure. The ‘folk’ grew to be as formulaic, as the theatre forms which these playwrights

rejected. Besides, the folk did not always prove to be an effective enough tool for social critique (9).

Karnadas a translator

Karnad is a skillful translator. He writes his plays in Kannada: English is the language of his adulthood. He writes articles essays, film scripts in English but not plays. When he translates his own work, he has a great advantage. He has a lot of freedom that another translator will not have. A translator has to be faithful to the text and he does not have the freedom to make changes if it is somebody else's text "My translation", says Karnad, "must therefore, be seen as approximation to the original'.(Translation, 218). To begin with, he was quite reluctant to translate his own plays. He realized that translating from Kannada into English required a great deal of re-writing- a kind of transcreation. He translated Tughlaq when AlyquePadamsee was to stage it and then Hayavadana for the Madras players. He feels that translating from one regional language to another is easier than translating into English. The basic problem for the translator lies in his search for appropriate cultural equivalents. Besides his own plays, Karnad has translated BadalSircar'sEvamIndrajit which was well received in literary circles. He found translating the play very enjoyable and rewarding. As a translator he kept in mind the utterance value of the dialogue. He also conveyed the appropriate rhythm and pace of the original language. Karnad has an immense faith in the discipline of translation. It is the only way for creative writers to reach a wider audience. How else, wonders Karnad, should one experience world theatre! His plays have been performed on stage, directed by eminent directors. The historical play *Tughlaq*, in particular, has stood the test of time. B.V Karanth's 1966 Kannada production in Bombay, Om Shiv Puri'sHndi production in Delhi the same year and AlyquePadamsee's English production in Bombay in 1970 are some of the memorable performances of the play. In 1974, the National school of Drama Repertory Company mounted a memorable revival of the way at the old fort in Delhi under E. Alkazi's direction.

Karnad's plays have received an international recognition. These have been widely performed in Europe and America. The play Tughlaq has been translated into Hungarian and German. The B.B.C., London, broadcast it in 1979 and *Hayavadana* in 1993, directed by E. Alkazi, Tughlaq was presented in London by the National School of Drama Repertory Company as part of the festival of India in 1982. Karnad's mythical play *Hayavadana* was presented at the Berlin Festival of Drama and Music in Germany in 1985. Directed in German by Vijaya Mehta, it was part of the Repertoire of the Deutsches National Theatre. Welmar, in 1984-86. It was rechristened as Divided Together and presented at the Ark Ensemble in New York in 1993. The play *Naga – Mandala* directed by VijayaMehata in German was presented by the LeipzigerSchauspiclhaus at Leipzig and Berlin for the festival of India in Germany in 1992. Again, it was performed at the University theatre in Minneapolis as part of its thirtieth anniversary celebrations in 1993. In the same year, Guthrie theatre commissioned Karnad's latest play The Fire and the Rain. Karnad has received wide recognition for his plays. He got the Mysore State award for *Yayathi* in 1962. Kamaladevi Award of the BharatiyaNatyaSangh for the best Indian play of the year for *Hayavadana* in 1972. For *Tale Danda* he won a number of awards:B. H. Sridhar award in 1992, Karnataka NatakAkademi Award for the best play of 1990-91 in 1992, Karnataka SahityaAkademi award in 1993 and SahityaAkademi Award in 1994. He was honored in 1990 by Granthaloka, journal of the Book Trade, as The Writer of the

Year' for his play *Tale Danda*. In 1992, he received Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award for the most creative work of 1989 for *Naga-Mandala*. He has also received the Government of Mysore Rajyotsava Award in 1970; Sangeet Natak Akademi's Award for playwriting in 1972; Karnataka Natak Akademi Award in 1984; Nandikar, Calcutta Award for playwriting in 1989. Booksellers and Publishers' Association of South Indian Award in 1992. Karnad is an important filmmaker and writer of film scripts. He has written the script and dialogues for the film *Samskara* (1960) in Kannada based on the novel of the same name by U.R. Anantha Murthy and played the lead role in it. With B.V. Karanath he has co-directed the film '*Vamsha-Vriksha*' (1971) in which he has also acted, and '*Godhuli*' (Hindi), '*Tabbaliyu Ninade Magane*' (Kannada) in 1977. He has also directed films like '*Kadu*' (1973) and '*Ondanondu Kaladal*' (1978) in Kannada; '*Utsav*' (1984) and '*Cheluvi*' (1992) in Hindi. His roles in '*Manthan*' (1976) and '*Swami*' (1978) are among his best in Hindi art cinema.

Between 1963 and 1970, Karnad was an active member of an amateur group called 'Madras players'. He worked as actor and director, in such plays as *Evam Indrajit*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, '*Uncle Vanya*, *The Caretaker*, *The Crucible* and *A View from the Bridge* in English during 1964-69. He also played the lead roles in *Oedipus Rex* and *Jokumaraswamy*, directed in Kannada by B.V. Karanath, for the open air festival in Bangalore in 1972. Karnad has also published a number of articles, the most significant being 'In search of New Theatre' in *Contemporary Indian Tradition*, ed. Caria Borden (Washington Smithsonian Press, 1988) and *Theatre in India*. While Karnad is a multi-faceted personality, it is essentially as a playwright that he is at his best. He confesses, "I have been fairly lucky in having a multi-pronged career. You know, "I have been an actor, a publisher, a film-maker". But in none of these fields have I felt quite as much at home as in playwriting. "In India, unfortunately, the writers cannot live on their writing alone; it does not yield enough royalties for sustenance. Says Karnad, "One can't earn a comfortable living even from a successful play. When consider *Tughlaq*, as we know, it's been enormously successful critically as well as in performance. Playwrights in the west have been able to retire on such successes- or at least, to devote themselves to that activity entirely. I can't." Today Girish Karnad is considered to be one of the most significant Indian dramatists. He has enriched the Indian literary scene with his contribution to art, culture theatre and drama. It is most befitting that Karnad has been conferred by the President of India, the prestigious awards, padmashri in 1974 and Padmabhushan in 1992. Also, he received the Gubbi Veeranna Award from the Government of Karnataka in 1997. Karnad is based in Bangalore and lives with his wife, a medico and his two children – a daughter and a son – both in their teens. He keeps shuttling between Bangalore, Bombay and Delhi as the three metropolitan cities abundantly offer an opportunity for creative writing, acting in films, and directing serials for national Television. Karnad is not impulsive by temperament and does not resort to writing just at the flash of an idea. He follows a golden mean of thought and action when he launches on a new play. Coming to the character of Horatio, Hamlet says that those persons are indeed blessed in whom, "blood and judgement are so well, commingled" that they are not treated by fortune as a musical instrument on which fortune may play at will and from which fortune may be able to produce whichever tune she wishes to produce. The classical qualities of balance and restraint are true of the person of Karnad too. He is a genius as a writer, man of excellent disposition. And one in whom all the

four elements, to use a Renaissance analogy, are so well mixed that Nature may stand up and say, “Here’s a man”.

Wherever we turn in the world we find theatre. Any event that involves the interplay of time, space, performers, action and spectators may be understood to carry the possibilities of theatre. Indeed, historians, archaeologists and anthropologists assure us that evidence of performance- that may be taken to represent forms of drama or theatre – occur among all the peoples and cultures of the world and can be traced as far back as human knowledge can go. According to Richard Schechner,

(...)dancing, singing, wearing masks and/or costumes, impersonating other human, animals or supernatural, acting out stories, presenting time 1 at time 2, isolating or preparing special places and/or times for these presentations, and individual or group preparations or rehearsals are coexistent with the human condition(Schechner 66).

Such coexistence of the phenomenon of theatre or performance with human communal life finds ample corroboration through cave paintings, temple art, archeological finds, ancient manuscripts, rites and rituals. It is also clear that in specific ways, performances of various kinds fulfil a variety of social functions, the most significant being ‘idealizing and or ‘criticizing’ the norms of living in a particular society and /or drawing attention to certain inalienable truths about human life and character. It is a commonly held theory that theatre originated in religious ritual. For instance, Greek tragedy is understood to have developed from the thyramb celebrating the primal Dionysian Dacchanalia, while it is assumed that Greek comedy grew out of the phyllite dances that were a later outgrowth. Similarly, Indian theatre traces its beginnings to the Fifth Veda as Natyasastra that was revealed to Bharatamuni by the Creator Brahma himself to celebrate ancient rituals and seasonal festivities of the country. The growth of Christian drama too is linked with the scriptural enactments in the nave of the Church through the middle ages and the Renaissance.

However, Performance Theorists like Erving Goffman, Victor Turner, Birdwhistell, D.W. Winnicott, Richard Shechner, Rebecca Schneider, Clifford Geertz, James Clifford and George Marcus insist that ritual must be considered as one among the several other activities like games, sports, dance and music that are performative (and therefore contain an element of theatre). They hold the view that all these activities along with rites and rituals together comprise the performance sphere of human beings. According to the theorists, all these activities are primeval and present in all cultures, showing variations only in their formal representations. (11) Moreover, they are so interlinked with one another that it is often difficult to classify them separately even for etymological purposes. A common feature with every activity is that each entails the creation of a unique spatio-temporal frame to generate a symbolic reality within which a ‘play’ that is governed by specific rules integral to its structure and form may be enacted. Shechner explains that such ‘special rules’ are formulated and persist because these activities are ‘something apart from everyday life’. He maintains that these ‘special worlds’ are not gratuitous but form a vital part of human life that ‘no society, no individual, can do without it’ (Shechner 12).

Performance is an essential part of our lives, but it is not an easy concept to define. It is equally difficult to write about performances. To state in simplistic terms, it is an activity by

an individual or a group enacted in the presence of another individual or a group. (13). Many such performances endure around the world and comprise our collective cultural heritage. But whatever be the activity, what is handed down through posterity very often comprises essential features of a performance. For instance, a dance form will retain certain basic steps to which variations can be added by individual performers. Similarly, in the Indian classical music tradition, the basic raga has remained the same through centuries and is passed on through the oral tradition of guru-shishyaparampara, though individual interpretation and rendition of it determines the finesse and the class of the vocalist. Similarly, again, the ancient marital art form of Kerala, kalaripattu is still performed with the same basic movements that are both athletic and theatrical. The 'essence' therefore consists of certain rules performative patterns which Performance Theorists describe as the 'text' or 'script' that pre-exist any given enactment and continues from enactment to enactment, sometimes through centuries, despite individual variations and interpretations. Thus, a performative activity is always already 'scripted'.

Drama, theatre, script and performance are all loaded terms with intriguing conceptual interlinking. One may follow the tips given by Schechner (Schechner 70-94) to define each separately. According to Schechner then, drama is what the playwright writes and is the domain of the author, the composer, the shaman. It is a tight, verbal narrative that allows little improvisations; it exists as a code independent of any individual transmitter and can be transported in time and space unaffected by the people who carry it; it is or may be easily made into a script. Script is the interior map of particular production and is the domain of the teacher, director, master. It can be either tight or loose knit or developed through the performance. Theatre comprises a set of specific visible/sonic gestures and is the domain of the performers. It is the visible aspect of the script, the exterior topography of the interior map. Performance encompasses the whole event and includes the receptors, performers and technicians, although the audience is the dominant element of any performance. But drama, script, theatre, and performance need not all exist for any given event. When they do, "they enclose one another, overlap, interpenetrate, simultaneously and redundantly arousing and using every channel of communication" (14)

Our purpose here is to examine drama, script, theatre and performance as an integrated enterprise and argue for a convergence between 'drams' and is understood as a scripted text' and 'theatre' that is supposed to be governed by a 'performative text'. To proceed towards this end, one must first tackle some attitudinal differences. For example, there exists a troublesome disagreement in the understanding of a 'play' as a literary written text to be interpreted or as a theatre script to be performed. This has been so for many years and has created a strange separation in the minds of the receptors of 'drama' (to be classified into 'genres' and consumed by literature departments) and of 'theatre' (to be handled by the theatre departments). It is often a matter of debate whether these two kinds of textual structure/semiotics can be brought into the same field of investigation (Hornby). There are many reasons why the breach between 'drama' and 'theatre' is allowed to continue. For instance, org Lukacs argue that In the great ages, the drama flowed naturally from the existing theatre while, from Goethe on, the poet-dramatist rejects the theatre, writers play which are too good for it and then calls for the creation of the kind of theatre which will be good enough for the plays. (Bentley 424).

Some writers (like Bertolt Brecht, de Marinis and Ruffini: all cited by Amis) rule out the dramatic text altogether as legitimate concern theatre studies, other theatre practitioners emphasize the total autonomy of the theatre world, citing its unique kinetic system of expression. Theatre's capacity to give visual embodiment to ideas through its distinctive language/semiotics awards theatre a unique system of intelligibility, Artaud, as is well known, takes this as a major achievement for theatre and explains that theatre's non-verbal language brightly incorporates but would not finally need the language of written text (Artaud 68-69). Hence, he argues, theatre provides an independent way of knowing that is not otherwise available. This no doubt confers a special status upon theatre but besides raising questions about theatre's formulation with the outside world, the norms of verisimilitude, notions of 'ethicity' and so on which have been major pre-occupations of all theatre practitioners through the past century, adherence to the viewpoint that theatre existed only for and by itself would evidently wake that very world of theatre ephemeral.

Generally, drama criticism tends to focus only upon the thematic concerns of a play in relation to its social impact, with negligible – or at best intermittent – reference to modes of performance; whereas, a play is always written with its performance in mind. Drama finds fulfilment as theatre. Changes in the texture, structure and theme of a play would embody changes in the nature of the theatrical event. It is an acknowledged fact that though theatre may be a circumscribed domain, what goes on within it is not fixed and unvarying, but changeable and often surprising. A balanced and thorough appreciation of a play, therefore, would link its texture, structure and the 'scripted' theme to the mode of performance that may be characteristic of a particular kind of a play in a particular context and theatre space.

The totality of the performance can then be assessed for the specificity of its social impact. Such a holistic conception of theatre recognizes it as a unique mode of knowledge because of its ability to figure not only as a mirror to the world, but for its ability to even replace the latter and go beyond it. Artaud carries this logic forward when he says, "Theatre leads to the rejection of the usual limitations of man and man's powers, and infinitely extends the frontiers of what is called reality" (Artaud 18)

A drama text or a theatre performance is capable of engendering different 'resistances'. The reader/spectator is invited metaphorically to either stand deep within the expanding horizons of a remote or familiar world to the drama enders; or, stand at the margin and contemplate the needs of restrictiveness; or, stand outside the boundaries and absorb the experience, difference. To recognize the challenging complexity of the mode of participation required of a critic and the audience is to recognize that some of the characteristics of the text have larger implications not only for the nature of the theatrical event and for the audience's participation in it, but also theatre's social function in the world.

The mutual contamination of the literary world of drama and the performative world of theatre is not only unavoidable, but fundamental to the mutual development of each domain. Moreover, the great achievement of twentieth century drama has been to transcend the traditional lines separating 'drama' and other kinds of performance (other 'performative domains') to register new conventions. The stage has meaningfully and successfully incorporated elements of dance, song, mime and puppet show, and a wide range of props from the performance genres to facilitate the embodiment of new themes, texture and structure in drama and theatre towards new social impact. Girish Karnad is a playwright whose plays offer

together are engagement between the apparently separated worlds and makes the autonomy and accessibility to drama and theatre complementary rather than contrasting domains. His plays figure in university syllabi around the world to be taught in classrooms as texts: they are equally popular as performance texts re-produced time again by different directors. It is remarkable that whatever be the physical or behavioral embodiment given to the mythical, historical, social or psychological horizons of his plays, the issues that build the plots are drawn from and remain firmly grounded in the experimental world of the reader/ spectators but bearing larger implications capable of transcending cultural specificities to reach out towards a universality of human knowledge. That Karnad's plays are successfully performed by theatre groups of different countries and are extremely well received by the audiences of different cultures proves this point.

In Karnad's plays, the worlds of reality and fantasy or illusion meet in such a way that poetry is created. To echo what was said about Genet's work, Karnad's plays represent the junction point at which 'dream is simultaneously reality, where the invisible coincides with the visible, where the object is both itself and the revelation of something not itself' (19). Yet, it is everyday language that he uses, perhaps re shaped and re vitalized with caritative richness, but operating as part of, rather than in opposition to, the language of theatre. Below the surface of the words lies the subtext of the actor's roles a potentially limitless body of tacit knowledge about what the characters are like, how they would react to certain situations, even though the explicit.

CONCLUSION

The Indian drama in English has always been an underdeveloped and often ignored genre in Indian English literature. Even though its origins trace back to the time of Krishna Mohan Banerji's *The Persecuted* (1831), Indian drama in English has never reached such heights as poetry and fiction achieved. The overriding problem lies in the very nature of the connection between drama and the theatre. A stage, actors, and an audience are required for drama to assume real shape, unlike poetry and fiction. The paper traces the historical trajectory of Indian English drama with special reference to Girish Karnad. His plays, *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, as also *Hayavadana*, weave a fusion of traditional myths with modern existentialist concerns reminiscent of the works of Sartre and Camus. Karnad's folk techniques, embedded announcements, and self-referential theatricality conform to the Brechtian model of alienation, demanding intellectual involvement from the audience instead of passive emotional response. The study further compares Ghasiram Kotwal by Tendulkar with *Tughlaq* in terms of the theme of the dynamics of power in the Indian political and historical contexts. Through the lens of this discussion, Indian-English drama is represented as an excellent literary form that deserves more academic and theatrical attention.

REFERENCES

1. Banerji, Krishna Mohan. *The Persecuted*. 1831.
2. Chatterjee, Bankim Chandra. *Rajmohan's Wife*. 1864.
3. Karnad, Girish. *Hayavadana*. Oxford University Press, 1971.
4. Karnad, Girish. *Tughlaq*. Oxford University Press, 1964.
5. Karnad, Girish. *Yayati*. Oxford University Press, 1961.
6. Khandekar, V.S. *Yayati*. 1959.
7. Naik, M.K. *A History of Indian English Literature*. SahityaAkademi, 1982.

8. Dharwadker, Aparna. *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India Since 1947*. University of Iowa Press, 2005.
9. Tendulkar, Vijay. *GhasiramKotwal*. Seagull Books, 1972.
10. Steiner, Claude. *Scripts People Live: Transactional Analysis of Life Scripts*. Grove Press, 1974.
11. Nair, K. R. *The Poetics of Nationalism: Cultural Resistance and Representation in Indian Drama in English*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
12. Reddy, G. Omprakash. "The Conflict of Tradition and Modernity in Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*." *Indian Literature*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2001, pp. 67-79.
13. Bhalla, Neela. "Myth and Reality in *Hayavadana*." *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2002, pp. 45-53.
14. Karnad, Girish. *Hayavadana*. Oxford University Press, 1972.
15. Dharwadker, Aparna. *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947*. University of Iowa Press, 2005.
16. Mukherjee, Tutun. *GirishKarnad's Plays: Performance and Critical Perspectives*. Pencraft International, 2006.
17. Naik, M. K. *A History of Indian English Literature*. SahityaAkademi, 1982.
18. Mee, Erin B. *The Theatre of Roots: Redirecting the Modern Indian Stage*. Seagull Books, 2008.
19. Sanskrit Tales – *VetalaPanchavimshika* (BaitalPachisi). Translated by Sir Richard Francis Burton, 1870.
20. Raghavan, V. *The Indian Theatre*. National Book Trust, 1970.