

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
I YEAR BA ENGLISH – I SEMESTER
INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH
STUDY MATERIAL FOR 4 th & 5 th UNIT

UNIT- 4

DRAMA

NAGAMANDALA-

GRISH KARNAD

UNIT -5 (FICTION)

THE WHITE TIGER-

ARAVINDADIGA

NAGAMANDALA- GRISHKARNAD

Girish Karnad Biography

Girish Raghunath Karnad was an Indian actor, film director, Kannada writer. He is the recipient of Jnanpith Award for Kannada, the highest literary honour conferred in India. For four decades Karnad has been composing plays, often using history and mythology to tackle contemporary issues. He is also active in the world of Indian cinema working as an actor, director, and screenwriter, earning numerous awards along the way. He was conferred Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan by the government of India. Girish Karnad was born in Matheran, Maharashtra, into a Konkani-speaking family. His initial schooling was in Marathi. As a youngster, Karnad was an ardent admirer of Yakshagana and the theatre in his village. He earned his Bachelors of Arts degree from Karnataka University, Dharwad in 1958. Upon graduation, Karnad went to England and studied at Lincoln and Magdalen colleges in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, earning his Master of Arts degree in philosophy, political science and economics. Karnad was a Visiting Professor and Fulbright Scholar in Residence at the University of Chicago.

Literature

Karnad is most famous as a playwright. His plays, written in Kannada, have been widely translated into English and all major Indian languages. Karnad's plays are written neither in English, in which he dreamed of earning international literary fame, nor in his mother tongue Konkani. Instead they are composed in his adopted language Kannada. When Karnad started writing plays, Kannada literature was highly influenced by the renaissance in Western literature. Writers would choose a subject which looked entirely alien to the manifestation of native soil.

In a situation like that Karnad found a new approach like drawing historical and mythological sources to tackle contemporary themes. His first play, "Yayati" (1961) ridicules the ironies of life through characters in Mahabharata and became an instant success, immediately translated and staged in several other Indian languages.

"Tughlaq" (1964) his best loved play, established Karnad as one of the most promising playwrights in the country. A large number of his Kannada plays have been translated by Dr. Bhargavi P Rao.

Movies

His directorial debut came with the movie VamshaVruksh, based on a Kannada novel by S.L. Bhairappa. The movie won several national and international awards. Before this, Karnad acted in a movie called Samskara, based on a novel by U.R. Ananthamurthy and directed by Pattabhirama Reddy.

That movie won the first President's Golden Lotus Award for Kannada cinema. Later, Karnad directed several movies in Kannada and Hindi. Some of his famous Kannada movies include Tabbaliyu Neenade Magane, Ondanondu Kaaladalli, Cheluvi and Kadu. His Hindi movies include Utsav, Godhuli and the recent Pukar. A recently acclaimed movie by Karnad is Kanooru Heggaditi, based on a novel by Kannada writer Kuvempu. Karnad has also acted in several other movies and received critical acclaim. He has been criticised by the eminent Kannada novelist S.L. Bhairappa for being untrue to history.

Other Notable Works

He has played the role of Karadi, the sootradhar (narrator), for several stories in the popular audiobook series for kids, Karadi Tales. He has also been the voice of APJ Abdul Kalam, President of India, in the audiobook of Kalam's autobiography by Charkha Audiobooks Wings of Fire.

Death

Girish Karnad passed away on June 10th 2019. He was 81, and was suffering from illness for the past few days.

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Nagamandala summary

The story begins with Kurudamma (blind woman) and her son Kappanna visiting her nephew for a [Devi](#) festival. There she sees her beautiful daughter Rani. She returns after the festivities, not before her nephew asks her to find a suitable match for Rani. Kurudamma feels Appanna is a right match but Kappanna disapproves saying that Appanna spends most night at the house of the prostitute Cheluvi. Kurudamma however pesters Appanna regularly for consenting to marry Rani. Finally Appanna gives in and marries Rani.

On their first night at Rani's maternal home, a timid Rani is taken aback by lusty & overbearing husband, she sleeps in a corner of the room. They return to Appanna's village where Rani confides her fear to Kurudamma who convinces Rani to win him over by teasing & playfulness. However that night she is again overcome by fear and locks herself in the pooja room. Appanna scolds her and leaves the house, locking the door from outside. He heads to Cheluvi's house.

Next day, Kurudamma comes there and is taken aback to see the door locked. She finally realizes that Rani is locked and with Kappanna's help talks to her over the window in one of the room. She gives Rani a small root & asks her to mix it with milk and give it to Appanna. Next day she does so & Appanna falls unconscious only to regain consciousness after a minute and leaves the house as usual. Again Kurudamma comes there and learns of Rani's failure and gives her a bigger root, saying that a sage gave it to her in return for her service. Kurudamma had tried it on her relative and Kappanna was thus born.

Rani tries to drug the milk, but it catches fire and Appanna arrives home at the same time and goes to bathe as usual. A terrified Rani pours it under a tree. The

milk drains into an anthill under the tree. On seeing this Rani is further scared and returns home. Apparently the snake would have consumed the milk and it comes to her bed that night. A scared Rani locks herself up in the pooja room. The snake then assumes the form of Appanna and talks her out and consoles her and sleeps her on his lap and wins over her affection. The next morning the snake is gone & the real Appanna comes in and is surprised to see a cheerful Rani and scolds her. A perplexed Rani prepares food and Appanna leaves as usual (to the farm, followed by a drinking session with friends & Cheluvi's house at night). At night, a melancholic Rani is waiting near the door for Appanna and the snake arrives in Appanna's form behind her and startles her. She runs into her room, but Appanna pacifies her and wins her over with smooth talk. They consummate their union that night. Next morning, the snake is gone as usual & Appanna arrives only to see a half naked Rani lying in bed with all the clothes & flowers lying around, as if after the marriage night. A suspicious Appanna bathes and goes away and talks about it in his gym. His teacher volunteers to keep a watch at Appanna's house that night. Meanwhile Rani tells Kurudamma about her success in consummating her marriage. However, Kurudamma is surprised when Kappanna says that the front door is locked from outside. This continues for a while.

The next night, Appanna's teacher keeps a watch over the door from outside. The snake appears as usual and is playing dice with Rani, when their voice is heard. The teacher bangs the door and shouts calling the man inside to come out. Appanna (snake) sends a scared Rani into the bedroom, while he slips out of the window (in the snake form) and bites the teacher. He comes back to Rani and tells her not to ask questions.

The next day Appanna and his friends are shocked to see their teacher dead. That night they come to the anthill with sticks and chases the snake. Rani sees a

tired Appanna (snake) in her bed and nurses him. Meanwhile real Appanna is with Cheluvi, but his mind is puzzled with what's happening at his home. Next morning after the gym session Appanna arrives home and sees Rani lying half naked in bed. This continues for a few days. One night he decides to keep watch of the door himself. That night the snake waits for him to leave. A frustrated Appanna upon waiting too long leaves to Cheluvi's house. Meanwhile, Rani realizes that she is pregnant. The snake comes back to Rani in Appanna's form and learns of her pregnancy and asks her to keep it a secret and not talk about it in the morning.

After a couple of days, Kurudamma and Kappanna learns of the pregnancy and rush to the gym to congratulate Appanna. A furious Appanna beats Kappanna and runs home. He beats Rani asking her who the father is. He pushes her out of the house creating a havoc, denying having slept with Rani. The elders pacify him and decides to call for a panchayat session that evening to investigate. A puzzled Rani locks herself inside the house to escape Appanna's beatings. That evening, the village gathers for the panchayat, when she is about to hold her hands in fire for a test. Some people in the crowd demand a more severe test - 'Naga divya' - holding a snake in the hand and swearing by the truth. Rani agrees to it. They all go to the anthill where Rani bows down and picks up a snake and declares that if she is pure, the snake would not harm her. This snake happens to be the very snake which impregnated Rani. Thus Rani escapes unhurt and the village adores her.

Meanwhile Appanna is frustrated and goes away to Cheluvi. Even she tries to convince him of his wife's innocence but is stopped short. That night the snake appears as Appanna and is confronted by Rani in her house. Meanwhile the real Appanna arrives there unseen by Rani. But the snake realizes that and sends Rani to fetch milk. The snake takes its form and slithers away through the window. Appanna sees this and realizes that the snake had taken his form and was sleeping

with Rani all these days. He goes to the anthill where the snake appears in Appanna's form and a fight ensues. When the snake is about to kill Appanna, he realizes that Rani's love has eliminated all the poison in him and spares Appanna. Appanna however beats the snake and throws him into the fire. The snake assumes his real form and dies.

After a few months, Appanna is a changed man who loves his wife. He is shown taking his heavily pregnant wife (who is oblivious to all the story so far) to a festival.

Feminism in nagamandala

The play *Nagamandala* is based on the two oral stories from Karnataka that the playwright Girish Karnad heard from his mentor, Professor A.K Ramanujan. Karnad through the play exposes the exploitation and incarceration of women that occurs through the institution of marriage and how myths display the fears of men in society and are thus inherently patriarchal and are used in order to control and restrict the actions of women. The play also mocks the idea of chastity and aims at the emancipation and empowerment of women.

The play is based on a rural setting and centred around the life of Rani, who is the everyday submissive rural Indian woman who is married off to a man by her parents, who arrange the marriage without taking into consideration her wishes. Her husband, a rich man named Appanna (which translates to any man). The name is a symbol employed by Karnad to highlight that this is the reality of most weddings that occur. It is to show how marriage is a patriarchal institution that has always been unfair to women.

Rani goes to Appanna's house with the hopes of living a quiet, domestic life that she has been conditioned to expect but the reality she faces is horrendous. On the first day of their marriage, Appanna locks her in the house and goes to visit his mistress. This goes on every day as Appanna's treatment of Rani is sub-human and he neglects her needs. She is kept isolated from society and due to the conditioning, she has undergone in her patriarchal set-up, she does not have the courage to question Appanna and better her condition. This stands to show that women in society lose the agency to question but when they violate the prescribed

patriarchal norms, they are questioned immediately. The same is not the case for men who are free to do as they please.

We find that Karnad's play is full of symbolism that represents the unequal nature of our society and how the women feel. As Rani's emotional and sexual needs are not being met, she suppresses her urges and this suppression is meant to display how women are not able to claim their needs. She dreams of an eagle coming taking her far away from Appanna's world, which is another symbol of the repression of her desires. Her repressed desire to be loved and to be free gets expression in her fantasy where an eagle wants to take her away. Being a victim of extreme isolation and subjugation, her dreams function to fulfill her emotional needs.

As the story progresses, Rani comes across Kurudava who offers her a mystical root which if she feeds Appanna, will lead to him forgetting about his mistress and being completely devoted to her. Upon cooking the root, the potion takes a horrible red color and she disposes of it in a nearby ant hill where a Naga(snake) drinks it. The snake falls in love with Rani due to the potion and takes the form of Appanna at night, praises her long hair and talks a lot about her parents and listens to her attentively. He also fulfills Rani's sexual needs and soon she falls in love with the Appanna

She however gets confused with the discrepancy in behaviour between the Appanna she sees at noon, who disregards her and leaves for his mistress and the Appanna at night, who treats her with care and is a sensual lover. However, she can't question her husband. She must obey whatever she was told by her husband or any other male. Here nobody permits Rani to question anybody – Naga because

of his deep passionate love for her and Appanna for his egoistic, male chauvinistic dominance. The women are seen as an object and not as a human being with an agency of her own.

Soon, Rani becomes pregnant which angers Appanna who calls her a harlot when she says that the child is his and she has done nothing wrong. She is taken to the village panchayat, where she must undergo a chastity test in order to prove her innocence. Nobody brings forth the question of Appanna being questioned for his misdeeds which again shows the two-faced notion of patriarchal justice that the panchayat was going to employ. Her test consists of her having to put her hand in a snake pit – if deemed pure, the snake would not bite her and if guilty of adultery, she would be poisoned by the very snake.

The Naga goes into the pit and makes an umbrella with his hood over her head and moves over her shoulder to make a garland. In an ironic situation, her infidelity comes to her aid in proving that she is a faithful wife. The panchayat declares that Rani is not only equal to a righteous man but is beyond human beings and is, in fact, a Goddess. Appanna too 'realises' this and begs for forgiveness and attempts to reconcile with Rani. Thus, the anxious, scared woman finds within herself, courage and confidence and gains social respectability as she emerges victorious from the public trial, by the same public trial that was meant to condemn her.

She now has more control of her life and, more importantly, respect. There are multiple ends given by Karnad that talk of the fate of the snake. The most accepted is the case where the snake strangles himself to death upon seeing Rani reconcile with Appanna.

Through the play, we can see that women can only be on par with men through attaining a god-like status, but this is only the case if the status quo of the society is maintained. In Rani's case, society is still patriarchal and exploitative in nature. However, she gains respect due to events that unfold during the trial. Her material reality has not changed. Hence, Girish Karnad implies that as long as the existing material reality of women is not changed, where they are forced to be reliant on the closest patriarch in their life, they can only attain freedom and respect by becoming god-like.

Naga-Mandala - Girish Karnad

multiple choice questions

How many ends are suggested for this drama?

- Four
- Three
- One
- Two

Whom does Appanna visit most days?

- Chief of the village
- His concubine
- Rani's parents
- Naga

Which ordeal proves the chastity of Rani?

- Snake ordeal
- None of them
- Fire ordeal
- Hot-iron ordeal

How many acts are included in 'Naga-Mandala'?

- Three
- Two
- One
- Five

Why do the flames assemble in the ruined temple?

- To pray
- None of these
- To tell stories
- To gossip

"In which language did Girish Karnad direct movies?"

- English
- Kannada
- Hindi
- Bengali

In the temple, the playwright is awaiting.....

- Death
- Rani
- Stories
- Flames

Who gets ensnared towards Rani with the magical power of the roots?

- King Cobra
- All of them
- Appanna
- Kappanna

Who is the protagonist of the Story's story?

- Rani
- Kurudavva
- Playwright
- Appanna

Which magical root is used by Rani to make curry?

- Large
- Small
- Stout
- Medium sized

"What does Kurudavva gift Rani?"

- Fruits
- Magical roots
- None of these
- Bangle

The drama starts within a

- Ruined temple
- A play ground
- Anthill
- House

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Score Me

Nagamandala

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE

- Mandala is a sign and symbol.
- Have spiritual and ritual significance.
- Signifies Karnad's version of theatre as a whole, unifying complete experience.

THEME

- MASCULINITY AND FEMINITY IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIAL ORDER
- SOCIAL CAGING

MASCULINITY AND FEMINITY IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIAL ORDER

In a patriarchal social order, “masculinity is associated with superiority: whereas ‘femininity’ is linked with inferiority,” and while “masculinity implies strength, action, self-assertion and domination, femininity implies weakness, passivity, docility, obedience and self-negation.”

THE MAN - WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN NAGAMANDALA

THE LEGEND OF THE NAGA.

OTHER MYTHS AND LEGENDS ASSOCIATED WITH SNAKES.

NAGAMANDALA

- A writer and director who works in south indian cinema and bollywood.
- Upon graduation Karnad went to England and studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Magdalen in Oxford as a

Rhodes Scholar (1960–63), earning his Master of Arts degree in philosophy, political science and economics.

- He is a recipient of the 1998 Jnanpith Award, the highest literary honour conferred in India.
 - For four decades Karnad has been composing plays, often using history and mythology to tackle contemporary issues.
 - His plays have been translated into many Indian languages.
 - He have recieved many awards.
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- The solitary caging of Rani by Appanna in the house symbolizes the chastity belt of the middle ages.
 - The decline of women's talents to housework
 - The keeping out of women from enlightenment and enjoyment