

UNHEARD FEMALE VOICES IN GIRISH KARNAD'S YAYATI

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ABSTRACT

As a playwright, poet, actor, critic and translator Girish Karnad holds a unique position not only in India but also in the world. His outstanding dramatic genius reveals out magnificently first in his native language Kannad to retain the ethnicity of his texts, and later on he himself translates them in English that earns him a subtle global recognition. In his writings, Girish Karnad makes artistic use of myths, symbols, metaphors, and folkloristic devices for depicting the complexities of human behaviour and relationships within the family. In his first play *Yayati* (1961), Karnad has used myth not only to fiddle with contemporary social and moral issues, and to reveal the cultural dialectics of India's past but also to converse with the problems of human beings as whole. Present paper intends to focus on the unheard female voices in Karnad's play *Yayati*.

KEYWORDS: Female Psyche, Hushed, Suppressed, Myth, Folklore.

INTRODUCTION

Many playwrights have dealt with the contemporary religious, political, and social issues through mythological themes and characters in Indian English Drama. About which Nand Kumar remarks: "Their sources and approaches may be different but all of them aim at solving material and moral problems through myths, acquainting the West with our rich cultural heritage and traditions, and popularizing Indian drama in India as well as abroad." (*Indian English Drama*, 208) So far as the myth of *Yayati* is concerned, Girish Karnad was greatly fascinated by this character of Mahabharata. In an interview, he says:

I was excited by the story of *Yayati*, this exchange of ages between the father and the son, which seemed to me terribly powerful and terribly modern. At the same time, I was reading a lot of Sartre and the Existentialists. This consistent harping on responsibility which the Existentialists indulge in suddenly seemed to link up with the story of *Yayati*. (Paul, Rajender: 1971)

Beside the main myth, around which the whole plot rotates out, there is another myth woven within, that is the myth of Devyani and Kacha, a Brahmin boy who came to Shukracharya for learning the art of '*Sanjeevani Vidya*.' Devyani's proposal of marriage was refused by him saying that he is like her brother who was brought up in her family. The refusal made Devyani furious so she cursed him that he would not be able to use the knowledge of '*Sanjeevani Vidya*' in future. In return, Kacha cursed her never to get married with a Brahmin. It is this myth which extends the structural meanings to the plot of the play.

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