

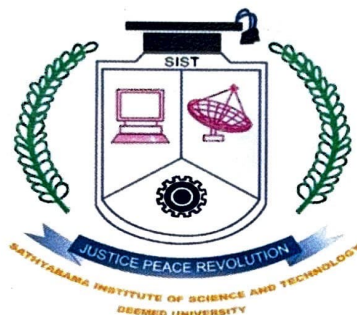
MYTHICAL ELEMENTS IN INDIAN PLAYS: A STUDY OF NAGAMANDALA AND HAYAVADANA BY GIRISH KARNAD

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of
Bachelor of Arts degree in English

By

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES**

SATHYABAMA

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

CATEGORY -1 UNIVERSITY BY UGC

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This is to certify that this Project Report is the bonafide work of **SURYA (41010008)** who have done the Project work. He has carried out the project entitled "**MYTHICAL ELEMENTS IN INDIAN PLAYS: A STUDY OF NAGAMANDALA AND HAYAVADANA BY GIRISH KARNAD**" under my supervision from June 2023 to April 2024.

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DECLARATION

I, SURYA hereby declare that the Project Report entitled “**MYTHICAL ELEMENTS IN INDIAN PLAYS: A STUDY OF NAGAMANDALA AND HAYAVADANA BY GIRISH KARNAD**”, done by me under the guidance by **Ms. Soumya Susan John**, is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts degree in **Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology**.

DATE : 24/04/2024

PLACE: Chennai



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ABSTRACT

In Girish karnad's play Nagamandala and Hayavadana mythical elements play's major role in shaping the narratives and exploring deeper themes. In both play's karnad talks about the essence of Indian folklore, mythology and social complexities. Nagamandala play deeply rooted in south Indian folklore revolves around the tale of neglected wife rani and her mystical encounter with snake. The mystical encounter between rani and snake use of the root given by kurudava makes rani's journey towards self-discovery and empowerment. Highlighting the power of myth reflected in rituals and magical realism to challenge social norms. In Hayavadana, karnad skilfully combines elements of Hindu mythology with modern storytelling to create a story that revolves around themes of identity, love and human conditions. This drawing inspiration in the play the horse headed man and encounter the theme of incompleteness by exchanging heads. The love triangle between Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini has made audiences from all cultures find connections between plays. In both, karnad skilfully uses mythical elements to delve into empirical questions, social complexities, and the difficulties of human relationship, creating a meaning that resonate across cultures and generations.

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1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background of Girish Karnad**

Girish Karnad, born on May 19, 1938, in Mathern, Maharashtra, is a prominent figure in Indian literature and the arts. With a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Statistics from Karnataka University, he initially aspired to achieve international literary fame through writing in English. Karnad's pursuit of higher education led him to Oxford, where he earned a Rhodes scholarship and a Master's degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. However, it was in his native language of Kannada that Karnad would ultimately gain recognition and acclaim. Known for his versatility, Karnad excels as an actor, film producer, playwright, and director. He has been the recipient of numerous accolades, including the prestigious Jnanpith Award for Kannada, the highest literary honor in India. Over the course of four decades, Karnad has written plays that incorporate history and mythology to address contemporary issues. He has also made significant contributions to Indian cinema, working as an actor, director, producer, and screenwriter.

In addition to his literary and artistic accomplishments, Karnad has received esteemed honours such as the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan from the government of India. His command over the English language, although not his mother tongue, has greatly contributed to his success as a playwright. Karnad's passion for theatre and writing was ignited during his childhood, where he regularly attended dramatic performances. While his parents considered traditional Yakshagana performances beneath their refined tastes, Karnad found interest in both these local plays and Western theatre. Initially aspiring to be a poet, he ultimately found his calling as a playwright. In summary, Girish Karnad is a multifaceted artist who has achieved international recognition for his contributions to Indian theatre and cinema. Through his plays and films, he skilfully merges history, mythology,

and contemporary issues. Despite originally intending to write in English, Karnad's mastery of Kannada has been pivotal to his success. His journey from studying mathematics to becoming a celebrated playwright showcases his exceptional talent and dedication to the arts.

Girish Karnad is a renowned actor and playwright who has made significant contributions to Indian cinema and theatre. After completing his studies at Oxford, he spent time in Dharwad, where he collaborated with the noted stage director B. V. Karanth. Karnad played the lead role in the award-winning film *Sanskara*, followed by *Vamsa Vriksha* and *Tabbaliyu Ninaade Magane*, all of which received the President's Award. He also wrote and directed the acclaimed film *Kaddu*, which won the Golden Lotus. Karnad later served as the director of the Central Institute of Film and Television Technology in Pune before venturing into Hindi films. He has since worked with renowned directors like Shyam Benegal and has also produced, directed, and acted in numerous television serials. Despite being a Kannada writer, Karnad has translated his plays into English to reach a wider audience. Alongside playwrights Vijay Tendulkar and Rakesh Mohan, he has revived the trend of using myths, legends, and traditional stories to uphold India's rich cultural heritage in their plays.

Karnad's plays showcase his deep understanding of human nature and his keen awareness of life's ironies. Through the use of mythical, historical, and folk themes, he sheds light on the social and political forces at work in contemporary India, often presenting them as satirical commentary. Karnad's incorporation of folk traditions into his drama has expanded the horizons of Indian theatre. His artistic perception and creative versatility are evident in his exploration of various dramatic genres. Overall, Karnad's work reflects a commitment to preserving Indian values and cultural ethos while challenging the legacy of colonialism. His plays provide a romantic charm without compromising the authenticity of the tales they are based on. Karnad's contributions to cinema and theatre have left a lasting impact and have helped shape the artistic landscape of India.

Kailasam and Adya Rangacharya were against the new dramatic movement in Kannada drama, but they were unable to find a lasting alternative. This new trend has revitalized Kannada drama, with playwrights like Girish Karnad bringing a firsthand understanding of the practical demands of the stage and a better grasp of dramatic style and technique. Karnad is recognized as a renowned actor, playwright, television artist, and creative figure, ranking among the top dramatists in Indian English drama. In 1964, the publication of Karnad's play *Tughlaq* surprised the world of Indian English Drama. It stands out as a distinct and exceptional work, gaining recognition for its importance, creative skill, and poetic excellence. While Karnad initially focused on acting in Kannada and Hindi films and television serials to earn a living, his true desire was to become a creative artist. Despite achieving popularity and critical acclaim through acting and directing, Karnad always harboured a wish to pursue his artistic aspirations. He is a conscientious artist who understands the potential drawbacks of fame, as it can interfere with creativity. However, Karnad remains committed to writing not only to fulfil his own artistic urge but also to stimulate the conscience of thinking individuals in India and abroad.

Girish Karnad's ideas and concepts may seem surprising and new to those living in an age of computers and technology. In a world that values power and might, people often think of God, nature, and the world in terms of seeking assistance and vengeance. Society is experiencing material prosperity and rapid commercial growth, but greed and selfishness prevail, and concern for the less fortunate is often neglected. People's primary focus is their own comfort and luxury, rather than exhibiting good behaviour or caring for their neighbour's welfare. Karnad has witnessed the suffering and struggles of poor Indian people and aims to shed light on their plight. He aims to show his countrymen and the world the miserable conditions endured by the poor, outcasts, and oppressed women. Karnad's work challenges the notion that their fate is predetermined and unchangeable. He offers insight into how their circumstances can be improved and advocates for a better future.

In 1926, Britain experienced the General Strike, which reflected a battle between the privileged and the disadvantaged. This was not unique to Britain alone, as Karnad observed similar conflicts in both Eastern and Western societies. Karnad embraced Indian thought and developed a secular and scientific humanism, aiming to enlighten and serve humanity's highest nature and noblest mission. He sought to compare and contrast European and Asiatic traditions, attempting to synthesize them. Karnad delved into the heart of modern man's struggle, addressing human sensibility, the tragedy of existence, class conflicts, spiritual degradation, and the inevitability of life and death. His plays offer a psychological interpretation of human history, exploring the conflicts and follies that define our lives. Karnad's plays are grand in scope, allowing for various interpretations and perspectives. Rooted in mystery and the mythology of our society's creation, they transcend time and remain relevant to the modern reader. They possess emotional, intellectual, and spiritual depth, enveloping the audience in their sublime and magnificent qualities. Karnad masterfully portrays the intricate nuances of human emotions and motivations, as well as the spiritual and cultural complexities of his characters in an unfamiliar language.

With his early plays, Karnad sought to blend Western and Eastern theatrical traditions. Works like *Yayati* and *Tughlaq* show Western influences in their expression and practices. However, Karnad's artistic journey moves towards embracing Indian traditions. He looks to folk traditions to create a distinctively Indian form of theatre, incorporating cultural concepts and devices into his plays. His innovative structuring combines prevalent theatre concepts with native mythical themes, reinventing myths to make contemporary statements. Karnad's plays draw from a vast cultural matrix of mythic modes, oral folk forms, and narrative conventions, offering a unique emotional and intellectual perspective on traditional archetypes. Through his reimagining of myths and folklore, Karnad provides a broader range of references and explores the complexities of modern life. These complexities reverberate in personal and public life, challenging the very foundations of human existence.

1.2 Overview of Nagamandala and Hayavadana

Girish Karnad's plays, *Nagamandala* (1990) and *Hayavadana* (1975), stand as quintessential examples of Indian drama, where he masterfully intertwines myth, folklore, and social critique to weave compelling narratives. Karnad's utilization of myth and folklore is not only imaginative but also serves as a bridge between traditional Indian storytelling and Western cultural elements, creating a unique fusion that resonates with a global audience.

In *Nagamandala*, Karnad is inspired by a folktale recounted by A.K. Ramanujan, Karnad delves into the life of a young woman named Rani, who is trapped in a loveless marriage with a callous husband, Appanna. The play is a profound exploration of female autonomy, societal norms, and the transformative power of storytelling. The narrative unfolds through a ritualistic performance where a serpent, Naga, assumes human form to fulfil Rani's yearnings for love and companionship, thus granting her a sense of identity. As Rani navigates the blurred lines between reality and fantasy, she is compelled to confront her fears and desires, ultimately facing the repercussions of her choices. At its core, *Nagamandala* is a meditation on the human condition, touching upon universal themes such as love, betrayal, and redemption. Karnad's rich symbolism and imaginative narrative craft a tale that transcends cultural barriers, prompting audiences to reflect on the intricacies of personal relationships and the life-altering potential of storytelling.

Hayavadana is drawing inspiration from Thomas Mann's *The Transposed Heads* and the ancient Sanskrit text *Kathasaritsagara*, revolves around a complex love triangle involving Devadatta, Kapila, and Devadatta's devoted wife, Padmini. Devadatta, an erudite Brahmin, and Kapila, a charismatic storyteller, become entangled in a metaphysical conundrum when their heads are accidentally exchanged. This event thrusts the characters into an existential crisis, compelling them to grapple with their fragmented selves. The play raises profound questions about identity, the quest for wholeness,

and the limits of human nature. Through the lens of mythology, Karnad prompts the audience to contemplate the intricacies of human identity and the pursuit of self-actualization. The play's exploration of these themes demonstrates how Karnad adapts and reconstructs myth to enhance character development and engage with the audience on a deeper level.

Both Nagamandala and Hayavadana are exemplary in their portrayal of human desires and the societal pressures that shape them. Karnad's innovative use of myth serves as a vehicle for examining the desires and sacrifices demanded by tradition. His plays are not merely stories but are rich tapestries of cultural introspection, inviting viewers to ponder the complexities of human nature and the transformative influence of myths and folklore in shaping our collective consciousness. Through his dramatic works, Karnad has left an indelible mark on Indian theatre, offering narratives that are as thought-provoking as they are entertaining. His legacy continues to inspire and challenge audiences, encouraging a nuanced understanding of the human experience. In the tale of a shape-shifting serpent. Through a transformative ritual, Rani breaks free from societal constraints, exploring themes of empowerment and desire. Hayavdana the play delves into existential questions of selfhood and completeness, blending myth, folklore, and philosophical inquiry to evoke contemplation on the human condition.

1.3 Structure of the paper

In the world of literature, the term myth is employed to describe a traditional tale that seeks to elucidate a universal or societal phenomenon. Myths often feature supernatural entities and are typically set in a time period that harks back to the early history of various cultures. These stories, rooted in tradition, purport to recount actual events and are closely associated with belief systems. Common themes in myths include the struggle between the forces of good and evil, the odyssey of a hero, or the origins of aspects of the natural world.

Myths are frequently structured around the dichotomies present within the universe, such as the clash of fictional narratives and superstitions—unfounded beliefs that are integral components of legends. Initially disseminated orally, both myth and folklore were later recognized as conventional forms of storytelling. Girish Karnad's utilization of myths and societal archetypes in his plays serves to address socio-cultural calamities. He suggests that a return to matriarchy could counteract male chauvinism, the harassment of women, and their betrayal by a male-dominated society, as depicted in *Nagamandala*. Mythical elements are evident in the second and third narrative levels of the play, where the author encounters laughing flames, each bearing its own tale. These elements, though partially used, form the foundation of the entire work.

In *Hayavadana*, Karnad employs myth to underscore human frailties and the indifference of the gods. The play is imbued with various interpretations of myth, including the tale of the elephant-headed god Ganesha, the subplot involving Hayavadana, and the narrative of Devadatta and Kapila's heads being exchanged. Hindu mythology serves as the cornerstone of the text. The extraction of myths in Karnad's selected plays and the role of myth in both the play and society are pivotal. They demonstrate how myths function and what the author symbolically conveys in his plays to foster societal harmony and support women in a patriarchal society.

By expanding upon these insights, we can further explore how Karnad's plays utilize myth to reflect and critique societal norms. In *Nagamandala*, the protagonist Rani's journey is emblematic of the individual's quest for self-fulfilment against the backdrop of societal constraints. The serpent Naga, who transforms into a human to fulfil Rani's desires, represents the dual nature of myths—as vehicles for escapism and as catalysts for personal transformation. Similarly, *Hayavadana* interrogates the concept of identity and the human yearning for completeness. The body-swap between Devadatta and Kapila challenges the audience's preconceived notions about the self and the body, prompting a reevaluation of what constitutes individuality.

Karnad's plays are not mere retellings of ancient myths; they are reimaginings that resonate with contemporary issues. Through his dramatic works, he encourages a dialogue on the enduring relevance of myths and their capacity to illuminate and influence human behavior. His stories are a testament to the enduring power of myths and their ability to shape and reflect the complexities of human society. Karnad's legacy in Indian theatre is that of a visionary who harnessed the timeless essence of myths to address the pressing concerns of his time, offering a mirror to society and a voice to the marginalized.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

PREVIOUS RESEARCH: GENDER NARRATIVES AND CUULTURAL PERSPECTIVES, MYTHOLOGICAL STRUCTURES, ROMANTIC PROBLEMS, MYTH AND REALISM.

A lot of research has done on these plays the previous study on these papers had made a connection between Gender and romantic problems and myth and realism. The research is on the study of Mythical elements in these plays are deeply connected with culture of India, shaping the narratives and characters and understanding the role of myth in Indian drama in theatre.

Scholarly research on Girish Karnad's plays has delved into various thematic explorations and solutions. Dr. R. Arulnayagam (2023) study focuses on Karnad's Yayati, Tughlaq, and Nagamandala, highlighting the use of myths and folklore as a means to comment on contemporary issues such as political manipulation and gender discrimination. Karnad is recognized for his innovative fusion of Eastern and Western dramatic traditions, reinterpreting historical and mythological tales to mirror modern socioeconomic challenges. The study also sheds light on Karnad's humanistic perspective and his adeptness in employing both indigenous and Western theatrical methods to tackle societal and national dilemmas. Furthermore, Dr. Arulnayagam accentuates Karnad's significant contribution to global theatre by presenting Indian narratives through a language that is both poetic and accessible, thereby engaging a diverse international audience with complex themes.

In Milee Singh (2023) analysis of Girish Karnad's plays *Nagamandala* and *Hayavadana* explored the incorporation of historical and folkloric elements to engage with contemporary themes. Singh's research underscores Karnad's adaptation of Indian myths for today's audience, a creative process influenced by his immersion in both traditional Indian performance arts and Western cultural dynamics. This approach was corroborated as notably effective in Dr. P. Arulnayagam's studies. Singh's examination delves into the use of myth and folklore, scrutinizing how Karnad's narratives employ these timeless symbols to confront societal issues. *Nagamandala*, in particular, is dissected for its portrayal of women's exploitation in Indian society, with a focus on the characters Appanna and Rani, alongside the play's integration of mythological motifs and folk traditions.

Dr. PR. Chandra Reddy (2023) delves into the interplay of Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomies within human history and psyche, positing that human experiences oscillate between these polarities. The research scrutinizes the manifestation of these philosophical concepts through the lens of alienation and unity in Girish Karnad's plays, reflecting the fundamental human tension between mental and corporeal disunion and harmony. Anchored in psychoanalytic theory, particularly Norman O. Brown's perspective, the paper views the oscillation between estrangement and reconnection of mind and body as a core human condition. Further, Dr. Reddy's analysis reveals how Karnad's plays, steeped in cultural and mythological richness with deities like Lord Ganesha and Goddess Kali, navigate the central conflicts in *Hayavadana* and *Nagamandala*. The study probes into the narrative choices in *Hayavadana*, such as the princess's marriage to a horse, Goddess Kali's transformation of *Hayavadana*, and the tragic fates of Devadatta, Padmini, and Kapila. Similarly, it explores *Nagamandala*, where a serpent refrains from harming Rani, Appanna's decision to remain in serpentine form, and the couple's acceptance of their child, preserving their familial bond.

Dr. T. Mahendran (2023) paper focuses on use of myth in Girish Karnad plays, highlighting how these tales mirror societal problems, especially the status of woman in patriarchal societies. Karnad's uses of postcolonial feminist viewpoints to modernize mythological stories in order to make commentary on current events. This paper examines plays such as *yayati* and *Nagamandala* highlighting the themes of desire, and societal norms, the plays of Karnad are regarded as a critique of the problems and restriction of Indian society it questioning traditional gender norms and expectations. This paper tells that the play tells eastern and western tradition, offering a rich portrayal of existential themes and human needs. The purpose of this analysis is to highlight the importance of Karnad's work in addressing the myths serves as metaphor for current circumstances, emphasizing the relevance of his work in addressing national and societal issues.

Hejab-I-Zahara Sandhu (2022) the focus is on the depiction of women in the plays of Girish Karnad, with a particular emphasis on how he uses mythological narratives to reflect the societal realities of 21st-century India. The scholar delves into Karnad's works, including *Nagamandala*, *Yayati*, and *Hayavadana*, to comment on the status of women and societal norms in India. Despite the predominantly male-centric settings of these plays, Karnad's female characters often exhibit signs of empowerment as they challenge traditional norms and assert their own decisions. The plays create parallels between historical myths and contemporary society, offering a critique of issues such as gender norms, caste discrimination, and the portrayal of women. The paper utilizes qualitative research methods, encompassing both textual and discourse analysis, to investigate Karnad's storytelling techniques and the thematic concerns he addresses. Through this analysis, the study sheds light on the evolving role of women in Indian society and the enduring impact of mythological motifs in modern narratives.

Kandimala Shyam Sundar Reddy (2022) delves into the significant contributions of Girish Karnad to modern Indian theatre, particularly highlighting his strategic use of historical and mythological elements to

address pressing contemporary issues. Karnad's plays are distinguished by their psychological intricacy and profound examination of human nature. The paper discusses the societal constraints and limited freedoms faced by female characters in Karnad's works, noting how these characters often engage in a struggle against the patriarchal framework to assert their femininity and individuality. Specifically, *Nagamandala* is analysed with respect to its central character, Rani, and her journey from naivety to maturity, navigating through the intricate themes of love, desire, and societal expectations. Meanwhile, *Hayavadana* is scrutinized for its elaborate narrative concerning love, identity, and the dichotomy between body and mind. Reddy's study employs Karnad's plays as a lens to scrutinize broader issues of gender and identity, as well as to shed light on the marginalization and societal constraints imposed on women. This exploration not only underscores Karnad's role in Indian drama but also contributes to the discourse on gender dynamics and identity formation within the cultural context of India.

Dr. Prathipa Nanasahab Jadhavar (2021) offers an insightful analysis of the interplay between myth and realism in Girish Karnad's play *Hayavadana*. The paper illuminates how Karnad ingeniously interweaves mythological narratives to confront and challenge the realistic issues prevalent in Indian society. Renowned for his feminist viewpoint, Karnad subverts traditional societal norms and champions the cause of female characters, exemplified by the play *Hayavadana*. Dr. Jadhavar's study delves into the ways in which Karnad's plays serve as a mirror to Indian culture, echoing its traditions and social concerns through the retelling of historical and mythological tales. Karnad's works, while rooted in folklore, are not mere replicas; they are creatively re-envisioned with a modern outlook, offering innovative approaches and solutions to contemporary problems. This examination not only highlights Karnad's unique narrative style but also contributes to the ongoing dialogue on gender roles and societal expectations within the framework of Indian performing arts.

Dr. Md Jahangir Ansari (2020) paper by, a detailed exploration of Girish Karnad's Nagamandala is presented, with a focus on the integration of myths within its narrative structure. The play is rich with mythological elements, particularly those originating from Karnataka, which are traditionally passed down by elder women of the family during evening gatherings. The paper delves into the portrayal of women's status within a patriarchal society, examining the entrenched notions of chastity and the sanctity of marriage, all while shedding light on the tribulations encountered by the central character, Rani. Central to the narrative is the myth of Naga, a divine, shape-shifting entity, which is reminiscent of the magical roots and trials akin to those depicted in the Indian epic, the Ramayana. Karnad's Nagamandala stands out as a pivotal work in his theatrical repertoire, articulating a profound commentary on the identity, status, and dignity of women in male-dominated societies, employing these myths as a vehicle for social critique and reflection.

Mrs. S. Ramya delves (2019) into the mythological underpinnings of Girish Karnad's acclaimed plays Hayavadana and Nagamandala. The research provides an in-depth analysis of how Karnad ingeniously employs narratives from Indian mythology, laying them as the foundational bedrock for his dramatic works. Through this approach, he navigates complex themes such as the intricacies of human desires and the enduring traditions of culture. The study meticulously dissects the mythological elements present in Karnad's adaptations, scrutinizing the characters and scenarios within Hayavadana and Nagamandala through the lens of Hindu mythology. Furthermore, the discourse broadens to underscore the pivotal role of myth in the annals of Indian literature, highlighting how Karnad's reinterpretation of these myths significantly enriches the tapestry of Indian theatre. Additionally, the study encompasses an exploration of Karnad's personal biography, his illustrious achievements, and his distinctive utilization of mythology within the realm of his theatrical creations.

Poonam Rathee (2019) delves into the innovative approach of playwright Girish Karnad in reinterpreting traditional myths through a contemporary lens, infusing them with scientific rationale and humanistic elements to craft distinctive identities for his characters. Karnad's theatrical works are distinguished for their intricate weaving of religious practices, ritualistic elements, and the intricate psychology of Indian society, all of which play a pivotal role in shaping individual identities. His acclaimed plays, 'Hayavadana' and 'Nagamandala,' are particularly noted for their exploration of the theme of the quest for wholeness, examining human relationships through the prism of myths reimagined with fresh interpretations. Furthermore, the paper elucidates how Karnad employs these myths as a medium to engage with pressing socio-cultural issues of the times, thereby offering women in society a broader spectrum of choices and a voice to redefine their roles. This scholarly work underscores the transformative power of mythology in addressing and reflecting the evolving dynamics of contemporary society.

Mr. Kuldeep Singh offers an in-depth examination of the characters from Girish Karnad's celebrated plays 'Hayavadana' and 'Nagamandala,' with a particular focus on the intricate dynamics of Padmini's relationships with Devadatta and Kapila. The text delves into the complex interplay of love, societal norms, and the personal aspirations that these characters navigate. Singh's article further explores the philosophical underpinnings of the plays, invoking the theories of French philosopher Jacques Derrida, specifically his concept of 'free play' in the interpretation of texts. This approach underscores the fluidity and multiplicity of meanings within Karnad's narratives. The paper also examines how Karnad utilizes elements of traditional Indian folk theatre, such as the use of masks and the art of storytelling, as a means to offer commentary on the contemporary societal milieu and its inherent challenges. Additionally, Singh's work incorporates a variety of references to critical studies on Karnad's art work, highlighting the profound exploration of identity and the nuanced supervision of traditional narrative techniques within the plays. This scholarly piece not only sheds light on the thematic richness of

Karnad's work but also illustrates the enduring relevance of mythological motifs in addressing modern-day issues.

S. Govidappa (2018) delves into the enduring essence of Nagamandala a narrative that skilfully intertwines traditional Indian storytelling with contemporary insights. The article probes into a mythical component, where a root provided by Kurudava, a blind woman, bewitches a cobra to fall in love with Rani, sparking a convoluted relationship that defies established societal conventions. Govidappa's analysis extends to the structural intricacies of the play and its profound commentary on the evolving roles and ambitions of Indian women. He scrutinizes the strategic employment of mythology and folklore as tools to interrogate and challenge entrenched cultural values. 'Nagamandala' is lauded for its rich symbolic and philosophical layers, particularly in terms of advocating for women's empowerment and critiquing societal norms. The play's multifaceted narrative structure and its open-ended conclusion invite a spectrum of interpretations regarding the characters and the societal implications of their actions. Through this examination, Govidappa underscores the play's capacity to serve as a reflective mirror for society, offering a critical lens through which to view and potentially transform prevailing gender dynamics and cultural expectations.

V. Radhika (2018) provides an insightful analysis of how playwright Girish Karnad ingeniously reinterprets the ancient Indian myth from 'Veralapanchavimsati' to delve into the universal human pursuit of wholeness and self-discovery. Karnad is renowned for his contemporary spin on classical myths and historical narratives, seamlessly blending them with Western storytelling techniques. His play stands out for its integration of supernatural elements and the utilization of traditional folk theatre practices, including the use of masks and the incorporation of songs. Through the lens of time-honored myths, the play poignantly addresses the anguish and struggles faced by individuals in the modern era, underscoring the playwright's adeptness at connecting age-old tales with the realities of contemporary life. Karnad's characters, though rooted in mythological contexts, are portrayed with a deep

sense of humanity, reflecting both the constraints and aspirations that define the human condition. This approach not only breathes new life into the myths but also offers a rich tapestry of meaning that resonates with the existential dilemmas of today's society. Radhika's examination of Karnad's work highlights his unique ability to bridge the gap between the ancient and the modern, inviting audiences to reflect on their own lives through the prism of mythic narratives.

The comprehensive review of literature indicates that numerous scholars have delved into the plays of Girish Karnad, yet there remains a wealth of mythical elements within these works that have not been fully explored. I intend to meticulously extract these elements and elucidate on the author's employment and portrayal of myth. The significance of this research lies in uncovering the profound utilization of myth by Karnad, which extends beyond mere storytelling to reflect upon societal issues and the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society. These plays serve as a medium for Karnad to voice the complexities of gender dynamics and social hierarchies, thereby offering a critical lens through which we can examine the prevailing norms and values of the time. By analysing the interplay of myth and reality in Karnad's plays, this research aims to shed light on the intricate ways in which the playwright weaves together the fabric of ancient lore with the threads of contemporary concerns, creating a rich tapestry that resonates with the audience on multiple levels.

In this research I am going to explore the mythical elements used in his plays and the symbols used by Karnad to maintain a flow in play and character analysis and folklore and rituals used in his plays to explore the theme and identity of characters and how it reforms the societal issues.

2.1.THE ROLE OF MYTH IN INDIAN DRAMA

Indian play is greatly influenced by myth, which shapes its plot, characters, themes, and acting techniques. Ancient mythological stories like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas provide as a solid basis for the plotlines of many Indian plays. Indian playwrights regularly incorporate moral and ethical themes into their dramas, which are also conveyed by these epics. In Indian culture, mythological figures like Rama, Sita, Krishna, and Draupadi are profoundly embedded and frequently feature in plays, sometimes with modern retellings. Another significant element of Indian theatre is mythical symbolism, which is employed by writers to express deeper meanings through events, things, and animals. In addition, religious myth-inspired rituals and ceremonies are incorporated into traditional Indian theatre, producing a strongly spiritual experience. Indian dramas reinforce traditional ideas and help audiences connect to their cultural history through the retelling and reworking of legendary stories.

Furthermore, Indian playwrights innovate in the arts by reworking and twisting legendary stories to address modern issues, which opens up new avenues for the investigation of classic subjects. All things considered, myth contributes cultural depth, moral complexity, and creative inspiration to Indian theatre. Throughout ancient times, mythology and theatre have been deeply rooted in Indian society. Indian theatre has its roots in the ancient Vedic era, when theatrical performances were first based on religious rituals and festivals. The rituals mirrored later theatrical forms and included legendary themes. From the first century BCE to the tenth century CE, the classical Sanskrit theatre flourished. Hindu mythology including epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata was a major source of inspiration for Sanskrit plays. Beautiful clothes, stylish gestures, and music were all featured in the performances that took place in royal courts.

Several regional theatrical traditions with unique mythological inspirations developed around Sanskrit theatre. The Yakshagana of Karnataka, the Kathakali of Kerala, and the Jatra of Bengal are a few examples. Devotional poetry and theatre centred on the worship of particular deities throughout the Bhakti movement, which lasted from the eighth to the seventeenth century. The lives and exploits of these deities and goddesses were the subject of plays and other acts that appealed to the crowd's psychological demands. Traditional Indian theatre was challenged by Western influences throughout the period of colonialism. The representation of mythological themes faced, though on occasion it was modified to fit the colonial ruler's preferences or Western theatrical elements were added. mythology plays a profound role in Indian culture, shaping collective identity, values, and worldview. It serves as a defining narrative that establishes cultural identity, providing a shared heritage across diverse communities. Indian mythology is also a source of moral and ethical guidance, with tales of gods, goddesses, and heroic figures embodying virtues and principles like duty, action and consequence, compassion, and integrity.

Moreover, Indian mythology offers spiritual and philosophical insights, exploring existence, the cycle of life and death, and the pursuit of enlightenment. It explores concepts like the eternal soul, cosmic order, and interconnectedness of all beings, which inform spiritual practices and philosophical inquiry. Through rituals, festivals, and ceremonies, myths are celebrated and enacted, fostering communal belonging and devotion. Indian mythology has inspired a rich artistic tradition in literature, music, dance, visual arts, and theatre. The themes, motifs, and symbols from mythology are drawn upon by artists, poets, and performers, perpetuating its legacy through artistic expression. Myths also convey messages of social harmony, justice, unity, and cooperation within society.

Indian mythology has demonstrated adaptability over time, reflecting changing social, cultural, and historical contexts. It continues to resonate with contemporary audiences, offering timeless wisdom and insight into the human

condition. Overall, mythology holds a central place in Indian culture, providing inspiration, wisdom, and spiritual nourishment for generations, revealing the deep reverence and respect for Indian society's cultural heritage and the profound insights contained within its mythological narratives. Hindu legends are frequently portrayed in Sanskrit theatre using elaborate costumes, exaggerated gestures, and poetic language. Dance, music, and speech are all combined in regional theatre traditions like Yakshagana, which originated in Karnataka and tells stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Keralan dance theatre Kathakali highlights Hindu myths with stylized movements, hand gestures, and facial expressions. Bengali folk dance, Jatra, combines modern concerns with legendary stories through colourful sets, lively tunes, and participative storytelling. Traditional plays like Ramlila and Krishnattam, which feature community participation and elaborate costumes, are mostly staged around religious festivals like Ram Navami and Janmashtami. Indian contemporary theatre defies preconceived notions by creatively examining legendary themes and characters. Mythology, folklore, social satire, music, dance, and improvisation are all used in Gujarati and Maharashtrian folk theatre styles like Bhavai and Tamasha to entertain and educate audiences. All things considered, myths in Indian theatre never fail to engage and motivate audiences by providing ageless tales with profoundly meaningful and universal themes.

A myth is a story that is passed down through generations to explain origins or natural occurrences. It holds high reverence in Hinduism and is considered an authoritative source on religious, moral, and social matters. Mythology can be used as a means of communication between a therapist and patient. They serve a profound purpose in ancient and modern cultures by explaining the world and human experience. They remain relevant today, answering timeless questions and guiding each generation. Joseph Campbell, a renowned scholar in mythology and comparative religion, identifies four basic functions of myth: metaphysical/mystical, cosmological, sociological, and pedagogical. It is a symbolic narrative originating from unknown sources and

is associated with religious belief. Myths exist in every culture to explain natural phenomena, origin stories, civilization development, and the reasons behind events. At its core, myth provides comfort by bringing order and meaning to a chaotic world.

Myths include gods and goddesses with supernatural powers and offer explanations for the existence of certain things in the world. They often convey moral lessons to their audience. Myths were created to educate people about significant and meaningful topics that were not easily understood, such as illness, death, earthquakes, and floods. Legends are similar to myths but have slight differences. Myths clarify uncertainties, provide reasons, and establish traditions within a culture. The material for myths is vast and often revolves around historical events and influential figures. Beyond providing answers, myths evoke various emotions, including happiness, security, awe, suspicion, and fear.

Indian drama written in English by Indian playwrights often incorporates traditional elements such as myths, legends, and folklore. Girish Karnad is a prominent dramatist who particularly embraces this trend. Through his plays, Karnad delves deep into Indian myth, tradition, and culture, providing a vivid and rich portrayal of Indian society and its people. He genuinely depicts both the positive and negative aspects of Indian life, highlighting the significance of tradition in contemporary times. Culture plays a defining role in any society, representing its unique ethos, character, and beliefs. Myths, legends, and folklore are the tangible expressions of these cultural values and principles, serving as a source of inspiration for Karnad in his exploration of his cultural roots. Girish Karnad explores the theme of idealism in his plays, demonstrating its misguided nature in *Tughlaq* its destruction by violence and traditionalism in *Tale-Danda* and its contrast with human instincts in *Bali-The Sacrifice* and *Flowers-A Dramatic Monologue*. Ideals serve as the foundation of societal principles and codes, shaping the psyche of a society. However, idealism is often manipulated for selfish purposes, as seen in the characters of *Yayati*, *Devadatta* and *Kapila*, and *Tughlaq*.

In Karnad's works, the individual is subordinated to social interests, as demonstrated in Nagamandala through Rani and Appanna's adherence to their social roles and obligations, despite the truth of their relationship. Indian society is deeply rooted in tradition, with individuals governed by societal norms and roles that ensure the continuation of cultural values. Karnad incorporates myths, mythologies, and folklore into his plays not to glorify them, but to relate their relevance to the present and to past beliefs. This highlights the consistency of human values and behaviours throughout history, as they continue to adhere to certain norms. Through his works, Karnad provides insights into both the past and the contemporary world, allowing readers and viewers to understand the significance of traditions and their impact on society. The plays depict the manipulation of idealism, the subordination of the individual to social interests, and the relevance of past beliefs in shaping the present. Karnad's use of myths and folklore serves as a medium to bridge the gap between the past and the contemporary society, shedding light on the continuity of cultural values and norms.

As creators and practitioners of Indian drama, we recognize the significance of mythology in shaping our artistic expressions. Mythology, with its vast array of gods, goddesses, epics, and legends, serves as an everlasting source of inspiration that provides us with endless themes, characters, and motifs to explore. By delving into the depths of myth, we aim to uncover universal truths, moral dilemmas, and existential questions that transcend time and culture. Through retelling and reinterpreting ancient stories, we breathe new life into them and imbue them with modern meaning. We also acknowledge the malleability of myth, allowing us to explore diverse perspectives and challenges while reflecting the complexity of the human condition. As custodians of our cultural heritage, we pledge to honor the sanctity of myth while daring to push its boundaries and invite audiences on transformative journeys of imagination and introspection. By harnessing the power of myth, we strive to ignite creativity, empathy, and collective consciousness for a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world.

3. ANALYSIS OF MYTHICAL ELEMENTS IN NAGAMANDALA

The author of Nagamandala examines the shifts in Indian society and culture this play is one of the notable works by Girish Karnad a Famous Indian writer and actor wrote the two-act drama Nagamandala, which was first shown in 1988. Karnad wrote the play between 1987 and 1988. Meaning a play with cobra, is Nagamandala especially, it was an English translation of a Kannada play. The drama combines aspects of mythology with history. The poet A K Ramanujan told Karnad this Kannada folktale, which is where the narrative originated. The play begins with a prologue in which a playwright encounters a story that has escaped from its teller's mouth and taken shelter in a village temple. The interrelated stories and plots, as well as the triangle relationships and triple ending, are represented graphically as a Mandala. This play serves as a medium to understand the cultural context of modern Indian women and their desires.

Naga-Mandala is a play with two interconnected plots. The first plot tells the story of supernatural light blazes gathering in a town sanctuary to communicate. The second plot is a myth-filled tale about Rani, her husband Appanna, and a King Cobra named Naga. In the main plot, Rani is married to Appanna, who locks her up in their home and only visits her for lunch. The story of Nagamandala is told to a man by the story. In a village, there lives a couple named Appanna and Rani. Appanna is kept apart from Rani by his extramarital relationship with a slave. while Rani is locked inside the house. Their married life starts to fall apart, and Rani yearns for her husband's love.

Kurudava, an elderly blind woman, discovers Rani's pitiful circumstances and offers her two love roots to her spouse. One small root was given to her husband that makes him sick and she tries to give a big root but that changed the color of gravy so she drops that in an ant hill a Naga has eaten that root and Naga meets Rani in the mask of Appanna, and she is content with her happiness at night. The next night, Kurudavva and Kappanna visit rani, and asks her about her husband. Rani discovers blood on Naga's

body and notices a reflection of a cobra in the mirror box. She coats Naga's body with cream and disappears as light arrives. Kurudava and Kappanna pay Rani a visit, and they spot a snake emerging from her bathroom drain and kappanna goes home, finds his dog dead, and brings a mongoose home. Naga fails to arrive due to injuries from a fight with the mongoose, and he is absent for an additional two weeks. When Rani finds out about her pregnancy, Naga is not satisfied and takes her to the Panchayat. He locks her inside the house and walks out. In the Panchayat, Rani requests Kurudava's assistance and takes a cobra from an ant hill and claims it on it. The snake slides like a diamond around her neck, proving her purity and allowing Appanna to accept her. With the newborn, Appanna and Rani start a joyful life together.

One evening, Naga reappears, and Rani and her husband are discovered sharing a bed. Naga changes his mind because of love, turning into a tiny snake and buries himself in her long hair. As she combs her hair, a lifeless cobra drops from her hair. Appanna declares their son safe from the snake and calls her a goddess. Appanna grants Rani's request to carry out a ceremony for the cobra on this day each year. The listener, who is the man, disagrees with the story's ending when the narrator finishes it. He believes it's alive when Rani discovers the cobra dropping out of her hair. Appanna attempts to kill the snake, but Rani grabs it and puts it back into her long hair, leading to a happy life for everyone involved.

The story ends, leaving the question unanswered does Rani know that Naga and Appanna are two different men the play also explores the significance of Rani's vow, which allows her to claim she has only touched her husband and the cobra in a specific way. The play's ambiguous ending introduces multiple possible endings and challenges the notion of absolute vows. The summary of the play talks about the use of myth by Karnad and his secondary level of imaginary. Nagamandala delves into themes of desire, betrayal, gender roles, and the oppressive nature of societal norms. It highlights the struggles faced by women in traditional Indian society, where their identities and desires are often subjugated to male dominance and

societal expectations. The Nagamandala ritual serves as a metaphor for Rani's quest for fulfillment and empowerment. However, it also explores the complexities and unpredictability of desire and power.

Through Rani's character, Karnad sheds light on the universal struggles of women trapped in oppressive marriages and stifling environments. Rani's journey is one of resilience and self-discovery as she confronts societal limitations and strives to break free from them. Appanna represents the archetype of the unfaithful spouse, embodying the destructive consequences of infidelity. He elicits both sympathy and condemnation from the audience exposing the moral ambiguity and opportunism prevalent in society. His exploitation of Rani's vulnerability reflects the darker aspects of human nature. The theme of empowerment and self-liberation pervades the play, culminating in Rani's symbolic act of defiance. By setting fire to the clay figurine, she rejects tradition and patriarchy, symbolizing a rebirth and the triumph of the human spirit. Karnad's use of symbolism and imagery enhances the play's thematic depth, inviting the audience to reflect on the complexities of human nature. The snake motif, in particular, symbolizes temptation, transformation, and the subconscious. In conclusion, Nagamandala is a masterpiece that explores profound themes of desire, betrayal, and empowerment. It resonates with audiences across cultures, inspiring introspection on the enduring themes of love, longing, and liberation.

Character analysis

Rani; the protagonist, represents the fight for freedom from patriarchal constraints in the play. Her marriage to Appanna, a wealthy man, is distant and neglectful, leaving Rani longing for fulfillment.

Appanna; a male chauvinist, disregards Rani's feelings and spends nights with a concubine.

Kurudava; a blind woman, plays a crucial role by providing Rani with a love potion to make Appanna fall in love with her. However, the mythical Naga, who drinks the potion intended for Appanna, falls in love with Rani instead. Disguised as Appanna, the Naga blurs the lines between reality and illusion, symbolizing vitality and liberation.

Temple; The temple structure, representing the Mandala, provides the foundation for the play and Rani's escape from patriarchy.

3.1 Symbols and Mythical elements

The play is a rich work to examine and analyze in the context of contemporary events since its mystical components are intricately entwined with its investigation of societal difficulties. In Indian mythology, the snake, also known as Naga, has great symbolic meaning. It symbolizes primordial energies that are beyond human understanding and conveys both anxiety and respect. In Nagamandala, the serpent serves as a vehicle for higher meanings in addition to being a physical being. It represents desire, transformation, and the blurred distinctions between illusion and reality.

There was a scholar named S. Govindappa according to his article examines into the various narrative levels of Karnad in the play Nagamandala. There are four narrative levels, with the frame story being about a playwright who must stay awake in a temple to break a curse. The playwright's last chance to ensure the audience stays awake throughout the night to watch his play is the night of the theatrical performance. The author-narrator repeatedly laments the possibility of his imminent death. Mythical elements are present in the second and third narrative levels. The author-narrator encounters flaming torches, each carrying its own story, on the second level. These torches lead him to the same ruined temple where the author-narrator is lamenting. On the third level, one of the torches tells a tale of an old woman who refuses to share an interesting story but unintentionally reveals it in her sleep, transforming into a young lady and accompanying song. The tale of Rani, the woman who emerged from the old hag's mouth, thus constitutes the fourth narrative level. In the drama Nagamandala, Rani takes on the role of protagonist. The primary story's intricate bend in the narrative's structure becomes apparent as it progresses.

Karnad takes its inspiration from oral folktales, in which serpents frequently have major parts older women tell these stories to younger ones at dinnertime, and it's a way for women in joint families to communicate. The supernatural marriage of male and female serpents is portrayed in the play. The complexity of identity, desire, and human relationships are reflected in this

union. Traditionally, the event involves two priests, one costumed as Naga Patri, the male serpent, and the female serpent. Their exchanges serve as a metaphor for the dichotomy contained in closeness and love. The female serpent rounds the complicated snake pattern, while the male consumes the areca flower their relationship goes beyond just physically to represent emotional fulfillment and hidden desires. The serpent appears as Appanna, the husband of Rani, the neglected wife her bodily and emotional needs fulfilled by the serpent who also offers her love and company karnad portrays Naga as a person of kindness and defense. By voluntarily giving herself up to this mysterious lover, Rani confuses the difference between the real and the fake. Without knowing every detail of Rani's bond with the serpent, the villagers pass judgment on her. The questioning of her chastity draws attention to the unfairly societal limitations placed on women. Nagamandala exposes the problems of the patriarchal system.

Rani's emotional liberation via the serpent stands in a major contrast to her imprisoned life. The role of women in countries where men dominated is examined in the play. Rani's dual view of her spouse as stranger during the day and a lover at night it illustrates the challenges faced by women in joint family. Karnad examines the sacredness of marriage and loyalty and questions societal norms through Rani's story. In Nagamandala author uses the serpent as a bridge and his extraordinary use of myth transforms Naga into appanna we can't imagine this in real life but karnad uses it to tell the problems in society.

By visiting Rani under the appearance of her husband Appanna, the serpent forges a close relationship that brings her comfort, fulfillment, and love. This metaphor examines the complexity of interpersonal bonds, women's subjugation, and the influence of secret relationships. Rani's silence regarding the visits from the serpent is a reflection of the silence that patriarchal societies place on women. Through the serpent's communication, Rani is empowered to rebel against oppressive standards and recover her identity and wants. Through the communication of the serpent, Rani is changed from a neglected wife to a woman who challenges social norms. Through the visits of the serpent, she overcomes her infertility and becomes pregnant. The mythical communication breaks down traditional gender roles for women and highlights

the importance of unspoken tales, which in turn promotes Rani's metamorphosis.

The snake is a powerful symbol that weaves together a variety of different topics. In Indian culture, it is connected to spirituality, healing, and the life-death cycle. As evidenced by Rani's transformation, the snake represents feminine strength, rebirth, and dedication. It draws attention to danger, kindness, and interest while reflecting the duality of both nature and the human psyche. Because it defies social conventions and satisfies Rani's repressed needs and desire for intimacy, the snake also symbolizes sexuality and desire. Rani sees the snake as a strange and fulfilling connection that helps her escape the harsh reality of her life. It gives her the freedom to question accepted norms and move outside of society, which challenges the patriarchal system. The snake serves as an agent of change, questioning established norms and offering an alternative narrative. In *Nagamandala* the snake is not just a character but a powerful symbol that weaves together themes of culture, gender, nature, and societal norms, making it a pivotal element in the play's exploration of human relationships and social structures. In the play, Patriarchy is portrayed as a system where men hold power and oppress women. The protagonist, Rani, initially conforms to societal expectations and is dominated by her husband, Appanna.

However, as the play unfolds, Rani rebels against these constraints, highlighting the unequal power dynamics inherent in patriarchy. Karnad questions the patriarchal moral code, which demands unwavering loyalty from women but does not hold men to the same standard. Rani's loyalty is expected, but Appanna's infidelity is overlooked, highlighting the unequal power dynamics. Rani's encounter with the serpent (Naga) symbolizes desire, liberation, and hidden truths. Through her relationship with the serpent, Rani breaks free from societal norms and experiences emotional fulfillment. Rani's journey represents a feminist struggle, challenging the patriarchal subjectivity imposed upon her. Her interrogatory narrative speech disrupts the hegemonic feminist positioning, inserting resistant feminist ideologies into gender discourse. Ultimately, Rani transcends her role as a submissive wife and rises to a divine status, defying patriarchal constraints.

The myth of magical roots appears in various forms in epics and literature. Indian mythologies contain numerous stories of magical herbs, fruits, and prasada. The Yagna-Prasada in the Ramayana is a prominent example in Indian society. In the play Naga-Mandala, Kurudavva gives Rani a root with instructions on how to use it. Rani follows the instructions and feeds the root to Appanna with milk, but it doesn't have the desired effect. Kurudavva then gives Rani a larger root, which she turns into a paste. However, the paste's color frightens her, and she fears it may harm her husband. In panic, she pours the paste into a tall ant-hill. To her surprise, a King Cobra inside consumes the paste and takes on the form of her husband, visiting her every night.

The myth of ordeal holds symbolic value, as seen in Sita's ordeal in the Ramayana and other Indian mythologies. In the play Nagamandala, Rani faces an ordeal to prove her fidelity, despite having spent time with Naga disguised as her husband. Naga advises her to undergo the snake ordeal and speak only the truth, promising his protection. The village elders order her to hold a hot iron rod, but she willingly chooses to hold a snake from an ant-hill, declaring that she has only touched her husband and the cobra. Naga then coils around her shoulder, spreading its hood like an umbrella, and the villagers bow before her, recognizing her as a goddess. This absurd ordeal highlights Rani's revered status in the village. But this is a stupid thing in Indian culture according to Karnad he uses two ordeals in his plays there are many ordeals here we don't know that we will discuss about the ordeal of snake how one should take the snake on the hand if we'll speak the truth the snake will bite us if he was in bad mood but in Nagamandala we all know that Naga loves Rani so he doesn't bite her and also she speaks the truth according to her words since coming to this village,

"I have held by this hand, only two..... My husband and,this Cobra, yes, my husband and this Cobra. Except for these two, I have not touched any of the male sex. Nor have I allowed any other male to touch me, if I lie, let the Cobra bite me. (Karnad; Three plays:58)."

Girish Karnad discusses the widely held notion in Indian society that snakes' names should not be spoken at night in *Naga-Mandala*. It is thought that if it were addressed by name, it would come into the house. This play by Karnad that explores the struggles of Indian women in rural India. The play features a prologue with flames symbolizing the societal limitations and societal constraints faced by women. Rani, a character with a quiet yet profound rebellion, challenges the norms without overt confrontation. Her encounter with a serpent symbolizes the persistent predicaments faced by women in Indian rural society. The play also deflates the concept of chastity, symbolizing a reclaiming of agency and departure from the prescribed roles assigned to women. Rani's journey serves as a powerful commentary on societal expectations, desire, and the resilience of women.

The play *Nagamandala* explores themes of betrayal, desire, transformation, socialization, and metaphorical love. The Naga impersonates Appanna, highlighting the suppression of women's agency in patriarchal culture. Rani's longing for affection and the Naga's love symbolizes romantic and platonic love, exemplifying metamorphosis. The play also reflects the socialization process in Indian society, where marriage is often the first experience of love and intimacy. Metaphorical love uses symbols, allegories, and unconventional comparisons to evoke emotions beyond the literal. Metaphorical love is often found in poetry, art, and literature, allowing creators to explore its depths and nuances. It invites us to see beyond the surface, feel the intangible, and appreciate love's multifaceted nature. Karnad uses myths in his plays to bring new meaning and interpretations to contemporary life. He believes that myths hold eternal significance in a postmodern world defined by globalization. His mythological works spark curiosity and offer fresh interpretations of folk tales. By cleverly incorporating myths, he preserves the rich tradition of ancient myths. In blending history and myth, he addresses socio-cultural issues in India and presents new choices for women, as seen when Rani refuses to escape reality.

3.2 Myth in Folklore and Rituals

Girish Karnad's play Nagamandala is a profound exploration of the intricate tapestry of Indian society, culture, and the human psyche through the lens of folklore and ritual. The narrative delves into the realm of snake worship, a practice deeply embedded in various cultures, particularly in India, where serpents are often revered and associated with divine entities and supernatural phenomena. Karnad's masterful blend of traditional folk theater, mythology, historical context, and contemporary literary elements captivates audiences, drawing them into a world where the past and present coalesce. The play reflects the societal mirror that Karnad holds up, challenging entrenched values while offering alternative perspectives that resonate with the realities of present-day society. The Naga Mandala Ritual, a venerable tradition in South India, epitomizes the profound cultural beliefs that are woven into the fabric of the narrative. This ritual, which seeks the blessings of a snake deity, represents the deep-seated beliefs and practices that have been passed down through generations.

Within the societal construct, folklore and rituals often mirror superstitions and beliefs. In Nagamandala, characters grapple with age-old superstitions surrounding snakes, such as the fear of curses or the belief in the magical properties of snake venom. These beliefs, while seemingly ethereal, have tangible consequences and are perpetuated by social norms and power structures, often reinforcing existing inequalities. The play also scrutinizes the impact of rituals on gender roles and relationships, with the protagonist, Rani, confronting oppressive gender norms that curtail her autonomy, as exemplified by the rituals that govern marriage and fertility.

The transformative and transcendent nature of rituals is a recurring theme in Nagamandala, allowing individuals to overcome limitations and ascend to a higher state of being. Through these rituals, characters face their deepest fears, desires, and insecurities, ultimately transcending the confines of their earthly existence. Karnad's Nagamandala is not only a celebration of

India's rich cultural heritage but also a critical examination of the relevance of ancient traditions in a rapidly modernizing world. The themes of community and belonging are central to the narrative, as characters partake in rituals to seek support and validation. However, these same rituals can also perpetuate social hierarchies and divisions, ostracizing those who do not conform to societal norms.

The play offers a panoramic view of the cultural richness and diversity of the Indian subcontinent, while also touching upon universal themes that transcend geographical boundaries and temporal constraints. Folklore and rituals are instrumental in shaping cultural identities, beliefs, and social practices, not just in India but across the globe. In *Nagamandala*, Karnad weaves these elements into the fabric of the story, providing a window into the complexities of the human experience. Set against the backdrop of a rural Indian village, the play showcases the traditions and customs that are deeply ingrained in the lives of its characters. Rituals, as formalized expressions of religious or cultural beliefs, involve symbolic actions, gestures, and ceremonies that adhere to prescribed rules. They serve multiple functions, including fostering social cohesion, marking significant life transitions, and expressing collective values. In *Nagamandala*, rituals associated with snake worship and fertility rites are pivotal, reflecting the characters' deep-seated faith in the supernatural and their reliance on traditional practices amidst the uncertainties of life. These rituals carry symbolic meanings that resonate on both personal and collective levels, offering insights into the human condition and the enigmatic nature of existence.

The motif of snake worship in the play symbolizes the ancient and enduring connection between humans and nature, representing concepts of fertility, wisdom, and divine power. The deity Nagamani, embodying both benevolent and malevolent aspects of nature, reflects the primal forces of creation and destruction. Rituals such as offering milk and prayers to serpent idols are acts of devotion, seeking divine blessings and protection, and mirroring the villagers' beliefs in the supernatural and their desire for harmony

with the natural world. Nagamandala also explores complex themes such as gender dynamics, social hierarchies, and the tension between tradition and modernity. The character Rani, trapped in a loveless marriage, personifies the struggle between societal expectations and individual desires. In a world that is constantly evolving, folklore and rituals continue to shape identities, communities, and cultural landscapes.

By examining the roles and representations of women in folklore and rituals, Nagamandala invites us to challenge traditional gender norms and advocate for equity and social justice. The play provides profound insights into Indian culture and spirituality through its portrayal of folklore and rituals, highlighting the complexities of existence and the enduring power of myth and storytelling in shaping our understanding of the world. The exploitation of women, as highlighted in Nagamandala, is a critical issue that the play brings to the forefront. The act of writing and recording has been instrumental in preserving fantasies and oral practices, safeguarding them from being lost to time. Indian literature, with its rich tradition of transmitting and preserving myths and oral traditions, has played a pivotal role in this endeavor. India, the cradle of these art forms, was once the epicenter of folk art. The Sama Veda, an ancient form of folk music, stands as one of the oldest and finest examples of its kind. Scholars, saints, and authors have meticulously documented numerous stories, including the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Buddhist Jataka tales, Pancha Tantras, Hitopadesha, Katha Saritsagarain, and the Jeremiah songs of the Bauls of Bengal, to ensure the preservation of these oral traditions and myths.

4. ANALYSIS OF MYTHICAL ELEMENTS IN HAYAVADANA

Girish Karnad wrote the play Hayavadana in 1972, inspired by Thomas Mann's work *The Transposed Heads*, which was based on the ancient Sanskrit collection of stories called *Kathasaritsagara*. While Mann used a mock-heroic tone, Karnad focuses on the complexities of incompleteness, twisted relationships, and the darker aspects of humanity. The play is set in the city of Dharmapura, ruled by King Dharma Sheela. The two central characters are Devadatta, a brilliant scholar with poetic abilities, and Kapila, a daring individual with extraordinary physical skills. Devadatta and Kapila share a strong bond, similar to legendary pairs like Rama and Lakshmana, Lava and Kusha, and Krishna and Balarama. The play takes an unexpected turn when an actor recounts a bizarre encounter with a horse-headed man who spoke to him. The actor becomes nervous and fearful, unable to perform. The narrator instructs him to find the talking horse and clear up the confusion. Later, the actor returns, claiming that the mysterious being is approaching. The narrator witnesses a being with the head of a horse and the body of a man. Initially assuming it to be a mask, the narrator realizes that the horse head is genuinely real, and the being is half-man, half-horse.

The play starts with a worship service to the God Ganesha. The worshipper, known as the Bhagavata, introduces the two main characters, Devadatta and Kapila. Devadatta is a poet and known for his sensitivity, while Kapila is the son of an iron-smith and known for his physical strength. While the Bhagavata describes the men, he is interrupted by an actor claiming to have seen a strange creature. The creature, Hayavadana, has the body of a man and the head of a horse. Hayavadana explains that his mother fell in love with a horse and lived with him until he returned to his true form as a celestial being. She was cursed and turned into a horse, and Hayavadana is their son. The Bhagavata advises Hayavadana to go to the temple of Kali and ask to become human. Hayavadana follows the advice and leaves.

The story then focuses on Devadatta, who asks his friend Kapila to find out the name and address of the woman he loves. Kapila falls in love with the woman, Padmini, when he sees her. He tells her about Devadatta's love for her. Devadatta and Padmini get married, and Padmini becomes pregnant. They plan a trip with Kapila but Devadatta's jealousy causes tension. Along the way, Padmini seems to admire Kapila's physical appearance, which leads Devadatta to fulfill his promise of sacrificing his head and arm for her. Kapila does the same. Padmini finds them headless and is about to kill herself when the goddess Kali intervenes. She instructs Padmini to replace the heads, but Padmini accidentally switches them. Back home, the two men argue over who is Padmini's husband. They each present their arguments based on their heads and bodies. Padmini chooses Devadatta's head. Devadatta goes to the fair and tells Padmini about wrestling with Kapila's body. Padmini later gives birth to their child.

The child's dolls narrate the events in the household. Padmini becomes dissatisfied with Devadatta's new body as it resembles his old one. She dreams of Kapila secretly. Padmini encounters Kapila in the forest and stays with him for a few days. Devadatta finds them and a fight breaks out, resulting in their deaths. Padmini instructs the Bhagavata to take her son to hunters and claim he is Kapila's son. After five years, he is to present the child as Devadatta's to his father. Padmini plans to commit Sati, lying on her husband's funeral pyre. Hayavadana appears as a horse, and Padmini's son is present. The boy doesn't speak or laugh until Hayavadana's story makes him laugh. They sing together, and Hayavadana's cry sounds like a horse neighing.

The play ends with a celebration to Ganesha for the play's success.

Hayavadana, a play by the playwright Karnad, is a highly accomplished work that combines Indian dramatic motifs, structures, and myths with elements of Western theater. It exemplifies the concept of the theatre of roots that explores cultural identity. The play begins with Bhagavata,

a devotee of the god Vishnu, who serves as the narrator, theater director, and guide. Bhagavata interacts with the audience, blurring the lines between reality and performance. The play opens with an invocation to Ganesha, a god with an elephant head, symbolizing imperfection and incompleteness. This foreshadows the central theme of the play – the search for completeness. Hayavadana, the main character, is introduced as a hybrid creature, a fusion of two species. Karnad uses the mask of Ganesha to emphasize the idea of hybridity and as a means to ensure the play's success. The Yakshagana form, a traditional Indian theater style that relies on masks, plays a significant role in the play. Karnad was inspired by this form and believed that it justified the use of masks, miming, dance, and music. The stylized action in Yakshagana serves to remind the audience that they are watching a play, creating a psychological distance. The play's sub-plot features Devadatta and Kapila and is intertwined with the main plot of Hayavadana.

This parallelism mirrors Shakespeare's use of sub-plots and adds depth and complexity to the narrative. The sub-plot is not resolved until the end of the play, surprising the audience when they expect the play to conclude. Overall, Hayavadana is a captivating and thought-provoking play that combines Indian and Western theatrical elements. It explores themes of identity, incompleteness, and the search for wholeness. Karnad's use of masks and stylized action enhances the theatrical experience, blurring the lines between reality and performance. The intertwined sub-plot adds depth to the narrative and keeps the audience engaged until the end.

Character analysis

The Bhagavata: is the narrator of the play and plays a crucial role in presenting and interpreting the main storyline.

Devadatta: one of the protagonists, is described as fair in color and represents intellectual pursuits and sensitivity.

Kapila: the other hero, contrasts with Devadatta as he embodies physical strength and has a dark skin tone due to being the son of an iron-smith.

Padmini: the character who sparks the rivalry between Devadatta and Kapila, marries Devadatta because she admires his mind, but her teasing comments reveal his sensitivity.

Hayavadana: meaning horse face, interrupts the main action of the play to share his origin story and his desperate quest for wholeness.

The boy: represented initially by a wooden doll, symbolizes the culmination of the characters' desires and conflicts.

Kali: A Hindu goddess of death, appears as various characters visit her temple and intervenes at critical moments.

Minor characters include the dolls, who narrate Padmini's dreams and Devadatta's fading strength, as well as the female chorus and Actors I and II, who discover Hayavadana and play essential roles in the unfolding drama.

4.1 Mythical elements and symbols

Myths are not merely stories but are symbolic narratives that resonate with a numinous quality, often featuring a cast of human, non-human, and super-human characters engaged in events beyond the realm of the ordinary. These tales are believed to be pre-historical, emerging before recorded time, and are the product of collective authorship, reflecting the shared beliefs and values of a culture. One of the defining characteristics of myths is their normative nature; they serve as repositories of moral rules and ethical guidelines, shaping the behavior and attitudes of societies. Girish Karnad's play *Hayavadana* is a rich tapestry that interweaves these mythical elements into its narrative fabric. The play delves into archetypal themes, explores recurring mythical patterns, and presents character types that are emblematic of larger human truths. Karnad employs folk theatre conventions such as masks, curtains, dolls, and the invocation of deities like Kali, Ganesh, and Rudra, all of which contribute to the allegorical significance of the drama. Originally composed in Kannada, *Hayavadana* was later translated into English and published in the journal *Enact*, allowing it to reach a broader audience.

The plot of *Hayavadana* draws inspiration from Thomas Mann's *The Transposed Heads*, which is borrowed from the Sanskrit *Kathasaritasagara* stories a venerable Sanskrit collection of stories. At the heart of the play is the central episode involving Devadatta and Kapila, which is based on a tale from *Vetala Panchavimshika*. While Karnad's rendition borrows elements from Thomas Mann's novel *Transposed Heads*, it also includes an original sub-plot crafted by Karnad himself, which revolves around the horse-man's quest for completeness. *Hayavadana* is a profound exploration of the themes of incompleteness and the search for identity amidst a labyrinth of complex relationships. Devadatta, the intellectual, and Kapila, the embodiment of physical prowess, are close friends who represent contrasting aspects of human nature. The drama unfolds as Devadatta marries Padmini, only for her to develop feelings for Kapila. This love triangle leads to a tragic sequence of events where the friends end their lives, and Padmini, in a moment of desperation, transposes their heads. This act of transposition becomes a

pivotal scene that blurs the lines of identity and underscores the ambiguous nature of the human persona. As the narrative progresses, the complexities intensify, culminating in a second tragic confrontation and Padmini's ultimate act of sati. Karnad's narrative is a deep dive into the human psyche, using traditional myths as a lens to examine the modern individual's inner turmoil and existential dilemmas. The play picks up where the Vetala story concludes, probing the potential reactions of a woman placed in such extraordinary circumstances and questioning whether such a predicament can ever truly be resolved. Karnad challenges the resolution offered by King Vikram in the original tale, suggesting that it falls short of addressing the core issue. By departing from Mann's interpretation and introducing his own creative twists, Karnad adds layers of complexity to the story, eschewing simplistic resolutions.

In Hayavadana, the horse's head serves as a potent symbol of the physical and emotional incompleteness experienced by the characters. Hayavadana, with his human body and horse's head, embodies the internal conflict and disharmony that plague him. Padmini's affection for Hayavadana, despite his unusual appearance, emphasizes the importance of looking beyond the superficial to appreciate the intrinsic value of a person. The horse's head also signifies the characters' pursuit of wholeness and self-actualization, with each individual grappling with their own sense of inadequacy or fragmented identity.

Moreover, the horse's head acts as a metaphor for the intricacies of the human condition, reflecting the inherent contradictions within individuals and society at large. Just as Hayavadana straddles the line between human and horse, individuals often find themselves torn between conflicting desires, obligations, and societal norms. The horse's head embodies the existential struggle to reconcile these opposing forces and discover a sense of unity and purpose. Additionally, it represents the theme of transformation and metamorphosis, with horses in Hindu mythology symbolizing power, swiftness, and transcendence. Hayavadana's hybrid existence challenges conventional boundaries, prompting both the characters and the audience to reevaluate their preconceived notions of identity and the essence of completeness.

In the world of Karnad's play, the talking dolls serve a critical role in portraying Padmini's cunningness following the head swap between Devadatta and Kapila. Through the dialogue of these dolls, Padmini's sensuality and complex desires are brought to the fore, as she finds herself drawn to one man for his intellect and to the other for his physical attributes. The juxtaposition of the switched heads symbolizes the concealed aspirations of women across cultures, yet the eventual reversion to their original forms serves as a stark reminder of the unforgiving realities of contemporary society. Karnad adeptly uses the dolls' conversations to depict the physical transformations undergone by the two men, highlighting the changes they observe in themselves, such as the loosening of a once taut and muscular abdomen.

Devadatta, initially portrayed as an erudite and honorable man, is devoted to his friend Kapila and his wife Padmini. Yet, his insecurities regarding his physical form a human body topped with a horse's head lead him to question his own value and fuel his yearning for completeness. His unreciprocated love for Padmini and his sense of inadequacy are central to the play's conflict. Padmini, depicted as a loyal wife, loves Devadatta but is simultaneously attracted to Kapila's robust masculinity. Her internal struggle between societal expectations and personal desires adds complexity to her character and intensifies the dynamics of the love triangle. Kapila, as Devadatta's best friend and the epitome of physical excellence, is unwittingly entangled in the love triangle, highlighting the intricate interplay of friendship and loyalty. Hayavadana tells the treacherous waters of jealousy, betrayal, and the tension between duty and passion, underscoring the delicate nature of human connections and the repercussions of unmet desires through the interactions of the central trio. The play probes the essence of identity, questioning whether it is defined by physical appearance, intellect, or emotional bonds. It challenges traditional notions of completeness and encourages introspection. The enigmatic figure of Hayavadana, reminiscent of the centaur, embodies the duality of noble and primal instincts. Thus, when one encounters a talking horse, it serves as a reminder of the story of Hayavadana and the profound truths it unveils about the human experience.

4.2 Folklore and Rituals

Folklore and oral traditions play a vital role in Indian tribal culture, showcasing the diverse heritage and beliefs of these communities. Passed down through generations via storytelling, songs, and rituals, these traditions offer a unique insight into the lives and customs of India's tribes. One prominent aspect of Indian tribal folklore is the presence of myths and legends. These tales recount the creation of the universe, the origins of the world, and the stories of gods, goddesses, and heroes. They serve as moral guides and reflect the values of the tribes.

Fairy tales and folk tales are enchanting narratives that captivate both young and old. Filled with magical creatures, talking animals, and mystical lands, these stories provide entertainment and impart traditional wisdom. Tribal culture in India also celebrates through folk songs and music. These songs, accompanied by traditional musical instruments, focus on various aspects of life such as love, nature, and daily struggles. They are sung during communal gatherings and festivals.

Proverbs and riddles are concise sayings and puzzles that encapsulate wisdom and challenge the mind. Proverbs provide practical advice, while riddles entertain and engage. Rituals and celebrations are significant in Indian tribal folklore. Life-cycle rituals related to birth, marriage, and death differ across tribes and regions. Harvest and agricultural festivals commemorate changing seasons, agricultural cycles, and abundant harvests. Religious and spiritual celebrations honor tribal deities and spirits, seeking protection and maintaining harmony with nature. Themes and symbolism prevalent in Indian tribal folklore include a deep connection with nature and the environment. Animals, trees, rivers, and mountains are often viewed as sacred entities. Creation and origin stories blend mythology, local beliefs, and historical events. Supernatural beings and spirits inhabit forests, rivers, and sacred groves. Heroic deeds and epics narrate the triumphs of tribal heroes and heroines as they protect their communities. Storytelling is a central element of Indian tribal communities, with elders passing down knowledge and

cultural heritage through oral narratives. This practice strengthens the bonds of tribes, reinforces their identity, and ensures a sense of continuity.

The temple in Hayavadana represents traditions, rituals, and the characters' religious practices. It highlights the impact of tradition on their identities and behaviors in a changing world. However, it also poses questions about the relevance of these traditions. The temple also becomes a site of conflict with modernity. The characters struggle with the clash between ancient beliefs and contemporary values. For instance, Devadatta's intellectual pursuits and desire for self-fulfillment challenge Brahmin expectations. Padmini's longing for love and autonomy clashes with patriarchal norms.

Furthermore, the temple symbolizes the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane. It serves as a sacred space for worship and spiritual awakening, but also as a place where human desires and conflicts arise. The characters' actions within the temple blur the concepts of divinity and morality, showcasing the complexity of human nature. Throughout the play, characters seek redemption and resolution within the temple. Devadatta searches for existential answers, Padmini prays for guidance in her love triangle, and Kapila wrestles with guilt and betrayal. The temple becomes a symbol of hope and forgiveness, offering the characters a glimpse of transcendence beyond their earthly struggles. It represents the intricacies of Indian society and the human condition. It captures the tensions between tradition and modernity, spirituality and desire, and provides a space for introspection, transformation, and transcendence.

The chorus in Hayavadana represents the collective voice of society, providing context to the characters' actions and commenting on the social implications of their choices. They offer insight into the cultural backdrop of the story. The chorus also acts as a narrative framing tool, introducing and concluding scenes to guide the audience's interpretation of the play. They help maintain the thematic coherence and engage the audience in the deeper

meanings of the story. In addition to their commentary, the chorus serves as a symbolic reflection of the characters' inner conflicts. They amplify the protagonists' emotional turmoil, intensifying the dramatic tension and mirroring their desires, fears, and aspirations. As witnesses to the characters' triumphs and tragedies, the chorus facilitates catharsis for the audience. They create a space for reflection and introspection, allowing viewers to connect with the universal themes explored in the play.

One compelling aspect of the chorus is their ability to embody multiple perspectives simultaneously. While they represent societal norms, they also encompass a diverse range of opinions and attitudes, adding depth and nuance to the narrative. This encourages the audience to consider the intricacies of the characters' motivations and actions from different angles. Overall, the chorus in *Hayavadana* serves as a versatile narrative device, fulfilling various functions within the play. They contribute to the richness and complexity of the exploration of identity, desire, and the human condition.

5. MYTH IN PLAYS: A COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS

Girish Karnad's seminal works, *Nagamandala* and *Hayavadana*, are steeped in the rich tapestry of Indian mythology, weaving narratives that, while distinct in their storytelling, share a common exploration of enduring themes and motifs inherent in mythological lore.

Nagamandala presents a tapestry of traditional and subversive narrative techniques to depict the stark realities of Indian society. The narrative centres around Rani's coerced union with Appana, casting a spotlight on the oppressive nature of societal customs. Yet, the intervention of an elderly blind woman, who provides Rani with a love potion, serves as a testament to the enduring belief in ancient legends, culminating in a blossoming relationship between Rani and the incognito serpent deity. Karnad positions the serpent as a pivotal force in resolving Rani's tribulations, ultimately unveiling the truth to her. Rani faces her challenges with ordeal, yet remains tormented by her past deeds. In a pivotal trial involving a serpent, she grasps it in her hand to affirm her innocence, leading to a dramatic moment where it coils around her, forming a protective canopy over her head. While Rani is venerated as a divine figure, the veracity of her spouse's existence hangs in the balance. The play delves into the tumult wrought by the mandala and subverts societal conventions by portraying Rani's extramarital affair with empathy.

Karnad carves out a realm for women's autonomy, challenging the entrenched behavioural codes prescribed for them. The play delves deep into the realm of ancient mythical folklore, illuminating the virtues of free thought and concealed motifs. The cobra's role symbolically subverts traditional Indian narratives, while simultaneously preserving the archetype of the virtuous Sati Savitri designated for women. Rani, however, defies societal expectations of chastity, which forms the narrative's cornerstone. The cobra aids her in achieving a multifaceted integration emotional, physical, and spiritual. Karnad employs myths to reinterpret and imbue contemporary life with new meanings.

He posits that the relevance of mythology remains undiminished, even in the modern postmodern milieu. His mythological creations ignite curiosity and proffer novel interpretations of folk tales. By fusing historical and mythical elements, Karnad addresses socio-cultural issues prevalent in Indian society and advocates for alternative paths for women, as exemplified by Rani's refusal to flee from reality.

Hayavadana, originally penned in Kannada and subsequently translated into English by Karnad himself, revolves around the motif of head exchange, a recurrent theme in Indian mythology. The protagonist, Padmini, embodies the dichotomy between her lofty ethical principles and her yearning for both intellect and physical prowess. Karnad adeptly captures this internal conflict through the divine intervention of Goddess Kali, who endows Padmini with a life replete with complexities. The play features a poignant doll scene, serving as a metaphor for the societal pressures that meld our choices. Moreover, Karnad utilizes the birth of Padmini's malformed offspring as an effective dramatic device, mirroring the legend of a man cursed with a horse's head, who yearns for a human existence yet is doomed to perpetual longing. The narrative orbits around Padmini, Kapila, and Devadatta, with Padmini fervently swapping Kapila's aesthetically pleasing head with Devadatta's intellectually appealing head in her quest for wholeness.

Additionally, the subplot featuring Hayavadana, who ultimately attains wholeness by transforming into a complete horse, ingeniously satirizes the main storyline, challenging the traditional notion that the mind supersedes the body. Karnad employs magical realism to obscure the boundaries between the fantastical and the real, as well as between sentiment and logic. The play scrutinizes the lived experiences of fully realized individuals—their aspirations, frustrations, joys, and sorrows. Hayavadana's battle with estrangement and his sense of incompleteness is depicted as an immutable and insurmountable truth. Padmini confronts this reality when she ponders the rationale behind enduring such a tumultuous state of incompleteness.

At the heart of both plays lies the theme of transformation. Nagamandala explores the transformative potency of desire, as Rani's life is irrevocably altered by her encounter with the Naga. In parallel, Hayavadana delves into the intricacies of identity and the pursuit of wholeness, with the characters experiencing both corporeal and existential metamorphoses. The plays traverse the multifaceted terrain of human existence through the lens of mythological dualities. Nagamandala juxtaposes the mortal with the divine, whereas Hayavadana grapples with the tension between the tangible and the transcendent.

The central figures in both dramas embark on introspective journeys in search of fulfilment and self-awareness. Rani seeks affection and emancipation, while Padmini and Devadatta chase after a sense of completeness and self-definition, each wrestling with existential quandaries rooted in mythological archetypes. The motif of sacrifice recurs throughout, emblematic of the characters' readiness to endure hardship for personal evolution or loftier ideals. Rani's sacrifice for love and Kapila's altruism in Hayavadana underscore the narratives' exploration of atonement through acts of self-denial. Animals assume symbolic significance in both plays, representing profound layers of interpretation. In Nagamandala, the Naga epitomizes desire, while in Hayavadana, the horse and the human-equine hybrid signify primal urges and the contest for supremacy.

While Nagamandala and Hayavadana share thematic and symbolic commonalities, they also exhibit distinctions in their mythological depictions and cultural resonances. Nagamandala draws from the rich wellspring of South Indian folklore and oral traditions, whereas Hayavadana is anchored in the classical canon of Sanskrit literature. Both dramas feature mythic archetypes and personages, yet they manifest divergently. In Nagamandala, entities like the Naga and the Yakshi embody elemental forces of nature and longing, reflecting a localized and visceral portrayal. Conversely, Hayavadana probes philosophical and existential questions through allegorical figures like the human-horse amalgam.

The narrative structures and stylistic choices of the two plays mirror their mythological underpinnings. Nagamandala adopts a non-linear and episodic format, echoing the oral tradition of folk narratives. In contrast, Hayavadana adheres to a more sequential narrative arc, evocative of classical Sanskrit drama with its lyrical prose and formalized norms. The cultural milieu and symbolism in Nagamandala and Hayavadana diverge based on their mythological foundations. Nagamandala delves into motifs of passion, longing, and treachery within the bucolic setting of Karnataka, weaving in indigenous customs and rites. Meanwhile, Hayavadana contemplates notions of identity and essence against the backdrop of age-old Indian mythos and philosophical discourse.

The mythological components in Nagamandala and Hayavadana play a pivotal role in sculpting the characters' motivations, conflicts, and resolutions. In Nagamandala, Rani's quest for love and autonomy is propelled by her liaison with the Naga, while in Hayavadana, Padmini and Devadatta's pursuit of wholeness is driven by their desire to surmount their corporeal constraints. The dilemmas faced by the characters precipitate profound transformations. Rani's odyssey from subjugation to empowerment in Nagamandala is ignited by her confrontation with the Naga and her acceptance of her yearnings. Similarly, in Hayavadana, the struggle with self-identity and enlightenment culminates in a deeper comprehension of the human condition.

The mythic symbols employed in both plays infuse the narratives with depth and allegory. In Nagamandala, the Naga and Yakshi challenge conventional gender roles and societal mores, signifying unbridled desire and feminine autonomy. In Hayavadana, the human-equine hybrid symbolizes the fragmented nature of human identity and the quest for integration. The denouement of each plot is interwoven with mythic motifs of sacrifice, redemption, and transcendence. Rani's defiance in Nagamandala paves the way for her liberation from patriarchal subjugation, while in Hayavadana, embracing imperfections and constraints leads to spiritual awakening.

. In conclusion of Nagamandala and Hayavadana underscores the profound sway of mythology in shaping character arcs, narrative progression, and thematic inquiry. Although both plays resonate with shared themes and elements derived from Indian mythology, they are distinguished by their unique representations, narrative styles, and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, the imprint of myth in these works is indelible, bestowing upon their tales an enduring significance and a resonance that transcends time and place. Nagamandala and Hayavadana are deeply influenced by Indian folklore and rituals, as seen through the use of symbols and mythical motifs in his work. In Nagamandala, Karnad explores complex human desires and societal norms through symbols such as snakes, moons, and magic potions, inviting the audience to reflect on universal themes in the context of Indian mythology. Similarly, Hayavadana delves into themes of identity and desire by combining Hindu mythology with folklore, questioning traditional notions of selfhood and fulfillment through the characters of Padmini, Devadatta, and Kapila.

Both plays also draw on Indian folklore and rituals, incorporating oral traditions and folktales to enrich the narrative. Karnad pays homage to India's cultural heritage by offering contemporary interpretations of ancient stories, showcasing his mastery as a playwright and his contribution to Indian literature and theater. Ultimately, the mythical elements in 'Nagamandala' and 'Hayavadana' serve as a vehicle to explore the depth of human experience within the larger context of Indian culture, resonating with audiences through their imagery, symbolism, and thematic richness. In conclusion of Nagamandala and Hayavadana underscores the profound sway of mythology in shaping character arcs, narrative progression, and thematic inquiry. Although both plays resonate with shared themes and elements derived from Indian mythology, they are distinguished by their unique representations, narrative styles, and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, the imprint of myth in these works is indelible, bestowing upon their tales an enduring significance and a resonance that transcends time and place.

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