



# 'REBIRTH OF A PLAYWRIGHT ' - IN THE PLAY NAGAMANDALA BY GIRISH KARNAD

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## ABSTRACT:

Dramatic expressions of our inner feelings can be original. Dramatic characters, themes, and dialogue bring real life events to life. Drama is overflowing with historical concepts, social conditions that still exist today, and answers to the chaos of the past. GirishKarnad does a good job of using the remembrance of old myths and folktales as a means of expressing his ideas for the current theme. GirishKarnad's drama "*Nagamandala*" is based on two Kannada folktales that A.K. Ramanujan recounted. Kids today's moral principles are in doubt due to media, Internet addiction, gaming, mindlessly embracing Western culture, and modernization. Elders in the past used story-telling as a means of instilling moral principles in children. GirishKarnad uses this approach in his play "*Nagamandala*" to portray the modern socioeconomic position. In the play "*Nagamandala*," the playwright was cursed for writing uninspiring plays. For his redemption from the curse, he had to stay awake for an entire night during that month or he would die. On that critical day, he was lamenting and complaining about his predicament sitting in an abandoned temple. There, he overheard rumours of flames coming from many homes. A new flame later joined the group in the late hours of the night, bringing with her a tale wrapped in a saree. That woman in the saree shared such an intriguing tale that it revived the dramatist and kept him awake all night.

**KEYWORDS:** Curse, Gossips of flames, Rebirth of a playwright, Story-telling, Story of a story

## STORY TELLING- DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE:

The art of storytelling in literature is not new. Chaucer used this technique in his work "Canterbury Tales. The Pilgrims shared twenty-four stories and the best storyteller received a free lunch at Tabard Inn. For more information GirishKarnad also sailed in the same boat in '*Nagamandala*'. In reference to *Nagamandala*, GirishKarnad stated, "Drama is a form of self-Expression for me. The meaning of meaning can also be drama. The *Nagamandala* story is not mine. It was already there and the play simply creates devices for telling that story". There are numerous stories told by various characters in the play *Nagamandala*, including the cursed playwright, flames 1, 2, 3, and a new flame.

## INTRODUCTION:

The Indian folktales from North Karnataka served as the inspiration for *Nagamandala*. The drama depicts the way of living, eating habits, and daily routine of Karnataka's mediaeval era. Snakes are revered and feared because they are regarded as sacred. In the play, conversations take place in the dialect of North Karnataka and it was translated by the author himself in English. A major theme of the play is the supernatural.

This drama explores the intricacy of human life via a magical folktale. The drama, in particular, focuses on the Indian folktale to highlight the societal and personal relationships. The play's most complicated difficulties reflect some of the prevalent social stigmas of the day. The drama reveals the love of women in India towards her

husband though he was immoral in his activities. It also mentions the village justice system and how married women are forced to show their fidelity by stepping into fire as Sita did in Ramayana and Madhavi became a saint to prove herself after Kovalan left her in Silappathikaram . In "Modern Indian Theatre astride Two Tradition," Talwar, Urmil, Chakrabarty, and Bandana (2005) examined how Nagamandala, exactly utilized the oral story telling method into play structure .Myths, dancing ballads and interludes of great Epics are chosen by GirishKarnadto expose the discrimination created by caste, inequality for women, sacrifices of a son for the sake of his parents. Karnad used the myths effectively to highlight the injustice done and gave a different notion and solution to approach the same problem that prevails in the present. He also described the question of existentialism for women before and after marriage. Though we are living in modern Era talking about women's freedom we are facing issues regarding the rights of women living in every households.Appanna in the play Nagamandala, is a crystal clear example for dominating male behaviour prevailing in Indian society. It considered women as a material and all the rights were taken by her husband without her permission. According to Hindu religion, a revelation is required for proving a woman's virginity, but a man's word alone is considered to be true, whether the woman in question is Sita, Shakuntala, or Rani.

### **GOSSIPS WITH DIFFERENT FLAMES:**

The first Act of the play "Nagamandala" began with the wailing of a cursed dramatist in a dilapidated and abandoned temple. From another area of the temple, he overheard female talk. He saw flames emerge from the light, sit down, and mock the owners of their house. The other flames were surprised by the third flame's quick appearance. They inquired as to the cause. The third flame said that the young couple wanted to enjoy life because her master's elderly mother had suddenly gone away. The flame was unnecessary for them in that situation, so they quickly set it off. The First flame criticised that her master was a miser. The lamp's oil, meantime, was unavailable that day. He chose not to turn on the lamp. The second flame criticised his wife's husband for being so voluptuous as to take full use of her beauty. At midnight, a fresh flame arrived, and the reason for her late arrival was discovered. She described her mistress as an elderly embrace who had a hidden tune and a narrative. The lady consumed a lot of food that day and napped in the afternoon. The music and the secret story spontaneously and unintentionally slipped out of her mouth. Afterwards, the tale became a stunning woman and a lovely saree, respectively. The attractive lady took refuge in the master bedroom. The story, disguised as a stunning woman, fled the master's room as soon as the elderly lady entered, punishing her for keeping the story a secret. The master and the mistress got into a fight over who she was. That woman in the saree was now accompanying the new flame. She joined the rumour collectively. The playwright who is covertly observing from behind the temple pillars asked that the story not reveal the outcome. Under one condition, the story vowed to tell the tale. The only requirement was that the playwright consent to spreading the tale to a large audience. By saying that he would propagate the rumour if he was still alive the next day, the playwright undermined the story.

### **THE PLAYWRIGHT'S BLAME:**

The playwright produced a number of apathetic plays that put the audience to sleep in the middle of the performance. His curse was formed from the abused bulk of sleep. He was cursed by a saint not to sleep for one entire night in that month or he would die the following morning. Nonetheless, the playwright slept every day of that month in disgust. That day marked the end of that specific month. He had to stay awake the entire night in order to survive. He asked the woman to tell him her story so she could wake him up for the rest of the night. His pitiful state made the narrative easier to tell him.

### **THE STORY DISCLOSED BY A STORY:**

Rich guy Appanna wed the seductive country beauty Rani, whose sparkling black hair curled like a black cobra. On the same wedding night, Appanna left Rani at his house and closed the door before going to see his concubine. Like Kovalan, who travelled from Kannagi to Sillappathikaram to see Madhavi. He was rude and only paid Rani a lunchtime visit. Fear was definitely induced by the fact that he hardly spoke to her. Her mother-in-law's Kurudava paid her a visit one day. She was blind, so his son Kuppanna carried her on his back. She intended to assist Rani by luring her husband with some roots. She instructed Rani to make Appanna some curry with the root in it so he would change his ways. Rani enjoyed that. But when she noticed the curry turning a bloody red colour, she decided against carrying out the plan. She was worried that the curry would cause any harm to her spouse because she was a devoted wife. As a result, she threw the curry into an anthill where a king cobra had stretched its hood. She hurried inside the home.

The cobra myth as it is told by Karnad favours a male interpretation of reality. It is believed that offering milk and egg to the snake will develop the status of a family and helps to gain a noble partner. Some people in India spread a white cloth on the floor where snakes have intercourse and considered this cloth as an auspicious one as it meant for fertility and wealth.

Thus Rani will also find a good husband as she poured the curry into the anthill where king Cobra lives. Once he had finished eating, Appanna went to meet his Mistress as usual and then locked the house.

Krishnamayi demonstrates, "In the dramatic universe of Karnad, women, both within and outside of marriage, are in some way or another exposed to various sorts of degradation, mortification, savagery and affliction. The playwright questions how women are socialised to internalise the dominant hegemonic ideology and devalue their own position in order to perpetuate the on-going subservience and enslavement of women in addition to exposing the mutability of the system where women are contemplated to be "second sex," "other," or "nonpersona." She has been constrained by man, who is controlled by the mastery-motive. She does so for biological and social reasons.

Institution of marriage, which blocks all the pathways that could give Rani the opportunity for introspection, self-development, and self-reflection as a human being, Unfair social lineage makes her a sufferer in this play. The patriarchal system exploits and oppresses women on a variety of levels, including the physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, and social, by using marriage as a coercive tool.

Feeding the root mixed curry, the King Cobra developed affection for Rani. Via a hole in the toilet, King Cobra paid Rani a visit out of love while posing as Appanna. Innocent Rani was drawn to adoring Appanna, the King Cobra, despite the fact that he was a snake. Rani finds that her spouse Appanna is not as gratifying as the Naga (myth) (reality). The Naga is modelled after the legendary version, in which the Naga is revered as a god of existence and formation rather than a fearful villain.— Naga teaches Rani about the human and animal practises of carnal knowledge, siesta, nutriment, and fornication using the concept of life and fertility that is ingrained in his heredity. Naga uses the phallic symbol to act in accordance with his nature or swadharma and tempts Rani into having sex. The Naga, who was posing as her husband, used to say the following to Rani when describing the nature of sex to her:

Foxes, crabs, ants, rattlesnakes, sharks, swallows, frogs croaking in the pouring rain, tortoises humming inaudibly in the night, even the geese! The woman starts to smell like damp earth. She stings the King Cobra, who then begins looking for his queen. To attract his mate, the tiger bellows. As the earth splits up at the touch and the forest flame bursts into a stream of red, Consequently, those who come together, attach, and fall apart carelessly are found amid that which sprouts, grows, stretches, creaks, and flowers! It can be found everywhere (Karnad, Naga-Mandala45).

As husband and wife, they advanced the act of making love into the next stage of sexual conjugation. Regarding his husband's actions both during the day and at night, Rani was unsure. Chastity has been a foundational component of the Indian patriarchal system from its inception, and it continues to be one of the most worrisome social chains that have imprisoned women for years. To women, celibacy is a sombre to think of love-making as being bad and demoralising activity. The prior responsibility a woman has in life is to uphold her nobility and virginity. According to Rani, she imagines a devoted and loving Appanna with whom she often enjoys wonderful moments. In reality, Naga was the person she mistakenly believed to be her husband after he drank the love potion that Rani tossed. Naga in the form of Appanna not only consoled her but also compromised her and continued to love her deeply. Once Appanna brought a Mongoose and left it outside the house to avoid the intrusion of strangers visiting his house. Naga and the mongoose fought fiercely that evening. Naga visited Rani after suffering severe wounds. She gave Naga medicine. More was needed. For Naga to fully heal from its wound before meeting Rani, it took more than fifteen days.. Everything went well-ordered until she got pregnant with Naga's child. Rani was delighted to announce her pregnancy to Naga. But, a disappointed Naga urged her not to tell Appanna the news when he arrived during the day. Sadly, Rani told Appanna the information. She was severely beaten by Appanna, who was furious.

*He scolded her as "Tell me who it is? Who did you go to with your sari off? You haven't? And yet you have bloated tummy. Just pumped air into it, did you? And you think I'll let you get away with that? You shame me in front of the whole village, you darken my face, you slut - !"*

She was beaten and brought before the village heads to seek redress. She was given the order by the village elders to accept the penalty for her illicit relationship. She argued that she was a good person and declined to do that instead. She took the Naga from the Anthill in order to demonstrate her virginity, contextualising that not even a single time she abut a male person await her life-partner and the King Cobra. When she heard that the snake wouldn't bite her, it slithered around her neck. She was praised as a "Goddess" by the people and Appanna was made to take her as his bride. Whether he wanted to or not, he had to accept her as his wife. He spoke these words:

*"What am I to do? Is the whole world against me? Have I sinned so much that even nature should laugh at me? I know I have not slept with my wife. Let the world say what it likes. Let any miracle declare her goddess. But I know what sense am I to make of my life that's worth nothing!"*

He changed his habits and showed her tender attention. She gave birth to a lovely boy.

According to Kiranth, having children gives an Indian woman a mission and pride that none else in her civilization can do. In the conclusion of the narrative, Rani is depicted as the mother who is in charge of the home and has some authority and decision-making capacity. She even gets Appanna to agree their son perform funeral rituals to the deceased Naga.

As per A. Jaganmohana Chari: "The heritage she has inherited contains the contradiction of lover and spouse. When she finally realizes via experience the distinction between Naga's compassion and that of her husband, the sensation of experience rarely transcends the boundary of her consciousness because, in the patriarchal hegemonic environment, "the experience of her mind or her morality hardly matters."

Later, when Rani was sleeping, Naga visited her. She was sleeping soundly with her spouse and son. Naga selected her stunning hair to hang up because of the failure of its love. Rani thereafter experienced weight in her hair. After she was untied, a dead snake was discovered. Because she saved his and his son's lives, her husband regarded her as a true goddess. She now understood the truth about Naga. She then requested from her husband that her son perform the King Cobra's cremation rites. She enquired to her spouse,

*“When we cremate this snake, the fire should be lit by our son. Every year on this day, our son should perform the rituals to commemorate his death”.*

He immediately accepted her order.

*“Of course, there is no question of saying no. You are the goddess herself incarnate. Any wish of yours will be carried out. ”Thus the story women ended the story.*

### **REBIRTH OF THE PLAYWRIGHT:**

The playwright decided to switch the tragic ending to a cheerful one after hearing the story. So he changed the conclusion such that Naga lovingly visited Rani while she slept. Rani correctly identified the Naga fact. She provided her hair without any hesitation, just as Lord Shiva had given his hair to Ganga as a home where he might live forever. He listened to the story of a story all night long, which kept him awake. He received both his life and a fresh start in his artistic life from that story. For the artist and by the artist, it actually represents a resurgence or resurrection of an artist.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The author also makes some general observations regarding the nature of stories, including their actuality and the fact that they only survive by being repeated. Because of objectivity, we see the story as a notion with its own origin and identity. In order to underline this individuality, the notion is personified as a lady. According to V. Rangan, a tale is born, flourishes, and has life. Each storyline has a distinct character and a separate existence. To maintain the narrative alive, all storytellers are cursed ancient seafarers. The narrative seems to support the idea that a story must be "told" and "re-told" in order to survive. In other words, without the listener or perceiver, the story is meaningless. I can't help but wonder if the author is emphasising phenomenology or the involvement of the readers in the process of meaning creation. The response of the reader hypothesis raises concerns about the author's point of view, which would not exist without the reader's perspective. Simply "interpretation" and "re-interpretation" are what being "told" and "re-told" means. All literary work is therefore just a material without the meaningful rendition of the reader. Therefore, the tale must ultimately be "passed on" in order to live. The image of "passing on" is emphasised by the flames in the background. And the cursed playwright emerged as an interesting story teller after hearing the story of a story.

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