



GIRISH KARNAD HIS GRAND WORKS

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Abstract

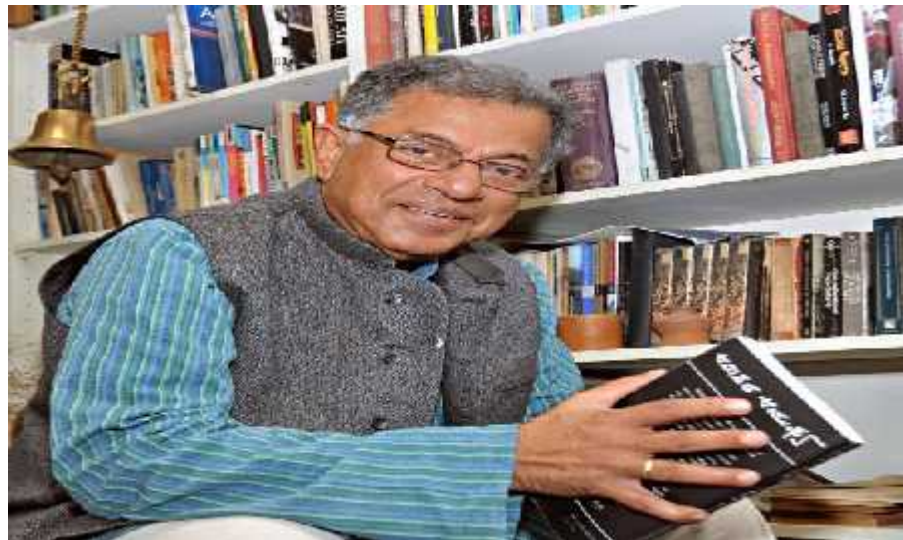
Based on Girish Karnad's serious explorations of folklore, mythology and history, the subject of his plays reflect the problems and challenges of contemporary life, and endeavor to forge a link between the past and the present. The creative intellectual that he is obviously views the subjects of his plays from his own perspective develops them in the crucible of his own imagination and personal experiences, and employs them as a medium to communicate his own independent and original feelings, thoughts and interpretations.(dodiya 89).

Though known for his controversial themes, his plays are widely read and enjoyed because of his wonderful dramatic techniques, vivid images and symbols and his outstanding ability to portray some of the harshest and bitter most realities of life with forthright simplicity.

Whereas Indian classical and folk theatre is at the centre of Girish Karnad's plays. Karnad keeps the reactions of his audience in his mind while writing his plays and he deliberately uses myth and history to sugar coat the bitter realities of life.

Key words

- *Own perspective*
- *Endeavour*
- *Interpretations*
- *Vivid images*
- *Forthright simplicity*



Girish Karnad's grand works

His first play, *Yahati* (1961), was written neither in English nor in his mother tongue Konkani. Instead, it was composed in his adopted language Kannada. The play, which chronicled the adventures of mythical characters from the Mahabharata, was an instant success and was immediately translated and staged in several other Indian languages. His best loved play, however, would come three years later. By the time *Tughlaq*, a compelling allegory on the Nehruvian era, was performed by the National School of Drama, Karnad had established himself as one of the most promising playweights in the country. He soon quit his post at the Oxford University Press, deciding to focus all of his energies on his writing.

For four decades, Karnad has continued to compose top-notch plays, often using history and mythology to tackle contemporary themes. He has also forayed into the jungle of cinema, working alternately as an actor, director, and screenwriter, and earning numerous awards along the way. At the age of sixty however Karnad is vowing to give up cinema for the stage "I've had a good



life” he says. “i have marriage to do all i good wish for even be a government servant ! Now i feel what our time i have left should be spent doing what i like best - writing plays”.

Karnad’s awards include the mysore state award for yayathi (1962), the government of mysore rajyotsava award(1970), president gold medal for the best indian film for samskara(1970),homi bhabha fellowship for creative work in folk theatre (1970-1972). The sangeet natak academy, (national academy of the performing arts) award for play writing (1972) the kamaladevi award of the bharthiyar natya sangh for the best indian. Play of the year for hayavadama (1972), the national award excellence in direction for vamsha vrikisha (shared with b.v. Karanth-1972), the mysore state award for the best kannada film and the best direction for vamsha vrikisha (1972), the presidents silver medal for the second best indian film for kaadu(1974), the padma shri award (1974), the national award for the best kannada film for the best ondanondu kaaladalli(1978), the national award for the best script for bhumika(shared with shyam benegal and satyadev dubey-1978), the film fare award for the best script for godhuli(shared with b.v.karnath-1978), the best bengal film journalists association award for the best actor in swami 1978) the karnataka nataka academy award (1984), the nandikar and kalkatta award for playwriting (1989), the golden lotus for the best non-future film kanaka purandara (1989).

The national award for the best non-future film on social issues for the lamp in the niche (1990), “ writer of the year” award from granthaloka journal of the book trade for taledanda (1990), karnataka state award for the best supporting actor in santa shishunala shareef(1991), the karnataka sahitya academy award for the most creative work for nagamandala (1992), the b.h.sridhar award for taladanda (1992), the padma bhushan award (1992),the karnataka sahitya academy award for best play for taledanda (1992), the bookseller and publisher association of south india award (1992),the national award for the best film on environmental conservation for cheluvi(1993), a special honour award from the karnataka sahitya academy (1994), the sahitya academy award for taledanda (1994), and the gubbi veeranna award (1996 -1997) and the jnanpith award (1999), he also served as director of the film and television institute of india(1974-75). President of karnataka nataka academy(1976-1978) india co-chairman for the joint media committee of the indo –us. Sub-commission on education and culture-1984-93), visiting professor and fullbright scholar in residence at the university of chicago (1987-88), and chairman of the sangeet natak academy of performing arts(1988-93) find more articles on girish karnad, search ebay for girish karnad collectibles.



Early life and education

Girish karnad was born in marheran maharashtra. His initial schooling was in marathai in sirsi n karnataka he was exposed to travelling theatre natak mandalis as his parents were deeply interested in their plays. [4] as a young’s , karnad was an ardent admirer of yakshagana and the theater in his village .

He earned his bachelor of arts degree in mathematics and statistics from karnatak arts college dharwad (karnataka university),in 1958 . Upon graduation karnad promptly went to English and studied philosophy, politics and economics at lincoln and



magdalen colleges in oxford as a rhodes (1960-63) earning his master of arts degree in philosophy, political science and economic. [3]

Career

After working with the oxford university press ,chennai for seven year (1963-70) , he resigned to take to writing full-time ,while in chennai he got involved with local amateur ten group , the madras players .

During 1987-88 he was at the university of chicago as visiting professor and Fulbright playwright-in-residence .[3] during his tenure at chicago nagamandala had its world premiere at the guthrie theater in minneapolis based on karnad's English translation of the kannada original . Most recently ,he served as director of the Nehru centre and as minister of culture in the Indian high commission London (2000-2003) .

He served as director of film and television institute of India (1974-1975) and chairman of the sangeet natak akademi, the national academy of the performing arts(1988-93).

Literature

Karnad is known drama as a play written in kannada have been translated into poet English and some Indian languages .karnad's plays are written neither in english in which in which he vainly dreamt of earning international literary fame as a poet , nor in his mother tongue konkani .instead they are composed in his adopted language kannada . Initially, his command on kannada was so poor that he often failed to distinguish between short and long vowels (laghu and deegha) . When karnad started writing plays kannada literature was highly influenced by the renaissance in western literature . Writers would choose a subject which looked entirely alien to manifestation of native soil .c.rajagopalachari's version of the mahabharat publish in 1951 ,left a deep impact on him [6] and soon ,something in the mid-1950s one day he experience a rush of dialogues' spoken by character from the mahabharate in his adopted language kannada .i could actually hear the dialogues being spoken into my ear'si was just the scribe ,” said karnad in a later interview . Eventually yayati was publish in 1961 when he was 23 year old . It is based on the story of king yayati one of the ancestors of the pandavas ,who was cursed into premature old age by his preceptor , shurkracharya ,who was incensed at yayati's infidelity.Yayati in turn asks his sons to sacrifice their youth for him, and of them agrees . It ridicules the ironies of life through characters in turn mahabharata. It become an instant success, immediate translated and stage in several other Indian languages.

In a situation like that karnad found a new approach like drawing historical and mythological sources to tackle contemporary themes and existentialist crisis of modern man, through his characters locked in psychological and philosophical conflicts. His next was tuglaq (1964), about a rashly idealist 14th-century sultan of Delhi, muhammad bin tug lug, and allegory on the nehruvian era which ambitions idealism and ended up in disillusionment. This establishment karnad, now 26-years old, as a promising playwright in the country. It was staged by the national school of drama repertory under the direction of ebra him alkazi, with the actor manohar Singh, playing the visionary king who later becomes disillusioned and turns bitter, amidst the historic purana qila in Delhi. It was later staged in London by the national school of drama for the festival of India in 1982.

Hayavadana(1971) was based on a theme drawn from the transposed heads. A 1940 novella by Thomas mann, which is originally found in kathasarisagara, herein he employed the folk theatre form of yakshagana. A german version of the play was directed by vijaya mahra as part of the repertoire of the deutsches national theatre, weimar, naga-mandala (play with cobra, 1988) was based on a folk tale related to him by a.k.ramanujam, brought him the Karnataka sahitya academy award for the most creative work of 1989. It was directed by i. Garland Wright as part of the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of gultire theatre, Minneapolis. The theatre subsequently commissioned him to write the play. April mattu male (the fire and the rain) though before it came taledanda (death by beheading, 1990) which used the backdrop, the rise of veerashivism, a radical protest and reform movement in 12th century Karnataka to bring out current issues.

Movies

Karnad made his acting as well as screenwriting debut in a kannda movie, samskara(1970), based on a novel by u.r.ananthamurthy and directed by pattabhirama reddy. That movie won the first president's golden lotus award for kannada cinema. Over the years he had acted in a number of hindi and kannada feature films and worked with directors like satyajit ray. Mrinal sen and shayam benegal. In television, he played the role of swami's father in the TV series malgudi days. (1986-1987), based on r.k.narayanan's books.

He made his directorial debut with vamsha vriksha (1971), based on a kannada novel by s.l. Bhairappa. It won him national film award for best direction along with b.v.karnath, who co-directed the film. Later, karnad directed several movies in



kannada and hindi, including godhuli (1977) and utsav (1984), karnad has made number of documentaries, like one on the kannada poet d.r.bendre(1972),kanata-purandara (english,1988) on two medieval bhakti poets of Karnataka, kanaka dasa and purandara dsa, and tha lamp in the niche (English, 1989) on Sufism and the bhakthi movement. Many of his films and documentaries have won several national and international awards.

Some of his famous kannada movies include tabbaliya neenade margone, ondanondu kaldali, cheluvi and kaadu and most recent film kanooru heggaditi(1999), based on a novel by kannada writer kavempu.

His hindi movies nishaant (1975), manthan(1976), swami (1977) and pukar (2000), he has acted in a number of nagesh kukunoor films, starting with iqpal (2005),where karnad's role of the ruthless cricket coach. Got him critical acclaim. This was followed by dor (2006), 8 x10 tasveer (2009),with lead actor john abraham and asshayein (2010).

He came back to hindi movies after years. He played a key role in yash raj film's movie ek tha tiger, karnad has acted in the kannada gangster movie aa dangalu.

Other Notable Works.

He has been the voice of apj abdul kalam, former president of India, in the audio book of kalam's autobiography by charkha audio books wings of fore.



Awards and honors

For literature

- Sangeet natak akademi award – 1972
- Padma shri - 1974
- Padma bhushan - 1992
- Kannada sahitya academy award - 1994
- Jhanpith award - 1998
- Kalidas samman - 1998
- Raiyotsava award
- D.litt., karnatak university - 1994
- Honorary doctorate, university of southern california,los angels- 2011
- For cinema
- National film awards -1972: best direction : vemsha veiksha(with b.v.karanth)
- 1974: second best feature flim kaadu
- 1978: best screenplay: bhumika (with shyam bengal and satyadev dubey)
- 1978: best feature flim in kannada : ondanondu kalalli .
- 1989 : best non-feature film :kanaka purandara



- 1990 : best non-feature film on social issues : lamp in the niche
- 1993 : best film on environment conservation : cheluvi
- 2000: best feature film in kannada : kaanura heggadathi .[10]

Film Fare Awards South

- 1972: film fare for award for best director –kannada –vamsha vriksha.
- 1974 : film fare award best supporting actor award : aasha :nominated
- 1978: film fare best supporting actor award: teri kasam : nominated.

Filmfare Award

- 1980 : filmfare best screenplay award :godhuli (with b.v. Karanth)
- 1980 : filmfare best supporting actor award : aasha : nominated
- 1982 : filmfare best supporting actor award : teri kasam : nominated
- Karnataka state award for the best supporting actor in “santa shisunala shareef” -1991 .
- Mysore state award for best kannada film and the best direction for vamsha vruksha -1972
- Gubbi veeranna award .
- Karnad served as the director of the film and television institute of india from 1974-1975 , the India co-chairman for the joint media committee of the indo –us sub - commission on education and culture from 1984 -1993 chairman of the sangeet natak academy from 1988 -1993 and president of karnataka nataka academy from 1976 – 1978 .
- Honorary doctorate from university of southern california , los angeles -2011[11] .

Controversies

At the tata lift fest held in mumbai , karnad was invited to speak about “his life in theater” in an hour-long session. Instead of talking about the subject, he took the opportunity to lash out at vs naipaul for his “ antipathy towards indian muslims” . Vs naipaul had earlier been conferred the lifetime achievement award by the festival’s organisers. Karnad also criticized for having honored naipaul .

The audience which had gathered to hear karnad speak about his life in theater was taken aback by this unexpected rant against one of the world’s finest writer . Later the festival organizers disapproved of karnad’s vitriol and wondered why he had misused the platform to vent personal political rage .[12]

Just a few weeks after this karnad again created controversy by claiming that rabindranath Tagore was a second –rate playwright and that his play were “unbearable”.

Personal Life

karnad is married to dr. Saraswathy ganapathy and they have two children . He lives in Bangalore .

Activism

There are some unverifiable claims that he is a proponent of secularism , multi-culturalism and freedom of expression , girish karnad has been a critic of religious fundamentalism and hindutva in india . He publicly condemned the demolition of babri masjid in 1992 and later spoke against the attempts to create controversy about the idgah maidan in hubli.

Quotations

- “i see a legacy of my generation . . . I am happy to belong to a generation that had a dharmaveer bharti, a mohan rakesh, a vijay tendulkar and i. Together we can claim that we did create a national theatre for modern india.”
-1999(on being asked about his lasting legacy)

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Plays

1. “maa nishaadha “(one act play)
2. “yayati “(1961)
3. “tughlaq “(1964) (translated in hindustani by b.v. Karanth. Major indian directors who have staged it: ebrahim alkazi, prasanna, arvind gaur, dinesh thakur & shyamanand jalan (in bangle).
4. “hayavadana” (1972)



5. “anjulimallige” (1977)
6. “hittina hunja” aka “ bali “ “(the sacrifice) (1980)”
7. “nagamandala” (1988) (play with cobra)
8. “taledandala “ (1990) (death by beheading), in hindi it is known as rakt –kalyan translated by ram gopal bajaj first directed by ebrahim alkazi for nsd rep., then by arvind gaur (1995-2008, still running) for asmita theater group, new delhi.^[16]
9. “agni mattu male “ (1995) (agni aur varsha, the fire and the rain), first directed by prasanna for nsd rep.
10. Tippuvina kanasugalu (the dreams of tipu sultan)
11. “odakalu bimba” (2006) (hindi, bikre bimb: english, a heap of broken images)
12. “maduve album” (2006)
13. “ “flowers”(2012)
14. “ “benda kaalu on toast”” (2012).



Filmography

Movies

1. Yaare koogadali (2012)
2. Mugamoodi(2012)
3. Ek tha tiger (2012)
4. Kempe gowda (2011)^{as} gowda (kavya’s father)
5. Komasa puli (2010) telugu
6. Life goes on (2009)^{as} sanjay
7. Aashayein (2009) (completed)^{as} pasthasasthi
8. 8x 10 tasveer (2009)^{as} anil sharma
9. Aadinagalu kannada (2007)^{as} girish nayak
10. Dor (2006)^{as} randhir singh
11. Iqbal (2005)^{as} guruji
12. Shankar dada mbbs(telugu) (2004)^{as} satya prasad
13. Chellamae (tamil) (2004) ^{as} rajasekhar
14. Hey ram (tamil) (2000)^{as} uppili iyengar
15. Pukar (2000)^{as} mr. Rajvanash
16. Prathyartha (1999)^{as} home minister of india
17. Aakrosh: cyclone of anger (1998)^{as} rajwansh shashtri
18. China gate (1998)^{as} forest officer sunder rajan
19. Minsaara kanavu (tamil) ^{as} anal raj
20. Ratchagan (tamil) (1997)^{as} sriram
21. The prince (1996)^{as} vishwanath. Malayalam film
22. Aatank (1996)^{as} inspector khan
23. Aaghalan (kannada) (1994) ^{as} psychiatrist
24. Kadhalan (tamil) (1994)^{as} kakarla
25. Praana daata(1993)



26. Cheluvi (1992)as village headman
27. Guna (1991)
28. Antarnaad (1991)
29. Brahma (1991)
30. Chaithanya (1991)
31. Ak-47 (film) (1990)
32. Nehru: the jewel of india (1990)
33. Santha shishunala sharif (kannada) (1990)as govindabhatta
34. Mil gayee manzil mujhe (1989)
35. Akarshan (1988)
36. Sutradhar (1987) as zamindar
37. Naan adimai illai (1986)as rajinikanth's father-in-law
38. Nilakurinhi poothappol (malyalam) (1986)as appu menon
39. Sur sanam (1985)as pandit shivshankar shastri
40. Meri jung (1985) as deepak verma
41. Zamana (1985)as satish kumar
42. Nee thanda kanike (kannada) (1985)
43. Divorce (1984)as jayant oswal
44. Tarang (1984)as dinesh
45. Ek baar chale aao (1983) as din dayal
46. Ananda bhairavi (1983) as narayana sarma
47. Teri kasam (1982)as rakesh
48. A parroopa (assamese) (1982)
49. Umbartha (marathi) (1982)as advocate subhash mahajan
50. Shama (1981) as nawab yusuf khan
51. Apne paraye(1980) as harish
52. Man pasand (1980)as kashinaths
53. Aasha (1980)as deepak
54. Anveshane (kannada)(1980)
55. Beqasoor (1980)as dr. Anand bhatnagar
56. Ratnadeep (1979)
57. Sampark (1979)as heera
58. Jeevan mukt(1977)as amarjeet
59. Swami (1977)as ghanshyam
60. Mantha (1976)as dr. Rao
61. Nishaant (1975)as schoolmaster
62. Jadu ka shankh (1974)
63. Vamsha vriksha (1971)
64. Samskara (1970) as praneshacharyas

Movies Directed

1. Vamsha vriksha (1971, kannada)
2. d.r bendre (1972, documentary)
3. Tabbaliyu neenade magane in kannada
4. Godhuli (1977,hindi)
5. Ondanondu kaladalli(1978)in kannada
6. Kanooru heggadathi in kannada
7. Kaadu (1973, kannada)
8. Durga in mahendar
9. Utsav in hindi
10. Who ghar (1984,hindi), based on kirtinath kurtakoti's kannada play aa mani
11. The lamp in the niche (1990) (documentary)
12. Cheluvi (1992, kannada and hindi (dubbed))
13. Chidambara rahasya (2005,kannada) (tele film for ddi)



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2. sachindananda, p.57
3. sachindananda, p.58
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