The Concurrent Play of Language and Narration of Girish Karnad: A Descriptive Stylistic Approach to the Prologue of Yayati

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ABSTRACT

The writing and narration of Girish Karnad exhibit a great awareness of Indian cultural tradition that was entwined with modern sensibilities. His contributions to theatre and film have had a lasting influence on Indian art. His literature is firmly entrenched in the Kannada language and culture, despite the fact that it has an international appeal. He drew inspiration from Karnataka's literary traditions and shared them with his domestic and foreign audiences. Karnad expertly used songs, music, and folk elements in his works. His stories frequently offered many interpretations and points of view since they were multifaceted. He urged the audience to exercise critical thinking and interact with the ideas in a more profound way. He frequently used flashbacks and non-linear storylines. Themes of identity, belonging, and the conflict between tradition and modernity were frequently explored in Karnad's narratives. He used evocative words to build vivid pictures and evoke intense emotions. Critics highly remark on his writing style and narrative technique; therefore, the present article analyses Karnad's language and narrative style, employing a stylistic approach. It strives to determine how the stylistic device Point of View is effectively engaged in the Prologue of Yayati to narrate the story and bring meaning to the context.

Keywords: language, narration, Point of View, Karnad, Yayati

1. Introduction

Indian author, actor, director, and academic Girish Karnad had a significant influence on the country's literature, theatre, and movies. On May 19, 1938, he was born in Matheran, Maharashtra, India; he passed away there on June 10, 2019. Over the course of his successful career as a playwright, actor, and director, Karnad won a great deal of recognition and honours. One of India's highest civilian honours, the Padma Bhushan, was given to him in 1992 for his noteworthy contributions to the arts and literature. He received the coveted Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honour, in 1998. His great contributions to Indian literature, particularly those written in Kannada, were recognised with this prize. For Tughlaq, he was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1994. His talent as a playwright, actor, and director was recognised in 1972 when he received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his overall contributions to Indian theatre. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the Kannada language and culture, he was given the Karnataka State Rajyotsava Award in 1980.

Indian mythology, folklore, and history were frequently included in Karnad's works. His plays become current and appealing to modern audiences by skillfully fusing traditional Indian storytelling with contemporary tales. The complicated social and political challenges affecting Indian society were frequently tackled in his plays. He addressed issues including power dynamics, cultural identity, gender roles, magical realism and the conflict

between tradition and modernity in his works. The barriers between truth and fantasy were muddled in his plays by surreal and dreamy aspects. As a result, he was able to investigate the deeper psychological and emotional aspects of his characters and subjects.

The plots and subplots in Karnad's plays were closely interwoven. His characters were multifaceted and diverse, frequently illustrative of the richness and diversity of human nature. Indian mythology, epics, and folklore served as the basis for Karnad. He challenged the accepted views by offering fresh perspectives and ideas through his reinterpretation of these historical accounts. Being from the southern state of Karnataka, Karnad was impacted by the regional linguistic and cultural background in his writing. His writings included references to, and expressions from, the local language and culture. The historical settings of many of Karnad's plays gave him the opportunity to investigate past figures and events while making connections to current problems.

2. Research Methodology

Falguni Desi's "Girish Karnad's Yayati" (2009) discusses the mythical implications present in the play. It focuses on Dharma, Satya, Ahimsa, Brahmacharya, Dama, Sila and Guna Dharma Desi defines Dharma as mortality and Satya as trustfulness. Further, she gives meaning to Ahimsa as the practice of love and Brahmacharya as the Control once all sensory organs. Guna Dharma is described as the code prescribed for a person. The research paper has explored these aspects in the play Yayati to argue the exceptional dramatic style of Girish Karnad. Like Falguni, Anuradha has explored the mythological aspect of Yayati in "Mythical Reworking in Girish Karnad's Yayati". She explores how the idea of myth works within the religious, social and philosophical context of modern society. The work argues that Yayati is a play that retells the story of Mahabarta.

Rani's "Theme of Responsibility in Girish karnad's Yayati" (2016) explores the theme of responsibilities from the play Yayati. It takes a thematic approach to bring out the theme and its associated notions. It sheds light on the exchange of personalities between the father and son. N. Moorthy's "Human Life and Its Value on Girish Karnad's Yayati" (2021) deals with the notion of human values evident in the play Yayati. The research paper positions the significance of human values in modern society by referring to Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. The discussion further refers to the remarkable leaders such as Martin Luther King, Mandella and Gandhi to point out how these leaders have emphasised human values and to what extent these values are ignored by the characters of Yayati.

The Conventional and modern sensibility within gender issues has been discussed in "Millennium Modern Women in Girish Karnad's Play Yayati" (2020) by M. P. Ganesan. He has explored the portrayal of Women characters. The research paper has attempted to find the dramatic style of Karnad in the portrayal of women characters. It traces how a modern drama, produced within the context of an ancient myth, brings out a feminine sensibility relevant to modern society. The research asserts that women can find solutions for their problems without ignoring traditional values and culture. The characters of the play Yayati have been examined in Keerthana S. Kumar's "Analyses of the characters in Girish Karnad's play Yayati" (2019). She argues that Karnad's portrayal of the characters is unique and dynamic. She argues that all the characters are grey with their strengths and weaknesses. The research paper argues that Yayati and Pooru are idealistic images in depicting Karnad. Kumar argues that Karnad's characters play a vital role in rendering "weight and sewing the intention of bringing a Contemporary resonance to the revisionist play" (81).

3. Method & Methodology

The present research deals with the text of Girish Karnad to understand his engagement with language. It has chosen the Prologue of the play Yayati, the first play of Karnad that he wrote in 1960. He rewrote the play at the age of sixty-nine in English which he wrote at twenty-two in Kannada. The present research explores the language of Karnad using a Stylistic approach.

The previous century saw the emergence of stylistics as a distinct academic field. The writings of the Russian formalists set the path for the development of stylistics as a field of study. The Russian stylists Osip Brik, Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovsky, Boris Ejxenbaum, Jury Tynjanov, and Boris Tomashevsky have significantly contributed to the discipline. Linguistics and literature are linked via the study of stylistics. As a result, the term "mediation area" is used. It is regarded as the linguistic study of style and is seen as a significant multidisciplinary effort to comprehend the text's style. Text in this context encompasses both spoken speech and written text. Critics and linguists have attempted to subdivide stylistics because it is characterised in a variety of ways and forms.

According to Paul Simpson, stylistics examines the originality in language through analysis and the use of

cognitive ability. The three Rs are regarded as the fundamental premise: stylistic analysis should be rigorous, stylistic analysis should be retrievable and stylistic analysis should be replicable. The phrase "stylistic method should be retrievable" refers to the organisation of the text analysis using clear words and standards. Stylistic analysis should be rigorous, which means that the examination should be conducted using a clear analytical framework. A well-structured model called a stylistic one aids in processing and comprehending various linguistic patterns. Thirdly, the arguing Stylistic analysis should be replicable (Simpson 2004).

Simpson has discussed the major levels of language analysis, such as phonological, graphological, morphological, syntactical, lexical, semantic and pragmatic   (2004).
The seven fields of language study demonstrate how one might approach a literary text stylistically by assessing the language of texts at various levels of language. A text can be analysed on a variety of levels. The text is analysed and evaluated at the phonological level in order to comprehend the language's sound pattern. Researchers can use stylistic techniques like alliteration, assonance, and consonance to make this analysis. Such an analytical technique enables the researcher to pinpoint the text's dominant sound pattern. In order to study the devices existing in the text, researchers frequently apply the definitions of the chosen stylistic devices.

By analysing the writer's choice of word, texts are studied at the lexical level. An analysis of a text's lexicon reveals the author's command over lexis and ability to use language appropriately in a given situation. One can do a lexical analysis of a text using stylistic conventions like simile, metaphor, and hyperbole. One can assess a writer's command over the language by using the definition of these devices. The stylistic examination of texts includes pragmatic text analysis. Understanding how context contributes to the formation of meaning is useful. The study of pragmatics encompasses the Speech Act Theory, conversation in interaction, and other linguistic, philosophical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives on language and behaviour.

According to Halliday, "language has evolved to represent or transfer three main meaning into the situation" (2004) and they are ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning. These three are referred to as language's three metafunctions. Ideational meaning refers to the significance associated with how the speaker represents their own experience while speaking. Interpersonal meaning is a term used to describe meaning that has to do with relationships between interlocutors. The significance associated with how the texts are organised is referred to as textual meaning.

The model put forward by Paul Simpson is the same one that Descriptive Stylistics applies to text. By examining the language of the text in relation to various degrees of language analysis, he has devised a model that applies a stylistic approach to a text. The phonological level of language analysis used by Simpson is comparable to the metric descriptive Stylistics discussed under descriptive Stylistics. In order to analyse the chosen text, the current study uses Paul Simpson's descriptive stylistics. It engages with the stylistic device Point of View to examine the language of Karnad. It further explores the meaning of the text with regard to the context.

4. Discussion

The narrative technique Karnad has occupied a significant role in introducing the essence of the play to the audience. The story of the play is brought out through Point of View. Abrams defines Point of View as "the made established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, action, setting and events" (Abrams 1999). He understands Point of view as a narrative technique adopted to portray the story characters. The Point of view has three types of narratives first-person narrative, Second-person narrative and third-person narrative. In the first-person narration, the author uses the first-person singular pronoun 'I' or the first-person plural pronoun 'we' (Abrams 1999). The Second-person narrative technique engages with the second-person pronoun "you" and the third-person narrative technique adopts the third-person pronouns such as 'he' and 'She' to introduce the story and characters (Abrams 1999).

The Prologue of Yayati begins with the First-person singular pronoun 'I'. The Sutradhara takes the role of a narrator to introduce the story to the audience. He introduces himself as "the holder of strings" (Karnad 2007), and this title establishes the lineage back to the puppeteer. He engages with the first-person pronoun to introduce himself as the person who has structured the play with words. In this context, the Sutradhara is significant in bringing Karnad's story to his audience. The author renders a significant position to the narrator in the Prologue to spur the audience's curiosity. Karnad has engaged with the stylistic device called Point of View to bring this effect. In the Prologue, the dramatist employed the first-person pronoun 'I' five times to show the importance of

a narrator. In all five instances, 'I' has been used to make the audience know more about the narrator of the Prologue.

In the Prologue, the narrator shifts to the first-person plural pronoun, 'we', to make an inclusive narration of the story. In the first instance, the narrator brings out a spiritual belief through the first-person plural narration. He articulates that "the sole reason for our suffering in this world is that we have forsaken oud gods" (Karnad 2007). He tries to point out the reason for the suffering of humanity using the first-person narrative technique. At this Juncture, the dramatist has meticulously injected his religious belief through the narrator. It reveals that Karnad strongly believes in god and treats him as the saviour; therefore, worshipping god is paramount. He also believes that forsaking god puts humanity into suffering. Thus, he teaches the audience to trust god and not forsake him. In this context, the narrator plays the role of connecting the dramatist and the audience to transact the knowledge of religious belief using the narrative technique called Point of View.

The narrator tells the audience that "If we crush our egos and give ourselves up in surrender, divine grace will descend upon us and redeem us" (Karnad 2007). This extract points out the second instance wherein the narrator has engaged with the first-person plural pronoun to hint at the plot of the drama. It teaches the audience the way to please god and get redemption. The narrator asserts that humanity can taste redemption only when people crush their egos and surrender themselves to the almighty. Like the previous extract, this extract sheds light on spiritual belief. It has advanced to teach the audience the way to please god. The disclosure of religious belief in this context can be perceived as the reflection of Karnad's understanding of life and religion. The third 'We' appears in the narration of the Prologue as the Sutradhara deals with immortality: "we aspire to become immortal but cannot achieve the lucidity necessary to understand eternity" (Karnad 2007). He points out that humanity aspires not to taste death but to live eternally. However, humanity cannot achieve this aspiration because it does not clearly understand eternity. In this context, the dramatist intends to underline people's understanding of eternity through the narrator.

In the fourth instance, the narrator uses 'we' to communicate that "We turn to ancient lore not because it offers any blinding revelation or hope of consolation, but because it provides greeting glimpses of the year and desires sleepless within us" (Karnad 2007). Through this extract, the narrator answers the question of the audience: Why do the people of modern society turn to myth? It is a decisive question that Karnad places here through the narrator. The dramatist answers that the people of modern society turn to myth because it provides sudden fear and strong desires that cannot be removed. In this instance, the dramatist plays the role of a literary theorist to shed light on the scope and function of myth, using the first-person plural pronoun in the narration.

Moving further into the Prologue discloses the role of Point of view, especially the function of first-person plural pronoun. The appearance of the pronoun for the fifth and sixth time occurs in the same line: "What we have in front of us is not a well-charted map but a network of paths, many of which plunge into the shrubbery and disappear before we have even registered them" (Karnad 2007). The narrator brings out a philosophical view of human life in this extract. However, it appears to be the narrator's text and thought; in reality, the dramatist authors the text and knowledge. The narrator communicates that humans do not get well-defined paths to journey instead, it is shrubbery wherein they have to search for their way to progress in their lives. He further points out that the Shrubbery path disappears instantly that they cannot even remember the path. In this exact, the dramatist has put away a lofty truth about humans.

The function of 'we' in positions seven, eight and nine appeared consecutively in the text to bring a philosophical meaning of human life. The narrator articulates, "But we must trust the narrative we have chosen for ourselves. Invent a bit if necessary, but go on. We must relive, not a saga embedded in books, but a tale orally handed down by our grandmothers in lamplit corners" (Karnad 2007). He urges the audience to travel on the path that they have chosen. In the journey, they can invent something if possible. The narrator advises his audience to come up with new ideas and knowledge in order to make society better. He further recommends reliving life like the tale that is orally communicated across generations rather than like a long story of heroic achievement. He expects the audience to relive their life in a way that is culture-bound rather than a sophisticated life. The dramatist has employed the narrator to print his perception of human lives philosophically. The narrative technique of Karnad has brought in his perception about human lives without any compromise in tone, meaning and language. Thus, it is evident from the analysis that the dramatist has employed the pronoun 'we' nine times to communicate his story and perception. Apart from this, he has used other narrative Points of view.

The dramatist has positioned the Sutradhara to engage with the third-person Point of view. He uses 'he' and 'she' towards the end of the Prologue in order to introduce Prince Pooru and Princess Chitralekha. The narrator communicates that "The king's son, Prince Pooru, is returning home today after many years of absence. He has successfully completed his education in the hermitage" (Karnad 2007). This exact from the Prologue picturises the real identity of Pooru. The narrator uses 'he' in the first instance to introduce Pooru, and in the second instance, he engages with it to point out his bed and action on the bed with his princess Chitralekha: "He must sow his seed here and then launch forth on a campaign of victory and death" (Karnad 2007). In the second instance, the narrator uses 'we' to point out his potency and manliness. The extracts of the text underline the fact that the narrator has employed 'he' merely in two instances.

Further, the narrator engages with the third-person singular female pronoun in the Prologue to keep the audience active and calm. He employs 'She' to introduce the princess of the story. He articulates that "she must proudly bear on her breasts the toothmarks incised by their offspring" (Karnad 2007). He engages with 'She' in this context to incorporate a romantic scene into the play, thereby projecting the emotional bond of a newly married couple. The narration does not move away from the traditional portrayal of a woman, though it sketches an eminent woman in the place. The Sutradhara has engaged with 'she' merely once to describe Chitralekha.

5. Conclusion

The present analysis concludes that Karnad's narration and language have concurrently played to bring the essence of the text. His engagement with the narrative technique has embellished the text with meaning and aesthetics. The study has found that the Point of View has been an influential Stylistic device in transacting the essence of the play. It further consolidates the effective appearances of the 'Point of View' in the below-given table.

S. No.	Pronouns	Category	Type of Narration	Frequency
1	I	First-person singular	1st person narration	5
2	WE	First-person plural	1st person narration	9
3	HE	Third-person masculine	3rd person narration	2
4	SHE	Third-person feminine	3rd person narration	1

Table.1 Point of view frequency table

The table sheds light on the frequency of appearances that the pronouns take to bring meaning to the context. It is vivid that the dramatist has employed the first-person singular pronoun 'I' to a maximum of five types to introduce and describe the narrator of the Prologue. Secondly, the table shows that Karnad has engaged with the first-person plural pronoun to a maximum of nine times to communicate the essence of religious belief and the philosophy of human lives. Thirdly, the dramatist has used 'he' two times in the course of portraying Prince Pooru. Fourthly, it is clear from the above table that Karnad has employed the third person singular feminine pronoun only at one instance in the entire narration of the Prologue. This pronoun has been used to introduce Princess Chitralekha.

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