



Study on Postcolonial Subalternization in Girish Karnad's Plays

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Abstract

This research focuses on Girish Karnad's plays and how he uses cultural retrieval to depict the subalterns, who are marginalized individuals, in his works. The study also looks at how Karnad tackles important problems like communalism and caste division, which pose a significant threat to Indian society. Karnad's plays are known for their portrayal of subalterns, particularly women and lower caste people, who have faced oppression from both patriarchy and the upper echelons of society for a long time. This research is valuable because it aligns with postcolonial theory and subaltern studies, which seek to revitalise native traditions and empower marginalised communities. By studying Karnad's plays, we gain insights into the cultural and social challenges that persist in Indian society and discover how literature and art can address these issues.

Keywords: Indian society, cultural retrieval, subalterns, communalism, caste division, social issues.

1. Introduction

Subaltern studies play a significant part in postcolonial theory, which gets its strength from Marxism and Post-Structuralism. Regardless of whether a community is marginalized due to class, caste, age, gender, or occupation, the primary focus of subaltern studies is on the historical & cultural settings of that people. The topic's position is essential to the concept of subaltern. Even when it behaves

in accordance with socioeconomic level, chronological age, & gender, it is more mental than physical. The lives of subalterns are marked by scarcity and suffering, alienation and loneliness, submission and subordination, silence and resignation, fortitude & neglect; even when they battle and succeed, they feel constrained & defeated by their subject position. Because no one in the society they live in speaks up for them, they are unable to change the way

things are. As a result, they face persecution and are frequently left out of histories written by the very communities that gave rise to the history and culture in which they play a crucial role in. According to M.H. Abrams, "a standard way to designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse & internalized by colonial peoples who employ this discourse" (237) is to use the word "internalized." The term "subaltern," which derives from the Latin terms for "under" (sub) & "other" (alter), is used by the British to refer to someone who is lower in rank. One issue that has persisted over time is whether or not a subaltern individual writing in a European language can act as an agent of resistance against, as opposed to conformity with, the discourse that gave birth to their subordinate identity.

Antonio Gramsci was being revolutionary when he used the phrase to refer to those who were inferior to them on a social, cultural, racial, and/or economic level. Specifically, Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak's 1985 essay "Can a Subaltern Speak?" She has used this phrase to refer to the working class, people of color, & women whose voices have been marginalized as the colonized/oppressed subject. Spivak, according to B.K. Das, "has emphasized 'gendered subaltern—that is, women, who are doubly oppressed by colonialism & patriarchy in the Third World countries" (143). According to G.N. Devy, the "Subalternization of Third World Literature" is the most urgent issue she has raised (221). According to Spivak, the process by which the local populace was persuaded to adopt the European version of reality for its ways of comprehending & constructing its social world is known as "worldling" of the "Third World," according to Pramod K. Nayar (192). The "Subaltern studies" area was founded in England in the 1970s, and historians from both nations have worked on it ever since. *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History & Society* by Ranjit Guha was first released by

Oxford University Press in New Delhi (in three volumes), followed by the release of an additional eight volumes. In 1988, OUP, New York & Oxford published *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited by Ranjit Guha & Gayatri Spivak, with an introduction by Edward Said. A group of intellectuals known as *Subaltern Studies* worked to create an alternative to the dominant colonial historiography in the 1980s. We conduct a critical analysis of the nationalism, identity, & ethnicity ideologies. Spivak and Ranjit Guha's work "in deconstructing imperial accounts of 'native' rebellion & customs to allow other voices freer play" (414) was crucial in revising the canon of Asian colonial history, Lodge and Wood acknowledge (in a footnote) and Spivak & Ranjit Guha. Gyan Prakash makes a clear connection between the subaltern studies project and postcolonial studies using post-structuralism, marxism, & archival research. The research focuses on subordination in all of its manifestations, including class, caste, age, gender, & position.

The study on Postcolonial Subalternization in Girish Karnad's Plays delves into the fascinating world of one of India's most celebrated playwrights, Girish Karnad, and his unique approach to portraying subaltern voices in his theatrical works. Subalternization refers to the process through which marginalized individuals and communities are pushed to the margins of society by dominant power structures, and postcolonial literature often seeks to challenge and disrupt these imbalances. Girish Karnad's plays provide a compelling canvas where subaltern experiences, identities, and struggles find expression, offering a glimpse into the complex sociocultural fabric of postcolonial India.

This research explores the strategic use of cultural retrieval in Karnad's plays, where the playwright harnesses native traditions, myths, and historical events to breathe life into the subaltern characters. By skillfully blending these elements with modern theatrical techniques, Karnad not only resuscitates

forgotten narratives but also presents a powerful critique of the postcolonial condition. Moreover, the study examines how Karnad addresses pressing issues like communalism and caste division, which continue to pose significant challenges to Indian society's cohesive fabric. Through his works, Karnad sheds light on the enduring impact of colonial legacies on contemporary social dynamics and highlights the urgent need for nurturing a more inclusive, egalitarian, and empathetic society in postcolonial India. The study aims to contribute to the broader fields of postcolonial theory and subaltern studies by shedding light on how literature and art can play a pivotal role in reclaiming agency and giving voice to the silenced and underrepresented in society.

2. Postcolonial Theory and Subalternization Studies

Karnad's core humanity, which permeates all of his plays, gives the voiceless a platform. In Karnad's plays, women and people from lower social groups, who have historically been subjugated by the patriarchal or upper hierarchy of society, play significant roles. Karnad has also infused vitality into their lives by exposing their subaltern position, bringing them from the periphery into the center and giving them a voice. Plays like *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, *Naga-Mandala*, *Tale-Danda*, *The Fire and the Rain*, etc. are rife with examples. Tribals from *The Fire and the Rain*, Nitilai & Vishakha from *Yayati*, Devayani, Sharmishtha, & Chitrlekha from *Yayati*, Kapil & Padmini from *Hayavadana*, Rani and Kurudavva from *Naga-Mandala*, and members of lower castes from *Tale-Danda*; all highlight the subalternity of the classes they stand for. In his capacity as a cultural administrator, Karnad goes farther, attempting to give people what is due while also questioning India's traditional social structure. Examining how Karnad addresses and offers solutions to the subaltern predicament in his plays is the goal of this study.

Yayati, the first play written by Karnad, is extremely important to the sociopsychological study of women because it is based on the Mahabharata's *Yayati* story. The names Devayani, Sharmishtha, Swarnlata, & Chitrlekha are all collective representations of the inferiority of women in a masculinist culture, notwithstanding their high social status. Instead of applauding the son's "self-sacrifice," Karnad questions it. Swarnlata is tortured by her husband's false accusations of adultery, taunting, & final abandonment; Sharmishtha is easy prey for *Yayati*'s filthy sexual enjoyment; & the Queen, Devayani, must endure every imaginable form of humiliation till she goes insane. Despite experiencing the same events as Pooru, Chitrlekha emerges as a more resilient and self-assured woman who challenges Pooru's choice and *Yayati*'s dishonest remarks. She states, "I will not let my husband step back into my bedroom unless he returns a young man" (61) to make it apparent that the only reason she married Pooru was due to his youth. Because of his moral failing, Pooru accepts his father's curse and ages as a result. Because he has the potential to become a Bharata and radically alter my life. He's no longer useful. I married him for no particular reason that has ever materialized. You are, nevertheless" (65-66). *Yayati* insults her by calling her a "whore" (66). She rebels against the kingdom and the illustrious Bharat dynasty by demanding "room" for herself. She cheerfully swallows the poison before passing away. She would sooner perish than follow archaic gender expectations and assumptions. Her passing supports the modern women's empowerment movement. Sharmishtha clearly summarizes the condition of women as "a woman dead (Chitrlekha), another gone mad (Devayani), & a third in danger of her life (Sharmishtha)" (68). Racial tensions and envy make their condition worse. The play emphasizes women throughout. As Aparna Bhargva Dharwadker so astutely notes, "The most remarkable feature of *Yayati*... is its quartet of sentient, articulate, embittered women, all of whom are subject to the whims of

men, but succeed in subverting the male world through an assertion of their rights & privileges."

The marginalization concept is defined by Padmini and Kapila of Hayavadana. Compare Padmini to the Rani of Naga-Mandala. She is from the Pavana Veethis, a renowned Dharampura merchant family. Despite playing a dominant role in the play, she shares many traits with Shakespeare's Cleopatra, giving in to her Dionysian impulses and engaging in cuckoldry. She imbues Devadatta's poems with new beauty and vitality by concealing her affections for him. She is so alluring that Devadatta declares, "I will sacrifice my two arms to the goddess Kali, I will sacrifice my head to Lord Rudra if I ever get her as my wife" (14). (14). After learning that "Yakshini, Shakuntala, Urvashi, & Indumati—all rolled into one," Kapila tells Devadatta, "She is not for the likes of you" (16). She really requires a strong man, according to 19 (19). Kapila is spot on when he tells Padmini, "I know what you want, Padmini," Devadatta's acute intellect and Kapil's strong build" (38). Soon, the truth is revealed—her attraction to Kapila's muscular physique; she is the true Padmini of Vatasayana:

PADMINI: [*Watching him, to herself*]. How he climbs—like an ape. Before I could even say 'yes', he had taken off his shirt, pulled his dhoti up and swung up the branch. And what an ethereal shape! Such a broad back—like an ocean with muscles rippling across it—and then that small, feminine waist which looks so helpless.... He is like a Celestial Being reborn as a hunter.... How his body sways, his limbs curve—its dance almost.... No woman could resist him. (25-26)

Devadatta notices that she is drawn to Kapila, but he is unable to stop it. Like Devadatta's yearning for Kapila, Padmini's desire for him is a natural outgrowth of her character. However, once Devadatta and Kapila have been sacrificed at the temple of Kali, she is so ashamed to witness the dramatic incident and

afraid to feel the mockery of others that she worries they would hold her responsible for their demise. She quickly decides to commit suicide. Despite the fact that transposition terrified her, she viewed it as a chance to win over both men: "My Devadatta comes like a bridegroom with the ornament of a new body. I need to accompany Devadatta since it is my obligation to do so. She expresses her nymphomaniacal joy and yearning for sexual fulfillment in the lines "but remember I'm going with your [Kapil's] body" (41), "fabulous body—fabulous brain" (43), & "male smell" (43). Even Doll I & II make a point of addressing Padmini's mental reactions, which include dreams, phantasms, & reveries in which figures of Kapila "climbed a tree!" or "dived into a river" (50), metaphorically releasing Padmini's pent-up sexual longing and hunger for Kapila. She gradually loses faith and joins Devadatta, Kapila, & Hayavadana in falling victim to the "mad dance of incompleteness" (57). She takes her son to the woods when her husband is gone for a few days because she still can't control her urges after getting married. In the middle of a fight, Devadatta and Kapila make up before killing each other. Consequently, Padmini has reached a dead end. She is cut off from her friends and family, & a perplexing situation has developed. She is persuaded to commit sati because she worries about her son's reputation or because she thinks Devadatta and Kapila would be unable to help her survive: "Kali, Mother of All Nature, you must have your joke even now. Other ladies can devote the remainder of their lives to praying for reincarnation beside the same man. You have not even given me that meager comfort (63) to cling to. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that no pativrata behaved in the manner that Padmini did, according to Bhagavatta of Padmini's sati (63). The female chorus justifies Padmini's sin by musing, "Why should love stick to the sap of a single body?" When the stem is already sloshed with the heavy desire of the multi-petalled, multi-flowered lantana, how can we expect it to remain affixed to the relationship

of a single flower? I don't feel guilty or regretful" (64). Karnad works to abolish the long-standing exclusion of women from positions of authority in human civilization. Her plays feature evolving people who try to elevate their social standing.

Kapila, the son of an ironworker named Lohita, is characterized as "dark & plain to look at, yet in deeds which require drive & daring, in dancing, in strength, & in physical skills he has no equals" (92). In contrast to Devadatta, "the only son of the Revered Brahmin Vidhyasagara, who had fallen the mightiest pundits of the kingdom in debates on logic & love, having blinded the greatest poets in the world with his poetry & wit, the apple of every eye in Dharampura," his physical characteristics & traits of the personality mark-off his social identity & inferior position in the society. Being a soul and a body, respectively, Devadatta & Kapila are both extremes. They are "One mind, one heart" (2), which is a genuinely extraordinary demonstration of friendship. Despite the closeness between Kapila and Devadatta, he continues to feel inferior. He gladly lays himself down on the ground rather than joining Devadatta in a chair. What literary and poetic works are you familiar with? His mockery by Devadatta. The subordinate Kapila is instructed to "go back to your smithy; that's where you belong" (13). Padmini can easily quench her need for him. After the heads-for-bodies exchange, his argument for the body is easily refuted in Vrihadkathasaritasagara, but Karnad rejects Vikram's proposal and mocks him for offering such a simple solution to a complicated problem. The presentation includes Kapila's refutations as well. In this case, the playwright has given prominent roles to supporting cast members. The limits of society are widened by anxiety and a passing reference of Hayavadana's mother.

A sociological analysis of Indian women is presented in Karnad's book *Naga Mandala*. It is a dramatic retelling of two Karnataka folktales, the kind of tales mothers

tell their children while they eat a bowl of rice. It not only exposes the unflattering fact that women in societies where they are viewed as "second sex," "other," "subject," & "non-man" are socialized to adopt the dominant patriarchal ideology (such as male superiority) and are subsequently conditioned to derogate their own sex and assist in maintaining their subordination. Patriarchal rules have hampered women's potential for creativity and productivity. The play's portrayal of Rani and Naga's deed of reconciliation is both a jab at conventional society and a call for reform.

Karnad had a good understanding of feminist theories and the harm patriarchal theories had done to Indian society. It is obvious that *Naga-Mandala* has been dramatized as a setting for clashes between ideologies, power relationships, and the struggle for uniqueness. Both Rani, the heroine of the narrative, & Kurudavva, another female character, are archetypal women who, like the males in *Naga-Mandala*, have gone through great physical pain and emotional anguish and now must struggle to restore their identities as women, wives, & mothers. *Four Flames*, *Story*, & *the Man* are all equally sympathetic to the plights and oppressions of women. Rani is held in solitary confinement and treated like a slave; she is not allowed to communicate with anyone from the outside world or interact with it. Regardless of her loyalty and purity, she must endure the *Naga Ordeal*. The three village elders, Appanna (Rani's husband), Naga (Cobra), Dog, Mongoose, & traditional society have all had a hand in enslaving the villagers. Karnad has researched the "eternal-triangle," as opposed to G.B. Shaw who disregarded it. *Candida* is a New Woman & the play's climactic scene expresses the idea that married love should be nurtured and appreciated, in contrast to Karnad, who exposes the hollowness of masculine chauvinism. *Candida* is a New Woman and Shaw gave the phrase "eternal-triangle" a new meaning. Rani's quick response to the issue of extramarital relationships, in

which males are free to go to concubine even after marriage (as Appanna does), yet women are held to a higher moral standard, is to accept Naga as her own. J. D. Soni correctly points out that Karnad's goal in the play is to "fuse artistically dialectical relationship between tradition & modernity" (76). The prologue introduces The Four Flames, four animated symbols that symbolize and document the agony of women. Even admirable and selfless female figures like the wise and altruistic Kurudavva participate in the tragedy of women. Only the blind Kurudavva can notice the wound Rani received from her cheating husband in a society where everyone has 20/20 eyesight. She treats Appanna & Rani with the same maternal warmth and tenderness. She also endures the negative effects of traditional culture, which devalues and subordinates women. Only her son Kappanna shows any interest in her. Nobody gives her any compassion after she loses her only son – not even the village elders. NagaMandala expresses, as Karnad noted:

The sexism & patriarchy of conventional texts and institutions are actively resisted by a woman's distinctive perspective on the world. In the story Naga-Mandala, for instance, Rani's position may be seen as a metaphor for a young lady seeing her spouse in two different but equally important ways: as a stranger during the day & as a lover during the night. She is compelled to make an imaginary network of relationships out of these chance encounters. The people who live in the abandoned home where Rani is stranded might be her new family.

In an androgenic setting, Krishnamayi reframed the rebellious female mentality but came to the conclusion that "Gender equality still remains a myth." Men, not women, have defined the guidelines for how men & women are expected to discuss their relationship. Someone who felt the need to rule over everything set limits on her. For psychological and societal reasons, she has accepted this. (64-65)

The play Tale-Danda focuses on the subjugation, role, ascent to power, & uprising of the lower castes, all of which are represented by its characters. Poets, mystics, social reformers, and philosophers came together in the 12th century under the leadership of social reformer Basavanna to create the Lingayat faith, which promoted independent thought and social commitment. Caste was abolished, gender equality was achieved, idols were shunned, Brahmanism was rejected, and Kannad was preferred over Sanskrit as the language of the people. These were the fundamental components of the subaltern revolution. The hatred between the two groups reaches a boiling pitch as a Brahmin named Madhuvarsa weds his daughter Kalavati to an untouchable named Sheelvanta. The Orthodox's violent retaliation to this final act of defiance of the dominant caste structure put an end to the movement's tumultuous history of terror & bloodshed. The dramatist wants to make clear that if such important issues are dealt carelessly & the solutions suggested by these philosophers are disregarded, disastrous outcomes would continue to occur. Basavanna, the central character of Tale-Danda, is a Kannada saint who used his religious convictions to fight against the negative effects of caste system. The explosive events that occurred in 1989 following the official endorsement of the Mandal Commission Report & the Mandal issue motivated Karnad to concentrate on the subaltern issue. And as Karnad himself explains, the historical backdrop that served as the impetus for his plays was characterized by "tensions between the cultural past of the country and its colonial past, between the attractions of Western modes of thought & our own traditions, & finally between the many visions of the future that opened up once the common cause of the political freedom was achieved." The drama illuminates the pervasive illness of caste and class politics that has afflicted our political system since the Middle Ages, which is when the play's characters may be found. His in-depth knowledge of his own

past has helped to build Karnad's overarching desire for social justice as well as his sincere care for the underprivileged and subaltern. As Vanashree Tripathi puts it, "Playwright understands of a long tradition of humanism in India...from the earliest periods," "Karnad's astute transformation of the metaphysical into the contemporary dimensions & history into trans-historical perspective" (25).

In the name of Varnashrama Dharma, the drama demonstrates how the lower castes are brainwashed into thinking the higher caste is superior. Mallibomma still feels uneasy visiting Jagdeva's Brahmin home despite his conversion to the Lingayat faith. King Bijjala's attempt to ascend from the lower barbarian Varna to the higher Kshatriya Varna was doomed to fail. "For ten generations, my forefathers ravaged the land as robber barons," he declared. The Emperor trusted them to be his obedient feudatories for a further five years. Every aristocratic family in the area they married into. Thousands of generations of Brahmins were bought off with millions of cows. To have the Kshatriya caste tattooed on their foreheads was the driving force behind this. Yet you query the most innocent of kids, "What is Bijjala?" The first word that comes to mind is "barber." The caste of a person is comparable to their skin color. Even if you remove it entirely, from head to toe, you'll still be a shepherd or a barber when the new skin eventually forms. (14-15)

Subalterns include people from tribal groups, herders, cowherds, & members of lower social levels. Resistance comes in two flavors: ideological & physical. The Lingayat faith (Shaivistic), which was founded on humanitarian principles, was open to all groups, stressed austerity in living, sought to remove the barrier of untouchability, & exposed the prejudice & intolerance inherent in conventional religion, stood in stark contrast to the Brahminical faith (also known as Sanatan Dharma). They disapproved of anything static because they valued "the principle of movement

& progress in the human enterprise" instead. They made some attempts to combat fanaticism in both religion and hostility toward people from various castes. The pious disciple went by the name of Sharana. Mallibomma, a tanner by profession, Kakkaya, Haralayya, Kalayani, Haralayya's wife, Sheelvanta, and King Bijjala are examples of low-caste Sharanas. Jagdeva, Basavanna, Madhuvarsa, & Gundamma are high-caste Sharanas. When shoemaker Sheelavanta marries Brahmin Kalavati, social unrest & ideological resistance reach a boiling point. When opposing forces compete with one another for control of a region, hegemonic conflict results. The Sharanas' physical defense eventually gives up. It was a conflict between conventional wisdom and novel ideas. The movement hadn't had enough time to develop. Even Basavanna has doubts about the hypergamous (Pratilom) marriage working out, & the young, violent rebel Jagadeva, who kills King Bijjala before taking his own life, takes control of the revolt. The Sharanas' lack of drive & internal struggle, together with Basavanna's choice to leave the movement and engage in power politics, led to a response from conservative Brahmins led by a young man named Sovideva.

M.K. Nayak claims that the play is unappealing because "it fails to offer a solution to the problem" (45). In a similar vein, Pranav Joshipura stated that "Karnad portrays the Varna system in a startling manner without any solution...to treat an age-old problem without suggesting a solution raises serious doubts about a writer's capacity" (69). Karnad, who follows in the footsteps of Henrik Ibsen & G.B. Shaw, leaves the audience's decision to them but provides remedial guidance through Basavanna's oratory. The playwright's personal emotions can be heard in Basavanna's doubt, worry, & embarrassment over the subaltern movement. Vanashree Tripathi's insightful comments:

The historical era that Tale-Danda illuminates has significant repercussions for the

present yet has been largely disregarded. The play, which is centered on the class, caste, & gender combinations in 1166 A.D., "shows the subterranean & insidious motivations driving the diverse caste groups in complex power equation" (28).

Sharanas frequently found themselves leading dual lives as a result of their complicated identities. They had embraced sharia without truly renouncing their previous identities, ensuring that those in higher castes continued to look down on those in lower castes & that those in lower castes would always remember that they were untouchables and loathed.

Bijjala says that Karnad's own vision of a more just and spiritualized society is expressed in Basvanna's desire to abolish the caste system. Destroy the varna order. Wow, what a dream! That takes some major guts, I tell ya! Additionally, he is capable of doing so. Look at the poets, mystics, & visionaries he has drawn to his cause. Furthermore, they lack any ethereal or dreamlike qualities. Those of us who diligently work and own common stock. While they sit together, neither their social standing nor castes are relevant. (15)

Vishakha and Nittilai, the main characters in *The Fire and the Rain*, come from quite different social & cultural backgrounds. While Vishakha is the Brahmin spouse of Parvasu & the erudite ascetic's daughter-in-law, Nittilai is the tribal background of Nittilai. Despite stark cultural differences, both feel restricted by social & psychological taboos & restrictions. Compared to other women, Nittilai experiences a more severe kind of oppression since, in addition to patriarchy, her lower social rank has a detrimental effect on her reputation. Despite taking cues from C. Rajgopalachari's prose retelling of the Mahabharata, particularly the myth of Yavakri in *Vana Parva*, Karnad creates a tale of passion, loss, & sacrifice within the contexts of Vedic rituals, spiritual discipline, social & ethical differences between human

agents, & interconnected forms of performance still close to their origins. Both Vishakha, an iconic figure, & Nittilai, a creation by Karnad, symbolize women's subordination, which the author has brought to light in order to highlight the ugly aspects of our society that restrict women's place and creativity.

Vishakha genuinely loves Yavakri, but when Yavakri decides to seek guidance from the gods by committing himself to a ten-year penance, Vishakha is left feeling helpless, distant, and "sick of silence" (141). She is also deeply disappointed. She finally marries Parvasu, who later sacrifices Vishakha's life to gratify his lust and later attention-seeking desires.

VISHAKHA: On our wedding night, my husband said, "I know you didn't want to marry me." Rest assured, though. I'll do all in my power to make your life wonderful for an entire year. So, he did. Throughout the entire year... Then, on the occasion of our second wedding anniversary, he yelled, "Enough of that." Officially, the search has started... He conducted tests on both my body and his own like a scientist or explorer. Throughout a search, as tools. discover just what? Simply didn't know. He was to act as the high priest for the fire sacrifice each year, but he hasn't turned up in seven years. I've grown brittle and dry, just like Tinder. They might catch fire with just a spark. (123)

When Vishakha and Yavakri reunite, Raibhya becomes enraged & grabs her by the hair before beating & kicking her. She is called a "whore" and a "bitch" (127) & her husband is left to care for her (138). Because of her grudge against the king for not designating her as Chief Priest, Raibhya is a convenient target for his wrath. He builds the Brahma Raksha with the intention of killing Yavakri. When Vishakha tells her husband the truth about her meeting with Yavakri before their wedding, she does it bravely. Nittilai, a tribal girl, is fourteen years old, and Arvasu, a Brahmin, is eighteen. They

both participate in a performing ensemble. She is now exposed to the harsh realities of everyday existence. The tribal elders of Nittilai are ready to interrogate Arvasu, but only Andhak recognizes their affection. Hers is an idealistic love that is completely idealistic and disregards social class or cultural background. Instead, she is referred to as "savage" by Raibhya (126). When Arvasu failed to appear at the Council of Tribal Elders, they decided that "Nittilai will marry another boy – of our own tribe" (135). She is coerced into being married to a local lad. She is helpless to change the situation. Her ultimate act of protest is her decision to leave her husband, her children, & her entire life behind for love. But she doesn't want to cuckold her husband because married Indian ladies don't typically do that. She elevates her relationship with Arvasu beyond mere passionate love & petty sexual fulfillment:

NITTILAI: Arvasu, I do not mean to imply that we must cohabit when I say we should travel together as a couple or as husband and wife. To my husband, I have already been too nasty. To spare him further embarrassment, please. Come on, let's be like siblings and stick together. Anyone is available for marriage. I need a spot in the corner, Arvasu, so please make one. (153)

She is being sought after by Nittilai's brother & spouse. She is fleeing for the hills, terrified of their evil plans. Even if she is innocent, she faces a horrifying death: "The husband takes out a knife, grabs Nittilai by the hair, & slashes her throat in one swift motion." Once he drops the ball, he simply lets her fall. She is "lying there, eyes open, bleeding, & dying like a sacrificial animal" (172). The killing of Nittilai serves as a reminder of the influence of patriarchy and enduring social norms, which, even in the modern age, can still limit a woman's right to freedom and exploration. However, the campaign for the liberation of women has started. In the same way, the drama depicts sudras & tribals as lower-caste members of the Varna social system.

Karnad has successfully moved subalterns from the margins to the center of attention in his plays, including subalterns from different socioeconomic groups and genders. Without giving a ready-made answer, he explores important social, political, and cultural challenges in modern Indian society in his plays.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the investigation of postcolonial Subalternization in Girish Karnad's plays illuminates social and cultural issues that still plague modern Indian culture. The research explores how Karnad uses cultural retrieval as a dramatic strategy to portray the subalterns in his plays and how he addresses the issues of communalism and caste division. The use of myth in Karnad's plays is another significant aspect that the research explores. The study of Karnad's plays is significant in postcolonial theory and subaltern studies, which aim to provide a much-needed rejuvenation of the native by rebuilding faith in native tradition and the self. The research on Karnad's plays contributes to the understanding of the role of literature and art in addressing cultural and social issues. It provides insights into how these issues can be addressed through creative expression.

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