

Overlooked Ecocritical Interpretation: Nagamandala

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on analysing on overlooked ecocritical interpretation in Girish Karnad's Nagamandala. This study provides new insights into animal symbolism, myth and folk imagination to show the ecological relationship. The study argues the non-human characters, specifically the king cobra (Naga) and female struggle against male dominance in society. While existing scholarship primarily explores the play through the view of feminism, myth and post colonialism. This analysis highlights the overlook of natural world. In Nagamandala Appanna, the human husband, behaves cruelly and callously towards his wife Rani, while the cobra an animal / mythical being, behaves with Genuine love and affection. This paper explores the deep, often symbiotic, connection between human characters and the natural world, particularly the central figure of the cobra, and frequently intersects with ecofeminism by linking the oppression of women with the exploitation of nature. It makes a critical comment on the exploitative nature of the society, established traditional norms of the society are unfair towards women. This paper argues that in the traditional society women as been glorified therefore with that pseudo glorification women do not dare to go against the society. This paper aim to analysis the gender issues in Girish Karnad's play Nagamandala the protagonist is Rani.

Keyword: Gender, chastity, patriarchy, female desire, marriage, and oppression, frame narrative.

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The Girish Karnad's Nagamandala (1990) is a mythological play based on a folk tale and the snake myth. Eco-criticism studies show the relationship between human and natural environment. The Karnad occupies a distinguished position in Indian English drama as a playwright who creatively reinterprets myth, and history to explore contemporary mortal enterprises. Among his notable plays, Nagamandala (1988) stands out as an important dramatic work that blends folk narratives with ultramodern sensibilities. Subtitle "Play With a cobra", Nagamandala draws upon orally traditions and fabulous motifs to examine themes of gender, power, desire, and identity within a patriarchal social structure. By employing folk convention, emblematic characters, and ritualistic rudiments, Karnad transforms a putatively simple tale into a complex dramatic disquisition of social realities. Nagamandala narrates the story of Rani, a youthful woman trapped in a loveless marriage with Appanna, whose emotional and physical neglect forces her into silent suffering. The entry of the magical cobra assuming the form of her hubby at night, introduces the element of myth and fantasy, blurring the boundaries between reality and vision. Through this supernatural intervention, Karnad questions rigid moral canons assessed on

women and exposes the insincerity foregrounds the inner world of a woman who, though socially oppressed, gradually earns recognition and agency through unconventional means. What makes Nagamandala particularly significant is Karnad's innovative use of folk theatre ways similar as the framing device of the story telling dears, the chorus-suchlike narrative voices, and the emblematic use of the snake. These rudiments not only bed the play in Indian artistic traditions but also serve as effective dramatic tools to notice social conventions. The folk form allows Karnad to address sensitive issues like womanish fornication and connubial oppression without overt literalism, thereby achieving both aesthetic uprightness and thematic depth. Likewise, Nagamandala can be read as a commentary on the relationship between myth and reality, where myth becomes a medium to articulate suppressed trueness. The play challenges conventional sundries of dedication, chastity, and honour by presenting a woman who's innocently justified by society but spiritually justified by myth. In doing so, Karnad reclaims myth as a dynamic and subversive force rather than a static artistic relic. Girish Karnad's Nagamandala is a wealthy dramatic work that brings out deeply into Indian folklore, myth and oral traditions while the play is often expounded through feminist and

psychoanalytic perspective an ecocritical great reading recalls its profound betrothal with nature and non-human life and the interconnectedness between humans and the environment. The play forefront a world view in which nature is not a passive background but an active, sentient force for shaping human destiny. “Why Should a Women Suffer This Way Just Because She Is Married?” at the heart of Nagamandala lies the figure of the naga (cobra) is a most powerful symbol in Indian ecological and cultural fascination. Traditionally respect a protector of the forests, fertility and water bodies the cobra act for nature regenerative and protective energies. In the novel the naga transforms into Appana, unfocused on the border line between human and non-human realms with this metamorphosis dares Anthropocentric thinking and suggests a mutualistic connection between human and nature through the naga assert power, and moral authority, desire thereby withstand for human domination. The female protagonist Rani’s relationship with nature more strengthens the ecocritical proportions of the play. Initially, cramped within patriarchal domestic extent, rani finds companionship and freeness through natural component such as the snake ,the forests and folk beliefs connected with fertility and earth worship nature become a strong force that give her emotional satisfaction and recognition in contrast to Appana’s infertility and harsh cruel masculinity this show up the Femin with nature reflection of ecofeminist ideas where both women and the Environment are disempowered resilient of oral folklore in Nagamandala plays a vital and crucial role in preserving ecological self- awareness of the story within a story structure emphasize the role of indigenous and traditional knowledge system. “Aren’t You as Hamed to admit it, you Harcot? And you expect this” (N 54) Rani the protagonist confinement within the domestic space mirrors humanity’s attempt to control and dominate nature. Her isolation, silence, and suffering parallel the marginalization of the natural world under patriarchal authority. The kitchen, traditionally associated with fire, sustenance, and earth-based rituals, becomes a site of ecological symbolism where natural forces quietly assert their presence. The cobra’s entry into this enclosed human space symbolizes nature’s resistance against imposed boundaries and artificial social structures

Nagamandala, a significant ecocritical perspective is revealed in which nature acts as a dynamic moral agent instead of a mere backdrop the play positions the cobra as a symbol of ecological justice, confronting patriarchal and anthropocentric system of power. The work serves as a call from Karnad to embrace principle of coexistence, balance, and profound respect for nature.

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