



Characterization in Girish Karnad's *Wedding Album*- A Psychological Approach

G.Keerthana M.A.,M.Phil.SET

Assistant Professor- Dept. of English,Srimad Anadavan Arts&Science College(Autonomous) Trichy-5.

ABSTRACT

Girish Karnad is a noted stage actor, playwright, film actor and a creative figure who discusses socio, political and cultural problems of India in his plays. Drama today has emerged as a powerful medium to project the changes that the Indian society faces besides the issues related to gender, class, caste and communities. The individual comprising the society follows its codes and culture ingrained in his/her psyche. The culture specifications of every society decide the psychology of the people, attitude and their character. This paper attempts to study the psyche of the characters of the play *Wedding Album*.

Key words: Culture codes, Psyche, Gender issues, and socio-political problems.

INTRODUCTION

The art of the pen is to rouse the inward vision, instead of laboring with a drop-scene brush as if it were to the eye because our flying minds cannot contain a protracted description.-
Meredith

Drama appeals to the eye since it has the power to create an image, which insulates the mind and help to visualize the multiple characters portrayed in all their complexities and collective reactions upon the stage.

In the post independence era while Indian Drama was in the experimental form in the hands of Asif Currimboy, Vijay Tendulkar, Nissim Ezekiel, Mahesh Dattani and many others, Karnad explored myths and legends, history, rituals, and folklores. Born in 1938 in Bombay,

he was initiated into the writing of drama by chance. He was greatly influenced by Henrick Ibsen,G.B.Shaw and Shakespeare.

Themes of the plays

The plays of Karnad mirror the contemporary social life of his country in a satirical style. He discarded Euro- centric models and techniques. He is known for advocating Indian issues and folk theatre conventions. He has written 13 plays and he has presented the Indianness of his imagination in his plays. His plays have Indian settings and thematic values based on Indian philosophy, sociology, psychology, and historical developments. His dramatic genius, acting, film making, and activities in theatre carry weight for their regional and national importance. His first play *Yayati* (1961) is a re interpretation of the myth of Yayati. *Tughlag*(1964) epitomizes the life of Tughlag. The traditional world of folktales as aesthetic device is projected in *Hayavadhana* (1971),*Naga Mandala* (1988),and *Flowers: A Dramatic Monologue*(2004).*The Dreams of Tippu Sultan*(1997) depicts the end of history of the Vijayanagar Empire and the rise of the British power in India. *A Heap of Broken Images* (2004) and *Wedding Album* (2009) are treated with twenty first century reality.

Freud's Conception of Psychological Criticism

In *Wedding Album*, Karnad peels of the middle class pride and glory revealing the emotional and sexual zones. According to Freud the three premises of psychological criticism are; an individual's mental processes are largely unconscious; human behavior is motivated by sexuality and social taboos attached to sexual impulses compel a person to be inhibited about love and sex. Our mental processes are assigned to three psychic zones:

1.id-reservoir of libido;2.ego-stands for the reason and reality;3.Super ego-Morality in life.

Freud states that unconscious exposes the true feelings, emotions and thoughts of the individual. The main characters of the play express their suppressed feelings and emotions and often they outburst.

Mental Anxieties of the Protagonists

Wedding Album, a one-act play of nine scenes, presents the routine life of the members of the south Indian Saraswat Brahmin family and their anxiety of Indianness in search of a suitable expat boy for their daughter. The play is set in Dharwad. The Nadkarni parents try to preserve their caste and tradition from the effect of hybridity and multiculturalism. But their children

have a cultural amnesia and they are uprooted in the name of modernization. The play presents middle class anxieties in pan-Indian life. It encapsulates the anxieties, prospects of love, marriage and search for life in their middle class status.

The play revolves around Vidula , the younger daughter of the Nadkarni family. She is engaged to Ashwin an NRI- who lives in the U.S. They have never met yet they vowed to get married. Mr.Nadkarni , the father, a retired doctor, is in government service. His elder daughter Hema is married to an NRI lives in Australia and his son Rohit is working for T.V serials and is in love with Isabel a Christian girl. The family members are anxious about Vidula's marriage.

The play opens as Vidula speaks in front of a camera. Her brother Rohit is handling the cam. Vidula is a 22 year old B.A.graduate. She is depressed and tired of posing in front of cam.” Am I looking depressed?”(WA-5).She introduces her family through a video to Ashwin.

Vidula: There was another brother between Hema and Rohit. He was retarded mentally. Don't know what he died of...But let me assure you I am not retarded-(WA-7)

The mother is anxious about how they are going to manage the expenses of marriage.”A wedding means expenses-there is no getting away from that”. The parents worry for the expenses they have incurred for Hema's marriage. But Hema is discontented with her parents. She has migrated to Australia after her marriage and she represents Indian wives .The playwright expresses the existential suffering of Indian wives through Hema, whose husbands work in MNCs as : “We Indian women...are obedient sati savitri ever willing to follow in our husbands' footsteps....Our men may get all the jobs. But I am in no better position than Ma”.(WA-17)

Sudden Tantrums

In the sub plot Radhabai , the cook of the Nadkarni family, plays an important role. Rohit finds her life story appealing, impressive and melodramatic due to her husband's death and her adopted daughter's forced madness. She is quarrelsome, demanding and not so good in cooking. The secret story of Radhabhai's life makes Rohit feel pity for her. To him it appears as a modern serial on the television and decided to make her story into a TV serial hoping that it will grip the interest of the audience. Her daughter Yamuna is being maintained by a rich trader and one day she is thrown out of the family. Yamuna has gone insane:

Vidhula: She looked down and saw Yamuna. Her saree was in tatters. The kids were laughing and throwing stones at her. She was obviously out of her senses, calling out Amma...and hurling abusing at her tormentors.(WA 53)

This incident haunts Radhabai and whenever she thinks of her daughter she just yells at the family members especially at the mother.

Hema: These sudden tantrums. Are you sure she is all right? Perhaps she should see a psychiatrist

Mother: No need for any fancy treatment...I think I had better go away somewhere-far away-in search of mental peace.”-(WA23)

Karnad presents the vanity of young girls in our contemporary middle class urban life. Their worries and anxieties in life, involvement and activities in the city internet cafés are displayed in the play with a realistic touch. When Vidula is caught red handed in net Café while watching pornography, defending herself she accuses the youths ,”You have come here to rape me”(WA 70).She is relieved when the internet café attendant tells her that the two young men have come only for their hafta.

Vidula thinks that the West can provide everything and dreams of marrying an NRI. When she meets Ashwin she appreciates his quest for a spiritual odyssey through marriage. He realizes the meaninglessness of material values and tries to escape from godless and amoral world.

Ashwin:I am boiling inside like a volcano.I want you to share my agonizing search of myself...It may even require an emotional giving up.If you agree to...you will have to share my inner turmoil...I believe you will find it enriching (WA-79-80).

He states that the Americans are now in a soul searching mission. He prefers to preserve Indian culture by marrying an Indian Girl who will favour him for wisdom, insight and guidance. A few days after their marriage, Vidula moves to Bangalore before leaving for America. It becomes an emotional farewell to her. Hema says” Leave him and come back if you feel like it..A divorce is okay. Its no shame.

Vidula promises them “I will never divorce Ashwin” (WA-86)

Vidula represents the middle class girl and westernized Indian youths.The play marks the highest evolution of feminine psyche.

CONCLUSION

Thus Karnad captures how modern men in general and the Indians in particular have anxieties in search of pleasures without any soul searching purpose in life. Karnad views the subjects of his plays from his own perspective, develops them in his imagination and employs them as a medium to communicate his interpretations. *Wedding Album* presents the pungent and stinging core of a family in which, the author has peeled off individual's hidden desires, urges, private afflictions and subterranean desires.

WORKS CITED:

- [1].Karnad ,Girish.*Wedding Album*.New Delhi:Oxford University Press,2009.
- [2].Kaushik,Abha Shukla.*Indian Drama in English Some Perspectives*.New Delhi:Atlantic Publishers.2013.