

ISSN 0976-8165

The Criterion



The Criterion

An International Journal in English

Bi-Monthly Refereed & Indexed Open Access eJournal

October 2013 Vol. 4 Issue-V

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Managing Editor

Madhuri Bite

www.the-criterion.com
criterionejournal@gmail.com

Kuntaka's *Vakrokti Siddhanta* and Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*: Resuscitating the Classical Indian Literary Criticism

Dr. Rohit Phutela

Abstract:

Indian English Drama has traversed multifarious discursive paths ever since its inception in the pre-independence era in the hands of likes of Michael M. Dutt, Rabindaranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, etc. who tried to relive the Indian ancient tradition of drama and aesthetics in the face of escalating colonial policy vis-à-vis erasure of Indian ethos and history. It is the Indian English Drama, original as well as translated, which has acquired a thrust area reputation for the standard research and object of critical inquires. Nonetheless, it is an unambiguous current of the postcolonial Indian situation which breeds such cultural products, literary output being one of them. The present paper studies such postcolonial socio-political and cultural forces working upon the Indian Theatre and its derelicted (under the Western colonial weight) glorious poetics of *Vakrokti* by Sanskrit Acharaya Kuntaka as applied on the dramas on one of the most highly critiqued playwrights of India Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*.

Keywords: Vakrokti, Kuntaka, postcolonial, linguistics, poetics, appreciation

Article:

The Indian dramatists like (Girish) Karnad, Tanvir, Panikkar and Karanth in their works return to the tradition...It is something to be lived and grappled with, adapted and even transformed, in order to create new forms of drama which relate to Indian people...their return to the past is an immediate response to the immediate historical reality of 'westernization' in India. There is also an attempt to 'decolonize the mind' in the sense that Ngugi wa Thiong'o might advocate; by decolonizing definitions of culture, aesthetics and representational forms and techniques; by combing rather than separating the various languages, idioms, forms and techniques, narratives and histories that make popular and regional cultures of India. This process of decolonization involves the practice of interculturalism at the most essential level...They produce plays in spirit of decolonization. They draw from the Ramayana and Mahabharata and from the dramas of Kalidas and Bhasa. But they do not uphold the Hindu hegemony by this (Reddy 34-35)

The Postcolonial Hangover and the Indian Critical Doldrums

The paper shall unfold the impact of postmodern and postcolonial Indian literary scenario on the Indian rejection of its own aesthetics principles in terms of the explication of drama theory and its manifestation in the contemporary Indian drama with special reference to Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*. And of course western critical cannons crippling the indigenous and native cultural vehicles long after the political autonomy of the country, is a significant argument of the postcolonial dynamics. K. Satchidanandan's remarks on this aspect of Postcolonialism and its Indian connection is pertinent:

"Paradigms are tried and given up; communities are imagined and dissolved; traditions are constructed and deconstructed; the principles of unity and of difference are alternately tried out; the West's presence is acknowledged and negated; radical European concepts and models are alternated with return to the indigenous roots; the classical and folk elements of the heritage, the written and the oral/ performed are explored one after the other. Our creativity has thus been

dialogic, our literary discourse marked by the negotiation of a necessary heterogeneity, by a conception of identity that lives through difference and hybridity. It has been a continuous process of mediation between “the self” and “the other” using, what Foucault terms. ‘the technologies of the self’.” (Satchidanandan 5)

Literary criticism is one such faculty whereby the homespun canons of literary appraisal also get a shift along with themes and genre of the creative output. Specifically in India boasting of the golden age of aesthetics producing literary blings like Kalidasa’s plays and Bharata’s, Kuntaka’s and Abhigyan’s literary criticism and canons of locating the beauty of expression, the change in attitudes is highly conspicuous. This postcolonial repercussion is dubbed as the ‘literary crisis’ with regards to criticism. G. N. Devy sums up the debate as ‘literary crisis’ as follows:

“Let us list some of the more prominent symptoms of the crisis facing modern Indian literary criticism. They are: a proliferation of nonproductive commentaries on Western critical positions and thinkers; lack of initiative in modifying critical concepts, tools and criteria in the process of importation; inappropriate use of cultural terminology developed in the West, mostly out of its original context, in an undisciplined way and without sufficient justification to use it; lack of scholarly material to support critical pursuits – want of literary biographies, bibliographies, translations of Indian and foreign works, editorial scholarship and relevant critical debate; inability to relate literature to other arts, the media and social and cultural phenomena; uncritical and uninformed attitudes to influence, absence of self-awareness and of tradition; arbitrary and mostly alien critical standards.” (Devy 10)

Such deficiencies in the Indian aesthetic pursuits have paralyzed the authentic Indian flavored literary criticism in its totality. Drama is one of them.

Indian Classical Theory’s Kinship with the Drama

The major emphasis of this paper is upon the dialectics of the Western Theory and the Indian aesthetic principles pertaining to the drama and poetry whereby the latter one has been obscured by its own inheritors. And this is when Indian thinking faculty has been fount of wisdom for western thinkers. Kapil Kapoor remarks:

“All the major European minds of the nineteenth century – Humboldt, Fichte, Hegel, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Kant, Nietzsche, Schiller, Schelling, de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Trubetzky, were either Sanskritics or on their own admission, had been deeply involved in the Indian thought. Their work has inspired various thought movements – Idealism, Romanticism which have shaped the contemporary mind. For example, Structuralism, which owes much to the work of Saussure who was the Professor/ teacher of Sanskrit at Geneva before he came over to Sorbonne, is the underpinning of what are today virtually global thought movements right up to the Post-modernism” (Kapoor 1)

Even with these realities the Indian researcher today vouches for the Western literary canons due to numerous political reasons and compulsions. As compared to Aristotelian *Poetics*, which is a discursive referent to understanding the plot, development, the psychology of the characters, etc. in the drama, Indian poetics like Bharata’s *Natyashastra* and Kuntaka’s *Vakrokti* are far older and far more elaborative in terms of primal human passions of pity and fear (in relation to *Catharsis*), the aesthetic quotients of delineation and expression of beauty in various forms and other cultural responses but has been cornered by the critical practices in the country due to its colonial phase and the grip of neo-colonized dynamics of which use of English language and western cultural practices is an important segment. Sanskrit poetics of ancient India has much to offer to the contemporary drama criticism in particular and literature in general which has been overshadowed by obstacles to communication caused by

“linguistic technicalities, mystic dross, quaint terminology and abstruse narration which made the going hard for one not well versed in Sanskrit. But if one succeeds in weeding out scholastic niceties, worn-out phraseology enmeshed in an opaque diction, one may come across a wealth of details, characterized by rare profundity, depth of comprehensiveness.” (Apeksha 54)

Hence, the Indian English drama, which could be studied and investigated in the light of rich and radiant ancient Indian classical benchmarks, is facing an acute malaise of non-exploration in terms of Indian ethos notwithstanding the reality that it is profoundly enmeshed in Indian consciousness. The perennial Indian themes of communal disharmony, casteism, homo-phobia, marginalization of women and gender discrimination, which apparently invoke pity and fear, need home-grown aesthetic and critical faculty for explication rather than the imported ones which fail in terms of universal applicability. Opines V. K. Kantak on the polemics:

“Consequently, Aristotelian views of drama don’t appear wide enough to include dramatic modes that developed independently in the East – whether Indian, Japanese or Chinese. There is never any ambiguity or doubt about the distinct character of the Eastern drama; a cursory comparison of Sanskrit play or a Noh play with a Western classic brings out the great gulf that separates the two traditions.” (qtd. in Dani and Madge 35)

The incommensurate relationship between the two traditions of drama is visible here. And the dramatists like Karnad with their works with indigenous subjects, myths, legends, history, and folklore reminding of the Indian classical theatre are evincing that the Indian classical aesthetics perennially hold good for theatre in India and must be encouraged to contest the colonial models.

Reliving the Tradition in *The Fire and the Rain* – Vakrokti

Karnad’s play *The Fire and the Rain* is cast in the same mode of myth i.e. Yavakri myth from the Mahabharata encapsulating various themes of love, passion, lust, envy, rigid caste and cultural codes, etc. The complex play has Parvasu who is guided in his life by an obsession to be the greatest Brahmin and intellectual which leads to his humiliating his own father the sage Raibhya by seizing the opportunity to be the chief priest in the *yajna* for invoking Lord Indra for rain. His cousin Yavakri, in a revengeful and lustful drive, defiles his sexually insatiable wife Vishakha and is killed by Brahma Rakshasa invoked by Raibhya as a revenge who in turn is killed by Parvasu himself by mistake. Arvasu, Parvasu’s innocuous and virtuous younger brother, loves a low born girl Nittilai who is eventually married off to another man making him join a drama troupe which shall lower his caste and make him equal to her lady love. Parvasu betrays his brother and family for his ambition and kills himself watching the play where Arvasu’s performance exposes his brother’s double standards. Nittilai is slain by her family for her love for Arvasu. And it rains after this bloodshed which was an act of expiation. Girish Karnad with the help of a mythical framework has forwarded the idea and peril of attaining knowledge and power without wisdom (as in Yavakri) as well as the superhuman gloating and haughtiness which comes with success (as in Parvasu). The play comments upon many ancient Indian traditional practices like untouchability and casteism which is manifested in the clash of brahminism and its related egoism and arrogance juxtaposed against the low bred but kind and generous hunters and other waifs. Its beauty lies in the contrasts which are visible in the characters of both the castes like Vishakha, who despite being married consummates her carnal fetish for Yavakri and the untouchable Nittilai who is ready to stake her life for Arvasu. The story is ancient and a part of folklore but Karnad makes it timeless and contemporaneous due to its applicability on human beings in all ages. The disillusionment of Parvasu and Yavakri, the moral fickleness of Vishakha, the rebelliousness of Arvasu, the kindness of Nittilai and the unreasonable smugness of Raibhya are all human traits with universal application. Karnad has

thus made an attempt to bring home the human socio-cultural predicaments and problems of choices coupled with the metaphysical anguish of modern man while rejecting the western models and narratives embracing the ancient Indian one which could be readily appreciated through the lenses of Indian aesthetics like *Vakrokti*.

Vakrokti, as enunciated by Kuntaka, emanating from the creative faculty of the poet endows poetic language with strikingness (*Vaicitrya*) and causes aesthetic delight to the reader. Etymologically, the word *Vakrokti* consists of two components – ‘vakra’ and ‘ukti’. The first component means ‘crooked, indirect or unique’ and the second means ‘poetic expression or speech’. It is manifested at six levels in language, viz. the phonetic level, (*varnavinyasa*), the lexical level (*padapurvarddha*), the grammatical level (*padapararddha*), the sentential level (*vakya*), the contextual level (*prakarana*) and finally the compositional level (*prabandha*). Kuntaka anticipates much of the modern stylistic approach to literature and his stylistics encompasses imaginative language at the micro and macro levels. The conscious choices made by the poet in the language is a fertile field of investigation in his approach. It is the considered view of Kuntaka that poetic language always deviates from hackneyed expressions by its imaginative turns. Girish Karnad in *The Fire and the Rain* has employed various linguistic devices in order to carve a greater impact in the presentation of some emotions as well as magnify the aesthetic quotient, which are typical to theatrical performances. These devices not only lend the virtue of condensation of words but also heighten the emotional effect upon the audience. The repetition of certain words in an extended dialogue, alliterative phonemes, abundance of exclamatory expressions, smooth movement within time frames, etc. are some of these. Eschewing the English variants for their evaluation, the paper intends to critique the same through *Vakrokti* laws which have better compatibility with an Indian sensibility like Karnad since his aim is the “artistic revival of the ceremonial content of drama as ritual; he gives theatrical performance the dignity of a religious rite to counter its reputation as mere mimetic entertainment” (Tripathi 14)

Varnavinyasa Vakrata (Phonetic Obliquity)

The most strikingly charming faculty of Karnad is his subtlety in the utilization of language to invoke certain desired emotions. His choice of words and their placement in a dialogue is deft and is strictly abiding by the theatrical paradigms of the concerned play. The claim could be evinced in the presence of first *Vakrokti* obliquity i.e. *varnavinyasa vakrata*. This obliquity is about the phonetic interplay of various sounds viz. phonemes engineered by the poet/dramatist to create a musical effect as well as soar above the mundane languor of the language. The repetition and abundance of a particular phoneme like /ð/ in ‘that’, ‘than’, etc. in the speech of Yavakri in the play lends more force to the poetic expression as an aesthetic evaluation and amplifies his range of emotions like love for Vishakha’s heart and covetousness of her body which he camouflages behind his quest for knowledge.

YAVAKRI: One night in the jungle, Indra came to me and said: ‘You are ready now to receive knowledge. But knowledge involves control of passions, serenity, objectivity.’ And I shouted back: ‘That’s not knowledge I want. That’s not knowledge. That’s suicide! This obsession. This hatred. This venom. All this is me. (Karnad 131)

The recurring and rhythmic employment of ‘that’ in the dialogue externalizes the pent-up emotions of Yavakri which had been furiously accumulating in his heart after regular snubbing from his adversaries and also accentuating upon the relevance of the oblique representation of the word ‘that’ which is knowledge coupled with restrain for Yavakri. He had sought infinite knowledge for the purpose of humbling his foes and sowing his wild oats on Vishakha, his object

of lust. But the fruit of the labor prevents him for doing so which cracks him and he starts loathing the thing he had desired assiduously. The word 'that' stresses his disgust and disillusionment with the 'knowledge' and he doesn't want to mouth the word even

Similarly, 'play-within-play' offers a decisive junction in the play where the denouement takes place. Vritra, the character symbolizing Brahma Rakshasa invoked by Raibhaya, claims kinship with Vishvrupe and Indra after being debarred from the sacrificial enclosure being a demon. He sees through the treachery of Indra, emblematic of Parvasu and warns and wails:

VRITRA: Why, brother? Why, why, why? Brother, why? Why? And why are the vultures, sparrows, kites and eagles reeling in such frenzy over the sacrificial sanctum? Why are they ripping the skies with their shrill screams? Why is a wave blood breaking out of the sacrificial enclosure like a flock of fear-crazed fowl? (170)

The repetitive 'why' in the dialogue is also a manifestation of the *varnavinyasa vakrata* whereby the repeated sound highlights the plight and anguished state of character's mind over the perfidy of Indra/ Parvasu. The repeated phoneme /w/ emphasizes the dazed state of mind and innocence of the character which has been executed by the playwright very adroitly. Similarly, the insertion of 'piled alliteration' and 'crossed alliteration' in the phonemes /s/, /b/ as in 'sacrificial sanctum' and 'blood breaking' and /f/ in the phrase 'flock of fear-crazed fowl' enhance the auditory as well as the emotional experience of the audience. The repetition of the word 'silence' in the below quoted dialogue of Vishakha too creates a similar effect on the audience whereby she laments the deplorable situation of women in Indian domesticity. The women in the Indian society is silenced, abused and robbed off her liberty by the patriarchy which is underscored by Vishakha here:

VISHAKHA: I shouldn't ask. I should be silent. And you, in any case, will be silent. My silence again followed by yours. Silences endlessly repeated. Perhaps they too will describe a whole universe. But I am sick of silence. (141)

The playwright has splurged such phonetic obliquities in the play throughout which augment the overall impact factor of the play in terms auditory perception

Padapurvarddha Vakrata (Lexical Obliquity)

Kuntaka's *Vakrokti Sidhanta* also enables a critic to measure the poet or the dramatist's skill in the lexical interplay i.e. application of particular words in a particular situation and their literary wizardry in giving a diversified experience to the reader and the audience. Kuntaka's concept of *padapurvarddha vakrata* or the lexical obliquity achieves this end. Karnad has exhibited his in-depth knowledge of classical vocabulary in *The Fire and the Rain* manifested in some of the words from the Sanskrit and other regional languages. Also his lexical obliquity skill is visible in the diversified usage of the available vocabulary. This craftsmanship of Karnad could be evaluated by one of the sub-varieties of *padapurvarddha vakrata* viz. *paraya vakrata* or the obliquity of synonym whereby the playwright gets the opportunity to enforce the passionate feelings of his characters while presenting them in different words and narratorial expressions. An excerpt where Arvasu holds in contempt the caste division and its callous rigidity which denies humanity of all its flowering sums up this obliquity:

ARVASU: Nothing, yes. For the young men of your tribe! But I am a Brahmin. To say all the in plain, loud words to a smirking, nudging, surging multitude. No hymns to drown out one's voice. No smoking to hide behind. It's dreadful. I hope there won't be too many people there – (110)

Arvasu's dialogue reflects his state of mind whereby he is miffed at the Indian social Puritanism and he externalizes it through various expressions connoting the same idea – disgust for the practiced religious bigotry. The various ways in which the playwrights renders through Arvasu

the social resistance to an inter-caste love episode are the methodologies of Kuntaka's *paraya vakrata*. Similar example is the third priest's dismay at the lackluster performance of the play which is but a crucial Indian ritual to appease Indian gods

PRIEST THREE: These endless philosophical discussions, metaphysical speculations, debates. Everyday! Surely, a sacrifice doesn't have to be so dreary (106)

The impatience of the priests is clearly visible here expressed with a clever interchange of phrases and words. In another sub variety of *padapurvarddha vakrata* named *upcacara vakrata* or the transference obliquity "Karnad brings the stated and implied, though far removed from each other on the same level, thus making the charm and beauty of expression worth noting" (Arora 50). Yavakri's epiphany and its consequent influence upon his actions are infused with life by the playwright which brings out vividly the contrast between the sublimity attached to his achievement and the low to which he sinks thereafter. The vivid expressions throbbing with aesthetics of words is what explains the *upcacara vakrata* and its full flowering is detectable in Yavakri's speech before Vishakha where even the inanimate natural manifestations participate with the living ones to augment the overall artistic expression and the subject's experience. An excerpt:

YAVAKRI: one would expect the appearance of a god to be a shattering experience. Concrete. Indubitable. Almost physical. But though I think Indra came to me several times, I was never certain. The first time he appeared he said, 'No Yavakri, you can't master knowledge through austerities. I must come with experience. Knowledge is time. It is space. You must move through these dimensions. ' I said , 'No, I must have it. Grant me knowledge.' He laughed and said: 'You are being silly.' That's it! Common dialogue. Not very profound. And when the god disappeared, nothing was left behind to prove he had ever been there. I looked around. The same old black scorpion. The same horned chameleon. The shower of bird shit around me. So it was all a hallucination caused by something I'd eaten that morning? Or was it fever working on my brain? So I go on. Another year. Or perhaps two. Then the god comes again. 'Why are you being so stubborn?' He chides. 'You can't cross a full stream on a bridge of sand.' (120)

In the same context he utters:

YAVAKRI: Ten years ago I had come to your house to bid you goodbye. And you quickly led me to the jackfruit grove behind your house. You opened the knot of your blouse, pressed my face to your breasts, then turned and fled. I stood there stunned. The trees were loaded with fruit. Many were ripe and had split open and the rich golden segments poured out. The sweet sick smell of the jackfruit, the maddening hum of a fly. The smell of your body. Ten years later I opened my eyes and I knew I was hungry for that moment. (121)

The sensuousness of the word play satisfyingly renders the sensual and the voluptuous with a poise in perfect harmony with the sumptuous depiction of the natural phenomena. Yavakri's carnal desires for Vishakha and the ensuing seduction and destruction can be easily estimated through the *upcacara vakrata*.

Padapararddha Vakrata (Grammatical Obliquity)

The third major type of *vakrokti* on the basis of which the play could be critiqued is *padapararddha vakrata* or the obliquity of grammar whereby the grammatical structures as observable in the shifting time or the tense resulting in an augmented sense of theatrical aesthetic in the play or the poem are critiqued. Also the dominance of a particular part of speech in the text is underlined which adds to the overall force of the emotion expression. The presence of this *vakrokti* can be exemplified by the *kala-vicitriya-vakrata*, a sub-variety of *padapararddha vakrata* in the play whereby shifting of time as in flashback episode lends a good amount of

anticipation and thrill in the play. A time gap of one month between two events in the play is designed which also gives the playwright an opportunity to dovetail the order of important action. For example, the *yajna* scene opens the play in the form of an epilogue and the same action forms the axis of the entire play. This time shifting is revealed through the dialogue of Arvasu announcing the events of the past one month which brought the situation to that particular decisive juncture. Also this is a device of the playwright (Arvasu conversing with Nittilai) to inform the readers too about this retrograde transition:

ARVASU: Please, please, watch. The play is about to begin. Yes, after all these years, it's going to happen. But you know, and brother knows, and I know that it isn't the real thing. This is a fiction, borrowed from the myths. The real play began somewhere else. A month ago. A month?... Was it really that recent? It seems ages and ages of darkness ago. You and I were going to get married. Begin a new life. And had to meet the elders of your tribe. (109)

Arvasu here anticipates the events ahead and further creates a suspenseful aura while talking about two plays – real and unreal which actually refers to the real life and play-within-play respectively. This moving back in time and then returning adds new dimension to the aesthetic value of the play. Also, there are numerous moments in the play where the exclamatory and interrogative expressions are used to elevate the acute feelings of the character and which is critiqued in the light of another sub-variety of *padapararddha vakrata* called *nipata vakrata* (obliquity of particle) by Kuntaka. The play is interspersed with such instances whereby a character's melancholy, joy, anger, disgust, shock, etc. are presented through such sounds which might not have a decidable meaning but certainly make the sequence more endearing and realistic. Arvasu's soliloquy while professing his love for Nittilai has certain exclamatory sounds which bump up his emotional experience:

ARVASU: Thorns! The wind has thorns now. The light too is nettled. Words – even your name, Nittilai – has fangs that rip the skin off my mind and make it bleed. How can I punish myself enough? Half an hour! Half an hour! But I stopped on my way to your village – to dig for water[...] an untouchable wouldn't have cared. An outcaste wouldn't have cared. But my cursed caste wouldn't let me go...to think you would have been mine! Half an hour! (143)

In another instance Arvasu is looking for Nittilai like an insane person

ARVASU: Nittilai! Nittilai! Am I dreaming? Or, are you really there? You won't disappear again, will you? Nittilai! Where have you come from, Nittilai! (149-150)

Here the impatience and the obsession of a lover would have been leaner in the absence of the interrogative and exclamatory expressions of which there is liberal spewing intensifying the desired emotional response. Another example is the awe and trauma of Parvasu and Arvasu at the sight of their father's blood:

ARVASU: What is it? What's happened? Is that father? What happened to him? Oh God! Blood! Blood – what's happened? (144)

The feelings are made more scandalous and horrific through the said expressions.

Prakarna Vakrata (Episodic Obliquity)

The fourth major *vakrokti* enunciated by Kuntaka is *prakarna vakrata* which is the episodic obliquity. This *vakrokti* relates to the creation of highly emotional states in the play or poem. The playwright creates such states to lend the element of dramatic sensibility which is essential to save it from the crude banality and wryness of mundane life. A sub-variety of *prakarna vakrata* called *bhavapurna-stiti-vakrata* is one of its scales of measurement and is discernible in many places in the play especially in the woman characters like Vishakha who is victimized both by her lover and her husband. Karnad's women characters in all his plays are

rich in emotional quotient and stand for the exploited and repressed gender denominations in the Indian society both of the ancient and contemporary types. Vishakha's emotional outburst in order to justify her adulterous action to her husband is full of pathos as well as reasoning which is an example of Karnad's sympathetic views about women abuse in the Indian households.

VISHAKHA: At last a question from you.

(Pause.)

We're three of us here. Your brother's never home. That leaves me and your father.

(Pause.)

Something died inside your father the day the king invited you to be the chief priest. He's been drying up like a dead tree since then. No sap runs in him.

(Pause.)

On the one hand, there's his sense of being humiliated by you. On the other, there's lust. It consumes him. An old man's curdled lust. And there's no one else to take his rage out on but me.

(Pause.)

At least Yavakri was warm, gentle. For a few minutes, he made me forget the wizened body, the scratchy claws, and the blood, cold as ice. And he paid for it with his life.

(Raibya's steps are heard in the distance, as he returns.)

Here it comes. The crab! Scuttling back to make sure I don't defile the Chief Priest as I did Yavakri. Grant me this favor, please. Kill me. For all your experiments you haven't yet tried the ultimate. Human sacrifice! You could now. (141-142)

Vishakha's emotional state of mind can be gauged by the presence of *bhavapura-stiti-vakrata* in the play which makes Karnad a champion of such cause and a masterly craftsman. There is another sub-variety of the same *vakrokti* which is *visista-prakarna-vakrata* and is the obliquity of particular events and looks for the presence of allusions and myths which the playwrights employ to lend further sheen to the main composition and plot. Karnad has referred to numerous anecdotes and allusions which make the drama culturally more rich and credible. A similar observed sub-variety in the play is *apardhana-prasangavakrata* or the obliquity of secondary episodes whereby the secondary episode is inducted or implied to thrust the main plot. Yavakri's transient debauchery with Vishakha and his father's humiliation by Raibhya are some secondary episodes in the play which foretell the further actions and events.

Vvakyavakrata (Sentential Obliquity)

The *vakrokti* named *vakya-vakrata* or the sentential obliquity enables the critic to locate the various experimental traits in the drama or the poem pertaining to the sentence structures. This parameter of aesthetic sensibility looks for the various liberties taken by the artist in the text which actually aim at beautifying as well as complementing the desired response from the subject in the composition. Shorter sentences defying syntactical arrangements, one-liners, broken sentences, terse expressions etc. are some of the instances of this *vakrokti*. The play is replete with these as has been exemplified in various aforementioned quotations whereby many unique sentential constructions were seen as present in the dialogue of Parvasu:

PARVASU: Stand in a circle of fire. Torture oneself. So many techniques, all equally crass, to make the gods appear. And when they give in, what do you do? Extend the begging bowl: 'Give us rains. Cattle. Sons. Wealth.' As one defined human beings by their begging – I despise it. I went because the fire sacrifice is a formal rite. Structured. It involves no emotional acrobatics from the participants[...]It has to be set right by a man. By me. That's why when the moment comes I shall confront Indra in silence. As an equal. For that, it is essential that one shed all

human weakness. Be alone. Absolutely on one's own to face that moment. Become a diamond. Unscratchable. (141)

The shorter sentences reduced to mere phrases and words provide an artistic variety to the playwright to enhance the aesthetic experience of the audience/ reader.

Prabandha Vakrata (Compositional Obliquity)

Prabandha-vakrata (compositional obliquity) is the combination of all five varieties and aims at modifying the dominant *rasa* by inserting a tweak in the events in the composition. The *prabandha-vakrata*, according to Kunataka, is the acme of aesthetic sensibility of an artist and influence the sensory experiences of the audience accordingly. It hinges around *rasa*, another Indian classical criticism canon propounded by Bharata which means juice in Sanskrit and Hindi, is referred to as the ultimate emotional quotient which is evoked by any literary presentation, poetry or drama, a total transference of the personal emotions of the spectator to the emotions created by the art.

“...‘Rasa’ to mean the perfect joy that the sage experiences when he perceives intuitively the Highest Truth in his meditation, and applied it to that ‘aesthetic pleasure’ which the cultured spectator with a responsive heart enjoys, when he loses himself completely in the characters, situations and incidents of a play represented by highly talented actors” (Sankaran 3)

Bharata's amplification of *bhavas* (mental states of spectator's minds) and their role in the genesis of *rasas* situates the *Natyashastra's* extra conclusiveness than Aristotle's *Poetics*. He enumerates eight *rasas* (*Shringara* (Love), *Hasya* (Joy), *Adbhuta* (Wonder), *Shanta* (Peace), *Raudra* (Anger), *Veer* (Courage), *Karuna* (Pity), *Bhayanak* (Fear) and *Vibhatsa* (Disgust)) and three *bhavas* and further classification of *bhavas* into eight *sthayibhavas*, thirty-three *Vyabhicharibhavas* and eight *satvika bhavas* which adequately evinces its superiority. Bharata's maxim *Vibhavanubhava Vyabhichariyan Samyogat Rasanishpattih* conveys that *Rasa* is enjoyed when there is an amalgamation of *vibhavas* (stimulants and determinants), *anubhava* (bodily expressions) and *vyabhicharai-bhavas* (diverse fleeting emotions) The transference of *rasas* is referred to as *rasantra-vakrata* (obliquity of changing *rasa*) in which there is a shift from one *rasa* to another in order to decimate the tedium which is generated after the domination of on particular kind of emotion. For example in *The Fire and the Rain*, Act I is filled with amorous encounters drawn between Vishakha and Yavakri, Nittilai and Arvasu qualifying it for the *Sringara rasa* (Love) which is the outcome of the erotic sentiment associated with the fullness of youth and originates when a relationship is tied between a man and woman. Bharata has divided this sentiment into *samyoga* (determined by blooming seasons, company of intimate fellow, etc.) and *vipralamba* (determined by indifference, languor, yearning, etc.) the *rasas* of union and separation respectively. Vishakha's provocative erotic passion and its consummation with Yavakri followed by separation from him due to his death comprise the sentiments of *samyoga* and *vipralamba*. The same is experienced in the relationship between Arvasu and Nittilai. But sooner the dominant love sentiment is replaced by rage and fury i.e. *raudra rasa* which is experienced by the actions symptomatic of indignation, rape, insult, false allegation, exorcising, envy, revengefulness, etc. many of which are pretty conspicuous in the Act II. The action suddenly shifts gear with the slaughter of Raibhya, exposure of deceitful and envious demeanor of Parvasu and the bitter antagonism between Arvasu and Nittilai's father. But the Act III takes a sentimental turn turning into *karuna rasa* which is extracted when the *sthayibhava* or the permanent mood of the pathetic sentiment is sorrow and it is determined by suffering under curse, separation, commotion caused by reversal of situation, death, captivity, fatal injury and other misfortunes. Its psychological states are epilepsy, anxiety, delusion, languor, etc. which

are embodied by Arvasu in the play after the death of his father, separation from Nittilai and abandonment of his brother. But the tenderness soon gives way to fierce passion in the epilogue with *raudra rasa* dominating which has determinants like disgusting sight, taste, smell and sound creating uneasiness and suffocation for spectators and which comes from lot of bloodshed in the end. This shifting and transference lends a thrilling crescendo to the play creating a spellbinding effect on the audience.

Conclusion

Hence, a comprehensive application of the Indian tradition of dramatic art makes me conclude that endemic emotional responses of Indian milieu can be better explicated and determined by the Indian model. Analyses of a particular *Vakrokti* in a predominant situation can best help the critic to judge the psychology and the sentiments of a character along with inventive. And given the sheer voluminous concept of *Vakrokti*, it does outperform other models. The play of Girish Karnad entrenched in Indian sensibility and mythical framework could have been, of course, critiqued through Western canons of deconstruction and feminism but aren't the Indian ideals of dramatic art like the *vakrokti* and *rasas* adequate in commenting upon the politics of power, caste hierarchy, women's situation while answering some discursive questions pertaining to these epistemologies? The Indian social conditions, which are perhaps still trying to come to grip with the loose strands of the Indian cultural muddle, may be left unjustified by the Western models of which have moved from structuralism, feminism, Marxism to post-structuralism, deconstruction, post-feminism, cultural materialism and other such constructions. Indian situation is quite different and return to the Indian classics may amply sum up the debate since India has successfully struck a dialectical compromise between its classic and modern cultural patterns. My inclusion only of the Indian critics, intellectuals and commentators relevant to the Indian classical theory in this particular paper is also but a humble ploy to establish the competence of the Indian critical faculty not only in the intellectual assessment of the Indian literary products but non-Indian and multicultural ones too especially the postcolonial dialectics which has a multinational discursive spectrum. Karnad is an internationally critiqued literary personality owing to his reputation as an innovator as well as curator of the dramatic heritage (actable plays on the stage) all over the globe and hence a hefty volume of critical dicta from international literary community is available on his theatrical flair. But the criticism of his craft has been restrained only to the Indian critical canon, in theory as well as practice, to achieve the aim which is the leitmotif of the paper.

Works Cited:

- Apeksha. "Comparative Politics: An Exercise in Multilateral Influence Binding." *Dialogue*. Vol.7 No.1 (June 2011). Print. 51-56.
- Arora, Indu. "Study of Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* in Light of Kuntaka's *Vakrokti Siddhanta*" *Atlantic Critical Review*. Vol.9 No.4 (October-December 2010). Print. 47-58.
- Dani, A.P. and V. M. Madge. *Classical Literary Theory and Criticism*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2001.
- Devy, G. N. *After Amnesia: Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism*. Bombay: Orient Longman Limited, 1992.
- Kapoor, Kapil. *Language, Linguistics and Literature: The Indian Perspective*. New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 1994.
- Karnad, Girish. *Collected Plays (Vol. 2)*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005 rpt. 2008.

Reddy, Obula P. "Cultural Heterogeneity in Indian Drama" *Flowering of Indian Drama: Growth and Development* (eds.) Reddy, Venkata K. and Dhawan, R.K. New Delhi: Prestige, 2004. Print. 23-36.

Sankaran, A. *Some Aspects of Literature Criticism in Sanskrit or the Themes of Rasa and Dhvani*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Oriental Booksellers and Publishers, 1973.

Satchidanandan, K. *Indian Literature: Positions and Propositions*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 1999.

Tripathi, Vanashree. *Three Plays of Girish Karnad: Hayavadana, Tale-Danda, The Fire and the Rain*. New Delhi: Prestige, 2004.