

**ST. JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE - 27**

**I B.A – THEATRE STUDIES**

**END-SEMESTER EXAMINATION: MAY- JUNE 2023**

**THEATRE & PERFORMANCE STUDIES: TS 221**

**Time- 2 hours Max Marks- 60**

**Instructions:**

1. **This paper is for students of II semester THEATRE STUDIES.**
2. **The paper has THREE SECTIONS and THREE printed pages.**
3. **You will lose marks for exceeding the word limit.**
4. **You are allowed to use a dictionary.**
5. **Read the following extract from Nagamandala and answer the questions below.**

(Her last sentence is drowned in the hubub created by the Flames as they prepare to leave. ‘That was a nice story!', ‘Has it dawned yet?', I don't want to be late', ‘Poor girl!')

MAN (exasperated): These Flames are worse than my audience. Can’t they wait till the story is over?

FLAMES: But isn’t it?... It will be dawn soon.

MAN: It can’t be. No one will accept this ending.

STORY: But why not?

MAN: Too many loose ends. Take Kappanna’s disappearance, for instance.

STORY: Oh, that is Kurudavva’s story. If you are interested in that one, you may find her yet, meet her unexpectedly as you met me here, in some remote place. Even in the market place perhaps. Or someone in the audience may know. Or you can invent the missing details. That would be quite in order. I am only Rani’s story.

MAN: Even then, the present ending just doesn’t work.

STORY: And why not?

MAN: It’s all right to say Rani lived happily ever after. But what about Appanna, her husband? As I see him, he will spend the rest of his days in misery.

1. **Answer the following questions in FIVE-SIX lines each. (3x5=15)**
2. From what the Man in the extract says, what can the reader gather about his career as a playwright?
3. Do you think Kappanna’s disappearance in the play is a loose end? Why? Why not?
4. Which aspect of theatre is revealed to us in the phrase ‘someone in the audience may know’? Explain.
5. **Read the following interview of Girish Karnad and answer the questions below.**

**Question**: Among contemporary Indian playwrights, you have the strongest life outside the theater, in film and television. Yet over a career that now spans more than thirty years you've always described playwriting as your primary activity and the identity of playwright as a kind of primary identity. I wonder why.

**GK**: There is no question that I think of myself essentially as a playwright. It may have something to do with the fact that in the small town of Sirsi where I grew up, strolling groups of players--called Natak Mandalis or Natak Companies--would come, set up a stage, present a few plays over a couple of months and move on. My parents were addicted to these plays. That was in the late '40s. By the early '50s, films had more or less finished off this kind of theatre, though some Mandalis still survive in North Karnataka in a very degenerate state. But in those days they were good. Or at least I was young and thought so. I loved going to see them and the magic has stayed with me. Beyond that, I don't know. I would have like to be a poet--I admire poets--but when I was about twenty-one or twenty-two I realized that I would never be one. I think I have been fairly lucky in having a multi-pronged career. You know, I've been an actor, a publisher, a filmmaker. But in none of these fields have I felt quite as much at home as in playwrighting.

**Question**: Poets often try and write for the theatre because they feel that it brings them in contact with a larger, live audience, and that poetry is otherwise very isolating. I find it interesting that you seem to see playwriting as a problematic and isolating activity, from which you need to escape into other mediums.

**GK**: I write slowly, painfully. It's not writing plays that's painful. It's writing itself that I find painful. Therefore I should have liked to have had more time for writing. But I have not been able to make a living from playwriting, and so I've had to take up other things that I enjoy less. I hated acting--certainly I hated acting in Hindi films, but I did it because it was my largest source of income. One can't earn a comfortable living even from a successful play. Take Tughlaq. As you know, it's been enormously successful--critically as well as in performance. Playwrights in the West have been able to retire on such successes--or at least, to devote themselves to that activity entirely. I can't, and that irritates me. The advantage is that the need to earn a living from other sources keeps me involved in the general flow of life. Otherwise one starts repeating oneself.

**Question**: There's one more aspect of the interconnection between the media that I want to bring up. It is possible to take a text--and by "text" I don't necessarily mean anything written or printed--and translate it into another medium. You can film the performance of a play, you can make a film based on a play, you can do television productions of plays which may or may not be videotapes of actual performances. How do you feel about the exchange between the media in this sense?

**GK**: In that sense, theatre has always been parasitical. It has always drawn on other forms: on epics in ancient India or Greece, for instance, or on folk tales and novels. But the "translation" in these cases involved considerable freedom of interpretation. Indian theatre has fed almost exclusively on the three epics: the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata Purana. Poets like Kamban or Lakshmish, who wrote the epics in Tamil or Kannada, thought of themselves as "translating" the Sanskrit originals, though they also felt free to move away from the original material. The poet himself decided how far he could stray. When Peter Brook and Jean-Claude were in India planning their Mahabharata, they wanted me to collaborate with them and that's the first point I made; in India you never reproduce the original epic--you are not supposed to. But Peter had a valid problem: as an outsider, he would not know how far he could stray without destroying the original. He therefore preferred to stick closely to the text of the Mahabharata. Also, only some material translates well into another medium. I can see Tughlaq as a film but not Hayavadana or Naga-Mandala. I find Chekhov "cinematic" because you can imagine the entire film in Bergmanesque close-ups of people talking to themselves. But not the early Ibsen.

1. **Answer the following questions in 100-150 words each. (3x10=30)**
2. Why do you think Karnad isn’t able to see Nagamandala as a film? What aspects of the play aren’t easy to bring on stage?
3. How do you understand the phrase ‘theatre has always been parasitical’? – explain using the performances you have watched this semester.
4. Read Karnad’s response to the first question carefully. What elements of the magic he mentions are we able to find in *Nagamandala*? Explain with reference to the play.
5. **Respond to the following prompt in no more than 2 pages. (15 marks)**

Kurudavva, Kappanna, Naga, and Rani are on a WhatsApp group. Pick any scene from the play and compose a series of chats involving the 4 characters. You are allowed to change the direction of the play as you see fit.

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