



## **PROSCENIUM THEATRE AND GIRISH KARNAD'S *THE DREAMS OF TIPU SULTAN* AND *BROKEN IMAGES***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Proscenium theatre is a theatre in the frame of arch in an elevated stage separating the action from the audience by putting a curtain between them. The root of the Proscenium can be traced from Greco-Roman culture of theatre. In Greek theatre the performances took place in hilly areas. The proscenium stage is structured like arch and that is why this theatre is also known as proscenium arch theatre. It is fully covered from the upper part and the stage is illuminated only through mechanical lights in the structure of an arch. All the three sides of the stage work as walls for the stage and the concept of the "fourth wall" is introduced in proscenium theatre. Proscenium theatre has one aim, that is, to present naturalism on stage. Naturalistic theatre is the central kind of theatre used in the proscenium arch. His plays like Weeding Album and monologue Broken Images are written with the advantages of proscenium theatre in mind.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Proscenium theatre is a theatre in the frame of arch in an elevated stage separating the action from the audience by putting a curtain between them. Proscenium theatre is an outcome of the gradual development of theatre from ancient Greece till now. The theatre which we use today for theatrical performance is known as proscenium theatre. In ancient times the performances took place outside under the open sky. With the passage of time the performances were gradually shifted to enclosed areas. Today theatre has got its richness with the help of new technology that is used in theatre. With the help of technology, electrical, mechanical gadgets, lights, sounds, equipment, etc. modern proscenium theatre has tremendously benefited. With the help of human effort and technical support proscenium

**DR. SATISH KUMAR PRAJAPATI**

1Page



theatre tries its best to present the illusion of reality on stage. It follows the concepts like curtain, use of lights, music, elevated stage, division of stage, etc.

The word “proscenium” is used as a part of theatre but with the passage of time, the word has acquired a changed meaning. Wikipedia elaborates the word proscenium:

*In ancient Rome, the stage area in front of the scaenae frons was known as the "proscenium", meaning "in front of the scenery". In the Roman theatre, no proscenium arch existed, in the modern sense. However, Roman theatres were similar to modern proscenium theatres in the sense that the entire audience had a restricted range of views on the stage—all of which were from the front, rather than the sides or back. (Web.)*

So in Roman days of theatre, the front area of the stage was known as proscenium. But the similarity lies in the position of audience. They had a restricted distance from where they watched the play and they were allowed to see the play only from front side. So the history of proscenium begins with the development of theatre.

The root of the Proscenium can be traced from Greco-Roman culture of theatre. In Greek theatre the performances took place in hilly areas. The origin of theatre in Greek can be traced between 550 BC and 220 BC, at the festival of Dionysia, in the area around Athens. Greek theatre buildings were called *theatron* (seeing place). It was large, open and constructed on the slopes of hills. It contains three principal elements- the *orchestra*, the *skene*, and the audience. The *orchestra* was a large circular area which was used for the ritual rites, religious rites, choral performance and sometimes for acting. In the middle of the orchestra, an altar was located which was used to offer or scarify anything to Dionysius (a Greek god). The *skene* (tent or hut) took place behind the *orchestra*. It was used as the green room (in those days known as backstage) where actors could change their masks and costumes and also sometimes put a painted curtain depicting the scene of the play. There was an elevated area between the *skene* and *orchestra*. This area was known as *proskenion*, the beginning of proscenium theatre.

Wikipedia clarifies *proskenion* as the ancestor of Proscenium and says, “In front of the *skene* there may have been a raised acting area called the *proskenion*, the ancestor of the modern proscenium stage. It is possible that the actors (as opposed to the chorus) acted entirely on the *proskenion*, but this is not certain.” The proscenium was there but the four-wall concept of today’s proscenium theatre did not exist. In Rome a certain changes were introduced in this theatre. The difference is described in this way:



*These buildings were semi-circular and possessed certain inherent architectural structures, with minor differences depending on the region in which they were constructed. The scaenae frons was a high back wall of the stage floor, supported by columns. The proscaenium was a wall that supported the front edge of the stage with ornately decorated niches off to the sides. The Hellenistic influence is seen through the use of the proscaenium. The Roman theatre also had a podium, which sometimes supported the columns of the scaenae frons. The scaenae was originally not part of the building itself, constructed only to provide sufficient background for the actors. Eventually, it became a part of the edifice itself, made out of concrete. The theatre itself was divided into the stage (orchestra) and the seating section (auditorium). Vomitoria or entrances and exits were made available to the audience. (Web.)*

Thus the term proscenium was also used by Roman to explain the performance place but the difference lies in the matter of decoration. It was more decorated than the Greek theatre. A full scene was constructed in the background instead of merely using curtain. They put painted curtain which helped them to change the scenes. With the changing of scenes they changed the curtain but not the whole setting of the stage. The actor came forward at *proscaenium* and acted his own part and went back.

“Elizabethan Age” was known as “the golden period of drama.” In this era the theatre was at its climax. It had got many famous playwrights like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, etc. The structure and performance of theatre is much more different from the previous theatre. Since this era, the stage performances were taking place in enclosed areas with certain stage and prop managements. The structure of the theatre houses was very different from the early Greek Amphitheatres. The stage was elevated four to five feet from the earth and the performance could be seen from three sides. For the audience multi-layered sitting facility was available. The actors came forward to act their part and exited from the back-side doors. If someone died on the stage, he would be taken out by four people. The changing of the scene facility was not available in those days. It was either given hint in the speech of actors or in narration. In this regard *enotes.com* says:

*Although costumes and props were utilized, changes of scene in Shakespeare's plays were not conducted by stagehands during brief curtain closings. There was no proscenium arch, no curtains, and no stagehands to speak of other than the actors themselves. Instead, changes of scene were indicated explicitly or implicitly in the speeches and narrative situations that Shakespeare wrote into the text of the plays.*

**DR. SATISH KUMAR PRAJAPATI**

3P a g e



The condition of stage gradually changed. The performance took place in an enclosed area. The structure of the stage is very close to the concept of “thrust stage”. In this structure of theatre, the audience sits on three sides of the performance area and the actors perform their parts by moving all the three sides. Thrust stage was largely use in 16<sup>th</sup> century during the period of Shakespeare. The audience of that time had very strong sense of theatre; they easily understood the change of scenes. The playwrights had often used soliloquies and aside to show inner conflict. These soliloquies and asides were written in narrative or reflective styles. The audience of those days had very strong sense of understanding. They easily understood and imagined the narration, reflection and description.

In seventeenth and eighteenth century the stage was closer to modern proscenium theatre. The audience watch the performance from the front-side and the actor came from the wings of the stage. With the elaborated scenery proscenium theatre did not aim for realism but presented an idealised vision of grandeur. The concept of “illusion” could not be created because the stage as well as auditorium was fully illuminated during the performance.

The proscenium stage in modern period has got its new shape. It has got its changed shape. The proscenium stage is structured like arch and that is why this theatre is also known as proscenium arch theatre. It is fully covered from the upper part and the stage is illuminated only through mechanical lights in the structure of an arch. It was blocked from three sides and the performance could be seen only from the front side. The stage looked like a “picture frame” to the audience. It seemed that the audience was watching some natural activity from the window without the actor knowing that he is being watched. The left and right side of the proscenium stage are known as the wings and are used for the entrance and exit of the actors. The green room is located at both sides of the wings where actors can get rest and prepares themselves for the next scene. The auditorium is in the darkness, invisible to the actors. They could act oneself unconsciously.

All the three sides of the stage work as walls for the stage and the concept of the “fourth wall” is introduced in proscenium theatre. The concept of “fourth wall” was introduced by philosopher and critic Denis Diderot in nineteenth century theatre to produce action very close to real life. The side of the stage that faces the audience is referred as the "fourth wall". Proscenium theatres have fallen out of favour in some theatre circles because they perpetuate the fourth wall concept. The staging in proscenium theatres often implies that the characters performing on stage are doing so in a four-walled environment, with the "wall" facing the audience being invisible.



Proscenium theatre is an outcome of realism on stage and presents the “illusion of reality” on stage. It tries its best to copy the events of the life of human beings on stage in a realistic manner. In order to produce realism on stage, the playwright creates illusion and presents illusionary reality. The illusionary reality can be presented on stage with the help of stage setting, lights, costumes, music and other theatrical devices. About the development of modern proscenium theatre, Encyclopaedia Britannica says:

*The proscenium's structure was first expanded by Squire Bancroft and his wife, Marie Bancroft, to enclose the lower side of the stage at London's Haymarket Theatre in 1880, creating a "picture frame" or an imaginary fourth wall through which the audience experienced the illusion of spying on characters behaving exactly as if they were unobserved. (Web.)*

Thus, illusion of reality is the key concept of proscenium theatre. Proscenium theatre has one aim, that is, to present naturalism on stage. Naturalistic theatre is the central kind of theatre used in the proscenium arch. The presentation of natural action on stage in natural scene (illusionary scene created through technicalities) is the main motto. Wikipedia says:

*Naturalism is a movement in European drama and theatre that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It refers to theatre that attempts to create a perfect illusion of reality through a range of dramatic and theatrical strategies: detailed, three-dimensional settings . . . ; everyday speech forms (prose over poetry); a secular world-view (no ghosts, spirits or gods intervening in the human action); an exclusive focus on subjects that are contemporary and indigenous . . . ; an extension of the social range of characters portrayed. . . ; and a style of acting that attempts to recreate the impression of reality (. . . advocated by Stanislavski). (Web.)*

The division of a play into acts and scenes is another achievement of proscenium theatre. The division of the plays into acts is an outcome of the impact of Roman theatre on British Theatre of sixteenth century by Elizabethan playwrights. But in those days, to show the division of acts and scenes on stage was very difficult. The division was indicated in the narration between the dialogues and actions. The plays were divided into five acts by Elizabethan playwrights imitating Roman playwrights. In late nineteenth century, Ibsen and Chekhov had written their plays in four acts. In the twentieth century, the division of three acts is introduced and now it is in the tradition of the writing of the play.



Act is a major division of the play and it is often some time divided into scenes. A scene contains the unity of action which has no change of place and action. It has also the continuity of time. M. H. Abrams defines act and scenes:

*Acts are often subdivided into scenes, which in modern plays usually consist of units of action in which there is no change of place or break in the continuity of time. (Some recent plays dispense with the division into acts and are structured as a sequence of scenes, or episodes.) In the conventional theater with a proscenium arch that frames the front of the stage, the end of a scene is usually indicated by a dropped curtain or a dimming of the lights, and the end of an act by a dropped curtain and an intermission. (3)*

The change of scene on stage took place with the help of lights and dropped curtain. The change of scene through light is done with the help of fade in, fade out or cross fade. When the light fades out and fades in, the audience understand that one scene is finished and another has begun. The curtain fall is another way to change the scene. Now a days the curtain fall is out of fashion because it takes too much time to change the scene. The dropped curtain is used at the time of the end of acts.

The role of audience in proscenium theatre is passive. They are not supposed to think and critically observe but only to watch and feel. If any thought comes in their mind they are not supposed to share it during performance but to keep it inside. It needs a passive audience not visible to actors. In this respect the role of audience is very different from Epic theatre and folk theatre which explain the active role of the audience. The audience plays much more active role in these two theatres. In both theatres the concept of "Fourth wall" is rejected and the audience is visible to the actors. The role of *sutradhara* is introduced and the front curtain is removed completely. He plays the role of a bridge between action going on stage and the audience. He makes direct contact with audience and asks their response for anything. The role of audience, in proscenium theatre, is like seeing something from distance or peeping inside the house and witnessing something which is private.

The theatrical roots of proscenium theatre can be traced even in *Natyashastra* by Bharata. It talks about two types of performances – *Lokadharmi* and *Natyadharmi* (detailed study is given in the chapter entitled "Sanskrit Theatre and Girish Karnad"). Between these two *Lokadharmi* (literally 'popular dharama') is close to proscenium theatre performance. It demands natural performance on stage. Ananda Lal defines it as:

*Lokadharmi: According to the Natyashastra, the natural mode of abhinaya (svabhavabhinayopeta), pure (suddha), simple, spontaneous, and in*



*consonance with the way of ordinary life. It is free from the stylized mode of representation, known as natyadharmi. For instance women perform female roles and men, males, in this style. (239)*

Thus the natural way of presentation is required not only by proscenium theatre but also by Sanskrit theatre. But further Ananda Lal explains that naturalistic presentation of Sanskrit theatre is different from modern naturalistic presentation. Illusion of reality could not be created through technical supports as done today. He says, "But *lokadharmi* should not be equated with modern naturalistic or realistic acting, for it incorporates a certain degree of conventionality" (239). So it cannot be equated with proscenium theatre but can be seen as the predecessor of this theatre.

Proscenium theatre in India is an outcome of the impact of the coming of Britishers to India. The impact of proscenium theatre can be noticed in theatres in the cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras (where the Britishers had created their centres). In these cities the urban middle class got a test of the life-style, education, culture, manner and behaviour of the westerners started to copy them. Most of the theatre in these areas started to copy all those plays which were performed by touring British companies in these cities. The public had got a different aesthetic pleasure through these performances and asked for more and more. Thus the proscenium theatre got its patronage in India and started to dominate on the other form of theatre as western culture started dominating indigenous culture.

Garish Karnad has also used proscenium theatre in his plays. He started his career as a playwright at that time when the theatre of India was in an ambiguous situation. He started at that time when two forms of theatres were found- on the one hand there was the native folk theatre and Sanskrit theatre. And on the other hand there was the colonised theatre which was Parsi theatre and Proscenium theatre. He says that in those days the condition of a playwright was to find a form of drama which could balance Western and Indian theatre. Talking about the condition of Indian playwrights at that time, Karnad says: "We keep acrobating between the traditional and the modern and perhaps we could not hit upon a form which balances both." (96) At that time folk and other theatres were losing their identity under the impact of proscenium theatre. Sanskrit theatre was not practiced by playwrights and directors because of its heavy use of conventionalities and out dated rituals. Karnad emerged as the "man of Renaissance" in the realm of Indian theatre. He has practiced most of the form of theatre in his plays. He says that when he started his writing theatre was in vague and confused state. In this regard he says:

*There is no any theatre and not only is there no theatre but there is no really meaningful tradition of theatre within which I have been grown up.*

**DR. SATISH KUMAR PRAJAPATI**

7P a g e



*Yakshagana at that time seemed moribund, Natak Company tradition was also dying and the urban theatre, that is the Sangeet Natak tradition has really left very little in terms of drama, it has left marvellous music. (89)*

Thus the theatre in India was in a pitiable condition. In order to improve the condition of Indian theatre, he has presented hybrid theatre to his audience by mixing Indian theatre with Western theatre and fulfilling the desire of both types of audience. By presenting hybrid theatre to his audience he has successfully managed to mix Western theatre, Indian theatre and folk theatre. A critic quotes about his hybrid theatre, “Karnad, therefore, thought of presenting truly Indian themes in a modernist style, by borrowing relevant aspects from Western theatre as well as Sanskrit theatre and folk theatre in Karnataka.” ([www.indianetzone.com](http://www.indianetzone.com))

Karnad’s writing is more or less influenced by western theatre. He himself acknowledges this fact and says, “. . . I would say certainly after the Sanskrit period or Sanskrit drama was over there is little that really excites one, as an Ibsen would excite one or a Shakespeare.” (87) Karnad explains that there are three theatres which had formative influence on him. There is the deep influence of *Yakshagana* (a Kannada folk theatre), Natak Companies of thirties and forties and the modern Western theatre. In this regard he says:

*. . . but to me three kinds of theatre, three kinds between which I swivelled and moved and written have been symbolised in a sense by these three kinds of theatre: the Company Natak on one side, the Yakshagana with mask like appearance, its ritual atmosphere, and thirdly the kind of theatre which really is a naturalistic theatre, the Western theatre as one came to see it, hate it, dislike it but was impossible not to be possessed by it. (88-89)*

Although in the early part of his life he has not shown any direct influence of the proscenium theatre but later on he has written some plays based on the dramatic techniques of proscenium theatre.

About the influence of Western theatre on him, Karnad says:

*The tradition that we borrowed from the West was not the tradition of Shakespeare, was not the tradition of Ibsen, so much as the tradition of Shaw. Even when Ibsen is imitated it is Shaw who comes from it and surprisingly what comes through Shaw to us, many of the notions that come through Shaw to us are entirely wrong. (91)*



Thus Karnad rejects Shaw because he had provided the wrong tradition of Ibsen to us. He says that the Western influence on Indian theatre came as the influence of Shaw. He says if it had come as the direct influence of Shakespeare and Ibsen then the situation of an India theatre might have been different. But at one level the Ibsenian theatre focuses on the realistic projection of urban middle class and their drawing room and living room conflict. Karnad felt was not suitable for India theatre. He says:

*All naturalistic plays in the West take place in the drawing room and this was a great tradition handed down by Ibsen; the living room of the house is the central point for the individual. This is the house which he has got, from which the individual faces the world outside as well as inside, in this living room. So from A Doll's House, through all these playwrights that I mentioned until Ibsen actually gives up naturalistic theatre, everything happens in the living room. This is because the living room has a very important place in the West, not only in theatre, but in society itself it is where the person belongs. But in India living room is really a place where you keep the external world out. The only function of a living room in India is to meet guests and to give them tea. It is not a place where the family meets and discusses, I mean the traditional family. (91-92)*

He says that to present the conflict of urban middle class as a theme for a play in India is very difficult. He says that in the Indian context the drawing room theatre is not possible because in India people always separate their individual life from their social life. The hierarchy of family is set in Indian context. On the other hand, in the West the drawing room is a place where people talk about their personal as well as social problems. So he denies the possibility of this kind of theatre in India. Karnad's rejection of this kind of theatre is a short coming in his theatre. He has never shown the conflict of modern urban middle class as theme in his plays. On the contrary, Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani and other playwrights have successfully used the conflicts of urban middle class conflict as theme in theatre depicting modern Indian life. These playwrights have got their popularity on the basis of their themes selected from urban middle class society, clash of hierarchy in family, class struggle, giving voice to the marginalised, etc. They were able to depict contemporary modern India life. Karnad realised his short coming very late and wrote a play *Wedding Album* based on the life of modern urban middle class society which deals with the living room setting. But Karnad's experiment failed on stage. He was unable to do this in his theatre. The reason may be, perhaps, that Karnad had not used the techniques of naturalistic theatre in an open minded way. The second reason may be that he was interested in depicting mythical, legendary and historical reality in a contemporary context. In this context he was for more successful than these other playwrights but in the other he failed.

**DR. SATISH KUMAR PRAJAPATI**

9P a g e



In the matter of technical impact, Karnad says that when he came to Bombay and saw the plays in proscenium arch within the controlled situation of light, music, etc. He was spellbound. Before it he had only seen the *Yakshagana* performances in his village. So all these things were new for him. He says, “You could actually control light and go into darkness, put lights off, and, this other notion that you could actually stand there and talk about yourself and talk about the innermost horror one suspects.” (88) There was a deep impact of proscenium arch on his mind.

Karnad’s plays are written with the mind-set of proscenium theatre. His plays like *Yayait*, *Bali: the Sacrifice*, *Tale-Danda*, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, *Weeding Album* and two monologues- *Broken Images* and *Flowers* all are written with the advantages of proscenium theatre in mind. These plays cannot be performed in other forms of theatre. *Hayavadana*, *Naga-Mandela* and *The Fire and the Rain* are written with the other dramatic technique of other forms of theatre (folk and Sanskrit theatres). But at another level these plays are also based on the advantages of the dramatic techniques of proscenium theatre. Perhaps the thought that these plays would be performed on a proscenium stage in an urban centre was prominent in his mind. Thus accordingly he has taken advantage of proscenium stage even in these plays which are the part of traditional folk and Sanskrit theatre where proscenium stage need not be used. This is what creates the hybrid theatre of Karnad and creates multiple levels of meanings and performance in his future. Which attract the traditional as well as modern audience. Parasuram Ramamoorthi, a playwright-director-actor, praises him and says:

*The plays of Girish Karnad are easily adoptable to the Western audience and they also appeal to the Western audience . . . some of Girish Karnad’s plays were performed in US and imported into India. This again lends a kind of complexity to the plays that make them national and international. Girish Karnad’s seminal contribution to Indian Theatre lies in this betweenness, a kind of theatre which could be at one level like the plays of Kavalam Panniker or Chandrasekara Kambar or Habib Tanvir and at the same time read/play like the plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar or G. P. Deshpande or Vijay Tendulkar, fusing the folk idiom and the modern Western theatre in a single theatrical performance- ‘Thanathu’, theatre of roots and at the same time theatre which is the relationship between the West and India. (1-2)*

Thus Karnad is one of the perfect examples of “betweenness” between West and Indian theatre.



*The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* is a play based on the dramatic techniques of proscenium theatre. The play was written as a radio play. But the play was performed on stage on 17 February 2000 by the Madras Players at YMCA Amphitheatre, Chennai. The play deals with the multiple dreams of Tipu Sultan. The structure of the play is very complex because it was primarily written as radio play and not for presentation. Karnad was familiar with the complexities of the play so he has added a note at the beginning of the play:

*Those who wish to stage the play should kindly resist the temptation of using masks, special lighting or costumes for the dream scenes. It is essential for the total impact of the play that the dreams are staged absolutely realistically, and that the scenes follow each other in rapid succession. As this rapidity can be best achieved by quick shifts of location on stage and of lighting, exits and entrances of characters have not always been indicated in the text in the traditional fashion. (178)*

Karnad suggests that the dream scenes should not be different from the rest of the scenes. He suggests this because he wanted to present the play in a realistic manner on stage. That is why he avoids the use of mask, different lights, different costumes, etc. Proscenium theatre and technical aids that go with it make easier to present flash-back, dreams, reflection of thought on stage.

The structure of the play is that of “play-within-play”. It begins with the conversation of two characters -Mackenzie and Kirmani. Even as they talk about the death of Tipu Sultan and how his body was found, the scene flashes of the discovery of the dead body of Tipu Sultan on May 1799. The flash back begins with these settings:

*(Ramparts of Seringapatam – or Srirangapatna – fort. Mid-night. There has been savage fighting and the ground is thick with the bodies of the dead and the dying. British Soldiers are searching through the piles of the bodies for Tipu’s corpse. Tipu’s servants, brought in to help identify his body, squat around, dozing. (183)*

The “play-within-play” scene begins here. In this scene few soldiers are searching for the dead body of Tipu. The scene ends with the finding of the dead body of Tipu Sultan. After that we are back in the house of Kirmani. The spot shifts and the “play-within-play” scene begin once again. Mackenzie asks Kirmani’s about the dreams of Tipu:



*MACKENZIE (laughs): Janaab Hussain Ali Kirmani Sahib. I am interested in the people who spoke so him and the ones he spoke to. You keep the dreams to yourself.*

*KIRMANI (smiling): I will too.*

*(From now on, Kirmani and Mackenzie act as choric characters, commenting on the action, as indicated. The stage darkens. Tipu enters, accompanied by Poornaiya.)(192)*

Karnad has presented double layers of “play-within-play” scene in the play. After the above mentioned dialogue Kirmani and Mackenzie work as chorus for the play. They comment on action of the play when they feel the need of explanation. The second layer of “play-within-play” scene takes place when Tipu dreams and his dreams are staged on the platform. Second layer of “play-within-play” scene takes place in this way:

*TIPU: Remove the bed from my bed chamber. While my sons are in foreign hands I shall sleep on the bare stone floor.*

*(Tipu undresses, sits on the stone floor. He takes out a string of beads and starts reciting a Sufi Zikr-incantation-to himself. He begins to sway as in a trance. He sways more and more violently as the lights darken. A voice calls out to him softly in the dark.)*

*VOICE: Tipu-Tipu –*

*TIPU: Who is that? Is that you father?*

*HAIDER: Yes, it's me Haider.*

*(Lights come on slowly to reveal a spectral landscape. Tipu looks around frantically.)*

*TIPU: Where are You, Father?*

*HAIDER: Here under this tree. (224)*

*And the dream ends:*

*TIPU: . . . I will not let them. I'll restore your limbs. Father, where are you? Father-Father-Come back-*

*(Darkness swallows them up. When lights come on we are in Maratha camp. Hari Pant Phadke is waiting for Tipu Sultan.)(226)*

So the play has two layers of presentation. Karnad balances each scene of the play. These kinds of scenes can only be performed with the help of the dramatic techniques of proscenium theatre. The complexities of the play can only be solved with the use of lights on stage and multiple division of stage. Karnad has written this play by using the dramatic



techniques of proscenium theatre in his mind. So the play is suitable for the performance in proscenium theatre.

*Broken Images (Odakalu Bimba)* is a play which follows the pattern of monologue. The play is written for proscenium theatre. It uses lots of technicalities which can only be performed with the advantages of proscenium theatre. The theme of the play is an interview of a well-known novelist Manjula Nayak. She has just completed her first debut novel *The River Has No Memories* in English. She is a lecturer in English in Bangalore. She has come for an interview in a TV show. After the end of the interview, she starts to go but her image remains on screen. Her image on the TV screens starts to talk to her. In the beginning of the interview she says that it is her own work. But with the passage of time she confesses that it is the work of her sister. The play ends with the confession of Manjula Nayak that the novel was not her own but of her sister Malini Nayak.

From the point of dramatic techniques, this play is written for the performance in proscenium theatre. The beginning of the play is very noticeable. It is the interior of a television studio where the interview has to take place. The stage setting is mentioned by Karnad in this way:

*The interior of a television studio. A big plasma screen hangs on one side, big enough for a close-up on it to be seen clearly by the audience. On the other side of the stage, a chair and a typically 'telly' table—strong, wide, semi-circular. At the back of the stage are several television sets, with screens of varying sizes.*

*A small red bulb glows above the table, high enough not to appear on the television screen. Manjula Nayak walks in. She is in her mid-thirties/forties, and has a confident stride. She is wearing a lapel mike. It is immediately evident that she is at home in broadcasting studios. She looks around. (261)*

Thus the setting of the play demands a lot of technical assistance. It has heavy use of props. The interview of Manjula Nayak begins as the light turns green. After her interview the light turns red and she feels relaxed but her image remains on screen:

*(Laughs and gets up. Manjula's image on the screen should have given way to the film, but hasn't. Instead the image continues as before, watching her calmly. She is of course unaware of it. She makes a move to the door.)*

IMAGE: Where are you going?

*(Startled, Manjula stops and looks around. Touches her earpiece to check if the sound came from there and moves on.)*



You can't go yet. –Manjula!

*(Manjula looks around baffled and sees that her image continues on the screen. She does a double take.*

*From now on, throughout the play, Manjula and her image react to each other exactly as though they were both live characters.) (267)*

The stage setting for this play needs many television sets. They should be interlinked together to show the same picture. The setting of the play shows that the dialogue of Image (as a character) should be pre-recorded. The setting in the beginning shows that the TVs relay the direct action of the stage on the TV screens. After the interview the dialogue between Image and Manjula begins. The task of the director becomes easy if the dialogues of Image are pre-recorded. In the last part of the play, the setting once again becomes complex. It needs a lot of technical assistant. The setting of the play runs in this way:

*(If there is a revolving stage available, it begins to revolve taking Manjula-cum-the-image with it, as the television sets at the back come alive one after another. Every screen shows a different image of Manjula, silent but gesticulating.)*

...

*(Suddenly all the screen starts speaking loudly, some in Kannada, the others in English. The cacophony is deafening. The revolving stage moves Manjula out into the dark. Then one by one, the sets switch off, leaving the studio, dark, empty.)(286-287)*

The stage for the play must be circular and revolving. The revolving stage is a part of the modern proscenium theatre as a technical facility. Thus this play would certainly require a modern technical added proscenium stage.

The division of a personality into two selves is presented by Karnad through the technique of doppelganger. Her mirror image represents the inner self of Manjula. Thus the conflict between the two selves of a person is presented on stage. In other forms of theatre, such scene is usually represented by two characters or two actors on stage. Here Karnad uses contemporary technology and makes an original experiment which is only possible in a proscenium stage. There is a scope in proscenium theatre that we can present two selves of a person at a time without using second person in the play.



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