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Adaptation of Myth in Girish Karnad's Play, *The Fire and The Rain*

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Abstract:

The myth is an inseparable part of the culture of any country. India is essentially a culturally rich country. Many Indian writers inherited myth and cultivated it in every genre of literature. Indian English literature is enriched with stories and themes drawn from Vedic texts, Ramayana, Mahabharata and various Buddhist scriptures. Girish Karnad's *The Fire and The Rain* is based on the myth of Mahabharata which forms the backbone of the play. In order to explore adaptation of myth in Indian English Literature, I have chosen Girish Karnad's play, *The Fire and The Rain*. Karnad's plays reflect upon contemporary Indian cultural and social life using myths and historical legends.

Keywords: Adaptation, Cultural, Legends, Mahabharata, Myths.

Myths are the stories which are narrated in an imaginative and symbolic manner, emphasizing on the truth of the cosmos. Myth holds history, customs, ancient faiths and traditions. Indian mythology is a significant part of Indian culture. The myth is an inseparable part of the culture of any country. India is essentially a culturally rich country. Myth is often fused with legends and folklores in order to shape beliefs of the common people. Indian writers inherited myth and cultivated it in every genre of literature. Indian English literature is enriched with stories and themes drawn from Vedas, Upanishad, Ramayana, Mahabharata and various Buddhist scriptures. The truths of Hindu culture are incorporated in a large number of myths such as Vedic texts and Epics. Indian Mythology enriches Indian culture and makes it a unique one in the world. M. H. Abrahams defined myth as- "If the protagonist is a man rather than a supernatural being, the story is usually not called myth but legend. If the story concerns supernatural beings but is not a part of a systematic mythology, it is usually classified as a folktale". Famous psychoanalytic Freud acclaimed myth "to be the great primordial truth, the precipitate of the unconscious". Therefore myth in literature is consciously used by writer and the writer's mind is unconsciously influenced by ancient tales. Myth is a fantasy which creates a magical world of wonders providing universal fables.

Adaptation of myth as a literary device is a very primitive tradition. Mythical allusions and metaphorical representation of myth in present literature helps to connect with the roots as well as preservation of ancient culture. Today in literature, the mythical character's life and conditions are compared to modern life situations and retold in a complete different way. Myth and legends provide a wide range of scope for inspiration. The retelling of myth in different works also helps in continuing the rich tradition. Mythical elements, legends and backdrop of events serve as a huge canvas to portray and project issues of contemporary society like racism, discrimination, injustice etc. In every genre of literature we find extensive use of Indian myth. Indian mythology served as a muse to writers. Writers like A.K. Ramanujan, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and modern writers like ShashiTharoor, Girish Karnad, Amish Tripathy, Devadutt Pattnaik, Kavita Kane, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni etc used Indian myth in different contexts in their fictional works. These writers retold the stories and revised them for literary purposes. Indian myths proved to be open texts and a

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