

## **The Dominance of Patriarchy on Nature and Women in Girish Karnad's *The Fire and The Rain*: - An Ecofeminist Perspective**

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### **Abstract:**

The present paper analyses Girish Karnad's technique of explaining the patriarchal domination on women and nature, particularly from an Indian context in the play *The Fire and the Rain*. The paper aims to examine two important features of the play. It attempts to explain Karnad's technique of empowering women through raising voice against the social domination and it reflects on the sensitivity of women towards nature bringing the concept of ecofeminism to the play.

In order to accomplish these given objectives, the paper is divided into three parts. Firstly, the act of domination on women is briefly depicted. Second, a short introduction to Girish Karnad as a dramatist and Karnad's plan of using myth for illuminating modern views towards human relationship is elaborated. Finally, an overview of ecofeminism and how this play generates the ideas of ecofeminism is highlighted.

**Key Words:** Patriarchal domination, Gender inequalities, Ecofeminism, myth, drama, women's psychological trauma.

### **1.Introduction**

The Indian dramatist Girish Karnad is one of the Indian English literary persons who has brought the idea of eco-sensitivity through a dramatic sequence in his renowned plays. Girish Karnad has acquired knowledge of history, colonial effects and cultural tensions of that time. Karnad's literary pieces always aimed at acting as a link between the past and the present, highlighting the mythical context with the social concerns, with a special reference to the Indian women's catastrophic condition in the social periphery. Despite a male writer, Karnad's plays are un-biased and always set women's issues on the front row in order to provide a social equality. Girish Karnad targeted the unjustified gender and class division of the society that prevailed since the ancient period by the patriarchal monopoly. The women characters in his plays are traditional as well as modern, believe in living on their own terms.

“Girish Karnad has explored the awakening of female consciousness often dramatized in literature” (Kosta,1999). In the plays the author put questions on the Indian marriage system where women need to stay inside the four walls of the house, aiming to serve the family members and completing all the household chores. Whereas, men are absolutely free to roam around and fulfil their dreams. Karnad made his readers to realise the psychological trauma that women go through in their lives for the repressive behaviour of men. In ‘*The Fire and the Rain*’, the lady characters Vishakha and Nittilai were encountered with lifelong miseries due to the societal norms set by patriarchy.

Initially inscribed in Kannada language, named as Agni Mattu Male (1995), *The Fire and the Rain* was published in English in the year 1998 by Karnad himself. The present play is considered as one of the highly intellectual works that explores Karnad’s structured ideas on human emotions like passion, sacrifice, greed, loss, spirituality, etc. Again, *The Fire and the rain* depicts some rituals from the Veda, the Hindu spiritual practices and the beliefs of connecting with Gods. Jeaneane D. Fowler has stated in *Hinduism: Beliefs and Practices*, “Agni is addressed in approximately one third of the hymns in the *Rig Veda*. He was central in sacrificial ritual because it was the fire that transformed the offerings into something accessible to the gods”. Fire stands for the symbolic representation of both positive and negative state of mind such as revenge, anger, betrayal, lust and jealousy. Whereas ‘rain’ is known as a gift from God, which nourishes the Earth and symbolises forgiveness, sacrifice, revival, re-generation and fertility. Karnad links the inner psychic of human with the nature’s elements and has projected both the positive and negative sides of human. “Agni works as anger and revenge in Raibhya, Parvasu, and Yavakri. In Vishakha, it burns as lust; and in the people as hunger due to the persisting drought. In all of them, except in Vishakha, Agni burns as sacrificial fire without its accompanying grace as vision or light. However, this apparently overarching element of Agni (Fire) in the title of the play burns to convey the lessons the human being must learn about the subjugation of one’s ego to the Universal Being. Much of the agony in the lives of the major characters is played out on the canvas of human consciousness till they learn this all-essential lesson of humility” (Jayalakshmi, 2006)

Both ‘fire’ and ‘rain’ are worshipped as Gods in the Hindu religion and both are strong elements of nature. The tragic consequences in the lives of the learned men like Raibhya, Parvasu and Yavakri in the play occurred due to their inability in coping up with the universal power they had acquired. Karnad has shown that when human worships nature, he gains but when he breaks the rule of nature by crossing his limits of passion, he ruins himself.

In a different play, '*Nagamandala*', Karnad has also shown the misery of women after marriage. In '*Nagamandala*', the leading character Rani was suppressed by her husband and forced to stay inside the four walls of the house. She was only instructed to "Do, as you are told, you understand." (Karnad,1995). Karnad has expressed his own perplexity on the societal constraint which set margins to women in expressing their true feelings. The author has understood that if women need liberation, they have to raise voice against any injustice done to them. The women characters of Karnad's plays are shown as uncompromising and purposive. Karnad denies the idea of patriarchy that consider women as only obedience whose only duty to serve men with absolute loyalty. Women in '*The Fire and the Rain*' and '*Nagamandala*' and are shown as the instinct of suppression under male egoism, but all of them were able to liberate themselves at the end.

'*The Fire and the Rain*' deals with the modernist thoughts of women's liberation as well as explores the power of nature. Karnad's views somewhere meets with Patrick D. Murphy's views on the link between feminist and ecologist, as both of their domination are "inextricably intertwined" and "on the recognition that these two forms of domination are bound up with class exploitation, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism." (Murphy,1998) The consciousness of Karnad towards nature is very strong in his plays, particularly the association of nature with the women characters. In '*Nagamandala*', the author presented that the 'Naga' (the cobra) that symbolises nature, is closely associated with Rani and at the end the Naga or the nature helped Rani in regaining her identity. The 'Brahma Rakshasa'(the demon) in *The Fire and the Rain*, got salvation due to the ideologies set by Nittilai. Nittilai's argument with the sage for using universal power in bringing rain to the drought gripped land links with ecological feminism.

### **1.1 Domination as a social process:**

Domination is an act of overpowering somebody in an unpleasant way to establish the former's power and supremacy on the later. In this regard, in human civilisation the most prevailed domination is the patriarchal domination over women in society. With the name of moralities, self-discipline and social status, the age-old phallogocentric powers have always succeeded in dominating women across cultures. Simone de Beauvoir named women as 'second sex' (Beauvoir, 1949) in order to question the gender inequalities in the process of socialisation that framed the image of women as passive, weaker and shy. Men interpreted the biological orientation of women as weaker who needed to be controlled, finally projected them as 'Weaker sex', and 'Other' (Beauvoir,1949) etc. Aristotle described women as 'Passive'

(Aristotle, 1966) who are inferior because of their biological capacities and not fit to participate in decision making process. From the history, it is being found that men were writers, thinkers, rulers, whereas women were mere companions, wives, friends or mistresses. "...the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled..." (Aristotle, 1966) Patriarchy felt privileged in commanding women. "...the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying." (Aristotle, 1966) Sigmund Freud defined normal human as only 'male', not female, and females "as weaker in their instincts than men". (Straehy, 1971) These assumed philosophies placed women second to men culturally.

The institutionalisation of patriarchal power became the accepted social hierarchy that obstructed the growth of women both in social and economic sectors. The male autocracy automated the thinking process of women too. Again, in the literary texts, women were projected either docile or submissive and this devaluation of women led them to remain subordinated until it was challenged by the female authors and feminist activists. Feminism that started consciously and unconsciously as a prospect for the women empowerment was voiced not only by the female writers, but also by countless male writers. Feminists perceived that equality only can be brought by giving equal status and rights to both the genders, not by controlling one over another. However, from the last few decades feminist critics have also brought the concern for ecology with the women liberation. This has given birth to ecological feminism or ecofeminism. Ecofeminism aims at realizing the significant link between domination of nature and domination of women by the patriarchal ideology. Thus, ecofeminism claims, by saving ecology, an extreme change in women's liberation can be brought. The renowned environmentalist Wangari Maathai said: "Today we are faced with the challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life supporting system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and, in the process, our own -indeed to embrace the whole of creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. Recognising that substantiable development and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come." (Maathai, 1940)

Ecofeminism claims women establish divine connection with nature through their biological similarities of reproductive capabilities and regeneration. The culturally defined responsibilities of nurture made women more concerned about the nature than men. The association of women with nature and men with culture, have created a hierarchical division in the society, where men took command on both nature and women to dominate. "As this system of domination is shaped socially, ideological tools were constructed to ratify it as a reflection of the

“nature of things” and the “will of God/the gods”. Law codes were developed to define these relations of power of dominant men over women, slaves, animals and land as property.” (Ruether, 1992). The eco-sensitivity of women is commonly analysed by the ecofeminists to find the possible ways in preserving nature around.

## 2. Power struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor:

The crisis arose in the lives of the lady characters, Vishakha and Nittilai is an example of the patriarchal domination on women in *'The Fire and the Rain'*. Vishakha was born in an upper caste of the society. Vishakha was married to Paravasu on her father's wish. Like any other woman of her age, Vishakha's opinion on her marriage was unheard and neglected. It shows the patriarchal aspect that prevents women's freedom in choosing their own partner. Paravasu kept Vishakha in a world of passion for one year. But, exactly after a year Paravasu was appointed as the head priest in the fire sacrifice or yajna and hence he left Vishakha as abandoned. Paravasu was the man, so he had the choice to chose the aim of life that gave a man reward, fame and names, but what about Vishakha? Vishakha was left to fetch water and serve the family members as it is designed for a woman. Karnad disagrees with such norms and practices that presented women inferior to men. Vishakha felt miserable as her questions were un-answered by the most learned persons of family. Vishakha made Paravasu responsible for the entire mis-happening arose in her life, she realised: “He used my body, and his own body, like an experimenter, an explorer. As instruments in a search. Search for what? I never know.” (Karnad ,1998)

Karnad exposed the sexual domination of women, that end up with killing women's desires and aspirations. Even Vishakha found lust in the eyes of her father-in-law. “On the other, there's lust. It consumes him. An old man's curdled lust. And there's no one else here to take his rage out but me...Here he comes. The crab!” (Karnad,1998) Karnad's depicts this despicable plea of a woman who is never spared by anyone, even from a father like figure. Karnad created a similar situation in *'Nagamandala'*, where Appanna insulted Rani calling a 'harlot' listening to the news of her pregnancy. Appanna himself indulged with a concubine from the first day of his marriage and being a man, he thought it as a right to have a sexual suppleness. This story again takes us to the village elders who asked Rani to prove her purity and loyalty by either holding a hot iron or putting the hand into the anthill where a cobra lived. Through Raibhya (Vishakha's father-in-law), Appanna (Rani's husband), village elders (village men), Karnad exposed the universal tendency of patriarchy which believes in supressing women only.

Girish Karnad has made his women characters liberal and modern, who have the voice to raise questions against the inequalities and injustice towards women. "Karnad does not neglect the women characters totally. He projects their sufferings and dilemmas and also makes them raise fundamental questions concerning the use of knowledge and goal of human life" (Renganathan,2008) Vishakha's query on the right of fulfilling the sexual desire of women represented the unending pursuit for the identity by women. The cultural norm never opened up for a woman in fulfilling sexual needs as it is considered as an emblem of erotic instinct, which will make a woman immoral. Parvasu rewarded his wife with interminable pain of isolation keeping no hope of contentment. Karnad discusses about the social norms of 'chastity' fashioned by patriarch ideology to fit only women in the boundaries of moral to immoral conducts. Vishakha asked to Parvasu:

"I suppose that would be too human. But what's wrong with being human? What is wrong being happy, as we were before you got Indra into you? (Karnad ,1998)

Karnad proposes that the sexual freedom should be understood as a 'human need', may it be a man or woman. Karnad has brought the ample example from Vedas (Hindu Sastras) which has divided human life on four basic aspects, like 'Dharma' means Duty, 'Arth' means Wealth, 'Kama' means Desire or sexual fulfilment and lastly 'Moksha' means Salvation. Karnad relates Vishakha's longingness for 'what's wrong with being a human?' with Hindu ethics which believes that one can get 'salvation' by fulfilling the first three facts and this is same for both men and women. This is how Karnad proved his women characters as pure and rightful. Vishakha's decision to negotiate with her self-instinct led her to move against the unjustified social whirlpools and thus she decided to meet with her ex-lover Yavakri. Vishakha was not only hungry for love, but also hungry for words as she uttered: "...parched and wordless, like a she-devil... Alone, I have become dry like tinder. Ready to burst into flames at a breath. To burn things around me down at the slightest chance (Karnad, 1998). Karnad's dramatic representation of patriarchal suppression matches with Kate Millet's opinions on domination and subjugation of women which defines patriarchy as 'internal colonization', (Millet,1970) where power resides in the hands of men which decide how to suppress women. P.D Naimsarkar observed in his text *Women in Girish Karnad's Plays A Critical Perspective*: "Marriage in the high caste Brahmin society where virtue is highly honoured, is reduced to 'mating and sex enjoyment'. From the very first day the conjugal life is perturbed, it is a loveless tie, temporal and transient. Husband's responsibility has been deliberately ignored by Parvasu whereas Vishakha's one sided expression of faith and

affection remain sterile. The lack of understanding and failure of communication ruin the secret concept of marriage and wreck the family.” (Naimsarkar,2009) Vishakha was deserted by Paravasu, abused by Raibhya and deceived by Yavakri.

Yavakri's lustful remark on the body of Vishakha “The sweet sick smell of the jack-fruit” (Karnad, 1998) presented him as a mere molester than a lover. Vishakha mistook Yavakri as her true lover and agreed in indulging love affairs with him. When Raibhya came to know the affair of Vishakha and Yavakri, he got extreme livid and invoked the Kritya or the Brahma Rakshasa to kill Yavakri. Knowing this Vishakha ran to save her lover. But instead of getting sacred, Yavakri opened up, “It was fortunate that you yielded. If you hadn't, I would have had to take you by force”. (Karnad ,1998) Karnad presented no difference between Paravasu and Yavakri as both of the men used Vishakha as an instrument in satisfying the egotistical motives and sexual needs. Vishakha cried, “My husband and you! He left no pore in my body alone. And you - you think a woman is only a pair of half-formed breasts” (Karnad ,1998) Mala Ranganathan renamed Vishakha as “a sexual weapon in the hands of the male to avenge each other and the male search for knowledge and power suffocates her...” (Ranganathan,2008) Girish Karnad always makes his readers to realise that the sexual appeal of women is quite aesthetic and beautiful that acknowledges women in recognising themselves as human beings. Vishakha was liberal and acted the way she wanted to do, not what the patriarchal culture commanded her to act. Commenting on Vishakha, Shanta Gokhale stated, “He (Karnad) transforms Vishakha from mere victim of molestation to an active agent who consciously yields to Yavakri, her beloved before he went away to do penance...” (Gokhale,1999)

Another powerful woman character of *The Fire and the Rain* is Nittilai, a tribal girl. Nittilai has got a strong voice in presenting her views. The love affair between Nittilai and Arvasu (the younger brother of Paravasu) was famous in the village. Through Nittilai, Karnad exposed how the powerful upper caste men abuse the powerless women from the lower castes. “These high-caste men are glad enough to bed our women but not to wed them.” (Karnad ,1998) A woman is dominated not because she is a ‘woman’ only, but also as she belongs to a ‘lower caste’. The marginalisation of women is doubled here. Karnad's way of depicting patriarchal violence reflects Simone de. Beauvoir's thoughts of feminism that labels women as ‘other’ (Beauvoir, 1989) in the society. Nittilai supported Vishakha many a times as she knew women were tortured and suppressed in every caste. Nittilai 's comments on Yavakri: “Some people put the treacherous viper to shame. (Karnad, 1998) exposes the

shamelessness of patriarchy. Nittilai's father also forced her to get married with another boy from the same tribe. She said: "He felt angry, humiliated. 'This daughter of mine has made me a laughing stock in the eyes of the world', he said, 'I'm marrying her off to anyone who'll take her'" (Karnad, 1998) Karnad has brought no differentiation in the suffering of women despite of their caste and class. P. Jayalakshmi states: "Vishakha and Nittilai, thus, are not mere literary constructs but women real and material, carrying within them their collective histories as women.... The need is for a sympathetic understanding of their oppressive past in grappling with our present-day reality in which also lies real humanity." (Jayalakshmi, 2006) Girish Karnad made his readers to understand the oppressive picture of patriarchy that ends with misery and suffering.

### **2.1 Ecofeminist perspective:**

The theory of ecofeminism is a product of post-colonial industrial over growth which brought unrestricted scientific experimentations, ecological devastation, female subjugation and most importantly a threat to survival in the present time with it. Every social structure of the world is divided into the categories like male verses female, culture verses nature, reason verses emotions, human verses nature etc. This dualism concludes with women are to nature as men are to culture. Hence, both women and nature suddenly came under the net of patriarchal supremacy which is justified with both cultural and scientific theories. However, it will be wrong to declare that only women suffer by the ecological crisis, rather all the human and non-human of the Third World those lives closely associated with the natural world are the victims of this crisis. Ecofeminism is not only a feminist concern, rather it is a humanitarian concern. But, as women are sole dependent on the nearby nature for arranging food, water, wood for their family, they suffer at the very first phase for the ecological crisis. Thus, it is impossible to regain peace without the joining hands of feminists and environmentalists as both of their vision is to avoid the survival crisis of the world. Rosemary Radford Ruether stated: "there can be no liberation for women and no solution for ecological crisis if model of domination persists in society. Feminists and environmentalists should unite their demands to envision a radical reshaping of the agenda of peace." (Ruether, 1975)

Ecofeminism addresses the hidden interconnections among every form of domination, which means domination on class, gender or the most importantly domination on ecology. Vandana Shiva claims both feminist and environmental movements have the same visions i.e. voicing against the cultural norm that causes ecological devastation and women exploitation. Françoise d'Eaubonne's introductory term 'Ecofeminism' highlighted the abilities of women in

finding a solution to the environmental crisis. Ecofeminism not only led women to become agent of change from the patriarchal oppression, but also frame a platform to search own identities. This paper exactly brings the dual domination of woman and nature by the patriarchal world in the most dramatic sequences using myth and history. Though, this play has no connections with any environmental movements directly, still Karnad has successfully drawn the ecofeminists ideas through depicting the revolutionary moves of women in seeking their identities as well as advocating for the ecological necessities for the surrounded communities.

The entire setting of the play brings a close sense of ecology. The starting scene about the drought signifies the importance of 'rain' and to get this rain, 'fire' sacrifice is essential. In this play Karnad presents two strong elements fire and rain, who are generally opposing to each other's nature. 'Fire' was used as a medium to carry the life support 'rain' to the Earth. This denotes the ecological consciousness of Karnad in depicting the nature and its unavoidable significance in the life of human being. The play starts with a depiction of famine and the spiritual bent of human in order regain the fertility of the land. The eco-conscious of Karnad starts with lines:

"It has not rained adequately for nearly ten years. Drought grips the land. A seven-year long sacrifice(yajna) is being held to propitiate Indra, the God of rains. Fire burns at the centre of step-like brick alters. There are several such alters, at all of which priests are offering oblations to the fire, while singing the prescribed hymns in unison." (Karnad ,1998)

The beautification of the plot generates spirituality, myth, and an in-depth connection of human with nature. Karnad had recited the human needs in one hand and on the other hand the human greed which led the human to the path of destruction. Through this play, Karnad exposes the false trials of human that challenges the power of nature and how it ended with a sad note every time. In the play, Parvasu, the chief priest, was devoted towards the sacrificial fire to please the Rain God. Arvasu gets a dream hallucination of himself "Dying of thirst. But there's no water" (Karnad ,1998). It was the king who arranged the fire sacrifice to blessed with rain in order to regain the fertility of his kingdom. Again, Yavakri aspired 'Inner knowledge' from Indra, the lord of rain. Later, he stored his power in the water of his 'Kamandalu' (an oblong water pot) so that he could destroy the Brahma Rakshasa. But when the water from the 'Kamandalu' was poured out, he cried, "My life!... water! Please! Just a drop. Oh gods! Only a drop". (Karnad ,1998) Yavakri then killed by the Brahma Rakshasa. Parvasu was offering 'fire' to get 'rain' or 'water', but his self-ego and selfish motivations blackened his innermost emotion and ended him as slayer of his father. In order to hide this

sin, Parvasu accused Arvasu as a murderer and ordered the soldiers to beat him up to death. Parvasu's selfishness killed the human instincts inside himself. But after self-realisation, Parvasu suicide by jumping into the burning fire. In another scene, water is shown as a powerful element when Raibhya invoked the Kritya or Brahma Rakshasa using the chanted power of 'water'. Nittilai requested Yavakri to bring rain or 'water' using his superpower. Thus, the life stories of each of the characters related with either fire or rain, or with both of the elements. Karnad has explored the inner consciousness of human in the form of various emotions with both fire and rain, and also, he projected the power of water and rain as supreme to human beings.

The relation of Nittilai with nature evokes the cultural ecofeminist theory of 'women's spirituality' where a woman is grounded with nature biologically. Nittilai attached with the mother nature, as she grew up on the lap of this earth. Nature showers all comfort, love, happiness and infinite web of knowledge on human life as it is mingled with life. Even Nittilai had imitated the language of animals along with their interpretations and also the capabilities of recognising the footprints of various animals as she depicts: "Tracks of the barking deer. A couple of porcupines. A family of mongooses. No sign of a panther- or anything that big- not within the last three days." (Karnad, 1998) Nittilai used to sing with the sounds of trees and waterfall. These phenomenon binds Nittilai with the surrounded nature. Nittilai simply put query on the intellectual accumulation or the 'Universal Knowledge' of Yavakri which he obtained from lord Indra. She simply discarded this universal knowledge which was not meant for the wellbeing of the people of the land. Yavakri could have brought the most awaiting rain to the draught gripped land using his supernatural power, but his act of vengeance overpowered his humanity. The difference of opinions towards both nature and the other living beings indicated the attitudes of human consciousness possessed by a woman and a man. Nittilai asked "My point is since Lord Indra appeared to Yavakri and Indra is their God of Rains, why didn't Yavakri ask for a couple of good showers? ...I want to ask Yavakri two questions. Can he make rain...what is the point of any knowledge, if you can't save dying children...?" (Karnad ,1998) Nittilai approached the ecofeminist thought by stating: "...all the land needs a couple of heavy downpours. That'll revive the earth. Not too much to ask of a god...". (Karnad ,1998) The revival of earth brings regeneration and then human have all the capabilities to grow and prosperous. Nittilai's proposal on bringing rain was devalued by Yavakri's father by saying "such powers shouldn't be used to solve day-to-day problems...they are meant to lead one to-to-inner knowledge." (Karnad ,1998) The

differences of thoughts of a woman and a man on the ecological crisis denotes the ecofeminists' ideas which says a woman supports for the survival instincts and a man finds the game of revenge and selfishness. The inter connections among human, divinity and nature is well depicted in *The Fire and the Rain*. The author focused not only on the domination politics through gender, but also, he included the domination of class, caste and race. Karnad's depiction of ecofeminism quite matches with the thoughts of Gaard and Murphy, who remarked ecofeminism as: "...based not only on the recognition of connections between the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women across patriarchal societies" but also "on the recognition that these two forms of domination are bound up with class exploitation, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism". (Gaard, 1998)

At the end, Nittilai sacrificed her life as she wanted her love to live a life of nobility. The lord of rain, Indra was happy on Nittilai's great sacrifice for a noble cause and as a result he poured water on the village. Karnad writes: "*Wind blows. Lightning. Thunder. People shout 'Rain! It's raining! It pours. People dance with joy. They roll in the mud. Arvasu sits clutching Nittilai's body.*" (Karnad, 1998)

In the play, the three men Parvasu, Raibhya and Yavakri had never hesitated to oppress the women of their lives by negligence, lust, ego, abuse etc. Karnad's ecofeminist ideas supports Salleh's ideas: "a parallel in men's thinking between their 'right' to exploit nature, on the one hand, and the use they make of women, on the other" (Salleh, 1989) Yavakri along with Raibhya thought both nature and women in a same way to oppress and dominate. Yavakri acquired the universal power and deceived on Vishakha's body, so also Raibhya, being with tremendous power of universe he laid lustful eyes on his daughter-in-law. Karnad has shown how the learned men defeated before nature and women at a time.

### 3.CONCLUSION:

The paper has reflected the consciousness of Girish Karnad towards the freedom of women from the clutches of patriarchal domination. His stories are no doubt based on ancient historical plot of India, but his literary arrows ever point out towards the post-modernist ethics. The ecological consciousness of Karnad's women characters have encouraged the patriarchal world to realise the power and value of nature, as well as how to give value to the subalterns present in the social background. By using myth and drama, Karnad successfully presented his ideas of the supremacy of nature over human. The men of this play were intelligent, but failed to live a blissful life as indulged with the instincts of anger, lust, revenge, jealousy and greed. Charlene Spretnak termed this problem as 'androcentrism'

(male-centeredness) rather than ‘anthropocentrism’ (human-centeredness). He points out that “...the problem is androcentrism (male-centeredness) and not anthropocentrism (human-centeredness). Patriarchal society, in which the male definition of reality is normative and in which fear of women and nature set the stage for biocide, must be named as the problem. The term anthropocentrism deflects our attention from the real problem and hence the real solution to the ecological crisis we face. Ecofeminism becomes, then, of inestimable value.” (Spretnak,1981)

Girish Karnad gives a morale that when dominance persists for a longer period of time, it automatically explodes. In this paper, both of the lady fronts challenged the patriarchal dominance and choose to live on their own terms, at the other hand the patriarch himself churned before the nature’s supreme identity. Developed on the platform of eco-consciousness and women-centric issues, ‘*The fire and the Rain*’ beautifully depicts the Ecofeminist ideas. Without directing towards any ecological movements, this present play brings a close look to the spiritual consciousness of human with nature. By giving ‘voice’ to both of the women characters and to the ‘nature’, Karnad has established the position of the duo which is either harshly reinterpreted or severely ignored in this patriarchal dominance. The power dominance created havoc and negativity in the lives of Parvasu, Raibhya and Yavakri. Vishakha and Nittilai led them free from the male-oriented cultural norms and lived their life on their own desires with graciousness and righteousness. At the end both fire and rain regain life to the ‘drought-gripped land’. The Rain Lord showers his blessings through the regenerating ‘rain’. Thus, a close look to the characters and their life sequences with the natural world in ‘*The Fire and the Rain*’ eventually induces Girish Karnad’s approach towards Ecofeminism.

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