



LITERARY QUEST

An International, Peer-Reviewed, Open Access, Monthly, Online Journal of English Language and Literature

Girish Karnad's *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*: Subaltern Historiography

Dr. M. Sikkandar Basha ¹, Dr. A. Mohamed Mohideen ²

1. Associate Professor, Department of English, Khadir Mohideen College, Adirampattinam, Thanjavur Dt., Tamil Nadu, India.
2. Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, Khadir Mohideen College, Adirampattinam, Thanjavur Dt., Tamil Nadu, India.

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to highlight how Girish Karnad raises several questions: regarding the clichéd British colonial statecraft of chicanery and divide and rule; the short-sightedness of Maratha tactics; Tipu's lack of killer instinct and so on, but never imposes his own conclusions. He leaves many tantalizing loose ends so that the reader or the viewer can draw his own. He weaves historical facts regarding Tipu's progressive statecraft effortlessly into the dialogue. In this play Tipu Sultan is shown to be in the habit of dreaming and recording his dreams in a dairy. By dreams are meant the ambitious that Tipu has about India's future. The pity is that none of his dreams are fulfilled. The English wreck all his grandiose dreams.

Keywords

British; Tipu Sultan; Colonialism; Dream; History; Patriotism.

Indian drama has given its incredible impact and limit to perfection since ancient times. Drama is basically a form of performing arts, where stories are enacted by utilization of dialogue, music, signal and dance. The colonial period in the history of Indian drama and its evolvement had brought in a radical and almost whirlwind phase for dramatists from the country. Quite understandably, the most renowned drama amongst the British was Shakuntala by Kalidasa, which was translated into English by Sir William Jones in 1789. The play was successful enough to etch upon an insightful impression upon such scholars like Goethe and created something like an almost literary sensation.

Girish Rahunath Karnad (born 19 May 1938) is a contemporary writer, playwright, screenwriter, actor and movie director in Kannada language. His rise as a playwright in 1960s, marked the coming of age of Modern Indian playwriting in Kannada, just as Badal Sarkar did in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, and Mohan Rakesh in Hindi. He is a recipient of the 1998 Jnanpith Award, the highest literary honors conferred in India.

For four decades Karnad has been composing plays, often using history and mythology to tackle contemporary issues. He has translated his plays into English and has received acclaim. His plays have been translated into some Indian languages and directed by directors like Ebrahim Alkazi, B.C. Karanth, Alyque Padamsee, Prasanna, Arvind Gaur, Satyadev Dubey, Vijaya Mehta, Shyamanand Jalan and Amal Allana. He is active in the world of Indian cinema working as an actor, director, and screenwriter, in Hindi and Kannada flicks, earning awards along the way. He was conferred Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan by the Government of India and won four Filmfare Awards where three

are Filmfare Award for Best Director – Kannada and one Filmfare Best Screenplay Award.

The great warrior king Tipu Sultan, known as the Tiger of Mysore, stood valiantly in the way of wily British colonialism in India. His statecraft was forward looking and was marked not only by burning patriotism but also by administrative efficiency, agricultural development, manufacturing, international and inter kingdom diplomacy, sericulture, gold mining and refining, pearl culture, toy making, foreign trade, rocketry and development of military technology and manufacturing. However the well-known playwright Girish Karnad brings to our notice a little known fact that Tipu was also literally a dreamer. He actually kept a journal where he noted down his nocturnal dreams. Karnad weaves his play around this fact.

It would be great fun to watch a production of the play in appropriate historical surroundings like Delhi's Purana Kila, but even a reading of the play leads to admiration for the heroic – tragic personality of Tipu as well as the craftsmanship of the playwright.

It is not easy writing historical fiction. There will always be critics looking for historical accuracy. However, if one wanted factual history, one should read history tome and not fiction. On the other hand there are those who use their characters, historical or otherwise, to mouth the author's own lemmas and dilemmas. The characters just become card board messengers of the author's 'message' and never come alive. If one were to engage in a serious polemic or put forward a thesis then one could write an essay and not dabble in fiction. However we see a large number of authors succumbing to these two extremes. It is only truly good writers who raise their fiction above essays or polemical propaganda. This play proves that Karnad belongs to that select few.

True to the panoramic canvas of nearly twenty years of Tipu's confrontation with British colonialism, involving three Anglo-Mysore wars, Karnad creates a cornucopia of interesting characters: the serendipitous

historian Kirmani; Colin Mc-Kenzie who is studying Arthashastra and pushing for a definitive history of Tipu Sultan, typifying orientalist scholarship when he says “we want to understand our enemy”, the upstart Arthur Wellesley pushed into the limelight by his brother, though he went on later to become famous as the Duke of Wellington after the battle of Waterloo ; Richard Wellesley or Lord Mornington, the Governor General, scheming against Cornwallis and pushing his brother Arthur forward with a ‘plum’ position; the ambitious Cornwallis waiting to avenge his humiliation in America ; the politically naïve Maratha, Haripant, and of course the warrior - dreamer Tipu and his children

Karnad raises several questions: regarding the clichéd British colonial statecraft of chicanery and divide and rule; the short-sightedness of Maratha tactics; Tipu’s lack of killer instinct and so on, but never imposes his own conclusions. He leaves many tantalizing loose ends so that the reader or the viewer can draw his own. He weaves historical facts regarding Tipu’s progressive statecraft effortlessly into the dialogue. In this play Tipu Sultan is shown to be in the habit of dreaming and recording his dreams in a diary. By dreams are meant the ambitious that Tipu has about India’s future. The pity is that none of his dreams are fulfilled. The English wreck all his grandiose dreams.

The first part opens in the house of the historian, Mir Hussain Ali Khan Kirmani, in the city of Mysore. A conversation takes place between Kirmani and the oriental scholar, Colonel Colin Mackenzie. Kirmani is engaged in writing a book on Tipu Sultan. He complains that he cannot make any progress because he is pained by the way Tipu was ‘destroyed’ by his enemies. Mackenzie advances his ‘version’ that Tipu acted unwisely and brought about his death himself and that he was not destroyed by his enemies. Mackenzie says that he has evidences to supported his version kirmani says that he was an admirer and supporter of Tipu and after by his death has started working for his enemies. He is stung by his conscience because he has become a traitor.

Mackenzie advises Kirmani not to become emotional as a historian ; he should be factual and objective.

Kirmani says that he cannot remember the expression on the face of Tipu Sultan on the last day of his life. Tipu was in his caravanserai, watching the English army. If it rained and the English army would be halted. But it did not rain and the English army was slowly advancing. Tipu got up when he was half-way through his lunch and fastened his sword belt. He gave a sealed envelope to Kirmani and told him to keep it till he came back. At that time word was brought to Tipu that his sincere follower Syed Gaffar had been killed by a cannonball. Tipu was convulsed. He mumbled a prayer and went to the battlefield. Kirmani opened the envelope a day after Tipu died, and found inside it a paper on which Tipu had recorded his last dream.

Mackenzie says that the dead body of Tipu Sultan was found under a pile of corpses near the water – gate of the fort on the night of 4 May, 1799. In the second part of Act I, the scene of action is the battlefield. The battle is over. At the behest of Colonel Wellesley and Captain Wilks, soldiers are engaged in identifying the dead body of Tipu Sultan. Some soldiers hold that Tipu Sultan must have escaped. At this time Nadeem Khan, Qilledar and Manager of the Fort, says that he saw Tipu Sultan fighting like ‘a man possessed’ and that the gates of the fort were closed and so Tipu Sultan could not have escaped. After some time Nadeem Khan discovers the dead body of Raja Khan, the Sultan’s dead body must be also lying somewhere near. In a few minutes the dead body of Sultan, still warm, is found. A soldier commits the sacrilegious act of cutting off one of Tipu Sultan’s moustaches to show it to his higher authorities and claim prize booty. The wailing of the ladies has to come to know through a signal that Tipu has died. Soldiers start looting and pillaging the city. The crying of the helpless citizens is heard.

Kirmani says that the death of Tipu Sultan was followed by wide-spread carnage. All houses in Mysore were raped. Besides, soldiers carried as much

jewels as they could not be carried away by the rapacious soldiers was left behind. Mackenzie is not bothered about these developments. He asks Kirmani to record how Tipu Sultan's treaty with Malarctic in order to befriend Napoleon resulted in the British attack any importance to these political developments. He keeps talking about Tipu's diary in which he recorded his dreams.

In the fourth part we are shown Tipu and his Finance Minister, Poornaiya. They come across a dilapidated temple where there are many stone statues. A female statue comes alive and says that she has been praying for several centuries for her salvation. Next, Tipu and Poornaiya meet two old men who introduce themselves as envoys of the Emperor of China.

Tipu dreams of envoys from the Emperor of China. The Chinese emperor has sent a white elephant which a rare phenomenon and some horses to Tipu. He sent the same kind of gift to King Alexander also. Tipu interprets his dream as meaning that he would soon become equal to Alexander. The dream brings out Tipu's overvaulting ambition and heroism. He is confident that God will him rise high.

Tipu proposes to send a delegation to the King of France. The delegation will be led by Osman Khan and Ghulam Ali Khan will be another member of the delegation. The purpose of the delegation is to influence the French King to send Tipu ten thousand French soldiers to fight against the English rulers in India. Besides, Tipu wants French craftsmen who will help gardeners should also be imported from France to introduce new varieties of flowers, fruits, etc., into India. Above all, Tipu wants the delegation to bring a sample thermometer from France – it will help physicians to find out the height of disorder of a patient. Tipu wants a book on medical science from France and get it translated into Persian. This part of Act I reveals what great visions regarding the future of India are cherished by Tipu.

Tipu says that enmity between the English and the French in India has been smoldering for many years. At any moment the two groups may openly

clash against each other. Tipu Sultan is planning to side with the French in order to send the English out of India. The passage shows Tipu's Machiavellianism.

“ to get the stain off his reputation he needs to ...

Vaniquish one man in India – only one – Tipu Sultan!”

The British Government has sent Cornwallis to India as Governor General to put down Washington who was a mere farmer. Cornwallis wants to wipe out the stigma on his name as an unsuccessful fighter against Washington by defeating one man in India, namely Tipu. Tipu is sure that Cornwallis will fail in his Indian mission also.

“Tipu is worth a hundred of the Nizam, who is

Nothing but a whining little limpet”

This is said by the Maratha statesman Nana Phadnavis to Charles Malet, representative of Lord Cornwallis. Nana says that Cornwallis is inciting the Maratha chiefs, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Nawabs of Carnatic and Gudh, the Rajahs of Travancore and Cochin and many others against Tipu in order to paralyze him. In short, Cornwallis is resorting to duplicity. Nana is openly condemning Malet and his master Cornwallis.

Tipu Sultan has three little sons. They are spending their time playing with toys that growl and roar like tigers, their mother Ruqayya cannot stand this noise and scolds her children for playing such a violent game. Father Tipu supports the little by saying that when he was of their age he dabbled in manslaughter and shed red blood. Tipu charges his wife Ruqayya with having made her sons effeminate and soft-natured. According to him, even in boyhood one should be exposed to blood and violence in order to become manly.

Thought a deadly enemy of the English, Tipu admires their honesty and supporter of one another in critical times. They are never treacherous. They will not stab a friend behind his back. They believe that the English are destined to win soon or late. Indians do not have this self-confidence.

Lord Cornwallis lays down four conditions by accepting which Tipu can live in peace. The four conditions are –i) the English prisoners in the jails of Tipu should be free ii) half of the domain adjacent to the territories of the English, the Marathas and the Nizams should be surrendered to the English iii) Tipu should play an indemnity of six crores and iv) Two of the four Tipu's sons should be sent as hostages to lord Cornwallis. Tipu's sons Muiz and Abdul are escorted by Ghulam to Cornwallis who receives them with due decency and decorum. Tipu's wife Ruqyya Banu dies before these unpleasant happenings take place. After two years, the two sons of Tipu, held by Cornwallis as hostages, are resorted to him. Mackenzie reports that lord Cornwallis was succeeded by Sir John Shore: seven years of peace ensued. In 1789 Lord Cornwallis was followed by Richard Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, and the Governor General of India. Richard Wellesley was accompanied by his younger brother Arthur Wellesley and Colonel William Kirkpatrick. Richard Wellesley says that his goal is to 'liquidate Tipu.

On the 4th May, 1799, at dawn, Tipu is informed by his followers that the situation is favourable to him. Both the Nizam and the Maratha chief have decided to join hands with Tipu. The commander-in-chief rushes in and informs Tipu that the English army is withdrawing. Tipu's eldest son Fath Haider advises his father that this is the best time for them to 'fall' on the running English soldiers and decimate them. But Tipu turns down this sane suggestion and says that he would rather spend the day, thanking and praying to God for his succor. This decision is a colonial mistake committed by Tipu.

Tipu is here praising the patriotism that motivates the English to come far away from their motherland and kill foreigners or get killed by them all for sake of promoting the interest of England. It is this patriotism that extends the British Empire. The implication is that Indians fall because they are disunited and treacherous.

But in the last minute the tide turns in favours of the English. Tipu is killed in battle. His followers join the English. Richard Wellesley becomes the Governor General of the East Indies. Arthur Wellesely becomes independent in 1947. The maharajas of Mysore who slammed the English are given rich privy purses. But the descendants of the first freedom fighter Tipu are left to rot in the slums of Calcutta. What an injustice!

Tipu Sultan one of the most tragic figures of the eighteenth century nascent colonial India inherited from his father Haider Ali the deep passion of his motherland along with the uneasy political equation with the English. His unceasing effort throughout his life to contain the ever increasing aggressive penetration of the British into the southern territory became the focal point of Sanjay Khan's controversial tele serial in 1990, titled *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*. And it was Girish Karnad who 'voiced a strong support (for it) on the grounds that Tipu needed to be given his due as a major future in Karnataka history, a visionary, and a patriot. Karnad's preoccupation with Tipu was the result of his long association with A.K. Ramanujan who had brought to his notice the existence of a little secret diary of the kind, which had surprisingly survived the ravages of time.

In *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* the focus is on the multiple facers of a nationalist who perhaps was not treated fairly by history. As an example of a complex construction of a history play it offers a serious reappraisal of a figure marginalized by history, study of the text further becomes relevant as Karnad attempts to re-read the past from the vantage point of the present and simultaneously use the past memories to make sense of the challenging present. Karnad's originality is reflected by the fact that he brings together factual history, memories and dream sequences to create an almost flowing, poetic narrative without any disjunction. Set in 1803 the play begins with a very significant interaction between two historians - one belonging to the class of colonizers - the other to the colonized. Mir Hassan Ali Khan Kirmani is the

court historian who is being encouraged to 'speak', develop certain objectivity, a dispassionate distance and to write history based on 'bits of evidences'. One is expected to be loyal to history and keep emotions but, the question is loyal to which side? Each side has its own to tell which may be at variance with the other. As is the case of Kirmani and Mackenzie where the latter is concerned only with facts and Kirmani on the other hand is dependent on memories as well - those memories which seem to be fading rather quickly. If memory is truth then it is of a special kind - 'it selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies and vilifies also; but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own'.

At one point of time, during his interaction with Mackenzie, Kirmani refuses to acknowledge any connection of Tipu with the French Governor - General connection - Malarctic, thought Tipu like his father had tried to forge a political with them, in order to contain the British aggression. It appears to be a case of 'selective memory' where he tries to save his Sultan from being further vandalized on basis of evidence against him by the English historian. This attempt at subversion of formal history based on so called reality of documentary evidences can be looked upon as an effort to reiterate his allegiance to the memory of the real Tipu who is lost somewhere within the layers of history. But this is again touched by irony as slowly Kirmani memory seems to desert him. He remembers all the details of the final catastrophe (battle with the British) vividly but try as he might he fails to remember Tipu's face during his last meeting with him. He also forgets the letter handed over to him by Tipu which contained the last of his recorded dreams before the final fateful confrontation with the British. This, "if the history repeats itself, and the unexpected always happens - how incapable man must be of learning from experience.

G.B. Shaw juxtaposition of memory with forgetfulness can be looked at, in two days, Firstly, History ‘recorded under duress, the views expressed during interviews for public consumption...’ can never represent the ultimate truth ‘Authentic history is that which is engraved on hearts and minds and erased the moment it is put in writing, lest it be read by those for whom it is not intended’.

The second way of apprehending it is via the Trauma theory of the 1990’s which has various strands, one of the being Freud’s psychoanalysis. The study includes many areas focusing on psychological, ethical, aesthetic questions about the representation of traumatic experiences and they range from public, historical, personal to memorial. Freudian psychoanalysis is provided a model about the effect of trauma on memory. The trauma involved for Kirmani is apparent when he says, “There’s no healing the wound remains fresh.

The violent of the sultan is perhaps something too traumatic for him to come to terms with. On the other hand why Mackenzie insists on Kirmani to record his version of history it becomes the case of ‘silenced’ historical narrative being given a voice. This is an example of ‘New Historicism’, (which) fascinated by the ideological omissions and repressions of historical narrative developed a mode of dissident or countervailing recovery of what had been silenced or lost in traditional literary histories;. On the very first of the play it becomes clear that the frame work of historical facts Karnad also tries to explore Tipu’s character in light of his recorded dreams. He uses Tipu’s own interpretations of his dreams to work out a political allegory of his reign’. It is quiet intriguing that a warrior who spent most of his life on horseback, waging war recorded his dreams and kept them hidden under his pillow, concealed from his closest confidants; Kirmani looks upon it as sacred, personal ; for Mackenzie it is just an ‘odd little book.... A pleasantly inconsequential conversation piece.

The difference in their perceptions is obvious. Karnad succeeds in proving that this ‘inconsequential conversation piece’ was actually the essence of his principal aspirations, statesmanship, astute political sense, and desire for a strong nation state. It offers a new perspective and helps us decipher the complexities that constituted this unique persona, placed at perspective and helps us decipher the complexities that constituted this unique persona, placed at a crucial juncture of the India history. In his struggle against the onslaught of the British, it is a crucial juncture of the Indian history. In his struggle against the onslaught of the British, it is his dreams that sustained him, ‘spoke to him’ and guided him in his public and personal life. Each of his dreams is a parallel to a particular event of his life except the fourth which is towards the end a tragic reversal of his expectations. The dreams come with an exact date thus giving them further credibility, of being rooted in reality, placing them at certain of time in a written history. The play proves to be adventurous in telescoping history and establishing the entire context through memory and dreams. The internal strife and the powerful external forces combine to form a similar backdrop as existed during his time. Outside was the formidable force of the British within home was the treachery of the closest confidants like Mir Sadiq, Poorniya and Qamaruddin Khan who was prepared to hand over Tipu to the Nizam just for a Jagir. ‘Thus the battle of Srirangapatnam was lost before was before it had begun’.

Tipu was perhaps much ahead of his times and a visionary born two hundred years too early. At the same time military acumen was his forte, and being a hardcore political strategist he tried his best to unite the Marathas and the Nizam along with forging alliance with the French to deter the imperialist designs of the British-their onslaught on the land, people language and culture.

If we reflect on this sentiment from the contemporary Indian socio-political considerations then the latest apprehensions of some sections over the

various international deals with the U.S. become relevant. New inventions, knowledge, technology advancement goes hand with progress for any nation but at the time therein lies an inherent danger of invasion on its culture, traditions and language. In the end though Karnad did not overtly intend it but perhaps it is our prerogative to draw the conclusion that those who refuse to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

Modernity is one of the most invaluable values and important insignias of society and literature. In fact, it is a process of change, evolution and development. But it should be based on rationality, a progressive thought and should aim at achieving a decent standard of living of all the people. It means that modernity means a way of life and a mode of thinking. However, each society as a small replica of vast universe, wants change and transformation, which, cannot be acquired merely by blind beliefs, adaptation or borrowing things from the west or elsewhere. Therefore, it requires change in action, opinions, conventions, and modes of thinking's, social behavior, social structure and other values. Thus 'change –continuity' lies at the core of any modern society.

As a culture-specific phase of history of any society or nation, modernity scrutinizes the traditional thoughts, values or institutions and fights against superstitions, narrow world –view, backwardness of society and other evil some aspects of socio-cultural values. This does not mean that modernity is a replacement of the old by the new but it is a realization and revelation of progressive thought. In this regard, Kumar, Suk Rita Paul remarks, "Modernity is a moment of realization and revelation of progressive thought experienced as mush in the past as it may be in the present. On the other hand, Sharma, K.L., the Vice – Chancellor, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur elaborates the term Modernity in his Foreword to Rethinking Modernity and says, "Modernity emanates from radical experience, from the constraints of morality and utility, religion and science. Modernity provides a critique of subjective rationalism.

Rational speech and action are the core elements of modernity at any given time and place". On the whole, modernity is a new value system. It is more a way of life and a mode of thinking which elevates the dignity and achievement of individual. It cannot be achieved and should not be transplanted but it must be shaped according to past traditions and present circumstances. Thus modernity is a genuine course of social change which implies innovations.

Jnanpeeth Awardee, Girish Karnad is one of the most outstanding dramatic geniuses of the Post – Independence period. His yeoman service in the field of new drama gives him an unflinching place in the annals of India drama like his contemporary playwrights namely, Badal Sircar (Bengali), Mohan Rakesh (Hindi) and Vijay Tendulkar (Marathi). His historical play the Dreams of Tipu Sultan is a master – piece. This play is an honest attempt of Karnad for removing all the untruths and misunderstanding about the ‘cursed hero’ of Indian history – Tipu Sultan. In fact this play resurrects him as a modernizing monarch whose mind was fraught with high ideals, hopes, projects, missions and visions which he wants to use them for the regeneration of his subjects. Indeed Tipu is a representative of modernity and his modern outlook throws light on contemporary.

Karnad presents this great man with a new perspective who was, indeed, far ahead of his age. This play is not mere a record of historical account of Tipu’s inner life but it is a representation of his innovative, radical progressive ideas which greatly influenced social, political, economic and religious aspects of his age, including his own personal life. His vigilance about his children’s education is one of them. In fact Tipu knows the value of education; therefore, he is very alert about it, particularly about his own children’s education. When Tipu is preparing to send a delegation to France for commercial and political purpose, his son Fath Haider wishes to join it. At that time, Tipu advises him that he should concentrate on his studies in order to get new and latest knowledge of the world. He illustrates the importance of education with his

father – Haider Ali's example, who was an illiterate, foul-mouthed and that was enough for him to rule. But his son Fath Haider belongs to different and challengeable age which was full of problems and difficulties. So Tipu thinks that his son must prepare himself for the different life and world and it could be possible only through education. Indeed, education can bring radical change in one's life. Definitely it provides knowledge for facing the worldly problems. Therefore, Tipu asks his son to concentrate on his studies instead of going on France tour. This approach of Tipu is, decidedly, modern one. Even Tipu is a far-sighted ruler and father, who took his children with him while administrating. He desires to give them the practical lessons of administration, therefore, involved children in the important decision-making process. This effort of Tipu clearly shows that he wants to develop his children's mind with progressive and enlightened thoughts with the experience of practical things. No doubt, he wants to train them for making a strong, knowledgeable, experience and able ruler for future.

Such approach of Tipu is modern one. In this Tipu is a devotee of new, scientific and innovative ideas. He readily accepts the novel ideas for the welfare of his subjects. In fact his goals ideals are high which he wants to use them for the generation of his people. Therefore, he launches upon a series of innovations for the promotion his people. He encourages industry, agriculture, trade and commerce for the said object, which gave Mysore State the glory, sound economy, prosperity and respectable place in India history. Indeed Tipu is an altruist ruler. Decidedly he tries to make his state modern on the basis of European model. So he introduces many schemes in his kingdom like reorganization of a Board of Admirably, issue of new coinage, ban on the use of liquor, reform of the calendar, experiments in commerce, changing names of cities and towns, novel revenue and judicial regulations. All these novel schemes present Tipu as an apostle of modernity who had modern sensibility

and vision. Tipu has a great interest in trade. He promotes trade and commerce in his state. He desires to make his state a 'trading nation' on European model.

He establishes a trading company in order to get economic prosperity through trade and commerce. He encourages people to export many goods like pepper, chilies, sandal wood, cardamom and rice. He establishes factories in foreign countries at Muscat, Pegu, Cutch and Jiddah. Even he establishes trade relations with China, France, Turkey and Iran. He too, sets up factories at Srirangapatnam, Bangalore and Chitradurg. All these things display that Tipu had a commercial view like British. He wants quick progress and economics. He says, John company- how they came to this country, poor cringing and what they have become in a mere fifty years. They threaten us today.

Tipu has modern sensibility. He knows that to depend on other nation for goods is nothing but slavery. In fact, he wants to become his state as self-sufficient state. When he is sending a delegation to France, he orders them to bring everything including new techniques, inventions, machines etc. He further asks Mir Sadiq to bring silkworms and eggs from the island of Jezeriah Diraz near Muscat along with the five or six men who would rear up and look after the worms (P.21). Even Tipu desires that his Government should step in trading agency for sake of money. He thinks that money is essential for buying the glass, guns and cannons. There is no wise ness to buy these things from abroad. He does not want to beg and borrow silk from Chinese like a poor person. He knows that his land is rich and full of ivory, sandal wood and forests and we didn't get anything if we sell these things to an individual trader. Tipu has commercial bend of mind. He has already brought few eggs of skills from China and flourished his own industry. Now they are getting sufficient skills. He does not want to live like traditional, stupid and progressed Marathas and the Nizam who were totally unknown about the face of India. So he wants to import things and persons from abroad.

He asks Osman Khan that he should return with ten thousand French soldiers and French craftsmen who could make guns, cannons and pistols (P.24). It means that Tipu wants to make the well-equipped with the latest weapons. To develop, increase and to show the superiority of military powers to others is his main aim. Therefore, he wishes to bring many things and persons from abroad. Then he makes a provisional list of professionals which included a doctor, a surgeon, a smelter, a carpenter, a weaver, blacksmith, a locksmith, a cutter, a watchmaker and new varieties of trees, flowers and bushes etc. along with them two gardeners from Versailles to look after Lan Bagh Garden. Indeed the catalogue of things shows that Tipu wanted to bring every item of his interest including thermometer. Tipu is business minded. He looks business opportunities in every aspect. He has already sent a delegation to Istanbul last year under the chair of Akbar Ali Khan to meet His Holiness the Caliph of Al Islamic Nations for the said purpose.

This trip gets a sensational success. He knows that there is a great demand for ivory, sandalwood and other products in Turkey, Arabia and Iran. Even the Imam of Muscat has fallen in love with the sandalwood and spices of this country. Soimam of Muscat asks Tipu to build a factor for these products here (P.24). All these instances show Tipu's interest in business, trade, industry and soldiers. He knows that Europe makes herself wonderful due to new ideas, inventions and machines (P.25). The scientific approach of Europeans has resulted in rapid progress in every field. That's why Tipu wants to observe all these things in India in order to make India like Europe. And it is possible only then when India would possess the passion for trade like England. It is called vision of progress of Tipu. In this regard, Sudhir Grace says, 'He (Tipu) wanted to open the doors of Mysore to new inventions, trade and commerce but without compromising on his independence and sovereignty of his state. He made growth and dynamism the foundation of his economic and commercial policies.'

He embarked on a bold economic policy, which included measures to modernize Mysore's industries, to introduce new ones such as cannon founding, paper-making, glass manufacture and ship-building. In addition to heavy industries Tipu saw the value of luxury such as pearl culture, silkworms and import of fine asses from Arabia. Tipu is an ardent patriot. He loves his land very much. He never compromises with his ideals unlike the other rulers of India. To accept foreign help for saving their kingdom was the main aim of these rulers including the Marathas and Nizam. English slavery is willingly accepted by them. On the contrary, Independency and sovereignty of the state is the most important value or doctrine of Tipu's life. He has already seen the danger from English. This is the root cause of his oppose to English. To expel English from India becomes his ardent desire and first priority. So he starts making an active preparation for the said purpose, particularly, after the big defeat in the third Mysore war from British.

In this regard he builds up close contacts with the outside world, particularly with the French. 'Tipu had high hopes, with French aid the drama of American War of Independence could be repeated in India'. Even he sent envoys to Persia, France and Afghanistan. The purpose is to seek help from them in fighting against the English. At the same time he tries to make unity of the Nizam and the Marathas. But he cannot get positive response from them. No doubt, Tipu has friendly relations with the French, Zamam Shah of Afghanistan and Abdul Hameed of Turkey. In this regard, B. Shiekh Ali says, "But Tipu's relations with the French, the Afgans and the Turks indicate his grand designs to distress the English" accessed. On the other hand, his dream of union of the Marathas and the Nizam remains unfulfilled. It is important to note that he never makes allies with foreigners against any India power. But he only tries to use foreign help for expelling the English. And he uses the foreign contact for this purpose. To be honest, Tipu's foreign contacts are an emblem of modernity.

Tipu is the first Indian ruler who tried to make his state a Republic. So he develops trade and commerce and encourages his people to follow the path of progress and science like the Europeans. He builds up factories in foreign and also develops industries in his state. His vision is to make his people progressive and prosperous. Many efforts have been done to make his subjects happy by him. Even he tries to give economic stability to his state. No doubt, he makes many economic improvements in his administration, destroys the conservative feudalistic system and develops industries in his state. In fact his main object is to make his state an Utopia. He sincerely tries the best in this direction but his untimely death resulted in not fulfilling his dream or Republic. This is a rare and exquisite example of Tipu's modernity.

Tipu is prudent ruler. He sends his children as hostages to Lord Cornwallis for the common weal. He knows that there is no danger to the lives of his children. But he realizes another danger that English will teach their language and culture of them. This language has its power to turn the little children into the war of prisoners. He firmly determines that he must have to free his children before they could learn English language and mix up with that culture. In this regard Tipu says, "The danger is: They'll teach my children their language, English. The language is which it is possible to think of children as hostages. All I can do is agree to their terms and conclude the treaty in a hurry before my children have learnt that languages (P.43).

To accept the dependence of language and culture means to mortgage one's own individuality. It is the frightful wicked wheel. But Tipu is self-respecting King. So it is unbearable of such type of encroachment on Indian language and culture for him. Regarding this Hanur Kirhsnamurthy says, "Later, the Muslim ruler who settled in India fought the British. Among them, Tipu holds a special place. In fact, it was natural for Tipu to resist the English infiltration during that period. Historical records of that period reveal that not only did Tipu oppose the increasing use of English Language and culture, he

also identified himself with Kannada culture”. In sum, modernity is a new value system, which implies innovations. It is nothing but a moment of realization of progressive thought but aims at a decent standard of living of all the people. And such modernity is reflected through the various actions, missions, ideals and projects of Tipu Sultan, the ‘Tiger of Mysore’. Indeed, Tipu does not want to accept slavery in importing things from abroad, therefore encourages people to export things. Even his foreign contact with various countries, establishment of factories in foreign countries, forming trading company etc. are some worth- mentioning examples, overclouded with his modernist vision and sense.

The Dreams of Tipu Sultan (1997) can be described as the long – awaited history play in which, after dealing with pre-colonial Indian history in two earlier works i.e. Tughlaq and Tale-Danda. Karnad confronts British colonialism in its curial early stages of military expansion, Karnad strongly felt that Tipu needed to be given his due as a major figure in Karnataka history, as a visionary, and a patriot and this play was written basically to revise his image. The dream of the play title refers to a secret record of Tipu’s dreams maintained by him found after his death. These ‘dreams’ have been used like a metaphor by Karnad to show the ‘real’ man behind the image of the warrior, by looking into the inner aspirations of Tipu.

In many important respects Tipu sultan follows the model of the history play established in Tughlaq and Tale-Danda. It draws upon a range of historical sources to present convincing portrait of the principal characters, but creates an imaginative plot and resonant dialogue to contain their experiencing. It deals with a controversial protagonist who can be characterized in radically opposite ways, depending on the observer’s viewpoint - as a heroic figure of anti-colonial resistance comparable to the Rani of Jhansi in one perspective, and a treacherous but fallible and even foolish adversary in another.

Hussain Ali Kirmani, among the play's characters enables Karnad to reflect on the process of history writing and the many conduits of history – oral and written, unofficial and official, objective and subjective, dominant and subaltern. The play also juxtaposes larger than life figures such as Tipu, Haider Ali, Nana Phadnavis, Lord Cornwallis, and Arthur and Richard Wellesley against a large cast of less prominent historical individuals like Kirmani, Tipu's principal queen and sons, numerous courtiers, and military official as well as colonized. Avoiding any partisan pride of heroes and villains, Karnad creates ambitious and determined players in both camps who are sucked into the vortex of a major transitional moment in India history, politics and culture. There are several important strategies at play in portrayal of Tipu Sultan that unfold simultaneously.

Karnad interlineated 'textualized' history with legend, lore, and memory because all these modes of transmission are germane to story to Tipu. The ruler's fabled persona as the Tiger of Mysore thus figures prominently in the action, both as oral legend and as military reality that the English must contend with. Karnad also casts his protagonist in multiple and contradictory roles - as a beloved ruler, legendary warrior, loving father, and visionary dreamer, but also as the machiavellian schemer who plots with the French against English, the defeated soldier who enters into humiliating treaties with the enemy, and the gullible commander who is eventually betrayed by his own side. The perceptions of Tipu that have the greatest energy, however, are those with Brechtian - materialist overtones: they economy, his interest in the link between commerce and empire, and his desire for an up-to-date army in his analysis. The tragedy of Tipu's fall is not only that it made way for a full-scale colonial takeover, but that it destroyed a visionary who shared the modernizing impulse of the European Enlightenment, and could meet the English on their own terms much to their chagrin.

Karnad's portrayal of English characters is more in line with the conventional view of colonial conquest and the attendant cultural relations. Ethically, the main English characters in the play are rational, calculating, pragmatic, and ruthless, although their resentment of Tipu's apparent invincibility is also an aspect of what Homi Bhabha terms colonial ambivalence while their racist contempt for all natives anticipates the unqualified colonialist denigration that Edward Said calls orientalism. Karnad's principal thematic argument is a familiar one; the English succeeded in India not only because of their superior weapons and warfare, but because of their ability to play off members of the native ruling elite against each other. This accounts for the crucial quadrangulations between the Wellesleys, Tipu Sultan, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and Nana Pahlavani, and the dynamics made interesting from the perspective of the postcolonial present because it depicts the decentered nature of power relations in the absence of 'national' idea. Karnad's Tipu is a proto-nationalist who resists as long as he can the Englishman's schemes to rob his land, even as he understands that English 'believe in the destiny of their race' and are willing to die in faraway places for their dream of England.

At home, however, his appeals to a common faith fail to really the Muslim Nizam to his side, and the instinctive hostility between Hindu and Muslim princes alienates him from the Marathas, although he issues a prophetic and purely political warning about England's territorial ambitions. The pained scenes of Tipu's peace treaties with the English emphasize that a complex, civilized and prosperous culture was betrayed into subjection because of the pursuit of petty self-interest by key functionaries. In hindsight, the 'traitorous' collaborations between English and native armies across racial and cultural lines becomes the perfect prelude and antithesis to the invention of India-as-nation by nineteenth-and twentieth century nationalists.

The play has scenes from the present which show Hussain Ali Kairmani's attempts to write an 'objective' account of the dead Tipu for the English, and

then there are also intermittent scenes from the past which portray the sultan. This gives the play a powerfully elegiac quality. Kirmani as a participant – observer in Tipu’s tragedy, shows that the matter of history consists not of facts (which concern the English) but also with the memories of fabled ruler that are fading all too quickly.

The play begins and ends with memory: Kirmani and Colin Mackenzie serve as the chorus for a highly selective and reflexive history that unfolds cyclically, beginning with the day of Tipu’s last battle and returning to it via crucial stages in his slide towards defeat and death. In subtle moves, Karnad also reveals that the interests of the appointed historian are at variance in some respects with ‘actual’ history, Kirmani disclaims that Tipu ever sent an embassy to Malarctic, the French governor – general of Mauritius, whereas the very first scene with Tipu shows him talking about Malarctic’s role in arranging a royal delegation from Mysore to France. Tipu’s dreams-partly narrated and partly enacted are political allegories of his reign; some contain imaginary characters while others conjure up key historical figures like Lord Cornwallis and Haider Ali.

The last dream is the most poignant because it is a fantasy of victory in the midst of defeat and death. The insertion of this dream text into history introduces a level of experience even more evanescent than memory, and makes *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* almost a poetic Play. Karnad has raised many questions through the play regarding the British Colonial policy of divide and rule; the short sightedness of Marathas, Tipu’s lack of killer instinct etc. but he leaves many loose ends never imposing his own conclusions so that the reader or viewer can draw his / her own.

References:

Karnad, Girish. *Collected Plays*. Vol. 2. New Delhi: OUP, 2005. Print.

Mukherjee, Tutun. Girish Karnad's Plays: Performance and Critical Perspectives. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2006. Print.

Prasad, Bisheshwar. Bondage and Freedom: A History of Modern India (1707-1947). New Delhi: Rajesh Publications, 1977. Print.

Waugh, Patricia. Literary Theory and Criticism. New Delhi: OUP, 2006. Print.

MLA (7th Edition) Citation:

Basha, Sikkandar, and Mohamed Mohideen. "Girish Karnad's The Dreams of Tipu Sultan: Subaltern Historiography." *Literary Quest* 2.11 (2016): 12-35. Web. DoA.

DoA – Date of Access

Eg. 23 Aug. 2015. ; 05 April 2017.