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Presentation of Contemporary City life on the Urban Stage

A Reading of Karnads *Boiled Beans on Toast*

Devamita Chakraborty

Abstract : Karnad's literary career begins with *Yayati* written in 1961 and concludes with *Boiled Beans on Toast* written in 2013. With *Yayati*, Karnad realises that he is destined to be an Indian playwright and not a poet. The decision to be a playwright again puts forth before the artist the tension of choosing the proper idiom to negotiate with his audience as he feels that writers like him have to acrobat between the traditional and the modern in search of their identity. The paraphernalia of his theatre has changed over the time. From experimenting with myths and folktales Karnad towards the end of his career started to present contemporary urban life mostly located in cities.

Boiled Beans on Toast presents the cosmopolitan life in the city of Bangalore through stories from all walks of life narrating lives experiences. The story of the Padabidri family is in the centre of the play. The life of Anjana Padabidri, Kunaal (her son) and Anusuya (her mother in law) is deeply affected due to the absence of Mr. Padabidri who is busy seeking fortune abroad in order to live a better life. The other stories of the minor characters present a similar search for better life in the city which is defined by economic standards only. All the stories narrate lives experience in Bangalore from different perspectives which challenge concepts of charity, honesty, and morality. People survive on their own in the big city and this present reality becomes all the more ironic in the context of the quintessence of the original narrative of kindness that gives the city its name.

Keywords : traditional and modern, Realism, human values.

The Oxford University edition of *Collected Plays: Volume Three* introduces Girish Karnad as a playwright, filmmaker, and actor who writes in Kannada, the language of the state of Karnataka, and has translated his plays into English that some of his recent plays were originally written in English.¹ The note rightly contours the map of the dramatist whose writing and concerns have changed over the time in order to negotiate with his immediate audience. Karnads literary career begins with *Yayati* written in 1961 and concludes with *Boiled Beans on Toast* written in 2013. Like his