

Thinking about the Play

1. How genuine is the love that Manjula expresses for her sister?

Answer. Girish Karnad's 'Broken Images' play mainly deals with psychological issues, the rivalry between siblings etc. At the very beginning, the play portrays an entirely different image of the protagonist Manjula's life. Manjula's sister, Malini, was physically challenged, suffering from meningomyelocele right from birth. She spent her entire life confined to a wheelchair. Manjula, being childless, treated her sister as her child! Indeed, the book is about her. Manjula dedicated it to her memory. Manjula was helpless when her sister passed away. There were times when Manjula felt ignored by her parents while Malini became "the apple of their eye", yet she understood the situation's importance and need. Indeed, Manjula's love for her sister was genuine.

2. The sister does not appear in the play but is central to it. What picture of her is built in your mind from references in the play?

Answer. Karnad elegantly portrays the psychological relationship between Manjula and her sister, who is physically challenged right from birth. Malini undergoes a series of operations, reducing her existence to misery. She is dependent entirely on her family, living in the shadow of Manjula. A few instances portray Malini as a lively and strong person who was more intelligent, attractive, and cheerful than the author herself and a compassionate person. It was as if "she radiated life from the wheel-chair to which she was confined." Hence, Malini becomes the most loved person among their family members. Thus, the author develops the character of Malini beautifully through the course of the play till the very end.

3. When the image says—'Her illness was unfortunate. But because of it, she got the best of everything'

(i) What is the nature of Manjula's reply?

(ii) How can it be related to what follows in the play?

Answer.

(i) Manjula was highly protective of her sister after knowing Malini's physical disabilities and was unhappy that she wouldn't survive. Malini received the best of everything because of her disabilities. However, we can trace a sign of insecurity in Manjula as she trembles for words and ends up defining her sister as "the apple of their eye". However, Manjula tries to convince the audience of her love for her sister but somehow can't accept it fully. At some point, Manjula felt insecure about Malini and pondered if she had received all that love and attention from her family, and she would have prospered. Somewhere, Manjula gets stuck in the comparative analysis between herself and Malini.

(ii) The statement mentioned above lays the foundation for the latter part of the play. In reality, Manjula feels insecure about her sister. Still, for the on-screen readers, she portrays her sister as the dependent one living in her shadows, consistently securing the attention of her family members because of her disabilities. Manjula misleads the audience by convincing them it is her sister who received all the lookout for her smartness and intellect and not for her disabilities, a fact that unfolds gradually. In the later part of the play, it signifies that Manjula was the one who was in her sister's shadow. Thus, the statement serves as the foretelling of the events that would unfold later in the play.

4. What are the issues that the playwright satirises through this TV monologue of a celebrity?

Answer. Yet another issue satirised by the playwright is the truth behind the media. The issues that the playwright satirises through this TV monologue of a celebrity are the defeated and unrealised hindrances, hesitancy and greed in an individual's subconsciousness. The playwright's satirical writing in English is akin to betraying the entire community. He also exposes the vernacular gap between intellectuals and the intense concern of commoners as well as communities. Thus, the playwright hints at the false optimistic pictures that the media presents, which are not entirely true, as is revealed slowly through the unravelling of the play.

Talking about the Play

1. 'Broken Images' takes up a debate that has grown steadily since 1947—the politics of language in Indian literary culture, specifically in relation to modern Indian languages and English. Discuss.

Answer. With the separation of Britishers and India in 1947, Indians generally believed that the importance of English as a language would diminish. On the contrary, the importance of the English language has increased, and it has almost become the "universal language" of ordinary citizens. Dr Girish Karnad's "Broken Picture" sparked another storm of discussions on "Language Politics in Indian Literature and Culture". Through the protagonist Manjula, Karnad came to portray the reality of the Indian mentality. According to the playwright's observation, it is believed that the British in India had the freedom to climb to the highest class of society. English is setting off a revolution in society. English is such a language that it is so strong and aggressive that it can even penetrate Indian family life and arouse sisters' jealousy, almost like those who are different from those who create a class struggle. He played the role of the patriarch of all literary languages in India. Girish Karnad's "Broken Images" vividly brings common ideas about English and other Indian languages into the realm of Indian literature and culture.

2. The play deals with a Kannada woman writer who unexpectedly produces an international bestseller in English.

(i) Can a writer be a truly bilingual practitioner?

(ii) Does writing in an 'other tongue' amount to betrayal of the mother tongue?

Answer. (i) Writing no longer depends upon the language but is shaped by the creator's feelings. Karnad made this clear in the celebrity monologue at the beginning of the play. "I wrote this novel in English because it caused a sensation in English," Manjula said. Karnad expresses his criticism of Indian bilingual writers through the protagonist, and language is only a means to express the writer's emotions. Therefore, the writer can, of course, be a bilingual practitioner.

(ii) Writing in "another language" is not a betrayal of the mother tongue. Karnad made this clear in the opening monologue of the play. Writers can pay equal attention to writing in both languages. It relies upon his audience's goal. Thus, it isn't a criminal offence to be a bilingual practitioner.

Appreciation

1. Why do you think the playwright has used the technique of the image in the play?

Answer. The performance technique is used in the drama because the playwright uses it as a psychological expression of Manjula's repressed guilt over the years. This image helps establish an intense dispute between Manjula and the harsh reality of the life she has experienced. Over the years, suppressed by false statements, jealousy towards Malini, parental negligence, loveless marriage, and occupations that did not belong to her in the end, she seems to face all of this through her guilt, which manifests itself in the screen and ridicules her image in the play. Thus, the playwright uses this technique to impress the audience and get their attention.

2. The play is called a monologue. Why is it made to turn dialogic?

Answer. Playwrights create plays through dialogue to leave a more straightforward impression on the audience. Monologues expressed through reflection and introspection do not necessarily have powerful effects as when the opponent encounters a character through dialogue. Therefore, it was made dialogic.

3. What is the posture the celebrity adopts when the camera is on and when it is off?

Answer. Karnad said a lot through the protagonist's pose, whether on the screen or off the screen. On the screen, she has the personality of a confident and booming writer. She fully understood the concept of broadcasting and laid the foundation for the success of her first English novel. However, once the protagonist leaves the judiciary, her behaviour changes radically. She became a clumsy novice, both scared

and frightened when faced with her image on the screen. Through the hypocrisy of this description, the media foresaw the events that would unfold in the play.

