

## “Treatment of Love in the Play Wedding Album”

Akanksha Watts

### Abstract

---

Man has been seeking something throughout the ages beyond himself, beyond material welfare something we call truth or love or reality or relationship or partner to share all his thoughts, a timeless state- something that cannot be disturbed by circumstances, by thoughts or by human corruption. We human beings have- colossally greedy, envious, aggressive, jealous, anxious and despairing with occasional flashes of joy and affection from millions of years. Each one of us is the storehouse of all the past. Where we can associate legendary stories with display time (Kalyug) where Karnad discusses craziness, duty, generosity, treatment of love, dreams and wants and numerous different things. This research mainly focuses upon *The Treatment Of Love in the selected play of Girish Karnad*. Here I am going to highlight the love triangles formed between the characters as per **Robert J. Sternberg’s theory "A Triangular Theory of Love"**.

---

**Keywords:** Love, Reality, Truth, Relationship, Corruption.

Girish Karnad is the most important name in the area of play writing in Indian English Literature. In his plays, Karnad has created consciousness while interpreting ancient myth and legends. The greatness of Girish Karnad lays the success on the stage as well as among the readers. The use of Myths, Love Triangle and Feminism are the reasons behind Karnad's success as a playwright. In this exploration, we will examine around **"A Triangular theory of Love"** by **Robert J. Sternburg** in the chose works of Girish Karnad. This examination is somewhat relative investigation of legendary and present day plays. As we probably are aware of the thing that characters of Karnad's play are enamored which either way eventually falls into the affection triangle.

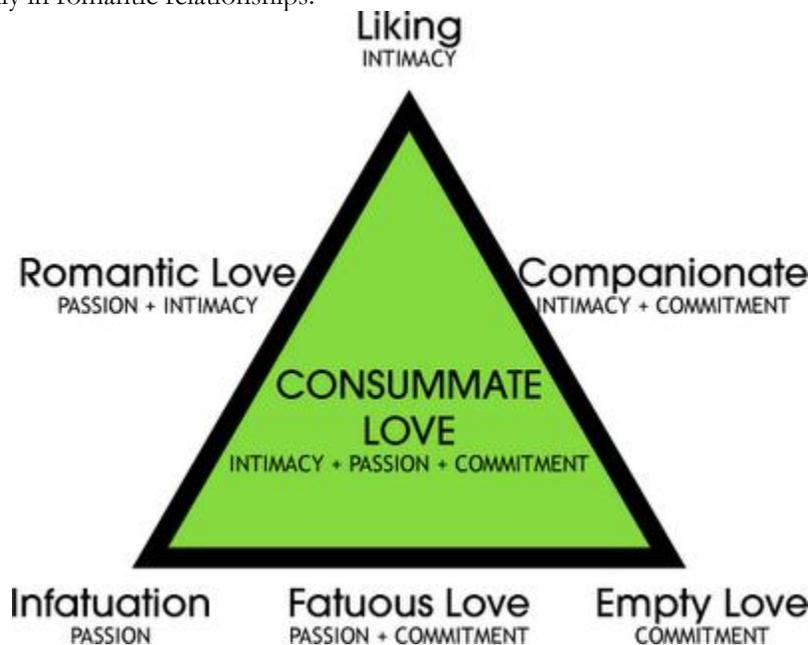
Sternburg (1986) conceptualized love in terms of three basic components that form the vertices of a triangle: **Intimacy, Passion and Commitment/Decision**.

- A. **Intimacy component** viewed as "Warm" which involves feeling of warmth, closeness, connection and bond in the relationship.
- B. **Passion** is considered as hot component which involves excitement or energy of the relationship. It consists of derives that are involved in romantic and physical attraction, sexual consummation and related phenomena.
- C. **Decision/Commitment** is a kind of "Business Aspect" of the relationship. It represents both the short term and the long term relationship. It is considered as "Cold Component". In short term, decision that one loves someone else, and in long term, the commitment to maintain that love.

These three basic components combine to produce eight different love types.

- i. **Non-love (No Intimacy/ Passion/ Decision or commitment):** Absence of all three components of love.
- ii. **Liking (Intimacy only):** It refers to the set of feeling one has towards another person that can be truly characterized as friendship.
- iii. **Infatuation (Passion only):** It is "Love at first sight". It tends to characterized by a high degree of psycho-physiological arousal, manifested in-somatic symptoms such as increase heartbeat, increased hormonal secretions.
- iv. **Empty love (Decision/Commitment only):** It is a kind of love that is stagnant, that is going on for years but has lost both the mutual emotional involvement and physical attraction that one’s characterized them.

- v. **Romantic love (Intimacy and Passion):** Romantic love is not only drawn physically to each other but is bounded emotionally. The view of romantic love can be seen in the classical works of literature, such as Romeo and Juliet.
- vi. **Companionate love (Intimacy and Decision/Commitment):** It is essentially a long term, committed friendship, the kind that frequently occurs in marriages in which the physical attraction has died down.
- vii. **Fatuous love (Passion and Decision /Commitment):** The commitment is made on the basis of passion without the stabilizing element of intimate involvement.
- viii. **Consummate love (Intimacy, Passion and Decision/Commitment):** It is a kind of love towards which many of us strive, especially in romantic relationships.



In **Wedding Album**, though the title refers to a video made by Vidula's family for her prospective groom in America, the story moves like a collage of snapshots exploring the characters in their hopes, frustrations, emotional tangles. The play gives insights into contemporary middle-class Indian society in the wake of technological advancement. The play is humorous and comical, marked by irony, multiple issues and questions of social and emotional nature. The play is like the modern day TV serials, presenting a realistic family situation. It also demystifies middle class South Indian Brahmin marriage (Srinivasan x) in the backdrop of familial and emotional relationships, their choices, values and life styles. An Indian wedding is an occasion for a family to bring together all the relatives and friends to show their solidarity and family ties. In the process the family also has to cope up with anxieties concerning dowry and other financial burdens while maintaining its social status.

Karnad presents the story surrounding Vidula Nadkarni's wedding in the form of a television serial. One of the characters in the play, Pratibha, a producer of television programme, however find the plot not sufficiently appropriate for an episode saying, "How can you make a character interesting in a tele-serial when you are not interested in her in real life?" (WA 9). As the play progresses, each scene reveals some hidden secrets of human yearning as the characters continue in their search for emotional and sexual fulfillment. The older members find it difficult to adjust to modern lifestyles in the technologically advanced world. The new generation on the other hand has its own ambitious plans of easy success. They have their dreams to scale and seek emotional fulfillment in sexual freedom, ignoring certain values and traditions.

**Wedding Album**, a one-act play of nine scenes, presents the routine life of the members of the south Indian Saraswat Brahmin family and their anxiety of Indianness in search of a suitable expat boy for their daughter. The play is set in Dharwad. The Nadkarni's parents try to preserve their caste and tradition from the effect of hybridity and multiculturalism. But their children have a cultural amnesia and they are uprooted in the name of modernization. The play presents middle class anxieties in pan-Indian life. It encapsulates the anxieties, prospects of love, marriage and search for life in their middle class status.

The play revolves around Vidula, the younger daughter of the Nadkarni family. She is engaged to Ashwin an NRI- who lives in the U.S. They have never met yet they vowed to get married. Mr. Nadkarni, the father, a retired doctor, is in government service. His elder daughter Hema is married to an NRI lives in Australia and his son Rohit is working for T.V serials and is in love with Isabel a Christian girl. The family members are anxious about Vidula's marriage.

The play opens as Vidula speaks in front of a camera. Her brother Rohit is handling the camera. Vidula is a 22 year old B.A. graduate. She is depressed and tired of posing in front of it. "Am I looking depressed?"(p. 5).

She introduces her family through a video to Ashwin. Vidula: There was another brother between Hema and Rohit. He was retarded mentally. Don't know what he died of...But let me assure you I am not retarded-(p. 7)

The mother is anxious about how they are going to manage the expenses of marriage:"A wedding means expenses-there is no getting away from that".

The parents worry for the expenses they have incurred for Hema's marriage. But Hema is discontented with her parents. She has migrated to Australia after her marriage and she represents Indian wives. The playwright expresses the existential suffering of Indian wives through Hema, whose husbands work in MNCs as:

"We Indian women...are obedient sati savitri ever willing to follow in our husbands' footsteps....Our men may get all the jobs. But I am in no better position than Ma".(p.17)

Sudden Tantrums

In the sub plot Radhabai, the cook of the Nadkarni family, plays an important role. Rohit finds her life story appealing, impressive and melodramatic due to her husband's death and her adopted daughter's forced madness. She is quarrelsome, demanding and not so good in cooking. The secret story of Radhabai's life makes Rohit feel pity for her. To him, it appears as a modern serial on the television and decided to make her story into a TV serial hoping that it will grip the interest of the audience. Her daughter Yamuna is being maintained by a rich trader and one day she is thrown out of the family. Yamuna has gone insane:

Vidhula: She looked down and saw Yamuna. Her saree was in tatters. The kids were laughing and throwing stones at her. She was obviously out of her senses, calling out

Amma...and hurling abusing at her tormentors (p. 53)

This incident haunts Radhabai and whenever she thinks of her daughter she just yells at the family members especially at the mother.

Hema: These sudden tantrums. Are you sure she is all right? Perhaps she should see a psychiatrist

Mother: No need for any fancy treatment...I think I had better go away somewhere-far away in search of mental peace."(p.23)

Karnad presents the vanity of young girls in our contemporary middle class urban life. Their worries and anxieties in life, involvement and activities in the city internet cafés are displayed in the play with a realistic touch. When Vidula is caught red handed in net Café while watching pornography, defending herself she accuses the youths, "You have come here to rape me" (p.70). She is relieved when the internet café attendant tells her that the two young men have come only for their hafta.

Vidula thinks that the West can provide everything and dreams of marrying an NRI. When she meets Ashwin she appreciates his quest for a spiritual odyssey through marriage. He realizes the meaninglessness of material values and tries to escape from godless and amoral world.

Ashwin: I am boiling inside like a volcano. I want you to share my agonizing search of myself...It may even require an emotional giving up. If you agree to...you will have to share my inner turmoil....I believes you will find it enriching (p.79-80).

He states that the Americans are now in a soul searching mission. He prefers to preserve Indian culture by marrying an Indian Girl, who will favor him for wisdom, insight and guidance. A few days after their marriage, Vidula moves to Bangalore before leaving for America. It becomes an emotional farewell for her. Hema says" Leave him and come back if you feel like it..A divorce is okay. It's no shame. Vidula promises them "I will never divorce Ashwin" (p.-86)

Vidula represents the middle class girl and westernised Indian youths. The play marks the highest evolution of feminine psyche.

Types of Love	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment	Characters in relationship
Non Love				
Liking	X			
Infatuated Love		X		1. Vidula's obsession with internet. 2. Vivan's relationship with Hema.
Empty Love			X	1. Rohit's relationship with Tapasyaji. 2. Ramdas's relationship with Dr. Nadkari.
Romantic Love	X	X		Rohit's relationship with Isabel.
Companionate Love	X		X	1. Relationship in Dr. Nadkarni's Household. 2. Relationship between Vidula and Ashwin. 3. Dr. Nadkarni's relationship with Ramdas.
Fatuous Love		X	X	Ramdas's relationship with Mrs. Nadkarni.
Consummate Love	X	X	X	

In the mythical plays we may conclude that we can see the glimpse of consummate love (intimacy, passion and commitment/ decision) whereas in the modern plays we lack such kind of love which exemplifies as "made for each other". Karnad has been very innovative in depicting absurd situations and strange sequences.

#### Works sited:

- Karnad, Girish. *Wedding Album*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.
- Lewis, Thomas, Fari Amini, Lannon Richard. *A General Theory of Love*. Vintage, 2001. Print.
- Saini, Alpna. "subjectivity as a locus of conflicts in Girish Karnad." Germany: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2012. Print.
- Srinivasan, Amrit. "Foreword." Girish Karnad. *Wedding Album*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.
- Sternberg, Robert. "Triangular theory of love" [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangular\\_theory\\_of\\_love](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangular_theory_of_love). Downloaded on 17 January 2018. Print.