



PUNE RESEARCH

ISSN 2454-3454

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

VOL 4, ISSUE 3

UGC Approved Journal No 48520 (Arts & Humanities) ENGLISH

THE DYNAMICS OF INDIAN AND KANNADA THEATRE

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ABSTRACT

Theatre is the life breath of all arts, since, by its very nature, it focuses on life and living, its meaning and purpose, its follies and foibles, in as wide a canvas as possible within the confines and limitations of the stage. Theatre brings alive real life as real drama, using the wings of fantasy to colour ordinary and hitherto trivial things, ballooning them up into a wholesome whole, so that we could see ourselves for what we are or what we are not, in terms of the larger picture of life around us.

INTRODUCTION

Theatre symbolises the existential reality or the perceived reality through the medium of the live and tangible human performance. It has what it takes when it comes to the representation of human hopes and dreams depicted in human terms, with the tangible human presence- the live human performance.

Let's understand this question- what do we reflect through theatre. These questions can be asked for all art forms all over the world. Theatre has always been a mirror for human beings. A reflection of the world, of the eternal conflicts that plague, through which an experience range of emotions run. Human race has created a very complex language called theatre.

A language that has the ability to redefine the natural concept of time, space and movement. A language that goes beyond the verbal and physical. Through this language of theatre, one is able to see, what one has to aspire to be.

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VOL 4, ISSUE 3

www.puneresearch.com/english

MAY – JUNE 2018

(IMPACT FACTOR 3.02) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL



So, what is it that we see through theatre? Do we really see ourselves? Do we see what we have made of ourselves? Do we see hopes, values, aspirations and struggles?

The answer to these questions- can be yes, no or may be. Probably it's all the three. So, we see our self as a part of awareness reflected in the theatre that we patronise, only then is there the true synergy between the artist and the audience. This synergy is better described in our traditional theatre as Rasa, for this rasa to be savoured- a common ground is laid, where the performer and the audience both look at identities that relate.

In a plural society as ours, which is culturally as diverse as the European continent, and a civilization that is as ancient as the world, a more pluralistic approach is required. The conventional ways of defining by linguistic and regional divides does not work for creating artistic identities any more, or it probably never has.

The spaces that go beyond regions to come closer to identities and ideological spaces like- traditional, continental and radical. Traditionalists who vouch for the performance and completeness of classical theatre and dance forms. In fact the word 'Natya' is used for both dance and drama. It has technique, grace, power, emotions, dramatic tension, beauty and most definitely it has a style .

The identities of our roots relate to rural, urban, regional, international or a mixture of all, roots have a great form of identity even if they have moved away from traditions. This state of transition has created many great works in our country. Girish karnad and kambar give us the satisfaction of viewing our past and our roots through a view finder that definitely belongs to the present. It is an important bridge that reminds us of where we come from and where we are today.

Karnad and kambar have used kannada folk tale- and have given us Nagamandla and sirisampige. Both are so different from one another and yet they share common roots. This is something unique to kannada theatre. The need for absolute vital change- we, need people who are willing to explore and develop new forms. Some of the most powerful works in the theatre today are from radicals like Rabindranath Tagore, BadalSircar and Vijay Tendulkar- Tagore was among the first of the 20th century dramatists to put the focus on the caste system and inequality through this plays. If traditional and continual theatre is linked to our roots, radical theatre is linked to our spirit. Theatre movement is inextricably linked to the development of culture, social and individual identities. That is the completeness of, life and its representative called 'Theatre'.



BadalSircar, the pioneer of an alternative people's theatre movement in Indian- Sensibilities towards Indian theatre demonstrates the complexities of the present times with the promise of a paradigm shift affected by post-colonial theories.

We watch or read a play, we know that the persons represented- the character are fictional, and yet people imagine reel characters associate with ourselves. Shakespeare's Macbeth and Banquo both heard prophecies. While Macbeth chose to kill Duncan in order to make the prophecy come true- Banquo resists any temptations to act, and so we infer that Macbeth too could have refrained from criminal action if he had really wished to.

Characters in play are of course only has airy nothings, but, if the playwright has done the job well, they have a convincing reality. We may even come to feel that we know Macbeth better than our next-door neighbour. Perhaps Shaw meant this, when he wrote that as you watch Ibsen's the wild Duck-you find yourself "getting deeper and deeper into your own life all the time". These are truisms, truisms are presented in such a way that take on life and become a part of us rather than remain things the way we say.

Theatre and life are closely connected, is indicated by terms that we apply to real life. People show off, act like big shots, clown around, make a scene, play up to someone, play down something ,and know that when they die it's curtain down. If the theatre at its best did not seem as image of life, we would not so often see life as theatrical. And so we can say-unifying idea of connected experiences has relevance. A play is reduced to a neat moral tag. This is what the audience infer and enter the play and fully possess it.

The humanities in Drama, gives us a sense of life at its fullest and most intense by and large they assume that people are responsible for their actions or to put it a little differently, that people are not simply bundles of random impulses but creatures who can achieve a coherent personality and are accountable for their actions. Both the theatre and ourselves have had enough of psychology.

Life has not utterly changed and the work of the best invigorate us by bringing us into contact with ideas and emotions that perhaps we, otherwise neglect- play help to be revivals of the people who see and read them. Here, I wish say that theatre may hasten the day when the rise to challenge the competition- response as audience in vast and vociferous numbers- will contribute to generating the consistent creation of theatre. Of all the art forms show business is the most unpredictable, gigantic and complex in collaboration. It's really magic- finally when it gets into the feel of magic it turns the world down to RELISATION- "All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players. If this is an appeal to humanity – I justify my title that theatre as a perennial appeal to humanity.

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Drama has been a very unique form of art since the very beginning. It has been an enabling and enriching medium of art. Also it has been the best form of art to reach the masses more effectively. No other art form has ever been able to reach as many people as much as drama did. The drama audience require very little or no preparation at all to appreciate a play, unlike any other form of art, such as music and dance, which all need a certain amount of preparation and a degree of taste. Music, painting, sculpture, architecture and all other forms of art need the audience/connoisseur to have cultivated a taste to appreciate what is being presented as the expression of art. They all require a certain amount of knowledge, without which the art expression falls flat. Drama does not need any such preparation as it is an expression of life itself.

The technicalities of theatre production need not be known to its audience because what they eventually see on stage is nothing but a re-enactment of life. Hence it is not surprising that drama became a very popular and powerful form of art until it was challenged by the modern mass media. Yet it can be safely said that drama/theatre even today wields a formidable influence on the people and can be as during the 16th century it was the most popular and influential form of entertainment in Europe.

Drama in India stands as the tallest and richest tradition. In fact the very spirit of the Indianness coins by the virtue of traditions, beliefs and values which the drama propagates. Tracing its roots in the revered Vedic era, drama has been celebrated throughout the ages. Ramayana, Mahabharata and the holy Bhagavad-Gita have been the epitomes of various dramatic plots. These have for long been used for promoting sensibility of issues prevailing in the society. The origin of drama in the world is mostly rooted in the religious instincts of people. In England the development of drama had larger contribution from the 'Church'. The 'Miracle' and 'Morality' plays drew heavily from the religious elements; written mostly by the clergy men. Likewise in other countries like Egypt and China drama grew on the similar lines. In India drama originated and came to be enacted in temples. Bharat Muni in 7th century A.D propounded his theory of drama in Natyashastra. According to his philosophy- Lord Brahma poured the nectar of all the four Vedas (Sama, Yajur, Rig and Atharva) to form the new Veda-the fifth one: Natya. Indian 'English Drama' was structured on the various European Models and plots of Sanskrit plays. The peregrination of Indian English Drama has been the canvas portrayal of diffidence until the literary wizard like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Harindranath Chatopadhyay occupied the stage in the pre- independence era. Their plays were largely inspired in soul from the deep rooted beliefs and values of the Indian soil-the 'Indian Sensibility'. In the post independence era the trend of translation of plays from various original vernacular form of language to English was in vogue. The



prime flag bearers of the genre were great playwrights like Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Mahesh Dattani, Uma Parmeswaran and Vijay Tendulkar.

Girish Karnad has been the playwright who impacted the Indian English Drama in a big positive manner. Through his first play-Yayati in the year 1961, Karnad embarked on what was going to be a splendid set of contribution to the Indian English Drama. Being a convincing voice of the era Girish Karnad has through his plays been able to convey beautifully the various shades of 'Man-Woman Relationships'.

It would be apt to term that he had the connoisseur eye in visualizing and building the underlying currents in the relationships of the characters of his play. The fabulous blend of myth and folklore made his creations churn out the crux of man-woman relationships. These would though appear complex in display, but were simple to comprehend and correlate. The power of communication that his characters imbibed from his outstanding yet simple style of creation had a phenomenal effect on the audience. The 'Man-Woman Relationships' in his plays have received a meticulous treatment.

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