

Theatre Criticism in Marathi

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Theatre criticism in Maharashtra dates back to a hundred and fifty years. In order to understand the nature of this criticism, one must study the different stages through which Marathi theatre evolved.

Modern Marathi theatre had its beginning in 1843 at Sangli, where Vishnudas Bhave's play *Sita Swayamvar* was staged under the patronage of Raja Chintaman-rao Patwardhan. This was the first ticketed show in the history of Marathi theatre. Every modern theatre has its own traditional sources. In the context of Marathi theatre, two traditional streams need to be considered: the folk theatre, and Tanjavari Natak. There are various forms of folk theatre in Maharashtra: Kalasutri, Bahulyancha Khel, Lalita, Bharud, Dashavatara, Naman, Khele, Tamasha, Gondhal, Vasudeva, Bahuroopi, Songi Bhajan etc. Together with these, Kirtana remains as the original source of folk theatre. These forms still exist in Maharashtra together with the urban proscenium theatre.

The other stream, Tanjavari Natak, had its locus in the Maratha dominion in present-day Tamil Nadu. It was only in the early 20th century that the historian Rajwade brought to light the plays of the Tanjavari dramatists. They were members of the royal family. Shivaji's stepbrother Vyankoji Raje's son Shahaji Raje was a prolific playwright who wrote no less than 22 plays in Marathi and almost as many in Telugu besides a few plays in Sanskrit and Hindi. His Marathi plays are: *Ganesh Jayanti*, *Saraswati*, *Parvati*, *Sita Kalyan*, *Pattabhishek*, *Sachi Purandhar*, *Valli Kalyan*, *Krishna Leela*, *Jalakrida*, *Sati Pati Kalyan*, *Shanta Kalyan*, *Shankar Narayan*, *Pancha Bhasha Vilas*, *Sarvang Sundari*, *Rati Kalyan*, *Mrutyunjaya Chiranjeeva*, *Hari Har Vilas*, *Laxmi Narayan Kalyan*, *Govardhan Uddharana*, *Ganga Kaveri Samvad*, *Subhadra Kalyan* and *Laxmi Bhudevi Samvad*.

Raje Pratapsinh, nephew of Shahaji Raje, wrote 20 plays of which 17 plays are traceable in the records of Saraswati Grantha Mahal library of Thanjavur: *Sita Kalyan*, *Uma Kalyan*, *Laxmi Parichaya*, *Krishna Janma*, *Dhruva Charitra*, *Parijat Apaharan*, *Parvati Kalyan*, *Mayavati Parichaya*, *Prabodha Chandrodaya*, *Mitra Vinda Parichaya*, *Yayati Charitra*, *Janaki Sukhoullhasa*, *Prabhavatti Kalyan*, *Anasuya Upakhyana*, *Rukmangada Natak*, *Rukmini Kalyan* and *Swamantaka Upakhyana*.

Serfoji Raje Bhosale, the grandson of Raje Pratapsinh, also wrote a number of plays which were preserved in Grantha Mahal, known for its collection of manuscripts of plays. Serfoji's plays are: *Ganesh Leela Varnana*, *Ganesh Vijaya*, *Ganga Vishweshwar Parichaya*, *Devendra Kavarji*, *Mohini Mahesh Parichaya*,

Radha Krishna Vilas, Shiva Ratra Upakhyana, Meenakshi Parichaya and Subhadra Parichaya.

These royal playwrights were multilingual and were open to many influences including Sanskrit drama and the Yakshagana theatre of Karnataka. But their often sophisticated plays were not accessible to 'mainland' Maharashtra, geographically and culturally separated from the distant dominion in Thanjavur. Very little has been written on Thanjavari Natak apart from the studies of Rajwade and Maya Sardesai.

From the mid-19th century Marathi drama and theatre came increasingly under the influence of Sanskrit and English plays. There was a spate of translations. The Gujarati and Urdu plays of the Parsi companies, with their clever use of music, dance, and special effects, also exerted powerful influence on the Marathi stage.

Prabodha Chandrodaya, the first play translated into Marathi, was published in 1851. It was translated from the Sanskrit by S.B. Amarapurkar and Raoji Bapuji Shastri. Some of the other translations from this period are: *Venisanhar*, *Uttar Ram Charitra*, *Shakuntala*, *Mruchhakatika*, *Parvati Parichaya*, and *Naga Nanda* by Parashuramtatya Godbole; *Janaki Parichaya* and *Malavikagnimitra* by Ganesh-shastri Lele; Shakespeare's *Othello* by Madhavshastri Kolhatkar, *The Merchant of Venice* by A.V. Patkar and *Julius Caesar* by B.G. Natu. However, not all these plays were staged on account of technical problems of stagecraft. Farces came into vogue from the 1860s, beginning with Bala Koti-Bhaskar's *Sitaharan*. Not all of these were on humorous themes. For instance, *Narayanrao Peshwe Yanchya Vadha* Farce and *Afzal Khanacha Mrutyucha Farce* dealt with assassination and death.

Annasaheb Kirloskar pioneered Marathi Sangeet Natak in the latter part of the 19th century. His play *Shankutala* was first staged in Pune on 31 October 1880. Encouraged by its great success, Kirloskar staged his second play, *Soubhadra*, on 18 November 1882 at Purnananda Theatre in Pune. This performance too was a remarkable success. Kirloskar's other plays were *Shankar Digvijaya* and *Ramara-jya Viyog*.

After the Kirloskar era, Govind Ballal Deval emerged as a major playwright. He wrote seven plays: *Durga*, *Zunjarrao*, *Vikramorvasi*, *Samshayakallol*, *Mruchhakatika*, *Shapasambhram* and *Sharada*. Of these *Vikramorvasi*, *Mruchhakatika* and *Shapasambhram* were of Sanskrit origin. *Zunjarrao* was an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, *Samshayakallol* is based on Moliere's *Gonerel* ('All in the Wrong', English translation by Murphy), adapted with consummate skill. *Sharada*, first staged in 1899, caused a social upheaval in Maharashtra. Dealing with the practice of marriage between young girls and old men—*bala jaratha vivaha*—the play became a landmark in the development of the Marathi stage.

The first decade of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of Shreepad Krishna Kolhatkar as a popular playwright. His plays include *Veera Tanaya*, *Muka Nayak*, *Gupta Manjusha*, *Mati Vikar*, *Prem Shodhan*, *Vadhu Pariksha*, *Janma Rahasya* and *Shiva Pavitrya*. Kolhatkar did not write plays on mythological or historical themes but chose his own, and made ample use of Parsi stage music in his

productions. Technically his plays lacked finesse, and thus enjoyed only a transitory popularity.

Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar, who followed Kolhatkar, wrote 15 plays in all. Most of them are based on mythological and historical themes while some have original plots. Khadilkar's hallmark is the philosophical content of his plays, introduced in mythological and historical situations. He was much influenced by Shakespearean tragedy and handled adaptations with ability. Before him Deval, Kolhatkar and Agarkar had also tried their hand at bringing Shakespeare to the Marathi stage but they did not succeed in respect of characterization the way Khadilkar did. He could handle prose plays and musicals with equal facility. *Manapaman*, *Swayamvar* and *Vidyaharan* became all-time musical hits.

Playwright Ram Ganesh Gadkari, who followed, was also a humourist and poet. His plays, written in the second decade of this century, include *Prem Sanyas*, *Punya Prabhav*, *Eakach Pyala*, *Bhav Bandhan*, *Raj Sanyas*, *Vedyancha Bajar* and *Garva Nirvana*. *Eakach Pyala* is the best known among them. Gadkari was greatly influenced by Shakespeare. His imaginative prose and poetry have always attracted Marathi readers and performances of his plays continue to be popular.

Among the earliest published pieces of theatre criticism in Marathi is a notice of Vishnudas Bhav's plays which appeared in the daily *Dnyanaprakash* on 11 February 1856. It said (in English translation): "These plays have the advantage of attracting large audiences to watch performances based on mythological themes. In contrast the contemporary folk theatre—*Tamasha*, *Lalit*, etc.—has its mainstay in vulgarity and cheap humour, which generally leads to misconduct and misbehaviour of people in society. Such performances are of an obscene nature. Against this background, Vishnudas Bhav's plays with their mature language, decent and sophisticated humour, the use of *rasas* such as *veera*, *shoka* and *ananda* offer entertainment of a higher order to respectable audiences."

The establishment of the University of Bombay in 1857 was a noteworthy event in the cultural history of Maharashtra and had a beneficial influence on the Marathi stage as well. It provided exposure to English literature and its criticism, and created a more widespread awareness of literature and drama. Sanskrit and English plays were increasingly introduced in Marathi theatre.

From the 1860s, reflections on the current theatre began appearing fairly regularly in the Marathi press. These writings discussed the issue of themes for drama, the question of realism, as well as technical aspects of theatre. A good example is Krishnashastri Chiplunkar's criticism of V.J. Kirtane's plays *Jayapal* and *Thorle Madhavrao Peshwe*, in essays published in *Shalapatrak* in 1865.

Kashinath Balkrishna Marathe presented a paper entitled *Naval Natika* before Dnyanaprasarak Sabha on 1 August 1872. It dealt with the plays *Manorama* and *Swaitesakesha*. Emphasizing the moral aspect, Marathe condemned obscenity on stage disguised as realism. Further, criticizing the penchant of Marathi playwrights for long soliloquies, he wrote: "Whatever may be the subject matter of a play, its exposition has to be through the action of the characters. The playwright can never

provide an exposition through description. Even the soliloquies may not be useful in this regard. In fact, as experienced in plays like *Manorama* and *Swairesakesha*, players delivering long soliloquies spoil the effect of drama. In Sanskrit and English drama the use of soliloquies is minimal".

Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, son of Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, in his essay *Granthavar Teeka* (Criticism of Books) published in the magazine *Nibandhamala* in 1867 praised the translation of *Othello* by Madhavshastri Kolhatkar. He wrote: "It has been achieved in an excellent manner. That the play could be rendered so effectively in Marathi was not realized by the author himself! But this was possible only because of Kolhatkar's romantic nature and the selection of the play itself."

Referring to Nilakantha Janardan Kirtane's *Tara*, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar wrote many years later (1909) in *Nibandhamala*: There has been a graded change in people's attitude and taste in theatre. Audiences today also appreciate themes other than the mythological, and this gives playwrights a chance to handle new subjects. *Tara* happens to be a good example of a new play based on a foreign source." Around the same time Annasaheb Kirloskar's plays appeared on the scene. *Shakuntala*, which was staged in 1880, laid the foundation of the Marathi Sangeet Natak. This attempt too, was appreciated by Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, who wrote approvingly of the vogue of the Sangeet Natak in the daily *Kesari*. In his article '*Natak Granth ani Natak Prayog*' he discussed Marathi Sangeet Natak in the context of European opera.

Translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays were a salient feature of the period. *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest* and *The Taming of the Shrew* saw their Marathi reincarnations in the late 19th century. They were widely discussed by contemporary critics. G.G. Agarkar and G.V. Kanitkar, for instance, wrote about two translations of *Hamlet* in *Nibandha Chandrika* in 1883.

The state of the nascent Marathi stage dictated the nature of theatre criticism till the end of the 19th century. Most of the criticism dealt with newly adapted plays, obscenity, theatre and social reform, etc. Details of the construction of a play, characterization and dialogues were not examined by and large.

Though the attempts at theatre criticism by Krishnashastri and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar have their value in the context of the times, more important is the later work of Shripad Krishna Kolhatkar. He wrote critical essays on many plays including Deval's *Shapasambhrama*, Dongare's *Chandrasena*, Barve's *Matrushiksha Prabhav*, Natekar's *Bajirao Mastani*, Patankar's *Vikram Shashikala*, N.C. Kelkar's *Totayache Banda* and Kirloskar's *Soubhadra*. Kolhatkar refuted some harsh views expressed on these plays, and commented in defence of Marathi theatre: "The evolution of theatre in England was a gradual process while Marathi theatre has enjoyed its childhood, youth and old age within a period of 30 years." In his article *Sadyasthitiprerit Dona Nataka* (Two Contemporary Plays), he wrote about *Bhimrao* and *Swami Chidananda*, based on Schiller's plays (*Vividh Dnyana Vistar*, 1907-8). Kolhatkar's criticism of the play *Totayache Banda* (in *Manorajan*, 1914) is a milestone in the history of Marathi theatre criticism. The essay, running

into 100 pages, is a mature and thorough piece of criticism in which Kolhatkar has discussed the fundamental principles of drama in a bold and straightforward manner. In this and other pieces, Kolhatkar introduced an appropriate Marathi terminology for dramatic criticism which benefited critics who came after him.

In 1903 Appaji Vishnu Kulkarni wrote *Marathi Rangabhoomi* ('The Marathi Stage'), an important work which surveyed the development of Marathi theatre from Vishnudas Bhawe to the end of the 19th century. It details the actual performance of plays and deals at length with actors, writers, drama companies, and the taste of the contemporary audience. The author does not hesitate to criticize slipshod and lopsided performances of some historical plays.

At the beginning of the 20th century a number of critics emerged on the scene, writing on theatre with increasing authority. Narayanrao Bhavanrao Pavgi in his 'Bharatiya Natya Shastra ani Natya Kala' (Indian Dramatics and Dramatic Art) was one of the first to attempt a fundamental discussion of dramatics in Marathi. Shankarrao Mazumdar's book on appreciation of drama, published in 1902, was also a noteworthy contribution.

In August 1907 Mazumdar established the monthly *Rangabhoomi* all 91 issues of which, published from 1907 to 1927, are fortunately available. In the editorial of the inaugural issue, Shankarrao Mazumdar says: "We hope that the audience which eagerly waits for the climax of an exciting play would show equal eagerness for the arrival of *Rangabhoomi*'s issues and wish long life for the monthly. The journal will give more and more space for writings in the field of theatre."

Rangabhoomi published reviews of contemporary productions in Marathi, Sanskrit and English. Among them were *Keechakvadh*, *Mativikar*, *Sharada*, *Baikanche Band*, *Premshodhan*, *Matsyagandha*, *Rakshasi Mahatwakansha* and *Hach Mulacha Bap*. The outlook of the critics was original, free and bold. They did not hesitate to point out drawbacks in a performance but were also mindful of various difficulties of play-production, especially the difficulties of plays rendered from other languages. Among the contributors to *Rangabhoomi* was Gopal Waman Bapat, one of whose articles was on 'Shakuntala Natak Nibandha'. An anonymous critic wrote on Khadilkar's *Keechak-Vadh*, in which the playwright used a mythological plot to deal with socio-political problems in quite a modern manner.

The eminent playwright Ram Ganesh Gadkari wrote an article in *Rangabhoomi* on the actor's place in society ('Samajat Natache Sthan') in which he held that an actor's success depended mostly on the audience, on whom Gadkari could be quite severe. R.G. Dandavate expressed his views on an actor's training ('Nat va Shikshan') in 1910, a topic which was touched upon earlier by Anand Waman Barve in 1908. V.A. Keskar advocated a training course for actors.

A critics' circle—*Natya Charcha Mandal*—was set up by Maharashtra Natak Mandal in Pune in 1909. This was the first effort to establish a forum—additional to newspapers and journals—where theatre could be freely discussed by writers and laymen.

Though a good deal of critical writing was published on the dramatic art of

Kirloskar, Deval, Kolhatkar and Khadilkar from 1843 to 1920, the first book devoted exclusively to a playwright was on Ram Ganesh Gadkari. It was jointly published by S.B. Joshi and K.V. Sathe in 1924, five years after the dramatist's death. Another study of Gadkari, by V.S. Khandekar, appeared in 1932. Khandekar later acquired renown as a theatre critic by his work *Marathicha Natya Sansar* (The Marathi Theatre).

Major changes occurred on the Marathi stage from the mid-1920s. The World War and a burgeoning industry at home left their marks on life and society. In Marathi theatre, the popularity of the Sangeet Natak declined, and so did the taste for historical and mythological plots. Many of the old drama companies closed down, including Kirloskar Sangeet Mandali, Ichalkaranjikar Natak Mandali, Punekar Natak Mandali, Swadeshhit Natak Mandali and Shahu Nagarwasi Mandali. The coming of cinema (silent films in 1913 and talkies in 1932) offered an alternative to theatre-going audiences. A new generation of playwrights took on fresh challenges: B.R. (Mama) Warkar, P.K. Atre, M.G. Rangnekar, S.V. Vartak, Y.N. Tipnis and Madhavrao Joshi, for example. Drama turned its attention to social themes, rendered realistically, and came under the influence of modern dramatists, chiefly Ibsen.

After independence Marathi theatre developed in many new directions. Together with the professional theatre, amateur theatre, political theatre and children's theatre grew apace. The traditional Sangeet Natak too acquired a fresh lease of life with the growth of a new awareness about the use of music in theatre.

V.V. Shirwadkar, Vasant Kanetkar, Jayant Dalvi, P.L. Deshpande, Ratnakar Matkari and Bal Kolhatkar emerged as leading playwrights of the professional stage. Shirwadkar's *Nat Samarat*, Kanetkar's *Raygadala Jevanha Jag Yete*, *Himalayachi Sawali* and *Ashrunchi Jhali Phule*, Jayawant Dalvi's *Sandhya-Chhaya*, *Barrister* and *Nati-Goti*, and P.L. Deshpande's *Tujhe Aahe Tujhapashi*, Ratnakar Matkari's *Ashwamedha*, Bal Kolhatkar's *Wahato Hi Durvanchi Judi* have been among the outstanding plays on the professional stage.

Alongside, there has been a great deal of experimental activity in post-independence theatre, both in the form and substance of Marathi drama. Vijay Tendulkar does not shy away from depicting cruelty, violence and lust. *Manus Navache Bet*, *Ghashiram Kotwal*, *Sakharam Binder* and *Gidhade* are some of his outstanding plays. Other playwrights have brought existential and political concerns to Marathi theatre, or dealt with social themes in new ways. Plays like *Garbo*, *Wasanakand Atmakatha* and *Wada Chirebandi* by Mahesh Elkunchwar, *Begam Barve* and *Atireki* by Satish Alekar, *Uddhwastha Dharmashala* and *Andhar Yatra* by G.P. Deshpande, and *Chal re Bhopalaya Tunuk Tunuk* by Achyut Vaze have enlarged the scope of Marathi theatre. Playwrights of a younger generation like Chetan Datar, Prashant Dalvi, Premanand Gajwi, Ajit Dalvi, Sanjay Pawar and Tushar Bhadre have also made their distinctive contributions.

Ratnakar Matkari, Sudha Karmarkar and Sai Paranjape are among those who have helped to develop children's theatre. During the last 15 years the Dalit theatre

has also made a place for itself in Marathi theatre. Playwrights like Datta Bhagat, Premanand Gajwi and B.S. Shinde have brought their own social experience on stage.

S.N. Banahatti's history of Marathi theatre—*Marathi Rangbhumicha Itihas*—published in 1957 is a major work on theatre in the post-independence era. He has critically and exhaustively surveyed the early history of Marathi theatre. G.K. Bhat, a scholar of Sanskrit literature and drama, is remembered for his *Vidushak* (1959), a work that considers the concept and tradition of the jester in Sanskrit drama. K. Narayan Kale, himself an actor, director and playwright, has been a theatre critic of high repute. He was the founder member of Natyamanvantar, a theatre group established in 1933 which did pioneering work in experimental theatre and is especially known for its production of *Andhalyanchi Shala*. Kale's objective and comprehensive outlook is reflected in his critical works including *Natya Vimarsha* and *Pratima, Roop ani Rang*. Kale's high literary standards and critical outlook benefited not only Natyamanvantar but also Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangha, Rangayan, and many other amateur groups. His view of drama and theatre is expressed in the following excerpt from his book *Natya Vimarsha*. "Criticism of drama and criticism of theatre are quite distinct and different from each other. The common man in the audience is often unable to understand the difference. This leads to a great deal of confusion in the mind of the common reader (of drama) and the common theatregoer. The critic's responsibility is to make the common man in the audience aware of this difference. Sometimes the reading of a play may be very impressive, and yet the play may not be very effective on the stage. This, however, does not mean that the play has no value. The critic himself must be aware of this and should study both literary and theatrical values. (*Natya Vimarsha*, p. 73).

R.S. Walimbe, eminent critic, has written on many aspects of Marathi theatre. His work *Marathi Rangabhoomivaril Vastavavad* is a major work on realism on the Marathi stage. His survey of Marathi theatre criticism is titled *Marathi Natyasamiksha: 1865–1935*. He has also written a critical study of Gadkari, *Natakhar Gadkari*. Some of his other subjects are the Marathi Sangeet Natak and Sanskrit drama.

Other noteworthy works of theatre criticism belonging to the post-independence era include *Nat, Natak ani Natakhar* ('The Actor, the Play and the Playwright') and *Makhmalicha Padada* ('The Velvet Curtain') by Vasant Shantaram Desai, examining the Sangeet Natak of Balagandharva's times; *Sangeetane Gajleli Rangabhoomi* by Baburao Joshi, which gives us a good idea of the present-day Sangeet Natak; and *Puranik Natyasrushti* ('Mythology and the Theatre') and *Samajik Natyasrushti* ('Society and the Theatre') by V.P. Dandekar.

V.D. Kulkarni, a well-known critic of modern Marathi literature, has done significant work as a theatre critic. His survey of the tragedy, the comedy and the one-act-play in Marathi holds an important place in Marathi theatre criticism. His book on Kirloskar's *Soubhadra* is an in-depth study of a single play.

Gadkari's *Ekach Pyala* has also been commented upon by various critics. An

exhaustive preface to the play by S.K. Kshirsagar changed the general assessment of the play. Here Kshirsagar critically discusses the play in the light of Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. It has also been discussed by T.V. Sardeshmukh and Gangadhar Gadgil.

In respect of contemporary playwrights, G.M. Kulkarni and Chandrashekhar Barve's book on Vijay Tendulkar's plays—*Tendulkaranchi Nataka*—is regarded as an important work.

The journal *Natak*, published by Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh, was a notable periodical on Marathi theatre. It is important particularly for Bapurao Naik's technical discussion of the stage and the auditorium, and Madhav Manohar's controversial series of articles on aspects of Marathi theatre which he found wanting.

An interdisciplinary seminar on Marathi theatre and mental disorder was held in Modern College, Pune, in which playwrights, directors, as well as psychiatrists presented papers on plays like *Gidhade*, *Vasanakand*, *Mahapur*, *Savita Damodar*, *Paranjape* and *Garbo*. The essays were later published in a book titled *Marathi Natak ani Manovikruti*.

Among notable writers on Marathi theatre are Tara Bhavalkar, Gangadhar Patil, Ashok Kelkar, Vasant Kanetkar, S.G. Malshe, Bhimrao Kulkarni, D.V. Deshpande, G.P. Deshpande, Shriram Lagoo and Sunil Subedar. 'Natak—Ek Chintan' by Vasant Kanetkar, 'Natya Darshan' by Sunil Subedar and 'Mala Disleli Natke' ('Plays I have seen') by D.V. Deshpande are some of the books by these writers.

Madhav Manohar, an eminent theatre critic and a scholar of literature, is known for the boldness and sharpness of his writings on theatre. Many of his essays on drama and theatre have been compiled in book form.

Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni wrote in the fortnightly *Mouj* and later in a number of English periodicals. Author of a biography of Balagandharva in English, Nadkarni is also well known as an art critic.

Pushpa Bhawe is a critic who has written ably on Marathi drama and theatre. The present writer has been writing on theatre for many years in journals including *Manoos* and *Sobat*, besides the books *Natakkar Khanolkar*, *Theatre Criticism—Some Viewpoints* (an edited volume) and *Raygadala Jenvha Jag Yete* ('The Play and its Criticism').

Reviewers of plays in Marathi active for several years include V.Y. Gadgil, R.G. Sardesai, Atmaram Sawant, Pandit Mandke, Kamalakar Nadkarni, Raja Karale, Mangesh Tendulkar, Shashikant Narvekar, R.N. Paranjape, Madhav Vaze, Madhav Kulkarni, Suresh Chandra Padhye, Rajeev Naik, Prashant Dalvi and Vijay Tapas. Rajeev and Arun Naik ran for some time in English journal named *Sameeksha* ('Criticism') devoted to theatre. Suresh Chandra Padhye has recently published a collection of his reviews of plays, *Natakachi Savli*.

As in other languages, theatre criticism in Marathi is published mainly in newspapers and magazines. Some of the important periodicals carrying theatre criticism in the post-independence era include *Natak*, *Natya Darpan*, *Bharat*

Shastra, *Natya Bhoomi*, *Sameeksha*, *Satyakatha*, *Abhiruchi*, *Manoos*, *Sakal*, *Kesari*, *Maharashtra Times*, *Loksatta*, *Lok Prabha*, *Jatra*, *Saptahik Sakal*, *Prabhat* and *Tarun Bharat*. The journal *Bharat Shastra* was, till its closure due to financial problems, notable for its devoted attempt to popularize theatre and promote sound criticism. *Manoos* and *Sobat* have also made a similar effort. Newspapers and their supplements are an important outlet for a theatre critic today to express his views. With a burgeoning press and substantial newspaper supplements, the volume of critical writing on theatre has certainly expanded in the recent past. However, what gets published is of uneven standard.

Marathi theatre in its career of some 150 years has responded to new challenges and thrown out new branches on the way. Style, substance, themes have changed—and are changing—along with changes in society. These are times for the critic to take stock of the new developments, explore new horizons, and affirm the meaningful in theatre. □