

# HANUMAN AND TRADITIONAL INDIAN THEATRE

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Exploring reality through the perspective of stylization has been the basic approach of traditional Indian art whether it is visual, performing or literary. According to the *Saivite* modification of *Sankhya* theory, art (कला) is one of the five separative illusory sheaths (कंचुक) of *maya*, the divine illusion. The suggestion finds a perfect parallel when Picasso defines art as 'a lie that makes us realise the truth'. This 'truth' is obviously not phenomenal reality, but the essence behind it. From such a point of view a rationalistic approach to art would, naturally, appear imitative and, therefore, inferior and less creative. The theory when extended to the literary art of characterization and also to the delineation of a character through either visual or performing arts, calls for a stylized, non-photographic treatment. The *Puranic* characters judged from this angle would appear more meaningful than trying to find, with all sorts of efforts, historicity, allegory, anthropomorphism, theriomorphism, etc. in them. Unfortunately history was not being written in the *Puranic* age. Our unquenchable thirst for historical knowledge, therefore, leads us to *Puranic* literature and the ingenious scholars through their wonderful interpretative ability reduce these essentially literary works to pure history in verse. Even these scholars find an insoluble enigma in the character of Hanuman. Valmiki has portrayed him in such a way that he is neither a monkey nor a man nor a god, yet he is unmistakably all these.

## Various Interpretations

I do not know of any musicologist trying to draw a pitch-pattern for the 'unheard melodies' nor of any anthropologist labouring to identify an ethnic group for characters like Caliban, Bottom and Ariel, but such efforts are likely to yield highly interesting results as has been the case when scholars tried to analyse Hanuman with rationalistic apparatus. Those who are bent upon

finding an allegory in every myth surmise that Hanuman is personified monsoon cloud. The cloud rises from earth and spreads its body in the sky taking various shapes at different times and crosses the sea just as Hanuman does. It rains but seeking Sita — the essence of the earth-spirit. These scholars, however, do not offer any satisfactory answer to the question that if Hanuman is personified monsoon cloud as to why Valmiki chose to give him the shape of a monkey and not of a bird which would have been much more apt?

Other scholars who, reading between the lines find factual material in every *Puranic* legend are more in number and much more inventive logicians. According to them *Ramayana* is the story of the Aryan invasion of Dravidian kingdoms and Hanuman belongs to a tribe called Vanara. Consigning Hanuman to an ethnic group would be logical if it could be proved, from the writing of Valmiki, that he is certainly not a monkey. For the purpose a couplet from the 26th *Sarga* of Kiskindhakanda is found very handy. It reads :

चतुर्दश समाः सौम्य ग्रामं वा यदि वा पुरम् ।  
न प्रवेक्ष्यामि हनुमन् पितुर्निदेशपालकः ॥ (9th Sloka)

The context is : Hanuman invites Rama to the coronation ceremony of Sugriva after Bali is killed and Rama replies in this couplet, “O, my dear Hanuman, in accordance with the behest of my father I am not to enter a village or a city, that is, any human habitation, for 14 years.” This, certainly, indicates that Sugriva, Hanuman and all others in Kiskindha are human beings not monkeys. Had they been monkeys Rama would have no objection to entering into the city of Kiskindha since on an earlier occasion he lives in Chitrakuta where there are plenty of monkeys. This is again evident from another couplet of Valmiki found in the 54th *Sarga* of Ayodhyakanda. It reads :

गोलाङ्गूलानुचरितो वानरर्क्षनिषेवितः ।  
चित्रकूट इति ख्यातो गन्धमादनसंनिभः ॥ (29th Sloka)

The context is : Rama in exile meets the sage Bharadwaja who gives him warm hospitality and requests him to stay in the *Ashrama*. Rama dare not stay there longer since the hermitage is close to the abode of men. Therefore, Rama requests the sage to suggest a place where he can stay without violating the vow. Bharadwaja points to the Chitrakuta mountains and describing the place to be safe for Rama says in the above quoted couplet, “Monkeys, bears and chimpanzees wander there freely. That mountain Chitrakuta is delightful as Gandhamadana.”

It is, therefore, logical to infer that in the age of *Ramayana* there were two kinds of monkeys: animal monkey and human-monkey. In Chitrakuta

there were animal-monkeys, but in Kiskindha human-monkeys. And human-monkeys are certainly tribals!

This thread of logic experiences a rude shock when Hanuman starts speaking chaste Sanskrit and Valmiki's portrayal conjures up a highly cultured, ethical and sophisticated image of Hanuman. The logicians then flounder for a qualifying adjective and say that Hanuman is cultured because the Vanara tribe, as a whole, was highly civilized. Dr. S.N. Vyas has devoted one complete chapter in his *India in the Ramayana Age* for describing the Vanara civilization with rare erudition. Based on Valmiki's *Ramayana* he has made a thorough survey of the Vanara culture. Every utterance of Valmiki on Vanaras has come under his scrutiny. His finding of two kinds of monkeys— the human-monkeys and the animal-monkeys — agrees, more or less, with the findings of other scholars like Gorresio, Wheeler, M.N. Roy, K.S. Ramaswami Sastri and Rajanikanta Guha. With all genuine respect and admiration for erudite scholarship I have one humble question : is Valmiki that consistent in portraying the two kinds of monkeys? Dr. Vyas himself has given the answer in the said chapter and it is quoted here. "There is a real difficulty in the identification of the Vanaras which arises out of the fact that the poet of the *Ramayana* has not maintained consistency in the depiction of the race. At times he represents them as real monkeys and tries to keep the verisimilitude by various devices."

Is it then the weakness of Valmiki as poet that he has not been able to maintain a consistency in his treatment of Vanaras? Is it his fault that he cannot conform to a framework carpentered by the scholars? Or is there a deeper purpose for this so-called inconsistency?

According to the accepted values the word 'monkey' used as adjective (as in the expression 'monkey-business') carries a derogatory sense. Viewed from a different perspective it may not mean so. To the sensitive eyes of Lin Yu-tang the face of a chimpanzee looks infinitely sad, contemplative and the deep dissatisfaction in it points to the evolution of man. Therefore, perspective is important. And to develop the perspective of a poet, who is also a voyant, Rimbaud has prescribed 'long, immense, reasoned derangement of all the senses'. Tentacles of logic powered by rationality can not even touch the periphery of poetry. To hear 'unheard melodies', to see 'multitudinous seas incarnadine' or to 'measure life with coffee-spoons' one is required to adjust his perspective, certainly not with the wrench of logic. The poet whose voyance could crystallise a character like Ravana with ten heads, twenty hands on a single trunk with two powerful legs, had surely deranged all his senses by a long and immense *tapasya* and to search for rational consistency in his writing would be a cry in the wilderness. If at all we want to comprehend him let us adjust our perspective as Rimbaud has suggested.

To be a *sahridya* reader of Valmiki, that is, to have the perspective,

sensitivity and sensibility similar to that of the poet, it would, perhaps, be helpful if the important traits of Hanuman, as depicted in the epic, are taken into consideration. He, like most of the Vanaras, is *kama-rupina* (capable of assuming form at will. Vide: I.17, 18; IV. 19, 10 and 39.38; VI. 127.24). A sort of monkey-ness (*capalyam*) is there in him as is evident from the excesses he commits, along with other Vanaras, in Madhuvana (V. 61). On the other hand, he keeps his mind fully under his control (V. 11.41 & 42) and is highly ethical. He never casts his eyes on women belonging to others (V. 11.37 to 39). He is not only well versed with *doutya*, the duties of an envoy (V. 2.38 and 30.38) but also in Vedic studies (IV. 3.28). He has a perfect command over grammar and never uses inappropriate words nor has any mannerism of expression (IV. 2.39 to 33) and, therefore, he speaks so very effectively that Valmiki has two epithets for him: *Vakyajna* and *Vakyakushala* (IV. 3.24). Though his speech is light, sweet yet weighty like that of a superb politician, he is least eager to make a speech or to show his debating skill nor is he ever vain of his talent (VI. 17.52). An intellectual of the highest order he has an extremely pleasing personality (*shobhana*), combining bodily strength, heroism, vigour and courage, nobility of spirit (*sattvam*), forbearance and humility, learning and wisdom (VI. 113.25 & 26). Thus the total image that emerges out of the said traits is highly complex. To Tulsidas, the famous author of *Ramacharitmanas*, the character of Hanuman appeared saintly — a saint who combines both the qualities of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In fact the behaviour of a person who has realised God may seem, at times, very funny to an ordinary eye. For example, a common man, who has no idea of *Hathayoga*, if ever sees a Yogi in some *Asana* position, say *Shirshasana*, it may look very funny to him. A genuine Yogi is indeed a highly complex person.

Again Valmiki's genius has beautifully blended myth with poetry. Myth, for him, forms a bridge between emotive experience and intellectual thought. Our perspective for mythical thought, therefore, requires adjustment as well. In this connection the suggestion of the renowned social-anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss may be helpful. He says, "Mythical thought surpasses itself and contemplates, beyond images still clinging to concrete experience a world of concepts... no longer by reference to an external reality, but according to their own mutual affinities or incompatibilities manifested in the architecture of the spirit." The architecture of Valmiki's spirit is certainly not the mirror of life but an image in the mirror which life approximates. Therefore, the text of *Ramayana* contains a poetic truth of eternal and universal validity, leaving it open to interpretation and appreciation by men of different ages, societies and faiths.

### Traditional Theatre

All the branches of Indian art draw heavily upon *Ramayana*, but the closest *sahridya* is, perhaps, the traditional theatre. Essentially stylized



Above left: Hanuman mask in Sahi Jatra; Above right: Hanuman mask in Ramleela of Varanasi;  
Below left: Hanuman in Koodiyattam; Below right; in Kathakali.





Above left: Hanuman in Gom-  
 atta Marionette Theatre of  
 nataka; Right, in Bomalattam  
 rionette Theatre Tamilnadu;  
 Below: Masked Hanuman of  
 ulia Chhau, West Bengal.

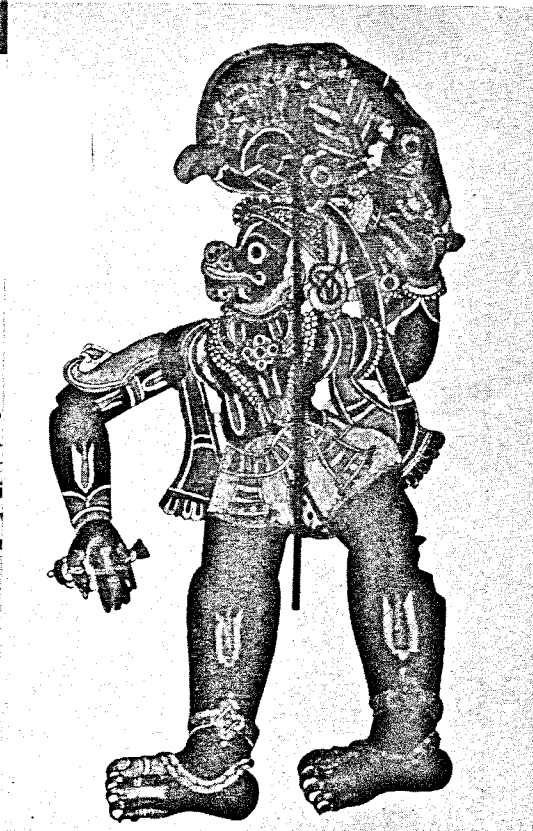
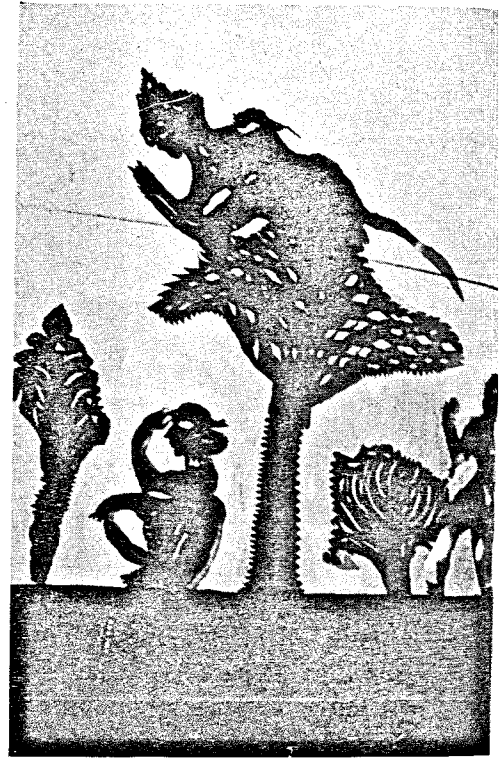




Above: Hanuman in Yakshagana (northern style) Karnataka; Below left, in Yakshagana Andhra Pradesh and below right, in Yakshagana (Southern style) Karnataka.







Hanuman in Shadow Theatre; Above left: Tholu Bommalattam, Andhra Pradesh; Above right: Ravan Chhaya, Orissa; Below left: Togalu Gombetta, Karnatak and right: Thol Pava Koothu, Kerala.





in character it aims at an artistic achievement at the expense of intellectual justification and Valmiki holds for it a rich inexhaustible store. The more stylized the form the better it understands and handles Valmiki's poetic material. For an example, a fragment of a scene from the *Ramaleela* of Mathura may be taken to see how far it helps us to comprehend the complex character of Hanuman. The lengthy quotation that follows has been taken from *The Miracle Plays of Mathura* by Norvin Hein. The author had recorded it from an actual performance.

The fragment is from the scene of the coronation of Rama after 14 years of his exile. In this ceremony Rama gives a pearl-necklace to Sita for presenting it to anybody she likes. Sita presents it to Hanuman.

पाठ : महावीर मन माहि विचारी ।  
है कोई गुण माला में भारी ॥

Chant : Mahavir (Hanuman) reflected in his mind 'There is some great excellence in the necklace.'

हनुमान : माता जी ने कृपा करके जो मणियों की माला मुझको दी है इस माला में अवश्य ही कोई विशेष गुण होगा । तभी मेरी अम्ब ने मेरे ऊपर कृपा की है ।

Hanuman : In the necklace which the revered Mother has graciously given me there must surely be some special excellence. Only for this reason has my Mother shown me the favor.

पाठ : परमानन्द-प्रेमरस-पागे ।  
मणियां सकल विलोकन लागे ॥  
बिनु प्रकाश कुछ और न तामें ।  
मन लागे भक्तन को जामें ॥

Chant : Soaked in the syrup of love for the supremely Blissful One, he began to look at all gems. 'Save light, there's nothing in it to appeal to the hearts of devotees.'

हनुमान : माता जी ने कृपा करके अवश्य दी है परन्तु इसमें प्रकाश के सिवाय दूसरी वस्तु नहीं दीखती कि जिसमें भक्तों का मन लगना चाहिये ।

Hanuman : The revered Mother has doubtless given this out of kindness. But in it, apart from light, no other thing is visible to which the minds of devotees should be attracted.

पाठ : मणि भीतर कुछ है सारा ।  
मुक्ता एक तोड़ तब डारा ॥

Chant : 'Within the gem there must be some Kernel'. Then he broke one pearl.

हनुमान : परन्तु माता जी दीनी हुई चीज बिना महत्व के नहीं हो सकती । इसलिए इसकी मणियों के भीतर कुछ सार अवश्य होगा । एक दाना पहले तोड़ कर देखता हूँ ।

Hanuman : But a thing given by Mother cannot be without importance. Therefore there surely must be some kernel inside these gems. I am going to break one bead first, and see. (He crushes one between his teeth. Since the 'gems' are grapes this is not difficult.)

पाठ : ताके मध्य विलोकन लागे ।  
देख लोग अचरज में पागे ॥

Chant : He began to scrutinize the inside of it. Seeing this, people were soaked in astonishment.

हनुमान : इसके भीतर तो कुछ नहीं दीखता सिवाय चमक के । ऊपर भी जैसी चमक है उससे कहीं अधिक भीतर भी चमक है ।

Hanuman : Inside this, nothing is visible but luster. Just as there is luster inside too, but far more than that.

पाठ : पुनि दूजो तोड़्यो हनुमाना ।  
देखि निसार तज्यो बलवाना ॥

Chant : The stout Hanuman broke another. Seeing it to be without kernel, he discarded it.

हनुमान : इसमें भी कुछ नहीं है ।

Hanuman : There's nothing in this, either!

पाठ : यहि विधि तोड़ क्रम क्रम मोती ।  
पीर अधिक दर्शक गण होती ॥

Chant : In this way he breaks one pearl after another. It gives great pain to the multitude of bystanders.

दर्शक : अहा! देखो, यह हनुमानजी इस मणियों की माला को इस प्रकार क्यों तोड़ डालते हैं ?

Bystander : O Look! Why is Hanuman breaking the necklace of gems in this way?

पाठ : कहन लगे निज निज मन माहीं ।  
जो कोई अधिकारी नहीं ॥

ताकों ऐसी वस्तु न दीजे ।  
 नाहिं तो यही दशा लख लीजै ॥  
 बोल उद्यो कोउ नृपत तब  
 कहा करत हनुमान ।  
 क्यों तोड़त हो माल तुम  
 सुन्दर रत्न सुजान ॥

Chang : They began to say, each in his own mind,  
 'To one who has no fitness  
 Do not give such a thing,  
 or see the same sad state of affairs!  
 Then some king cried out,  
 'What are you doing, Hanuman?  
 Why are you breaking the necklace —  
 the beautiful jewels — O Wise One?'

दर्शक : हे हनुमान जी, ऐसे सुन्दर अमूल्य रत्नों की माला को आप क्यों तोड़ तोड़ कर फेंक रहे हैं ?

Bystander : O, Hanuman, why are you breaking up and throwing away a necklace of such beautiful and priceless jewels?

पाठ : वचन सुनत मारुत कह बानी ।  
 देखो राम नाम सुखदानी ॥  
 नाम न यामें परत लखाई ।  
 ताते तोड़त डारत भाई ॥

Chant : Hearing the speech, the Son of the Wind said,  
 'I am looking for the joy-giving name of Rama. The Name is  
 not to be seen in this; that is why I am breaking it, O brother'.

हनुमान : हे भ्राता, मैं इसमें सुख देने वाले श्रीराम जी का नाम देख रहा हूँ । हे भ्राता, इसमें मेरे प्रभु का नाम नहीं दीखता, इस कारण इसे तोड़ रहा हूँ ।

Hanuman : Brother, I am looking in it for the name of the joy-giving Rama.  
 The name of my Lord is not visible in it, brother. That is why  
 I'm breaking it.

पाठ : कह कोउ सकल वस्तु के माहीं ।  
 राम नाम कहूं सुनियत नाहीं ॥

Chant : Someone said, 'one does not hear anywhere that the name of  
 Rama is in all things.'

दर्शक : हे हनुमान जी, सब वस्तुओं के अन्दर राम नाम नहीं होता और हमने अपने कानों से ऐसा कहीं नहीं सुना ।

Bystander : O, Hanuman, the name of Rama is not inside everything, and we have never with our own ears heard anything to that effect anywhere!

पाठ : कह माखत न नाम जेहि माहीं ।  
सो तो काहु काम की नाही ॥

Chant : Said the Son of the Wind, 'what hasn't the name in it isn't of any use at all.'

हनुमान : हे भ्राता, जिस वस्तु में मेरे प्रभु का नाम नहीं होता वह तो किसी काम की नहीं है ।

Hanuman : O brother, that thing is not of any use in which there is not the name of my Lord!

पाठ : बोल्यो सोई सुनो बलधामा ।  
तुम तन माहीं राम को नामा ॥

Chant : The same person said, 'Listen, O Abode of Strength! does the name of Rama exist in your body?'

वही दर्शक : हे बल के धाम हनुमानजी, क्या आपके हृदय में भी भगवान राम का नाम लिख रहा है ?

Bystander: O Hanuman, you Abode of Strength, is the name of the Lord Rama written even in your heart?

पाठ : सुनत बचन कह पवन-कुमारा ।  
निश्चय तनु हरि नाम उदारा ॥

Chant : Hearing the speech, the Son of the Wind said, 'Certainly Hari's noble name is in my body!'

हनुमान : हां, मेरे शरीर में अवश्य ही परम उदार प्रभु का नाम होगा ।

Hanuman : Yes, the name of the supremely noble Lord must surely be in my body!

पाठ : अस कह कपि निज हृदय विदारा ।  
रोम रोम प्रभु नाम अपारा ॥  
अंकित राम नाम सब ठाहीं ।  
लख सब चकित भये मन माहीं ॥

पुष्प वृष्टि नभ जयति उचारी ।  
 कृपा दृष्टि रघुनाथ निहारी ॥  
 अंग भयो पुनि कुलिस सम  
 उठे तुरत भगवान ।  
 वारि विलोचन पुलक तन  
 हिय लागे हनुमान ॥

Chant : Having spoken thus, the ape tore open his heart.  
 On every hair's breadth were the infinite names of the Lord.  
 Seeing the name of Rama stamped everywhere.  
 all became astonished at heart.  
 There was a rain of flowers, shouts of 'victory' in the sky.  
 Hanuman's body became again hard as thunderbolt.  
 At once the Lord rose up;  
 With his body atingle and tears in his eyes  
 he took Hanuman to his heart.

The above quotation is only the verbal aspect of the theatre and gives a partial idea of the manner in which the character of Hanuman is delineated in the performance; yet, I hope, it is sufficient to indicate the perspective through which *Ramaleela* comprehends the poetic depth of Valmiki. Even this fragmentary piece brings to relief the important traits of Hanuman. The very act of breaking the pearls one after another surely appears monkey-like. The way Hanuman replies to the bystanders proves, beyond any shade of doubt, that he is *Vakyajna* and *Vakyakushala*. The import of the words he utters indicate his saintly qualities. And finally when he tears open his heart — he is divine. It is indeed a life-time's experience for any sensitive theatre-goer, when this intense verbal material is served to him couched in non-verbal elements like music, dance and highly stylized *aharyabhinaya*. The multiform Indian traditional theatre is thus a threefold experience. It consists of the meaning, the sensory perception and the emotional impact. There is a song or dialogue which suggests the meaning, intensified by the sound of the accompanying music and, lastly there is the sight of the interpretative gesture. The intensity and largeness of the gestures carry the impact and enables the spectator to be moved emotionally not by realistic actuality but aesthetically by an emotional essence above and beyond reality. In this way it is an intense abstraction from reality, yet at the same time a deeply moving experience firmly rooted in universal humanity.

Non-verbal elements contained in conventions and devices like treating the actor's face with elaborate make-up or putting a mask on it, fantastic costuming and unification of music, dance and mime to give a choreographic character to the acting, form an integral part of the total scheme of stylization adapted by most of the traditional theatre forms. To this scheme of stylization the character of Hanuman lends itself admirably and we find a

great range and variety in the interpretation and delineation of the character in the various forms of both human and puppet theatre.

Besides *Ramaleela* of north India there are other highly evolved forms like *Koodiattam*, *Kathakali*, *Yakshagana*, etc. which have extremely elaborate *aharyabhinaya*, that is, make-up and costuming, done with such meticulous care that sometimes it is like a ritual lasting for several hours.

The *aharyabhinaya* is not merely decorative. Designed and perfected to match with the presentational style it is now almost stabilized into strict conventions. The most important and interesting part of *aharyabhinaya* is the treatment of the actor's face. It is done mainly in two ways in the traditional theatre forms: 1 putting a stylized mask on the face and, 2 treating it with elaborate and colourful make-up which finally gives a mask-like appearance to the face. In *Koodiattam*, the only surviving form of Sanskrit theatre, still performed traditionally in *Koothampalams*, that is, the temple theatre-halls; in *Kathakali*, the famous classical dance-theatre, and in *Theriyattam*, a form of ritualistic temple-theatre, all these three forms prevalent in Kerala and also in *Yakshagana*, a highly developed operatic dance-drama prevalent in Karnataka in two styles — northern and southern — Hanuman wears a mask-like make-up. But in *Ramaleela*, a sort of processional pageantry, specially as performed in Varanasi and Ramanagar of Uttar Pradesh, *Sahi Jatra*, a form of processional theatre of Orissa and in the Purulia style of *Chhau*, a form of vigorous dance-theatre of West Bengal Hanuman wears a mask. Often he wears a headgear matching the mask or the make-up and the garment is made of some indigenous fibrous material with a tail attached to it so that the monkey-ness inherent in the character is also reflected in a realistic way. Thus even in *aharyabhinaya* there is a perfect blending of the real with the unreal.

### Puppet Theatre

Apart from the human-theatre, Hanuman is delineated in the traditional puppet-theatre with great variety. The marionettes of *Gombe-atta* of Karnataka are highly stylized and appear exactly like the *Yakshagana* actors. Hanuman in *Gombe-atta*, however, wears a green garment made of locally grown fur.

Tamilnadu marionette theatre called *Bomalattam*, prevalent in Tanjore region admirably combines the elements and techniques of both the string and rod puppets. Puppet figure of Hanuman in *Bomalattam* is delineated in a more realistic manner.

A form of glove-puppet is prevalent in Kerala in which the puppet-figures are modelled like *Kathakali* actors and they perform *Kathakali* texts with regular musical accompaniment. Unlike *Kathakali* the face of Hanuman, in this form of puppetry, is painted black but the costuming etc. is similar.



There are 4 styles of Shadow Theatre prevalent in India in the regions of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa and Kerala. While the Andhra and Karnataka styles throw coloured shadows on the screen their Orissa and Kerala counterparts throw silhouette-like shadows. The shadow-theatre of Orissa, called *Ravanchhaya*, is more primitive in character and the puppet-figures are smaller and conceived in bold designs and dramatic poses, but manipulated in a peculiar jerky manner. Their moving shadows are extremely lyrical and aesthetically very satisfying. *Ravanchhaya* has two separate puppet-figures, one small and the other larger, for Hanuman and are pressed into service according to the demands of the episode. For example, when Hanuman gets ready to cross the sea to go to Lanka the smaller figure is substituted by the larger one suggesting that he has expanded himself physically. When he takes the leap, the puppet-figure that remained almost pressed to the screen, is moved away to a distance from it, throwing a diffused but highly fascinating shadow that flashes out of the screen like an extremely agile monsoon-cloud.

In shadow-theatre of Kerala, called *Thol Pava Koothu*, the puppet figures have one jointed hand which is manipulated, specially when the characters are engaged in conversation and they also reveal, in their shadows, exquisite jewellery and gorgeous costume. Hanuman in this form appears more sophisticated than in that of *Ravanchhaya*.

Locally known as *Tholu Bomalatta*, the Andhra shadow play has the richest and the strongest tradition. Brightly coloured Andhra shadow-puppets are the largest of the 4 styles. Hanuman of *Tholu Bomalatta* is more versatile on the screen since the figure has jointed shoulders, wrists, elbows, knees and ankles.

The Karnataka shadow-theatre, locally known as *Togalu Gombi Atte*, is similar to Andhra shadow play in many respects. These puppets are, however, smaller in size and in some cases a small scene is depicted in one puppet-figure. One such figure shows Hanuman carrying the mountain Gandhamadana containing the magic herb that finally saves Laxmana from the injury of the mighty missile, *Shakti-shela*.

Thus we see that Valmiki's Hanuman has deeply inspired the traditional theatre and the great range and variety of this delineation gives us some idea about the aesthetic dimensions of the character. Of course, I have not dealt here, with the variety of interpretation of the character in traditional painting, plastic arts and language literatures. There is yet another dimension when we see Hanuman being worshipped as a deity in several temples. This cannot just be brushed aside as theriomorphism. There are deeper purposes besides blind faith.

I do not, of course, try to establish that all these dimensions were

present from the very beginning when the character crystallised in the voyance of Rishi Valmiki; but he has certainly created a very powerful poetic myth that has for centuries grown in us spreading its branches in all possible directions. In this connection it would, perhaps, be relevant to quote Claude Levi-Strauss who writes, "Mythical analysis cannot have for its object the demonstration of how men think in their myths but how myths think themselves in men and without their awareness." And Hanuman, as a myth, has not only been thinking in us for more than two thousand years but also in men living in the countries of the South-east Asian region. He has been thus telling his own long long history in many forms of art and in many languages. It would be, perhaps, a pity if it is but put under a microscope to show the particular muscles of his body containing streaks of history, long since dead and gone. What I want to say has been much better expressed by Sri Aurobindo: "Nor do I mean to subscribe to the theory of the man and his milieu or the dogma of the historical school of criticism which asks us to study all the precedents, circumstances, influences, surroundings, all that created the man and his work, — as if there were not something in him apart from all these which made all the differences, — and supposes that out of this the right estimate of his poetry will arise. But not even the right historical or psychological understanding of him need arise out of this method, since we may very easily read into him and his work things which may perhaps have been there before and around him, but never really got into him". (p. 43, chapter VI, *The Future Poetry*).