

Hindi Folk Drama

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Folk drama is the richest and the deepest-rooted element of the traditional culture of any country. Like music and dance, this branch of folklore reflects in a true measure the national genius. India with her diverse cultural patterns has provided a wide field to this form of people's artistic expression. There is, in this country, a vast folk dramatic lore, which is as rich in its ethnological material as in aesthetic appeal and artistic achievements. Whether it is on festive and ceremonial occasions or other familiar, common events in the life cycle of the community, there emerges a theatrical performance integrating song, dance, myth and tale into one composite art.

The Background: Medieval 'Variety Theatre'

Nothing in the history of Indian theatre is more fascinating than the multi-form character of the 'variety theatre' of middle ages. It arose and developed with the spread and enrichment of the *bhasha sahitya* and *janapada* culture, after the break-up of the classical tradition. Our folk theatre is the inheritor of this 'variety theatre'. The medieval theatre did not suddenly and completely die out, but was projected and survives even to this day in our folk theatre. It is from this picturesque and highly theatrical theatre that our folk drama has borrowed its art material, principles and techniques of dramatic presentation.

The medieval Hindi poet Jayasi, in his famous epic poem *Padmavat*, gives a glimpse of this 'variety theatre' by making a mention of the *katha* recitation, dance, magic shows, puppet theatre, vocal music, natak, Tamasha and acrobatics as theatrical entertainments of the people. In the *Singhal Dweep—Varnan Khand*—he writes:

कतहं कथा कहै कछु कौई, कतहं नाच कौउ भलि होई ।
कतहं छरहटा पैखन लावा, कतहं पाखंड काठ नचावा ।
कतहं नाद सबद होई भला, कतहं नाटक चैटक कला ।

Sur, Tulsi and other medieval poets while describing royal festivities do not forget to make a mention of the various classes of itinerant minstrels—Sut, Magad, Bhat, Charan and Bandijan—who were responsible for the circulation of all medieval literature. They were brilliant versifiers; recorders of war events, of civil and military pageants; singers of eulogies and reciters of *gathas*. Their recitations were fused with histrionic qualities; they often used impersonation and gestures, perhaps even a simple *mise en scène* in their recitation. Certain stylistic devices of these dramatic recitations are common to all kinds of folk drama designed for oral presentation.

Many writings of the middle ages, of narrative or lyrical form, have potential dramatic

elements, though they were not written with any idea of the impersonation of actors speaking upon the stage. Most of these literary pieces were adaptable for recitation, perhaps, for presentation. There is an abundance of dialogue infused with high rhetorical quality; there are highly dramatic monologues; narrative is divided into some sort of sequence of action by putting the dramatic and non-dramatic in an effective relationship; the continuity of these is maintained by a kind of flashback technique, when the poet suddenly stops the flow of the action and narrates a previous episode; and, lastly, there is an attempt to create the locale by putting the necessary description in the mouth of the characters, who often announce their identity and even their dramatic purpose.

It is true that these medieval poetic writings were not dramatic in intention, but they testify to the narrow borderline that separated narrative from dramatic literature in the middle ages, and to the ease with which the narrative poetry could be turned into drama. Epic poems like *Ramacharitmanas* of Tulsidas and *Ramachandrika* of Keshavdas were probably used for dramatic presentation together with their recitation from the very beginning, even during the lifetime of the poets. Their structural design is so dramatically conceived and the action so developed and organized that they yield to dramatization easily. *Ramacharitmanas* is the basic work for the last four centuries providing dialogue material and plans for dramatic scenes to the Ramlila plays of several forms and styles.

Apart from the variety of theatrical entertainments, dramatic recitations of epics, ballads and semi-dramatic poetic work used for stage presentations, the dramatic genius of the nation had used other non-dramatic forms for its expression. The royal and civil pageantry, religious and socio-cultural processions carrying floats and tableaux depicting dramatic scenes in pantomime accompanied by music, provided a spectacular theatre in the middle ages. Pictorial arts were also exploited for representing scenes and episodes in dramatic compositions, thus giving to the people theatrical enjoyment in the absence of the theatre proper.

Processional and Pageantry Drama: The Lilas

For several centuries in the medieval ages the temple remained the abode of drama, and gave it such theatrical virtues as were not to be repeated in later history. "The stirring devotional music, the impressive architectural background, the sincerity and conviction in delivery, an element of devotion to awaken the histrionic sensibilities of the spectators are some of the unique virtues of this drama that was born in and grew round the temple." And when this religious drama left the temple during the later medieval period, and came on the streets in the form of a grand processional and pageantry drama, it assimilated and represented the total artistic and cultural life of the people, their plastic and graphic arts, their songs and dances, beliefs and customs, dress and dialects.

The processional dramas, Ramlila and Raslila, of the Hindi area depict the life of Rama and Krishna respectively. They are the richest and most representative specimen of the folk theatre. It is in these Lilas that we can fully and faithfully study the artistic principles and conventions of folk drama, and its presentational devices and techniques.

These Lila-nataks have dominant ritualistic character. In some of the Krishnalilas, each scene is acted on the very spot with which the original event is traditionally connected. The ceremonies and rituals, and the improvisation and imitation of action are fused into one to build up the dramatic whole. The rituals and ceremonies and the episodes from the life of Rama and Krishna that form the dramatic action are placed within the broad literary framework which is prepared from multiple sources, both ancient and modern, written and oral. Both the mimetic action of the ceremonies and the delivery of the versified verbal material of these Lilas, follow a traditional and stylized pattern, with which the audience is as familiar and intimate as with the epic stories and their *dramatis personae*.

Luxuriously decorated floats and pageants—*simhasan*, *chauki*, *manch*, *dol* and *jhanki*, as they are called—pictorially depicting climactic points of the story, form part of the great pageantry of the Lila-nataks. These floats move from place to place, from one locality to the other, on their route of procession. They are separated in time, as the entire Lila-natak is divided into several 'drama days'. Ramlila is a fourteen-day drama and the Krishnalila series extends over a month. The number of days for Lila performances is increased or reduced according to the tradition of the region or other practical considerations; and the Lilas are accordingly rearranged under a different dramatic scheme. The floats in the processional Lilas or the stage localities in non-processional Lila types are not organized into any spatial unity.

Technical Features

The technique of simultaneous stage setting is very suitable for the epic dimensions of these Lilas and has obvious theatric advantages. It makes possible a splendid and highly diversified spectacle. It allows the action of the play to move from one locale to another—from Ayodhya to Vishwamitra's ashram, thence to Janakpuri and so on and so forth. There is no shifting of the scene, so the events can proceed without any break, no matter where the action occurs. If need be, action can even go forward in different places simultaneously. In Janakpuri, the garden scene, where Rama sees Sita, and the *swayamvara* scene, are set simultaneously. During the battle scenes, Sita is also shown sitting in Ashok Vatika. Such simultaneous scene-setting is done by a simple device of changing the optical levels, which is another technical feature of these Lila-nataks.

Outside the towns in large open playing areas, or in theatre arenas, stand huge fantastic effigies much before the commencement of the actual performance, which serve as setting for the Ramlilas. Sometimes different theatric localities are created by simple architectural equipment and scenic decorations. Actors playing under the shadow of these effigies wander from one locality to another with the simple, horizontal movement of the story. The effigies standing in the acting area throughout the days of performance symbolize the forces of evil and by collapsing down magnificently on the final day heighten the dramatic effect, strengthen the purpose of the drama, and seem to widen the theatrical dimensions of the performance.

The final and the dominant thought about these Rama and Krishna plays is that in all their aspects—the multiple settings, the selection and arrangement of episodes, movement and grouping of actors—these Lila plays are pictorially effective.

New Forms of Lila-natak

Under the influence of changing socio-cultural scene of the folk life, this processional drama, during the past few decades, has developed several variant forms in accordance with the form of the stage and the staging methods. There are platform-stage Ramlilas, danced and acted with background narrations from *Ramacharitmanas* of Tulsidas, and other *Ram Kavyas*. These platform-stage Lilas use simple staging methods and material. There is no effort to create any setting or to make use of elaborate properties. The whole action is portrayed by stylized pantomimic gesticulation. The recitations serve a double purpose by supporting the mimetic action and giving significant facts about the developing plot.

Ramlilas have also been adapted to the modern theatre, importing new spoken-word material, and presented with curtains and full stage equipment. Uday Shankar's experiment in presenting Ramlila in shadow play is another formatic variation. Recent developments in stagecraft have made further variations possible. The ballet *Ramlila* of Sachin Shankar and the Ramlila puppet play of the great choreographer, the late Shanti Vardhan, are marvellous innovations.

It is interesting to note that all these experimental Ramlila productions draw greatly from the traditional Lila, and have borrowed many stage conventions and presentational devices from it.

Raslilas are also undergoing similar formatic changes. New versified dialogue and new dance content have been freely imported. The traditional form, however, still survives in the temples with uninterpolated spoken-word material, pure music and stylized acting and dancing. The processional and elaborate Krishnalilas are in a gradual process of extinction. A third variety has emerged by a kind of cross-mixing with the secular operatic drama, the Sangeet or Nautanki. It is interesting to note that these plays are called Lilas but they depict the life of medieval heroes with a Ras piece in the form of prologue or *purvarang*.

The Lighter Forms

Together with the pageantry drama of the Lila type, there exists a variety of light social plays of a secular character. In its dramatic scheme, it follows the pattern of Indian story-telling, where the narrator and the listeners or the performers and the audience become an integral part of the narrative piece. It draws its inspiration and builds up its literary structure on simple anecdotes of daily life, usually concerning social relations, and certain funny and humorous situations in the daily cycle of life. It even sometimes strikes a serious note of mocking at and satirizing local events and maladjustments.

Karinga, the main actor and commentator in one of the popular farces of this category, conveniently deviating from the main theme, boldly condemns the exploiters and wrong-

doers. In his performance, he builds up by himself a full dramatic sequence, by a mimetic portrayal of the characters and situations, and by conversing with the leaders of the accompanying chorus at such points in the performance which call for a vocal expression.

The lighter and secular drama of the folk is a very simple theatre. Swang, Naqqal and Bhandaiti are the main dramatic forms of this class of drama. There are other innumerable, simpler and less-developed farcical pieces associated with festivals and ceremonies, and they have their many regional variations.

This lighter folk drama has lived and maintained its simplicity for centuries with the full approval of its audience. Perhaps in no other form of drama, the audience is so directly and so vitally associated with the performance as it is in this variety. Sitting within or in the closest proximity of the acting areas, spectators quite often participate in the performance by punctuating it with exclamations, applauses and appreciative utterances.

Secular drama of all communities customarily takes to humbler forms and is less spectacular than religious theatrical performances. There is no pageantry to widen the theatrical dimensions of the performance; there is not even a raised platform for presenting the actors in an imposing manner; and there is no scenic equipment to create the locale for the dramatic action and give a perspective. It is all very simple, a humble occasion of group art-activity, of entertainment. But it has all the essential elements of a theatre. The story furnishes the plot, there is sharp and brilliant mimicry and a great display of imitative arts. Distortions and exaggerations of human behaviour, captivating narration of anecdotes and riddles and acrobatic feats—all combine to build a grand theatrical show.

There is not a big team of actors and hardly any theatrical equipment to support the presentation. A small group of *dramatis personae*, sometimes there being only two, carry forward the dramatic action. There is a main actor, who takes up the role of narrator or leader of the chorus. There are one or two other actors who accompany the chorus, provide dance and interrupt and comment on the main actor's speeches and monologues. There is an easy and effective coordination between the team in the evolving dramatic piece. There come such significant points when the actors stand facing each other in sharp dramatic poses and exchange dialogues, which change from performance to performance, with interpolation of the local and topical material. This technique of building up dramatic sequences within the larger framework of the narrative is common to many forms of folk drama.

There is absolutely no setting and no effort to create a theatric locality to the dramatic action, and the personification is so weak as to be hardly able to sustain the illusion. Most often, the characters perform standing on the same level on which the audience sit, and keep to one single optical level. There are not many variations of movement and groupings of characters to create stage-pictures. Whatever little stage properties the actors use, they carry with them to the place of performance, e.g., a hukka for imitating the dignified landlord or a stool to serve as a royal throne.

There is a galaxy of actors of varying standards to keep this theatre alive. The Nat, Kautuki, Bahurupia, Natki, Swangdhari, Bhagatbaz, Bhand, and Naqalchi are a varied class

of mimes, acrobats and comedians who generated a great theatrical activity throughout the middle ages and kept up the tempo right up to the early decades of the 20th century. The actor's community of Bhand is still keeping the tradition of this kind of theatre alive. They are versatile theatre men who compose their own pieces and design the presentational outline. They have a huge repertoire of proverbs, riddles, recitations, all sorts of metaphors and similes, quotations and references, which they supply to the piece so wittily and effectively that the performance acquires a stupendous note of gaiety.

The Platform-stage Drama: Nautanki

This platform-stage folk drama which is a kind of ballad-opera is a very interesting study-material for the student of Hindi drama. From the point of view of theatre, it stands between medievalism and modernism. It has left behind the medieval mode of staging in multiple settings and seems to approach the modern method of presentation by attempting a unified stage-picture. The study of the contents of this drama is equally fascinating as it has utilized the vast treasure of folklore and the literature of oral tradition, and presented it in a new garb and adapted it to a different medium.

In the dramatic history of all countries, there emerge such hybrid dramatic forms and styles which are only adaptations and variations of the content and the styles of the drama proper. These forms are the result of a kind of theatre contamination between the dramatic and non-dramatic literatures, and between the urban and the folk dramatic traditions.

This form of drama is a vital link in the development of theatre in the Hindi region. It preserves the entire atmosphere of colourfulness, rhetoric and gallantry of medieval culture. Historically its position is very advantageous, as it emerged in the middle of the last century, when the rural and urban cultures were coming into closer contact. The folk poet and other theatrical personages, the dancer and the comedian, caught the opportune moment and dramatized the whole wealth of traditional tales, pursuits of local heroes, stories of love and intrigue of all nations, intermingling with them songs and dances and mimetic arts.

These dramas are known by several names like Nautanki, Sangeet, Khayal, Bhagat, Mach and Swang. These names are more or less synonymous and denote only one theatrical form, but at the same time they represent regional variations, both in constructional as well as presentational aspects of the play. Swang is probably the oldest name and has been traced back to the ninth century. It was a popular social farce. Sattak, Rasak and several other categories of literary writings of the early medieval period seem to be some kind of musical dramatic entertainments. Our modern Nautanki or Sangeet has something in common with these mediaeval semi-dramatic writings.

The composition and recitation of *gathas* in popular folk metres was greatly prevalent throughout the middle ages. Medieval poets make a mention of the akharha or the competitive feats of these recitations. These competitions are still held and are known by the same age-old name. These akharhas of popular folk poetic recitations of Lawani, Lahchari, Khayal and Rasia style have directly contributed to the rise of this ballad-opera.

This tradition of recitation was further developed and enriched under the new literary

and cultural influences during the last century. Great innovations were introduced in metres and tunes and a hybrid popular musical idiom was developed. It needed little theatrical skill to arrange this recitative material in an operatic dramatic form, just by introducing a narrator to link up the episodes and putting in mimetic dances at suitable places.

A study of the presentational techniques of this musical comedy will show that it has evolved certain conventions to suit the form and conditions of its stage. No doubt this class of drama has been provided a platform-stage, but in its arrangement of episodes and theatre practices, it follows the theatre-less form of folk drama. In the absence of curtains, the dramatic theme is not capable of any division into scenes and acts. So there is a narrator, named Ranga, meaning the man belonging to the ranga or theatre, who controls the division and development of the plot, preserves the thread of the story by making relevant announcements about the missing parts and supplies some essential information about the locale of the dramatic action.

The stage itself is a sort of neutral ground not representing any particular place of action. It is left blank without any setting. The nakedness of the stage is exploited to great advantage. The absence of scenic specification allows freedom from the laws of unity of place and time and opens the possibilities of using hundreds of such themes which would otherwise not submit to the discipline of dramatic construction. The unadorned platform is probably responsible to the same degree for the rapidity and tempo of action. In the absence of a drop curtain, the individual scenes are faded out by the simple folk device of actors leaving the stage. This invariably results in creating the Nautanki, a drama of several climaxes.

Broad and sweeping gestures, dance-like movements and plastic poses are some of the virtues of the acting on the open platform-stage of the Nautanki. Most of the characters remain standing or move about on the stage in pantomimic, dance-like patterns for the whole duration of a scene. They speak out their dialogues in a half-musical and half-recitative manner. Every dialogue is delivered to the accompaniment of the orchestra. The facial make-up of the characters is not very elaborate, but they dress in a most rich manner and wear all kinds of precious jewellery.

The Nautanki performance begins with the singing of *sumirini* or *mangalacharan* which forms part of the *purvarang*, and the high sound of Nagara, the main instrument in the orchestra, announces the commencement of the performance to the people in the neighbouring villages. The lovers of this theatre immediately start for the place of performance for a whole-night feast of drama with great action, thrilling music and rich choreographic acting.

Dramatic Dance

There is yet another unrecognized variety of folk drama which stands midway between the dance and the drama proper, in its course of artistic development. Theatrically most effective are the short narrative dances in which the performers gesticulate and dance a short mythological episode, while the chorus sings the text elucidating the mimetic action. The Bihar folk dance depicting the battle between Kirat and Arjun, or the Ghumar dance of Rajasthan with its pictorial compositions and slow mimetic movements gradually building

up to a climax seem to be enactments in the spirit of the ancient Hindu drama. Sometimes, a single performer, putting on a mask or an elaborate, complicated make-up, develops surprising theatrical intensity in his pantomimic presentation of a narrative piece. When the great Kathak dancer, Shri Shambu Maharaj, illustrates a Thumri or a Rasia, he imports dramatic idiom into his dance sequences and 'impersonating' various characters creates a powerful pantomime, the source of all drama.

Any of the wide variety of the folk dance of various regions can be taken as an instance of the structured drama. They clearly show a scheme in the construction of theme sequences, and use elaborate make-up for easy and effective impersonation. Sometimes small stage properties are also used to indicate the locale and help the presentation of dramatic action more realistically. The orchestra players reinforce thematic action and maintain dramatically useful coordination with the dancer-actors of the dance performance.

Drama with Conventions

It is commonly believed that the folk drama is completely shapeless, that it is without any scheme of scene-sequence and structural pattern, and that it has no presentational principles and stage conventions. But a close study of this genre of drama will show that these open-air performances have a structure, and manifest the unities that distinguish any artistic production. There is a beginning and an end; there is also a sequence in time and in incident; there is a sense of progression of climax, heightening or diminishing of effect.

Their theatrelessness does not in any way mean that this drama is without stage conventions; it only means that the conventions of the folk drama, without any physical theatre or with just an informal platform-stage, are only different from the modern formal closed theatres. It has several codified conventions which have evolved out of the actual circumstances of the presentation and with the active participation and the consent of the audiences.

Large and open acting areas in pageant drama of the Lila type have necessitated the use of masks to register facial expression, or elaborate stylized make-up to represent a particular character to a large audience sitting at a distance; the processional and mobile performances of the Lila type, after leaving the temple and coming on the street, have conveniently allowed the use of floats and tableaux, pictorially representing the culminating points of the epic stories; characters not imprisoned in the 'picture-frame' speak soliloquies, asides, narrations and announcements as naturally as they speak out dramatic dialogues.

In view of the narrative character of these performances, folk dramaturgy has evolved a technique of simultaneous stage-setting; the entries and exits, even the scene-shifting and make-up, are done in full view of the audience. Sometimes the stage is set in the midst of the audience, who never regard it as a place somewhere else, where only the *dramatis personae* can meet, as we regard the proscenium stage. The lack of any scenic apparatus changes the entire character of the folk theatre, both in its relation to the actors and to the audience.

Folk dramas are not built up of well-knit scenes; their plot-construction differs greatly from what it is generally understood. Instead of scenes and acts, it creates self-complete

phases of dramatic action, as in the Lila type. There is a kind of looseness in the whole scheme of dramatization. This loose anatomy of the folk drama offers great opportunities for improvisation, for the use of mimetic arts, for festivity and spectacle, for a slow and elaborate movement of the story giving a peculiar rhythm to the dramatic action. Similarly, the openness and bareness of the folk stage is a positive virtue. It affords directness in imitation of action, simplicity of make-believe and immediacy of emotional contact and response.

All these general devices and conventions have evolved a specific folk theatre idea. This theatre idea is the fundamental and significant thing in any discussion and study of the folk drama. This theatre idea does not have a static character. It grows and changes with the changing social perspective and cultural content, thereby giving birth to new practices and conventions, enlarging and readjusting the old ones, and creating varying versions and styles of one single dramatic form. This theatre idea and the conventions of the folk drama are only different from those of the drama of the literate people, and it is wrong to think that they are in any way inferior or less artistic.

Some Concluding Points:

(a) Contribution to Literary Drama

This rich store and variety of folk drama has made valuable contributions by supplying art material and formative devices to the literary drama of all periods, and in all phases of its development. Constant exchange between oral and written tradition is a special feature of Indian cultural and artistic life. Sometimes it becomes impossible to distinguish between the literary and the oral tradition. It is not a matter of chance in dramatic history that *Inder Sabha*, the first modern operatic drama of the mid-nineteenth century, borrows greatly from the folk dramas of the Lila type.

Coming to the pure literary tradition of drama, we find that in Bharatendu's *Andher Nagari*, the characters, situations, and the entire dramatic atmosphere of the folk drama come to life. The Parsi theatrical companies have presented a kind of stage version of the pageantry drama of floats and tableaux, which has been built up by the people in their theatrical pursuits throughout the centuries. In recent experiments in dance-drama and other forms of stage-play, certain conventions of the folk drama, such as the introduction of a narrator and the use of stage hands for arranging and shifting the scenery in full view of the audience, have been effectively employed. There are further hidden avenues of mutual exchange between the drama of the urban and the folk traditions. The speed of exchange is to be accelerated and the area of contact and cooperation widened for their mutual benefit.

(b) Research and Survey

The present situation regarding the study of Hindi folk drama is far from satisfactory. This class of drama has no place in the history of dramatic literature and in academic studies. Some common informative facts are given about these folk dramas in various articles appearing in literary journals, but this material has not been developed and scientifically

analysed. The whole of folk dramatic material—its spoken word, music, dance and presentational techniques—is decaying and facing extinction. So our foremost need is to take scientific equipment and modern investigational techniques to the villages and collect the material from first-hand sources. It is also essential that for the evaluation and analysis of this material, we follow the same course and principles as in the case of literary drama. Problems of style, the multiple sources of its spoken-word material, devices to heighten suspense or to reach a climax, staging conditions and methods, variations in form when moved from one place or people to another, should form some of the aspects of study. What we need is to recognize the drama of the non-literate as a definite art form which has its own laws and conventions.

(c) *Reorganization*

It is commonplace to say that the folk drama is declining or that some of its styles are not pure and authentic. We can talk of their rehabilitation and reorganization, but there is no use in regretting the vanishing picturesqueness of the theatre of the past. With the development of technical knowledge these are bound to be affected. We cannot put obstacles in the way of technological advancement. Electricity will go to the villages in a few years. Electrical illumination of the folk stage will have a tremendous effect.

In our reorganizational schemes, we have to make certain concessions for changing social conditions and the progressively improving circumstances of play presentation, and allow changes in the general pattern of these dramatic forms. Flexibility of folk dramas will permit an easy introduction of new subjects. We can even build simple-structured theatres to house this drama. It is not rational to keep folk drama in constant poverty of stage equipment and force it to remain a homeless wanderer of medieval centuries.

The collection of all existing data relating to folk dramatic lore and auxiliary theatre arts is of paramount importance today, when we envisage a plan for a theatre movement in the country. It will help us to venture into new stage experiments and vitally contribute to the literary drama. The body of folk drama is becoming non-effective and outmoded. We can reshape it and revitalize the decaying dramatic elements by a planned programme; the purity and authenticity of the form would not be preserved by neglecting it and denying it healthier and more prosperous staging conditions.

In this study of Hindi folk drama, I have deliberately excluded a discussion of the puppet drama as it was not possible to do full justice to its artistic evaluation and the problems of its organization in the short space that I could have devoted to it in this paper. I personally feel that this form of folk drama should be independently discussed and it should not be treated just as an appendage to the drama with human actors, as we have been doing so far. The entire material, the theatre and the presentational designs of this drama, is basically different from other forms involving human material.

It is needless to say that we have a long history of puppet theatre. It had once an honoured place both in the public and in palaces as well. The puppet has preserved for

centuries a theatre lost and forgotten elsewhere. Its thread is not broken and it still continues. But it has stopped growing. Its entire material—dramatic theme, puppet characters and their make-up, the stage, the technique of manipulation, and the entire mode of presentation—has become old, and in the new context of our artistic life it has lost most of its appeal. We have to reshape this whole material. A small experiment in renovating this theatre, conducted under the inspiration of the Akademi, has already shown the direction of our effort and the scope of its success.