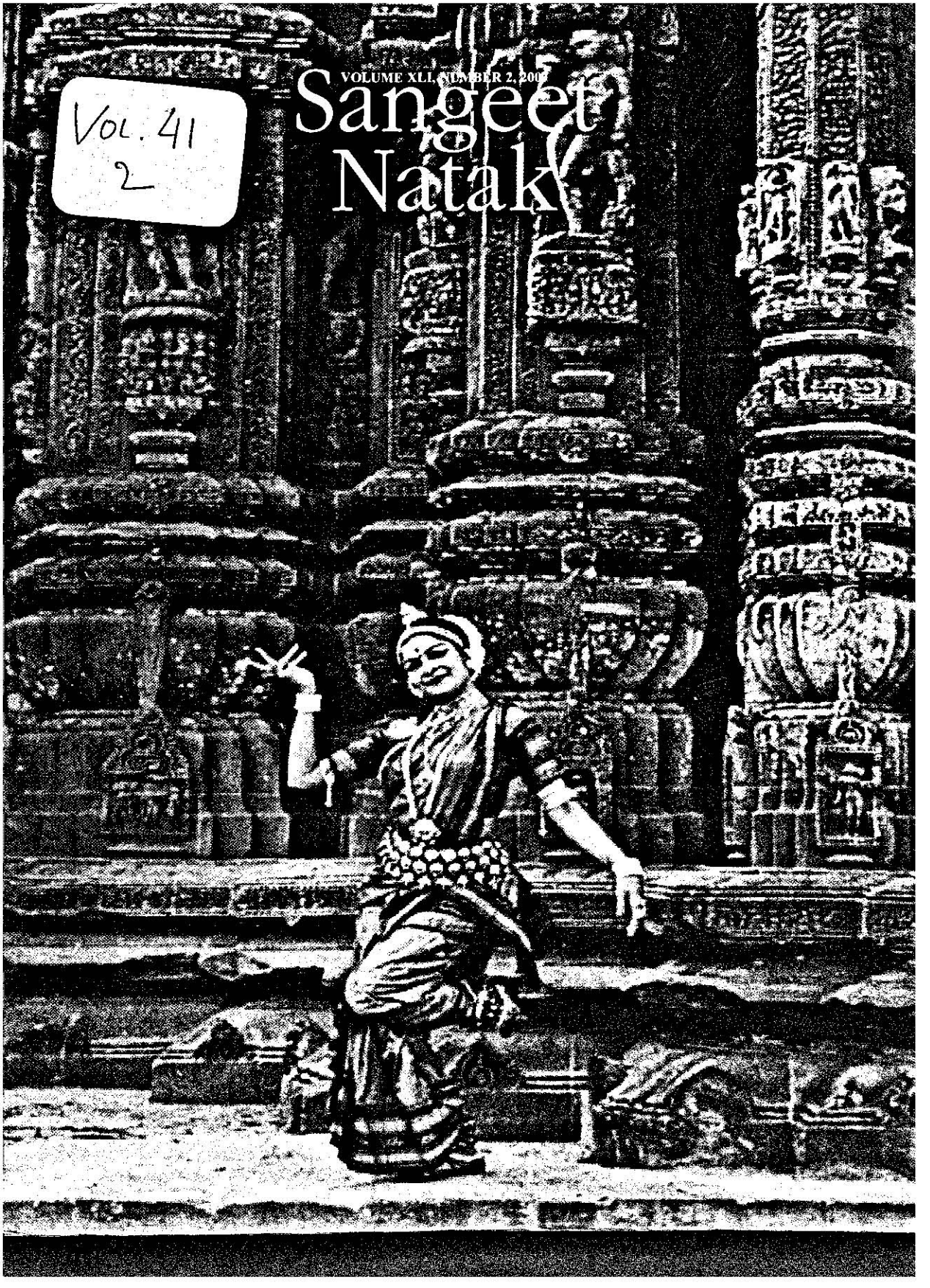
VOLUME XLI, NUMBER 2, 2007

Sangeet Natak



Sangeet Natak

VOLUME XLI, NUMBER 2, 2007

Front cover: The Odissi dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi, 1980. *Photograph*: *Courtesy Eberhard Fischer.*

Back cover: Orissan folk dances represented in the *Abhinaya Chandrika. Courtesy Maya Das.*

Both photographs reproduced from Rethinking Odissi *by Dinanath Pathy*

Sangeet Natak is a journal of music, dance, and drama published since 1965 by Sangeet Natak Akademi—the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama for India.

Contributions offered for publication may be sent to the editor by post or e-mail (sangeetnatak@bol.net.in).

Apart from this journal, Sangeet Natak Akademi publishes books on Indian music, dance, and drama on a small scale. Enquiries and orders may be addressed to the editor.

Annual subscription in India: individuals Rs 100, institutions/libraries Rs 150 (Rs 30 extra for registered mail); single issue: individuals Rs 30, institutions/libraries Rs 40. Back issues: individuals Rs 40, institutions/libraries Rs 50. Annual overseas subscription: U.S. $ 15 ($ 10 extra for airmail); single issue US $ 5. Cheques/drafts/postal orders covering subscription should be payable to Secretary, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi. *Bank charges should be added to outstation cheques. Money orders may please be avoided.*

Publisher: Secretary, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, Feroze Shah Road, New Delhi 110 001.

Typesetting: G. Subramanian

Printed at: Nutech Photolithographers, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase-I, New Delhi.

CONTRIBUTORS

V. Premalatha has been awarded a PhD by the University of Madras for her research on music manuscripts in various archives. She is now a Lecturer in the Department of Performing Arts, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. email: drvpremalatha@yahoo.com

Anita Cherian holds a PhD from New York University for her research into the making of contemporary Indian theatre. She now teaches English at Indraprastha College, Delhi. email: anitacherian@hotmail.com

Dinanath Pathy is a painter and writer on art. *Rethinking Odissi* is his first book on dance. Formerly Secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, he now heads the Alice Boner Institute in Varanasi as Director. email: journal_angarag@yahoo.com

Vijay Verma is a scholar of the music of Rajasthan and a connoisseur of popular literature. He has authored *The Living Music of Rajasthan* among other publications. A former Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, he now lives in Jaipur.

S.K. Saxena is an aesthetician and a critic of music and dance who was formerly Professor of philosophy at Delhi University. His book *Hindustani Music and Aesthetics Today* is due to be published by Sangeet Natak Akademi. email: sks @cranes.org

A Survey of Music Manuscripts in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai

V. PREMALATHA

Introduction

The Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai (GOML), is a treasure-house of thousands of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts, of which about five hundred deal with music. The music manuscript collection of this library includes technical works or lakṣaṇa-grantha-s and texts and notations of songs written in Saṃskṛta, Telugu, Tamiz and Kannada languages. A detailed examination of the music manuscripts found in GOML was done by this author for a research project and the present article is based on it. The article focuses on the following areas:

I. Unpublished works of musicological literature
II. Transcripts of the Saurashtra Sabha, Madurai
III. Manuscripts on tāla
IV. Manuscripts containing notations

I. UNPUBLISHED WORKS

Many music manuscripts found in this library are yet to be published and the following is a brief note on some of the unpublished technical works.

1. *Arjunādimatasāra* (R3070)

This is a paper manuscript written in Devanagari script. From the title and the colophon statements, it is known that the work has been compiled by Śrī Śuddhasatva Vēṅkaṭācārya. The title of this work is given as 'Arjunādimatasāiti śrī śuddhasatvavēṅkaṭācārya saṅgṛhītē'rjunādimatasārē bharataśāstrēprathamōdhyāyaḥra', meaning 'the essence of the schools/thoughts of Arjuna and others'. It is curious to note that the colophons found at the end of the chapters refer to the work as Nāṭyaśāstra and/or Bharataśāstra in Arjunādimatasāra. The different colophon statements found in this work are as follows:

(i) "iti śrī śuddhasatvavēṅkaṭācārya saṅgṛhītē"rjunādimatasārē bharataśāstrē-prathamōdhyāyaḥ" (p. 5 at the end of the first chapter);
(ii) "iti śrī śuddhasatvavēṅkaṭācārya saṅgṛhītē'rjunādimatasārē nāṭyaśāstrē dvitīyō'dhyāyaḥ" (p. 11 at the end of the second chapter);
(iii) "iti śrī śuddhasatvavēṅkaṭācārya saṅgṛhītē'rjunādimatasārē nāṭyakriyā tāla-daśaprāṇāyāpaṇaṃ nāma tṛtīyō'dhyāyaḥ" (p. 19 at the end of the third chapter);

(iv) "iti śrī śuddhasatvavēṅkaṭācārya saṅgṛhītē'rjunādimatasārē nāṭyaśāstrē caturthō'dhyāyaḥ" (p. 23 at the end of the fourth chapter).

The available work consists of five chapters of which the fifth is incomplete. The first two chapters deal with nāṭya, which also includes the characteristics of a dancer, judge and sutradhāra. The third chapter deals with the tāladaśaprāṇa-s and the last two chapters are devoted to tālaprastāra.

2. *Bharatasārasaṅgrahamu* (D2557)

This work is composed of verses in Telugu language. It speaks of the different kinds of hasta-s and their viniyōga-s. The work begins thus:"Śrī Rāmā nīdu kṛtiyaisāraṃ bahu Bharatasārasaṅgrahamu camatkāramu taga nenarintunu." The author acknowledges writers and scholars like Kōhala, Nandikēśvara, Nārada, Śārṅgadēva and Hanumān in the beginning of the work. The contents of the work in the given chapter is summarized in p.1 and then the work speaks of the four kinds of abhinaya (pp. 4,7). A detailed description of the asamyuta-hasta-s is seen from pp. 5-20 and of the samyuta hasta-s from pp. 21-25. This is followed by the nṛttahasta-s (pp. 27-30), dūtiśirassu lakṣaṇam (p. 31), sirōbhēda (pp. 32-33), dṛṣṭibhēda (p. 33), sthānalakṣaṇam (p. 34), pādabhēda (p. 36) and the hasta-s for navaratna-s, navarasa-s, saptasvara-s and so on (pp. 37-41). The colophon statement found at the end reads thus: "Śrī kāntāpati karuṇāsākalyata bharatasārasaṅgrahamuvacaḥ śrīkaruḍu cillakūridi vākaruḍu tenuṅgu kṛti dhṛvambugā jēśēnu".

The work is composed in the style of Pōlūri Gōvindakavi's Rāgatālacintāmaṇi, as this also contains Telugu verses of the same style and the author salutes Lord Rāmā at the end of each verse.

3. *Bharatasarvārthasaṅgrahaḥ of Muḍumba Nṛsimhācārya* (R1668)

This work also speaks of the various hasta-s and their viniyōga-s. The section on samyuta hasta-s starts on p. 1 with patāka and ends on p. 51 with the viniyōga of mukurahasta. There is a colophon in p. 51 stating: "iti śrīvatsānvavāya sañjāta Muḍumba Nṛkaṇṭhīravācāryēṇa lēkhaka paṭhana pramadādi dōṣa rahitam mayāśāstraṃ pariṣkṛta darpaṇaśāstrē Nandikēśvarīya Nāradīya Bṛhaspatīya Sārasvatabharatākhya caturgranthāsthā samyutahasta sarvaviniyōga tatprasāra saṅghaṭita Bharata-sarvārtha-sāra-saṅgrahābhidhānē ṣaṭtriṃśati saṅkyā viśiṣṭhā samyutahasta prakaraṇam sampūrṇam". Then the work deals with the asamyuta hasta-s, which end on p. 65.

The beginning of the work is missing. The author quotes from four different works, namely Nandikēśvarīya, Nāradīya, Bṛhaspatīya and the Bharata called Sarasvati while explaining the hasta-s. A table of contents is found at the end of the manuscript.

4. *Kōhalarahasya* (R787)

This work deals with the rāgas and their different types of classification. The various topics found herein are: List of sūryāmśajā rāgas, candramāmśajā rāgas (p. 2), effects of singing

rāgas at improper timings, rāgas to be sung in morning, noon, triyāma-upari (p.3), classification of rāgas into ṣāḍava, auḍava and sampūrṇa (p. 3), svara sambhava relating to the sounds of animals, list of sampūrṇa (p. 4), ṣāḍava (pp. 4-5) and auḍava (p.5) rāgas. Benefits of singing pūrṇa rāgas (p. 5), classification of rāgas into muktāṅgakampita, ardhakampita and kampitahīna (p. 5) varieties, classification of rāgas into puṃrāga, strīrāga and napuṃsakarāga-s (p. 6), classification of rāgas into rāgāṅga, bhāṣāṅga, kriyāṅga and upāṅga (pp. 6-7), classification of rāgas into suddha, śālaga and saṅkīrṇa varieties (p. 7) and a list of suddha, śālaga and saṅkīrṇa rāgas (pp. 7-8).

The text is in the form of ślōka-s in Saṃskṛta written in Devanagari characters and the colophon statements in Tamiz are written in Tamiz script in pages 6, 7 and 8. The total number of masculine (puruṣa) rāgas are 22, feminine (strī) rāgas are 12, and the neuter (napuṃsaka) rāgas are 11. Likewise, the number of śuddha, śālaga and saṅkīrṇa rāgas are 13, 31 and 57 respectively. There is a note in Tamiz saying that these three together are called 'kūṭarāgam'. There appears a colophon on page 10 stating thus: "iti kōhalarahasyē tritiyōdhyāyaḥ", meaning, 'thus ends the third chapter in the work Kōhalarahasya'. Another curious thing to be noted in the description of rāgas in this work is that the masculine, feminine and the neuter rāgas are associated with three rasas each, namely, raudra, vīra and adbhuta for puruṣarāgas, śṛṅgāra, hāsya and karuṇa for strīrāgas, and bhayānaka, bībhatsa and śānta rasas for napuṃsaka rāgas.

5. *Nāṭyacūḍāmaṇi, Saṅgītaratnākara and Svararāgasudhārasa of Sōmanārya*

There are six manuscripts with the titles Nāṭyacūḍāmaṇi, Saṅgītaratnākara and Svararāgasudhārasa, the authorship of which is attributed to Sōmanārya. The critical edition and translation of Sōmanārya's work was done as part of my PhD. dissertation. In the course of my research, it was found that though the mss existed under different titles, they all represented a single work. (Please see article titled 'Nāṭyacūḍāmaṇi of Sōmanārya' by this author published in *Kṛti Rakshana*, October 2006).

6. *Rāgapradīpa* (R1728)

The opening verses of this work are missing. It mainly deals with the lakṣaṇa-s of rāgas according to the Kanakāṅgi-Ratnāṅgi set of the 72-mēla scheme. The work begins with the heading, "rāgāṇām nāmāni", and the description of the twentieth mēla, Narabhairavi, and its janya-s are found. Though this work speaks of the lakṣaṇa-s of janya rāgas that were in vogue in the past two or three centuries, it does not look similar to works like Saṅgrahacūḍāmaṇi. The text is in Telugu and more in the form of prose and not in a metrical format like Saṅgrahacūḍāmaṇi and Rāgalakṣaṇam. The description of rāgas is also concise. For some, the descriptions are not complete and for others, not all the janya- rāgas are described, but only listed.

There is a colophon on p. 12 stating the end of the first adhyāya of Rāgapradīpa, "iti rāgapradīpē prathamā[mō]dhyāyaḥ", and then the heading, "Pratimadhyamarāga-nirṇayaḥ".

Probably the work was intended to describe the rāgas in two chapters devoted to Śuddha-madhyama and pratimadhyama rāgas respectively.

7. *Rāgasāgara*

There are four mss available in GOML under the title 'Rāgasāgara' bearing the numbers D13014, D13015, R7899, and R15754. Among these, R7899 is a restored copy of the manuscript numbered D13014. All the four are paper mss and their contents are the same. The title of the manuscript numbered R7899 is noted as 'Rāgasāgaram-Nāradīyam'.

The work begins in the form of a dialogue between Dattila and Nārada. It consists of three chapters or taraṅga-s. The colophons found at the end of the three taraṅga-s are:

(i) "iti śrīragasāgarē nāradadattilasamvādē rāgavimarśakōnāma prathamastaraṅgaḥ" (first taraṅga, p. 24);

(ii) "iti śrīrāgasāgarē nāradadattilasamvādē śrutisvararāga vimarśanavidhānaṃ nāmadvitīyastaraṅgaḥ" (second taraṅga, p. 35);

(iii) "iti śrīrāgasāgarē nāradadattilasamvādē rāgadhyānavidhānaṃ nāma tṛtīyastaraṅgaḥ" (third taraṅga, p. 54).

The work speaks of different types of classification of rāgas like eight masculine and twenty-four feminine rāga-s, ṣāḍava, auḍava and sampūrṇa rāgas (pp. 30-31), śuddha, sālaga and saṅkīrṇa rāgas (pp. 29-30), putra rāgas (p. 19), miśra rāgas (p. 20), mitra rāgas (p. 19-20), dūti rāgas (p. 21) and rāgas born out of the śruti-s (pp. 31-32). Other details relating to rāgas found in this work are the specific time to sing rāgas (pp.21-23), various rasas associated with the rāgas (p. 23) and rāgadhyāna ślōka-s (pp. 36-54).

The work also speaks of daśavidha gamaka-s (p. 34), which are different from the ones found in texts like Mahābharatacūḍāmaṇi (Tamiz) and Sārasaṅgrahabharata of Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar. Verses from the manuscript are given below.

गमका दशविधाः प्रोक्ताः सङ्गीतस्वरवेदिभिः।
धृतं प्रथममित्याहुः द्वितीयं पदसंश्रुतिः।।
गतागतः पञ्चमं तु षड्जव्याप्तिरितीरितम् ।
सप्तमं चलसं ज्ञेयं अष्टमं चावगोपनम्।
नवमं स्फुटनित्याहुः दशमं सर्वतोमुखम्।।
वादानुवादसंवादविवादादिस्वरेशु च।
गमनं कुरुते तेषां नामानि गमकानि च*।।

Terms representing the daśavidha gamaka-s, namely āhatam, pratyāhatam, sphuritam, ḍālu and kampitam are also described in this work (p. 32-33), but not noted as gamaka-s.

अतः परमं रागगानलक्षणं वक्ष्यते मया।
आहतं प्रत्याहतं च स्फुरितं डालुकम्पितम्।।
एतैः पञ्चविधैर्भेदैः वर्तन्ते रागभेदकाः ।

Vīṇā is said to be of four types, namely, sūryāvartam (svaramaṇḍala), vajrāvartaṃ

*The verses are reproduced here as found in the manuscript.

(tumburam), harāvartaṃ (rudravīṇā), and vīrāvartaṃ (kinnara) (p. 34). Five types of ṭhāyā-s, namely, āyattaṃ, muktakam, uccaṃ, ārāvaṃ, atidhṛtaṃ are then mentioned (pp. 34-35).

In pp. 2-10, 16-18 and 25-29, the work speaks of gīta praśaṃsā and śuddha-vikṛta svara-s, which is just an interpolation from the Svaramēlakalānidhi of Rāmāmātyā. This is confirmed from the colophon found at the end of this section on p. 7 thus: "iti śrīmadabhinavabharatācārya vāggēyakāraka tōḍaramalla timmāmātyanirmitau varamēlakalānidhau svaraprakaraṇam dvitīyam"

The verses of Svaramēlakalānidhi (SMK) corresponding to these portions of the text are:

pp. 2-10: SMK 2,18 - SMK 2,65 (end of second chapter) and SMK 3,1 - SMK 3,22
pp. 16-18: SMK 2,1 - SMK 2, 17ab
pp. 25-29: SMK 2,21 - SMK 2,65

The texts on pp. 2-7 and pp. 25-29 are a mere repetition; however the colophon found on p. 7 announcing the end of the second chapter is not seen in the repeated portion on pp. 25-29.

The work abruptly ends on p. 10, and from pp. 10-16, there are verses dealing with the lakṣaṇa-s of mēlakartā-rāgas, starting from Dhēnukā and ending with Dhīraśaṅkarābharaṇam. The description includes the variety of svara-s occuring in each mēla, graha, aṃśa and nyāsasvara-s, rasa associated with each mēlakartā and its corresponding serial number in the 72-mēlakartā scheme.

8. *Rāgavarṇanirūpaṇam* (D13013)

The opening verses of this work are missing and the edges of the leaves are broken and hence parts of the text are not available. There are plenty of gaps in-between. This work contains svara passages in the pattern of ālāpā and tāna for the rāgas Kannaḍa, Ānandabhairavi, Yarukalakāmbhōdi, Śaṅkarābharaṇa, Kāmbhōdi, Bhairavi, Kēdārigauli, Tōḍī, Sāvēri, Mukāri, Punnāga, Bilahari, Nīlāmbari, Gaulipantu, Kalyāṇi and Saurāṣṭra from fols. 1-6. In fols. 7a-8b, we find the texts of a few songs. This is then followed by "akṣaratānā-s", i.e., svara passages with sāhitya, found for the rāgas Kannaḍa, Bhairavi, Kalyā[ṇi], Nāṭakurañiji, Āhiri, again Kannaḍa, Karṇā[ṭa]kasāraṅga, Madhyamāvati, Mōhana, Vuśēni, Dhanāsari, Sai[n]dhavi, Śuddhadhanyāsi and Parimālavati (?). Towards the end, there are a few compositions, probably 'daru-s', and the last one of these found in fol.15b contains jati patterns as a part of text.

The restored copy of this work, numbered R15783, does not carry some of the names of rāgas, which are given as marginal headings in the original palm-leaf manuscript. Sometimes the svara and the sāhitya phrases are split differently in the restored copy, thus leading to various misinterpretations. An in-depth study of this manuscript would enable one to understand the history of some of the rāgas in the realm of manodharma.

9. *Saṅgītakaumudī* (R4163)

This work consists of eight chapters called "pāda-s", namely Svara-nirūpaṇa, Rāga-nirūpaṇa, Tālasvarūpa-nirūpaṇa, Tāla-nirūpaṇa, Bandha-nirūpaṇa, Grahādi-nirūpaṇa and Nṛtya-

nirūpaṇa, known through the colophons. The colophon pertaining to the seventh pāda is missing.

The work begins with a list of scholars on music. Quotations from Viṣṇupurāṇa are then found. The introductory section deals with the seven svara-s, three grāma-s, twenty-one Mūrcchanā-s, twenty-two Śruti-s, and forty-nine tāna-s. Then come the names of twenty-two Śruti-s distributed among the seven svara-s. The other contents of the work are a classification of rāgas into eight masculine and twenty-four feminine rāgas (three for each masculine rāga), a section on gāyaka-dōṣa, a list of Ṣāḍava, Auḍuva, and Sampūrṇa rāgas and the appropriate time to sing the rāgas.

Following this, there are some details on tāla like aṅga, mātrā and kriyā. Structures of a few tāla-s are also given.

10. *Saṅgītādhyāyaḥ* (R11918)

This is a small, fragmentary work on music. It mainly speaks of the basic concepts of music such as śruti, svara, mūrcchanā-s, etc. This is a restored copy of a palm-leaf manuscript numbered R366e, which is very badly damaged. The manuscript begins abruptly with a description of the svara-s and their various "extra-musical attributes such as vaṃśa, dēvatā, chandas, nakṣatra, rāśī, and so on. At the end of this, there is a colophon reading: "svarāṇām lakṣaṇam samyak sōmanāryēṇa kīrtitam—iti gītādhyāyē prathamāśvāsaḥ". Then follows a text on nāda and a list of eighteen śruti-s and their distribution among the seven svara-s. The ten varieties of svara-s seen in Sōmanārya's work are then given. The work abruptly ends with the listing and description of the twenty-one mūrcchanā-s and twenty-two śruti-s.

The name of the work or the author is not clear. Though there appears a colophon in the middle of the text, it has been found that the work is not the exact copy of Sōmanārya's work but probably another work based on it (This has been discussed in my doctoral thesis, Section 2, Chapter 2, pp. 93-95).

11. *Sakalabharatasārasaṅgrahaḥ* (R3564)

This work speaks of the hasta-s and their viniyōga-s. It starts with a listing of the samyuta and asamyuta hasta-s (pp. 1-2) and is then followed by a description of each of them in order. The description of thirty-six samyutahasta-s, starts with pātaka (p. 2) and ends with tāmracūḍa (p. 27). Then follow the asamyuta hasta-s, starting from rēkhācandra (p. 28) to pūrṇanābhi (p. 30). A colophon statement marking the end of the first chapter, "iti sakalabharatasārasaṅgrahō asamyutahasta prakaraṇaṃ nāma prathama vibhāgaḥ", is found on pp. 31-32.

The next chapter deals with maṇihasta-s and some other topics, the details of which are not clear, since the text is illegible up to p. 59. On p. 37 avahidda and vardhamāna-pakṣāntara are described. The colophon announcing the end of the third chapter, "iti sakalabharatasārasaṅgrahō viśēṣahasta prakaraṇaṃ nāma tṛtīya vibhāgaḥ" is found on p. 59. The next chapter called 'Dēvatāpradarśaṇa prakaraṇam' is found in pp. 60-76 and the colo-

phon marking the end of this (fourth) chapter reads thus: "iti sakalabharatasārasaṅgrahō svarga pradarśaṇa prakaraṇaṃ nāma caturtha vibhāgaḥ" (p. 76). The fifth chapter called the "saṅgīrṇa prakaraṇam" runs from p. 77 to p. 92. This includes mṛgādi nirūpaṇam (p. 79), śila-nirūpaṇam (p. 80), martya-nirūpaṇam (p. 82), avayava-nirūpaṇam (p. 86), ratna-nirūpaṇam (p. 87), lōhā-nirūpaṇam (p. 88), navarasa-nirūpaṇam (p. 88), rāśi-nirūpaṇam (p. 89), kāla-nirūpaṇam (p. 89), svara-nirūpaṇam (p. 89), nakṣatra-nirūpaṇam (p. 90) and rasa-nirūpaṇam (p. 91). The last chapter deals with śirō-lakṣaṇam (p. 93), nētra-lakṣaṇam (p. 96), pāda-lakṣaṇam (p. 98) and sthāna-lakṣaṇam (p. 103).

The date on which this manuscript was written and the name of the scribe are given as post-colophon statements at the end of the work. The manuscript is in a very bad condition, the text on one page appears merged with the text on the reverse, thus making the manuscript illegible.

II. TRANSCRIPTS OF THE SAURASHTRA SABHA, MADURAI

The Saurashtra Sabha, Madurai, contains the valuable collection of the Walajapet music mss, mainly consisting of the compositions of the great saint composer Sri Tyāgarāja. Besides a huge number of songs, this collection also contains the biography and horoscope of Tyāgarāja. The mss were mainly said to have been written/copied, transmitted and preserved by Walajapet Vēṅkaṭaramana Bhāgavatar and his son, Krishnaswāmi Bhāgavatar, disciples of Tyāgarāja.

Information on the music manuscripts of the Sabha are not readily available to scholars except in the article by Prof. P Sambamurti in his *Great Composers, Book-II.* Between 1953 and 1955, copies (transcripts) of these mss were made by the GOML, Chennai. The transcripts made from the Saurashtra Sabha, Madurai, and preserved at GOML are listed below:

1.	Account of Some Musicians	R1596
2.	Śivanāmāvaḷi	R1532
3.	Kīrtanalu	R1594
4.	Kuppayya bhāgavathar Kṛti-s	R1576
5.	Pañcaratankīrtanalu	R1511
6.	Prahlāda Caritra	R1578
7.	Rāmadāsu Kīrtanalu of Gōpaṇṇakavi	R1585
8.	Saṅgītaratnākaramu	R1538
9.	Tālaprastāramu	R1581
10.	Tānasvaramulu	R1510
11.	Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu	R1573
12.	Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu	R1575
13.	Tyāgarāja Kṛtulu	R1577
14.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1579
15.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1580

16.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1582
17.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1583
18.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1584
19.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1586
20.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1591
21.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1593
22.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1595
23.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1597
24.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1601
25.	Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1604
26.	Tyāgarāja kṛtulu	R1531
27.	Vēṅkaṭaviṭṭhaladāsa kīrtanalu	R1598
28.	Varṇamulu	R1574

Although most of the mss contain the texts and notations of songs of Tyāgarāja, one can also find the songs of other composers like Purandaradāsa, Badhrācala Rāmadāsa, Mārgadarśī Śēṣayyaṅgār, Kṣētrajña and Vīṇa Kuppayya. Besides, mss containing the notations of Gīta, Varṇa and Svarajati, texts of Naukācatritramu and Prahlāda Bhakta Vijayam of Tyāgarāja also figure in this collection. Saṅgītaratnākaramu of Sōmanātha (Sōmanārya) and Tālaprastāramu are the main technical works found here.

III. MANUSCRIPTS ON TĀLA

In the collections at the GOML, there are a good number of manuscripts with their titles prefixed 'Tāla'. The contents of these are not known and it has been difficult to decide if these are independent works dealing exclusively with tāla or chapters on tāla of larger musicological works. All the tāla works noted here are unpublished ones, except Tāladīpikā. The following are the mss on tāla available at GOML.

Title	*Ms. No. (Original/Restored)*
Tālacandrikā of Vīrupākṣā	R13885
Tāladaśaprāṇa with Telugu Commentary	R16606
Tāladaśaprāṇaprakaraṇam with Telugu meaning	D12990
Tālādhyāyaḥ with Telugu Meaning	D12996
Tālādhyāyaḥ with Telugu Meaning	D12997
Tāladīpikā of Gōpatippabhūpāla	R770
Tālalakṣaṇa	R4034 / R5734
Tālalakṣaṇam with Telugu Commentary by Kōhala	D12992/ R7979
Tālalakṣaṇam with Telugu Meaning	D12994
Tālalakṣaṇam	D12993/ R7977
Tālaprakaraṇa with Telugu Meaning	D12991/ R7985
Tālaprakaraṇam	R14016

Tālaprastāraḥ	R5207
Tālaprastāramu	R1581
Tālavidhānam with Malayalam Meaning	R2779
Tālaviṣayaḥ with Telugu Meaning	D12995
Tālaviṣayaḥ	R13002

Of these, Tālavidhānam, Tālacandrikā and Tāladīpikā appear to be independent works.

A study of the tāla manuscripts reveals that they mainly deal with topics such as tāladaśaprāṇa-s, sapta-tāla-s, dēśī-tāla-s and the tāla-prastāra. A detailed account of the tāladaśaprāṇa-s in a systematic manner is found in the mss titled "Tālalakṣaṇam", bearing the numbers D12992 and D12994. Probably these could be the "Tālakalābdhi" referred to by scholars like M. Ramakrishna Kavi and Dr R. Sathyanarayana. (See my thesis, Section 2, Chapter 1)

The following Table gives a picture of the various topics found in the tāla mss.

Title	*Ms.no*	*Tāla-s general*	*Dēśī tāla-s*	*Tāladaśa-prāṇa-s*	*Prastāra*	*Sapta-tāla*	*Others*
Tālacandrikā of Vīrupākṣā	R13885	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Tāladaśaprāṇaprakaraṇam with Telugu Commentary	R16606	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Tālādhyāya with Telugu Meaning	D12996	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Tālādhyāya with Telugu Meaning	D12997	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Tālalakṣaṇam with Telugu Commentary by Kōhala	D12992	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Tālalakṣaṇam with Telugu Meaning	D12994	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Tālalakṣaṇa	D12993	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Tālalakṣaṇam	R5734	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Hasta-s
Tālaprakaraṇa with Telugu Meaning	D12991	No	No	No	No	Yes	Jati-s, kavuttuvam
Tālaprakaraṇam	R14016	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Tālaprastāraḥ	R5207	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Tālaprastāramu	R1581	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

IV. MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING NOTATIONS

Manuscripts containing notations of songs of various types are found in the collections of GOML. Detailed notation (as seen in modern publications) of the compositions of Tyāgarāja is found in the following mss transcribed from the Saurashtra Sabha, Madurai.

Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1575
Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1591
Pancharatna kirtanalu	R1511

Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1604
Tyāgarāja kīrtanalu	R1579

Very brief notations of the songs of Tyāgarāja are found in the following mss:

Kīrtanalu	R1594
Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu	R1597

and the compositions of Vīṇa Kuppayya in the mss titled Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu (R1601)

Notations of gitam-s are found in the mss titled

Gitam	D923
Sahityamu and Pavvalimpu	D1588
Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu	R1582

Notations of Varna-s are seen in the mss titled

Varṇamulu	R1574
Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu	R1595

Notations for singing and playing ālāpana-s and tāna-s are found in the Mss titled

Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu	R 1582
Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu	R 1584
Saṅgītakottu	D 2496
Tānasvaramulu	R 1510
Rāgavarṇanirūpaṇam	D13013

NOTABLE FINDINGS

Some of the important findings of the survey of music manuscripts at GOML, Chennai, are summarized below:

- Two mss, Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu (R1583) and Muttutāṇḍavar Kīrtanaigaḷ (R1951), are found to be copied from printed books.
- The mss titled Svaramēlakalānidhi (R15752), Tyāgarāja Kīrtanalu (R1579), Rāgapradīpaḥ (R1728), Nāṭyacūḍāmaṇi (D12998), Saṅgītaratnākaramu (R1538), and Svararāgasudhārasamu (D2591) deal with the rāgalakshaṇa-s and/or the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of the rāgas of the 72-mēla scheme. o
- The concept of the classification of rāga-s into eight masculine and twenty-four feminine rāga-s is found in the mss titled Nāṭyacūḍāmaṇi, Rāgasāgara, and Saṅgītakaumudi.
- Texts of dance compositions like Kavuttuvam, Alārippu, Sabdam, etc., are found in the mss titled Vināyakatālam (R8189), Tālaprakaraṇam (D12991), and Tānasvaramulu (R1510).
- Most of the works on tāla, like Tālaprakaraṇam, Tālalakṣaṇam, Tāladaśaprāṇa and Tālādhyāyaḥ contain Saṃskṛta mūla and a Telugu commentary.
- The manuscripts titled Saṅgītaratnākara bearing the numbers R16607, R8186, and D13024 do not contain the work of Śārṅgadēva but of Sōmanarya.
- The manuscript titled Saṅgītaviṣayaḥ with Malayalam meanings (R3811) contains the unpublished work called Svaratālādilakṣaṇam.

CONCLUSION

Catalogues of manuscripts have been prepared by libraries but they are still to be updated; in most cases, they do not give the exact contents of the works. Meanwhile, scholars like Dr V. Raghavan have also written on musicological texts after surveying the manuscripts preserved in various libraries. The present study was done by examining the manuscript codices (mainly unpublished ones) leaf by leaf. Thus many hitherto unknown facts and new information on the manuscripts and their contents have been unearthed, which one hopes would be useful for future research.

REFERENCES

1. Mahābharatacūḍāmaṇi (saṅgītādi rāgamēlalakṣaṇam): ed. Mudikondan Venkataramayyar, and Visvanatha Ayyar, U. V. Svaminathayyar Library, Madras, 1955
2. Mahābharatacūḍāmaṇi ennum bhāva rāgatāla-cingārādi abhinayadarppaṇa vilāsam.: ed. R Visvanathan, Chapters 1-3, Madras Government Oriental Series, No. CXIV, U. V. Svaminathayyar Library, Chennai-20, 1955.
3. Rāgalakṣaṇa (Anonymous): ed. D. K. Joshi, Poona, 1914.
4. Rāgatālacintāmaṇi of Pōlūri Gōvindakavi: ed. T. V. Subba Rao, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, 1952.
5. Rasikajanamanollāsinisārasaṅgraha-bharataśāstra of Vēṅkaṭasundarasāni, published by B. Vēṅkaṭarāmayya, CTA Press, Mysore, 1908.
6. Saṅgītaratnākara of Śārṅgadēva, Vol.1, ed. Pt. S. Subrahmanya Sastri, 1943, rpt 1992, Vol. 2, ed. Pt. S. Subrahmanya Sastri, revised by V. Krishnamacarya, 1959; Vol.3, ed. Pt. S. Subrahmanya Sastri, revised by S Sarada, 1986.
7. Saṅgrahacūḍāmaṇi of Gōvinda: ed. S. Subrahmanya Sastri, Adyar Library, Madras, 1938.
8. Svaramēlakalānidhi of Rāmāmātya: ed. M.S. Ramaswami Ayyar, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, 1932.

BOOKS, THESES, AND ARTICLES IN JOURNALS

Kavi, Ramakrishna M., *Bharatakosa*, Sri Venkatesvara Oriental Series No. 30, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, Tirupati, 1951.

Premalatha, V., 'A Study of Manuscripts on Music and a Critical Edition and Translation of the unpublished work of Somanarya', thesis submitted for Ph.D., Department of Indian Music, University of Madras, Chennai, May 2001.

Premalatha, V., 'Natyacudamani of Somanarya' *Krti Rakshana*, National Mission for Manuscripts, Govt. of India, New Delhi, October 2006.

Raghavan V., 'Some More Names in Early Sangita Literature', *Journal of the Music Academy*, Madras, 1932.

Raghavan V., 'Later Sangita Literature', *Journal of the Music Academy*, Madras, 1933.

Sathyanarayana, R., *Nartananirnaya*, Critical Edition and Translation, published by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, and Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi. Vol.1:1994; Vol.2:1996; Vol.3:1998.

Imagining a National Theatre: The First Drama Seminar Report*

ANITA CHERIAN

> . . . we have to remember while trying to reorganise our professional theatre . . . that our new theatre must be thoroughly national and popular in character. In our attempts [at] building up this national theatre we must make maximum use of indigenous material from our national heritage and its foundations must be firmly laid in our national traditions.
>
> *Narain Kale* [1]

> Today our dramatic art stands on the threshold of a new birth.
>
> *Balraj Sahni* [2]

> Which is to say, with the creation of an institution, an institution where we were, in one sense, the masters. It was a matter of knowing what we were going to do with it, how we were going to manage this institutional mastery, if we were going to identify it with the transmission of science or not.
>
> *Jacques Ranciere* [3]

Introducing the Drama Seminar

The Sangeet Natak Akademi organized the Drama Seminar in April 1956. It was the second of a series organized by the Akademi following its inception. The first was the Film Seminar of 1955, and the last, the Dance Seminar of 1958. Perceived as *critical* activities, the Seminars were conceptualized as a central part of the Akademi's long-term development planning. The Drama Seminar's principal concern was with the delineation of the *future* Indian drama. This is evident from the first chapter of the First Drama Seminar Report (henceforth FDSR). In its opening address, the Seminar's Director Sachin Sengupta referenced the Akademi Chairman, Dr P.V. Rajamannar's query regarding what the "future Indian drama *should be like*." The Seminar, Sengupta suggests, represented the Akademi's efforts to "*find it* [Indian drama] *for him*."[4] Sengupta's 'address' reveals the 'characteristic' discomfort of the 'artist' encountering the 'institution.' The Akademi's response to Rajamannar's directive was therefore neither that of a 'bureaucratic body' nor of one so 'foolish' as to "issue any directive on the subject." In lieu of these, a decision was made to "gather the opinions of experts who have devoted the best part of their lives to make Indian

* This is the edited version of a chapter from the author's PhD thesis, titled 'Fashioning a National Theatre: The Work of Institutions and Cultural Policy in Post-Independence India'. The dissertation was submitted to the Department of Performing Studies, New York University, New York, U.S.A.

drama what it is today."

The Seminars for the performing arts organized by the Akademi had in Sengupta's opinion, a function quite distinct from that of the 'academic' variant. Their significance, lay in the fact that any relevant analysis demanded the interpellation of their institutional conditions of possibility. Sengupta argues that the arts required "for their fulfillment immediate response from their patrons, as well as their sustained support. Seminars relating to these *arts* should therefore, seek the contact of their connoisseurs as far as practicable." This statement alludes to both the transitions in structures of patronage for the performing arts, and the dynamics of connoisseurship, suggesting the historically contingent relationship between the social standing of patrons, performers and the arts themselves.

Sengupta's invocation of the 'connoisseur' references neither the feudal patron (a symbol of political and economic structures rapidly being rendered redundant) nor the corporate sponsor.[5] He hails instead the 'amateur' lover of the theatre, affirming the 'rationality' and reformism of middle class tastes, and representing them as normative. Such a sensibility is reflected in the Seminar's participants, all of whom were characterized as the "*very best* in the field" who would offer the gathering the "full benefit of ... [their] wisdom and experience." The vast majority of the participants worked in the amateur theatre and shared a bracing contempt for the commercial stage.

The opportunity to participate in the Seminar was an honor conferred on the nation's theatre enthusiasts by the Akademi. Participation signaled not only the Akademi's recognition of the participants' prior contributions; it also placed on them the onus of delineating the contours of the national theatre to come. A majority of the Seminar's participants were soon key figures (as directors, playwrights, actors, heads of national institutions, cultural administrators, ideologues and critics, national award winners, Fellows of the SNA) determining significant trends in Indian theatre's post-1950s development. The Seminar lasted six days and brought together forty "eminent theatre experts from all over the country".[6] The report, however, remained unpublished for nearly five decades till 2004 when the Akademi published it in its journal.[7]

A striking aspect of the FDSR's organization is its desire to both replicate the linguistic restructuring of the nation-state, and to present a range of thematic questions relevant to the imminent theatre. Since national representation was a key concern, a concerted effort was made to bring together participants representing the nation's linguistic and cultural diversity. The fifty-two papers submitted to the Steering Committee examined the "various facets and problems of Indian Drama." They addressed questions of "[T]he growth and development of language dramas and regional theatre in all the 14 recognized languages."[8] Besides, there were papers on 'Folk Dramas', 'Opera and Ballet', 'Professional, Amateur and Children's Theatre,' 'Tagore's Drama,' 'Theatre Architecture and Stage Settings,' 'Production of Drama Suitable in Indian conditions,' 'Indian Drama in contrast of [*sic*] World Traditional Dramas and Plays of Today,' and 'Training in the Art of Dramatics.[9]

Though the language presentations followed one after the other in alphabetical order,

beginning with Assamese, and concluding with the Tamil and Telugu theatres of the (former) Madras Presidency, we see one noteworthy exception: that of the Sanskrit theatre. In a gesture indicating an *origin* for the *authentic* Indian theatre, a history of the Sanskrit theatre was the first of the presentations to follow the Introductory Speeches. Also of significance were the theatrical forms that did not find mention. The Parsi theatre and the IPTA were significantly not seen as subjects meriting consideration through individual papers. Both these areas, particularly the former, figure largely in the papers and the discussions that followed. The latter despite its very recent history (1943-48) remained a subject introduced perforce into discussions, where bare mention was made of its contribution.

This essay attempts to examine the modes through which the FDSR constructs (recovers, re-visions) the history of pre-independence theater in India, and thereafter to evaluate the terms through which it imagines and institutes a *national* theatre for the nation's postcolonial future. These, needless to say, are related exercises signaling the post-colonial nation-state's *arrival* into *modernity*.[10]

My analysis of the FDSR elaborates on this claim, arguing that the postcolonial nation-state in its moment of arrival, claims dominion over two key sites—the organization or the *institution* of institutions, and relatedly the [re] organization of the temporal, that is the past (history), and the future (development).[11] The control of the past is engineered through the rubrics of tradition and history, and the management of the present and the future through a complex of institutions.

The nation-state's assumption of the 'privilege' of institutional reorganization as evident from the FDSR takes shape across varied spaces: that of the formation of institutions interested in the production of a national theatre, the instating of a 'new' network of patrons and performers and finally the rationalizing of 'new' forms of political and cultural affiliation through the validation of the region as a constituent part of the *integrated* nation.

A critical impulse motivating the Seminar's discussions is the discovery of a legitimate 'Indian' theatrical tradition. The Seminar's understanding of 'tradition' reiterates nationalist narratives about India's 'spiritual unity' which transcended in Sachin Sengupta's words the "apparent differences in languages, customs, manners, social orders and political set-ups."[12] Such nostalgia asserts that India's 'soul' had remained constant, notwithstanding the determinations of the governmental and institutional structures of colonialism. The papers presented at the Seminar reveal pervasive "doubts" about the "quality of [existing] Indian drama."[13] It would appear that these concerns about 'quality' were in fact concerns about the *Indian* or *national* character of recent theatre in India.

The FDSR importantly was perhaps the first document, produced under the aegis of the sovereign state, to articulate concerns relating to the idea of the national theatre. Its reiterated desire for a theatre history consistent with the realized national present transforms its presentations and their proposals for the future into documents akin to policy.

The FDSR claims that the theatre was still awaiting its transformation into a *national* form. And the task of nationalizing this theatre, that is, of reconstructing *Indian* theatrical

traditions fell upon the state, in association with its principal allies, the elite and the upper-middle classes.

Pre-histories of a National Theatre: Bengali and Parsi Theatres

The FDSR devotes three chapters to the Bengali Theatre. These include Dr. Amar Mukherjee's essay on the "Bengali Drama and Theatre," (FDSR, 64-74), Lila Ray's discussion of the "Plays of Tagore," (FDSR, 80-87) and the actor, Ahindra Chowdhuri's (1895-1974) presentation on the "Professional Theatre in Bengal" (FDSR, 376-385). In striking contrast, the Parsi theatre, which had since the 1850s constituted vibrant forums for public entertainments across the subcontinent, did not warrant a single paper. Instead, we find that the Parsi theatre makes its appearance either as the stigmatized, commercial *'other'* to various vernacular theatres seeking the stamp of authenticity, or alternately, as appropriated by the vernacular, thereby constituting the (heritage of) theatre in that language. Often, as in the presentations on Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Andhra, Tamil, Bengali and even the Manipuri theatres we see both these processes working together.[14] Here clearly the appropriation of this form that characteristically exceeded its linguistic connections to Gujarati or Hindustani or Urdu, was achieved so seamlessly that it became the singular patrimony of several other languages.

Another point to be kept in mind while reading the FDSR's representations of the Bengali and Parsi theatres is that of its alignment of the former with the projects of nationalism and religious reform, and of the latter with its inauthentic, hybrid, colonial antecedents. The FDSR's history of the Bengali theatre erases the necessary trace of its institution at the intersections of the encounter between the forms of Bengali culture and British colonialism. As Homi bhabha points out, this is the "margin of hybridity, where cultural differences 'contingently' and conflictually touch."[15]

Projects attempting to institute a national theater have been an integral part of the histories of several nation-states. Such aspirations signal a landmark moment in their desire for self-representation: with the theater representing a nation's integrity to itself. Loren Kruger suggests that this "notion of staging the nation, of representing as well as reflecting the *people* in the theatre, of constituting or even standing in for an absent or even imperfect national identity" first emerged during the European Enlightenment and took "concrete shape with the Revolutionary fêtes." However the "institution" of what Kruger calls "theatrical nationhood manifests itself fully only in the . . . nineteenth century with the rise of mass national politics, universal "male" suffrage, and the demand of the people for legitimate representation as protagonist on the political stage."[16] Kruger's assertion while compelling can be misleading if not considered within the individual national and historical contexts she is concerned with, that is, England, France and the United States. Seen thus, it becomes clear that each of these nations desired different models of the national theatre in keeping with their individual political trajectories; engagement with the ideals of the Enlightenment; the concept of bourgeois revolution; notions of popular citizenship,

democracy and empire.

Applied to the context of colonial India, however, Kruger's criteria for 'theatrical nationhood' of 'mass national politics' and 'universal suffrage' appear deeply problematic. The rule of 'colonial difference' ensured that the colonized were not allowed the emancipatory space of nationalism as mass movement, bourgeois revolution, or universal suffrage.[17] Instead as Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee have shown Indian nationalism articulated itself as a mediatory project wherein the elite and middle-class urge to hegemony in relation to other subaltern colonial classes took the form of a 'universalism' expressed "inevitably as a nationalism."[18]

Across India, distinct political and economic configurations impacted upon the diverse institutional forms of 'modern', urban theatre. This is clearly the case when we consider the preeminent forms of the public theatre in colonial India's major metropolitan centres—Calcutta the "capital of the empire," and Bombay which was emerging as the colonized world's leading commercial centre.

In Calcutta, the first Bengali play was staged in 1795 at a theatre established by the Russian adventurer, Gerassim Lebedeff.[19] This was a short-lived endeavor, with the theatre closing after Lebedeff's departure from the city. The next significant moment was the 1831 opening of the 'Hindoo Theatre' by the rich landlord Prassana Kumar Tagore at his garden house near Calcutta.[20] The practice of constructing European style theatres in the residences of rich landlords and moneylenders continued till the 1860's. As a consequence of this, the theatre became the chosen form of 'private' entertainment for the "respectable gentry" who carefully vetted their invited audiences.[21] During this period, the plays most favored for performance were commissioned Bengali translations of 'ancient Sanskrit classics,' Shakespeare, and newer plays written in the heroic mode. The first original Bengali play was written in 1852 and performed soon after. Performances by amateur troupes became customary after the 1850's with the widespread formation of dramatic clubs representing every community, town and locality. By the 1870's alongside the emergent nationalist movement, changes were becoming apparent in the "social base of patronage" of the Bengali theatre.[22] These transitions indicated an inclination towards nationalism and political organizing among the *bhadralok*, a significant shift from its earlier collaborationist relationship with the colonial rulers.[23] Also signaled were shifts in the class base for the theatre with increasing numbers of the professional middle classes forming their own troupes. Among the most significant of these were the 'Bengal Theatre' and the 'Great National Theatre'.[24]

Bengali theatre came into its own as a public institution only after the establishment of the Great National Theatre in1872, by the acclaimed playwright and director, Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1912).[25] The National Theatre was the earliest Indian attempt to constitute a theatrical organization claiming the name of the 'national.' The inception of the public theatre radically transformed perceptions about stagecraft, viewership, publicness, and mass access to the modern economies of entertainment and media.

Ghosh began his career as an amateur possessed with the desire to create a theatre for common people. For five years he directed and acted in amateur productions, all the while training a group of young artistes, who would form the core of the National Theatre. Among the group's earliest professional productions was their 1872 staging of Dīnabandhu Mitra's *Nīl Darpan* (The Indigo Planter's Mirror, 1860).[26] This play's production history between 1872 and 1875 is a critical part of the nation's cultural history.

Historically allied with the Bengali middle classes, the professional theatre provided an unprecedented forum where the pressing political and social questions of the time could be addressed.[27] Ahindra Chowdhuri in his essay, 'The Professional Theatre' claims that the theatre was not only a "centre of attraction for amusements and entertainments but exerted a tremendous influence as an educational agency."[28] The new accessibility of the theatre made it a significant factor in urban sociality, through the possibilities of interaction it offered to vast cross-sections of the populace. Among the crowds flocking to the theatre were lawyers, judges, intellectuals, artists, students, shopkeepers, and after the late 1880's the Viceroy, the Governor of Bengal and even visiting English royalty. Theatre going, Chowdhuri tells us was central to the experience of the city, with visitors from the mofussil areas combining trips to the theatre with customary activities such as those of pilgrimage. After the imposition of the *Dramatic Performances Act* in 1876, the theatre became a site for a Hindu revivalism that masked a burgeoning cultural nationalism. This religious fervor turned the theatre in Chowduri's words into a "veritable . . . pulpit" drawing the attention of spiritual leaders like Ramakrishna Parmahansa, Swami Vivekananda and the Bhramo Samaj leader Keshabchandra Sen.

The FDSR conveys the impression that there was never amidst the Bengali middle-classes, a movement opposing the professional theatre or its commercial inclinations. Such a structure of representation contrasts with the intensifying opposition to the commercial theatre elsewhere in India.[29] From the work of Sudipto Chatterjee and Rimli Bhattacharya, however, we discern a somewhat different picture. The Bengali theatre, though immensely popular with middleclass audiences, was hardly devoid of conflict. Debates on the moral correctness of the practice of the theatre, particularly with regard to the employment of women from the prostitute class as actresses, portraying the virtuous bhadramahila provoked discussion, ambivalence, and on occasion, tore apart professional relationships.[30] Bhattacharya points out that, the Public theatre, notwithstanding its bhadralok identity depended on the labor of the prostitute actresses, who were first recruited in August 1873, barely a year after the formation of Girish Ghosh's National Theatre in December 1872. I will suggest that this information is relevant for the light it sheds on the narrative strategies employed at the Drama Seminar. The FDSR quite clearly acts upon a desire to homogenize histories of the Bengali theatre, creating as a result the 'ideal' institutional model for both the vernacular and national theatres in the post-independence period.

Further evidence of the Akademi's attempt to constitute a usable past for the theatre, by way of the Bengali theatre, is available in its celebration of the latter's attentiveness to the

political and social concerns of the middle class, and relatedly in its functioning after 1870 as a forum for nationalist politics. This perception of the theatre's role among its primarily middle class constituency distinguishes responses to it from those evoked by the Parsi and other commercial theatres. A quick survey of the public theatre's early history is called for.

From its inception in 1872, the National Theatre had demonstrated its affiliation with an emerging nationalist consciousness. Its production of *Nīl Darpan* introduced anti-colonial concerns to Calcutta audiences.[31] Though this production did not draw the attention of either the *bhadralok* or the colonial administration, it was recognized as a protest play.[32] The production's successful run in Calcutta lead to its being taken on tour in 1875, with performances in north Indian towns like Agra, Delhi, Mathura and Lucknow.[33] Everywhere it went, the play's portrayal of the plantation owners angered audiences. In Lucknow, European audiences attacked the players compelling the District Magistrate to ban the play and ask the troupe to leave town. Also in 1875, the staging of two political plays *Cha ka Darpan* (The Tea Planter's Mirror) and *Gaekwad Darpan* (The Gaekwad's Mirror) in Calcutta, provoked the administrators leading to the imposition of the *Dramatic Performances Act*, in 1876.[34] Imposed in time across the subcontinent, the Act sought to prohibit the production of plays "likely to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government established by law in British India, or likely to deprave and corrupt persons present at such performance."[35]

Given the colonial state's antipathy to the 'realist' mode of the *Darpan* (Mirror) plays, the public theatre took to staging political and social farces. The most significant of these was the 1876 staging at the Grand National of *Gajadṣnanda and the Prince*, which satirized the hospitality shown to the visiting Prince of Wales by a local lawyer Jagadananda Mukherjee.[36] The administration recognized this infringement by expanding the punitive powers of the 1876 *Act* through an ordinance that prohibited performances that were "scandalous, defamatory, seditious, obscene or otherwise prejudicial to the public interest." Responding to the ordinance, the National Theatre staged yet another farce, *The Police of Pig and Sheep*, lampooning the police commissioner, Sir Stuart Hogg and the police superintendent, Mr. Lamb. This time the playwright and the director were arrested and sentenced to a month in prison. Following these events the Great National began to eschew overtly nationalist themes and turned instead to the production of social farces that reflected the growing conservatism of upper caste Hindu cultural nationalism, caricatured the key figures of the reformist impulse.[37]

The events following the National Theatre's staging of *Nīl Darpan* conferred a mythic stature to the Bengali public theatre. Acclaimed for its nationalist past, the Indian government (prompted by the Seminar participants) signaled its approval of the public theatre's role by waiving the hated entertainment tax for the most prominent professional theatres.[38] Interestingly the Bengali public theatre, despite its commercial infrastructure, was not perceived as 'mass entertainment'. Through its intimate links with the *bhadralok*, the public theatre conveyed the impression that its themes, reformist inclinations and aesthetic sensi-

bility reflected middle class tastes. Additionally the public theatre made the medium a significant forum where a complex, often contradictory anti-feudal, anti-colonial politics came to be articulated.

However, the commercial and 'critical' success of the Bengali public theatre, needs to be recognized as a distinctive phenomenon whose conditions of possibility derived from Bengal's colonial history and consequently Calcutta's development as a metropolitan centre; the restructuring of castes and classes as a corollary of colonial intervention; the collaboration of the middle and upper-classes with the colonial governmental projects; exposure to colonial education; the emergence of English as the language of bureaucracy and "intellectual influence for [on] a new Bengali elite"; the refurbishing of Bengali as a "modern" language "adequate" to the task of representing a "modern culture"; the state's relative linguistic homogeneity[39]; and finally the reform and nationalist movements that delineated the sovereign construct of an Indian nation.

An analysis of the Parsi theatre (in relation to the demands of the national) will remain incomplete without a contextualization of the geographic, social and economic conditions for its emergence and consolidation. While Calcutta was the administrative seat of British India until its capital was shifted to New Delhi, Bombay, British India's most vital port, was the commercial hub of empire and attracted to its shores a multiethnic and multilingual population. The Parsi theatre developed alongside the decline of court culture and its patronage system, and the corresponding growth of Bombay's wealth and power as a metropolis.

Kathryn Hansen points out that from the outset the city nurtured a heterogeneous population comprising Parsis, Banias, a minority of English citizens, Marathis, Gujaratis, Armenians, Arabs, Jews, Malays and Indian Christians.[40] Unsurprisingly the city's cultural heterogeneity was manifest in the heterogeneous practices of the Parsi theatre. I will suggest that this quality was in many ways at odds with nationalism's homogenizing and centralizing impulses.

If in relation to the Bengali theatre my effort was to reveal the contexts within which it came to exemplify a national theatre, my intention vis-a-vis the Parsi theatre is to reflect upon why despite its overwhelming popularity, linguistic flexibility, and pan-Indian (in fact pan-Asian) circulation, it was not thought to be a theatrical style worthy of the name of the national. One possible reason for this could be the hybrid modes of its articulation—visible in its "deformations and displacements" of language,[41] performance strategies, and narrative content; refusal of the 'classical' unities; use of all available stage technologies, territorial and linguistic mobility; and the ethnic and religious identities of the directors, actors, writers and financiers.

Yet, it is important to acknowledge before I continue, that the Bengali theatre, quite as much as the Parsi variant, was 'infected' with the signs of colonial rule. The hybridity of the Bengali theatre is in fact a key aspect of Sudipto Chatterje's persuasive history of the Bengali theatre.[42] Given this, we can conclude that the FDSR's bypassing of the implica-

tions of the Bengali theatre's uncertain antecedents, signals its desire to confer it with a 'positive' ideological valence, distinct from its attitude to the Parsi theatre, of which it was often incontrovertibly critical.

The FDSR presents the history of the Parsi theatre through the work of theatre historians and practitioners asserting regional, vernacular identities. Ignored as a subject meriting an individual paper, it is only through presentations dealing with the Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi and other professional theatres of the Western region that we have access to the Parsi theatre. Visible here is the establishment's refusal to acknowledge the Parsi theatre as an entity that transcended the linguistic, religious and cultural divides being consolidated alongside the nationalist movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[43] Additionally, I would argue that the Parsi theatre's hybrid vision of the pan-Indian 'popular' was *not* a mode (aesthetic or governmental) that the national imaginary was willing to accept as part of its schema. More conducive perhaps were claims to the national made via regional forms, emerging alongside strengthening vernacular identities.

In keeping with its metropolitan contexts the Parsi theatre's antecedents were in commerce, and in the efforts of a commercial class to seek legitimacy in the acquisition and circulation of cultural capital. In 1840, a 455 strong group of Bombay's wealthiest businessmen, petitioned the Governor asking for the institution of a public theatre. Popular sentiment, they argued, favored the "erection of a Theatre for the purpose of Dramatic entertainment." This they claimed was a "measure" that "would promote good humour and tend to induce a desirable tone of feeling in Society at large."[44] The Grant Road or the Badshahi (Royal) Theatre was inaugurated in February 1846. It was built on land donated by Jagannath Shanker Seth, one of Bombay's richest businessmen, Funds for the project were split between contributions from the government and from the Parsi businessman, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy.[45]

Built in the 'English' fashion with London's Drury Lane theatres as a model, the Grant Road Theatre had dress boxes, seating arrangements in the pit, a gallery with 200 seats, perfect acoustics, gas lighting, green rooms and magnificent drop curtains. Leased to an English professional actress Mrs. Deacle, in its early years, the theatre staged a variety of English plays, complete with elaborate costumes and scenery.[46] Fairly soon the theatre was being used to stage productions by various amateur Indian groups. It was here that Vishnudas Bhave of Sangli, the founder of the Marathi theatre, staged his mythological plays while on tour in 1853.[47]

Also in October 1853, the Parsi Dramatic Corps staged *Rustam, Zabuli and Sohrab.* Somnath Gupt informs us that 1854 saw such a series of Gujarati plays by various groups, all with the title Parsi appended to their names, with Parsi themes, characters and actors staged at the Grant Road Theatre, that it led one to believe that the Parsi theatre had in fact arrived.[48]

The Parsis, who had in the 18th century through their collaboration with the British acquired great wealth, became by the middle of the 19th century the new patrons of culture,

buying and constructing theatres, establishing drama companies, creating the conditions for the emergence of a new form of popular entertainment. In the initial stages, the nomenclature 'Parsi' established the theatre's intimate ties with the community: referring to the ownership of the companies, the identity of the playwrights, actors and audience, and the language of playwriting and performance, Gujarati. With the form's growing popularity, and with the introduction in 1870 of plays in Urdu, newer audiences, including Iranis, Muslims, Hindus and even high-ranking British officials, began to frequent the theatre. A liberal pricing structure for tickets ensured a diverse audience including large numbers of the working classes.[49]

Among the more pressing problems faced by the Parsi theatre in Bombay was the shortage of playhouses. Theatrical companies were therefore allowed only short runs before the work of other companies were mounted. To contend with this, the companies devised by the 1870's, the strategy of taking productions on tour across the subcontinent. These were elaborate procedures that involved the transportation of entire casts, props and scenery to different locations.

From its inception in 1853, to the post 1870's decision to tour the subcontinent and Asia as a traveling theatre, the Parsi theatre's defining characteristic was its dynamic embrace of an institutional and aesthetic heterogeneity. Following its corporate and dispersed emergence as a recognizable producer of popular entertainments, we see the establishing of 'Parsi' theatre companies across the country, and a switch in the language used from Gujarati to the more widely understood Urdu and Hindustani. Somnath Gupt points out that theatre companies used Gujarati between 1850 and 1870, making the transition to Urdu in 1870, with the intention of attracting new audiences.[50] Here again, we see the Parsi companies' attentiveness to the changing demographics of the city, and to the demands of audiences outside Bombay. While Urdu and Hindustani were understood as the languages with the greatest reach in a linguistically diverse territory, this transition also signals the influx into Bombay of artists, writers and performers made redundant following the dissolution of Princely States.

Relentlessly inventive in its pursuit of the popular, the Parsi theatre did not hesitate to borrow from a myriad performative, linguistic and literary sources. It cared little for the artificial boundaries set up between the permeable realms of the folk, the popular and the classical. We see the evidence of a relentless sifting, and juggling of performative idioms in the attempt to produce popular entertainment. This expansive lexicon derived its components from a variety of sources: classical music and dance transiting from a court supported patronage economy to more 'scientific' middle class spaces; folk performance forms such as Nautanki, Tamasha, Bhavai, that were being squeezed out of urban centres with the advent of the 'modern' theatre, leaving their characteristic imprint on performers and performing styles; the 'realist' and revue modes displayed by traveling European theatre groups; and reworkings in performance of the iconic articulation characteristic of 'traditional' Indian art.[51]

The Hybrid

Anuradha Kapur[52] and Kathryn Hansen have commented on the 'eclectic' and 'hybrid' character of the Parsi theatre referring to the prolixity of its sources (Shakespeare, Victorian melodrama, Sanskrit plays, Hindu and Persian epics, the Puranas, Islamic fantasy); culturally diverse audiences; mobility as a commercial and cultural concept; fluid use of language; utilization of the proscenium arch; performative practices that deployed techniques ranging from declamatory verse, realist narrative structure, overblown melodrama, classical and folk music and dance, magic, spectacular effects approximating the miraculous; fabulous costuming; and elaborate sets and scenery. In Kapur and Hansen's work these terms (eclectic, hybrid) perform a descriptive function encapsulating the Parsi theatre's unabashed pursuit of the popular.

My use of the term 'hybrid' in relation to the Parsi theatre is intended to characterize this form as a distinctively colonial invention. The convolutions of the Parsi theatre make it an apt site to examine the conditions and processes of the constitution of hybrid identities. The notion of the hybrid emerges at the intersections of the political, economic, and social transformations initiated by colonialism, pointing to both the colonial desire for dominance, and the ambivalence of the desire of the colonized to engage with, appropriate, and re-produce the signs and structures of colonial power. The hybrid is in this context, the site where we see the ambition of reproducing colonial mentalities, or rather, mentalities amenable to colonialism, unraveling.

I will point to a couple of instances. For the first, I turn to the Parsi theatre's seemingly indiscriminate use of Anglo-European culture's hallowed literary and dramatic texts. The Parsi theatre's favored sources were the acknowledged 'classics' of the European canon. These texts circulated in the "overlapping" Parsi, Marathi, Gujarati and other vernacular theatres as source materials for 'new' plays; as productions in translation; as the disparate parts of two plays [mis]-located in a third; as tragedies transformed into comedies, with farcical and musical interludes; as texts translated from English into a vernacular language, and then into several others; as Shakespeare, Molière and Sheridan mingling with *Rustam and Sohrab, the Shahnama*, Mughal historicals, Sanskrit theatre and episodes from the Hindu epics.[53]

A precursor for such anarchic 'mixing' was the frequent use of these texts by university theatrical groups at institutions like Elphinstone College's Parsi Elphinstone Dramatic Society.[54] Interestingly, this turn to the classics was a part of the history of various vernacular theatres, and represented the efforts of a university-educated class to develop an alternative to the commercial stage.[55] These efforts to deploy the 'classic' as a disciplinary tool did not however trouble the Parsi theatre or the emergent vernacular, professional theatres. The Parsi theatre's hybrid aesthetic is an aesthetic resistant to the rationalities of the 'normal' and the 'sensible'— qualities that the colonial state had tried so strenuously to inculcate in native populations, through the imposition of the "English book."

While we acknowledge the Parsi theatre as an institutional idiom resistant in its perfor-

mative flourishes to the regulations of colonial policy, we must simultaneously recognize the FDSR's critique of the Parsi theatre, as an acceptance of both the regulations of colonial policy, and its perpetuation in postcolonial cultural policies. Narain Kale in his presentation on the Marathi theatre disparages, as a point of comparison, the professional "Gujarati-Urdu" stage, claiming of its treatment of "Shakespearian tragedies and comedies as well as . . . other European and English plays," that the Urdu Kavi (poet) "went to the absurd length of confining roaring farce to certain scenes of an adaptation, reserving the pathetic extravagance to others, and frequently violating the decencies of the stage without any compunction."[56] Kale's critique of the Parsi stage shows little recognition of the Parsi theatre's resistance of the rationalities of colonialism or its pedagogic imperative. Instead, to Kale and others at the Seminar, the idea of the classic functions as a realized signifier of cultural authority. To make matters plain, the Parsi theatre, in its dislocations of the authoritative text, is a threat to an idea of social and political order. The FDSR performs therefore the institutional function of placing it outside the frame of the nation's representational practices.

The Classical and the Folk: Counterpoints to the Hybrid

The FDSR's statements on the subject of an aesthetic model for the national theatre seek to institutionalize practices of authenticity that would replace the inauthentic strategies of the Parsi theatre. Given that this in-authenticity gestured towards the latter's disregard of taste, hierarchy, and national or cultural difference, the utopic national theatre sought to embody authenticity through its investment in 'classical,' idioms and in an uncorrupted indigenity represented in folk and tribal performance.

Orientalism and the colonial educational system together constituted the concept of a 'classical' literary canon: the former through its work on Sanskrit and the Indian 'golden age', and the latter through the valorization of English literature. Both these 'models' signaled in different ways the reformist potential of high cultural forms.[57] If the Parsi theatre's reworking of Shakespeare and other canonical European texts revealed the ambivalence and uncertainties of reception, its appropriation (in Gujarati and Urdu translations) of Sanskrit plays like Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam,*[58] and its derivations of classical music and dance, threatened to undermine the painstakingly established "continuities and constancies of the nationalist tradition."[59]

The FDSR's observations on the classical tradition in India claims, on the one hand, that the Parsi theatre had undermined the hieratic status of the Sanskrit theatre, and on the other, suggests that a revival of the classical in the non-commercial (national) theatre would be an antidote to the corruptions normalized by the Parsi theatre.

J.C. Mathur's paper on "The Hindi Drama" exemplifies such a stance, with its reactive valorization of the nineteenth century playwright Bhartendu Harischandra, who responding to the Parsi theatre began writing Hindi plays within a so-called "Sanskritic tradition." What is interesting about Mathur's proposition is his disavowal of the intrinsic hybridity of

Bharatendu's own work. Historians of the Hindi theatre, like Pratibha Agrawal point out that notwithstanding Bhartendu's efforts to reclaim the theatre from the corruptions of the commercial stage, his own plays were replete with the familiar embellishments of the Parsi theatre—songs, grand scenes and backdrops, humour and satire.[60] It is of course quite another matter that Mathur's paper like many of those presented at the Seminar seems entirely (if unsurprisingly) unclear about the *precise* performative material that would constitute this long forgotten Sanskrit theatre.[61] In characteristic fashion all claims of resemblance between the 'modern' and the 'ancient, traditional' forms are obfuscated through phrases such as:"[S]ome features of the old Sanskrit drama re reappearing . . .", " . . . a symbolic technique (reminiscent of the allegorical Sanskrit play . . .)" etc.[62]

The clamour for the classical is in effect a clamor for fixity of origin, for transmission that is controlled rather than dispersed. This perspective provides the context within which we can examine the FDSR's 'position' pieces on classical theatre.

The FDSR's references to the classical appear as both casual allusions that index it as an ideal, and expositions such as V. Raghavan's piece on the Sanskrit theatre, and Natraj Ramakrishna's essay on the Kuchipudi Bhagvatam. 'Classical' elements are also discernible in the frequent citations of the Sanskrit theatre, and in the 'Sanskritic' elements 'espied' in extant, regional ("derivative vernacular") dance-theatre (natya) forms such as Kathakali, Kudiyattam and Bharata Natyam.[63] In all these instances, the Sanskritic is associated with an essentially Hindu culture. Nataraj Ramakrishna is unequivocal on this claiming that the: "Temple is the cradle of Hindu civilization and religion, the back-bone of the Indian nation [sic]. Hence every detail of Hindu culture, whether it is science or art, is intimately connected with religion."[64]

Evident in Raghavan and Ramakrishna essays are two related aspects of the mobilizing of the classical. The former draws upon Sanskrit drama to establish the pan-Indian, transhistorical spread of a pre-Islamic golden age. Interestingly, here the classical conveys a delocalized national sensibility that ideologically fuses the fragmented sub-continent. One consequence of this valorization of the national is a provincializing of regional/ vernacular forms as "derivative" of the "Sanskrit original" or alternately as inferior to it.[65] The latter, picks out the seeming remnants of a Sanskritic culture in regional 'classical' idioms like the Veedhi Bhagavatham (practiced by the Brahmin pundits of Kuchipudi) to affiliate vernacular cultural forms to a national tradition, and simultaneously to validate the political and cultural claims to regional autonomy of linguistic communities such as the Telugus of Andhra *desa* (the Andhra country). Such an example deploys the authority of the classical and its association with notions of antiquity, tradition, and uncorrupted transmission to legitimize the political imperatives of linguistic nationalism.

What are the implications of the FDSR's invocations of the classical? What does this suggest of the governmental practices of the modern nation-state? It may be argued that the yearning for the classical points towards the paradox of the modern state, combining its aspirations to modernity, evident in the espousal of modern institutions and forms of the

state, with the seemingly contradictory desire for the re-installation of older forms of power and social authority, epitomized by the quest for "our immortal cultural heritage".

Valid questions in this context concern the sources of the authority of the classical, and how its invocation enables a valorization of the same. Homi Bhabha can help answer these queries. Bhabha argues that a "unitary (and essentialist) reference to race, nation, or cultural tradition," is critical to the task of preserving the "*presence* of authority" as an "immediate mimetic effect."[66] Applied to the contexts of classical performance traditions, his insights suggest that the desire for the classical, signals a desire for the uncorrupted reproduction of the social, cultural and political authority vested in it.[67]

The cultural resurgence of the nationalist middle classes hinges upon the notion of the classical. The validity of arguments suggesting that the valorizing of the classical enabled upper caste domination is clear from the centrality ascribed to a Brahminical culture in the delineation of Indianness. As mentioned earlier, Sanskritic culture was constituted as metonymic of the pan-Indian, wherein identity congealed around scripture, ritual, and a civilizing discourse located in the classical idioms. Raghavan's essay offers an optic to the devices through which the Sanskrit theatre normalized hierarchical social relations, while foregrounding aesthetic values promoting the "*Sattva Guna* whereby repose and serenity are attained, and a glimpse, . . . is gained of the ineffable spirit."[68] In both instances it is worth considering the ideological implications of naming the classical drama as a model for a modern, national theatre. In an unusual linguistic division of labor, the Sanskrit drama uses a variety of languages to indicate distinctions in caste, class and gender. These, Raghavan describes as the "learned and the popular tongues," with the "higher strata and the educated male characters speaking Sanskrit and the lower classes and the ladies speaking *Prakrits*, . . . of different kinds, according to the number and nature of the lower characters."[69]

The relationship between authority and the classical is evident in the discursive slotting of traditions associated with socio-political power as classical, or as hierarchically *above* other traditions.[70] Nowhere in the FDSR is this relation more visible than in Natraj Ramakrishna's essay on the dance-drama form, Kuchipudi Bhagavatham. Classicism, in the Bhagavatham's history between the seventh and sixteenth centuries, traverses a path from a 'tribal' form called the Kuravanji, practiced by the Kuravas and the Chenchus; to the social/secular idiom of the *Yakshagana*, practiced by the Yaksha (Jakkula); and finally to the classical/religious *Bhagavatham*, whose hereditary practitioners were the Brahmin priests of Kuchipudi. The *Bhagavatham* reconceived the *Yakshagana* on the "model" of the Sanskrit drama. According to Ramakrishna, this implied the incorporation of elements from the *Natya Shastra* including the elaboration of narrative, the practice of the four kinds of *abhinaya*, and *nritta* (pure dance). Highlighted in this account of the form's 'progress' are the enhancing of the story line, and character through song and *abhinaya*, presumably the indices of its growing sophistication.[71] Accompanying these transformations was its processual appropriation by the upper castes and the ruling elite. The rulers of the Vijaynagar Empire and the Nayak Kings of Tanjore actively patronized the 'secular' *Yakshagana* and

the 'sacred' Bhagavatham in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with grants of land to develop *Agraharams* or Brahmin dwellings located around a temple complex.

Interestingly this transitional tale reverses the more commonly available movement, of degeneration from classical purity, to the hybrid corruptions of folk and popular idioms. In either case, the classical remains the benchmark for aesthetic perfection/perfectibility. This pre-eminence of the classical extends to an 'abstract' realm where its authority is affirmed through its aspirations to purity and transcendence, its methods of transmission and the rigor demanded in training from aspirants. Of these, the myth of purity is the most potent, with its claim to traditions transmitted 'uncorrupted' across time and space. Speaking of the Devadasis resident at the Andhra temples, Ramakrishna claims:

> the dances developed in the temple . . . never changed as the original idea of the Acharyas was to preserve the classical traditions of the art for ever . . . They were executed in such a perfect manner that the divine forms of Hindu gods and goddesses were visible in these temple dances.

Ramakrishna's account of the Bhagavatham deals significantly enough with a distant past, the events of which he interprets with a scrupulously contemporary eye. The Bhagavatham's 'present' enters the narrative only at the very end, with the information that its survival was once again at stake, threatened in the nineteenth century by the popularity of the Parsi style commercial theatre, and in the mid-twentieth century, by the technological prowess of the cinema.

The idea of the 'folk' complements that of the classical as an aesthetic counterpoint to the baggy, portmanteau style of the Parsi theatre. As I have said elsewhere, the postcolonial nation-state followed the colonial state in its policies of fetishizing the folk/tribal, through a representational discourse combining anthropological with aesthetic interest. Further, the 1950 institution of the yearly Republic Day parade, and Folk Dance Festival had made a 'certain' image of the 'folk'—that of exotically dressed dancers gamboling down Rajpath in frigid January—a part of the national imaginary. Given this, the folk have been a deep-seated part of the visual-aesthetic field that signifies the nation. In 1956, the FDSR had two papers devoted to folk performance: Suresh Awasthi's essay, the "Hindi Folk Drama," and Dina Gandhi's presentation on "Bhavai: the Gujarati Folk Drama." Despite these essays, the FDSR's delineation of the folk conveys the impression that this was not yet an area properly constituted as a subject of metropolitan investigation. Suresh Awasthi, who would in the decades to follow become a doyen of the folk-oriented, 'theatre of roots' movement, admits as much:

> 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 dramatic 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 analyzed. Whole folk dramatic material its spoken word, music, dance and presentational techniques is decaying and facing extinction [sic]. *So our foremost need is to take scientific equipment and modern investigational techniques to the villages and collect the material from first hand sources. . .*
> *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 to venture new stage experiments and vitally contribute to the literary drama. The body of folk drama is becoming non-effective and outmoded. *We can re-shape it and revitalise* [sic] *the decaying dramatic elements by a planned programme*, the purity and authenticity of the form would not be preserved by neglecting it and denying healthier and prosperous staging conditions.[72]

Awasthi presents here a nearly 'complete' framework for the strategies through which the state and the middleclass sought to appropriate the performance of the folk/tribal. A central imperative is the institution of programs sanctioning scientific documentation and recording for future use. There is a sense in which the 'immateriality' at the 'core' of Awasthi's essay performs simultaneously the present lack of necessary information, and the demand for the future constitution of a disciplinary structure enabling access to the folk. Folk performance, for Awasthi is clearly a resource to be 'shaped' and 'vitalized' for the future. Importantly, this is also a resource in decline, caught in a dynamic of decay. The folk can never be a part of the post-colonial present; the imperative that the folk remain 'authentic,' implies that it can never be modern.[73] This is the foundation from which the nation-state embarks upon its ceaseless bid to develop and modernize.

Institutions/Infrastructure: The Politics of Legitimation

One of the most avidly discussed questions at the Drama Seminar concerned the institutional structure of the 'future' Indian drama. The principle issues at stake were those of 'rebuilding' the theatre, removing the "outdated [colonial] restrictions" "hindering [its] growth and development,"[74] and finally creating a suitable infrastructure for the imminent national theatre. Predictably, the debate centered on the degree of state support that would be available to it, and on the comparative merits of the commercial and the non-commercial, amateur theatre. Despite the seeming pragmatism of these concerns, the FDSR reveals that they were in fact heavily freighted ideologically with the question of national infrastructure for the arts providing opportunities for the legitimation of both the new institutions and the sovereign nation-state.

The desire for a national theatre coheres with the effort to delineate a sovereign national culture as an ideological and policy counterpart to independence. The FDSR's rhetoric of the theatre maintains that it represents the territorial, social and imaginative landscapes of the nation. Dr P.V. Rajamannar's welcome address drew upon the insights of Rabindranath Tagore, Stanislavsky and Bernard Shaw to claim that the theatre played a central role in the

nation's cultural life. Through his citations of these luminaries he foregrounds the virtues of the theatre as signals variously of the quality of its cultural life, as an index of its aesthetic taste, and finally quoting Shaw as redemptive of its 'soul': "[A] national theatre is worth having for the sake of the nation's soul." [75]

Harley Granville-Barker's *A National Theatre* provides another perspective on the function of a national theatre. Granville-Barker writing against the backdrop of British imperialism argues that this institution would highlight British claims to being "civilised," while also emphasizing London's position as the "capital city of an Empire."[76] Granville-Barker's movement for a national theatre visualizes the alliance between a particular form of the state and the kind of theatre it merited. The FDSR makes a similar argument on behalf of the post-colonial state. Importantly, in both instances the operative strategy seems to have been to establish and represent a valid 'native' tradition,through delineation of a cannon of dramatic works, removing indecorous elements, and placing aesthetic concerns above those of commerce.[77]

While the FDSR drew upon various national models that affirmed the role of the theatre in the task of nation-building, a significant part of its effort and that of the Sangeet Natak Akademi was to represent the Indian national theatre as an area of difference, a realm deserving the support of the State. The task of inventing a national culture endorsed the imperative to claim as Indian, institutions and media able to legitimate the nation-state. Within the new regime the theatre was a site inscribed with the marks of 'tradition' and classicism. It is no wonder then that all the speakers at the Seminar's inauguration recalled the *Natya Shastra*, whose very title suggests that the theatre was a sacred activity, with a scriptural basis. Dr Radhakrishnan confirms this belief, but also importantly suggests that drama was a uniquely Indian art. Comparing the relevance of film and theatre, Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "Last year we had the Film Seminar. While the film is a modern invention, the drama has been with us for a long time past. Indian tradition preserved in the *Natya Shastra* claims for the drama a divine origin."[78]

State Support and the Constitution of the National Theatre

Notwithstanding the Drama Seminar's overarching interest in the subject, the FDSR articulates a lack of clarity about the institutional contours of the national theatre prompting questions such as: does the concept of the national theatre imply a centralized organization, bearing the mark of the national, or did it involve instead the articulation of a theatre practice that could be identified as national*?*

Among the most critical of the tasks that the Drama Seminar set itself was to deliberate upon a suitable institutional framework for the national theatre to come. The FDSR is not at all hesitant about urging the State to fulfill its role as patron of the arts. Calls for the State to intervene in support of the theatre are a feature common to almost all the presentations at the Seminar, with notable exceptions being the Bengali director, Ahindra Chowdury who felt that "[F]ull control of the Government over the theatre is not desirable for various

reasons;"[79] and Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, the Sangeet Natak Akademi's Vice-Chairman who responding to Mulkraj Anand's enthusiasm for the State, introduced a cautionary note:

> One thing I would like to say, and that is this that, perhaps, having for a long time been starved of Government patronage in the past for our creative activities, there is a kind of hunger, probably a very justifiable one, for state aid for such activities. But few people in the field of culture have any intimate knowledge of the working of the administrative machinery. I have a little experience of it. And that is why I venture to say that the Five Year Plan activities in regard to culture should be entrusted to autonomous bodies as envisaged in the Akademies . . . . The Sangeet Natak Akademi is a [sic] autonomous body brought into existence by the Government of India. But the state of its finances is disgraceful. It has very limited finance at its disposal. It can hardly give substantial subsidies to theatrical troups found really competent and honestly active. The Administration works in a peculiar way. And that is not exactly congenial to the growth and fulfillment of the arts. Again and again I hear, not only in this Seminar, but also outside it, how nice would it be to have a Ministry of Culture, God forbid, if such a thing happens there will be an end to cultural activities in this country. I do not cherish such a hope in it because I know how the Governmental machineries function. A Ministry is a Ministry and as such, it will have to go through so many formalities and procedures. . . . I do not say that the Government would interfere, but I firmly believe that no cultural activity can be carried on by a Ministry. All the time they will be busy in collecting datas, statistics, blue-prints and hundred and one theories. That is . . . how they work and sow seeds of discontentment.[80]

The FDSR represents the task of 'nationalizing the theatre' as a mission of 'revival' and reform for the state. One of the most pressing concerns before the Drama Seminar was the rescinding of the Dramatic Performances Act of 1876 and the Entertainment Taxes levied on the theatre during the colonial period. The veteran IPTA actor Balraj Sahni is forthright in his criticism of the Government's failure—a decade after Independence—to repeal these constraints. Arguing for the institution of cultural freedoms as a necessary counterpart to democracy he claims that:

> . . . under such conditions no real development or expansion of activity is possible. The foreign rulers succeeded in destroying the dramatic arts in our country by instilling fear, by making it impossible for artists to say what they really wanted. . . If even after . . . independence these fears have to continue then there can be no hope for resurrection. We may build palatial theatres . . . we may establish academies in every city, we may announce a hundred prizes and a thousand scholarships but unless we liberate artists from the old fetters, our bonafides as lovers of freedom, as genuine lovers of art, cannot be established.[81]

If the debate about the Dramatic Performances Act directly engages issues of censorship and freedom, the discussions on the subject of the Entertainment Tax had more subtle institutional implications The SNA's *Annual Report 1959* makes clear its bias towards the drama by claiming that it "was much more than entertainment" and therefore merited consideration "as a serious nation-building cultural activity." State Governments were therefore "urged to exempt drama" from the Entertainment Tax.[82] It is worth pointing out that these opinions were made against the contexts of the decline in the commercial theatre, the corresponding "efflorescence of [amateur/ IPTA] dramatic activity during the last few years,"[83] and the emergence of the cinema as the chosen medium of popular/'mass' entertainment.

While several of the Seminar participants spoke of the punitive effects of the Tax, there was less unanimity about how the state and the Akademi could negotiate its continued imposition. Participants such as K. Narain Kale,[84] Chandravan C. Mehta and Mulk Raj Anand were of the opinion that the commercial theatre was obliged to pay the tax, given its commitment to mass entertainment and box-office profits. Anand is categorical in his statement:

> The demand for 35% of the sale of Entertainment Tax is certainly too high . . . But if you run a theatre for profit why should you ask for an exemption . . . . If you run a theatre *as a cultural activity pure and simple* you may seek for an exemption of the tax. But if you run it *on a profit motive* why should you demand . . . a *special concession*![85]

There are undercurrents at work, most significantly the efforts to buttress the amateur theatre, while undermining the contributions of the commercial theatre and the cinema. Chandravan C. Mehta and the Manipuri writers M. Bira Singh and H. Romain Singh clarify that the effects of the tax were mostly critically welf by the amateur theatre whose potential for experimentation was entirely crippled.[86]

Amateur/Professional: Paradigms for the National Theatre

The Entertainment Tax was not the only area around which the FDSR reveals its partiality for the amateur theatre as the chosen institutional mode for the 'new' national theatre. Mulk Raj Anand's presentation to the Seminar expresses this position plainly. He asks, "[A]nd how can the pronouncedly amateur character of our theatrical movement lead to the foundation of a new professional theatrical tradition?"[87] Notwithstanding the rhetorical thrust of this question, it foregrounds key issues—the first the characterizing of contemporaneous theatre activity as 'our[s]' and as 'amateur', and secondly the desire to establish this amateur theatre as the "foundation" of a re-visioned professional theatre. As the Recommendations made by the Seminar to the Akademi reveal, this relationship was based on commitments as wide-ranging as the earmarking of funds in the Second Five Year Plan to be allocated by the Central and state governments as subsidies to theatre groups; removing

'hindrances' to the growth of the theatre; constructing theatre infrastructure; supporting commercial and amateur theatre companies; establishing theatre training institutions; creating incentives for the preservation, study and support of folk performance forms; incorporating drama within educational curricula; organizing drama festivals and competitions, and finally initiating a publishing program designed to publicize theatre activities across the country, circulate research, and publish and translate plays.[88]

While these demands for policy and infrastructural initiatives are fairly precise, more intriguing perhaps were the ideologically charged rationalizations used to legitimize the transition from the commercial to the state-subsidized national theatre. The FDSR's arguments on behalf of the amateur theatre range from a celebration of the freshness, 'humility', and 'naivete'[89] of the amateur theatre, to suggestions that the professional theatre was the natural corollary of colonial rule and represented a disorganized, rampantly commercial ethos, reflecting the laissez faire policies of the colonial state. In contrast, the imminent national/amateur theatre would mimic the rationality of the sovereign state, its predilection for development, and its institutionally organized methods for the reproduction of resources.[90]

A definitive aspect of the national theatre is its foundational relationship with the state. The state is its condition of possibility and enables its ability to function, disregarding the jurisdiction of the box office. Yet, an important consideration remains the language used to legitimize this transition. The state I would argue, uses a language simultaneously modern, moral and aestheticizing, the language, in fact of nationalism.

Among the ironies of the FDSR's reiteration of the amateur theatre's role in the shaping of a national theatre movement, are the demands made by participants that the State intervene to transform the amateur theatre into a new professional theatre.

Not surprisingly the criteria enabling this distinction drew upon a reformist vision that dichotomized art and commerce, to emphasize the greater value of the amateur theatre in the post-independence era. What is of interest to me however is the contradictory desire for a professional theatre subsidized by the State.

This contradiction requires contextualizing in relation to the Drama Seminar's primary function—to underscore the assertion that the "future hope for the establishment of a national theatre" lay in the "promotion" of the amateur theatre.[91] Though articulated on moral, aesthetic and modernizing grounds, the FDSR's central concern was the provision of infrastructure for the theatre. Alongside the ostensible nobility of purpose of the Seminar's presentations, there is another narrative—of the utter financial impracticability of the amateur theatre. Considered thus, it is clear, that it was only through the State's continued sustenance that the amateur theatre could hope to survive.

Seen in this light, the Drama Seminar is a timely event for the amateur theatre, providing it with an unprecedented opportunity to present the case for a reformed theatre and to invoke the state's assistance. The FDSR suggests that the most significant ways in which the state and the Akademi could contribute would be to reconstruct the institutional mecha-

nisms that would create conditions favorable to the emergence of a new theatre.[92] Primarily this involved the provision of two kinds of support—the setting up of national infrastructure like auditoriums and rehearsal spaces in the big cities, progressively moving towards establishing similar institutions in towns and villages across the country; and secondly, creating institutions "for the study of the theory and practice of the art and profession of the theatre."[93] The latter as Narain Kale tells us was crucial since "[N]o national theatre can gain strength without the firm foundations of the properly educated taste and carefully trained sensibilities of the younger generation of its people."[94]

Cultural Legitimation and Middle Class Reform

The nation-state, allied with its principal collaborator, the middle class undertook the organizational reconstruction of the theatre. The FDSR marks the emergence into prominence of the nationalist middle classes in the tripartite roles of patrons, performers and audiences for the theatre. It establishes the relationship between this class and the state, presenting them as partners not only in the 'known' fields of politics, economy and social change but also in that of reforming the arts and constituting a properly national theatre.

The middle class is central to my analysis of the transforming structures of patronage for the theatre. Attempts at characterizing this class have to necessarily embrace ambivalence, given the juxtaposition of the category of the 'elite' besides the humbler nomenclature of the 'middle class'. Lakshmi Subramanian in her study of the contributions of this class to the excavation of India's cultural foundations refers to this sliding scale in her claim that the term was used to describe a tiny segment of the population who while being in the main upper class and caste, comprised an assortment of members from the fractured aristocracy and feudal land owning classes, in addition to the intelligentsia, business men, industrialists, eminent professionals and lower and upper level colonial functionaries.[95] Partha Chatterjee's commentary on the Bengali colonial elite eschews the slippages of 'sociological' definition and focuses instead on the "social agency" of this class that derived from its mediational role, "in the sense of the action of a subject who stands in the 'middle' working upon and transforming one term of a relationship into the other."[96]

The middle class's affiliation with the Congress-led political establishment enhanced its access to governmental power.[97] This alliance of the middle classes with the state signals on one hand the "actualization" of its aspirations to power.[98] On the other, it highlights the constitutive role of this class in the processes of state formation. Refuting perspectives that would detach the practices of the nation-state from the desires and actions of the bourgeoisie, Etienne Balibar has argued that the "dominant bourgeoisie and the bourgeois social formations formed one another reciprocally. . .by restructuring the state in the national form. . ."[99] The participants at the Seminar speak like the State and for the State suggesting their simultaneous assumption of its authority, while being delegated with authority as its representatives.

Mulk Raj Anand's interventions at the Seminar demonstrate the middle class' proximity

to the State establishment. His address of the state, while more rambunctious than many of the other participants, shares with them a confidence in its potency and right to intervene in every sphere. Also in evidence is the participants' self-assurance at being able to intercede on behalf of the 'people' for whom the national theatre was requisite. Consider, for instance, the developmental imperative motivating Anand's demand that the Centre's Five Year Plans allocate resources for the construction of a hundred theatres and for the translation of plays across the fourteen national languages:

> . . . we cannot think of the Five Year Plans without theatres in the country, theatres not needed for propaganda but [as] enquires [sic] into the conscience of *those people who are half dead, living in the cow-dung age* and not able to appreciate the horrors of the atomic energies.[100]

In a similar vein, Snehlata Sanyal suggests:

> I feel that at this stage . . . we cannot foretell . . . what shape we should give *our* national drama, what we have . . . to do is to make physical conditions possible for the development of Drama. Our Akademi should make it possible that theatres may reach the people with all . . . forms of drama to give the villagers a chance to see them all and let *us* watch which *they* like the most [sic] what *they* like the most would be the precise form of *our* National Drama.[101]

Anand and Sanyal clearly belong to the community that Susie Tharu has characterized as the "ethical middle class," comprising besides bureaucrats and technologists, the nation's educators, artists, and institutions, the designated agents, as it were, of the developmental Nehruvian state.[102] Drawing upon Partha Chatterjee's emphasis on the middleness of the middle-class' function of mediation, it is possible to suggest that this class serves as a conduit between the state and the 'people.'[103] Tharu argues that though the middle class mediated the state in 'statist form' to the groups we refer to interchangeably as the 'masses', the 'folk', the 'people,' the idiom of this mediation is pedagogic.

With few exceptions (Ahindra Chowdhuri, K. Chattopadhyaya, Balraj Sahni), the FDSR produces the sovereign state as the source of all munificence, as the originator of positive action. Significant here is the transference of the political energies of the nationalist movement onto the realized nation-state.[104] Such a movemtnt in thearts parallels the decision to invest through Planning in ostensibly "social" models of 'stae capitalism' wherein the ownership of the 'engines' of production and development, distribution and the markets were vested with the state.[105] From the perspective of the burgeoning theatre movement of the 1940's—the IPTA and the amateur theatre also—it is apparent that there is a surrender of initiative. The theatre's struggles over scarce financial and other resources, politics, censorship, and untrained actors are set aside, making room for the state to takeover the task of supporting the theatre, and creating the political, infrastructural and pedagogic contexts

for its continued existence.

Even as the universalising of the state form is one aspect of the middle class' function, the other is its representation of the 'people' to the state. Needless to say this activity, constitutes the 'people,' while simultaneously establishing the state and the middle class as its trustees. The hierarchical basis of these relations is nowhere more explicit than in the argument between Ebrahim Alkazi, J.C. Mathur and Mulk Raj Anand on the 'treatment' of the Bhavai artists. Alkazi's critique of Dina Gandhi's plans to educate the Naiks illustrates the contradictions besetting even liberal attitudes towards the people/folk.[106] Alkazi claims, on one hand, that Gandhi's reformist zeal imposed a modernizing sensibility upon rural communities that would erode the distinctiveness of their cultural practices: ". . .We want to educate the Bhavai artists. . .teach them. . .how to behave like educated persons like us. But we do not for a moment consider that the nearer they reach us, the quicker would they discard the art of their forefathers." On the other, he would rather that the educated classes did not "poke [their] noses into this affair because we do not really know what would. . .be good for this form and. . .its exponents" Alkazi suggests instead that the 'matter' be left to the state: "The Government have [sic] a department to put the Bhavai artists on the right track. This problem should be tackled by anthropologists and not by dramatists and actors and producers."[107]

Though Anand and Mathur disagree with Alkazi, these differences are not substantive. Mathur argues that the "folk drama" was not "something outside us. It is an expression of a larger community of which we are a very small part."[108] Anand is emphatic about the social structure, which he shared with the Bhavai:

> These Bhavai artists are not tribals. They are within the social set-up to which we belong . . . we are not talking of racial or tribal decadence but the decadence of folk arts. I feel we have a responsibility which cannot be brushed aside. I do not think that the anthropologists have anything to do with the problem . . .[109]

The Universalizing of Middle Class Interests

If the discursive productions of the middle class constitute the subaltern as inherently inadequate, the opposite is also true, with the middle class' claims to hegemony conditional upon its assertions of superiority over the latter. Commenting on the paradoxical foundations from which the nationalist middle class emerged, Partha Chatterjee has argued that this "class was created in a relation of subordination. But its contestation of this relation was. . .premised upon its cultural leadership of the indigenous colonized people."[110] Given its uneasy origins it is not suprising that the middle class sought to expand its spheres of influence by "express[ing] its hegemonic urge in the form of university."[111]

The nationalist elite deployed the idea of a national culture as a key tool through which to naturalize their class concerns as those of the nation. As in the fields of politics and

economy, they emerged as the self-appointed trustees of the arts. Simultaneously 'modernizers' and 'preservers' of trâdition, they fashioned with the state, a singular nationalist vision of the function (and type) of the aesthetic alongside structures of patronage that replaced those extant under colonialism.

Culture, clearly was an avenue through which the middle class validated its desire for command. Additionally it allowed the engendering of consent and the naturalizing of the nation-state's policies. Speaking of variations in 'taste' and "cultural consumption," Pierre Bourdieu has argued that, "art and cultural consumption are predisposed. . .to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences."[112] Two related issues emerge from this argument: the first that struggles for hegemony were often worked through in the spheres of cultural production with the bourgeoisie claiming 'ownership' of specific forms; and secondly that this arrogated to the concerned classes the privilege to appreciate, interpret and reconstitute these forms. Of significance here is Bourdieu's suggestion (elsewhere) that the ahistoricism typical of artistic discourse repressed the very social relations that were its "conditions of possibility."[113]

As evident from the FDSR, the middle classes presented themselves as saviors of the arts, liberating one form after the other from imminent depravation and sure extinction. The endeavors of eminent cultural activists such as Rukmini Devi, Sumitra Charat Ram, Charles Fabri, Dina Gandhi, Kapila Vatsyayan, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Uday Shankar and many others, reveal shared narrative patterns comprising the discovery of a form either 'classical' or 'folk', the search for its 'traditional' gurus, the years spent mastering the form, the triumphant public performance in the metropolis, the modernizing and institutionalizing of the form through its transplantation to an urban institutional structure, and finally its reconstitution as an aesthetic entity 'deserving' the name of the national.

The veteran cultural scholar and administrator, Kapila Vatsyayan schematises elite interventions in the restructuring of patronage for the performing arts from two related perspectives: the first, the 'dialectic' of the reorganization of the states, the 'disappearance' of the princely states and the urgent need for new structures of patronage; and the second, the paradoxes created by the arrival of political freedom, the continuance of an Anglican infrastructure, and the custodianship assumed by an elite trained in a discredited colonial system. Vatsyayan's insights derive from 'experience' and reveal the close ties meshing the actions of the new elite with those of the state. Narrated in the first person, her memories of the 'first decade' exhibit a sensibility acutely aware of its place in history. As she puts it:

> We were . . . I was part of this process through which the state replaced the princely states as patrons for the arts—and this was a necessary function—a function more of discovery than of deliberate, motivated efforts towards creating a national idiom and aesthetic. I recall the bringing of Amjad Ali Khan's family to Delhi after the Rampur Maharaja was unable to support them anymore. This was not necessarily motivational, this was about what needed to be done, in response to the necessity of the moment.[114]

Framing the actions of the middle class within the twin rationales of 'discovery' and 'necessity,' Vatsyayan's insights provide clues to the distinct modes of this class' interventions. It is clear from accounts such as this that the middle class played a mediatory role, introducing and representing the nation's performance traditions to itself, to the 'people,' and to the state. Seen thus it is apparent that the Drama and the Dance (1958) Seminars, were not solely invested in the 'making' of the nation, they were as concerned with discovering its people, and idioms of performance, bringing them together, and in so doing recognizing the nation's fabled diversity. In effect, the seminars staged the educated elite's discovery of the nation, and the nation-state's discovery of its people.

While occasions like the Drama Seminar created opportunities for the middle class discovery of the nation's 'culture,' it also enabled the governmentalization of this realm with the introduction of programs designed to 'retrieve' (reconstruct) and 'protect' 'threatened' art forms.[115] Among the initial steps taken to inscribe middle class values upon it were the demands by the vernacular theatres for the institution of a national theatre. A critical aspect of the desire to nationalize performance was the imbrications of the projects of moral and aesthetic reform. Accompanying the emergence of 'new' communities of performers (middle class men and women), were reconfigured audiences (primarily urban) and discernible shifts in the pattern of consumption of the arts.

It is no wonder then that the newly powerful bourgeoisie sought to rid the arts of their connections to their hereditary, often morally 'unregulated,' antecedents.[116] Perhaps the most 'successful' project of moral and aesthetic reform was the transformation of Sadir, an art practiced by Devadasis (slaves of the deity) hereditarily dedicated to the sexual and spiritual service of the temple deity and its patrons, into the 'uncorrupted,' paradigmatically national art-form Bharata Natyam.[117] Dina Gandhi's account of the Bhavai likewise, dwells on the 'corruptions' that had entered the oral texts, rendering the form vulgar and therefore unfit for 'respectable' consumption. Yet again centuries of 'foreign' rule, Muslim and European were held responsible for the degeneration of 'Indian' culture.[118]

Having discursively constituted these forms as decaying within obsolete structures, the move towards transplanting them to 'modern' establishments that combined the 'better' parts of nationalist sentiment found immediate legitimacy.[119] The new dispensations of the sovereign nation-state and the dominant middle class shifted perspectives on the function of the arts from their role as forms of livelihood and sources of pleasure, to the projects of highlighting the nation's antiquity and its unbroken cultural traditions. In keeping with these changes the arts did not continue as forms extant in the public domains of commerce and livelihood, instead, with the advent of state support, they were moved into the sanctified spaces of high art, seemingly isolating them from popular consumption and from systems of valuation.[120]

A majority of the presentations at the Drama Seminar thus speak from positions that valorize high art and correspondingly deride the contributions of the popular variant. The criticism offered most often in relation to the Parsi theatre cited its refusal of regulation

(disciplining). As K.N. Kale puts it, in their "enthusiasm for the spectacular and the popular," the Parsis "disregarded all the cannons of art and indulged in gross anachronisms."[121] Given this context, an important question concerns the governmental functions of the high arts. A tentative response might be available in the mutually inflected nature of the discourses of the aesthetic, nationalism, and reform. Arguably, embedded in the aesthetic are the disciplinary functions of moral and spiritual regulation.

NOTES

1. K.Narain Kale, "The Professional Theatre in the Western Region of India" 'First Drama Seminar Report' (henceforth FDSR), 403.
2. B. Sahni, "Traditional and New Drama" FDSR, 359.
3. Jacques Ranciere, "Politics and Aesthetics: An Interview," translated by Forbes Morlock in *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 8: 2 (August 2003): 195.
4. S. Sengupta, "Speech", 'FDSR,' to organize the Seminar, the SNA appointed a Director, and a Steering Committee under the guidance of its Vice-Chairman, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya.
5. Several of the papers presented at the Drama Seminar articulate this view, see Shri. A. Chowduri, "The Professional Theatre," 376-385; Shri K.N. Kale, "The Professional Theatre in the Western Region of India," 392-405 and others in the 'FDSR'.
6. *Sangeet Natak Akademi Report 1953-1958*, 28.
7. See *Sangeet Natak*, Vol.XXXVIII, No.2-4. This eassy, however, refers only the unpublished manuscript of the FDSR, following its system of organization and pagination.
8. The Eighth Schedule (Articles 344 (1) and 351) of *the Constitution of India* enumerates the fourteen 'recognized' national languages as follows: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu. The 21st Amendment Act of the Constitution, 1967, inserted Sindhi as the twelfth language in this alphabetically ordered list, bringing the number of national languages to fifteen. *Shorter Constitution of India*, 1980.
9. *Sangeet Natak Akademi Report 1953-1958*, 27.
10. M. Madhava Prasad, "Back to the Present," *Cultural Dynamics* 10: 2 (1998): 123.
11. Walter Benjamin affirms that "our view of the past" is the "concern of history." Further, the . . .past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one." The past can, in other words, be mined with redemptive, "messianic" interest. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana Press, 1973, 1992): 245-246.
12. S. Sengupta, "Speech", FDSR, 12.
13. *Sangeet Natak Akademi Report 1953-1958*, 28.
14. Recent research has shown the influence of the Parsi theatre style on almost all the vernacular