

The Training of the Actor

E. ALKAZI

My limited experience in the theatre has taught me the dangers of making dogmatic statement on the subject of training the actor. How far is acting a matter of pure natural talent? To what extent can an individual be trained into an actor? There can be no clear-cut answer to these questions.

If acting can be taught, there arises the question of the type of training the actor should receive. The present state of the Indian theatre—a state in which it is aware only in the vaguest manner of its ancient traditions, and is as yet uneasy in its assimilation of foreign influences—renders any attempt to maintain a doctrine of pre-established system of training a hazardous venture. After all, the actor is trained to go out and serve what may be called the institution of the theatre. Such an institution has a past, a present and some sort of attitude towards the future. If no such living institution really exists to make specific demands upon the aspiring actor, what are the forces that will determine the type of training he should receive?

Moreover, the theatre is not a static institution; it is ever-changing, and its truth has many faces. What was accepted as the ultimate truth in the theatre at one period may be looked upon as a violation of it in another. However subjective and erratic such a state of affairs may appear to be, this intellectual freedom and flexibility is essential to the theatre. The theatre can only live through constant experiment in idea and methods and through exposure to new tendencies. That is why, to be true to itself, the theatre cannot be anything but modern in the simplest sense of that term.

No one period fathomed the full depth of the theatre. Each period has extended our understanding of its possibilities, but the whole truth of it has never been revealed. It is the eternal search for the truth, through fresh and unexplored territories, that lends the theatre its magic, exhilaration and terror. Theatre, therefore, is a way of looking at life. One questions and militates against long-established traditions, against truisms which have been accepted long enough to be rendered sterile. That is the only way of serving the theatre.

Nonetheless, at any one time there are certain beliefs one holds to be true, and on the basis of these beliefs one's theories on training the actor have to be constructed. Acting, one affirms, is an art; the actor is an artist in the theatre. He is both creator and interpreter of another's creation. The actor's instrument is his body, in this he is at once the creator and the thing created. These assumptions partially determine the type and quality of the actor's training. But in this connection another factor cannot be ignored—namely, a society's conception of the nature and function of the theatre.

By way of material, the present-day Indian actor is offered the following: the classical

Sanskrit drama, the regional drama (both sophisticated and folk), and foreign dramatic literature. There must be an underlying unity of approach to this enormous variety of dramatic fare, and every training school must adopt a specific attitude in relation to this material. That is why it is not enough to say that acting is an art, such a statement precludes a particular artistic creed to which the training school subscribes.

It is obvious enough that the training of the actor falls into two natural divisions: theory and practice. When I speak of theory, I refer to what may be called a philosophy of acting: the history of acting, dramatic literature, theatre architecture, costume and scenic design, both in India and the rest of the world, and the relationship between theatre and the arts of painting, music, dance, sculpture and architecture. By and large, the theory will shape the practice, but as the theory is not a static body of material, practice is bound to have repercussions on it.

The history of the Indian theatre presents great problems. It is incomplete. As far as dramatic literature goes, there is the magnificent heritage of classical Sanskrit drama and theory of theatre, as embodied, for example, in the *Natyashastra*. Between this and the various regional dramatic literatures, there is an enormous distance of time. A similar gap exists in the other aspects of theatre. For example, apart from brief enigmatic written references, we have nothing to go by which would give us a graphic idea of theatre architecture. Were there any building for dramatic performances, or were plays performed in temple or palace courtyard, or simply in the open air? Is there any development in the manner of play presentation? What kind of make-up was used? What type of costumes did the actors wear, and was there any development in costume design on the stage? These are crucial questions to which precise answers must be found, based on irrefutable evidence, if we are properly to understand our theatre heritage.

During the twelve centuries that separate the living Sanskrit theatre from that of our own times, India has gone through vast political, economic and cultural changes. But to all intents and purposes, as far as large-scale theatrical activity goes, apart from the written drama, and certain types of folk theatre, these centuries suggest little activity. Sanskrit drama declined after the Muslim invasions. The bhana and the prahasana became increasingly crude. The new Indian theatre, which can claim to go back a century or two, arose out of the modern dialects.

In Europe during the same period, theatre went through a score of styles in writing, acting and production, which present a line of logical, historical and artistic continuity. This constitutes the European theatre tradition. However poor a period may have been either in the quality of its dramatic literature or its play presentation, we know precisely what it was like. There are documents, accounts, drawings and architectural monuments from which evidence can be deduced. By a strange conspiracy of circumstances, there is little such material on the Indian theatre. One of the reasons for this is perhaps the belated use of printing in this country.

A style of acting must find its place as the contemporary expression of the tradition which

has come down through history. The present can only be studied in relation to past achievement and style, and enriched through that experience. Our modern productions of Sanskrit plays make me uneasy and raise great doubts in my mind. I witness a play written in the classical style, according to obviously rigid and highly formalized conventions, performed by actors who resort to a pseudo-realistic style of acting, in settings achieving a certain shabby naturalism. However appreciative the Sanskrit student may be of the play as spoken by the performers, the incongruity of the entire production is aesthetically excruciating.

In Indian dancing, the classical traditions have been maintained, and every aspiring exponent is judged against the exacting demands made by that tradition. But what are the classical traditions of the Indian theatre? By this I mean, not only what was the style of acting when Sanskrit drama was at its peak, but also how that style has changed since then to the present day? The *Natyashastra* is a compendium of rules, structures and definitions which translated into practice may perhaps claim to constitute the classical style of Indian acting. But I have yet to see a performance in strict accordance with the grammar of the *Natyashastra*.

Research into the arts and life of the times may give us some inkling of the original style in which these plays were produced. Such knowledge may be useful and interesting for the light it throws on ancient theatre practice, but the essential style of any of these plays is implicit in the play itself, and the chief problem of producer and actor is to discover it. To be valid today that style has to be fashioned in terms of today. A Sanskrit play has meaning for us now (primarily as theatre) only if the 'truth' or 'essence' is, without violation, revealed to the contemporary audience in terms of the present.

The chief aim of Sanskrit drama was to evoke a sentiment or *rasa*. In form, the play resembled the dramatic poem (with prose passages as well), and was meant primarily for the delectation of a cultured intellectual elite. The greater part of modern Indian drama has been inspired by the techniques and themes of such writers as Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann, Galsworthy and Shaw, to name only a few, in whose works—in accordance with Western dramatic tradition—importance is placed on psychological conflict portrayed in a clearly-articulated plot-scheme.

There is a wide gulf between these two approaches. On the one hand, in its theatrical treatment, we have the formalized gestures, alternation of prose and verse, and subordination of plot and character to emotional content in the idealistic Sanskrit theatre, and on the other, a vividly realistic portrayal of life in the contemporary Indian theatre.

The traditions of the folk theatre in India, with its startling mixture of ancient conventions and realistic devices, provide some kind of a tenuous link, bridging both the time-span as well as the stylistic differences between the conventional Sanskrit and the realistic contemporary theatres. I cannot help feeling that the modern Indian playwright has not only failed to give these folk forms their due respect, but has contemptuously discarded them for the superficial glitter of Western dramatic form and presentation. India need a Lorca to make her aware of the riches of her folk traditions.

Today, the Western theatre is astonishingly rich in its diversity of styles, ranging from naturalism to the most esoteric forms of symbolism. It is reasonable to suppose that with the breaking down of physical, political and cultural barriers between countries, the achievement of any nation anywhere in the world, in any field of art, becomes a contribution to world art, and the common heritage of all mankind. Under such conditions, we cannot help foreseeing an overwhelming impact of every type, style and form of the foreign theatre on the Indian and vice versa.

The Peking Opera, which recently participated at the International Theatre Festival in Paris, was not regarded by the West as a merely alien, exotic, colourful but irrelevant form of theatre. On the contrary, to both audience and theatre-workers it revealed theatrical truths to which they had long been blind, and thus provided an extension of the West's idea of theatre.

Through the work of such an eminent playwright and producer as Bertolt Brecht, the Chinese influence has percolated down to the European theatre generally, altering its fundamental conceptions of the purpose of theatre, of dramatic form, of the technique of the actor, and so on. A German playwright like Mr Egon Vietta, writing under the obvious influence of Brecht, comes to India, sees all types of Indian theatre, from the Ramlila to the most elaborate Kathakali dance dramas, and finds in them elements germane to his own advanced sophisticated ideas. Thus, there is not only a cross-fertilization of the West and the East, but also of the Eastern past and the Western present.

Clearly, out of all this, an international style of styles is bound to emerge, just as it has in architecture, painting, music, sculpture, and particularly the applied arts, with superficial national deviations and idiosyncrasies. It is no accident of history that Le Corbusier, one of the most progressive and revolutionary European architects of today, should be entrusted with the task of raising out of Indian soil a new Indian city. It is only a vivid sign of the times. And what is happening in the field of architecture, is happening in the theatre and indeed all the arts, though in a subtler and less spectacular manner.

This stupendous ferment of ideas and cross-influences presents no dangers, and holds no terror for all that is vital and authentic in the arts. It destroys decadent form, shibboleths, fake traditions.

What the actor therefore needs is not so much a fixed technique of acting as a basic general education—to begin with—which will enable him to understand the bewildering complexity of forms, styles and media which prevail in the modern theatre. The first step in this education should be towards the integration of the student's personality, aiming at a dynamic relationship between him and his environment. There is no such thing as a confused artist. Art presupposes clarity of idea and expression.

Though it may sound platitudinous, one cannot help stating that the ultimate purpose of this education should be the harmonious balance between the intellect and emotions. The emotions are developed and trained through experiences of life, both real and imaginary. The theatre offers limitless scope, in this, leading the actor through the lived-through

experience of art towards a more profound understanding of the problems of everyday living. The emphasis, therefore, should be all along on the immediate aesthetic experience of the student. The truer that experience, the richer the educational effect.

The most a school of acting can do is to provide the student with as wide and rich a range of material to experience as time will allow, and to make him as sensitive to this experience as is possible. It is of course assumed that the student will be put through the rigours of voice and movement training, and such other aspects as will be dealt with later. It is enough to say here that the principles of muscular relaxation, correct breathing, perfectly articulated speech and movement, sensory awareness, resilience of mind, and the faculty of concentration—all these will have been brought to such a degree of awareness and accomplishment as truly to make the body the obedient instrument of the actor.

For this purpose, the school may avail itself of one of several methods, depending upon such factors as time, place, the teacher's views and the reaction of the students. It may be felt, for example, the Kathakali embodies a system of physical training—in terms of movement, gesture, rhythm and mime—ideally suited to the Indian actor. On the other hand, another teacher may arrive at the same results through another system, as that of Dalcroze's Eurhythmics, or the methods of Rudolf Laban. In these cases, the ends certainly justify the means, so long as there is no harm done to the student's physique or personality in the process. Each school will have its own preferences in this matter, having arrived at a particular policy through the years, by trial and error. Constant revision and revaluation will nonetheless be essential.

I shall return a little later to some other aspects of the actor's craft. What I should like to stress here is that the actor is not only a craftsman but also an artist in the theatre, and so his sensibility, his physical and emotional experience, his insight, his intuition and imagination, will require tender nursing. I do not say 'training' or 'discipline', because that would imply a specific system which would be imposed on the student. I use the word 'nursing' because each student has to be helped into finding his own 'personal' approach to acting. The teacher should tend to him as a gardener tends to the growth of a delicate plant, which, though it be one of several hundred, needs personal attention, patience, gentleness and reverence.

The early phases of the student's training should be devoted to increasing his ability to appreciate the arts, and evaluating art works. Appreciation cannot be 'taught', but the student can be shown the basis of appreciation in the various arts, and some of the basic principles underlying them. The final aim of this study should, of course, be his better understanding and enjoyment of the theatre as an art form. At the same time, he should be assisted through active participation in theatre work, in developing individual skills in acting, production and stage design. One need hardly emphasize the need for a subtle integration of the various studies. If the student is to enjoy a living experience of the theatre, all fields that lead to an understanding of that experience must be investigated.

Theatre is a reflection of life in terms of art—so it is a magnified, more intense, deep and

vivid recreation of life. In this larger world, the actor must learn how to find sincerity and also a sense of reality. He must be taught the elaborate process of authentic character-creation, through a succession of graded phases—when and where to rely on imagination, when and where on technique so as to reach the precise control of and possession by the character, which we know as acting.

The training should be essentially a formative process, with the emphasis on the creativity of the student himself. There is therefore no question of shortcuts, or the imparting of the so-called professional 'technique' or 'tricks of the trade', or successful ways of playing different types of parts.

The creative aspect will require constant attention right through the actor's training period. In the earliest times, the actor combined in himself the functions of performer, dramatist and producer. If in the course of his training, the student is asked to fulfil in himself these various functions and assume his ancient status, it would give him an illuminating experience of the total theatrical mystery. Realizing this, Copeau, the great teacher of the school of the Vieux Colombier in Paris, made his apprentices return to the original sources of drama 'in order to discover the secrets of authentic and untrammelled dramatic creation'.

The average student will come to the school with absolutely no idea of the creative and imaginative aspect of the actor's work. He will come with certain preconceived notions of theatre and art of acting, which he will have picked up through amateur theatrical, or his knowledge of the professional theatre, and particularly of the films. To him acting will mean the imitation on the stage of his favourite screen idol.

The difficulty of the teacher's task will lie in his fight against the litter of sterile convention and defunct traditions which suffocates the contemporary Indian theatre, and which the student will have in all innocence assiduously encumbered himself with. It will be hard enough for the teacher to content against the natural or acquired faults of speech and movement which will have become hardened in the student through the years. These alone would take further years of patient and conscientious practice to rectify. Incidentally, does it not seem strange that it should be generally accepted that the dancer should start his training at a very tender age, before his muscles are set, while it seems to be ignored that exactly the same thing applies to the actor? As the profession stands today, the student-actor is already half ruined before he assumes training, most of which would necessarily have to consist of undoing the harm already done to him in the preceding years. Difficult enough as this is, it is even more difficult to shake the actor out of the mistaken beliefs and erroneous practices in which the successful and popular professional theatre is steeped. It means inviting a young man who is anxious to make a name for himself to join the ranks of an impoverished minority. This is not a romanticized picture of the artist struggling against the stream of popular taste and belief. In India today, it is a bitter reality.

Only a cold fanaticism can enable the teacher to hold his own against these beliefs. For his task is neither an easy nor a simple one. The student has to be born again. He has to be

stripped bare. He has to be made to experience life and the arts afresh, through his own being, through his own mind and heart. He has to spit out the chewed-over cud and knowledge he has been made to masticate in school and in college.

His body has to be rejuvenated, to come alive again, shorn of all false modesties, inhibitions, complexes. The actor has slowly to make the discovery of his body for himself, in all its intricate mechanism, and its evocative beauty, an instrument which has to be sensitive, flexible, perfectly tuned, so as to respond effectively to the actor's imagination, and reflect accurately his ideas.

And finally, the student's imagination has to be fired. It has to be stirred anew, as it was stirred when first, as a child, he began to make fantastic discoveries of space, of feeling, of his five senses, discoveries with something of the element of magic about them; and then again in adolescence when he suddenly found himself growing into a world of strange eruptive forces, of new awareness of his manhood. The actor's imagination must be made to flame with the same ecstasy.

Through acrobatics, improvisation and mime, the student should seek the sources of dramatic creation. The student will soon realize that a lyric ecstasy is not enough. He will learn to perceive, that is, to seize upon and investigate the life around him: nature, the behaviour of men and animals, the varying reactions of different types of people to different circumstances, and under the stress of different emotions. This minute and objective observation of reality the student should then be taught to translate into theatrical terms. In this way, without the aid of speech, purely through gesture and movement, he should undergo the agonizing experience of transforming life into art.

At the same time, as the student makes the rediscovery of his body and his emotions, his mind should be furnished anew, not with exhausted texts, definitions and ideas, which have had the juice chewed out of them till they are dry fibre, but the masterpieces studied anew, in whose fresh and invigorating company the mind can be spurred to great dreams, feelings and actions.

After a lifetime devoted to such a conscientious study of the art of the actor as has never been known in the history of the theatre, Stanislavsky confessed:

I have tried all ways and means, I have paid up tribute to all modes of production: realistic, historical, symbolistic, ideological. I have studied the most diverse trends and theories, realism, naturalism, futurism, architecture, statuary, stylization by means of draperies, screens, gauzes and lighting effects. I have reached the conviction that none of these furnish the actor with the background his art requires. The only monarch of the stage is the gifted actor.

The most a school of acting can therefore do is to create the bracing intellectual and artistic climate conducive to the development of the actor's gifts.

In conclusion, I should like to quote a statement which briefly sums up all I have been trying to say. It is one of ten basic principles which Mr George Devine, who a few years ago

was a director of the Old Vic Theatre School, considers essential to the subject of the training of the actor: "A school of theatre should be based on a clear artistic point of view."

The students, in the presence of such a point of view, can only gain strength from it. They may, sooner or later, develop or deviate from their original inspiration but, at least, they will realize that art is personal and based on conviction. In such a school, therefore, a student will undergo formation as a artist which is much more than training. This first principle will demand the direction of the school by a person of sufficient artistic strength and achievement to promote a certain point of view. I use the word 'promote' and not 'impose'.

Author's Note: The suggestion that a school should or can cater to all tastes is not only impractical but artistically impotent.

DISCUSSION

E. Alkazi: My paper is concerned with only one aspect of the actor's equipment i.e. training he should have. I see an actor as an imaginative creator. And as such we should not dogmatically lay down any particular system for building him up. While talking of his training we must take into account: (a) the nature of the theatre itself, and (b) the present state of theatre in India. A theatre is not a static institution but an everchanging medium of reflection of the changing life and the concept of life. To be true to itself, the theatre cannot afford to be anything but modern in the simplest sense of the term. Accordingly, there cannot be any 'ism' like 'traditionalism', 'modernism' in the theatre. The theatre has always got to be 'modern' with all the might and the wealth of its tradition behind it. There is only one legitimate type of modern theatre. And that is what is known as *avant-garde* theatre, which, I assert is the very 'nature' of theatre.

The second factor that determines the training of the actor is the present state of theatre in India. An Indian actor today has to take into account ancient Sanskrit dramatic literature, dramatic literatures of the regions (both sophisticated and folk), and thirdly an Indian actor should be able to interpret all the varieties of forms and styles that he finds before him. There is the strict formalism of Sanskrit drama which demands formal treatment of conversation, posture, diction and movement. And there is the modern realistic treatment as well as several elements of folk drama which are found to be irresistible. What would be the style of the acting that the present generation of Indian actors should adopt as the medium of his interpretation? What I believe is this: a style of acting must find its place as the contemporary expression of a tradition which has come down through history. But there is a schism between contemporary styles in the Indian theatre. We have no continuous logical and historical development as they have it in the West. What makes the present situation still more transient and subject of change is due to the conquest of time and space. The world is fast becoming one single cultural entity giving birth to art an international style of expression. In the modern theatre also, we witness the emergence of an international style

although we find everywhere bias for two extremes, i.e., the traditional, which at its worst, becomes reactionary, and the *avant-garde* or progressive, which at its worst, becomes too abstract and out of touch with reality.

Dr Mulk Raj Anand believes that imagination is the cardinal quality of Indian culture. I don't say he is wrong. But I cannot help saying that theatre in other countries have their quality too. The naturalistic theatre is not necessarily unimaginative. Naturalism in the hands of a Stanislavsky, or to take an example of our recent experience, a Satyajit Ray as revealed in the magnificent picture, *Pathar Panchali*, is a completely different thing from the shady naturalism of most of the West end or Broadway or for that matter of most of Indian Theatre and film. I wish to stress this particular point because it has a direct bearing on the training of actor. I feel the emphasis should not be so much on technique but on the nurturing, development and maturing of a sensibility, which is the basic thing. The training of the actor is a formative process and it is not something which can be imposed from outside. Emphasis in training the actor should be laid on the growth of sensibility and creative zeal of the student enabling him to choose and discover style and form and technique. He must develop within him all the qualities which make a dramatist, a producer and a performer. He must have intimate contact with reality, must have the wisdom to select significant elements and the skill to recompose and re-arrange those elements into an integrated form. When a student develops these essential qualities he becomes an actor, an interpreter of society and a recreator of the play he has got to perform. A mere recital of the theme of a play does not make an actor of a man.

An average student of the art of acting comes for a training in the art with absolutely no idea of the creative and imaginative aspect of the actors' work. He will come with certain preconceived notions of the theatre and the art of acting which he had picked up through amateur or professional theatricals or the films. To him acting will mean the imitation on the stage of his screen idol. This will make the task of a teacher extremely difficult. He will have to remove from his pupil's mind the evil influence of sterile conventions and defunct traditions which suffocate the contemporary Indian theatre and which the student will have in all innocence assiduously encumbered himself with. Therefore, a student desirous of having an actor's training must be striped bare as if he were a new born body. His body has to be rejuvenated, to come alive again, shorn of all modesties, inhibitions and complexes. The actor has slowly to make the discovery of his body for himself, in all its intricate mechanism and its evocative beauty, an instrument which has to be sensitive, flexible, perfectly tuned so as to respond, effectively to the actor's imagination and reflect accurately his ideas. And finally, the student's imagination has to be fired. All I have said so far goes to suggest that the state to which the actor should aspire is that of the poet, the lover and the fool.

Ahindra Choudhuri: I do support every word Shri Alkazi has uttered in regard to the training of an actor. A student's mind and body must be so prepared that he may receive what he is given. But the real training begins from the moment an actor appears on the stage and ends only when he retires from the stage. An actor grows in stature through the experiences he gathers while he plays. His day to day routine work of giving dramatic performances from year to year makes an actor of him, the idea of a finished actor turned out by any school of drama is a doubtful, if not altogether an impossible proposition. A school

may only kindle a student's imagination and give him a knowledge of theories related to the art of acting, but for practical training he must have the stage to act upon and an audience to please. The acclaim and the cat-calls do alike help an actor to grow. He is trained by them and not only by lessons he learns from his teachers at the school. It may be said that if it is true that the real training field is the stage, then why do we want that there should be school as well. Shri Alkazi has very lucidly and cogently brought that out. Unless a student is prepared mentally, physically and spiritually to receive experiences, it would be extremely difficult for him to gather them while he plays on the stage.

When we had come to this field, there were no schools to help us. We had to discover things by sheer industry. We learned from our failures and successes. We had to be under constant strain. Very few of us could stand the strain. Some of us left the stage, and some became stereotyped. If we had received such basic training as Shri Alkazi expounded in his speech and his paper, many of us would have had the opportunity of gathering experiences pleasantly and very few would have gone away or would have grown callous. A basic training removes the causes of a crushing strain and lends a light to see things where everything appears to be dark. I congratulate Shri Alkazi for his excellent paper. I guess that some of you know my connection with the State Akademi of Dance, Drama and Music founded by the Government of West Bengal. I happen to be the Dean of the Faculty of Drama of that institution. It is a training Akademi. I believe I will not be wasting your time if I tell you how we train our students. We start with study of anatomy and physiology. Then we come to the mental aspect of acting. Only when the students get familiar with the physical and the mental requirements of an actor and learn how to use their body and mind we do take up pronunciation, diction, voice culture, etc. Along with these we teach them from the very first year the theories of emotion as the Westerners have built up as well as the *rasa-vichar* of our ancients. When we find our students well equipped with the basic requirements, we teach them dramaturgy and the history of the growth and development of drama from the earliest up to the very modern days. From the second year on students start specializing on how to give practical shape to things they had learned in theory. Designing of stage, light charts, costumes, etc. have to be drawn and models have to be prepared by the students when they reach a certain stage of specialization. We believe that they will be engaged to any theatre. They will go there equipped with the fundamental knowledge of the art of playmaking. We have yet to see how this system works. Writing of drama and criticism also get our attention.

Suresh Awasthi: I want to know whether there is any relationship between the art of acting and the art of production? My second question is why do we find that when there have been great actors, the standard of plays have been correspondingly lower?

E. Alkazi: There must be close relationship between the two. Both the arts are used to produce drama. Production includes acting also. An interpretation of a play by acting requires a style which should be consistent to the interpretation the producer is called upon to do in order to unfold the inner beauty of the play. If the actor chooses his style which neutralize the efforts of the producer, the totality of the art is bound to be chaotic. The actor and the producer must collaborate to give the play every colour it needs. The quality of

acting depends on the stylization of the particular production which has to be acted. Secondly, the style of acting is determined by the style of the play itself. The essence is the style of the play. I find it difficult to answer the second question. No actor, I believe, can interpret a character in its entirety. When a play is poor, the character is feeble, an able actor tries hard to make up the deficiencies by his creative skill. He does shine out by outshining the play. But there might be characters greater than an actor's imagination. In those cases, an actor has to engage his whole to the interpretation of the character. The result is that the play become irresistible. When we say that a play was found to be greater than the actor or an actor was found to be greater than a play, we do actually lose sight of the difference between an interpretation and a creation.

K. Narain Kale: How do you propose to teach all the dramatic styles and forms pursued in different countries to the students who come for actor's training at one single school? Can you teach Sanskrit forms and Western forms all together?

E. Alkazi: I do not believe that there is any difference either between Western drama or Eastern drama or Sanskrit drama or any other drama. The common basis for all art is human experience. And human experience is the same everywhere in the world. That is why you find art develops more or less in similar pattern all over the world.

A Delegate: Not exactly the same, either the experience or the art.

E. Alkazi: Well, I have no knowledge of Sanskrit. But I am prepared to produce a Sanskrit play. I am sure that I will not be offending the spirit and the style of the play. If there is any difference between a Sanskrit play and a play of the West, it is only of degree and emphasis on the sensibility.