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*Cover:*  
Glimpses of Kathakali: Training, Makeup and Performance.  
(Pictures: David May. Design: Ratnakar Sohoni)

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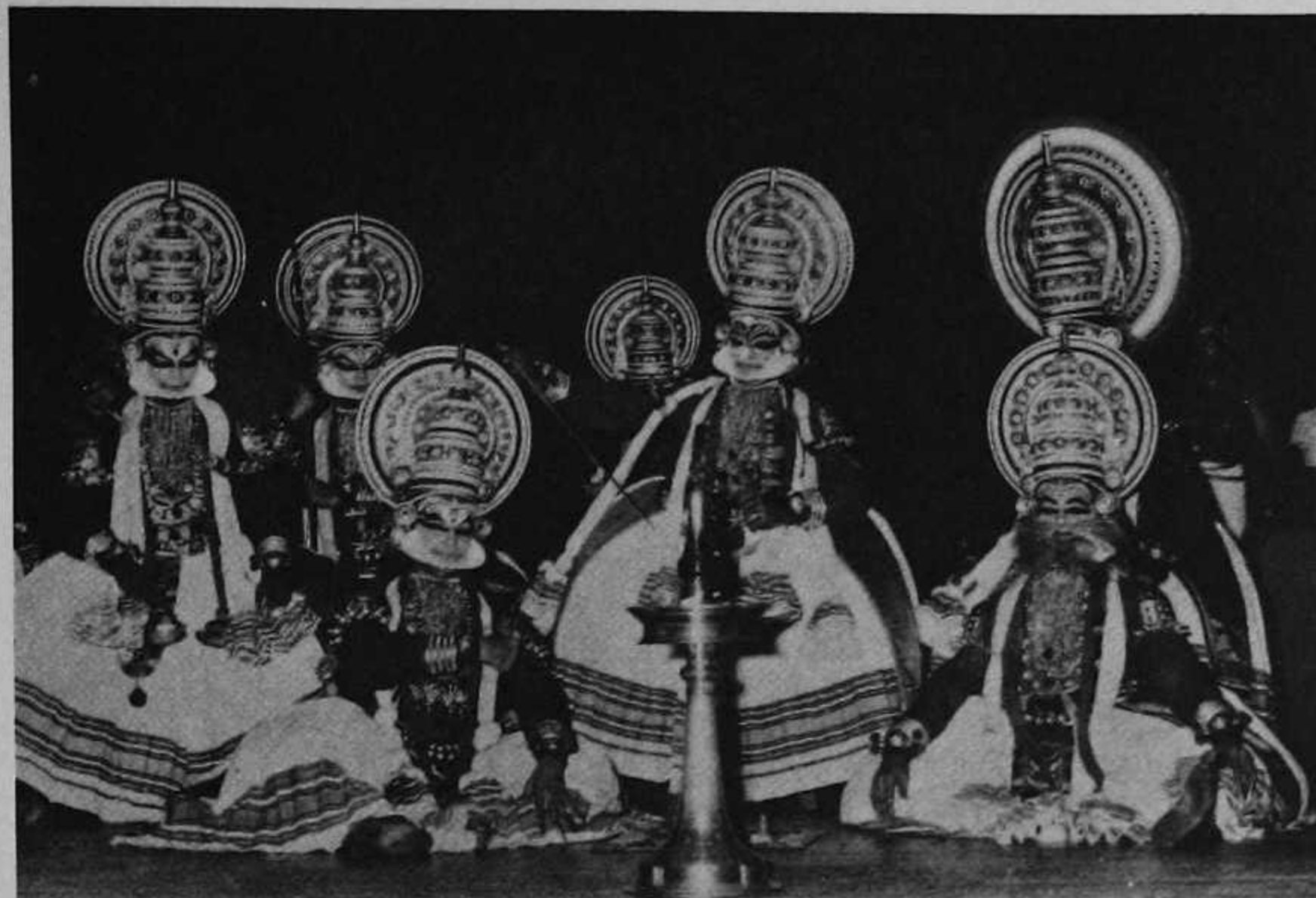
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The game of dice from the *Mahabharata*.

## *Satvika Abhinaya* in Kathakali

M. K. K. Nayar

The forest is thick and frightening, yet cool. The sun is low in the sky, scattering its rays through the thick foliage, laying a carpet of golden flowers on the shores of the gurgling stream. A doe, in labour pains, gently moves along to find a safe and cosy corner to give birth to its offspring. It relaxes on the dry ground close to the water. It is startled by the sound of a dry twig breaking. Peering into the distance, its sad eyes catch a glimpse of a hunter, stalking it carefully, his bow strung and poised to pierce it. The doe is lying far too much in the open. Since it cannot flee, it must hide nearby. As it turns around, it is stricken with fear at the sight of a tiger approaching it from the direction where it hoped to hide. The doe must somehow escape, but the dried grass behind it has caught fire. Thus the creature is hemmed in on all sides, by the river, the fire, the hunter and the tiger.

The impending peril aggravates the doe's labour pains. In sheer agony, it looks around only to see the flowing river, the raging fire, the approaching hunter, and the tiger ready to spring. All hope of escape seems to be lost—when suddenly a flash of lightning rents the sky, followed by a thunderstorm.

Struck by lightning, the hunter dies; his arrow misses its aim and kills the tiger instead. The rain quells the fire and once again a cool and calm atmosphere reigns. The doe delivers its offspring in peace and licks it, delirious with happiness.

What has just been described was sixty-four-year-old Mathur Kunju Pillai Panicker, the greatest actor of the Kathakali stage, portraying the scene which met Bhimasena's eyes as he made his way through the forest in search of the legendary Saugandhika flower for his beloved Draupadi. It was enacted sixty years ago. On that occasion, the *Natakashala*, the spacious theatre of the Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple at Trivandrum, was filled to suffocation. Bhima was at once the doe in distress, the tiger on the prowl and the gleeful hunter. The spectators were groaning in suspense; some of them were about to jump to the rescue of the poor doe! The changing demeanour of the hunter, expressing his eager anticipation, the hungry tiger's thrill at the sight of its prey and growl of satisfaction when it was about to spring and the transformation of the doe from a state of agony to sheer alarm and, ultimately, to stark terror held the audience stupefied and helpless. And when the lightning struck and the rain poured, the whole auditorium sighed like a furnace with genuine relief. That was *satvika abhinaya* at its best in Kathakali, an expression of the total theatre of our tradition. One had to see it to believe it.

When one sees such perfection in *satvika abhinaya* on the stage, one is not aware of the strenuous efforts that have been expended over centuries to attain that goal. For *abhinaya* is the core of Kathakali, while *satvika abhinaya* is its delicious kernel.

To appreciate *satvika abhinaya* in all its splendour, and understand how the Kathakali actor is able to capture its vast dimensions and soul-stirring nuances, one has to travel back to our ancient traditions and discipline. It all began a few thousand years ago when we, as a people, became conscious of *rasa*.

*Rasa* defies translation. No single word in English conveys its exact connotation. Scholars have described it as flavour, sentiment etc. Though *rasa* embraces both flavour and sentiment, it is far more than that. It is the intrinsic emotional satisfaction evoked by a combination of several factors which help to generate an appropriate psychological state. For instance, the sight of a lovely rose by itself is a source of pleasure which is heightened by its sweet fragrance. And, if the rose blooms in a lovely garden, where a cool breeze blows during the spring season, the joy is further enhanced. The eye, the nose, and the body together savour this experience. One enjoys listening to a good song. There is a deeper joy when it is rendered in a melodious voice, and an added dimension of pleasure when it is accompanied by appropriate instruments and regulated by perfect percussion. It is such states of inner enjoyment that constitute *rasa*.

In a performing art like drama, *rasa* is created in the mind of the spectator by the actors. The actor succeeds in the creation of *rasa* through his actions. In other words, the actor, through various modes of expression, creates the necessary psychological state in the mind of the spectator to generate the appropriate *rasa*. The modes of expression employed by the actor are called *bhava*-s.

*Bhava* has been translated as 'feeling' or 'emotion' by A. B. Keith. Anand Coomaraswamy would call it 'mood'. Haas calls it merely 'state'. The objective of the actor is to create *rasa* in the spectator. He does it through his expression of the appropriate *bhava* or *bhava*-s. It is the *bhava* of the actor that creates the *rasa* in the spectator. The actor does not express a *rasa*. *Rasa* belongs to the audience. *Bhava* belongs to the stage.

When the *Natya Shastra*\* was compiled by the sages, the recognised *rasa*-s were only eight: *Shringara* (erotic); *Hasya* (comic); *Karuna* (pathetic); *Raudra* (furious); *Veera* (heroic); *Bhayanaka* (terrifying); *Beebhatsa* (odious) and *Adbhuta* (astonishing). These were the *rasa*-s prescribed by Lord Brahma himself. One of the later Bharatas, however, felt that Brahma had not done a complete job. So he added the ninth *rasa*, *Shanta* (tranquil). Some versions of the *Natya Shastra* do not include the ninth *rasa* in Chapter Six.

It is the actor's responsibility to create the above *rasa*-s in the minds of the audience. To enable him to do so, the appropriate *bhava*-s that would generate the relevant *rasa*-s were also prescribed.

<i>Rasa</i>	Main <i>Bhava</i>
<i>Shringara</i>	<i>Rati</i> (love)
<i>Hasya</i>	<i>Haasa</i> (mirth)
<i>Karuna</i>	<i>Shoka</i> (sorrow)
<i>Raudra</i>	<i>Krodha</i> (anger)
<i>Veera</i>	<i>Utsaha</i> (energy)
<i>Bhayanaka</i>	<i>Bhaya</i> (terror)
<i>Beebhatsa</i>	<i>Jugupsa</i> (disgust)
<i>Adbhuta</i>	<i>Vismaya</i> (astonishment)
<i>Shanta</i>	<i>Sama</i> (non-attachment)

These are the main *bhava*-s or the dominant moods of the actor relevant to the appropriate *rasa*-s.

To enable the actor to express the various *bhava*-s effectively, it is necessary to support each *bhava* by contributory elements akin to the main *bhava* itself. These are called *vyabhichari bhava*-s. They could be called complementary *bhava*-s or transitory emotions or moods. Bharatas have prescribed thirty-three such contributory *bhava*-s, which include despair, helplessness, apprehension, jealousy, intoxication, etc.

*Abhinaya* (histrionic representation) has four components: *angika* (gestures), *vachika* (spoken word), *aharya* (costumes and makeup) and *satvika* (aesthetic expression). While all these aspects of *abhinaya* are important, the success of a performance is directly related to the elevation attained by the actor in *satvika abhinaya*. The word *satvika abhinaya* also defies accurate translation in English. *Satva* originates in the mind. It calls for mental concentration and is a true presentation of human nature in all its aspects; love, hate, sorrow, arrogance, anger, jealousy, generosity, meanness etc. In other words, the actor has to live the role of the character to create successfully the appropriate *rasa* in the spectator.

\*The *Natya Shastra* is not the work of a single sage called Bharatha as is commonly believed. In ancient times, 'Bharata' was the professional name of the teachers of dance and drama (comparable to the *Nattuvanar*-s of Bharata Natyam). The *Natya Shastra* was compiled, corrected and edited over a period of time by a succession of erudite Bharatas.

Whether one plays the role of Shakuntala or Vasavadatta, Hamlet or Shylock, the audience should have a revelation of the real character on the stage, not of the actor. The attainment of such a level of proficiency in *satvika abhinaya* is what every actor yearns to accomplish.

Nearly two thousand years ago, when the choreographers of Kerala ventured upon a stylised presentation of Sanskrit drama, they had a wide canvas of folk theatre to draw from. The folk theatre had already chosen the colours that would accentuate *satvika bhava-s*. They preferred green, the pleasing colour of the rain-fed paddy fields, to represent nobility, divinity and poise. Red, the colour of blood, stood for the cruel and arrogant. The terror-filled darkness of the thunder-bearing monsoon clouds reminded one of the demons and the cavemen. The golden yellow of the *Konna* flower brought to mind tenderness. A judicious harmonisation of these colours was exploited for typifying the characters of the play. *Kutiyattam*, the stylised presentation of Sanskrit dramas, thus set the pattern of the traditional theatre of Kerala. Classification of characters by a prescribed makeup and costume helped to imprint on the audience the true nature of the character itself. The individual actor lost his identity behind the makeup and the costume. Yet the talented actor held sway through his mastery over *satvika abhinaya*.

Kutiyattam was a highly stylised drama which needed several days for the performance of a single act of a play. The plays preferred were those of Bhasa and Shaktibhadra and, after the ninth century, those of the Chera King, Kulashekhara.

Several centuries later, when Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* became popular in Kerala, a dance form (Krishnattam) was choreographed to present the story of Lord Krishna in eight days. The performance was sponsored by the then powerful ruler (Zamorin) of Calicut who retained it more or less as a private preserve. It was costume-oriented, with the attire and makeup largely from Kutiyattam. It was essentially a dance performed by men, young and old. Kutiyattam, on the other hand, had women playing feminine roles right from its inception.

Over the centuries, Kutiyattam had evolved a meticulous system of training to ensure that its *satvika abhinaya* attained the highest standards. The actor had unlimited scope for flights of imagination so that he could, for instance, delight connoisseurs for a whole night by merely describing the beauty of the heroine. Due to the proprietary attitude of the Zamorin towards his Krishnattam, it remained unchanged, without any development for centuries.

Kathakali, when it appeared in its original crude form around the sixteenth century, aimed, in general, at entertaining spectators. Kutiyattam was exclusively for the élite and the erudite. Krishnattam was a closed book within the temple of Lord Krishna at Guruvayoor or at the Zamorin's palace. The Raja of Kottarakkara, a small chieftain in South Kerala, introduced Ramanattam (the story of Rama), also enacted in eight days to match the Zamorin's eight-day-long Krishnattam. The army chief, Kittu Panicker, was the moving force behind the Raja's enterprise. Since Ramanattam was accessible to the common man, it became popular (within a short period of time) throughout Kerala. Soon, other promoters came forward. Prominent among them were the Raja of Vettathunad and the Raja of Kottayam. These Rajas, too, had their small armies consisting entirely of the Nayers of Kerala.

In the early years, the actors in Ramanattam, which later became Kathakali, were drawn from among these Nayar soldiers. Handsome, and with chiselled features, they received rigorous physical training at the *Kalari-s* (gymnasias). From the cradle to the battlefield, their life was one long movement in rhythm. Whether they were engaged in sowing, weeding or harvesting the paddy and even while rowing their boats, they worked to a tune and *tala* (time-beat). In the *Kalari-s*, every physical movement was attuned to a *tala* scheme. As a result, the actor of Kathakali could in those days assimilate swift dance movements with ease and grace. *Kalasa-s* punctuate the phrases and sentences of the dialogue or close a particular scene. They add grace to the performance and establish the pace within the strict standards of the rhythm.

Chathu Panikker, the army chief of the Raja of Kottayam, was a celebrated actor and a distinguished scholar. The Raja himself was also a scholar. The two of them foresaw a great future for Kathakali as total theatre and worked with dedication to achieve this objective. The technique for *satvika abhinaya* in Kutiyattam inspired them to emphasise the need for a high standard of training in *abhinaya* in Kathakali. That was the beginning of a well-oriented and rigorous programme of training for the Kathakali actor.

Boys begin their apprenticeship when they are around ten years old and undergo the Gurukula form of training for more than a decade. The training starts at dawn with a rigorous course of physical exercises and daily massage with medicated oil so that the body becomes supple enough to embody grace in movement and gesture. Separate exercises are prescribed for the eyes, the brows, the chin, the lips, the head and the neck since it is the face that determines the quality of an actor's *abhinaya*. The eye receives special attention and is exercised continuously along with the waxing moon for several nights till the actor can will every flicker of his eyes. The goal of all this training is to enable the actor to bring every part of his body under perfect control in the interests of *abhinaya*. His eyes are ever-vibrant, his facial muscles eloquent, his finger-tips creative and his whole person is the very embodiment of rhythm. It is the integrated effort of the limbs, the eyes, the facial muscles and the movements of the body that makes *abhinaya* in Kathakali so expressive and unparalleled.

The Kathakali actor does not speak on the stage. The dialogue, in the form of *pada-s*, is sung by two musicians standing behind. The actor has to interpret the words to the audience through his *abhinaya*. To enable him to perform this arduous task, the *acharya-s* evolved a language of gestures. This language was already in use in Kutiyattam and is based on a small text named *Hasta Lakshana Deepika*. This is a code of hand gestures, consisting of twenty-four basic *mudra-s* and the several permutations and combinations evolving from them. Mere use of hand gestures is not enough to express or describe effectively. They have to be accompanied by movements of the eyes, the face and the limbs. To suit this combination of movements, a complete language of gesture has been evolved in Kathakali. This language falls into four major categories: *Imitative*, where the actor imitates what he describes, namely, elephant, lion, deer, snake, flower, etc.; *Descriptive*, where fire, river, mountain, city, or house, etc. are described to the audience in such a way that they can also see all of them through the actor's eyes; *Expressive*, where different moods embodying courtesy, arrogance, anger,

impatience, contempt, mirth etc. are expressed; and *Symbolic*, where symbolic gestures are employed to convey God, Destiny, Heaven, Hell, Salvation, Sin, Ecstasy, etc.

The language is so elaborate that it can express anything quite effectively, be it a nuclear explosion or the bee sucking honey from a flower without bruising its petals.

#### AHARYA ABHINAYA

*Aharya* (costumes and makeup) plays an important role in the ambience of Kathakali.

The initial impact of a Kathakali performance is made by its colourful makeup and costumes. These were not invented overnight. Since Kathakali presented themes relating to gods, demons and supermen, it had to generate an impression of unearthliness in characters. To do this, it drew from the ancient traditions of the folk arts of Kerala. The choreographers of Kathakali thus freely utilised what was available in folk arts like Thira or in the classical style of Kutiyattam and, to some extent, even in Krishnattam. Then they improved upon these traditions. As far as makeup was concerned, the general contours of a character were regarded as more important than individual features. Thus a noble character, be it god or man, could be presented with an identical makeup. Similarly an evil one, be it demon or man, could use the same kind of makeup too. Classification of characters by their basic qualities, therefore, determined the costume.

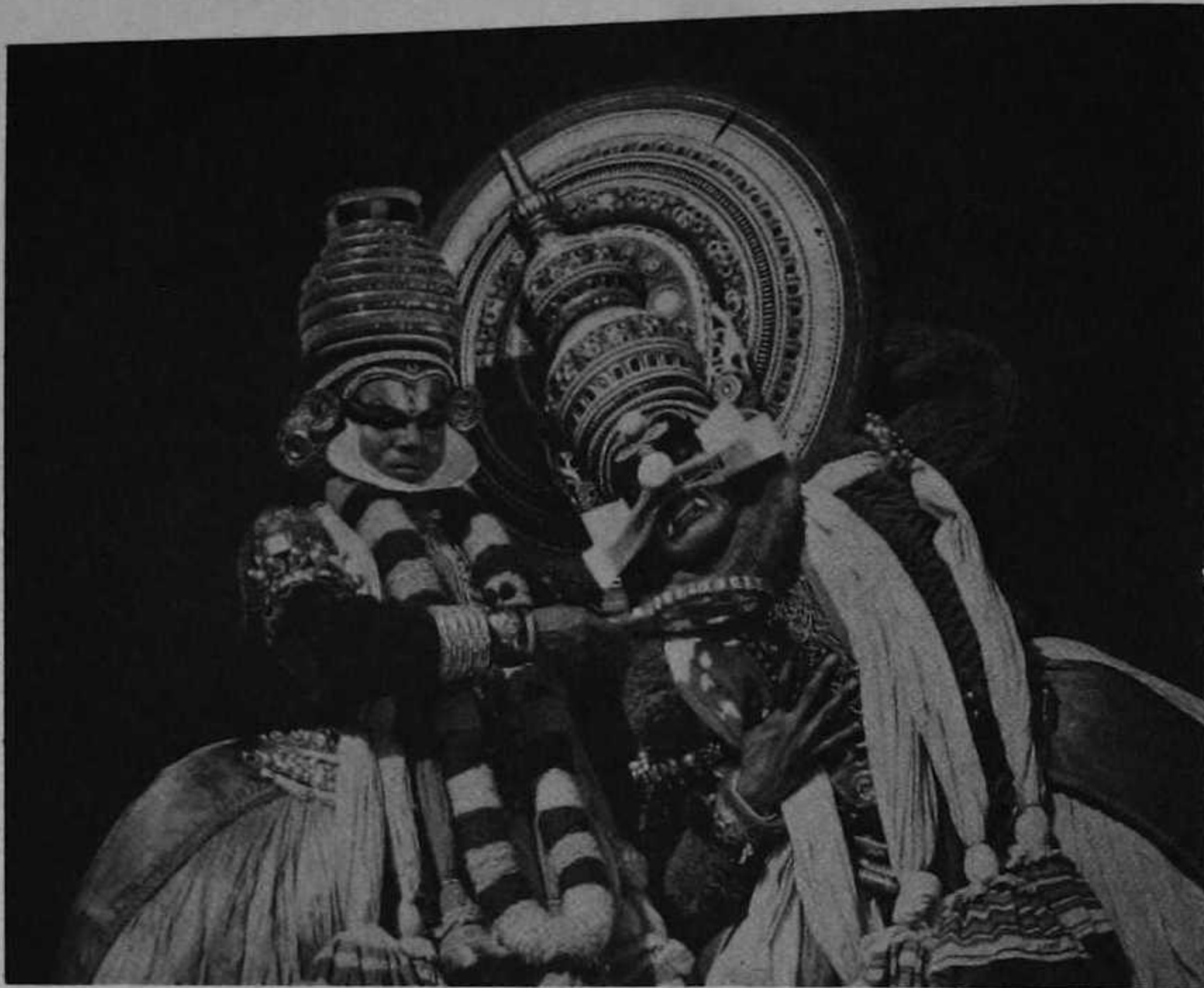
#### Paccha

The basic qualities were: *Satvika*, *Rajasi* and *Tamasi*. *Satvika* stands for the noble, the generous, usually described as *Dhirodatta*. Indra, King Nala, King Yudhishtira and the Pandavas are included in this group. For such characters, the face is painted green, symbolising inner refinement, poise, heroism and moral excellence. Green is *Paccha* in Malayalam. So these characters are generally referred to as *Paccha*. The face is marked off by a white *chutti*, beginning from the middle of the chin and rising on either side of the face along the jaw-bones in a bow-shaped curve. The *chutti* is terraced inside and it serves to project the face as a miniature stage for expression. The face is painted bright green; the lips are brilliant coral red. Eyes are drawn out in black border lines and the eyebrows neatly pencilled. On the forehead is drawn a Vaishnava mark (*namam*) in red and white. Consistent with their basic qualities, the characters in *Paccha* are dignified, graceful and aristocratic in their bearing and movements. As a result of systematic training, they can smile and even laugh effectively without opening the mouth. They wear *kirita*-s (headgear) made out of pith and wood, and elaborately decorated with mosaic.

Among characters generally classified under *Paccha*, there are some variations to suit specific requirements. Krishna stands out among them. His headgear is different. Instead of a *kirita*, he wears a *muti*; a silver coronet, decked with peacock plumes. While *Paccha* characters generally wear red jackets and white



Dharmaputra in anguish after being exiled to the forest.



Lord Krishna killing the demon Narkasura.

skirts, Krishna wears a blue jacket and a dark blue skirt. Krishna also wears a large garland representing *vanamala*. Krishna's costume is also used for Vishnu. Rama and Lakshmana also appear with the same headgear.

Characters such as Brahma, Shiva and Balabhadra are made-up slightly differently (*pazhuppu*). Instead of the green makeup base used in *Paccha*, a light orange-gold base is applied. The costumes are blue and red while the ornaments and headgear are the same.

### Katthi

The second broad classification, namely, the *Rajasi* type are *Dhirodatta*-s representing ambition, might, arrogance and defiance. They are *Pratinayaka*-s (villains) as against the *Paccha* type that denotes *Nayaka*-s (heroes). Examples of this type are Ravana, Kamsa, Shishupala, Duryodhana and Kichaka. The makeup is called *Katthi*. The green background of *Paccha* makeup is broken by a knife-shaped red patch with a white border-line, drawn close to the upper cheek bones. On the forehead, at a point close to the root of the eyebrows and at the tip of the nose, *chuttippoo*-s (white balls) are fixed. The makeup is intended to project an aggressive and a savage majesty. *Katthi* characters wear a pair of canine teeth (*dhumstra*-s) which they can bring out at will while expressing wrath. Nevertheless, *Katthi* characters have certain noble traits and accomplishments—hence, the green

background of the *Paccha* type is retained. The characters are generally sensual and pleasure-seeking as much as they are headstrong and valiant. There is no difference between *Paccha* and *Katthi* characters so far as the headgear or the costumes are concerned.

There are some variations among *Katthi* characters to emphasise specific differences. An unusually wicked, fierce or wily *Katthi* character is indicated by a larger knife-like pattern, additional red patches over the eyebrows and sometimes a black beard. In Kathakali, every leading actor is keen to perform a *Katthi* role since it offers wide scope for the display of histrionic expression.

*Katthi* characters are permitted to make weird noises to accentuate their expression. These sounds vary in appropriate density in relation to the mood: from cooing sounds while courting to roaring when angry.

### Thati

*Thati* (meaning 'bearded') is the generic term used for the makeup of characters that typify the *Tamasi* quality: namely, vicious and vile characters, cruel and power-crazy. Red *Thati* (*chukanna thati*) is the prominent one among *Thati* characters. Examples are *rakshasa*-s (demons) like Bakasura, wicked men like Dushasana and Susharma. The makeup is distinctly different from *Paccha* and *Katthi*—the white *chutti* framework common to both is absent. Instead, the attempt is to project an embodiment of elemental, untamed passions, mighty and overpowering. Bright red and deep black combine with the colours painted on the face to remove any suggestion of softer graces or restraint. The eyes are made ferocious with a patch of deep black around them. The lips are painted black giving them a lurid look. On each cheek a white, bristle-like pattern is made. The white balls affixed to the tip of the nose and the forehead are much larger than in *Katthi*. Everything about this character denotes ferocity and might. The headgear is very much larger than the *kirita* and its rim is fitted with red wool. He roars like thunder and moves about in aggressive hauteur.

Among *Thati*-s, an important variation relates to Kali, the evil character in the story of King Nala. The makeup is equally ferocious, but he wears a black beard instead of a red one.

A further variation is used for the monkey kings, Bali and Sugriva of the *Ramayana*. Though they are not classed as demons, they are still fabulous animal kings possessing brute force. The difference is provided by a white curved patch on either side of the chin.

*Sudarshana chakra*, the all-annihilating discus-like weapon of Vishnu, is also given the Red *Thati* costume.

Black *Thati* (*karutha thati*) is used for jungle tribes and aboriginals. They represent the primitive man, uninhibited and alert. The face is fully painted in black with bracket-like patterns in red and white around the eyes. Lips are painted dark red. On the tip of the nose, a flower-like *chuttippoo* is worn. The headgear is also peculiar—black, built with peacock feathers and shaped like a lotus capital. The



Lord Hanuman

character sports a black beard and carries a bow and arrows and a sword. He makes a simple noise resembling a bird's chirp. Examples of such characters are the Kattala (hunter) in the story of King Nala and Kirata (Shiva in disguise as a hunter).

For Hanuman (referred to as white *Thati* and *Vattamuti*), the makeup and the costume are both unique. The upper half of the face is painted black and the lower half red. Lips are painted black and a white moustache pattern drawn on the upper lip. The nose is painted green, there are two red ovals on the forehead and a white *chutti*-like pattern on either cheek. A white woolly beard is worn over an enormous white fur coat. The headgear resembles the helmets worn by French colonial officers in the eighteenth century.

### Kari

**Kari** characters (such as Surpanakha and Simhika) wear black costumes, black makeup with strange white patterns and a headgear similar to that of black *Thati* characters. A pair of canine teeth (*dhumstra*-s) are also worn. Two enormous and grotesque breasts are affixed to the breast-plate, further compounding the feeling of disgust evoked by these characters.

### Minukku

Apart from the three basic categories of makeup, there are some others of note. Of these, *Minukku* (meaning 'polished') is a common name given to the

makeup of women, *rishi*-s (sages), messengers and Brahmins. *Minukku* really refers to the facial makeup alone. The painting is done in flesh colour in a simple manner. Lips are painted red and the eyes and eyebrows accentuated. The makeup signifies gentleness, restraint, poise and spiritual qualities. The costumes are unostentatious—no bulging skirts, blazing overcoats or imposing headgear. A *rishi* wears a *jatamukuta* (hair tied up over the head) and a grey or black beard. A brahmin merely covers his head with a piece of cloth. A messenger wears a turban.

The costumes of female characters (other than a demoness) are indeed a class by themselves. In Kathakali, female roles are almost always played by men or boys. There are, therefore, no natural advantages for display. Moreover, the costume is carefully designed so as not to expose the man behind it. The makeup is also delicately arranged. A light golden yellow paint is used for the face. Powdered mica is sprinkled over it. The eyes and eyebrows are delicately elongated with a sensuous curve. The hair is dressed into a knot, near above the forehead, a little to the left. Over this, a light coloured veil is worn, extending to the waist. A tight-fitting red jacket covers the body and arms. A gilt breast plate with two red breasts fixed on it is worn on the chest and a white scarf drawn over the neck covers them. An ornamental belt is worn over a pleated white sari. And then there are earrings, necklaces, armbands and bangles. Their movements are in the *lasya* style as contrasted with the masculine *thantava*.

These constitute the main costumes. Then, there are variations for the swan, serpent kings, Narasimha and so forth. Most of the male characters wear long silver nails on the left hand fingers, to enhance the elegance of the *mudra*-s.

The eyes of Kathakali actors are always reddened by the application of a flower (*Solanum pubescence*). This adds a sense of colour contrast and also provides a vibrant, sensitive instrument for effective expression.

All this takes time. To get an actor ready for the stage, it usually takes between four to five hours.

### SATVIKA ABHINAYA

*Satvika abhinaya* dominates Kathakali. As discussed earlier, the objective of the actor is to create *aaswadana* (sublime enjoyment) of *rasa*. In that effort, everything that happens on the stage contributes. The music by itself could be enjoyable, but its role in Kathakali is contributory to the success of the actor's *abhinaya*.

The Kathakali orchestra consists of two singers and two drummers and the performance generally opens to the sound of the *maddalam* (also called *shuddha maddalam*) playing a specially composed piece known as the *kelikai*. The *maddalam* is a barrel-shaped, double-headed drum, three feet or more in length, quite similar to the *mridangam*. It is hung in a horizontal position and played with the hands—the fingers of the right hand are treated with a mixture of rice paste and chunna and bandaged. Unlike the *maddalam* which accompanies all *padam*-s, the *chenta* is never used for female characters (except a demoness). It is a tall, cylindrical drum played either with one hand and one stick or with two



sticks. Generally, in Kathakali, the *itantala* (or left end of the instrument) is played except at certain dramatic moments when the *valantala* (or right end) is also played. The *edakka*, a small, hour-glass shaped drum, accompanies the *maddalam* when female characters are depicted. (It usually accompanies the *geeta*-s of the *Geeta Govinda* sung in temples.)

Using the *chengala* (a gong of the metal-bell), the first singer (*ponnani*) maintains the rhythmic beat of the *tala*. He is followed by the other singer (*sankiti*) who uses a pair of bell-metal cymbals (*ilattalam*) to keep *tala*. To heighten the dramatic impact of a situation a conch shell (*shankhu*) is sometimes blown.

In classical dances like Bharata Natyam, Manipuri, Odissi and Kathak, the themes mainly revolve around *Shringara rasa*. They are devotional in character, the particular deity being conceived as the heroine's beloved. In Kathakali, however, the *bhava*-s cover the entire range envisaged in the various *Natya Shastra*-s. The style is essentially *thantava* except when female characters appear.

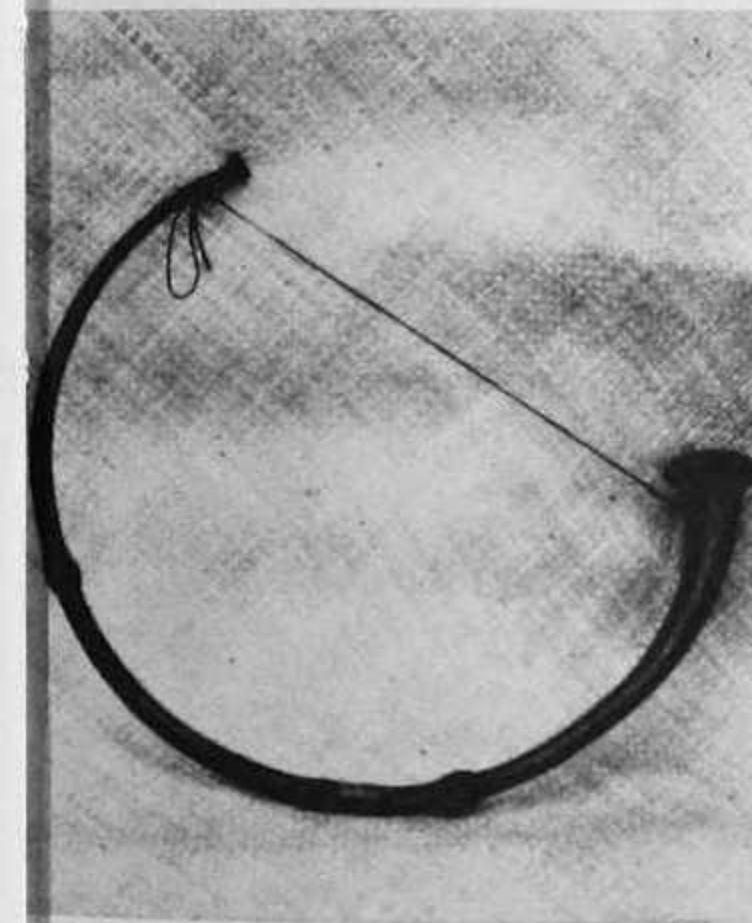
In Kathakali, *Satvika abhinaya* consists of three important components, namely, *Nayana abhinaya* (based on the eye), *Rasa abhinaya* (delineation of moods and sentiments) and *Abhinaya* by impersonation (*Pakarnattam*).

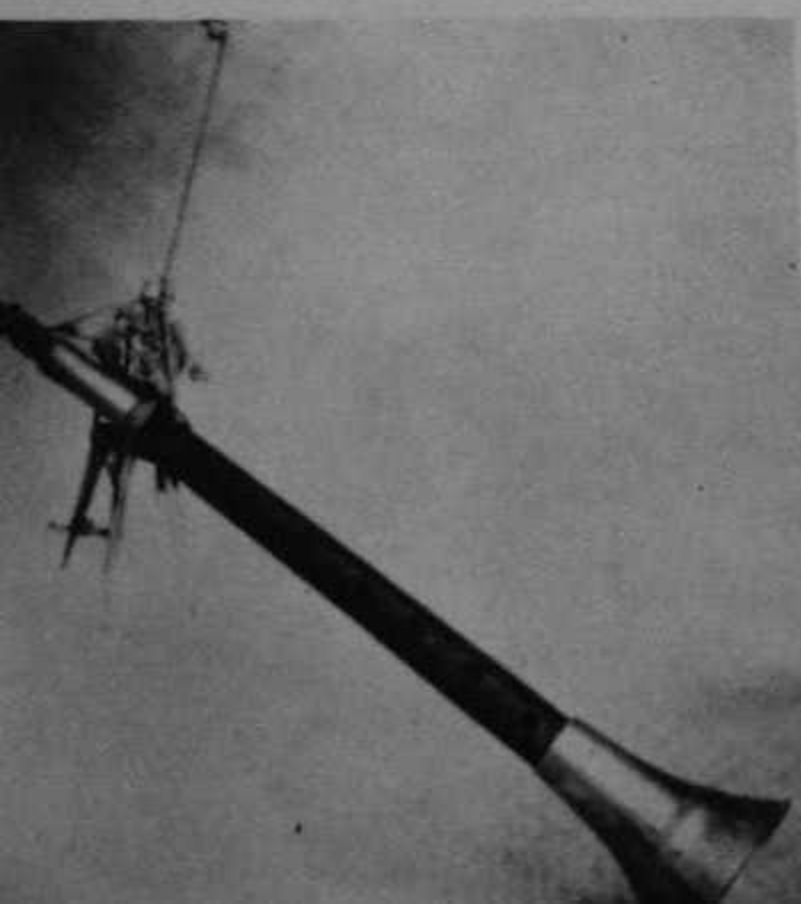
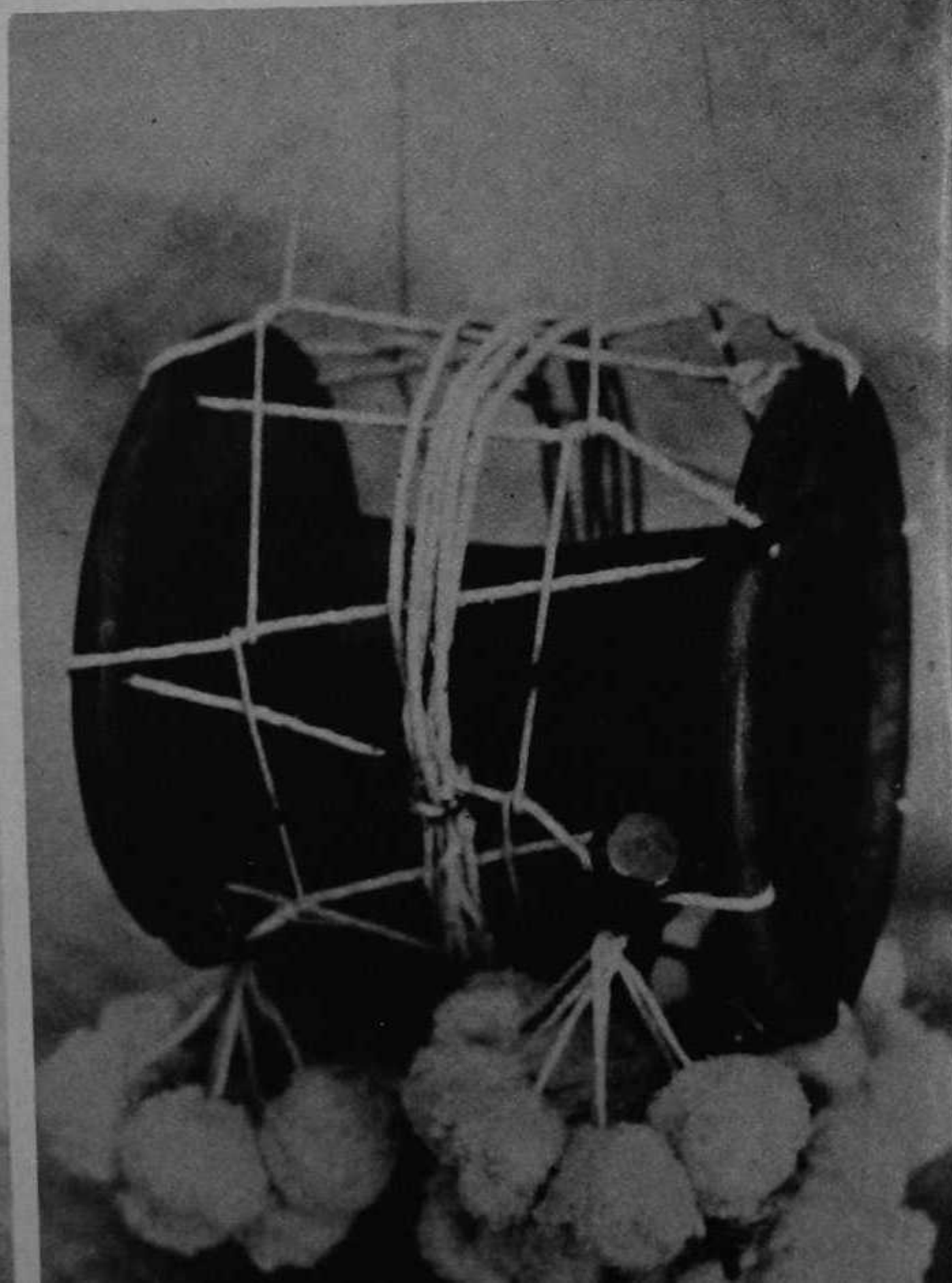
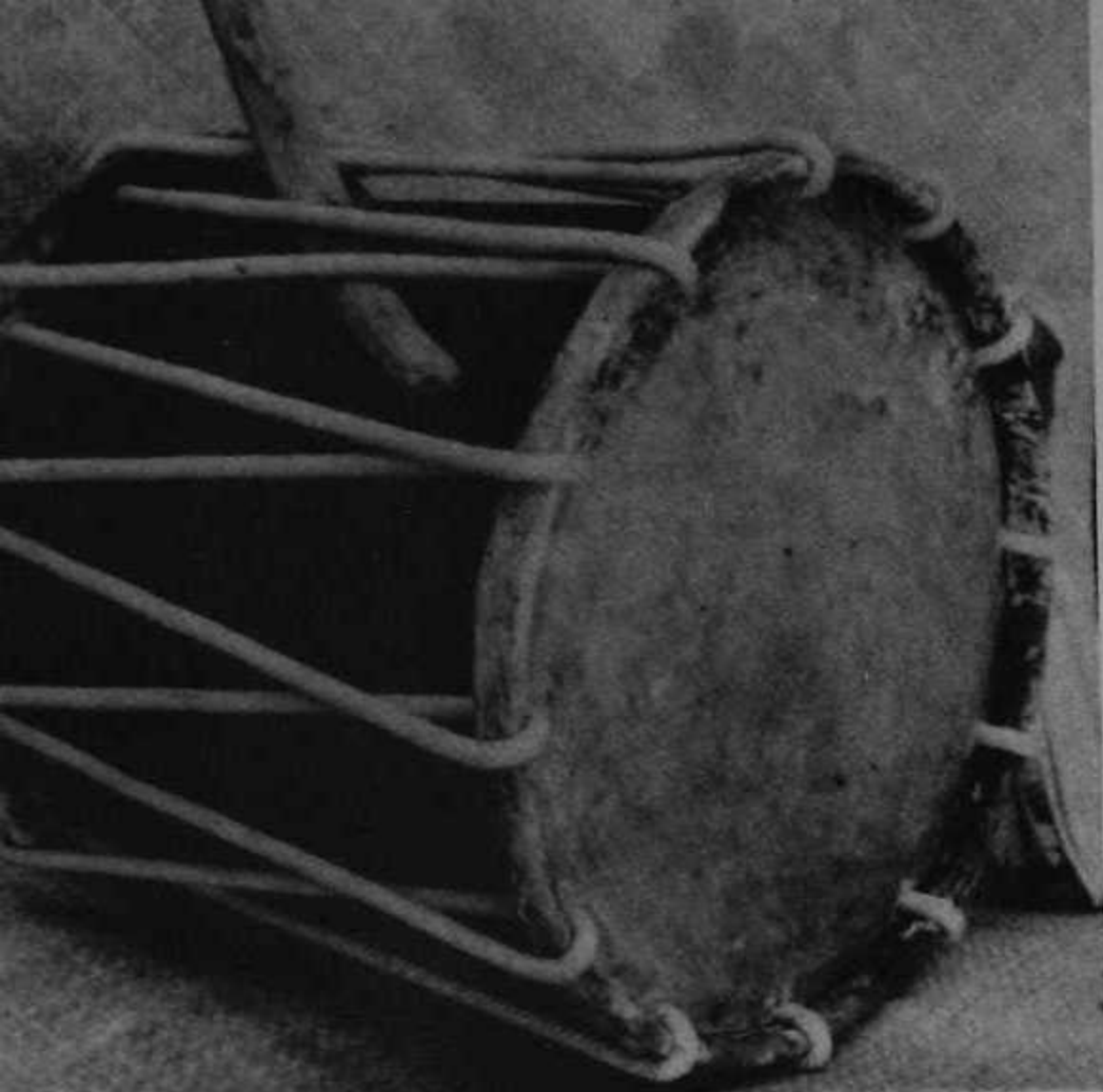
*Nayana abhinaya* is, strictly speaking, *angika*. But, in Kathakali, its dimensions go far beyond all concepts of *angika abhinaya*, being influenced directly by Kutiyattam. The Chakyars (the community from where the Kutiyattam actors hail), have developed *nayana abhinaya* to an unbelievable extent. By using the eyes alone, a veteran actor can convey a whole story. He can create a city before you in an instant. Take the case of the poor brahmin Sudama on his way to see Lord Krishna. In his tattered clothes and with a torn palm-leaf umbrella, he enters the city of Dwaraka. He looks around in amazement. That is the time to watch his eye. In a matter of seconds, the audience sees the wide but crowded roads, the multi-storeyed mansions, the palace guards moving into position, the haggling over prices in the vegetable market, lovely women travelling in palanquins escorted by valiant youths and so on.

Another example. King Rukmangada is relaxing after a hunt in the cool shade of a grove in the jungle. Suddenly, Mohini, the celestial temptress sent by Brahma, appears before him. Look at the eyes of the king and you will see through them the picture of a beautiful woman with lovely dark tresses, a face that rivals the full moon, eyebrows that challenge the bow of Kamadeva, lips that flow with nectar, and curves that render one helpless.

Bhimasena is on the battlefield of Kurukshetra in search of that scoundrel Dushasana who had disrobed Draupadi in the Kaurava court thirteen years ago. He sees the rascal in the distance. Watch Bhimasena's eyes. There is real fire in them. The audience feels Bhima roaring with his eyes, beckoning Dushasana to fight him. The battle is over; Dushasana's entrails are drawn out and Bhima is dancing over the dead body in animal fury. Lord Krishna appears on the scene. Bhimasena's eyes light on Krishna and he is transformed. The crazed animal is now humble and contrite.

The next two pages depict musical instruments used in Kathakali.





The hero and the heroine are in a lovely garden in spring. The sun has just set. The hero, in a romantic mood, points to the branch of a tree where two *chakravaka* birds are chirping. Suddenly, the female-bird catches a glimpse of the heroine and is terribly upset because, according to poetic fancy, the male-bird flies away the moment the moon rises. The actor depicts the mood of the female-bird; with one eye she gazes in fury at the heroine, mistaking her face for the moon and, with the other, she sadly implores the male-bird not to fly away. Only an actor of extraordinary ability can portray this *Eka lochana* situation (each eye expressing diametrically opposite moods) on the stage. It is the ambition of every Kathakali actor to be able to display this rare expression.

*Rasa abhinaya* is intended to create the appropriate *rasa* or aesthetic flavour in the audience by the effective display of the appropriate *bhava*-s. Here—the eyes, the eyebrows, the lips and all other facial muscles come into coordinated play. *Shringara*, the king of *rasa*-s, dominates *rasa abhinaya*. *Shringara* could be *Sambhoga shringara* (love in union) or *Vipralambha shringara* (love in separation). *Sambhoga shringara* could be in the form of courting the beloved, or the hero approaching the heroine during their honeymoon or it may be a rake like Kichaka making advances to a resentful Sairandhri. Although the text may be only fifteen to twenty lines, the entire scene could last for more than an hour on the stage. A scene resplendent with *ratibhava* demands leisurely treatment. As the *sahitya* of the dialogue is rich in imagery, the actor has to project an expansive mood. The *acharya*-s, who choreographed such scenes, used to insist on a slow tempo to enable the spectators to obtain *rasa sfoorthi* (a high level of enjoyment of *Shringara rasa*). The lover is comparing the beautiful eyes of the beloved to the petals of a blooming lotus flower, starting with the bud on its stalk, facing the rising sun, and slowly opening itself out to reach the rays. Then he proceeds to admire the beauty and grandeur of the flower. He watches the long petals and notices how they resemble the eyes of his beloved. He discovers to his satisfaction that the petals are no match for the eyes that make him dance to her tune! Let us go back for a second to watch him portraying the lotus flower. He had spent days and days sitting at dawn by the side of lotus ponds, observing the gradual transformation of the bud into a thing of beauty and it is through this rare experience that he takes the audience along with him. The *Kalasam* (the concluding dance sequence at the end of a sentence in the dialogue) in a love scene is unique for its grace of movements and consistent with the *ratibhava* displayed.

The *Vipralambha shringara* situation brings out the best in an actor. The beloved is not there to be addressed directly. The pangs of love have overpowered the character. It may be Nala or it may be Damayanti. Each is pining for the other and can convey his or her agony only to companions. The agony, though a prelude to the ecstasy of the character, can in turn create a rapturous mood among the spectators. King Nala, for instance, is so captivated by what he has learnt of Damayanti that he yearns to be near her, to meet her and convey his deep love for her. He is helpless in the face of Kamadeva who continues to hurl his flower-darts mercilessly at him. Nala has lost his sleep, his taste for food, his interest in recreation. He flees to the coolness of the garden only to find it suffocating. He entreats Kamadeva: "You torture me with your unending darts. Why are you so cruel? Why don't you aim just one of your darts at Damayanti instead of concentrating on me alone?"

To enter into a real discussion on the *Vipralambha* situations would defy space. So let us now look at some other areas of *Satvika abhinaya* in Kathakali, particularly *rasa abhinaya*.

In Kathakali, when a character is acting to the dialogue sung by the musician he has to keep within the area of the text. The interpretation of the text is called *Cholliyattam*. Normally, the *thirassila* (curtain) should fall when the dialogue is over. But not so in Kathakali. The mettle of the actor is really revealed when the dialogue is over, when he has full scope for the free play of his *manodharma* (flights of aesthetic fancy). This is known as *Ilakiyattam* — 'unrestrained performance'. The *rasika*-s of Kathakali always look forward to the *Ilakiyattam*, and particularly that of renowned actors. The dialogue may be over in about half an hour. But the *Ilakiyattam* that follows can continue for half an hour or go on for the rest of the night, depending upon the level of the actor's talent, the dramatic situation and the aesthetic level of the audience.

Ravana is one of the most preferred roles in Kathakali, as it offers very wide scope for *abhinaya*, generating all the *rasa*-s in the audience. Ravana is an ardent lover. Unequaled both in his arrogance and valour on the battlefield, he is a seeker of everyone and everything that is beautiful. He despises cowards, rages against the gods, and yet he is compassionate towards his subjects. He knows no fear; he respects none. Even so, he is a great devotee of Lord Shiva.

Sage Narada, the legendary trouble-maker, visits Ravana. In the course of paying hypocritical tributes to the King of Lanka, he casually refers to the contempt with which Bali, the King of Dandakaranya, holds Ravana. An infuriated Ravana immediately prepares to teach Bali a lesson. Here, the text ends. Now the *Ilakiyattam* begins. One sees Ravana picking up the *Chandrasahsa*, the sword given to him by Lord Shiva, and bidding Narada lead the way. Quite innocently, Narada asks if it would not be more appropriate for Ravana to carry a piece of rope to tie up the Monkey King Bali. The opening for a grand exposition has been made. Ravana rises to his full stature, smiles derisively at the ignorance of the bearded ancient and begins to relate how he acquired *Chandrasahsa*. Every Kathakali actor worth the name has looked forward to this opportunity to tell the story in his own way. He begins with his desire to secure from Kubera, his elder brother, their ancestral *Pushpaka*. He dwells on the greatness of his ancestors and how the wily Vishnu cheated them of their kingdom and relegated them to the underworld. He could narrate the story of his birth, his *tapas* (penance) before Brahma and his acquisition of superhuman powers, his campaign of conquests and the subjugation of the gods. He could then enact his battle with Kubera and the way he won the *Pushpaka*. Seated in the plane, he is flying towards the north when he is obstructed by Mount Kailash. Ravana alights from the *Pushpaka* and, in a trice, lifts the mountain in his hands and throws it round.

At that moment, Lord Shiva is battling with his own problems, the rivalry between his wives, Parvati and Ganga. When Parvati was away at the bathing *ghats*, Shiva had used the opportunity to enrapture Ganga. Parvati guessed what was happening and rushed back to surprise Shiva and Ganga. Terrified of the wrath of Parvati, Ganga fled into hiding. Now Shiva is nonplussed. Parvati, having had her say, is sulking in the corner. It is at that time that Ravana takes

hold of the mount and flings it around. Startled and frightened, Parvati rushes back to Shiva's arms. The Lord is angry with Ravana for daring to hurl the mountain; at the same time, he is pleased with him for creating a situation leading to a quick reconciliation with Parvati. So he blesses Ravana and bestows on him his own sword *Chandrasahsa* as a present.

Played on the Kathakali stage, the story is far from prosaic. It reveals the entire gamut of an actor's ability to express every *bhava* demanded by the situation. The audience sits spellbound during a performance that might well last for several hours. The actor is at once: Ravana, the arrogant mountain-thrower; Shiva, the lover; Parvati, bathing with abandon; Ganga, the coy maiden; Ravana, the gleeful stalwart; Shiva entranced, with his arms around Ganga; Parvati with her tantrums; Ravana, the self-satisfied showman of his prowess; Parvati, jealous, the personification of fury; Shiva, embarrassed and nonplussed; Ganga terror-stricken; Parvati, the tongue-lasher; Shiva, the tongue-tied; Ganga, the meek fugitive. The actor communicates, one by one, these kaleidoscopic changes, and the scene changes quickly from pleasant placidity, through a range of transformations, to a situation with explosive potential. It is here that the actor expresses what is known as *Pakarnnattam*, playing different roles at the same time with remarkable effect and tempo. This is only one of the examples of *Ilakiyattam*. Kathakali is full of them; some involve description of cities, others reveal the beauty of Heaven; a few present the wild beauty of forests.

It is significant that the Kathakali stage is the simplest imaginable—there are no decorations, stage-settings, side-curtains and wings. The only properties on the open stage are the traditional stool (sometimes, two) and a *thirassila* (curtain) held with the hands. It is in this arena that the actor can create before his spectators a celestial abode or the battlefield of Kurukshetra or the bridal chamber of Nala and Damayanti or the palace where poor Sudama is greeted in an ecstatic embrace by Lord Krishna. The actor converts the stool into a throne, the space around him into a luxuriant garden or the city of Ayodhya. He transforms a small piece of painted wood into the legendary *gada* (club) of Bhimasena; he builds Mount Kailash out of the thin air around him. When the *Patttabhisheka* (coronation) of King Rama takes place on this simple stage, the whole audience rises in reverence and devotion and chants 'Ram Ram' with the women prostrating and shedding tears of divine rapture.

## Science, Conversation and Wholeness\*

J. L. Mehta

For an Indian it is gladdening to hear Western scholars like Heinrich Zimmer proclaim, "We Westerners are about to arrive at the crossroads that the Indian thinkers had already reached about seven hundred years before the birth of Christ." I shall, however, refrain from the self-congratulatory exercise of quoting back to you countless other laudatory comments of this kind from Western Indologists, culture-critics, philosophers and scientists. For one thing, in this post-modern age, my cultural tradition is for me as much of a problem as the Westerner's own has become for him since the onset of modernity. Secondly, I do not believe that either the modern scientific enterprise or the ancient wisdom of the East can gain in glory, prestige or usefulness by borrowing each other's feathers or benefit from being buttressed, one by the other. Lastly, critical reflection in recent philosophy has placed under deep suspicion, and rendered questionable the entire epistemological tradition in modern philosophy. Not only the radical inquiries stemming from phenomenology, like those of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, but the questionings of the later Wittgenstein and of hard-core analytical philosophers have tended lately to render untenable much that is presupposed without question in discussions of the philosophical implications of science. The conception of knowledge as accurate representation and as in need of a foundation which may be provided by epistemology; Wilfrid Sellars' attack on the "Myth of the Given"; Quine's rejection of the conceptual-empirical, analytic-synthetic and language-fact distinctions; Davidson's examination of meaning and truth and the scheme-content distinction and the work of Kuhn, Feyerabend, Putnam and others on the theory of reference and on models and paradigms, all these have raised grave doubts about facile interpretations of scientific knowledge in terms either of ancient wisdom or of traditional metaphysical thought. This is the perspective that has guided the following reflections.

Even in the realm of ideas, the encounter between East and West, as partners in a possible whole, has already taken place and been for long in process. The Greeks defined their identity in a relation of conflict and exclusion with the Asiatic, which was already in their midst before their burst into splendour as the founders of Western civilization. And, long before that, the ancient Indo-Iranian speaking people identified themselves as *Arya*, which originally meant (if Paul Thieme is right) "hospitable to the stranger." The rise of a global cosmopolitanism in the mid-nineteenth century and the breakdown of what the historian McNeil calls "the fundamental four-fold cultural balance of the ecumene" has only hastened the process and given it a new urgency. It is now perhaps more appropriate, therefore, to speak of a conversation rather than an encounter. The parts are coming together, albeit hesitantly, and talking together, giving rise to a possibility of the emergence of a whole, a world community of speech. East or West, the stranger has always been in our midst. What has changed are our attitudes towards him, our perception of him as an alien or friendly presence, our strategies of dealing with him. With the emergence of the European West as the dominant civilization in the nineteenth century, both Europe and India began actively to welcome the stranger, beginning with the German Romantic

movement in Europe and India's entry into modernity about the same time. What is new about the present is an explicit awareness of the global situation of mankind as a whole and the recognition that the stranger is securely lodged now within our own selves. Western civilization and India now encounter the other of each within themselves and the problem for each is how to come to terms with this other in themselves, how to put them on talking terms and coax them into lively conversation. The pattern, pace and urgency of the problem are experienced differently by the two, mainly because Western civilization has now become, in principle, a planetary, world-civilization, with science and technology as the dominant forms of intellectual culture in the world, and the denizens of this spaceship suddenly find themselves on the brink of a possible catastrophe, man-made and yet beyond their will. Whatever pre-suppositions and spiritual resources we bring with us, our conversation must grow out of and bear upon this hermeneutical situation of our age. A consequential part of this situation is that in any Western-Indian conversation the partnership is bound to be unequal and in favour of the West, both because the concentration of available information and skill is in the West and because of the intensity with which institutionalized and professionalized intellectual energy is applied there to the attempts to cope with the ambiguities of that situation.

Long ago, "Asia" and "the Orient" became almost existential categories in the European mind, sometimes projected to a vaguely defined geographical area, sometimes introjected as "the Orient within us," sometimes ardently sought after as the land of desire and dream, then to be either excluded altogether from the realm of rationality or to be brought within control, conquered physically, economically, religiously or culturally. The history of the world, as Hegel said, has an East *kat exochen*. Nothing in the Indian consciousness has ever corresponded to this geographical mythology; the "West" has never had that kind of symbolic value for India, far from playing the self-defining role that the Occident-Orient polarity has done in Western consciousness. Is this because the ancient Aryans founded the Indian cultural-religious ecumene by "orienting" themselves eastwards to begin with, or because they promptly transformed dawn, sunrise and night into religious symbols in their self-understanding and so grounded the entire fabric of Indian spirituality for over three thousand years? Or, was it because, ever since the conquest of Gandhara in 510 B.C. by Darius I and Alexander's invasion of India in 326 B.C., and more catastrophically since the eighth century A.D., India has been at the receiving end of Western solicitations? May this be the reason why, in the words of W. Halbfass, "*Indien hat den Westen nicht gesucht?*" Though we seem to be rapidly making up for this oversight in a variety of ways now, I must admit that Halbfass's plaint is not without a deep truth. We have been assiduously cultivating Western literature, philosophy and science for over a hundred years in our Universities; we have experienced the influence and impact of Western ideas in our lives; and we have enthusiastically sought to appropriate much from the West as self-evident truth. But we have not made any systematic attempt so far to *understand* the West in its metaphysical and religious roots, as it is in its difference from us and as it understands itself. We have borrowed not only modern science but also legal, political, social, economic and educational ideas from the West; allowed our sensibilities and thinking to be shaped by Western humanities; taken over, in secularized form, a lot from its Christian past. But we have not sought to understand (disengaging ourselves from the immediacies of

unreflected impact, influence and appropriation) Western civilization as a whole, in its unity, its otherness, and in its foundations. Nothing in our Universities parallels the Departments of Sanskrit, Indology or Asian studies in the West. Such systematic study would make sense even without the Imperial concerns, direct or indirect, that have largely been operative in the Western case. Taking so much from the West, we might take time to stand and stare, step back from our immediate involvements, and marvel at this amazing phenomenon of the surging Western adventure in science and civilization and ask ourselves *what* it is in its essence and movement, *why* it is enveloping the whole world, *how* it differs from our own inherited patterns of thought and experience. Unless we know the other, we cannot know ourselves, nor take free possession of our very own and so be ourselves. This is not easy, as the poet Hölderlin knew: "*der freie Gebrauch des Eigenen das schwerste ist*," for it needs both the reaching out to the stranger and the return home to ourselves.

It is in philosophical thought that the spirit of a civilization achieves full self-awareness and it is here that it is seen at its articulated best. In the Western case, the twin roots of such consciousness are the Judeo-Christian and the Greek strands in its heritage. No major philosophical endeavour in India, during the last hundred years, bears witness to our concern for inquiry and insight into the Western intellectual passion born of these twin roots. There is no major study of Plato or Aristotle, Augustine or Aquinas, Descartes or Leibniz, Kant or Hegel, to evidence such concern by us. Having admitted this, however, I must also point out that, in the history of Western philosophy itself, no philosopher before Hegel attempted to gain a total view of the Western spirit and that, as we know, was in reaction against the Romantic bursting of the boundaries of Western identity. As we also know, for Hegel it was in the West that the history of the spirit's blossoming consummated itself and found its highest summation, progressively sublating the earlier and the less developed into itself. It was left to Martin Heidegger in this century to question this kind of Western self-understanding, which has become normative in the West since Hegel. His is the first philosophical attempt, since the Greek origins of Western civilization, to devote the labour of a lifetime to probing into the unexamined and unthought foundations of this twin-rooted enterprise, in its historical totality, in an antithetical movement of thought, self-critical and deconstructive, to disengage himself from this totality in a disciplined withdrawal beyond the origins to be able to see it as a whole, and in relation to its present meaning for mankind as a whole. It is not surprising that in the very extensive secondary literature on Heidegger, this crucial feature of his work is the one most consistently passed over in embarrassed silence. Even the few Western scholars who have taken notice of it, speak of it in muffled voices, without trying to spell out the full implications of his shattering critique. Jean Beaufret wrote to him on his eightieth birthday, "Das Rätsel Europa, Ursache für so viele Kriege, Ihnen ist es vorbehalten geblieben, es zur Sprache zu bringen, nicht es zu erklären—das überlasse man den Historikern und Soziologen—sondern es zu denken bis zu dem Fragezeichen, das es enthält;" and more explicitly Eugen Fink, "Martin Heidegger hat eine Destruktion in Gang gesetzt, die das Fundament erschüttert, auf dem das Abendland baut." Far be it from me, as an Asiatic, to exult over such shaking of the foundations, for we, too, are irretrievably enveloped in the Western adventure. And has it not hammered out the only key that can

unlock the safe-vault of nature, and handed over to mankind this dangerous and dubious gift?

The conversation with its other is now taking place inside both East and West, though its pattern in each case differs according to the hermeneutical situation of each at the present time. In the West, the determining factor seems to be the survival of "our" Western civilization—and in general carrying *some* saving gospel to the farthest ends of the ecumene. It takes a positive and a negative form. The latter consists in damming the onslaught from the East and preserving the purity of the Western heritage, religious or Greek-secular or both. The positive form is exhibited in a variety of ways and stances, the moderate strategy being that of domesticating the East by appropriating elements in it which are felt to be complementary, enriching and enlarging, and enabling the West to become planetary without losing its intrinsic virtue. Mission theology, the writings of Eliade, Roszack, W. I. Thompson, Ellwood and Needleman readily come to mind. More remarkable is the penetration of the East into the secular-scientific strongholds of academia, in departments of psychology, sociology, anthropology, in medical schools and even among physicists. Above all, there is in the West, the firmly established and institutionalized tradition of Indological scholarship, now almost two hundred years old and still flourishing. This academic strand in Western humane scholarship not only provides a wide-open window on the Indian cultural tradition but is also a mirror in which the West can itself be seen reflected in a moving image of its own seekings and pre-judgements, changing intellectual fashions and altering perceptions or participation in alien modes of sensibility, thought and vision. More importantly, this scholarship acts back on Indian self-understanding itself. Since the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 by Sir William Jones, it has played a major role in the Indian intellectual's perception of his own past and has enabled him to lift himself above the cultural matrix on which he was borne and to try to look objectively *at* his tradition rather than simply living *out* of it. Here is a fascinating mirror-game in which the parts are reflected, refracted and constituted in and by each other, change each other, and asymptotically move towards an undefined wholeness. Another facet of the Indological enterprise is this. The purely scholarly work, irrespective of its initial motivation, leads to interpretive attempts by poet, scholar, humanist, theologian or scientist, in which a specific item in the alien culture is decontextualized and extricated from its historical particularity. Yoga, for example, or the Krishna myth, is abstracted from its cultural and religious context in Indian life, liberated from its historical and provincial setting, and made to come alive in another, the Christian or humanist-religious, or in the service of a planetization of culture as envisaged by Mircea Eliade, or domesticated in secularized form, as in the case of Transcendental Meditation. A work like Stella Kramrisch's splendid *The Presence of Śiva* only shows how rare is a creative interpretation of the alien.

From the Indian point of view, such abstractive re-interpretation may appear misleading for his own self-understanding and of questionable legitimacy in so far as it neutralizes something which to him carries a primarily sacred meaning, within the context of his tradition. Yogā, like peak or zero experience, is no longer what he knew as yoga and unitive self-knowledge. Such feedback from the West becomes intellectually dangerous when the Indian appropriates it naively as self-evident, without any awareness that the secularization process (this saving "virus

from the West", as the theologian van Leeuwen calls it) is itself only meaningful within Christian history. The matter becomes even more confusing when the Indian naively takes over, via the West, a traditional religious content already transposed into a Christian context, as if it were his own, only "modernized" as to language. This sort of decontextualizing mirror-game takes place when a rationalist-Jewish or humanist-Christian philosopher translates an Advaita text from Sanskrit into English or German, superimposing upon it, like Paul Deussen, Platonic-Kantian conceptuality in the very act of translating. Subsequently, when the Indian intellectual reads this, with or without knowledge of the original, he takes it to be *the* meaning, himself then writes his dissertation, which, in turn, is taken as confirmation of his own understanding by the Western scholar. In areas of thought where it is possible to speak of objective knowledge, it may be legitimate to disregard questions of origin and provenance, to ignore the historical context and appropriate such knowledge without further ado. But where religious and metaphysical presuppositions are in play, as is invariably the case with philosophical thought (in which traditional cultural modalities of experience are involved), analytical, deconstructive and discriminative scrutiny in context would seem to be called for prior to appropriation. The concept of a rational secular sphere which is neutral, value-free and a source of self-evident verities has worked havoc in the encounter of non-Western cultures with the West, largely to the former's detriment. It may indeed turn out on examination that some Western theological, metaphysical or ethical ideas, the idea of reason above all, can be domesticated within non-Western cultures without unwitting deracination. But the main task for philosophical reflection in India, with its massive and long tradition of discursive thought, is comparative analysis—the making of distinctions rather than starting out with an assertion of blanket identities between Eastern and Western philosophemes.

In this respect, the situation in regard to the astonishing Western phenomenon of modern science is complex, intriguing and very novel, for the problem from the East's perspective is science as it impinges on its so-called "wisdom". It is widely held that the idea of modern science is intimately related to the matrix of Western Christian civilization. According to Whitehead, "Faith in the possibility of science, generated antecedently to the development of modern scientific theory, is an unconscious derivative from medieval theology." R. G. Collingwood said, "The presuppositions that go to make up (this) 'Catholic faith', preserved for many centuries by the religious institutions of Christendom, have as a matter of historical fact been the main or fundamental presuppositions of natural science ever since... The constellation of absolute presuppositions (was) originally sketched by Aristotle, and described more accurately, seven or eight centuries later, by the Patristic writers under the name of the 'Catholic faith'." More recently, Weizsäcker has spoken of the tacit, meta-scientific presuppositions of science, and of scientism as secularized Christianity. Similarly, Heisenberg interpreted and grounded the theory of elementary particles in terms of Pythagorean and Platonic notions of symmetry and form and of the Aristotelian distinction between potentiality and actuality. And, Heidegger, seeking to delineate the specific character of the Greek mode and tradition of thinking called philosophy, sees in modern science a free consequence of that beginning. "The statement that philosophy is in its nature Greek says nothing more than that the West and Europe, and only these, are, in the innermost core of their history, originally 'philosophical'. This is attested by the rise and domination of the sciences. Because

they stem from the innermost Western-European core of history, that is, the philosophical, therefore they are able today to put a specific imprint on the history of mankind upon the whole earth... *philosophia* appears in the birth certificate of the contemporary epoch of world history which is called the Atomic Age."

Now, these questions of origin, motivation and religious or metaphysical foundations may be of great importance to the non-Western student who wants to understand the specific genius of Western civilization for its own sake and to ponder over the uncanny fact of what has been called "the Europeanization of the Earth." But, as a historical force, science comes into non-Western culture as an ascertained, self-correcting and exponentially increasing body of knowledge about nature and as primarily in the service of technological utility, liberated from its metaphysical and religious-historical context. For the non-Western student it is at best a novel mode of empirical inquiry which he may master and promote, to the extent to which he can share the ethos and the passion of scientific research. Objectifiable knowledge, once it becomes a fact, is released from its context and becomes universally appropriable and in principle is no longer Western or European. This, significantly, is true not merely of natural science but of all areas of human life, for there is hardly any which does not have an objectifiable component. Everything in experience that can be objectified will, at some point, be brought within the orbit of science, thanks to its intimate two-way relation with technology and to its own inherently technological character and momentum. It will be culturally neutralized and universalized, emerge as an autonomous form of culture in its own right and become part of what Heidegger calls world-civilization. Like the agricultural and industrial revolutions in history, the present ongoing revolution will generate pressures and upheavals unheard of in the past and require commensurate adaptive skills, above all an equally radical, novel way of thinking about ourselves and the world. As the cutting edge of scientific advance moves from physics to biology, neuroscience and psychology, making deeper inroads into man's accustomed ways of thinking about himself, undreamt of realms of possibility open up, both for human creativity and as deepest threat to the very core of what it has meant to be human.

I do not have the competence to judge between rival interpretations of particle physics or to decide on the merits of the much-discussed Copenhagen interpretation and its philosophical implications. Is it an incomplete theory, as Einstein held, and does it require, as against the view of Neumann, the assumption of hidden variables as David Bohm thinks? Should we conclude, with Heisenberg, that the laws of nature which quantum theory formulated mathematically, apply not to the elementary particles in themselves but rather to our knowledge of them, or that this discovery, for the first time in history, places us in the novel situation that man now confronts only himself everywhere? Is it a new discovery that we are no longer mere spectators but also participants in the game of life, as Bohr puts it? Does the residual concept of "energy" within the abstractions of post-classical physics allow it to bridge the gulf between understanding and conceptual objectification, hitherto thought to be concerned with the human and natural spheres respectively? Does a notion like the Vedic *Vayu* or *Prana* comprehend inanimate, living and human spheres, as Weizsäcker seems willing to admit? Is it possible to *understand* nature, beyond mere explanation, as Heisenberg and other great theoretical physicists have sought to do? I personally

feel rather sympathetic to the views of Mario Bunge and critical realists in general, who would strip the scientific achievements of physics of its philosophic accretions and speculative accompaniments and hand over discussion of such questions to the philosopher of science who professionally takes in his stride both the arcane mysteries of theoretical physics and conceptual problems arising from them, as well as the no less sophisticated argument in recent analytical philosophy and logical theory. A higher order philosophical reflection can then take over, as has indeed been the case with most modern Western philosophers from Descartes to Richard Rorty's examination of the "mirror of mind" paradigm in epistemological inquiry. What is of primary interest to the non-Western student is physical science as a body of increasing knowledge and its use, as also its limits, as objective, decontextualized knowledge, not so much the philosophy that has originated it or accompanied its rise and development or how and whether it hangs together with the Western cultural tradition as a whole. Nothing like the religious and intellectual repercussions produced by Galileo, Newton, Einstein or Bohr, by Darwin, Nietzsche or Freud is thinkable in the Indian context.

Between them, quantum theory and astronomy would seem to close in principle an epoch that began with Copernicus and Galileo. The only thing that remains now is to establish contact with, or at least to discover the existence of, extra-terrestrial intelligence and its active involvement with us—that would be earth-shaking, as Carl Sagan and Fred Hoyle have adumbrated. Until then, advances in the life sciences will perhaps be of greater theoretical and speculative interest to the Indian student, touching more deeply his traditional "wisdom". The steadily advancing frontiers of objectifiable knowledge opened up by cybernetics, and information theory earlier, and the discovery and deciphering of the genetic code in 1956 are obvious examples. Mathematics, formal logic, physical theory and philosophy of science together generate a new way of thinking about phenomena of life and mind and relentlessly push forward the limits of objectifiable knowledge in this area. The logical or formal conception of information, transcending the Cartesian dualism of matter and mind or consciousness, shows how a major part of language can be treated as information in the sense of being objective, measurable, manipulable, univocal and amenable to formal logical handling. It also shows how similar biological processes are to semiological concepts such as code, message, reception, transmission and storage. A definition of life in terms of chemical order and language has now become possible, as Georges Canguilhem notes, for "the phenomenon of self-reproduction, the peculiar property of what is alive, from being vaguely imagined as a mode of construction with or without an architect, now comes to be seen merely as the copy or echo of a message." As in physical science so in biology and neuroscience, there is no halting the urge to press on with the venture of objectifying what can be objectified, however double-edged its rewards. For speculative philosophy the discovery of the genetic code uncovers a fascinating riddle: the meaning of "isomorphism exhibited by these two different codes, genetic and verbal," in Roman Jakobson's words. The genetic code, so far as pure information is concerned, resembles in many ways the verbal code without in any way deriving from it and makes it possible to rethink the notion of teleonomy in terms of coding and decoding without reference to conscious intention. As Paul Ricoeur remarks, "thus language constitutes, at both the biological and human levels, the very archetype of a teleological system." The work of Lévi-Strauss on myths and of Lacan in psychoanalysis

further strengthens the centrality of language as the key for the understanding of nature and man. Erhard Scheibe and David Bohm have shown how crucial a role language plays in physical theory. In anthropology, Clifford Geertz has been developing a semiotic concept of culture, treating it as an assemblage of texts.

The whole area of modern science, objective, universal and culturally neutral, not only can but *must* be appropriated by non-Western cultures even though it may appear to conflict with traditional modes of categorization. Precisely here is our opportunity to pursue novel empirical research by objectifying and reconceptualizing a good part of traditional practice by first separating the mythical, imaginative and sacred from the objectifiable components, conceptualizing them and bringing them within the orbit of scientific experimentation in the modern sense. It is not enough to know that Transcendental Meditation has certain measurable effects. The entire question of stress itself must be investigated from this perspective in all its complexity, in cybernetic terms, as they relate to brain function, endocrine balance and neural information. Similarly with the experience of pain and pleasure, and the variety of ways in which the circuit of reception, transmission and interpretation can be handled, without electrical stimulation of the relevant area, and employing the *Sankhya* rather than the Cartesian version of metaphysical dualism. What kind of teleonomic process is at work, we may ask further, in the apparently circular relationship between the existence of miniscule receptor sites in the neural system for narcotic substances such as morphine and production of encephalins and endorphins by the body? Obviously, the information process within the body involves morphogenesis rather than mere functioning of pre-existing pathways. What triggers off this process, involving not only transmission but also production of new pathways? If anywhere, it is here that "thinking in terms of a different language-form," in Bohm's words, may be helpful, specially by recourse to informal language-forms other than the Western. As Weizsäcker has noted, natural language is already presupposed in demonstrating that part of it can be treated as information, just as our natural experience of the physical world, of our bodies and the act of perception itself, with its anticipative and not just reactive character, is presupposed in the attempt to abstract the formal, objectifiable components and incorporate them within exact science. Would it be illegitimate to speculate that the unconscious linguistic circuit (as information) that is nature, inanimate or living, is triggered off by that simple pure awareness which is the ground of all articulation in our pre-scientific experience? "The 'paradox of consciousness' is," as Raymond Ruyer remarks, "that consciousness, the model of goal-directed activity, precedes itself as an organic consciousness immanent in life," the choice thus being between universal extension of chance and the universal extension of goal-directed activity. From the Rigveda to Aurobindo, the central Indian tradition has made the choice in favour of the primacy and priority of consciousness.

I have tried to argue that from the perspective of the East, the body of knowledge constituting exact science can and should be disengaged from its historical, philosophical and religious underpinnings, released from its specifically Western matrix and appropriated by non-Western cultures, along with the logical, mathematical and technological conceptuality that goes with it. Similarly with the philosophy of science, divested of 'extraneous metaphysical assumptions. The more wide-ranging speculative elaboration of the philosophical implications

of science by major philosopher-scientists, as in some of the Gifford Lectures, may be studied with profit for educating, vivifying and enlarging our imagination and intellectual vision and, at their best, as appendices to the central body of Western philosophy. These include the "theoretical imbrolios" of science which have of late stimulated extensive reflection on language.

As for philosophy itself, it seems to me that for the non-Western student the main thing is to see it as *Western*, to grasp it as a specific and unique thought-form in its historical totality, rather than taking it naively as philosophical thinking as such in an absolute sense, and also try to separate from it its Christian religious entanglement. Whether in India, China or the West, philosophical reflection represents the highest reach of the self-consciousness of a culture. Only when we grasp the particularity of the historical course of Western thought in its difference from our own can we have insight into the specificity of Indian discursive thought. Only when we have comprehended the Western metaphysical tradition in its inner movement can we see it as the matrix from which the modern scientific mode of thinking about reality has arisen. Only when we have understood this can we see how and to what extent we and the entire world are today implicated in the metaphysical core of Western history through the spread of science and technology. Here is a mode of thinking, with its origins in Socratic-Platonic philosophy, which has culminated in modern scientific thought and knowledge. We can take this end-product and let the rest go, insofar as we are not only driven by the passion to know nature but must also use this unique method to master it and make it serve our ends. The conversation within us will then be between it and what in principle escapes its reach. But if we are responsive to his seductive power and come to love the stranger in our midst, as it will sometimes happen, a study of the great masters of that philosophy can indeed be a joyous and immensely rewarding and liberating experience in itself.

It has often been pointed out, and not merely by neo-positivists, that as science advances, it wrests from philosophy more and more of the area occupied by it, until little is left (as now) as its own field, except perhaps theorizing about what science does. For a UNESCO colloquium in 1964, Martin Heidegger wrote a piece entitled, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," described as his legacy by Werner Marx. Here he describes this self-emptying of philosophy into science which, according to him, amounts to the beginning of world-civilization based upon Western-European thinking. From this perspective, the entire metaphysical tradition is seen as based upon a prior, unexamined view of reality, the being of what is, and of an implicit, presupposed conception of thinking as a mode of knowing reality as confronting us, that is, as conceptual thinking, to which reality opens itself in its aspect of objectifiability. As Von Weizsäcker said in his remarkable memorial address on Heidegger, "The fundamental principles of science are conditions of the possibility of objectifying experience . . . perhaps in this sense natural science is co-extensive with conceptual empirical thinking as such, and the basic question therefore is to inquire into the conditions of conceptual thinking in general." It is obvious that this question itself does not fall within the scope of science, or of objectifiable experience or perhaps of conceptual thinking itself, which has its life only within a wider whole as its context. A higher order reflection, non-formal and non-conceptual, and a mode of thinking disengaged from the formalized conceptual sphere, which is still a

kind of thinking, not an other of thought, like intuition or some other mode of immediacy, and therefore can comprehend and give its rightful place to conceptuality in the wider whole. Science defines, as Weizsäcker says, not one region of what is, but is a specific manner of apprehending all of it, that is, in the manner of conceptual thinking. What is the real nature of such thinking, how and where to secure a foothold outside of such thinking in order to have a bird's-eye view of it, what is a concept and what is the nature and reach of logic, of reason itself? Apart from Heidegger's life-long wrestling with these questions, there is the tradition of Vedantic thought in India which, in its long-standing debate with Nyaya-Vaisheshika and Buddhist schools of thought, sought to analyse the nature of concepts and the limits of conceptual thinking, without moving in the direction taken by Platonic and Cartesian thought. What is the difference between this conceptuality and that which is co-extensive with science? Within objectifying thinking, should one perhaps distinguish among different modes of objectifying (following Niels Bohr), as suggested by Meyer-Abich? Is the conception of thinking presupposed in modern science a kind of forceful grasping, an attack on and taking possession of what is in front of us, as Heidegger declares? What can Heidegger mean by saying, "All the great thinking of the Greek thinkers, including Aristotle, thinks non-conceptually" and yet accurately and sharply? Is there a kind of thinking, a non-representational figuration, which is disciplined and precise and yet does not stand in an objectifying and possessive relationship to its object?

As Weizsäcker remarks, the fact that there are laws of nature holding unrestricted sway over everything that exists, does not mean that they represent the ultimate truth of things, for the very idea of a law of nature presupposes a specific project of what it means to be, a project which gives us the truth about reality as objectifiable, that is, rendered calculable and measurable by agreed upon procedures. We may conclude with Heidegger then that "there are two kinds of thinking, each justified and needed in its own way: calculative thinking and meditative-recollective thinking." The latter would be concerned with that whole which is the unobjectifiable matrix from which has emerged all that is objectifiable, but which may also present itself to us in another fashion; with man as the area of openness in which reality discloses and conceals itself; with disclosure and concealment themselves, with presence and absence, with the wider relationship of man and reality, out of which various modes of objectification and the specific modern technological relationship itself has emerged. Having poured itself out into the sciences, Greek-Western *philosophia* fulfils its latent possibilities and makes room, not for faith, feeling or mysticism, but for another mode of thinking and creates for itself a new domain hitherto unexplored in Western thought. No longer seeking to hold a place in the land of science, in Weizsäcker's words, nor in metaphysics as traditionally taken, Heidegger gains an open view on science as one unified form of truth dominating the modern age. His critique of the Western metaphysical tradition in its entirety, which is at the same time the most radical critique of reason since Kant, exhibits for the first time in the history of Western philosophy the particularity and limits of this mode of thought, and shows that renunciation of the metaphysical mode of thinking is also not the end of thinking as such. Such a deconstructive analysis, starting out with the old Aristotelian question of the meaning of being and moving out eventually beyond the closed Western horizon encompassed by it, opens up at



last the possibility of a dialogue with non-Western traditions, as even Hans Gadamer finally admitted in 1976: "Heidegger attempted the step backward (viz. the critique mentioned above) and in doing so to take the step forward as well, a step which would allow modern civilizations to realize the limits of Greek thought... It may be that by virtue of this a dialogue has become possible with philosophical traditions which have developed outside these limits, if they learn to free themselves from any tendency to parallel Western thought." In the case of India at least, the idea of another domain of thought, encompassing and transcending our everyday life, is as old as the beginnings of the Vedanta tradition.

As Weizsäcker asserts, science and the physicists have not up till now understood what Heidegger had to tell them, for in one respect he saw the signature of our age correctly and that was his gift to the world in which we now live. What really is going on in our age? Heidegger asked; and his answer is based on a two-fold perspective of the present and the future to which it points, in the light of a remembered past. First, as concerns man's technological relation to nature, arising out of his inquiry into being and truth, in which nature is conceived as a stock of energy for human use. The immediate danger from the unleashing of atomic power will surely be overcome in due course, he says, but the real danger lies in the grip that technological reality now has on man, beyond his voluntary decision, and alters his human essence as a thinking being, precisely when no atomic war breaks out. "No single man, no commission of prominent statesmen, scientists and technicians, no conference of leaders of commerce and industry, can break or direct this historical course... no merely human organization is capable of gaining mastery over it." For technology is the name of a relation between nature and man and it is this relation, the nature of which is still hidden, that rules and dominates, not man, as in a game which dominates and encompasses the players, the reality of which transcends the knowledge and will of the individual players. "The approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle and beguile man that someday calculative thinking comes to be accepted and practised as *the only* way of thinking." That nightmare may appear a long way off, for at present single individuals, among them scientists, can fall back in their non-professional moments on the Bhagavadgita or Tao Te King, Bible or Bach, psychotropic drugs or yoga. This does not alter the overarching reality of the technification process, however, unless we begin to participate, here and now, in the building up of a new non-conceptual domain and its appropriate manner of thinking, emptied of the Greek-metaphysical content, a coherent linguistic domain, without lapsing back into the pre-scientific but looking forward to a post-scientific mode of thoughtful existence and rootedness. The central questions for such thinking remain: Time and space, man and world, nature and Deity, being and truth, self-hood and otherness. It is strange and significant that in most counter-culture writing the names of the two men who invite us, in different ways, to *think*, without fear of contradicting or being contradicted by science, J. Krishnamurti and Martin Heidegger, are hardly ever mentioned.

The second motivation behind the storm that blows in Heidegger's thought concerns the possibility of recovering the dimension of the holy, which is being threatened so rapidly with oblivion that soon we may not even remember that we have forgotten it. The flight of the gods, the secularization process, the

disenchantment of the world, nihilism, are all expressions that name a relatively recent happening in human history and it is inseparably tied up, according to Heidegger, with the flowering of the Greek mode of thinking into modern science, in conjunction with Biblical history. The dimension of the holy, which provides the measure for mortals, and "the sense of worth beyond ourselves," in Whitehead's words, "is that factor in the universe whereby there is importance, value, and ideal beyond the actual." Is it possible to restore, in a post-scientific, post-technological thinking, and to articulate in language, the unity of man with what is, their complicity and chiasm, within the dimension of the sacred, and thus overcome the nihilism which is not only the uncanniest guest standing at our doorstep, in Nietzsche's words, but which constitutes "neither just *one* historical occurrence nor even the *central* feature of Western history, but is itself rather the very law of this history, its inner 'logic'," as Heidegger declares?

We in India may consider ourselves lucky in having an extraordinarily rich legacy of non-representational yet stringent discursive thought which never fell out of the dimension of the holy. This may seem to make it easier for us to retain the inner detachment from technics and the openness to mystery of which Heidegger speaks, even after we have become a "developed" country. Western peoples, philosopher Richard Rorty says, "are the heirs of three hundred years of rhetoric about the importance of distinguishing sharply between science and religion, science and politics, science and art, science and philosophy, and so on. This rhetoric has formed the nature of Europe and made the West what it is today." The rhetoric that has shaped us in India for a longer period is vastly different, philosophically and religiously. Perhaps it can safeguard us to a certain extent from becoming technified within or from being brow-beaten by that other rhetoric. But it is not enough; it would be dangerous self-deception to secure ourselves within the insulating mantle of our own traditional rhetoric. In order to make it relevant to modern scientific thought, as not something alien but rather a part of our present reality, the West within us, we must seek to initiate a conversation between the two, beyond mere apologetics. Transforming rhetoric into reality requires the hard labour of thought, of turning reflection into verbal articulation, of creative self-interpretation, without which fruitful conversation between the Western and the Indian within us cannot be carried on. In such a conversation, each of the partners is allowed to be itself and yet both are transfigured by being taken up within the unity of a game that transcends them. The basic polarity, as it presents itself to an Indian, may I say, is not between Western science and Eastern wisdom but between the questing adventure of science and the love of wisdom, not between attained knowledge and inherited wisdom, but between two modes or levels of thinking within man as such, in which what is known is subordinated to the erotic pursuit of the inconspicuous simplicities of life and the profundities of experienced reality. Such polarity underlies the conversation that we all have to carry on with each other and within ourselves; it defines the hermeneutical conception of the relationship between wholes and parts and the centrality of linguistic *poiesis* in all thought, ceaselessly overcoming the dualism of science and wisdom. The Vedantic tradition of Indian thought, as it developed in conflict with diverging trends, testifies to the possibility and necessity of such conversation. As Heidegger sees it, the root-problem with Western thought lies "in the seemingly unimportant separation of being and thinking," which long ago determined "the fundamental position of the spirit of the West." The phrase *philein to sophon*

itself gives hint of an *erotic* conception of thinking, that is, of man's basic relation to what is; when joined with a *poetic* approach to its verbal articulation, philosophical thinking can once again be seen as included within an erotics and a poetics of experience, from which spring all wisdom and the possibility of holy greetings between palmers on a common pilgrimage. Things Indian can meet such thinking half-way.

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\*This is the text of Prof. Mehta's paper presented at the East-West Philosophy Encounter held in Bombay from November 14th to 19th, 1983.

## The Tradition of Odissi Music

Jiwan Pani

About forty years ago, a few sensitive scholars and leading gurus awakened to the fact that the dance form now known as Odissi had come under corrupting influences, and that if these were not removed, this lyrical and beautiful dance form would soon be transformed into a sloppy display, aiming at nothing more than cheap entertainment. The task of restoration would have been extremely difficult had the tradition been entirely an oral one, but, fortunately, a few treatises on the dance are extant, of which the most important is *Abhinayachandrika*, written by Maheshwara Mahapatra in the sixteenth century. This invaluable work and the countless dance sculptures on the walls of several ancient temples of Orissa, give a comprehensive idea of this tradition and clearly indicate what should be considered authentic or otherwise. When the scholars and gurus set themselves the task of cleansing the form of its corrupt elements they used this evidence as a touchstone of authenticity. However, due attention was not paid at that time to the aspect of music, which also needed the same treatment. Consequently, while the dance moved closer to tradition, the music drifted away. And now, shorn of its distinctive character, Odissi music is often found to be under the total influence of the towering Hindustani system. Only a few characteristic *tala*-s, such as Athatali, Nihsari, Jhula, etc. distinguish it somewhat from Hindustani music. But it does not have an identity of its own.

Orissa, however, did have a distinctive tradition in music. This is unmistakably indicated by more than half a dozen treatises which were written between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century and are even now extant. The more important among them are:

*Geeta Prakasha* by Krishnadasa Badajena Mahapatra (1565 A.D.);  
*Sangeeta Kalpalata* by Haladhara Mishra (circa 1623 A.D.);  
*Natya Manorama* by Raghunath Ratha (1696 A.D.);  
*Sangeeta Narayana* by Gajapati Narayana Deva (1750 A.D.); and  
*Sangeeta Muktavali* by Harichandana (after 1750 A.D.)

The last named work was published in 1955 by the Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. The editor Pandit Banambar Acharya dates it to 1590 A.D., but since the work contains quotations from *Sangeeta Narayana*, it must have been written after 1750 A.D. The Orissa Sahitya Akademi, Bhubaneswar, published *Natya Manorama* in 1959 and *Sangeeta Narayana* in 1966. The other treatises have not yet been published but are in the collection of the Orissa Museum, Bhubaneswar, in the form of palmleaf manuscripts.

Krishnadasa Badajena, author of *Geeta Prakasha*, appears to have been received at the court of Akbar and rewarded for his learning. Raghunath Ratha, author of *Natya Manorama*, remarks that a king of Kerala, pleased with his knowledge of the performing arts, offered him generous patronage.

About 44 *raga*-s have been named and defined in *Geeta Prakasha*, 46 in *Sangeeta Kalpalata*, and 74 including 12 of the mixed variety (*sankirna*) in

*Sangeeta Narayana*. There are a few *raga*-s which may be found in one work and not in the others. But the majority of them are listed in every treatise and the manner in which they have been defined points to a consistent tradition. A careful study of these treatises leads one to the conclusion that as late as the eighteenth century the tradition of music in Orissa followed the ancient practice of *jati* singing under the *grama murchchhana* classification system. For instance, the *raga* Mallara has been defined by the *Sangeeta Narayana* thus:

धांशान्यासः पान्वयतो मल्लारः स-प-वर्जितः ।

सदा वर्षास्विष्टरसे ग-मन्द्र-तारसप्तमः ॥232॥

Again, the *raga* Gandhara has been defined in the same treatise thus:

गान्धारको मध्यमजश्चमान्तः ।

स-पोञ्जितः ब्यात् करुणे सदैव ॥255॥

These two pentatonic *raga*-s, according to their definitions, omit both *Sa* and *Pa*, which is unthinkable now in the *raga* music that accepts *Sa* as the fixed universal tonic for every *raga* without exception. This was not the practice in the *jati* singing tradition since the *Arshabi* and the *Dhaivati jati*-s used to omit both *Sa* and *Pa* in their pentatonic varieties. Although *Sa*, corresponding to *Do* of the Western solfa system, used to be considered as the first note, it was not always the tonic. In fact, in a particular *grama* (*shadja* or *madhyama* or *gandhara*; the latter two seem to have gone out of use even by the time the *Natyashastra* was written), different *murchchhana*-s were obtained by adopting different notes of the octave as the initial note or tonic. In the *jati* system, the name for the tonic was *graha* and that for the dominant note was *amsha*. Many *jati*-s had the same note for both *graha* and *amsha*, but there were exceptions such as *Nandayanti* which had *Ga* as *graha* but *Pa* as *amsha*.

*Raga*-s, born of *jati*-s, became so popular that by about the sixteenth century they totally eclipsed the latter both in the north and the south, but perhaps not so completely in Orissa. All the treatises mentioned above often describe *raga*-s as born of *jati*-s, and as having characteristics such as *graha*, *amsha*, *nyasa*, *apanyasa*, limits of movement in *mandra* (lower) and *tara* (higher) octaves and other elements which are now seldom used in *raga* music.

It is significant that none of the treatises written in Orissa mentions *mela* or *thaata* while most of those written elsewhere in India during the period between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century mention either one or the other of the two systems. This is because, at that time, both the Karnatic and Hindustani schools of music, discarding the *murchchhana* system, strove to formulate some kind of grouping pattern that would be scientific, convenient, and acceptable to all. In 1660, Venkatamakhi formulated the *melakarta* scheme with 72 *mela*-s and it has since been followed by Karnatic music. The Hindustani school of music, influenced more or less by the music traditions of the Middle East, has not found a satisfactory system till today. About sixty years ago, Bhatkhande suggested a scheme of ten *thaata*-s which was generally accepted. But eminent scholars like K. C. D. Brahaspati have challenged the scientific validity of the scheme which is considered quite inadequate for the purpose of accommodating

rationally all the *raga*-s in the repertoire of the Hindustani system. The music tradition of Orissa (which, for the sake of convenience, we shall call Odissi music) followed, at least till the eighteenth century, the *murchchhana* system and did not perhaps seek to consider any other. This view is strengthened by the fact that *Sangeeta Narayana* and *Natya Manorama* have different names for the *murchchhana*-s from those given by either Bharata or Narada. The table below shows names of the seven *murchchhana*-s under the *shadja-grama* as it was followed in the Odissi tradition and the corresponding names according to Bharata and Narada.

According to the Odissi tradition	According to Bharata	According to Narada
1. Lalita	Uttaramandra	Uttaravarna
2. Madhyama	Rajani	Abhirudgata
3. Chitra	Uttarayata	Ashvakranta
4. Rohini	Shuddhashadja	Souviri
5. Matangaja	Matsarikrita	Hrishyaka
6. Soubira	Ashvakranta	Uttarayata
7. Shadjamadhya	Abhirudgata	Rajani

The names of the *murchchhana*-s under the other two *grama*-s also bear no similarity with those mentioned by either Bharata or Narada.

The Odissi tradition also accepts 22 *shruti*-s in an octave, but their names again differ from those mentioned in the *Natyashastra*. The Odissi names of the *shruti*-s and their corresponding *Natyashastra* names are listed below:

<i>Natyashastra</i>	Odissi	Place of the seven notes of the <i>shadja-grama</i>
1. <i>Tivra</i>	<i>Nandi</i>	
2. <i>Kumudvati</i>	<i>Vishala</i>	
3. <i>Manda</i>	<i>Sumukhi</i>	
4. <i>Chandovati</i>	<i>Vichitra</i>	<i>Shadja</i>
5. <i>Dayavati</i>	<i>Chitra</i>	
6. <i>Ranjani</i>	<i>Ghana</i>	
7. <i>Ratika</i>	<i>Chandanika</i>	<i>Rishabha</i>
8. <i>Roudri</i>	<i>Sarasa</i>	
9. <i>Krodha</i>	<i>Mala</i>	<i>Gandhara</i>
10. <i>Vajrika</i>	<i>Magadhi</i>	
11. <i>Prasarini</i>	<i>Shiva</i>	
12. <i>Pritih</i>	<i>Matangi</i>	
13. <i>Marjani</i>	<i>Maitreyi</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
14. <i>Kshitih</i>	<i>Vala</i>	
15. <i>Rakta</i>	<i>Kala</i>	
16. <i>Sandipani</i>	<i>Kalarava</i>	
17. <i>Alapini</i>	<i>Shangiravya</i>	<i>Panchama</i>
18. <i>Madanti</i>	<i>Mata</i>	
19. <i>Rohini</i>	<i>Amrita</i>	
20. <i>Ramya</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Dhaivata</i>
21. <i>Ugra</i>	<i>Vijaya</i>	
22. <i>Kshobhini</i>	<i>Madhukari</i>	<i>Nishada</i>

The view that Odissi music used to follow the ancient *murchchhana* and *jati* system is further strengthened when the definitions of the *raga*-s given in the said treatises are closely examined. *Sangeeta Narayana* deals with the maximum number of *raga*-s and mostly follows the line of *Geeta Prakasha*. In its description of many *raga*-s, it clearly indicates from which *jati*-s or *grama-raga*-s they are derived. In the table below, a few *raga*-s are listed with corresponding *jati*-s from which they are said to have been derived. The list is suggestive rather than exhaustive.

Table 3

Odissi <i>raga</i> -s	<i>Jati</i> -s from which the <i>raga</i> -s are derived
Vasanta	Shadjamadhyama
Bangala	Kaishiki
Amrapanchama	Andhri
Kamoda	Shadji
Saindhavi	Panchami
Dhannasi	Shuddhakaishika
Deshakhya	Gandharapanchami
Abhiri	Dhaivati
Gandhara	Madhyama
Nilotpala	Dhaivati

There are also a few Odissi *raga*-s which, according to the *Sangeeta Narayana*, were derived from *grama* or *bhasa* or *bibhasa raga*-s. The descriptions of *raga*-s found in the Odissi treatises are very similar to those in the *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, which is now also followed in practice to some extent in Karnatic music. Thus, the Odissi tradition had perhaps more affinity with the Karnatic rather than with the Hindustani system.

Let us now take a *raga* and closely examine it theoretically to see how it should be rendered in conformity with the tradition. The first *raga* defined in the *Sangeeta Narayana* is Shri. It is a *raga* of the *sampoorna* variety, using all the seven notes of the octave and has been defined as:

जातिन्यासग्रहग्रामांशेषु षड्जोल्पपंचम ।  
शृंगारवीरयोर्गोयः श्रीरागो गीतको विदेः ॥३२॥

This means that the *jati*, *nyasa* (note of rest), *graha* (the initial note, the tonic) and *amsha* (the dominant note) of the *raga* Shri is *shadja*. It uses *panchama* infrequently and knowledgeable musicians employ this *raga* for songs which express love or heroism. The *raga* comes under the *shadja grama*.

The *Sangeeta Ratnakara* defines the *raga* as:

षड्जे षड्जी समुदभूतं श्रीरागं स्वल्प पंचमम् ।  
सन्धासांशग्रहं मन्द्र गंधारं तारमध्यमम् ॥  
समशेष स्वरं वीरे शास्ति श्रीकरणाग्रणी ।

The *raga* Shri, born of *shadji jati* under *shadja grama*, uses *panchama* infrequently. Its *nyasa* and *amsha* is *Sa*, and the other notes get equal importance. Its movement is between the third of the lower octave and the fourth of the higher. The leader of the *karana*-s (the epithet *Shrikaranagrani* is meant for the author, Sharngadeva) says that this *raga* is to be used for songs of heroism or those denoting a sense of punishment.

There is practically no difference between the two definitions except perhaps in the style of singing for which the *raga* could be used in the Odissi style—both for heroic and love songs. There is no disagreement about the use of the *svara*-s.

It is in the *shadja grama* and its tonic is *Sa*. Therefore, it comes under the *Uttaramandra murchchhana* (in Odissi tradition, the *murchchhana* is called *Lalita*). The *shruti* intervals between two successive notes should then be:

Sa-3-Ri-2-Ga-4-Ma-4-Pa-3-Dha-2-Ni-4-Sa

An interval of two *shruti*-s if taken as a half-tone and that of three or four *shruti*-s as a full tone, then the above scale has two half-tones, one between the second and the third and the other between the sixth and the seventh. For the sake of convenience, we take the notes of the *Vilaval thaata* of Hindustani music as the *shuddha svara*-s. Then, the third (*Ga*) and the seventh (*Ni*) of the above scale are flat (*komal*) and it corresponds to the *Kafi thaata* of Hindustani and the 22nd *melakarta* (named *Kharaharapriya*) of Karnatic music.

In practice, at present, the Hindustani style has drifted away from the tradition and *Shri raga* is sung with the second and sixth notes as flat and the fourth as sharp. It can be grouped under the *Poorvi thaata*. There are again two types of *Shri*: one is *audava-sampoorna*, that omits the third and the sixth in ascent, and the other is *shadava-sampoorna*, omitting only the third in ascent. This is certainly not in conformity with the tradition since even Tulaji Rao Bhonsle in his *Sangeeta Saramrita*, which Hindustani music more or less follows, indicates that the *raga* is *sampoorna* and the third and the seventh notes are flat.

श्रीरागः परिपूर्णः सग्रहांशन्याससंयुतः ।

Tulaji wrote *Sangeeta Saramrita* around 1770. Therefore, the wide drifting must have taken place during the last 100 or 150 years. It is significant that Bhatkhande in his *Sangeeta Shastra* does mention that Venkatamakhhi in his *Chaturdandi Prakashika* includes the *raga* *Kafi* under *Shri mela*.

Karnatic music is not so far away from the Odissi tradition since in practice it groups even now the *raga* *Shri* under *Kharaharapriya mela*, but it is an *audava-sampoorna raga*, omitting the third and the sixth in ascent.

*Shri raga* has now become rather rare in Odissi. However, if one wishes to render it in conformity with the tradition, it should be treated as *sampoorna*, with *Ga* and *Ni* flat; *Sa* as both *vadi* and *nyasa* and *Ma samvadi*. Infrequent use of *Pa* will bring it, at times, closer to *Bageshri*. In fact, *Shri raga* in Odissi is in some ways a combination of the *Bageshri* and *Kafi* of Hindustani music.

If, however, the *raga* Vasanta (which is not now as rare as Shri) is examined, it will be clear how Odissi music has drifted away from its tradition. The *raga* is at present more often rendered with both *Ri* and *Dha* flat—resembling, more or less, the style of Karnatic music. A few musicians, besides using these two notes flat, employ both sharp and flat *Ma*, in a way similar to the Hindustani Vasanta. But the *raga* has been defined by *Sangeeta Narayana* as:

षड्जमध्यमिका-जातः षड्जन्यासग्रहोशकः।

गेयो वसन्तरागोयं वसन्तसमये बुधैः ॥ १३९॥

(The *raga* Vasanta is born of *Shadjamadhyamika jati* and the note *shadja* is its *nyasa*, *graha*, and *amsha*. Knowledgeable musicians sing it at any time during the spring season.)

Vasanta, according to *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, is a *raganga* born of Hindola which belongs to the Kaishiki *jati*. Thus the *raga* Vasanta of *Sangeeta Ratnakara* is different from the Vasanta of *Sangeeta Narayana*.

*Shadjamadhyamika jati* belongs to the Matsarikrita *murchchhana* which in Odissi tradition is called as Matangaja. In this *murchchhana*, *shruti* distances of the notes are:

Ma-4-Pa-3-Dha-2-Ni-4-Sa-3-Ri-2-Ga-4-Ma

We are now so accustomed to the fixed tonic *Sa* that the characteristic of the *murchchhana* can best be understood when the initial note *Ma* is regarded as *Sa*. Then the *shruti* intervals can be rewritten thus:

Sa-4-Ri-3-Ga-2-Ma-4-Pa-3-Dha-2-Ni-4-Sa

Again, if an interval of two *shruti*-s equivalent to a half-tone, and that of three or four *shruti*-s is a whole tone and the former is denoted by H, and the latter by W, the pattern of intervals covering an octave of the Vilaval *thaata* (the same as a major diatonic scale of Western music, and regarded in Hindustani music as comprising all *shuddha* notes), can be written as W W H W W W H and the above *murchchhana* as W W H W W H W. This, in comparison with the former, has the *Ni* flat, resembling the Khamaja *thaata* (Harikamboji in Karnatic music). The Odissi Vasanta belongs to this scale. Therefore, if the *raga* is rendered in conformity with the tradition, it should have only *Ni* as flat and all other notes should be *shuddha*. It should also be of the *sampoorna* variety, using all the seven notes of the scale both in ascent and in descent with the *Pa* as the *vadi* (dominant note). All main musical phrases should begin and end on the note *Pa*.

Of course, according to the rules governing the *Shadjamadhyamika jati*, it can take either of the two *sadharana svara*-s: *antara-gandhara* and *kakalinishada* or both. If it takes the *antara-ga*, *Ni* becomes sharp and thus similar to Vilaval *thaata* (Dhirashankarabharana of Karnatic). If the other, then *Ma* is augmented by a half-tone to become *tivra-Ma* and then it resembles Vachaspati, the 64th *Melakarta* of Karnatic music, which has no corresponding *thaata* in the

Hindustani system and, therefore, can be said to have Kalyana in *purvanga* and Khamaj in *Uttaranga*. If, however, both the *sadharana svara*-s are taken, it resembles Kalyana of Hindustani, corresponding to Mecakalyani of Karnatic music. In no case can the Odissi Vasanta have *Ri* and *Dha* flat unless it drifts away from the tradition owing to the influence of Hindustani music.

Similarly, it can be proved that the way the more popular *raga*, now wrongly called Saveri, is rendered does not conform to the tradition. Its correct name is Shavari and, according to the above-mentioned Odissi treatises, it is a hexatonic *raga* whereas it is being rendered as pentatonic in ascent, very similar to the *raga* Jogia of the Hindustani style. Other *raga*-s which do not at all conform to the tradition, are Todi, Bhairava, Mallara (also Malhara) and Hindola. Many typical Odissi *raga*-s, such as Deshakhya, Hunchika, Ghantarava, Pulindi, Madhukiri, etc. are now not heard at all whereas borrowed *raga*-s like Kafi, Khamaj (at times called Harikamboji), Kiravani, Arabhi, etc. are often heard. There is, of course, no harm in borrowing a *raga*, but if the borrowed ones outnumber the traditional ones, then the tradition is obviously in danger of being sooner or later extinct.

The Odissi tradition has also a fascinating and strong oral component in the *chanda* style of singing. *Chanda*, derived from the root *chand* (to move rhythmically), is basically a metrical scheme used by Oriya poetry, especially the *Kavya* (long narrative) literature which was popular from the seventeenth century to the first few decades of our century. There are about a hundred different *chanda*-s, each with a fixed metrical scheme, and they are primarily meant to be sung. Many *chanda*-s are named after *raga*-s to which they were perhaps originally set. At times, the *tala* is also indicated. In a few *chanda*-s such as Ashadhashuklavani, the *raga* is not mentioned in any of the music treatises. They are, however, now also sung in fixed traditional tunes. Therefore, it can be assumed that, right from the beginning, they might have been just names of metrical formulae or of *raga*-s which went out of use by the sixteenth century, leaving behind their names only to the literary tradition of *chanda*.

Some *chanda*-s have a simple arrangement of syllables in their metrical schemes. For instance, in the *chanda* called Bangalashri (which according to *Sangeeta Narayana*, is a mixed *raga*) each stanza has two lines and each line has a 6 + 6 + 8 arrangement of syllables or rather beats. The metrical scheme may, however, be quite complicated. For instance, one of the popular *chanda*-s is Chokhi. No *raga* of this name is found in the treatises. Only *Sangeeta Kalpalata* mentions a *raga* named Chokhari which might have originally inspired this *chanda*. A stanza of Chokhi has four lines having the following arrangement:

1st line 8 + 8 + (8 + 5)

2nd line 8 + 8 + (8 + 5)

3rd line 9

4th line 8 + 8 + 13

A number of beautiful poems have been written in this *chanda*.

It is a matter of sorrow that such an interesting and distinctive tradition of music is now in a state of decline. In this context, the treatises mentioned above deserve far closer study and deeper analysis than they have hitherto received. This may shed light on lesser known aspects of Indian music as a whole.



Nastassia Kinski in *Moon in the Gutter*.

## Filmotsav '84

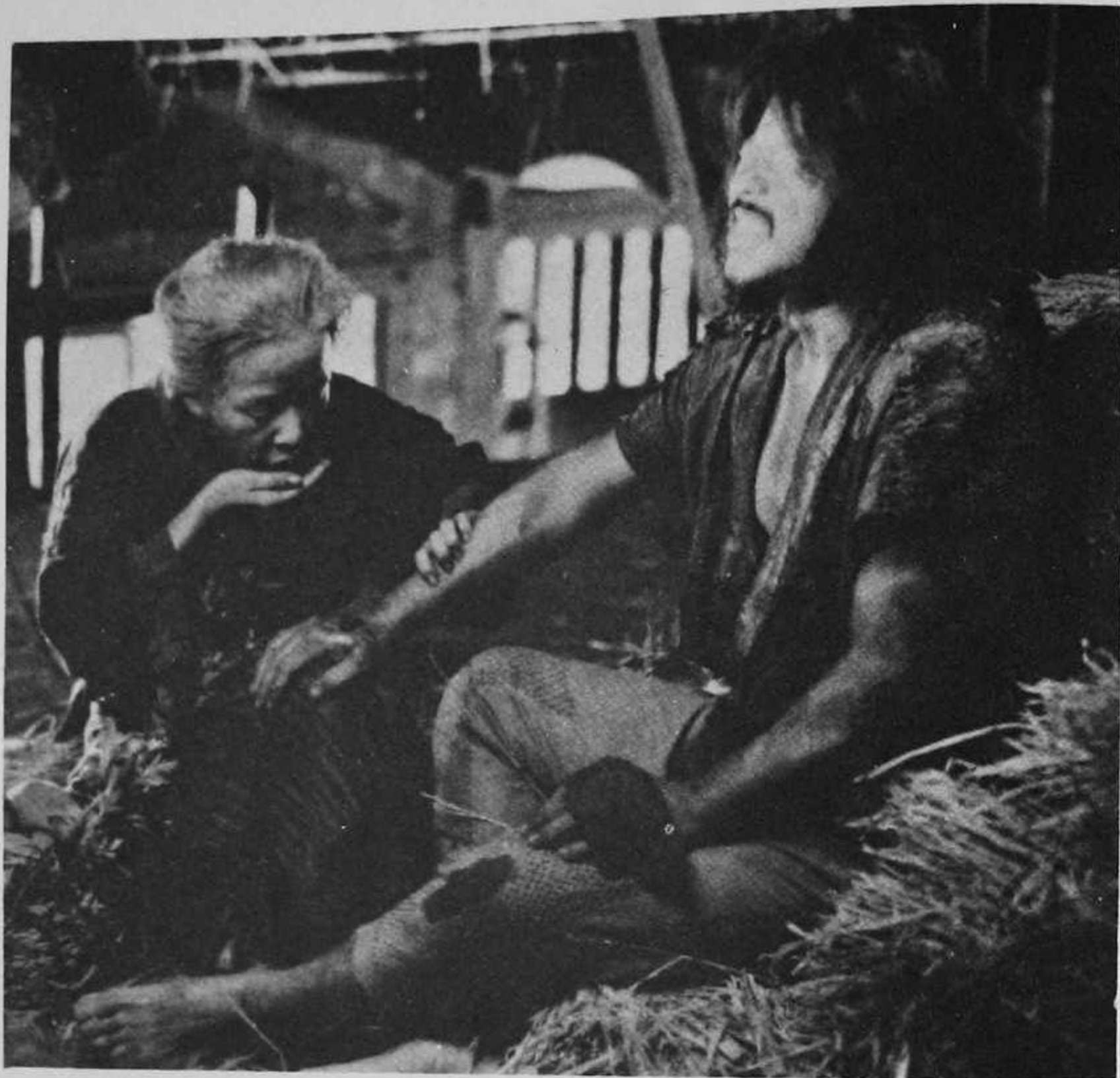
Suresh Chhabria

Bombay's Filmotsav '84 was, in the opinion of most people who regularly attend these film festivals, perhaps the best ever to be held in India. The number of quality films in the main section was larger than ever before (1982-83 seems to have been a very good year in international cinema). The retrospectives of Ingmar Bergman, Andrzej Wajda and Nagisa Oshima, though incomplete, covered several of their major films. And the new 'Focus on African Cinema' section introduced our audiences to national cinemas and individual talents which we need to know more about.

The usual organizational lapses, the sheer luck that so many outstanding films and personalities turned up because of the problems facing the rival Manila Film Festival, the disappointing Indian Panorama section—these and other aspects of the Filmotsav were amply discussed in the Bombay-based dailies and magazines. For my part, I would only like to call attention to the poor standards of projection in most cinema halls in Bombay. In many of them the sound is unclear. Arcs are either dim or inconsistent. Several projectionists were heard commenting loudly on the films instead of concentrating on focus and frame. The purity of experience which a proper, technically expert projection can provide is becoming almost a thing of the past. Concerned authorities—including the Directorate of Film Festivals—must look into this problem. Then there are the noisy wrappers, the incessant chatter, the latecomers, the forced intermission in the middle of a film intended to be projected continuously . . . All these irritants make one doubt Bombay's claim to be one of the premier film cities in the world.



David Bowie in a still from *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*



A still from *The Ballad of Narayama*.

Now to the films. Television and video may have shrunk the audience of films exhibited in theatres but the volume and quality of authentic feature filmmaking seem undiminished. Firstly, films of originality and charm like Euzahn Palcy's *Black Shack Alley* are still being made. A feature-length ecological treatise like *Koyaanisquatsi* draws huge and appreciative audiences. In spite of political controls, East European and Russian filmmakers continue to make challenging personal and social statements in films as diverse as Ferenc Andras' *The Vulture* (Hungary) and Sergei Michaelian's *In Love with his own Choice* (U.S.S.R.). Politically-sophisticated and artistically satisfying films like *The Wedding* (Venezuela) and *West Indies—The Fugitive Slaves of Liberty* (Mauritania) are being made in unexpected and remote parts of the world. Radical feminist German films like Margarethe Von Trotta's *Labour of Love* and Hans W. Geissendorfer's *Edith's Diary* indicate a new maturity in the women's movement in European Cinema. The setting up of another channel of British Television triggers off a wave of excellent English films—even the redoubtable John Grierson would have approved of Edward Bennet's *Ascendancy* and Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero*. And, above all, 'difficult' directors like Alain Resnais, Nagisa Oshima and Jean-Luc Godard are allowed to make films of deepening maturity and personal and moral expression.

With so many fine films on show, it is difficult to discuss even a handful of them adequately in a report of this length. For the record, in addition to the six films highlighted below and some of the titles already mentioned, the best films of the Filmotsav were Alain Resnais' *Forbek Castle*, Andrzej Wajda's *Danton*, Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas*, Mr. Lawrence, Werner Rainer Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss*, Jerzy Skolimowski's *Moonlighting*, Shohei Imamura's *The Ballad of Narayama* and Jean-Jacques Beineix's *Moon in the Gutter*.

### *Pauline at the Beach*

Eric Rohmer's *Pauline at the Beach* is the third in his new cycle entitled 'Comedies and Proverbs'. This one illustrates Chretien de Troyes "Qui trop parle, il se mesfait", or, literally, "He who talks too much does himself a disservice". Three adults and a couple of teenagers get in and out of bed and love at a seaside resort. But the real centre of the film, in keeping with Troyes' admonition, is that they *talk* themselves into trouble. Rohmer's exceptional talent, of making the prolonged conversations between his perfectly realized characters the stuff of his films, remains unmatched. Various aspects of sexual relations such as romantic love, compatibility, fidelity, etc., are discussed over and after meals. The cast (led by the bewitching Arielle Dombasle) is once again perfect, and the deceptively placid atmosphere is played off against the brittle contacts and barely concealed tensions with an urbane but compassionate humour. The intellectual subtlety and psychological shadings of Rohmer's earlier "Six Moral Tales" was perhaps richer, but the humanity and emotional vulnerability of the characters in this film is in some ways even more affecting.



A scene from *Pauline at the Beach*.

## *The King of Comedy*

The contemporary American Cinema's unique ability to blend the private with the public, the daily lives of individuals with the collective national environment, individual idiosyncratic behaviour with sociology, and all this within the traditions of the Hollywood narrative forms, was perhaps best displayed in Martin Scorsese's *King of Comedy*. In fact, Scorsese is the most sociological of contemporary American filmmakers. His protagonists are products of a precisely delineated environment—the technological, dollar- and media-dominated post-industrialism of U.S.A.—against which these hapless creatures come into contradiction and finally adapt in unexpected but meaningful ways. This meaning is never an affirmation of traditional humanistic values, but a fatalistic, interiorized, and even unconscious acceptance of pain and dehumanization.

In yet another superb performance for Scorsese, Robert De Niro plays Rupert Pupkin who aspires to become television's 'King of Comedy'. He is completely immersed in a fantasy world presided over by the comic talk-show host Jerry Langford (played by Jerry Lewis). Contriving to meet his idol with the help of a fanatic groupie, Pupkin takes Langford's polite offer to listen to a tape of his work seriously. Scorsese inter-cuts this and subsequent events with Pupkin's fantasies of success and triumph, and this device makes the film a painful but rivetting account of one more victim, of 'a place in the American Sun' philosophy, well on his way to crossing the thin line between sanity and madness.

In the film's frighteningly sardonic conclusion, the enthroned star is kidnapped by Pupkin with the ransom condition that he be featured as a guest on the Jerry Langford show. The desperate plan works. He is jailed, but becomes



Robert De Niro as Rupert Pupkin in *The King of Comedy*.

a national celebrity overnight, writes a best-selling autobiography in prison, and finally returns to make his great dream come true. Such a severe comment on modern life-styles and the inanity of contemporary popular culture could only come from America. And Martin Scorsese.

## *Zelig*

Woody Allen's *Zelig* is one of the most original American films since *Citizen Kane*. In fact, it extends the techniques of the 'March of Time' newsreel from the prologue sequence of that epochal film to a feature-length 'documentary' on another fictional character, Leonard Zelig. Interviews shot in colour with people who knew Zelig and his current 'interpreters' (including Saul Bellow and Susan Sontag!) are inserted in a parody of 'The Witnesses' in Warren Beatty's *Reds*. The rest of the film is a mixture of black and white actuality clippings of the 20's and 30's and pseudo material featuring Zelig. This conceit is carried off with stunning audacity and assurance by Woody Allen and his team-photographer Gordon Willis, designer Mel Bourne and editor Susan E. Morse.

The story is typical Allen whimsicality. Allen himself 'plays' Leonard Zelig whose desperate need to be liked and accepted by others makes him a human chameleon. Thus, for instance, when with a negro he becomes black, and when associated with a psychiatrist he assumes the identity of one himself. He is rescued from becoming a sideshow freak and ultimately cured by his psychiatrist, Dr. Eudora Fletcher (played by Mia Farrow who has replaced Diane Keaton in the archetypal Woody Allen hero's search for a strong feminine ideal).

The romance is set amidst the socio-political and cultural environment of the so-called Jazz Age—an era which has received a great deal of attention from the American compilation film genre and which Allen brilliantly spoofs. Fads and fashions of the period, many songs and dances, prohibition, aeromania, Hollywood, sensation-thirsty newspapers and their readers, wireless broadcasting—all these are linked to Zelig's curious life. Giants of the age—Hitler, newspaper tycoons like Hearst, entertainers like Fanny Brice, Charles Chaplin and Josephine Baker, Presidents—respond to the Zelig phenomenon in a satirical collage which takes one's breath away. *Zelig* is pure invention, a great American film comedy and Woody Allen's best film to date.

## *The Wind*

The 'Focus on African Cinema' section highlighted the work of the major filmmakers from Black Africa. Most of the films were inevitably political in their concerns. In all the countries represented, decolonization is comparatively recent, neo-colonialism and big-power intervention are a constant threat, and democratic movements (as also, indigenous film production) are in their infancy. Most of the films, which I was able to see, wove these and other related aspects of national politics and continental history into their stories. Without exception, the films denounce corrupt military and comprador elites, oppressive and outdated patriarchal and tribal structures, and the omnipresent poverty and exploitation. However, unlike the major political Cuban and Latin American films (represented





Woody Allen in *Zelig*

in this festival by Miguel Littin's Cuban-Nicaraguan coproduction *Alsino and the Condor*) which pulsate with fierce protest and revolutionary anger, these films are quieter and technically restrained.

Both these qualities were apparent in the work of the Malian filmmaker, Souleymane Cisse. *The Wind*—his most accomplished film to date—is a sympathetic account of the birth of political consciousness among young Africans. As in his earlier two films—*The Girl* and *The Porter*—Cisse unfolds his characters and story in unfussy and underplayed vignettes. But then, an aged grocer dons his ancestral chieftain's robes to visit the site of his tribal gods to secure divine justice for his victimized grandson. The totem confesses its impotence and urges him to rely on his own initiative; a handsome, white ram lyrically crosses past the sacred grove; and the old man returns to his hovel to burn his robes and join his grandson's mates in their struggle for freedom. 'The wind awakens thought in man'. Cisse, quietly but firmly, captures this wind of hope in this minor, but radiant, masterpiece.

### *Fanny and Alexander*

If *Fanny and Alexander* is indeed Ingmar Bergman's final film, he could not have brought down the curtain on his cinema career with a more satisfying film. To the masterly blend of autobiography, the consummate mise-en-scène and the recurrent personal motifs and psychological concerns of his earlier films, Bergman has at last succeeded in adding comedy and farce which have hitherto eluded him or come across in a heavy-handed manner. A warm, Renoiresque humanism suffuses this account of a large and affluent provincial theatrical family, the Ekdahls, in the early years of the century.

Bergman's main protagonist is ten-year-old Alexander who lives out the Hamlet situation in real life and survives. The evil stepfather is destroyed and his mother and sister are rescued from the household of this tyrannical and religious

bigot. While death and despair haunt several of the Ekdahls, the overall tone of the film is joyous, even celebratory. The restaurateur uncle's paean to the good things of life on the birth of his daughter, the grandmother's quiet resignation and good humour in the face of old age and death, the mother's defiance and strength of character in safeguarding her children's independence, the genuine warmth and affection of the Ekdahl household—all these elicit Bergman's sincere admiration and approval. And this makes *Fanny and Alexander* one of the richest and most mature films of his career.

Moreover, Bergman's powers of scriptwriting and extracting brilliant performances from his players have not faded with the passage of time. Sequences like the Christmas celebrations at the beginning of the film, the father's death (onstage, while playing the murdered king in *Hamlet*) and its immediate aftermath, and the nocturnal visitation by 'God' in the Jewish family friend Isak's pawnshop puppet theater are invested with an inspired beauty and equal anything Bergman has done before. Among the performances, the most memorable is by Gunn Wallgren as the grandmother who, with her good sense and keen humour, gives the Ekdahl family—and this valedictory film of Bergman's—a solid centre.

### *Prenom Carmen*

Hotel rooms, bistros, highways, petty criminals, a *film noir* type femme fatale, the tribute to small pictures—in *Prenom Carmen*, Godard returns to the world of his earlier films like *À Bout de Souffle* and *Pierrot le Fou*. But there are significant differences. The sympathy for the young is not so complete, the romanticism and the attendant flamboyance not so delirious, death not so inviting. At the same time, the didacticism of his middle period is replaced by an austere realism and respect for the function of fiction (howsoever loose, and circumscribed by other elements) in the narrative arts. Instead, *Prenom Carmen* features a ripe sadness, a frank confession of loneliness (Godard himself plays a major role in the film), and, above all, a pervasive but controlled fantasy which reminded me of the finest films of earlier masters like Josef von Sternberg, John Ford and Kenji Mizoguchi.

It is always risky to take statements of the creator at their face value, but I find that the key to *Prenom Carmen* is in Godard's claim that he has invented 'a camera that makes music.' Godard is obviously moving away from his 'classicism is dead' stance to a position which promises to usher in yet another exciting phase in his career—the acknowledgement of the persistence of the power of classicism and the need for modern artists to achieve the same standards albeit by different means. As yet it is enough for Godard to poise the great music, films and painting with his fragments of images and sounds. But these are among the most precious in cinema today.

To take a single instance—the stark image of a hand stroking in silhouette a live but empty television (video?) screen to a rhythm and blues song. This image evokes indescribably poignant emotions and assumes the same emblematic significance which, in earlier Godard films, possessed objects, colours, words. To reduce the existential force and anthropomorphist resonance of this image to mere words is to negate the possibility of autonomous images. This is the kind of impoverishment which, I believe, the cinema must resist if it is to remain a treasury of syncretic symbols and experiences which have incalculably enriched 20th century culture.

*A Report on the East-West Philosophy Encounter, Bombay, November 14-19, 1983.*

The East-West Philosophy Encounter, sponsored by the National Centre for the Performing Arts and Max Mueller Bhavan, took place in Bombay from the 14th to the 19th of November, 1983. The co-sponsors of this meeting were the Alliance Francaise and the British Council. Its theme was 'The Part and the Whole', and the discussions, on the whole, revolved around 'philosophy' in a very general sense. Understandably, because the Encounter included, both as speakers and participants, physicists, sociologists, psychologists and other philosophically inclined intellectuals. Less than one-third of the forty participants were philosophers proper. None of the speakers represented the linguistic/analytic tradition.

There was, among the speakers, a tacit and unquestioned acceptance of the philosophical relevance and ontological validity of mystical experience. To question this would perhaps have taken us into waters too deep to fathom in six days. Functioning within this framework, the Encounter was, nevertheless, an interesting and valuable experience.

Instead of a chronological record of the discussions, I shall summarize the thread of the main arguments. In keeping with its theme, the Encounter sought to discover how the philosophies of the West and the East could be related and reconciled. As pointed out by a speaker, 'the East and the West are spiritual poles and not geographical notions', and the distinction often boiled down (unfortunately) to one between Western *science* and Indian *mysticism*. Thus, four variables had to be continuously manipulated: Western science, Western philosophy, Indian mysticism (i.e. mystical experiences as *experiences*) and Indian philosophy (i.e. canonical utterances based on mystical experiences). Inevitably, what emerged was an intricate, and sometimes bewildering, counterpoint of themes and ideas.

Amaury de Riencourt<sup>1</sup> sharply distinguished the East and the West, (admitting, however, that he was overplaying the differences for heuristic reasons). The West, he said, always claimed to give an (objective) account of the world as it *is* and was concerned with problems of existence (e.g. What were the *facts* of Christ's life? Did Christ exist?), whereas the East never bothered whether the gods existed or not, but regarded them as symbolic and the tales about them as myths. (Much doubt was expressed about this thesis). The West, said Riencourt, tried to *rationaly* investigate, without success, metaphysical problems like the relation between Man and the Divine, but such investigation was never even considered by the East, which believed that Man is not *related to*, but *is*, deep down, divine and has only to 'peel off the veil of illusion'. The Eastern thinker has no awareness of a separate Reality but only of a 'psychological' process of evolution from one level of consciousness to the next and his 'centre of gravity' lies in the depths of consciousness. 'Science can tell us nothing of this Ultimate Reality' and, indeed, it 'baffles telling'. In the mystic vision, there is no difference between subject and object, only a merging with the supreme being. This 'translogical knowledge was beyond the most brilliant intellect'. Riencourt mentioned

how Aquinas, after his rapturous vision, said that all he had written was like straw, and ceased to write more. (It may be pointed out, however, that Aquinas did not destroy his *Summa*.) Riencourt's concluding recommendation that we should evolve a 'global culture' wherein East and West could meet, seemed to go counter to his entire thesis that the Western intellect is incapable of grasping reality.

J. Vieillard-Baron<sup>2</sup> said that only the Whole, the 'concrete universal', can be complete, and the Whole is such that 'nobody can master it even through spiritual asceticism.' Science and mysticism are 'two aspects of one and the same concrete universal', each trying to grasp reality in its own way. But only philosophy can attempt this. That philosophy is true which gives, in rational terms, the greatest total intelligibility. A participant noted that this view came close to the theory that the ultimate criterion of truth was (what the British Idealists called) 'comprehensive coherence', understood not as a narrow consistency among some propositions, but as an all-embracing hanging-together of propositions *and* experiences of all kinds.

Vieillard-Baron's view joins up with that of Aghananda Bharati's<sup>3</sup>. Bharati deplored the attempts of 'legitimising religious and parareligious ideologies' by means of 'rudimentary and usually obsolete science' and of supporting mystical experiences by 'contemporary scientific parlance'. It is thought that an Upanishadic dictum like 'Who can know the knower?' *is* what physicists say, but, said Bharati, 'physicists say nothing of the kind', and that it is not true either that 'religious truth proves the validity of experimental finding' or vice versa. According to Bharati, the 'universalists' (i.e. mystics and 'metaphysicians') nowadays let scientists understand the empirical universe and the scientists 'leave the formulation of the nonempirical . . . to the religious virtuoso'. Bharati admitted that there can be no dialogue between scientists and 'experiencers' unless scientists 'soften' their criteria and 'experiencers' talk the language of science (which they cannot, unless they subscribe to its rigour).

Wilhelm Halbfass<sup>4</sup> held that the Indian tradition, in trying to accommodate itself to Western methods, has been 'wounded' and has lost itself. He cautioned against the pitfalls and traps that bestrew the path of any East-West encounter. Since Western experimental methods could not just be applied to Indian concepts as they stood, the West, keen to test meditational truths, reinterpreted Indian concepts. But science is so vitally dependent on technology that it is futile to interpret concepts like *dharma*, *karma* or *maya* (formulated in a non-technological age) in modern scientific terms. The *vidya*-s were 'timeless' and hoary truths, 'static', unmodifiable, not open to empirical discoveries, whereas research was the centre of science. This 'obsession' with the timeless has, according to Halbfass, 'blocked' empirical research in India; indeed, any empirical or rational critique of these timeless truths is inapplicable. (That there was no experimentation in the East was challenged by some). Halbfass also repudiated the view (held by Dayananda, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophists) that the West learnt all its technology from the 'ancient wisdom' of India. Paul Davies<sup>5</sup> thought such a view quite 'ludicrous' and suggested that the reason why science didn't develop in the East was that while in the West, from Greek times, the gods went out of Nature, they never did in the East. He admitted that there was, in ancient India, some mathematics,

astronomy and medicine, but they did not spread, perhaps because of lack of communication.

Halbfass was also critical of two other views: (i) Ouspensky's and Capra's, that science transcends itself and leads to mystical truth, and (ii) Vivekananda's, that while the orientalist must learn technology from the West, the occidental must learn about God and the Soul from the East.

Bharati's solution was that both the 'universalists' and the scientists 'might postulate a basis that generated the experiment *and* the experience', so that scientific and religious 'truths' might 'derive from the same TRUTH'. He suggested that 'grand unification theories' which seek to unify, within physics, apparently irreconcilable theories and also different scientific disciplines, should also 'incorporate metaphysics', and, further, that 'Indian canonical sources' could, at this point, 'be drawn in' for 'creating a communicational infrastructure between scientists and metaphysicians'. (Notice the merging of metaphysics and mysticism, which was a pervasive underlying feature of the Encounter.) Picking on the text which says, *Bahusyam prajayeya* ('Let me be many, let me bring forth'), Bharati claimed that it throws light, 'in a rather marvellous way', on how the Absolute 'remains intact in all that it has manifested'—all that the scientists and metaphysicians deal with. How seriously should a canonical dictum be taken? Not only did Bharati admit that 'we must peel away its mythological trimmings', but also held that we must 'postulate all of this in an "as if" mode, with no stake in its ontological status', which, according to him, was 'irrelevant', for 'it is here not important whether the *brahman*, the absolute ... exists or not, the main issue being that it *might* exist and ... it helps us to generate a shared denominator language'—that is, shows us how science and 'metaphysics' *could* be reconciled.

Regrettably, this thesis was not spelt out more precisely or, in the ensuing discussion, examined critically. Interest shifted, instead, to the status of religious dicta as truth-claims. Margaret Chatterjee<sup>6</sup> said that one mystical experience, being unquantifiable, would be incomparable with another, which complemented P. Divakaran's<sup>7</sup> view that the essence of scientific inquiry was that it was 'social', that it was possible to convince an opponent, whereas when one said one had a mystical experience there was no way by which to convince the sceptic. Jose Cabezon<sup>8</sup> said there *were* tests (e.g., behaviour) by which to settle whether a *shishya* had attained a certain level. However, such tests surely cannot assess the *truth* of the ontological claims.

S. Goonatilake<sup>9</sup> developed the view that scientific activity was determined by the social and political milieu. Had Copernicus lived in India, his 'revolution' would not have created much of a stir because the Indian mind would not have been much concerned by what he said. Davies remarked that scientific progress depends on 'the clash of opinions' and, since the climate which makes that possible did not exist in India, it was very doubtful if a Copernicus *could* have arisen in India. E. Scheibe<sup>10</sup> commented that although the beginnings of a science or of a scientific theory *might* be socially and politically determined, surely this could not be said of its *content*, for a scientific theory proceeds by its own internal momentum.

In his paper, E. Scheibe carefully analysed the 'part-whole' concept. The 'analytical method', which stems from science, proceeds from part to whole, from the simple to the complex, and works on the presumption (an 'as if') that the part can *be* apart from the whole, that the whole is a *total* of its parts and that its nature is determined by the nature of the parts. Modern analytic philosophy, deriving from Logical Atomism, also holds that language and knowledge are built, by logical connections, out of basic 'bricks'. Recent developments, said Scheibe, seemed to challenge this picture. It used to be thought that, although scientific theories may not apply beyond certain limits, yet within those limits they are absolutely true. It is now felt that if a theory is limited, it must also be *self-discrepant* and, so far, *untrue*. This was in line with Aristotle's view of the 'part-whole' relation—that a part, to be a real part, must be such that its removal would either alter the whole or even destroy it. This 'organic' view was also held by the Idealist tradition in the West, which, according to Scheibe, was still alive. It stresses that there are no sharp distinctions, that knowledge is not made up of isolated 'bricks' and that there are degrees of truth, that the areas which science studies are only *relative* wholes and that (quoting Quine) 'the unit of empirical significance is the whole of science', that apparently 'incompatible' theories could be reconciled by a more comprehensive theory and that 'closed' theories show themselves as *more and more* false when applied to wider fields. 'The opposite of truth', said Niels Bohr, 'is falsity, but the opposite of deep truth is also a deep truth'.

A number of speakers were sympathetic to the parapsychological claims of mystics and others. Walter Frank<sup>11</sup> and Stanislav Grof<sup>12</sup> pleaded for a more open-minded approach. Grof and Satwant Pasricha<sup>13</sup> reported many interesting cases, but said that assessing the claims was very difficult and frequently impossible. Elizabeth Rauscher<sup>14</sup> gave a highly technical exposition of her work in studying such cases by methods of modern physics. Everybody nodded and looked wise until Bharati pricked the bubble by declaring that, barring the physicists present, nobody could have followed the talk. Even the physicists confessed they were unable to *assess the value* of the tests described by Rauscher.

H. Reitbock<sup>15</sup> showed, in great detail, that certain facts of consciousness were definitely correlated with certain brain structures. He said that, at this stage, all that we can say is that consciousness emerges due to material conditions and not due to any non-material ones. He said, in a private discussion, that although the possibility of disembodied consciousness could not be logically ruled out, it was extremely improbable.

Ashok Gangadean<sup>16</sup> championed what he called Grammatology. After a long introduction about 'identity', 'negation' and 'predication', he expounded his thesis that we live within 'multiple grammatical structures', that every culture is a conglomeration of different 'grammars', that one is ostracised when one tries to understand another culture through the 'grammar' of one's own culture, that one must break through one's own 'grammar' to enter another's, etc., etc. Much of this was rather dated reasoning under a new verbal covering, coupled with a naive faith in the wide-ranging therapeutic properties of Grammatology.

Klaus Meyer-Abich<sup>17</sup> explored one instance of the 'part-whole' relationship—that between Man and Nature. We treat Nature as a 'self-service shop without

a cashier' and even our motives for 'conservation' are selfish. This anthropocentric attitude is due to our technological progress coupled with a corresponding erosion of our finer feelings. We have to work for power over Nature without doing violence to her and we must establish a relationship with her as we have done, through concepts of law and justice, between man and man. Man is a *part* of Nature and through his capacity for language and art, Nature has found a way of expressing herself. When Man works as a *part* he creates artefacts which are *natural*; when he considers Nature as separate from himself, as 'out there', then he does violence to her and creates what is *unnatural*.

Alex Comfort<sup>18</sup>, taking a video game as his model, expounded the view that our normally-experienced world of objects is a 'display' created by our nervous system. This world-picture, derived from quantum physics, has demolished the Democritean picture where everything could be reduced to matter-energy. Comfort regretted the fact that most sciences today continue to use the Democritean model, totally unaware of the profound change that has happened in physics and of its 'shocking' consequences for all sciences, and particularly with regard to the problem of the nature of mind. Comfort's very valuable but extremely difficult paper was relevant to the Encounter only in that he claimed that the new world-picture was foreshadowed by Vedic concepts.

Under Mr. J. J. Bhabha's able guidance and Dr. G. Lechner's efficient control, the Encounter was a worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

—S. S. OOKHERJEE

Notes on the speakers and participants mentioned above, with the title of his or her statement in brackets:

1. Amaury de Riencourt, widely travelled writer on philosophy and psychology. ('The Meeting of East and West').
2. J. L. Vieillard-Baron, Director, Department of Philosophy, University of Tours, France. ('The Concrete Universal—Modernity, Adaptation and Decadence').
3. Agehananda Bharati, Professor of Anthropology, Syracuse University, New York. ('Models for a Rapprochement of "Truth" and "truth": the position of a religiously engaged anthropologist').
4. Wilhelm Halbfass, Professor of Indian Philosophy, Department of Oriental Studies, Pennsylvania University, Philadelphia. ('Europa and India—Aspects of their Spiritual Encounter').
5. Paul Davies, Professor of Theoretical Physics, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. ('The New Cosmology').
6. Margaret Chatterjee, Professor of Philosophy, Delhi University.
7. P. P. Divakaran, Researcher at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay.
8. Jose Cabezon, Ph.D. candidate, University of Wisconsin, Madison. ('Physics and Experience: A Buddhist Perspective').
9. Susantha Goonatilake, Director of Research, People's Bank, Colombo, Sri Lanka. ('Science and Creativity').
10. E. Scheibe, Professor of Philosophy, University of Gottingen. ('Aspects of Wholeness in Science and Philosophy').
11. Walter Frank, Research Scholar and Reader, Seminar for Central Asian Studies, University of Bonn. ('Western Science and Indian Philosophy—Match for a New Age').
12. Stanislav Grof, Scholar-in-Residence, Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. ('Modern Consciousness Research and the Quest for a New PARADIGM').
13. Satwant Pasricha, Lecturer, Department of Clinical Psychology, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences, Bangalore. ('An Investigation into Reported Cases of Reincarnation').
14. Elizabeth Rauscher, associated with J. F. Kennedy University and Tecnic Research Laboratories, San Leandro, California. ('Multidimensional Properties of Consciousness and Some Laws of Reality').

15. H. J. P. Reitbock, Professor and Head, Department of Applied Physics and Biophysics, Philipps University, Marburg. ('Consciousness').
16. Ashok Gangadean, Professor of Philosophy and Director, Margaret Gest Centre for the Cross-Cultural Study of Religion, Haverford College. ('Meditation, Rationality and Communication').
17. Klaus Meyer-Abich, Professor of Philosophy of Nature, University of Essen and Member, Enquete Commission of the German Parliament. ('Peace with Nature').
18. Alex Comfort, Consultant Geriatric Psychiatrist, Brentwood VAH Hospital, Los Angeles, and Adjunct Professor, Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, UCLA. ('On Eastern and Western Philosophy—Science and Philosophy in the 21st Century').

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*Project on Traditional Performing Arts: The First Festival sponsored by the School of Drama, Calicut University, December 9-11, 1983.*

The School of Drama, Calicut University, has recently initiated a project on Traditional Performing Arts, with financial assistance from the Ford Foundation. The objectives of the project are to document, study and disseminate the performing art forms associated with Mother and Nature Worship. The project seeks to attain its aims by producing monographs, recording performances on video, tape and film and conducting three Village Festivals with a view to enabling the rural population to reinforce its links with its own traditional heritage. The First Village Festival was held from the 9th to the 11th of December, 1983, at Alumthara village, 24 kilometres north of Trivandrum.

The Festival opened on the evening of 9th December, with the flag-hoisting ceremony (*Kodiyettam*) by P. Bhaskaran, Chairman of the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi. Earlier, a group from Trichur presented *Panchavadyam*. This was followed by three important *Theyyam*-s and the *thottam* of one *Theyyam*. Then came *Natakam* which is not directly connected with any ritual but forms part of the post-harvest entertainment popular in the Palghat district. *Pulluvan Pattu* (invocation of the serpent), *Poorakkali* (from Payyannoor, an entertainment for scholars), *Margam Kali* (a dance of the Christian community), *Kambadi Kali* (a stick dance employing martial footwork), *Kakkarasi Natakam* (a folk play with stock situations and characters), *Mudiyettu* (a ritualistic and dramatic representation of Kali's fight with the demon) and *Padayani* (Kali's victorious march after the destruction of the demon) were the traditional forms presented on the second and third day by groups with authentic training. The general idea was to present, in their natural surroundings, the forms popular in the north to a gathering in the south. The Festival also opened up a meaningful dialogue between traditional gurus and modern theatre enthusiasts.

The Second Festival is to be held from the 6th to the 8th of April, 1984, at Kalliaseri, near Cannanore. A tribal festival is also being planned in May at Laloor, near Trichur.

—G. SANKARA PILLAI

## Book Reviews

SOUTH INDIAN TRADITIONS OF KALAMKARI by Lotika Varadarajan. Published by the Perennial Press, Bombay, for the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, 1982. Price not stated. (*In English*).

The book is a detailed survey of the traditions of Kalamkari as practised in South India, particularly in Masulipatam and Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh, with a brief reference to its practice in Sickinaikkenpet in the Tanjore District of Tamil Nadu.

It is published by the Perennial Press, Bombay, for the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, and is based on the *Research on Kalamkari traditions and techniques*, a project undertaken by the Institute, with Lotika Varadarajan as the Project Director and some senior students and faculty members working on the project.

Lotika Varadarajan is a distinguished historian and whatever help she may have received from the students and faculty of the National Institute of Design (N.I.D.) or from all the other people and institutions whose names she has very carefully mentioned and acknowledged in the Introduction, the book is basically her book. It is a result of the detailed research which she has carried out herself and the text is indeed well-written, absorbing and interesting. Anyone even remotely interested in the subject of Kalamkari, will find a reading of the book a most rewarding experience.

The first two chapters deal with the historical aspects of the subject. Chapter One acquaints us with *The Pre-modern Trading World of Asia*. It discusses silk weaving traditions; Indian expertise in silk and cotton; layout, motifs and colours. There is a section devoted to the primary artisan and textile production; caste and community in Gujarat and South India. In Chapter Two, she speaks of *Historic Techniques and Processes*, and the opening lines are revealing: "From the time when man switched over from bark, leaves and animal skin to woven fabric as a medium for the fashioning of costume, regional differentiation began to emerge as to the basic material in use." She traces the different influences in different regions—in particular, the Persian influence preponderant in the Masulipatam region, until the first decades of the twentieth century. Very wisely, she observes—"if present practitioners are made aware of the richness and diversity of the earlier tradition, perhaps a more meaningful revival may be possible." Finally—"It is very necessary at this point in time to evolve a policy whereby the craft may be encouraged without deterioration of standards or dilution of aesthetic content. These considerations are as important as any socio-economic desiderata aimed at improving the position of the artisan and levelling out caste distinction."

The major part of Chapter Three details the existing techniques in relation to block printed Kalamkari at Masulipatam. Similarly, Chapter Four deals with the techniques and processes involved in the painting of figurative designs at Kalahasti.

These two chapters are really meant for the serious student of Kalamkari, but the ordinary reader will be fascinated to discover how all the different elements from Nature—from the vegetable and mineral world—help to produce the different shades of colour found in Kalamkari in both these regions.

The layout and design of the book is not of the highest standard, not what one would expect from the N.I.D.—the premier Institute of Design in our country. Although many of the photographs in black-and-white and colour are quite brilliant, there are a few which are unsatisfactory. Also, the 'registration' in several colour pictures is poor and the overcrowding of photographs on many a page makes us feel that some of the pictures should have been omitted. The text refers to pictures mentioning the figure numbers, but the reader has to turn several pages backwards or forwards to locate those particular illustrations. The number of pictures could have been reduced and those included could have been highlighted with a beautiful layout and more thoughtful captions. This procedure would have maintained the standards of the cover and the end paper, both of which are excellent.

To sum up, the N.I.D. and Lotika Varadarajan have rendered yeoman service to the art and craft of Kalamkari and we consider the author's 'observations' in the body of the book most sensible and penetrating. Her 'Conclusion' is really the high point of this monograph and its last paragraph deserves to be quoted here.

"Unless action is taken soon there is danger that existing crafts will find themselves cut off from past tradition. Even in the most advanced industrial societies, crafts are nurtured as they serve as links with a living past providing society with a sense of identity. In India, recent developments have greatly eroded this base. The situation needs to be rectified, for, to sacrifice craft tradition at the altar of modernity is tantamount to adding yet another dimension to poverty of the mind."

—NELLY & HOMI SETHNA

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AAINA-E-GHAZAL (A *ghazal* companion) by Dr. Zarina Sani and Dr. Vinay Waikar. Published by Amit Prakashan, Nagpur, 1983, Rs. 75.00 (*In Hindi*).

GHAZAL-EK ADHYAYAN by Chanan Gobind Puri. Published by C. R. Publications, Delhi, 1980, Rs. 20.00 (*In Hindi*).

The *ghazal* is today by far the most popular form of Urdu poetry. Its appeal lies essentially in its most remarkable embodiment of the agonies and ecstasies of human passions. Even in its recent forays into nationalism, politics and social progress, the *ghazal* has left an indelible mark as a popular medium of mass communication. Given this recent growth in popularity, it is quite understandable

that some literature on the *ghazal* should appear now, especially aimed at explaining those 'ticklish' Urdu words that often render a good Urdu *sher* incomprehensible to a fresh enthusiast.

*Aaina-E-Ghazal* by the late Dr. Zarina Sani and Dr. Vinay Waikar will serve as a useful *ghazal* companion and help to overcome this inconvenience. This dictionary concentrates only on those words that are found in Urdu *shairi*. While the chosen words are printed in the Devanagari script, their equivalents are given in three languages; Hindi, Marathi and English. However, even with equivalents in three different languages, a word from an Urdu *sher* may at times not be totally clear with all its nuances unless it is placed in its context in a *ghazal*. The authors have wisely recognised this fact and added an appropriate *sher* or two after every few words to bring out more vividly their meanings and usage. This is indeed a remarkable feature of the book since it adds another dimension to its usefulness.

A short note on the *ghazal*—(*Ghazal Kya Hai*)—by Dr. Arshad Jamal appears as an addendum despite the fact that in the dictionary we are asked to look up the word *ghazal* itself (P. 42) in the Preface. Dr. Jamal has, in this useful note, explained briefly the anatomy of a *ghazal* and its minor technicalities followed by a very short history of its development.

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*Ghazal-Ek Adhyayan* by Chanan Gobind Puri is a short exercise in explaining the *ghazal*. The author is a great admirer of the form and his simple and lucid style, duly interspersed with *sher-s* or *ghazal-s*, makes the book readable.

The book touches on various subjects, starting off with the *shayar* and his *shayiri*, the various aspects of a *sher* and then the *ghazal* itself. However, throughout the book, the viewpoint is static—totally devoid of any historical perspective. The *ghazal*, having evolved over centuries, bears the mark of the era in which it was composed as also of the *shayar* who composed it. To discuss a *ghazal* without proper reference to the social environment in which it was composed or the personality of the composer thus leaves a serious vacuum in any understanding of *ghazal-s*—even in a general sense. To add to this serious drawback, is the needless debate raised by the author over the relevance of a *sher* or *ghazal* to society. Owing to the omission of these important aspects of the *ghazal*, *Ghazal-Ek Adhyayan* has the contours of a simplistic essay devoid of any meaningful analysis.

—MADANLAL VYAS

ANCIENT INDIAN COSTUME: A History of Indian Costume from 321 B. C. to 850 A. D. by Roshen Alkazi, Art Heritage Books, New Delhi, 1983, Rs. 225.00 (*In English*).

Roshen Alkazi has been working as a costume designer on the Hindi and English Stage in Bombay and Delhi for about twenty-five years, and has also taught costume design for some time in the National School of Drama, New Delhi. As a designer, her costumes are noted for their simplicity of line, muted colour schemes, sparing but telling use of detail, and a marked preference for strong textures. It is only befitting that the source material she has assembled for her own use over the years should be put together in the form of a book. Previous books on Indian costume were written by generalist art historians who had no specialized knowledge of the design aspect of costume; nor were they familiar with the practical basics of style and tailoring—areas in which Roshen Alkazi is an acknowledged expert. This work can, therefore, be considered the first definitive work on Indian costumes.

The book is divided into five chapters, of which the first, on the post-Vedic period 600 B.C.—323 B.C., is just three pages of text without any illustrations. Four longish chapters divided periodwise follow: Mauryan and Sunga periods (321 B.C.—72 B.C.); Satavahana (Andhra) period (200 B.C.—250 A.D.); Kushan period (130 B.C.—185 A.D.); Gupta period (early 4th century A.D.—middle 8th century A.D.). Each of these four chapters includes: a brief social history of the period, notes on important people and events, on costumes, headgear, hairstyles, jewellery, military costume, religious persons, textiles and dyes, and a concluding note on the visual style of the plastic arts of the period. For instance, the note on the art of the Mauryan period says, "The drapery hangs in heavy folds and the jewellery is massive and somewhat coarse. Turbans coil and twist with the hair to form protuberances, . . . the head veils of the women are voluminous; long beaded aprons and crossed scarves at the chest suggest fruitful abundance, and necklaces and strings with amulet boxes suspended on the breasts indicate a fear of the evil and dark forces around. Persian sophistication was felt only in the pomp and ritual of the Mauryan courts, as primitive influences were still very evident in the adornment and dress of the Indian people." This is a typical example of the text of the book which is precise, evocative, and informative without being pedantic. The text in each chapter one is prefaced by a map showing the territorial divisions of the period and is followed by a profusion of line drawings and black and white photographic plates. Each drawing and illustration is carefully documented, with an indication of the source, and there is a useful glossary of Sanskrit and other names for various garments, and not one but two indices.

For some reason, the extreme South has not been included in this study, although examples from Aihole, Pattadakal, Badami, Mahabalipuram and other South Indian centres are readily available. Perhaps this lacuna will be corrected in a future edition. An interesting feature of the book is that comparative examples are cited from fashions contemporaneous with that period from neighbouring areas like Central Asia and Iran. These show that even at that time there were a number of cross-influences and similarities in mode and dress between India and its neighbours. Another point which is highlighted is the persistence of older,

even archaic, fashions in presentday survivals, particularly amongst tribal and nomadic groups. A *choli* with a flap in front, as seen in Cave 1 in Ajanta, is still worn by certain communities in Punjab, and the same *choli*, without a flap, was worn by German tribes in the early bronze period and is still worn in North India, Baluchistan and Afghanistan. Examples of this sort could have been extended to Burma, Ceylon, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and other South-East Asian countries where variations of our ancient costumes have been adapted for local use.

The printing and get-up of the book is aesthetically and technically satisfying, with an elegant typeface and well-spaced layouts, but the line drawings are rather amateurish and not even consistent in style. The few colour plates are unfortunately of sculpture rather than painting. Instead, if no other material were available, at least the Ajanta paintings, or rather details of these paintings in colour would have conveyed a better idea of the colour spectrum, texture and textile details of at least one or two periods. Some examples of the style of cutting and joining the simple, stitched garments of the ancient period have been given. A few more would have been very useful. Additional material on the actual draping styles of various upper and lower garments could have been included since the majority of garments were draped. Information on the breadth and length of these garments would also help, as presumably these differed in various periods.

However, these are but minor shortcomings in a book which is such a splendid addition to the meagre library of works on Indian fashion and design. It is an essential reference work for fashion designers, costume designers in theatre, television and films, and illustrators.

—SHAMA ZAIDI

### Obituary

We record with deep sorrow the death of Karande Kochappa Suvarna (May 15, 1918—February 5, 1984), veteran Kannada playwright, director and actor and Assistant Director (Programmes) of the National Centre for the Performing Arts. Before joining the Centre, he was for several years Manager of the Shanmukhanand Fine Arts and Sangeet Sabha, Bombay. Closely associated with Films Division documentaries, he was a pioneer in advertisement films and spots in TV and Radio programmes. His varied experience of stage management and allied spheres of activity was an asset to the Centre, which is the poorer by this loss.

### Letter to the Editor

Madam,

The combined September-December 1982 issue of your Journal contained a review of *Raga Vyakarana* by Vimlakant Roy Chaudhury (translated from English into Hindi by Madanlal Vyas) for which I thank you on behalf of the late author who was the founder of our institution. Since the author has given all rights of his books to this institution, we consider it our responsibility to answer certain points raised in the review.

In the second and third para of the preface of the book, the author has drawn a simile between language and *raga*. He has compared "alphabets" to "notes" or *varna-s*; "words" to *pada-s* or musical phrases composed of notes and so on. He has further compared prose compositions with *alapa* and poetry with "songs" or *gat-s* (in case of instrumental music). But your reviewer seems to have missed the simile and interpreted *pada* as "words" instead of as musical phrases composed of "notes". Thus she has remarked:

"I am unable to understand this concept. Is it possible that something has gone wrong with the Hindi translation? ... But if Roy Chaudhury means what he says, he has grossly missed the point: *raga* is a musical entity independent of the word."

There is nothing wrong with the Hindi translation which was duly approved by the author. The original English text is as follows:

"Indian Raga melody is a superb creation to express certain feelings through the medium of music. It can be very well compared with another similar medium, the language. As language has alphabets, words formed by these alphabets and syntax to complete a sentence, so also has a Raga melody, musical alphabets known in Sanskrit as 'Varnas', words known as 'Padas' and syntax to choose and use such words or 'Padas' to form a musical composition. As there are essentially two types of language compositions viz. prose and poetry, bound by rhythm, metre and feet, so also in Raga melody there are two types of compositions viz. *Alapa* i.e., a rhythmic composition and songs or *gat-s*, that is, instrumental pieces bound by 'Chhanda' 'Tala' and 'Matras'.

"As the words 'honesty', 'goodness', 'cruelty' etc. are abstract nouns signifying some concepts implying certain qualities in living creatures, so also is a Raga a concept having certain qualities expressed through the choice of particular words or 'Padas' composed of notes in a particular way for each Raga. It is here that the rules of a Raga come in, and there are typical musical words or 'Padas' earmarked for each Raga so that the latter may remain different from many others. Such 'Padas' are put in various combinations to form various musical phrases belonging to that particular Raga and the composition is made complete by virtuosi according to their individual artistic and aesthetic sense of diction, to express their inner feelings according to their mood through Raga

melody. This grammar deals with the rules to form 'Padas', phrases, and syntax to combine them into a particular Raga composition."

Your reviewer has expressed surprise that the *raga*-s described in this book are not in conformity with the works of Subba Rao, Bhatkhande and Kaufmann. In this connection it may be stated that the author had consulted a large number of books and ustads and formed his own opinion on the basis of his experience as a musician. This book is an original work and not a mere copy of other books. Hence it is not surprising that some of the *raga*-s do not fall in line with those in the works of others.

Regarding the remark, "The short Glossary includes familiar and unfamiliar terms which could have been explained more clearly", it may be stated that the author has a separate book, *Bharatiya Sangeet Kosh*, also published by Jnanpith, which is exclusively devoted to terminology. In the Glossary of the present book the author has only dealt with those terms which meet the bare needs of this book. As regards the term "Mahatva Darshan", your reviewer's assumption is correct.

Regarding your reviewer's remark, "*Raga*, however, is described at some length but haphazardly", it may be stated that the same view may not be held by all readers.

The reviewer's statement, "Some *raga*-s come under a double heading: Kamod is mentioned as a variety of Kalyan and has also a group of its own which is confusing," is not correct. Kamod Kalyan is a variety of Kalyan and has been grouped accordingly. The *raga*-s Karun Kamod, Hem Kamod, Gopi Kamod and Shree Kamod are varieties of Kamod and have been grouped with the common Kamod, that is Shuddha Kamod.

The remark, "The time of performance is not in *prahara*-s but in accordance with the Indian Standard Time which will obviously create problems for those who perform our *raga*-s in other parts of the world", is unfounded. A *raga* suitable for performance at 9 p.m. of Indian time in India will also be suitable for performance at 9 p.m. in U.S.A. For that purpose no calculations will be necessary.

Some aspects of the book have, however, been praised by your reviewer for which we thank her.

Subhas Chanda,  
Principal,  
Imdadkhani School of Sitar,  
Calcutta.

## Record Reviews

BEGUM AKHTAR: Thumris. Sawan. Ghazals.  
MUSIC INDIA 2393 924

MALINI RAJURKAR: Pure Classicism at its best. Side One: Raga Jaunpuri. Side Two: Raga Chandrakauns—Bageshwari Ang.  
HMV ECSD 2933 (Stereo).

PT. RASIKLAL ANDHARIA: Reflections from Kirana Gharana. Side One: Raga Lalit. Side Two: Gorakh Kalyan.  
EMI ECSD 2938 (Stereo)

USTAD LATAFAT HUSSAIN KHAN: Side One: Raga Miyan-Ki-Todi. Side Two: Raga Gara-Kanada.  
MUSIC INDIA 2393 923

CHHAYA GANGULI: Bhakti-Sudha (Bhajans in Hindi)  
EMI ECSD 2941 (Stereo)

USTAD ALI AKBAR KHAN: Sarod. Side One & Two: Bageshree-Kanada.  
EMI EASD 1419 (Stereo)

BRIJ BHUSHAN KABRA: The Evening Mood (Guitar). Side One: Raga Shri. Side Two: Raga Maru Bihag, Raga Maand.  
EMI ECSD 2937

HIMANGSHU BISWAS: Flute. Side One: Raga Maru Bihag. Side Two: Raga Durga, Bhairavi Dhun.  
MUSIC INDIA 2393 926 (Stereo)

Begum Akhtar's disc merits pride of place in this batch of releases, and for many reasons. Firstly, it enshrines the kind of music which, alas, may not be heard again. Begum Akhtar's music had the stamp of an age, a tradition and prodigious talent. Secondly, the disc is a "posthumous" release, issued almost a decade after her death. Thirdly, the repertoire is a reproduction from the tapes preserved in AIR's archives. Even so, the tonal quality sounds surprisingly good, though one must confess that the Begum's voice heard here is not at its hypnotic best. But the charisma remains. Mark, for instance, her innate ability to shape the sensitive expressions of her songs into apt musical moulds—be it a *thumri* or *sawan* or *ghazal*. They come to us like the utterances of a deeply moved soul. This is specially true of the music on Side Two.

Music India has done well to provide on the disc's cover-jacket the texts of the compositions. The name of the artiste, who lends such superb *sangat* to the main singer, should have been mentioned. In a sense, that is not surprising, since there is no biographical note about Begum Akhtar either on the cover-jacket.

Malini Rajurkar ranks high among the younger generation of Hindustani vocalists whose eclectic approach shows a happy blend of the traditional and new.



She sings the *raga*-s Jaunpuri and Chandrakauns with typical aplomb, investing them with all the melodic and rhythmic virtues one has come to expect in her musicianship. The Bageshree-based Chandrakauns is a 'tricky' melody not much in vogue and Malini's skill can be instantly recognised through the practised ease with which she moulds the complex tonal substance of the *raga*.

Equally delightful are Rasiklal Andharia's depictions of the *raga*-s Lalit and Gorakh-Kalyan. Their unfolding reveals many felicities of tone and style, often reminiscent of Ustad Amir Khan. But there is no mindless imitation of the maestro. This is quite an achievement particularly for one who is basically a self-taught vocalist and has evolved a style of his own through relentless *riyaz*. There is greater emotional depth in Lalit than in Gorakh-Kalyan since its modal structure holds a greater appeal for me.

Listening to Latafat Hussain Khan's disc, however, evokes a mixed reaction. The late Ustad Faiyaz Khan was undoubtedly one of the greatest musicians of this century and no maestro enriched the Agra *gharana* as he did. Latafat Hussain is regarded by the votaries of the *gharana* as one of the most authentic exponents of the Ustad's *gayaki*. To this reviewer, his latter-day concerts seem to be stilted, even doctrinaire versions of the maestro's music. The disc under review is a case in point. Without doubt, both the *raga*-s, in point of form, design, structure and general treatment, carry the veteran's touch. But physical vigour often gets the better of musical expression. Besides, Sultan Khan's sarangi frequently intrudes and tends to act as an irritant.

Finally, one wonders if Music India has decided to give up the practice of providing biographical information about artistes. As in the case of the Begum Akhtar disc, the cover-jacket of Latafat Hussain's disc makes no mention of the artiste's musical lineage and other important data. Even the technical details of the repertoire are missing. Incidentally, the paper-wrapper used for the disc within the jacket is so poorly pasted and its quality is so fragile that it begins to tear even as one tries (with due care) to take the disc out. The printing of the cover jacket is also far from satisfactory.

The young singer Chhaya Ganguli and composer Jaidev share the honours for the music heard on the "Bhakti-Sudha" disc. One is at once struck by the sheer artlessness with which Chhaya has woven charming musical vignettes around the content of her lyrics. There is a subtle blend of poetic feeling and musical sensitivity in all the themes. Above all, her singing is utterly free of 'filmi' flavour with its familiar touches of sentimentality. The tunes based on classical modes communicate a feeling of sombre dignity.

Ali Akbar Khan is not just the unquestioned master of the *sarod*. He is also the doyen of the instrumentalists of our time. His music has many unique facets: that characteristically moving strain which marks his playing; the element of humility which accompanies it and engulfs the listener even without his knowing it. These elements in his music place him in a class by himself and are expressed in all their naturalness in his exploration of Bageshree-Kanada. This is a *raga* seldom heard nowadays. It demands a tremendous capacity for visualisation and keen insight into the subtleties of its composite structure. But in the hands of

this maestro, the exposition emerges as a masterpiece of melodic portraiture and generates in its unfolding a serene and delicate feeling. The *alap* and *jod* are evocative, the *jhala* clear and powerful and the *gat* movements sustained, fluent and precise. Mahapurush Mishra on the *tabla* lends ideal support. Geoffery Lipner, an American disciple of the Ustad, deserves to be congratulated for his sensitive yet erudite sleeve-note.

Brij Bhushan Kabra's guitar versions of the *raga*-s Shri and Maru-Bihag and the lighter Mishra Maand substantiate, once again, his claim to apprenticeship with Ali Akbar Khan. He has shown originality and virtuosity in adapting the Western guitar to the requirements of our melodic system. One has only to listen in order to be convinced that Kabra's Indianised guitar, despite its relatively limited range, does lend itself naturally to tonal and rhythmic sequences of a wide variety. The overall impact may not be as abiding as that of the sarod. But there is no departure from the traditional concept of instrumentation and no compromises in intonation in relation to the basic character of our music. All these aspects of Kabra's playing are seen to advantage in this disc. The *raga* Shri projects a well-knit, cohesive picture. His approach is thoughtful and his treatment of the *raga* is marked by cautious diversity. Equally satisfying is the Maru-Bihag *gat* for the beauty of the *bandish* and rhythmic elegance. The concluding Mishra Maand retains a charming folk flavour. Kashinath Mishra ably accompanies on the *tabla*.

Himangshu Biswas's expositions in Maru-Bihag and Durga, with a tail-piece in Bhairavi, are pleasing to hear on account of their methodical presentation. There is no pretence, nor flights of imagination. The Bhairavi *dhun* is perhaps the best number. (By the way, one is intrigued by the sequence *ma, ga-re-ga*, which, though alien to *Maru-Bihag*, punctuates the opening portion of the melody).

—MOHAN NADKARNI

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WYNTON MARSALIS  
CBS 10067 (Stereo)

Wynton Marsalis is an unusual jazz musician and classical trumpet player. He played Joseph Haydn's Trumpet Concerto with the New Orleans (his home town) Philharmonic when he was fourteen and the Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 at the age of sixteen. After two years he joined the legendary Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Today, the 22-year-old Wynton leads his own jazz group, apart from being a member of the fabulous V. S. O. P. II with Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams. With veteran Dizzy Gillespie, Jon Foddie and a rejuvenated Miles Davis, Wynton Marsalis has joined the ranks of the topmost echelon of trumpeters in jazz.

Marsalis personifies the new generation of American jazz musicians who derive inspiration from and are influenced by the traditions established by the great masters. They demonstrate the vitality of this powerful musical culture.

For instance, Wynton combines the *gharana*-S of Louis Armstrong, Clifford Brown, Fats Navarro, Miles Davis, Don Cherry into a new "Wynton Marsalis *gharana*" to become an influence of his own.

Nothing of the technical nature stands in his way — he is as fluent and agile as he is exciting and imaginative. For this reviewer, however, Wynton Marsalis is at his very best when he improvises and explores in the lowest register of his horn. He can do that perhaps better than any of his contemporaries.

It is a matter of much satisfaction that an LP of this unique young musical genius is released in India.

Also received:

GREATEST LOVE THEMES OF THE 20TH CENTURY: Ferrante & Teicher  
EMI/CAPITOL LU 27327 (Stereo)

MY FAIR LADY: Original Sound Track Recording  
CBS 10034 (Stereo)

NEBRASKA: Bruce Springsteen  
CBS 10059 (Stereo)

—NIRANJAN JHAVERI

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