CHAPTER - IV
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It is possible to present the infinite variety of the world, in an innumerable number of forms (Rupa).

They can be ever new, (Naveena) as also endless (Ananta).

-Bharatha's Natyashastra.

The language of the theatre signifies everything that can be manifested and expressed on the stage, and that is communicated first of all to the senses in terms of sound, music, gesticulation and dance, instead of being addressed primarily to the mind as the language of the words.

The text of a play, if transformed into the medium of music and dance, it emphasises the fact that drama is not cereberation but celebration. Music, as ordinarily comprehended, is not a part of every play. If the term is extended to include all patterned sound, namely, the voice of the actors, songs, instrumental music, and sound effects, it becomes a significant component in every production and imaginative reading of a play.

A play becomes a work of dramatic art only when the print is converted into action and sound. Although the meaning of words remains constant, their implications can be varied considerably by the voice of the speaker. For instance, by shifting the point of emphasis from one word to another, or by altering the tone from anger to sarcasm, to question to wonder, numerous shades of meaning
can be imparted to so simple a statement as, "you say she told him". So the actor must give appropriate emphasis, and show relevant tonal mark if we are to interpret the play properly.

Voice should be appropriate to character. The man who plays Sir Thomas More in A Man for All Seasons should speak in a quiet, thoughtful manner. Hence an actor with a voice that is either deep or soft would be most ideal. In comedies, it is very important for voices to match parts. For example, it would be difficult to imagine Lady Bracknell in The Importance of being Earnest with a high-pitched voice or Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Twelfth Night with a hearty, deep one.

In tragedies too, voice matters more. A Hamlet with a slow heavy voice might bring out the brooding elements, but would be less suited to the playful aspects of the character. Similarly, an actor with a rich, romantic voice could do justice to the poetic side of Macbeth, but might be less appropriate in portraying the character’s ruthless side. A comprehensive understanding of the totality of the character may enable the performer to suit the voice to the word and the word to the action.

In the absence of specific guidelines to actors in parentheses as regards dramatising appropriate gestures, moods, and emotions in tune with scenic demands, a dramatist like Shakespeare seeks special means to instruct the players in general. For instance, with the arrival of the players, Hamlet wants the ‘Gonzago play’ to be performed by them. As his purpose is to probe the king in the scene of Gonzago’s murder, he takes care in instructing players so that the
total effect of the Gonzago-play may be brought to bear upon the king. So warns them against exaggeration of feelings on the stage:

:for in the very torrent, tempest, and - as I may say - whirl wind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O! it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, . . . I would have such a fellow whipped for o’er doing. . . . (3.2.4-10)

Instead of whipping the actors for over doing on the stage, the dramatists of the later centuries, unlike Shakespeare, have resorted to built-in dialogue directions which assisted the performers to avoid exaggeration. Currimbhoy uses parentheses before the commencement or during the course of the conversation, to set off a parenthetical element that contains references to emotions, voice modulation, and actions which are expected of every actor in response to his level of participation in the scene concerned. For instance, the principal character in The Clock seeks financial help from Joe:

HENRY [ speaking on the phone ]: Hello . . . is that you, Joe? . . . Surprised? . . . Yes, you must have just got in . . . say, Joe, there was something I wanted to ask you . . . No, it’s not a loan I need or anything like that just now . . . I’ve got some products to sell which you might be able to take into your store . . . strictly on a

The afore-mentioned dialogue is an evidence for telephonic conversation where a brisk change of intonation matters most and to affirm the reality of the situation, Currimbhoy makes Henry simulate the responses of the man on the receiving end in the course of his speech which is punctuated with a series of interrogations, affirmations and negative equivalents. A performing artist can accurately and appropriately manifest an array of emotions or change the tempor-rhythm in speech provided that the dramatist helps him with parenthetical remarks.

Presentation of a telephone conversation on the stage has its own constraints, for the director cannot show the listener or present his voice on the stage. It could be possible with dual sets and a sophisticated light and acoustic arrangement, but Currimbhoy takes different route in The Clock to signify the
listener. In order to repeat the verbal responses of the listener, he makes the speaker change his speech rhythm in such a way that the viewers take the involvement of the listener for granted:

Dramatic language is nearly always far more energetic than 'ordinary speech', a difference caused by the concentration and intensity of the mode.

(Watson 15)

The dynamism of the language is intimately connected with the performing aspect of voice and its stress on action. Speech is music. Pronunciation on the stage is as difficult an art as singing. It requires training and a technique bordering on virtuosity. When an actor attributes sound to the living content of words, he evokes images and instils the inner vision of the dramatist in others. Therefore every actor must feel not only phrases and words, but also each syllable, and each letter. To make the process feasible and effective Currimbhoy specifies in parentheses appropriate tonal variation for every actor.

Prema in The Dumb Dancer analyses the reasons for Bhima’s insanity. While doing so, she narrates to Dilip how Bhima who considers himself the terrible son of Vayu is

afraid of none . . . [her voice tapers] . . . save himself.

[Then softly] But Bhima the man is also different from “Roudra-Bhima” the God. He did not kill, nor drink the blood of Duryodhana ... [Defiantly] I claim his
innocence . . . and his every thought of love and revenge . . . (1.2.24)

The dramatic medium makes allowance for every actor to change the whole gamut of feeling from the greatest joy to the depths of despair. In the last scene, Prema kills Sakuntala and proves herself as insane as Bhima. When Dilip calls her hysterical she retorts at once:

PREMA. [ voice low, shaking, appealing, then far away again]. Who is sane, Dilip, and who is not? Remember, I tried, Dilip. Really tried.
But it drew me closer instead of further . . .
Distraction reaches higher than sanity . . . Do you understand Dilip, why I cannot return now . . . (3.2.74 - 75)

As already indicated, words to an actor are not mere sounds, they are designs of visual images, and the best way to avoid mechanical acting, the mechanical rattling off the text of a role is to convert the images into reality which will result in effective communication. In The Doldrummers Rita becomes a prostitute, and Joe, her well-wisher, offers himself as another candidate, and the conversation runs as :

RITA. [ still unbelievingly ] You, Joe, You?

JOE. [viciously] "Et Tu Brute?" Et tu Brute! These are not mere words, RITA this is the proof

(1.2.62-63)
The prosaic expression of shock, "You, Joe, You?" is remodelled on a different key to imagistically refer to a proverbial saying about the "noble and valiant Brutus, "Ceasor's Angel" turning into a traitor, and that accounts for history repeating itself in the private lives of the doldrummers.

Yet another evidence as regards the significance of voice occurs when Liza describes Rita's adventurous efforts to rescue Tony from the sea. The essence of drama lies in action and if action is not shown but reported or narrated as seen in non-dramatic genres, the enthusiasm for theatre performances may flag. However, it becomes an inevitable process if the depiction of an event poses scenic challenges for the dramatist. Therefore, he sugarcoats the bland narration by cashing in on the potentials of voice which are an asset to the actor. Currimbhoy describes the scene:

The following morning Liza is talking excitedly to a bored-looking policeman. She is absolutely overwhelming in her narration and does not give the policeman a chance to put in a word edgewise.

(2.2.86)

Poor speech conceals emotions, thought, and its very plot owing to which the audience may begin to fidget, and that spells ruin for the play. One means of guarding against this is the use of adding clarity to the speech as well as extending the range of voice. In The Thorns on a Canvas Yakub invites Malti deliberately to see him in an indescribable embrace with Nafesa. Malti's eyes
open wide with shock and horror, and the verbal rendering of the shock effect emerges as follows:

MALTI. (at first speechless, then trembling, sobbing with humiliation and anguish and indignation.) Y . . . Y . . . You . . . You ! Yakub ! You! . . . H . . . h . . . how dare you! (Yakub looks at her gravely but does not reply).

You . . . You . . . called me at dawn here, now ... on purpose! (5.60)

A playwright, unlike a novelist, cannot tell us things directly; all he or she has to work with are the words the characters speak. Hence the dramatist gives each character a distinct manner of speech. For instance, Alphonso, in Goa, informs Senhora Miranda that he is leaving for good and it triggers off Miranda’s emotions:

SENHORA MIRANDA. (Realising he’s serious, finding herself having to change Positions earlier than expected) Leaving? (Her voice goes through a strange change). Leaving? No, no, Alphonso . . . You won’t leave. You had promised me you would’nt. Or that you’d take me along with you. Take me then . . . (sobbing) Just take me. (He is about to leave,
but she grabs him) No, stay a minute. Just a
minute. (1.2.40)

Maria's emotional outburst, which takes the form of repetitions,
interrogation, exhortations and negative statements, is meant to show her as
totally insecure, uncertain and perplexed. Another point of observation is that
Currimbhoy's female characters like Shakespeare's are equally dominant in
words and deeds. Among Prema, Rita, Malti and Razia, Maria scores the highest
priority, and that accounts for the dramatist giving her a distinctive manner of
speech. Alphonso blabbers drunkenly that he desires Rose. On the other hand
Maria says,

SENHORA MIRANDA. (soothingly) All in good time, you impatient
virgin. All in good time. We've got a lot of things to do first... to
improve on, you know, for I was always first... What was I
saying?... ah, yes, all in good time. It can't be today. It takes time,
but it gets nearer you come every time, so do not waste time...

.. (1.3.50)

Alphonso falls on his knees and instantly pleads: "Maria... Maria..." (1.3.51)

Miranda’s eyes appear satanic; and she looks exhausted through sheer victory.
Hence, she says,

Ah, that's the way I like to hear it. Maria. Maria.

Nothing else. But "Maria" Just Maria. Maria alone,
like when we're no longer formal. ... And I'm

Maria, without beginning or end... (1.3.51)
The repetitive use of distinctive and subtle patterns of expression characterises Maria's speech. To the dialogue the actor contributes his voice, and the movement of the voice is inseparable from the movement of the emotions which attribute life and force to the words. Such an actor, who has a wider and most distinctive intonation, is suitable on the stage because he clarifies the meaning for the listener. Therefore, Stanislavski insists that every actor must develop a tonal plan with the necessary perspective to attribute movement and life to a phrase. The speech that begins well ends well, if the dramatist provides the actor with a precise intonation by the particular arrangement of the text. It follows that if the actor overlooks the author's directive line which tells him how to deliver his dialogue significantly, his speeches may become clumsy and false.

For instance, in Goa the Portuguese Administrator and the Goan Nationalist are sitting on the porch outside the tavern, (adjoining the Bench-sitters) having a glass of beer. When Alphonso enters, they greet him:

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR. Hey! Come back and have your drink. (But ALPHONSO moves on. As he passes by each of them ...)

VICAR. Hello Alphonso. (Repeat)

OLDMAN. Hello Alphonso. (Repeat)

SMUGGLER. Hello Alphonso (Repeat ...) (23)

The directive note 'Repeat' is repeated in every utterance because he states in the parenthesis that the sound of genuine "hellos" is important for it is made to serve as a foil to the exaggerated bows of Alphonso when he makes the long
It is said that when we are in verbal intercourse on the stage, "speak not so much to the ear as to the eye" because intonation and gesture are inseparable. They spring from the same basis of feeling in the speaker (C. Stanislavski, Building a Character Trans. E.R. Hapgood. 118).

Entering the house of Senhora Miranda, Krishna throws the bloody knife on the table and tells her that Alphonso the "man with a terrible temper" (2.2.74) is no more. Miranda looks at the object incredulously, and as she stares at it, her eyes become large and frightened making her voice and gesture as expressions of fear and disbelief:

SENHORA MIRANDA. (Her hand holding the cross)

Wh . . . What are . . . What are you saying, Krishna? Wh . . . Why the . . . the Knife?

What . . . do you mean?

KRISHNA. (Quietly) I've killed him. I've killed Alphonso. I had to have her . . . before he.

She . . . is . . . mine. (2.2.74-75)

The vocal contribution of meaning to the understanding of the scene differs from actor to actor. While Maria's expressions of fear are truncated in nature, Krishna's is a quiet reply, the effect of which is greater than an impassioned stage speech.

In a play, the visual and the verbal reflect, and exemplify each other. Krishna sees Rose with a blind across her eyes, and he goes to her with his hands going up to her blind:
KRISHNA. (Shouting) TAKE IT OFF! TAKE IT OFF!

(His hands almost touch her face and the blind
across her eyes when he stops himself in mid-
air. Whisper) No . . . No . . . she's deaf . . . and
now she's blind, isn't she . . . (Whisper) Why
should I then tear off this blind? Why should I
face . . . myself . . . (Aloud) Senhora, I'll have
her . . . (2.3.90-91)

Krishna's tonal variations and contextual gesture are expressions of
tought and feeling that constitute his words. If we consider words as signs for
sounds, we must also regard them as signs for physical movement:

The tonal design of dramatic speech is founded
solidly on a concept of action . . . The real significance
of 'woman' or 'house' does not begin to emerge until
the utterance gives some intimation of the speaker's
personal feeling regarding that particular object, his
inclination to do something about it- to approach or
to avoid it, to extend its activity or to destroy it, to
sense it more fully or to cast it forth from the realm of
his experience. This kind of movement implicit in the
speaker's mind at the moment of uttrance is reflected
in a vocal colouring which affects the sound of the
word. Therefore, we say, in general, that human
voice tones are connected with the sense of muscular
tensions. They are Kinaesthetic. (qtd. in Styan 99)

The success of radio drama depends on the sound of a voice which has the
power to kindle the listener's motor imagination, to stimulate him to reproduce
imaginatively some muscular activity. There is some detachment about the
effect. On the contrary, a drama on the stage reaches the audience on its own
terms of intimacy. Stage drama depicts its meaning strongly in physical terms.

An example of how dialogue lends itself to more intense physical
expression is felt in The Hungry Ones. Al desires to destroy the meditative
power of Ramesh. He wants to make him fall on his knees and weep. Hence he
proceeds to sexually assault Razia through no desire or ill-will, but merely to
show his superiority over Ramesh. Razia screams as Al tears open her bed-sheet,
but Ramesh remains unperturbed. Finally, when Al flings her on the bed, the
shadow of a third person falls across the room. It is Sam:

SAM. (his face coolly ferocious, a giant of a man, his
hands clutching and Unclutching, immense
physical force and anger building within). Lie,
on her, Al, and I'll kill you. I'll Kill you, you
swine, whether you do it through lust, or lack
of intent. (8.50)

He catches hold of Al, and flings him across the room, and then clutches
him by the throat and squeezes him. For Currimbhoy, gesture is a precise and
powerful expression. When he wishes to convey the deeper and inarticulate
feelings of the characters, the two Americans, for instance, in *The Hungry Ones*, he gives them action rather than speech. Sam and Al visit the hovels of Calcutta, and see along the footpaths, rows upon rows of maimed and deformed beggars and when they go to the last man:

[Sam and Al let out a cry and approach the man victoriously . . . As they touch him, the man slumps, lifeless . . . They catch him by the hair, and twist his head to catch the lamplights flare, a mute dead face, lean and gaunt . . . ] (3.38)

A harmonious composition of the visual and the verbal elements creates the stage picture. When Sam and Al offer Razia the food they have earned by means of hard work, she hesitates whereupon,

SAM. (shouting) No! No! you will have to take now!

You have no choice; it was earned with our blood. Same as his! Take it! (inspite of herself, Razia approaches, stretching out her hand; softly) . . . we've learnt Razia . . . now we are one of you . . . (her hand touches the sack of food grain which she takes with tears in her eyes... (53)

The performing aspect of drama takes it closer to other technology based media such as cinema, television and radio. Yet it does have distinctive features of its own. Voice is indispensable for a stage actor while a film actor, owing to
dubbing, does not require voice, for dialogue is added later. An expressive face is the greatest asset and it serves as means of communication for the film actor, whereas voice and the body language give a rare distinction to the stage actor.

The aural aspects of a play include the effect of musical instruments. The authors of Greek tragedy and Comedy, for instance, expected that the choral passages would be sung and danced and that the rest of the portions of the plays would be sung or chanted to musical accompaniments. The Italian dramatists too showed a similar inclination in the composition of comedies. Songs and instrumental music were conspicuous in many of Shakespeare’s plays, and the melodramas of the 19th century made use of musical scores to enhance mood and atmosphere much as the film does today.

The earliest commentaries on dramaturgy postulate that a production lacks colour and vitality without music and that every dramatic situation can be made lively by it. Bharatha states in his treatise that instruments are the very bed of a performance. Accordingly, many Sanskrit dramatists included songs because they delighted the hearts of the audience and established the emotional continuity of the plays.

Therefore, specific types of melodies and kinds of rhythms were designed by various dramatists for every entrances and exits, for separation of lovers, for fatigue, for peace that follows anxiety, for debaucherous thoughts, for enhancing a mood already introduced, and even for a type of song that was kept in reserve for filling up a gap or mishap in the production. Following the classical drama, a
majority of modern plays incorporated this ancient aesthetic principle. Currimbhoy's plays confirm this observation.

The Kathakali dance sequence in the exposition scene of The Dumb Dancer bursts forth in a blaze of sound: "The sound consists of the full orchestral effect of drums, cymbals and gongs as used in the battle scene of the play" (1.1.11). Instrumental music is essential for Kathakali because the dancers hardly speak, except for an occasional shrill cry, only the musicians who stand at the back beating gongs and cymbals sing the poetic stanzas into the ears of the performers describing their actions and advising them to make sure of significant movements: "Kathakali is a pantomime, and especially trained singers and musicians provide the documentary for the dance play" (2.1.25).

Generally the musical instruments for performing Kathakali and Bharathanatyam are similar with regard to the clatter of drums. But Currimbhoy requires a "special type" of drum (2.1.26) to create a mood of violence and insanity when the character performs Kathakali.

Kathakali is extraordinarily virile unlike Bharatanatyam which is essentially a woman's art. In other words, it is masculine in its force and impact:

Its actions are bombastic and exaggerated, its pace grandiose with huge leaps and jumps and even moments when the dancers leap into the air and plunge down on the floor with their legs stretched in a full split. (Faubion Bowers 44)
In the Dumb Dancer, towards the end of the play, Dilip leaves the amphitheatre after the autopsy. Prema approaches the table, and uncovers the sheet on the corpse, and puts on it, the mask of Duryodhana:

Her form recedes into the darkness, and suddenly to the sound of battle drums and the wail of the conch shell, we find Bhima leap clear into the amphitheatre from the darkness and near the table where the corpse lies... (3.2.72)

To represent violent and agitated physical movements, as seen in the dance of Bhima, the dramatist has made use of a wild musical score. In the use of musical instruments for Kathakali, Currimbhoy deviates from the conventional forms. The Production Notes emphasise

Normally in Kathakali, the string and wind instruments are not used, but in this case it will be necessary to give the fantasy impression... (2.2.47)

Therefore, there is instrumental music when an under-water scene is created on a semi-transparent curtain covering the stage. It gives the spectators an impression that this is purely Bhima’s world of make-believe and not anybody else’s. The musical accompaniment harmonises with the development of the scene.

In The Doldrummers the guitar, a western musical instrument, which forms a part of Tony, sets the mood of the play. Music brings the lovers together drawing a close parallel to the opening line in Twelfth Night, “If music be the
food of love, play on”. Tony’s romantic inclination finds an outlet when he strums the guitar. He admits to Rita that he hears music when they kiss.

In The Doldrummers music forms the mode of expression and communication. Tony is found singing in the beginning of the play:

There’s a magnetic aspect to his singing. It’s raw. He beats his guitar, strums, hums, talks and yells. It’s not “rock”, and it’s certainly not Victor Sylvester. It’s something quite original to him, but he makes the mood and meaning felt,... (10)

Tony has chosen for the song one of the then current film hit tunes, but has improvised on it with his own variations. As the song comes to an end, Rita claps enthusiastically, and regards the song as wonderful. The mood is one of romance, but soon it changes into cynicism when Joe snatches the guitar from Tony, and starts to plonk on it.

The song which begins with an emotional concord between individuals, namely, Tony and Rita, makes a sudden leap into the public life which is beset with religious encounter between two sects of believers - the austere and the profane.

Currimbhoy is closer to Shakespeare in the use of songs for they are meant to express the dramatist’s attitude to life. That the dropouts live like a rudderless ship in the ocean of life is conveyed through the song found in the play.
Amien's song 'Under the Green Wood Tree', in Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' extols virtue and happiness that one sees in the country side. Hence those lines end on a note of hope:

Come hither, come hither, come hither:

Here shall he see no enemy . . .

But winter and rough weather.

On the opposite, Joe's song in The Doldrummers reveals the existential predicament of man. Equally the duet song by Tony and Joe expresses man's search for identity and meaning in the following lines:

We two

Sit and puke

Don earmuffs

Play Blind - man's - buff

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

We'll eat atoms for break fast

Hydrogen for Lunch

And when it's time for dinner

We'll chase gals like the old sinner

So why worry,

Make haste in a hurry,

For when you get there,

You'll only meet a shaggy old bear (1.2.42-43)
Currimbhoy's songs contribute to the effect of the play. But one has to honestly admit that they do not have the brilliant flights of fancy, sweetness, melody, magical charm, rhythmic grace, brevity and speed of development which characterise Shakespeare's songs. Music is not only an art with its own laws and values, but also a social fact for the Elizabethans. Shakespeare uses instrumental music on socially appropriate occasions to represent the voice of the world and also as an auditory image of the magical and supernatural world. The masque in Much Ado about Nothing and in The Tempest are examples for the former while Antony and Cleopatra is a good example for the latter. We come to know that Enobarbus has deserted Antony and the scene which follows introduces supernatural music which announces to the common soldiers that the God, Hercules, whom Antony loved has now deserted him.

The effect of this is to make us see that the human characters who act as agents of power are being either assisted, or undone by the power above. No such supernatural intervention is seen in the case of Currimbhoy’s world of music. Music, vocal or instrumental, adds to the realism of human emotions. The orchestral effect in The Dumb Dancer contributes to the ferocity and the excitement of the characters who are involved in re-enactment of the battle scene in The Mahabaratha.

The music of a single instrument, guitar, is comparatively pitched on a lower scale in The Doldrummers for it serves as a substitute to the verbal act. Tony plays the guitar all the time, and he comes to Rita without her having to call out to him: "That’s 'cause I hear music when we kiss" (1.1.12) says Tony.
On several occasions, even a single stroke on the guitar, followed by gesture, translates the meaning of the situation to the listener. Joe asks Tony as to what kind of tickle would amuse Liza. Tony replies by making a hot strum on the guitar, and "then starts blowing on his fingers as though it had caught fire" (1.1.19). Tony does not just play the guitar but uses the medium to complement his verbal expressions.

Thorns on a Canvas begins with a fast tempo of music within a short curtain call. A group of musicians are practising individually almost off-key like solitary instruments in an orchestra testing and turning before the collective performance commences: "There is the variable sound of TABLA tapping, the full instrumental scale of the SARANGI, interrupted sounds of singing" (1.9) marking the quick movement of the artists busily engaged. As the scene develops, the individual variations get reconciled to a uniform and harmonious action which of course evinces a mechanical, unemotional, and repetitive character. Throughout the play, music adds to the mature understanding of the nature of art.

The play attacks the autocracy of the state patronage which treats a panorama of artists as mechanical toys. As against this institutionalised tyranny the playwright introduces masterpieces of individual performance which assert the truth that they can only be fashioned within oneself. The play shows a street scene where a man is seen playing with an empty kerosene tin which he fashions into a form of drum and begins to play on it as though it were a tabla. It is an invitation for Yakub to become the "Street singer begging for alms" (4.55). He is
a Qawali singer, and when he sings, his voice comes to life rapturously flowing like mighty passions to find relief. Currimbhoy introduces a song from the great nineteenth century Urdu poet Ghalib. As there is no precise English literal translation, and the meaning lies in the language (Urdu) which has great appeal, the playwright insists that "the singing must therefore be in Urdu, to the accompaniment of the TABLA and the HARMONIUM" (55).

Music, when sung or enacted on the stage, transcends the barriers of language. On the contrary, if it is to be read on page, the readers may feel indebted to the dramatist, if he gives the translated version of the song in a language which is relatively common to many. Currimbhoy satisfies the need of the audience by resorting to the technique of transliteration to describe the song:

"Agar tujh ko hai, yakeen ejabat dua ne mang
yanee begair yek dilay bay mud duat ne mang."

"IF THOU BE SURE OF GOD THY PRAYER TO GRANT,
THEN ASK FOR NAUGHT BUT A HEART WITHOUT A WANT".

.........................................................(4.55)

"Dil hee toh hai no sang vah khash dartd sai
bhar ne ayai quein
Roaingay hum hazar bar koey hamain setaay quein."

"LEAVE ME, OH! LEAVE ME ALONE, AND LET ME WEEP,
WHY SHOULD I NOT WEEP ?
WHY SHOULD SUPPRESS MY TEARS ?
I AM NOT MARBLE OR STONE; AM NOT WOOD;
I HAVE A TENDER HEART (4.57)

Yakub sings through the long magical hours of the night. As the performance progresses, the frenzy of pure involvement overtakes the group of the Qawali gathering which acknowledges the greatness of the singer by giving him money in notes and coins:

As the feeling of HAAL (A Self-induced hypnosis through rapport with the singer and musicians) grows, there is even more . . . THE CLAPPING OF HANDS AND THE SOUND OF COPPER COINS THROWN . . . in adoration of the singer and commemoration of his intense feeling. (4.56)

It is a mood indescribable in any other language or manner, and the dramatic impact of it is forceful even to an "uninitiated (theatre) audience" (56). Hence the dramatist insists on singing in Urdu. And the verses are often repeated in impelling cadence, sung and resung over and over again, till it casts the spell of Qawali singing which alone can convey the action to follow. Brecht treats music as an alienating device.

In the epic theatre, music does not portray a psychological state or the subjective interpretation of a situation. It always communicates an attitude and shows social gestures. Brecht uses songs for several dramatic purposes. They expound the major themes of the play, comment upon incidents and interpret the action.
'The song of the Shelter', in scene 10, in *Mother Courage and Her Children*, serves as an example of the dramatic function of song in the epic theatre. The song sung by an anonymous voice from within a farm house, stands for security and pride of possession. The house holder’s situation is contrasted with that of Mother courage and her daughter, who listen to it in silence while wandering homeless. Once Mother courage has given up the offer of a home in Utrecht and Kattrin realises, she can never have a home of her own. The song thus shows the social life of the haves and have-nots. Similar to the role of a chorus in classical tragedy, songs in Brecht’s plays move from particular situation to general situations.

Currimbhoy on the other hand, does not treat songs as interruptive devices in a dialectical relation to the dramatic action which is immediately preceding or following. Songs are meant to discharge emotions or even to illustrate the text:

> When the appeal of music in Goa is significant, for the dramatist assigns a specific kind of melody to depict the state of drunkenness. When the play begins, there has been a young girl sitting on the balcony and a young man standing on the patio looking up to her. "In the house, underneath the balcony there is the sound of a gramophone playing. Occasional laughter of a male and female
voice, the clink of glasses mixed with drunken
‘hushes’... “(1.1.15)

It is followed by the Portuguese Administrator’s description of Goa before
the take-over. Goa is a place which characterises a peculiar meeting point of
cultures, religions and a different political attitudes. But one gets the feeling that
this curious imbalance cannot last, however beautiful it is. And to predict the
same, the Smuggler is shown playing on the harmonica. The sound of this
mouth organ brings about a break in the pensive mood of the speaker.

Similarly, when the Vicar and the Goan Hindu try to pull each other to
their mode of worship the Smuggler plays on the harmonica:

   VICAR. And when will you come to my church, 
         brother . .

   GOAN HINDU. I’ll worship from outside, father.

   VICAR. Why from outside?

   GOAN HINDU. My temple father. You built your
         church on it.

   VICAR. What do you mean?

   GOAN HINDU. (Pointing to the foundations of the
            Church) See the Foundation stone of the
            church father? Look closely. That ancient
            carved motif is the lotus flower, and my God’s
            symbol. That was my House of God . . .(1.2.21)
If religion is a matter of positive emotional attitude and thought, the Smuggler is sane, while the rest are insane and to convey the attitudinal insanity of the people around him with respect to nationalism and religion, he "giggles like a baboon and plays madly on the mouth organ" (1.2.22). Despite his musical efforts to make people realise their narrow outlook, the religious differences continue. The vicar, yet another time, makes request "When are you going to come into my church, son?" (2.1.56) and the reply from the Goan Hindu, as usual, is "But tell me, Father, why don’t you come to my temple?" (2.1.56). The Smuggler comprehends the futility of his attempts and yet "plays the mouth-organ once again, desolately" (2.1.56). The theme of the play finds its equivalence in the sound of the mouth-organ. The dramatist expresses that inter-religious love is still a distant vision. Krishna loses his innocence and peace by murdering Alphonso. Unable to cope with the consequences of having lost the mighty principles of love and non-violence and also upon hearing the sound of the mouth-organ, he sinks in the shadows. The strains of the macabre music played by the Smuggler stand as an objective correlative to the moral degeneration of Krishna in particular and the prevalence of sexual opportunism in general.

In like manner, music serves as a metaphor for the basic message of hunger conveyed in The Hungry ones. In the streets of Calcutta, two Bengali’s, a man and a woman begin to perform "a monkey act": (26)

The woman now takes out a small drum from the bag. The drum is shaped like an hour-glass with tight
canvas-skin on either side and a couple of strings with striking objects which tap on the drum as it is twirled with wrist action: this drum is commonly seen in India with monkey-trainers who entertain the public and pedestrians around street corners to eke out a meagre living. (26)

The woman twirls the drum slowly with regulated tapping; and the man takes out his cap, drags himself on the pavement, like a deformed hungry beggar slapping his bare stomach, till the sound of his empty stomach sounds very much like the empty drum, inviting pity, revulsion and charity.

The sound of the drum is heard only once in the play. But whenever the idea of hunger and the means of earning one's food are indicated the mind takes recourse to the sound to interpret the meaning of the situation. The drum held by the Bengali woman reminds us of Lord Shiva whose dance signifies the essence of life. Tirumular's Tirumanthiram elaborates the purpose of the celestial never-ending dance of Shiva. It calls Him "Koothan" whose dance represents five activities - panchakritya. "They are Shrishti (creation), Sthithi (preservation), Samkara (destruction), Tirobhava (illusion), and Anugraha (salvation). These activities are symbolised in the idol of Nataraja. Creation arises out of the drum (Udukkai) held by Siva" (Lakshmi Vishwanathan The Cosmic dance of Shiva" The Hindu, Folio 13 Dec. 97).

The drum in the hand of the Bengali woman too represents life. Currimbhoy's application of drum as a familiar medium of sound to perform the
hungry act affirms the Indian sensibility, and enriches the receptivity of the Western audience in comprehending the meaning of the play.

Sound effects play an eminent role in Currimbhoy’s productions. There are two kinds of sound effects; one is actor-operation sound, and the other is, sound effects which are taped before hand and played during the performance. Door slamming, and doorbell ringing, are instances of the former which lend a sense of realism, while recorded sound effect brings about a feeling of make-believe.

In The Clock the conversation between Henry and Mary gets interrupted “by the ring of the doorbell. She goes, and opens the door” (20), and to their pleasant surprise Joe’s voice is heard. After the departure of Joe, Henry is left alone but he is interrupted again “by the arrival of the DOCTOR who taps on the door and walks in (27).

As against this actor-operation sound, we have the exaggerated tick-tock sound of the clock, which in order to remain audible throughout the play and increase to a maddening and deafening pitch at the end, has to be recorded in advance with the assistance of the sound operator who determines its volume levels and cue times. Surprisingly, these two sound-effects merge when “HENRY’S fist subconsciously begins to pound the table in synchronization with the clock’s ticking-first softly, then louder and harder until the volume reaches a crescendo” (44). Unable to bear the sound, Henry smashes the clock. Yet the audience hear its ticking sound even after the curtain closes.
fairly because the effects are taped beforehand and are played during the performance.

Another instance of the actor-operation sound effect is from The Dumb Dancer where Prema is shown in a possessive gesture while applying oil on the body of Bhima after he completes his dance rehearsal in her office in the mental asylum. The situation leads to physical intimacy and once Prema is conscious, she breaks away more from herself, than from him:

She almost runs over to her table and rings the bell.

The attendants take a minute to come, but she keeps on ringing with impatience and alarm. (3.1.53-54)

The attendants come, and leave with Bhima. The incident gets over. Yet it puts her in great tremble. It is then, she hears “a knock on the door” (3.1.54). The attendant enters and hands her a piece of paper. The content of the letter makes her inadvertently arrange her hair. While doing so, “the door opens again to admit” (3.1.54) the Guru and his young daughter. Apart from attributing sound effect, the opening and closing of doors by characters on the stage add to the dramatic and psychological interests of the play. If the mystery of a door is “to keep the heart in suspense” as stated by Christopher Darlington Morley in his essay On Doors (Representative Anthology Ed. Sundarraj 19) the actors, while performing significant actions, help us experience the same which adds to the psychological interest in the study of characters. It is stated that “The wise man always opens his door with humility and a spirit of acceptance” (148). Prema could accept the arrival of the Guru but she “looks hesitatingly” at the
"pretty young girl" (54) who accompanies him. Prema is taken aback on hearing that Bhima had looked upon Sakuntala as "Draupadi" (60). She becomes terribly jealous and the irrevocable tragedy occurs, thereafter, on account of Prema's uncanny involvement in the case history of Bhima.

In *The Doldrummers* the opening and closing of doors is hardly heard, for the action of the play takes within and around a shack which is made of thatched coconut-palm.

As the shack is situated near the Juhu Beach, there arises the need to create the impression of the sound of waves, "sometimes lulling, and at other times irritating in its intensity and monotony. The sea-breeze is similarly erratic either blows hard or is terribly still in consonance with the tides" (Production Notes). A sea on the stage can only be represented, and so its effects are through the application of sound tapes. A stage review which followed the Little Theatre Group's production of Currimbhoy's *The Doldrummers* in Delhi confirms the truth. Raha the reviewer, had observed,

The set (I.L.Das) was imaginatively designed and made good use of space. The director's (Popo Pruthi) heavy reliance on lighting, beautifully scripted and executed, was well placed. Why did he not requisition a few exhaust fans to suggest sea breeze and a tape for seashore sounds? (Rev. of The Doldrummers, by K.Raha)
The criticism helps us realize that background music is immensely helpful in the presentation of scenes and relations between director and musical director in this regard are very essential. Each must have ideas about the other's province and both must be satisfied if the production is to be a success.

The text of a drama if transformed into aural-visual images on the stage, its effect is tremendous. Of the two school boys who approach the "open house" of Rita to play the game of love, the first boy tells the second that he would like to ask Rita if she would be willing to take the place of Jean, his lady love, and simulate further as though they were married. Meanwhile, the boys sense the arrival of somebody. They scramble away "as though the devil were after them" (82). In the rush, the first boy's cap flies off. Rita who is standing at the window above them, within earshot, appears on the porch, takes the cap, brushes the sand off it, and looks at it in contemplation:*

She sighs, then gets her portable record-player . . .

which is a hand-winding 78 r.p.m. with a scratchy needle . . . and starts playing the song "pretending" vocalised by Nat King Cole. Now she enacts a pantomime to the melody, pretending to be the wife of the 1st school boy, a girl by the name of Jean. She does this with the help of the school-cap which represents the boy-husband, and on her part she performs the sacred rituals which to the boy would
represent the 'ideal-wife, starting with getting the
slippers, filling the pipe, etc., . . . (2.1.82-83)

Fantasying, as indicated earlier helps one realise unfulfilled needs and
desires of life. Rita's pretence of an ideal-wife to the 1st school boy is a vicarious
pursuit of marital intimacy with Tony. The theme of the song played on the
record-player forms the foreground to the pantomime for it joins action with
feeling. The use of pantomime explicates the meaning of drama to those who
experience linguistic obscurity or complexity. The Academy scene in Thorns on
a Canvas conveys the sense of pantomime owing to which "the actions seem
somewhat exaggerated" (1.10).

The Patron of the Academy removes a copper coin from his pocket which
he flings towards the gutter. Yakub, the bizarre young man, hears the sound
alertly like some trained dog, "and though he does not give the impression of
being a beggar, he quickly scurries on all fours to pick up the coin" (1.10). The
same action is repeated with an additional mode of actor-operation sound effect
in the second half of the play. The Qawali gathering gives Yakub money in notes
and coins as his vocal performance progresses. The melody grows ever more so
also the clapping of hands and the sound of copper coins thrown. At the end of
the song, Yakub rises:

In both his fists there are coins, of copper and silver
and gold . . . as he gradually falls to his knees, the
coins dropping from his hands, clattering from
pavement to gutter . . . (4.57)
His hands further loosen the currency notes which get scattered by the breeze, deliberately lost, at which he cries with bare outstretched hands, in an intensely tragic vision, for the sound of copper coins can never define the spirit of a true artist.

An allegorical play, like Goa, which blends the theme of human violation with political violation, foretells the disastrous events through the provocative forms of nature, the possibility of which rests on an intelligent manipulation of sound tapes. At the time of the invasion of Goa, the dramatist indicates that there is the ominous wind which blows hard, screaming and swirling the rain across the deserted patio.

Depiction of nature in her tooth and claws, in a closed auditorium, can only be done through contrived means. Even in the film medium, which makes provision for location shooting, the directors resort to artificial manipulations of sound and light energy, for the fierce forms of nature are unpredictable and are beyond the limits of personal experience. Therefore, “the still sad music of humanity” which is presaged through thunder and incessant rains in Goa emphasises the need for sound tapes. A similar situation arises in The Hungry Ones where, in the deep of night, Sam rolls restlessly in a state of delirium, and refers to incidents of Communal disharmony which appear real, “for outside there are in fact the real sounds of riot and arson, violence and rain . . .” (5.46). By ‘real’, one means not natural but artistic.

The secret of art is that it transforms a fiction into a beautiful artistic truth, and the moment we come to doubt the reality of the application of sound tapes
in the play, truth disappears and with it emotion and art. Theatre, as an aural-visual means of communication, ought to be conscious of space and time similar to that of other mass media, like newspaper, which is conscious of space, and of radio and Television which are conscious of time. In such contexts any action or sound, even as that of "door-bang", has to make a thematic contribution to the total comprehension of the play. Sam and AL carry a sack of food grains which was earned with their blood. Sam asserts "Now we're one of you . . . the brothers that you set to make out of us . . ." (10.53). Razia touches the grain in acknowledgement of the fraternal disposition of the Americans. But the irony of the situation is, love and friendship may arise between nations but not within a nation. Hence the contrast occurs between Razia who accepts human togetherness and the warring groups in the city who challenge the same by making a "sudden sound of door-bang outside" (10.53) signifying panic and communal agitation.

Furthermore, while considering the auditory effect of the plays, the device of chant deserves a special mention. In his interview to Commentary Currimbhoy says,

There is the mystical element in the human being that always drew me to the spiritual factor in life; I was not attracted to any one particular religion; I was attracted by all. . . . (1.3. Feb. 1976.48)

The Hungry Ones extols the month of Ramzan, the month of fasting, in memory of the prophet who suffered privations in the Arabian desert. The
beggars weep around, bare their breasts, beat themselves with chains, and cut open their flesh with knives, and undertake other self-inflicted torture, in tune with the practice in the Muslim month of Mohurrum chanting the glory of that "one man", "one man alone, not God, but his prophet" (41), who cleansed everyone through sacrifice and pain. The beggar raises his hands to his ears, and calls out:

"LA ILAHA ILLA'LLAH;

MOHAMMAD RASULA'LLAH" (3.41)

To counterbalance Islamic chanting, we have recitation from the Indian epics, The Mahabharatha and the Ramayana, and the essential philosophic treatises that form part of the Hindu religion. Ramesh reaches the hermitage of "the Rishis (Holymen)", and observes the disciples reciting from the epics, which helps him "meditate in yoga" (7.48) in order to be "noble and true" (8.50)

Chants, apart from the intended effect, religious or aesthetic, enable the dramatist to break the stylistic monotony of the prose play. In other words, the rhythmical effect of chants award the status of the verse play to a few of his production.

In this play Currimbhoy "makes a bold attempt to represent dramatically the highly abstract and abstruse metaphysical concepts of Hinduism" (Paul Verghese 166) which offers ample scope for a total theatre with elements of chant, dance, pantomime to create a dynamic sense of movement on the stage.

In Om the dramatist makes the chorus recite select passages from the Vedas and the Upanishads including the Gita to suggest revelations which
follow the development of character and thought. In the opening scene, Svetaketu is haunted by the fear of death, and questions the purpose of sacrifice whereupon the chorus recounts to him the glory of Agni, the god of fire:

CHORUS. Agni(fire) is in the earth, in the plants, the waters hold Agni, Agni is in the stones; Agni is within men, Agni is within cattle, within horses. Agni glows from the sky; to Agni, the God, belongs the broad air. The mortals kindle Agni, the bearer of oblations that loveth thee... (17)

The all-encompassing virtues of Agni are recited in the recurrences of rhythmic flow of sounds which forms frequent aspect of verse. Meter, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, are all based upon repetition:

... repetition has been deemed a basic principle in art, linked with variation, it exemplifies in the material of the work what is commonly sought as unity with variety in the spirit. (World Literary Terms 269)

The verses chanted by Madhu in The Dumb Dancer are from the Mahabharata which give most of the background to the incidents of the play. In this regard, Currimbhoy resorts to Dutt’s English translations which retains “much of the musical movements of the sonorous Sanskrit poetry”(2.1.27). Madhu recites “Draupadi’s plaint” in the Council Hall:
Here in glory, son of DHARMA, sits my noble righteous lord, Sin nor shame nor human frailty stains Yudhishtra’s deed or word, Silent all? and will no chieftain rise to save a woman’s life, Not a hand or voice is lifted to defend a virtuous life? Lost is Kuru’s rightful glory, lost is Bharat’s ancient name,

The recitation becomes a passionate fury or an impassioned oratory when Bhima, in “thundering accents, recites the Insult and Vow of Revenge:

May I never reach those mansions where my fathers live on high,
May I never meet ancestors in the bright and happy sky,
If that knee, by which thou sinnest, Bhima breaks not in his ire,
In the battle’s red arena with his weapon deathful, dire!”

Since the play emerges as a dance form, it requires oral text in terms of situations or themes. Therefore, they are uttered in the form of recitation, as is customary to poetry. Repetition lends an integral effect to the play.

Music is neither ornamental nor superfluous in the plays of Currimbhoy. It is functional. The “fast and furious” rhythmic patterns of Kathak are effectively comprehended when the accompanists mark time of the talas with sharp resounding palm-claps, chanting aloud:

“"ta thei tat thei ta thei tat thei thei tat thei - ta thei thei thei tat tat ta . . ."”

“"dha ta ka thunsa - dha ge di ge ta - dha din ta dhe tta kida dha ta hka thum ga taki tata ka - tita kata gani gana ta thei tat thei
Instead of focusing on Bhavas, moods, and the meaning of dance, in the exposition scene, the playwright highlights the foot work of the dancer, for sound and not sense, restraint and not freedom, which predominates the Academy of Art. Another instance of recitation occurs in The Clock where, for each progressive gong of the midnight, Mary, Joe, Doctor, Jean and the BOSS troop in silently, and form a ring-chain around Henry. At the end of the last gong, they recite together:

Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you,
Happy Birthday dear Henry,
Happy birthday to you,
Some one blows a horn. Another a Whistle. Then there is general pandemonium with Happy New Years and Kisses. (43)

The recitation and the gesture that accompany suggest that some treat celebrations of eventful moments, old or new, are a mere annual ritual. If there is no sweet concord of hearts or thoughts, life becomes a "general pandemonium".

In the Natyashastra, drama is described as a Drisya Kavya. Kavya refers to its literary aspect and Drisya stands for its visual attributes. As Kavya or literature is subordinate to Drisya, drama becomes a Rupaka, a visual medium beyond compare. Asian drama has remained more traditional and the repertoire more permanent than the theatre in the West because the emphasis is on how a
passage is acted and not on what is being acted. This is almost contrary to the Western conception of a theatre where the audience desire to hear and understand every word of the play:

And although the poetic element has determined the form of the play and the style of acting, it suffices in Asia to see how an old familiar story is being performed and what is being done on the stage rather than to hear what is being said and understand its meaning. (Faubion Bowers 23).

Currimbhoy's plays employs effective means and materials to he registers his communication with his audience. Of them, the spectacle of dance deserves a special mention for it is meant to express what is too deep and too fine for words. Among the four schools of Classical dance, Currimbhoy employs the entire repertoire of the South Indian dance-drama form, Kathakali, the second of the four schools, in The Dumb Dancer. Bharata Natayam and Kathak, the first and third of the dance schools appear in Thorns on a Canvas. One of the characteristics of Kathakali is, it draws its themes from the great and powerful Indian epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which afford an inexhaustible supply of incident, anecdote and plot situation suitable for innumerable drama and dance forms.

Accordingly, the dance-form in The Dumb Dancer makes use of an excerpt, Duryodhana's slaughter, from the Mahabharata, which forms a complete background to the main story. The Mahabharata has a unique place
among the Hindu Sastras in that it is encyclopedic in its sweep, for "one may find here", as the Epic itself puts it, "all that is to be found elsewhere; and one cannot find elsewhere what is not to be found here". Among the sacred books of India Maharbaratha is classified as Ithihaasa. A heroic story permeated with mythology is called Ithihaasa. Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* defines myth as

> . . . the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation. Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth." (3).

The function of mythology is "to magnify and allegorize the happenings in nature" (Swami Chidbhavananda.Introduction. *Ramayana* 4). The benign and malign are the two forces patent in nature and the conflict between these two is in evidence everywhere, whether it is in the mind of an individual or in the society in which he himself is an integral component. The good life is the central theme of the Dharmasastra.

The great proclamation that the Mahabaratha makes is, where dharma is, there is victory. Duryodhana insults Draupadi by disrobing her, and Bhima takes a vow of vengeance, and kills him in the final battle. The characteristic
concept of the Indian culture emphasises that indignity done to women brings ruin to the individual and the race.

Currimbhoy adapts the episode of Duryodhana’s slaughter in a contrasting situation in *The Dumb Dancer*. It is not a man, but a woman who perpetrates violence on another woman. Dilip is shocked to find Shakuntala’s body torn open from the stomach, but Prema makes a Satanic justification that it was Shakuntala’s fault: “She was willing to be sacrificed . . . So that Bhima would be restored. But he could never harm her . . . so it became my duty” (3.2.24).

Of the two women who care for Bhima, one has to die and the die is cast against Shakuntala, “a beautiful name and mythological too” (3.1.62) as pointed out by Prema, which reminds us of Shakunthala, the foster daughter of Kanva Maharishi in *The Mahabharatha*, who experiences melancholy when her husband, King Dushyanta, ignores her on account of a curse of Durvasa. The name Shakuntala is thus identical with sorrow despite its beauty and innocence. Shakuntala in *The Dumb Dancer* too receives a great blow to her virtuous traits.

While the struggle that the mythological Draupadi and Shakunthala encounter comes to an end, the struggle that Shakuntala faces, ends up with Prema murdering her. There is “interpenetration and metamorphosis” in the making of art as stated by Eliot. Currimbhoy transforms the relics of the past into contemporary history which is known for its anarchy of sentiments. The violation of innocence which stands for the predicament of women makes a continuous parable between contemporaneity and antiquity, the thematic
possibility of which is through the adoption and manipulation of one’s own indigenous materials in terms of myths and folk lore.

To continue one’s findings on the spectacle of dance, it follows that, Kathakali uses a highly stylised gesture language, a vast vocabulary of eye movements, hand gestures and moods to the accompaniment of drum and songs:

"Kathakali has always seemed to me, full of secrets, mysterious, fascinating", observes Raghavendra Rao in “Colours in the green room” (The Hindu Folio 36). Red, green, black, yellow and orange are the predominant colours used in the Kathakali make-up having a significance and a direct bearing on the characters. The Guru insists on the pupil in the training centre acquiring a knowledge of the importance of colours. Therefore, he asks him,

What’s the colour for marvelous! No! Don’t talk.
You’ll crack the paint on your face. Just show me the colours. [the pupil indicated yellow] Now . . . What’s terrible! [black indicated]. How many principal masks! [pupil raises five fingers]. The colours in Katti! [pupil shows the different colours]. Its pattern! [a dash of colours on a piece of paper] No the throat is painted deep rose, the ivory fangs for defiance or anger, as with the Demon Ravana! Do it again. And remember it well! (2.1.35)

Kathakali is Kerala’s ritualistic art, and communication through the visual spectrum, an evolved methodology, is regional at one level and universal at
another level on account of its archetypal significance. As regards the practice of
eye movements which evinces the actor’s efficacy to arouse dominant rasa or
emotion in the viewer’s sensibility, an incident can be cited.

The Guru asks the third pupil who is practising the movements of the
eyes to show,

The Alokita! (the pupil makes a quick circular open
look). Pathana! (pupil drops his eyes down) Brukuti!
(pupil raises the eyebrow) No, the Brukuti! wrath,
show wrath! Brukuti! you’re showing me Utkshepa.
Not the whole eyebrow! The ends of the eyebrow
only! (2.1.34)

Kathakali belongs to the theatre of imagination. The versatility of the
dance through its reliance on abhinaya (language of the human body) is fully
interpretative. Shakuntala asks Bhima to show “a lotus flower” (2.1.37) and “the
gait of an elephant” (2.1.38) through mudras. For instance, Bhima’s hands to
signify the formation of the flower, move thus:

at first the hands crossed at wrist and standing back
to back right over left in the centre above breast
height. Right hand revolves to the right and left to the
left, with wrists as pivots, till they stand palm to
palm. Cupped hands now touch at the base and
finger tips touch. (2.1.38)
The concept of production takes different forms in a dance-play. Act II, Scene ii suggests the cause of Bhima’s distraction. Hence Currimbhoy suggests that

if the production slant is on the dialogue and not the dance, this scene can be modified or even eliminated with minor changes in the other acts. But if the emphasis is on choreography, the scene can even be played in pure pantomime with a musical background. In the latter alternative, the possibility of combining western ballet with Kathakali effects can be investigated. (2.2.47)

Ballet is a beautiful art having plasticity, grace, rhythm, gestures and a characteristic manner of walking and movement. When it is clubbed into the virility of Kathakali, it bursts into the theatre like “fire works” holding the audience spellbound. Currimbhoy recalls the effect of the dance-play, The Dumb Dancer, on the foreign audience when it was staged at the British Drama League Festival:

The timing and the tone of the play were just right. Everything was bizarre to the point of fascination and the audiences were absolutely thrilled. I don’t think we will ever forget the experience. (V.S. Patil “ A playwright speaks” Span 11.4.1970.18).
The introduction of dance in this play serves three purposes. Bhima is basically a dancer who has developed "an uncanny sense for the dance" (3.1.56) through loss of speech. Therefore, the sign language of the dance is essential to comprehend and analyse the reasons for his mental disquietitude. Secondly, dance as such is a symbol of the quintessence of the human psyche which embodies a grant of emotions. An interpretative study of character through emotions becomes feasible through the medium of dance. It is in evidence when Prema argues that Shakuntala "with her background of Kathakali, . . . I'm sure she can also interpret 'navarasas' . . . The moods of our patient" (3.1.62). Thirdly, like all arts, dance, in general, holds the key to interest and involvement as found in the words of a distinguished dance enthusiast, Martha Graham:

I think the reason that dance had held such an ageless magic for the world, is that it has been the symbol of the performance of living. (qtd. in "The Ageless magic of Dance" by Alarmelu Valli, The Hindu Folio 1997)

Dance is a performing art and when it gets assimilated into drama, another performing art, the coalition effect of strength, power and beauty of a dramatic presentation is ineffable.

Jose Limon, a renowned American dancer observes that "a nation makes itself known through its dances." (qtd. in "Ancient features" by Anitha Ratnam The Hindu Folio 1977). If Kathakali reveals the cultural heritage of Kerala, Bharatha Natayam and Kathak represent Tamil Nadu and the province of Uttar Pradesh.
The first scene in The Thorns on a Canvas shows flashes of dancing of Bharata Natyam and Kathak in the Academy of Art. Of the two modes of dance form, the emphasis is more on the young kathak girl - dancer, who flashes in-and-out-and-around the rest of the artists, with "GUNGHARAS" on her feet, practising "NRITYA (rhythmic patterns), to the accompaniment" (1.11) of musical instruments. She is costumed in rich colours. However, her performance has a mechanical character which is made clear in the conversation between Malti and Nela:

MALTIX . . . Dance me a little story, Nela; sing too. A perfect NRITYA . . .

NELA. (dancing the NRITYA i.e. the meaning of a story/song through suggestive facial expressions, codified gestures of the hands and symbolic postures of the body).

"I pushed these two bracelets to the elbow, tightened the girdle and silenced the ringing anklets; thus quietly I left for the house of my beloved, but Ah! My friend, at that moment this brute of a dawn tore away the veil of darkness ... (2.17)

The kathak dance comes slowly and sadly to an end. It is more "perfunctorily than meaningfully danced" (2.17). Nela feels that "hers is not a perfect NRITYA for it lacks the BHAVAS and the moods" (17). The implication is, if art is institutionalized, it turns into a mechanical exercise. As against this sophisticated, orthodox, classical Kathak which lacks drive and emotions, the
dramatist introduces the voluptuous “NAUTCH” and “HIJIRA” (enuch) dancers consisting of males dressed and made-up as female. (1.50)

Yakub introduces Malti to this queer and degenerate dance desiring to show her the meaning he attaches to art form which is unknown to her. Nela’s performance is austere and intellectually rigid. It is in sharp contrast with the dance of the Enuchs. However, intellect and emotions are not contradictory but complementary to each other: “This is perhaps understandable to those who know that classical Kathak dance went through a phase of the nautch dance during Moghul times which developed great sensuous appeal” (50).

The dance of the Hijira if interpreted historically signifies as the last link to “one extremity of the dance evolution that developed its perverse appeal. The other extremity would perhaps be the real nautch dance which reached greatness in its own fashion during the Moghul epoch” (4.50).

To enable us to observe the different phases of Kathak dance, a curtain behind the Hijira dancer is lifted with magic perspective, to reveal a thin veil behind which is a perfect reproduction of the Nautch held in the Moghul court of the 17th century with all the colour and richness of the old times when Nawabs and Maharajas patronised the arts: “As opposed to the HIJIRA’S dance, this is the other extremity of the same genre. The tin-can sound of the drum is now replaced with the soft and dexterous tapping of the table, the rich sonorous notes of the sitar, the gay music of the harmonium, and one or more NAUTCHWALLIS (girls)” (4.50).
The girl is beautifully dressed in transparent skirts through which can be seen tights in brilliant red and green, quite traditional to the times. She wears a “DUPPATTA” or “ORHNI”, with Moghul ornaments.

The Nautch dancer who stands for individual expression resembles the classical Kathak style, but there is more naturalness, vigour and sensualism in it. It hardly has “the mechanicalness characterised in the first act” (51) which takes place in the Academy of Act. The device of dance faithfully thus lends a thematic relevance to the understanding of the play.

Currimbhoy makes a stress on choreography as regards dances. Choreography is basically a Western concept which has made inroads into the field of the Indian Classical dance. The trend of presenting multiplied solo not only in Kathak but also in other schools of dance is so rampant because in India we do not have a single theatre hall which is suitable for solo dancing.

The proscenium stage, which is most suitable for presenting a play, is unfit for solo classical dances in which expressional numbers are important because these only give the audience a taste of the rasa. In a hall with a proscenium stage the viewers sitting beyond the first rows can hardly observe the subtle facial expressions. Furthermore, the stage is so big that the solo dancer appears almost as a miniature dynamic figurine. As a result, to cover the large dancing area the dancer moves much more than what she should. These two disadvantages of the proscenium stage might have urged the dramatist to recommend group numbers.
In addition to the classical mode of dancing, the playwright observes in *Thorns on a Canvas* the dance movements of the choral odes of the Greek drama. The strophe, antistrophe and epodes of the chorus, that is to say, the turning, the counter-turning and the stand-still position of the Greek chorus finds expression in the orbital movement of the apprentice artists and the artists of the Establishment Group as they converse in the Exhibition at the Art Gallery. Contrary to the Greek chorus who sang and danced their choral passage, the members of the two groups of artists merely indulge in a drab exchange of dialogues signifying the world of prose as against the world of Greek poetry. A good artist assimilates and transforms, if needful, the material to serve his purpose. Currimbhoy does that. The Greek Chorus never exchanged partners but the artists in *Thorns on a Canvas*, at points of concurrence, interchange partners which gives an opportunity for Yakub and Malti to come closer.

The application of dance assists thematic revelation and adds to character distinction in Goa. The Smuggler dances a "quaint little tune all to himself" (1.2.18). When the Portuguese Administrator foreshadows the disintegration of cultures and religions that are, at present, found in Goa. His "mad little dance" (1.2.18) is symbolic of the attitudinal degeneration which might beset futurity. Apart from the Smuggler, Alphonso and Senhora Miranda romantically get together "on a dancing stride" (1.2.28) suggesting "love" (1.2.28) but love in Goa, as in *The Waste Land*, fails to achieve its high ideals. Senhora Miranda is as seductive as that of the society lady in 'A game of Chess’ in *The Waste Land*. She is full of intrigue, falsehood and fraud and therefore the Smuggler dances
"with a sense of the macabre and shakes " his hips suggestively, in an obvious imitation of SENHORA MIRANDA (1.1.21). When the people around him are pretentious the Smuggler dances "an unmerry tune with false, unmeasured steps" (2.1.56). It takes place when the old woman objects to the idea of the Vicar entering the Hindu temple braving the wrath of God. Equally, the smuggler "dances insanely" (2.3.81) to a "macabre melody" (2.3.81) when Krishna commits the unforgivable acts of murder and rape. If permitted, dancing can be equated with a kind of hieroglyph using the short cut of the body language with the accompaniment of an appropriate melody to suggest how a character spirals downwards or succeeds otherwise.

If religious interpretation and overtone are accepted, one may observe the attributes of dance in The Hungry Ones too. "The drum" that is used in the monkey act to eke out a meagre living can be equated with "the drum" (Udukai) held by Siva, the cosmic dancer, whose dance embodies layers of symbolism.

In the beginning of time, when Shiva began shaking a little hand drum, it sounded

the world's first rhythm and as he started to move his body in keeping with its beat, the world gradually took shape. During the act of creation, fire appeared in the palm of another of his hands, and he continued to dance until his world was complete and provided at the same time with means to destroy itself.

(Faubion Bowers 9):
If the Hindu view of the rhythmic process of creation and destruction is symbolised in Siva's dance, the monkey act in The Hungry Ones re-enacts the dance with a difference. With regulated tapping on the drum, an indication of the commencement of the acts of life, the beggar is on the move. Similar to that of Shiva who preserves the flow of life, the beggar feeds many a number of hungry mouths. In the process, he tries to destroy social and religious violence, failing which, he puts an end to his "enigmatic" performance of body by committing suicide. Thus the rhythmic monkey act of the Bengali man can stand for life and death. Human mind works through comparisons and contrasts to yoke heterogeneous ideas. And as a metaphor it stands for the principle that all opposites are interdependent and that the essence of life, as in literature, is the dynamic balance of the two.

Currimbhoy makes an explicit reference to a "frug-dance" (1.27) being performed by the Americans in The Hungry Ones. A frug-dance is derived from the twist which is contrary to the Indian classical dance which has power, poise and purpose. The frug-dance is characterised by the fantastic gyrations of the dancers. It has neither expression nor the potential to integrate the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual qualities of man. Among them "the first three have relevance in time, the last has relevance in timelessness" (Padma Subrahmanym "Bharatanatyam : time and timelessness" Hindu Folio 1970).

The frug-dance has relevance in time, but it may not stand the test of time. Infact, the playwright includes this dance as one of the funny things that the
Americans perform to distract the attention of the Bengali woman. The production notes substantiate the same:

Now both the Americans are full of fun and confidence. They begin to do all sorts of funny things: from yoga to athletics, from carpet-prayer to a "frug-dance". The woman is amused, temporarily distracted from the grief of seeing the man, who continues sliding along the length of the pavement. (1.27)

Both “the hungry act” and the frug-dance use the very personal medium of the body. The former is painful, yet meaningful in its presentation. But the latter provides comic relief, and that is all the status that Currimbhoy bestows on it. The Hippie culture fakes strength and superiority, so do their forms of art in the context of the play.

Sounds, gestures, expansive mimes, music, and dance keep the stage from being empty, and fill in all necessary detail explaining actions to a greater degree that the meaning of the play becomes visually comprehensible. They solve the problem of language communication among the spectators who are unfamiliar either with the linguistic intricacies of the playwrights in English, or with the complexities found in the regional vocabulary and syntax of the play.

For the foreigner, the idiom of Indian dance may seem a little too dense a structure both linguistically and religiously.
But whatever the language, the gesturing is virtually international and the intellectual mechanics of understanding are, of course, universal. (Faubion Bowers 40)

Gestures, an effective global language of understanding make dance exciting for those who are accustomed to more drabness in such theatres which are non-religious, danceless, realistic, and action-packed featuring abbreviated entertainment.

Currimbhoy’s plays take something along the lines of Western drama in stage effects, and in formal outline. But they are inevitably Indian in mood, effective in gesture and thought processes, evincing the long link with the past in terms of myths, symbolism, and mystic response with a magnificent sense of dance, music and colour. The theatre no longer remains as a place for visual entertainment but serves as a means of visual learning imparted by the author to the audience that life is an Odyssey of struggle, perseverance and acceptance.