For a long time, I wanted to analyse the chapters of Natyashastra which are directly related to the training of classical Indian actor. Sanskrit theatre demanded accomplished singer/dancer/actor. The arts of dance and music not only beautified the audio-visual aspects of the ancient classical drama performance but also offered immense flexibility to the playwright in the choice of time, place and action, in the text.

Today dance theoreticians, musicologists and critics of ancient literature refer to Natyashastra as the oldest book, written about their respective arts. But few realize that the treatise is written primarily to define the nature and scope of Natya or the drama performance (Natyashastra) which included all the three above mentioned arts as its complimentaries.

Brecht who was immensely influenced by the performance of Mei lan Fang the great Chinese actor imbibed the element of actor-character duality from Oriental theatre and used it as one of the important methods to bring about Alienation effect in his productions.

(i)
The modern Indian theatre which has absorbed various European as well as South Asian influences in its development, is also impressed by Brecht's plays. Brecht has been performed quite extensively in India, in Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Panjabi and English language. He has significantly inspired many Indian playwrights and directors, who have used the concept of alienation in a meaningful way. Ghasiram Kotwal, Begam Barve, Mahabhoj, Mukhya Mantri, and Einstein can be quoted as some of the successful experimental texts.

To-day, when Indian theatrician is turning towards his ancient tradition for new vocabulary in theatre, it is important to examine as to how Brecht picked up one element - namely that of actor/character duality - from the oriental tradition and used it in an effective manner to interpret contemporary situation.

This research thus aims at a clinical investigation of these two theatrical styles and tries to explain the nature and scope of the concept of Alienation effect as understood by Brecht in his own writings and described by his co-workers and critics.

Some Indian theatre people feel that Alienation is an integral aspect of traditional Indian theatre, and
therefore, there is nothing new that Brecht discovered. This is another point which expressly needs scientific research.

In this endeavour, I would like to remember my Guru Acharya Parvati Kumar who taught me Bharat Natyam (Classical Indian dance) and acquainted me with Natyashastra and Abhinaya Darpana (the Sanskrit texts) right from my childhood.

I must at this point pay my heartfelt respects to my teacher Shri Ebrahim Alkazi (the former director of National School of drama) who first and foremost induced the spirit of enquiry and the element of social commitment through theatre, in his students.

I should also mention about great affection and guidance I received from my grand father Late Shri Mama Warerkar—a significant playwright of Marathi theatre before and after Independence—who inspired me to take up theatre studies as my career.

I am also grateful to Prof. M.P. Bharadwaj who insisted on my following the scientifically developed methodology for this research so that it could also be helpful for other researchers interested in the comparative study of Eastern and Western theatrical traditions.

(iii)
Lastly, I am profoundly thankful to my husband Prof. Mohan Maharishi - noted playwright/director/designer and theoretician-who suggested me this subject and provided invaluable insights in comprehensively developing this work.

Anjala Maharishi nee Anjala Chitnis.