PART - I: INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 THE PROBLEM

It is generally believed that the German dramatist/director and theoretician of Epic theatre, Bertolt Brecht borrowed the concept of Verfremdungseffekt - roughly translated in English as Alienation Effect - from Eastern traditional theatre. It is also contended that Indian theatre always had alienation in the theatrical presentation and Brecht invented nothing new. Time has come when such generalities and beliefs should be put to scrutiny.

The tradition of classical Indian theatre preserved in the Natyashastra - the oldest of the extant texts on the theory and practice of drama - claims close connection with sacred Vedas. Theatre historians place Natyashastra around 500 B.C. The decline of this magnificent theatre practice, around 1000 A.D. started mainly due to the socio-political conditions of the time. The longest of the continued tradition in the world-almost for more than 2000 years - offers very scanty material as far as the texts are concerned. Very few ancient plays have seen the light of
the modern times. Yet, the grandeur and elegance of the text is fortunately alive especially in the plays of Bhasa, Kalidasa and singular text of Shudraka. Still, it would have been difficult to study and visualize the presentation technique if Natyashastra, the theoretical treatise on Indian dramaturgy would not have been preserved by Sanskrit scholars. This voluminous book not only stated rules for the playwrights by collecting and categorizing the experience of the previous works but also evolved a training system for the classical actor where he was supposed to master the arts of classical dance and classical music alongwith various recitational skills. Peculiar intrinsic relationship between text and performance that implied music, dance and drama as inseparable elements was one of the most significant characteristics of classical theatre which is still prevalent in the regional traditional theatre in India.

Epic theatre in contrast, is a purely modern theatre phenomena that took place in post world war I, in Germany. Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) who theorised the concept of Epic theatre after writing and directing plays in the new mode, was a committed believer and follower of Marxist ideology. He wanted to change the purpose of theatre "by developing the means of entertainment into an object of instruction and to change certain institutions from place of amusement into organs of public communications". Epic in German means a particular narrative form. The text in Epic
theatre controlled the scenic illusion by relating it to an empirically perceived reality, and by making this reality accessible to the spectator, in a manner that stimulated imagination and openness to reason. In other words, Epic theatre endeavoured to 'entertain and instruct'.

Alienation effect or verfremdungseffekt in Epic theatre was to make the spectator adopt an attitude of enquiry and criticism in his approach to the incident shown on the stage. Particular rehearsal methods adopted by the actor helped him not to create the illusion of transforming himself into the character as was prevalent in the Western Realistic theatre. The Epic actor tried to adopt the behavior of the character to the best of his ability without making the audience forget his individuality. Thus he enabled himself the opportunity of commenting on the character's behaviour. The basic idea of this concept Brecht borrowed from the Chinese theatre. At the same time he coined the word which had its origin in the term 'entfremdung' as used by Marx and Hegel which refers to the need for any situation to be alienated if it is to be seen socially. Brecht formulated his ideas on A-effect in his theoretical writings known as 'Short Organum for the Theatre'. This collection of notes written in the style of Aristotle's Poetics was based on the actual experiments and specific actor training methods he used during the rehearsal sessions of his plays.
This comparative study will primarily envisage the discussion on the scope of classical Indian theatre and the Epic theatre of Brecht and will elaborate a specific point of intersection namely A-effect as used by Brecht and as it is naturally there in the performance theory of Natyashastra.

1.2.0 Survey of the existing literature

To emphasize the significance of the study as well as to draw definite boundaries to limit and focus its scope, survey of the existing material is essential. The material comprises of the books on the theory and technique of the Classical Indian theatre, the extant ancient plays, the treatises written by ancient and modern, Indian as well as foreign scholars on the dramatic texts and Natyashastra, the original (?) script, its English and Hindi translations. The books on the theory and technique of Classical Indian dance and music are also included since they offer fairly interesting information about the relationship between the text and its visual and melodious enactment.

In the case of epic theatre, most of the material written on the subject is written by Brecht himself. Fortunately the whole volume of his articles on concerned subject is
translated in English. Also, important Western critics who had discussions with Brecht and actors/directors who worked closely with him have written extensively on their views and experiences of seeing and working in Epic productions of Brecht's Berliner Ensemble.

Comparative studies on the concerned subject are negligible. Similarly, detailed analysis of the presentation of the Sanskrit text is also a subject which deserves more serious study.

Following is the list of books and journals which forms the main body of the research material. Part I comprises of the books on Sanskrit drama; part II, on Epic theatre and Part III on the comparative studies.

PART I : CLASSICAL INDIAN THEATRE


The book presents invaluable material on the theories and development of Sanskrit drama, the classical plays, playwrights, dramatic practices and aesthetic experience.

1.2.2 Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. (1927) \textit{THE HINDU VIEW OF LIFE}. Unwin Books. London.

The author reflects on the philosophical aspect of the
Duality and Oneness between the subject and the object, creator and the creation. It is an important book to understand the relationship between philosophy and art.

1.2.3 O.C. Gangoly (1935) RAGAS AND RAGINIS. Munshiram Manoharlal. Delhi.

The book provides extensive information on the history of Ragas (melodies), their nomenclature, time theory, and Sanskrit texts written by Kohala, Meshakarna, Nripa, Vitthala and Bhavabhatta on music.


The chapter on Chinese dance provides important information about the great actor Mei Lan-fang who immensely influenced Brecht’s technique of Epic acting.


The writer informs about the main schools of classical dance, their links with Natyashastra, the common elements in all forms, the time rhythm, and musical instruments accompanying each form. The forward by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and prefaces by the dance exponents of various classical styles provide a penetrating view on the relationship of dance and Indian philosophy.
1.2.6. Ramlakhan Shukla. (1967) **SADHARANIKARAN.** (A scientific study.) (Hindi) Sahitya Sadan, Dehradun.

The book informs about the various theories on Aesthetic Experience of Shankuka, Bhattanayaka and Abhinavagupta.


The most important primary source book to understand the dramatic theory of Sanskrit drama. The book comprises of the translation of the first 27 chapters of Natyashastra.


The volume comprises of first 28 chapters of Natyashastra alongwith a significant introductory note by the editor.

1.2.9. James R. Brandon. (1967) **THEATRE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.**

Harvard University press. Massachusetts. U.S.A.

The book offers information about the music, dance and dramatic forms of Southeast Asia, the common elements in the theatrical performances and their relationship with the philosophical tenets of Confucianism and Buddhism.
1.2.10. Bharat Muni **Natyashastram** (Vol. II) (1968) (Trans.)

In the introduction, the translator has explained the Indian concept of music along with a note on early Indian musicologists like Narada, Swati, Kohala, Dattila etc. It is followed by the translation of the chapters 27 to 36 of Natyashastra.


Book contains introduction by the translator followed by the translation of the Rasa Chapter by Abhinavagupta from his book Abhinava-Bharati.

1.2.12. Kapila Vatsyayan. (1968) **Classical Indian Dance in Literature and Other Arts**. Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi.

The book deals with the concept of Indian aesthetic theory as the underlying link among all ancient arts.


The chapter on Sanskrit drama throws light on the literary as well as production elements of Sanskrit theatre.

The book informs about Historical development and the growth of Indian music, the grammar of the Raga and the Rasa theory.


The eminent scholar discusses various explanations propounded by the ancient theorists. The three selected chapters are-, the Natyotpatti Adhyaya; the Natyamandapa Adhyay and the Rasavikalpa Adhyaya.

1.2.16. Ramparatap Tripathi. (1973) **KALIDASA-GRANTHAVALI.** Kitab Mahal, Allahabad.

The book contains the original texts and the translations of the three plays and three long poems of Kalidasa.

1.2.17. Niharranjan Ray. (1974) **AN APPROACH TO INDIAN ART.** Publication Bureau, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

The book explains the relationship between the Indian philosophy and the nature and purpose of Indian art.


The author discusses the problem of interpretation of the first Adhyaya of Natyashastra followed by the chapters on the semblance between Theatre and sacrifice (Yagna).


A concise history of the evolution, growth and the treatment of Raga from the age of Bharat Muni to Bhatkkande.


The two volumes contain the translation, and notes of all the 13 plays of Bhasa.


The explanatory chapter on Rasa theory is important for this study.


The book offers the information about the Flower theory, of Japan, similar to Rasa theory, and aesthetics of...
PART II: EPIC THEATRE

1.2.25. Toby Cole and Helen Krich - Chinoy (Edit.) (1954) *ACTORS ON ACTING.*

The book discusses the views of great actors on the art of acting and as an important byproduct provides a comprehensive history of the art, starting from the tenets of Aristotle till modern times, of various countries including Germany.


The author provides a short chronology of Epic plays along with their analyses and complete bibliography of Brecht’s works, poetry collections and collections of articles on the theoretical aspect of Epic Theatre.


The nature and the elements of Western drama, Realism and Naturalism, are some of the important chapters for this study.

The most important primary source to understand the Epic theatre. The book in four parts comprises of the articles, interviews, notes on the productions, notes to the actors, written by Brecht. The editor adds penetrating historical references to the main body.


The author discusses the 10 significant playwrights of the modern times, including Bertolt Brecht.


Commentaries on poems, productions, Epic theory of Brecht by a close friend, collaborator and eminent critic.


Collection of articles written by designers, collaborators, actors and co-directors of Bertolt Brecht.


The book gives a detail account of the historical development of German theatre starting from Lessing, Wedekind to the present times. It also reflects on the anti-Aristotelian strain in German drama and post world war theatre in East Germany.
1.2.33. Cesaro Molineri. (1975) *THEATRE THROUGH THE AGES.*

The book provides complete history of Western theatre. The two chapters, 'Theatre and Political Strife' and 'The Disintegration Of Theatrical Space' are particularly important for this study.


The book is an important text book for Realistic acting.


Selected articles of German composer Hanns Eisler are edited by Grabs with a comprehensive introduction. Articles are translated by Marjorie Meyer.


Significant study of theatrical communication; codes, systems and performance text.


The book illustrates the relationship of scientific social control and Art.
PART - III COMPARATIVE STUDIES

1.2.38. Antioin Artaud. (1964) THE THEATRE AND ITS DOUBLE.
(Transl. Victor corti.) First published in French Editions. Gallimard. France

Two significant articles, 'On the Balinese theatre' and comparative study of 'Oriental and Western theatre'.

1.2.39. Leonardo C. Pronco. (1964) THEATRE EAST AND WEST.

The author describes the Chinese theatre, its significant classical productions and its impact on Bertolt Brecht.

1.2.40. Roland Beer. (1975) KALIDASA AND BRECHT. (Article)
Sangeet Natak Journal of Sangeet Natak Akademi No - 38, New Delhi.

Cursory yet useful comparison of the two playwrights.

1.3.0 DELIMITING THE STUDY

It is necessary to mention that Brecht while discussing Alienation, was always referring to an element of classical Chinese theatre and he probably never had any
direct exposure to Indian traditional theatre. The massive Western interest in the forms of traditional theatre like Kathakali, Kootiattam, Yakshagana, Chhau and other Indian martial arts, is largely a post-Grotoviskian phenomena. Brecht himself has not mentioned his indebtedness to Indian theatre. However, he had contributed to the generalisation, now frequently used in serious writing on Indian theatre, by mentioning the word 'Oriental' in place of 'Chinese' in his own writings.

Since a detailed and deeper comparison between the Chinese and Indian theatre is not within the scope of this study, sufficient it would be to say that there are certain common features in widely different forms in the cultural belt that covers the whole Asian region. The geo-cultural philosophical affinities developed in ancient times are probably responsible for the formation of a loose cultural matrix within which the so called 'Oriental' operates. The actor - character duality is one such feature is now a well established fact. This relates the Indian Classical theatre tradition to the Epic theatre of Herr Bertolt Brecht.

Secondly, Epic theatre is a phenomena that took place in Post-war Germany. Today there are many European as well as Indian and American playwrights who are following certain techniques and conventions of Epic theatre. Though they demonstrate how quickly Brecht's ideas are assimilated in the very texture of modern theatre, these plays cannot
be specifically categorized as Epic plays. Therefore, it would be appropriate to focus this study on the plays written by Brecht himself.

Three representative plays are chosen to explain the A-effect in the text and the corresponding acting style in Epic theatre. Similarly, the three plays from the classical Indian drama are discussed from the point of view of the actor-character duality as discussed in Natyashastra.

1.4.0. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Even a cursory glance at the existing literature on the above mentioned subject makes it clear that there are very few books which elucidate the actor-character duality in classical Indian theatre. Though the concept is generally accepted by a large number of theatre workers and critics, no detailed critical study has taken place from the point of view of text-performance relationship. Abhinavaguptapada mentions about this specific quality of acting while discussing Rasa theory. But how it is achieved in the classical tradition, remains unsaid.

Secondly, the impact of Epic theatre on present Indian theatre scene has been equally important. Not only the Indian directors have produced translations and
adaptations of Brecht's plays, but have also imbibed many techniques of playwriting and play-productions of Epic theatre. But the extension of the theatrical language to deepen the experience of the spectator is not happening in most cases because of the lack of proper conceptual clarity.

Therefore, this study would open new vistas for theatricians who seem to be experimenting with various traditional elements of Indian theatre to convey and present a contemporary experience.

1.5.0. THE SEQUENCE OF THE STUDY

The comparative study of Epic and Classical Indian theatre with specific reference to Alienation Effect consists of three major parts, scientifically developing each part into required number of chapters.

First chapter introduces the subject in brief manner. The survey of the existing material proves the necessity of scientific discussion on this subject. Yet its extensive and open-ended nature needs to be delimited right in the beginning so that the focus of the research is not blurred. The chapter states at the end the logical development of the study.
Second chapter, titled as Classical Indian Theatre, provides necessary information about the period, the purpose and function of this theatre practice, its text and the style of acting. Annexure no. 1, a minutely worked out table gives extensive information about the types of plays, their structural developments, characterization, the production styles-individual as well as that of the over all performance-in one glance.

The third chapter deals with Epic Theatre. The exposition is based on the similar points - period, purpose and function, the text and style of acting in the first section of the chapter. The second section deals with the theory of Alienation Effect. It is the corner stone of Epic Theatre. The information states how various methods such as preparation of the actor, special way of rendering the text, carefully developed physical attitudes, use of music and special design of the sets and lights, bring about the A-effect in an Epic production.

Second part of the thesis consists of five chapters. This part develops various points, penned in the theoretical exposition. Fourth chapter informs about the preparation of the actor in Epic theatre as well as in classical Indian theatre. Different methods of the training systems that the actor follows, are explained in great detail as to how and in what form he alienates his character in the preparatory period.
Chapter five deals with the special ways of rendering the text in Epic theatre which develop alienation in the actor's performance and help him to adopt attitudes towards the character he is playing. The information is further explained by giving examples from the three selected Epic plays of Bertolt Brecht; Mother, Mother Courage and her children, and the Caucasian Chalk Circle. The second section of the chapter discusses the verbal expression and various methods of rendering the text in classical Indian theatre as instructed in Natyashastra. Specific examples from the three selected Sanskrit plays—Swapnavasavadattam, Vikramorvashiyam and Mrichhakatikam—would clarify these assertions. It is interesting to study whether similar conditions create Alienation effect in Sanskrit theatre, if yes, of what nature?

The first section of the chapter six deals with the use of music in Epic performance. The ideas of music used in Epic theatre by the illustrious composers of Brecht are stated and studied. Examples are given from the three above stated Epic plays. The second section explains the elements of classical Indian music and the way it would be used in Sanskrit theatre, specifically referring to the three above mentioned plays.

Chapter seven elaborates on the physical attitudes an actor develops while performing in an Epic play. The examples from the three plays of Brecht clarify how the
physical attitude develop the alienation or in other words, actor-character duality, where actor is in a position to comment on the choice and behaviour of the character. The discussion continues on similar points as mentioned earlier and finds whether the classical actor develops alienation in similar ways and for similar purpose.

Stage design - the use of sets, properties, costumes, make-up and lighting, the important elements of actor's accessories are discussed as to how they are used in Epic as well as Classical Indian theatre. Chapter eight deals with this particular and important aspect of the stage presentation.

The third part of the thesis comprises of ninth chapter. Its first section consists of the logical development of the subject - matter. The second section deals with the comparative study of the findings stated in the first section. At the end, the researcher wishes to suggest new and untouched themes which can be taken for further study by the students of theatre since there is very scanty material and scientific research done in this field.