CHAPTER III

STRUCTURE AND MEANING OF YAKSAGĀNA
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SECTION 1: SYNTAGMATIC ANALYSIS

3.0. THE STRUCTURE OF YAKŠAGĀNA PERFORMANCE

Semiotics and structuralism have both grown out of Saussure’s phenomenal insights into the nature of language. Though both have grown in different ways, they share a great deal in their approaches and assumptions. One such primary assumption is the need to study the structure, which itself becomes the first stage of analysis. This shift in emphasis from parole to langue, from the study of individual isolated events, to that of the structure, that makes these events meaningful, was a major intellectual advancement. In understanding the significatory process of any product of human intellection, it thus becomes obligatory to pay attention to the structure. The individual signs do not have any meaning that is ‘intrinsic’. Each sign gets its meaning only through its relation to other signs which may be one conjunction or disjunction. So, a study of the individual signs and of the process of signification in general, can be made only by studying the structure, because the individual signs get their meaning only as part of the structure. Outside the structure, the signifiers are only like empty envelopes.
In analysing the structure of any cultural artifact, two different levels are recognised. One is the linear or syntagmatic level; the other is the nonlinear or paradigmatic level. The paradigmatic level can be reached only after the syntagmatic ramifications are analysed. The discourse of the artifact at the manifest, apparent level begins to unravel at the syntagmatic level. But the immanent discourse, embedded in the criss-cross of references through conjunction and disjunction of signs can be understood only at the paradigmatic level by decoding these references. Only then can we reach the immanent meaning and logic of the cultural artifact.

The first part of this chapter will be an analysis of the linear and temporal structure of a Yakṣagāṇa performance. This will be a study of how a Yakṣagāṇa performance unfolds itself; in other words of the performance score. A performance score, in the words of Philip Zarelli, "Consists of all the created and/or received conventions which collectively constitute the complete composition performed". The second part of this chapter will be a paradigmatic analysis, where the function and meaning of individual units discussed earlier, as well as of the structure as a whole will be examined. In other words, our concern in the second section will be with the immanent discourse where alone, the real meaning of symbolic forms, such as Yakṣagāṇa, can be deciphered.

In any yakṣagāṇa performance, there are certain features which change when the prasanga (lit. episode:=this word refers to the particular episode to be performed as well as to the written script), to be performed changes. At the same time, there are features that remain the same in every
performance. These can be termed the variables and constants of the yakṣagāna performance. The preliminaries and the closing prayer for example, are the constant fixed features of any yakṣagāna performance. On the other hand, other features, vary with each different prasanga performed. (Within the performance of the prasanga also, there are some fixed features and these will be discussed later.) This analysis will concentrate on these 'constants' with remarks, where necessary on the variables.

The performance scores of the commercial troupes and of the open-air troupes vary slightly. Many details are no doubt similar in the performances in different 'contexts' by troupes that are organised on a commercial or noncommercial basis. But because of the shift in emphasis, the performance score will also differ.

From a linear perspective, a yakṣagāna performance, from beginning to end, can be classified as follows:

i. Preliminaries performed prior to the performance.

ii. The preliminary part of the performance-
   Sabhālakṣaṇa

iii. The prasanga or the particular episode enacted

iv. Maṅgāla or the auspicious ending

v. The final rituals in the cauki (lit. square:= make-up room)
3.1. PRELIMINARIES PRIOR TO THE PERFORMANCE

These are items that are performed prior to the actual commencement of the performance on the stage. These situate the actual performance, in the cultural, religious context. These also point to the ritualistic framework of yakṣagāna. These preliminaries consist of the following:

3.1.1. The musical interlude

A few hours prior to the performance on the stage, the instrumentalists play on the small cymbals, maddałe (a cylindrical leather percussion instrument which is kept horizontally and played on both sides) and canđe (another cylindrical leather instrument, that is kept vertically and struck on one side with two sticks). Different rhythmical combinations are played by them. In the open-air performances, this musical interlude acted as an advertisement to the surrounding villages, of the yakṣagāna performance.
Sketch of Yakṣagāna Stage and Auditorium
(Commercial troupes)

(1) Tent (2) Chairs (3) Place for women (4) Stage (5) Place for men
(6) Canḍe* (7) Seat (8) Maddale (9) Śruti (10) Bhāgavata (11) Exit
(12) Entry (13) Caukl (make-up room)

* In tenkūtiṭṭu, the canḍe player stands to the left of the bhāgavata
3.1.2. **The rituals performed in the cauki** (Pics. 1, 2)

The ritual worship performed in the cauki forms an integral part of every performance. Lord Gaṇapati and the presiding deity of the troupe, are worshipped in the cauki. During worship, the singer accompanied by the instrumentalists, sings the song, the first two lines of which are given below.

\[ \text{Gajamukhadavage GaṇapageI celva} \\
\text{Trijagavanditanigārati ettire} \]

To Lord Ganapa, who has the face of an elephant,  
To the beautiful one, who is worshipped in the three worlds,  
Wave the sacred flame.  

All the crowns to be used in the performance, are also worshipped. The worship in the cauki forms an integral part of every yakṣagāna performance. This is true even of the commercial troupes and of the modern experimental troupes. This is an example of the ritualistic element present in yakṣagāna performances even today. All those present in the cauki at the time, take part in the worship in all seriousness and receive the prasāda (lit. graciousness:= as part of the ritual of worship, food is offered to God; it is then supposed to be returned to the devotees with God's blessings). The singer then asks for God's permission to proceed to the stage. Usually, the person who has performed the worship, grants the permission. The singer and the instrumentalists then proceed to the stage.

The performance thus begins with the worship in the cauki indicating that the performance on the stage is also a
mode of worship. This points to the strong ritualistic frame-work of the entire performance. This is not something unique to yakṣagāṇa but is shared by almost all the traditional performing arts of India.

3.2. PRELIMINARIES PERFORMED ON THE STAGE.

Every yakṣagāṇa performance, begins with certain set and fixed features. Irrespective of the episode to be performed, these preliminaries remain the same. Bharata in his authoritative text on Sanskrit dramaturgy calls these preliminaries, pūrvaranga (lit. pūrva-before, ranga -the stage:= preliminaries performed before the play to be performed). In yakṣagāṇa, they are called sabhālakṣaṇa (lit. sabhā - the auditorium (including the stage), also the audience; lakṣaṇa-features/qualities:= The part that deals with the features of the stage and auditorium as well as the qualities to be possessed by the performers and the audience).

In the past, in open-air performances, these preliminaries were performed in great detail. In present day performances, they are retained but in a curtailed form. (If it is a show of limited duration of about 3 hours, they are not performed at all).

The singer, as soon as he enters the stage, begins singing a number of songs in praise of the gods. No actor will be present on the stage when these songs are sung. These songs are in praise of Gaṇapati, Pārvatī, Mūkāmbika, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. These songs also describe the qualities to be possessed by the bhāgavata (the main singer) the instrumentalists, the dancers, the stage and even the
audience. The following song, for example, describes the qualities to be possessed by the dancer.

"Where one's hands are, there should be one's sight; where the sight is, there should be the mind; where the mind is, there should be the bhāva or emotion; This is the essential nature of dance"\(^5\)

Many of the songs in the sabhālakṣaṇa are in Sanskrit, though the written script of yakṣagāna is always in Kannada. These songs have an incantatory effect and thus become signs that create the ritualistic effect. They also point to the influence of Sanskrit dramaturgy on yakṣagāna.

In open-air performances, the first actors to appear on the stage were kōḍangis (lit. ape like men:= assistants to the clown). They would make fun of one and all and entertain the audience. There were a number of set humorous dialogues that they would enact.\(^6\) Anyhow, in present day performances, this practice has almost been given up. The sabhālakṣaṇa in commercial troupes, begins with the appearance of two young actors.

3.2.1. The bālagōpālas (young actors) (Pics.3, 4)

The first actors to appear on the stage are two young artistes called bālagōpālas. Their costume depicts them as young heroes. Their dance is brisk and fast. The songs sung during their dance, are in praise of the Gods Gōvinda (Krśṇa) and Gaṇapati.\(^7\) Along with the dance, prominent use is also made of the hasta mudras (hand gestures) to represent the words of the song. The most important difference between the
preliminaries and the prasnaga proper, is that the former does not contain improvised dialogues. The dance of the balagopālas, contain many aspects of the dance, that will be used later during the performance of the prasanga. After the detailed dance to the songs sung by the singer, a crown is brought and kept on the seat in the deep stage. The crown, is worshipped by them on the stage by waving the sacred flame. After this worship on the stage, they dance for a short while and make their exit.

The worship of the crown is an example of the symbolic style of representation of yakṣagāna. A limited number of stage properties are used as signs for representing the entire possible range of meanings. The crown becomes a signifier for the wearer of the crown (the King or God), who is here, the object of worship. Equating the king with God has been recognised as one of the important characteristics of the indigenous South Indian religion. George Hart III in his article on Tamil devotion, points out how the king is always recognised among Tamils, as an agent of the sacred. Peter Claus, in his study of the Tuḷu people of South Kanara, has called this unique position of the king, "the cult of the king". Seen in this light, it is not surprising to find that the crown becomes an object of worship in Yakṣagāna.

The characters that these two young actors represent, is kept indistinct and vague. They are not individualised and this vagueness plays an important role in the significatory function of the preliminaries as a whole. (This will be analysed later in the chapter). Shivarama Karanth, keeping the entire structure of the yakṣagāna performance in mind, recognises them as Balarama and Kṛṣṇa. Young novices who want to become yakṣagāna actors, usually
start their career by playing these roles. Thus, the enacting of these roles, plays a significant part in the process of training of young artistes.

3.2.2. Strīvēṣa - female characters (Pic.5)

The next part of the preliminaries, consists of the dance by two strīvēṣa (lit. female costume/impersonators)-female characters. (Female characters are also played by men in yakṣagāna.) The identity of these characters also, like that of the bālagōpālas, is left vague. They are referred to only as strīvēṣa. The songs pertaining to their dance, highlight srṅgāra (the erotic) emotions and are usually those that deal with Kṛṣṇa’s relation with Rādha and the other milk maids of Brindāvan. So, in the dance of these female characters, the qualities of grace and feminity get pronounced unlike the dance of the bālagōpālas (or the other male characters), where the virile qualities are highlighted. The costumes of female characters resemble those of the rich women of the present and do not seem to confirm to the general structure of Yakṣagāna costumes.

3.2.3. Oḍḍōlaga: First appearance of characters (Pics.6,7,8)

The oḍḍōlaga ("a great assembly, a royal audience... the term for a dance used to introduce characters in yakṣagāna performances") is a sequence that has qualities of a constant as well as a variable feature of Yakṣagāna. It is a constant feature in that the performance of every prasanga has to begin with an oḍḍōlaga. It is also a variable feature because the particular oḍḍōlaga to be performed depends on the prasanga to follow. In the same manner, oḍḍōlaga forms a part of the preliminaries because it is a fixed feature of
every performance. At the same time, it also forms a part of the prasanga because the narrative of the prasanga begins with the oddolaga.

The oddolaga sequence is a highly choreographed item involving elaborate and intricate dance sequences. Oddolaga is a royal assembly or a king's court. The performance of every prasanga begins with the oddolaga of a king or a god, where the characters are introduced for the first time. The oddolaga has to be of important personages. As P.V.Hasyagara, an important yakṣagāna performer says, " Tradition lays down that in the beginning, only a god or a king has to enter the stage. Demons, monkey characters and sages do not enter the stage in the beginning". If the episode to be performed is from the Rāmāyaṇa, the oddolaga will be of either of Daśaratha or of Rāma: if it is from the Mahābhārata, it will be of the Pāṇḍavas. Many other prasangas begin with Indra's oddolaga. Female characters do not appear on the stage in the oddolaga. The following is a description of the oddolaga of the Pāṇḍavas.

As the rhythmic beats, indicating the start of the oddolaga begin, two stage hands in ordinary dress, enter holding a colourful curtain (usually 5' x 8' in size, sometimes with the name of the troupes appliqued on it). The last of the Pāṇḍavas, Sahadēva enters from behind the curtain, pays his obeisance to the singer, musicians and the stage and stands with his back to the audience. Only the top of his headgear and his feet are visible. He plays with the curtain, pressing it down to show his profile, his face etc. The curtain is raised again and he makes his exit. All five Pāṇḍavas, one after the other, go through these motions.
Then all five, in a group, stand behind the curtain. While dancing to the music, they press the curtain a little and reveal their profiles, first on one side and then on the other. Then they dance facing the audience. After these movements, the youngest of the Pândavas, pushes the curtain aside, 'emerges' free and begins his individual dance exhibiting fast foot work and body movements. The same process is gone through by all the brothers, after which the curtain is removed. They dance in a group, first in a row and then move in a circle, displaying impressive foot work with quick turns and twists of the body to the music that now reaches a crescendo. The entire dance, as Shivarama Karanth says, "consumes nearly half an hour and looks very thrilling on the stage". This dance is a fine example of the choreography found in yakṣagāṇa.

Breaking the study of the syntagmatic progression of the performance, mention may be made here, of other oddolagas that are performed during the course of the prasanga. The first appearance of a major character is always through an oddolaga. Gods, warrior queens and even hunters have their own oddolaga, though these are not as detailed or elaborate as the first one with which the prasanga commences. Baṇṇada vēṣaḥ (lit. coloured roles:= demonic characters) also have their own oddolaga. The first appearance of a baṇṇada vēṣa creates a powerful impact on the audience. As R.VijayaKumar says, "The entry of a demon particularly arouses immense expectations. Even if a villager has gone to sleep while watching the staging of a play, it is time for him to wake up when the demon makes his entry". The loud beats on the instruments are punctuated by the high pitched shout of the actor from the make-up room itself. After emerging from behind the traditional curtain,
the actor, through gesture and mime, enacts actions like washing the face, worship of lord Śiva etc. To highlight the effect, some times a burning torch is held near his face on which resin is sprinkled from time to time.\textsuperscript{15}

To return to the syntagmatic study, the oddōlaga also functions as a prelude to the particular episode to be performed. The narrative of the prasanga, begins with the oddōlaga itself. After the elaborate dance sequence, the main character, (the king or god, whose court is being depicted), begins speaking. Each prasanga deals with only one small episode out of the vast epic canvas. The introductory speech, provides succinctly the background of the story, upto the particular episode that is to be performed. It thus situates the prasanga in the larger context of the epic world. Kicaka Vadhe (The killing of Kicaka) for example, deals with the episode where Kicaka tries to molest Draupadi and is killed by Bhīma, when the Pāṇḍavas were living incognito for one year in Virāṭanagar. In the introductory speech, the main character gives a brief resumé of the events of the epic, upto the episode that is going to be performed.

The introductory speech, thus provides the backdrop of the epic in the light of which, the present prasanga is to be viewed. Thus the speech is high in its referential/informative content. But this background of the epic, is usually known to the audience and so forms part of the shared common knowledge. As a result, the audience, often pay little attention to this introductory speech.
3.3. THE PRASANGA AND ITS PERFORMANCE

The word prasanga is used in two senses: it refers to the written text as well as to the particular episode to be performed. In the analysis of the performance, attention has to be paid to the written script as well as to the performance. The received text of yakṣagāṇa comprises of written text as well as the unwritten oral tradition regarding performance (of the individual prasanga and of performance in general). This unwritten tradition is called nade (lit. walk/gait:=conventions regarding performance) and is built up over the centuries. This analysis will deal with the written script first and then proceed to deal with the unwritten convention regarding performance.

3.3.1. The Prasanga

In Indian poetics, drama is referred to as drṣya kāvya (visual poetry), because dramatic literature is also considered part of poetry, though classical Sanskrit drama makes use of both prose and poetry. But the written literature of yakṣagāṇa, is very different in form from Sanskrit drama. It is also different from the western concept of poetic drama. Each prasanga contains only poems (from 250 to 350) which are neither divided into scenes nor even into dialogues of different characters. The Prasanga thus has the look of a long poem or a sequence of poems, though it is specifically written for performance as a dance drama.

The written literature of yakṣagāṇa, exhibits qualities of a mixed genre. It is composed like poetry but is has the potentiality of becoming drama when performed. We can say that it is a special kind of poetry that has all the elements
necessary for a performance. Folklorists have often faced the problem of categorising folk forms into different genres because often they not fit into the analytical genres that the folklorist employs. Dan Ben-Amos makes a distinction between analytical and ethnic categories of genres and says, "Analytical categories of genres have been developed in the context of scholarship and serve its varied research purpose. Native taxonomy on the other hand, has no external objective. It is qualitative subjective system of order".¹⁶

In this context, it is interesting to note that yakṣa-गाण-ा literature does not fit in, even to the categories of genres used in Indian literary tradition, because it can be classified as both poetry and drama. As the written text of yakṣa-गाण-ा does not have the features of dramatic literature, some scholars have surmised that the form of the written text may have emerged when yakṣa-गाण-ा was only a kind of narrative in poetry that was performed by one person (probably the bhāgavata).¹⁷ Harikathe is an example of such a performing art, where a single performer narrates the story, enacting small sections, with music predominating the entire performance. (The influence of Harikathe on yakṣa-गाण-ा literature is discussed later in the Chapter.)

The poems of the prasanga are written in different metres. Both Sanskrit and Kannada metres are used. Rhyme is used prominently. Sometimes, short prose passages called vacana are used to link two scenes. As the written text does not have a dramatic form, the poems themselves are used not merely as dialogues but also for describing the situation or for describing the stage business. Depending on the function they perform, the poems can be divided as under:
(a) Poems that describe the situation
(b) Poems that describe the stage business of actors
(c) Poems that lead to improvised dialogues

(a) At the beginning of a prasanga or at the beginning of a scene, descriptive details of the locale as well as the narrative links between the scenes are provided through the songs that are sung by the bhāgavata. As an example, we can take the following song from Indrajītu Kālaga. Indrajitū, the son of Rāvana, is known for his valour and extraordinary prowess. When many of Rāvana's famed warriors are killed in the battle with Rāma, Indrajitū, enters the battlefield with his father's blessings. Then we have the following song:

"With his father's permission, the enemy of sleep [Indrajitū] went to the battlefield on his chariot, met the army of monkeys, felled and slayed them with his magic". 18

The details contained in the song, are rarely enacted on the stage. They depict the devastation caused by Indrajitū, necessitating Rāma's entry. These details are usually summed up by the actor in his improvised speech.

(b) The stage business and action of the characters are normally indicated in dramatic literature under stage directions. In yakṣaṅgāṇa, these also appear as songs sung by the bhāgavata. The following song from Karṇa Parva may be taken as an example. In the battle between Karṇa and Arjuna, Śalya, who is Karṇa's charioteer, decides to desert his job and go away as Karṇa refuses to heed to his advice. The following song describes the action:
"Throwing his whip, getting down from the chariot, Śalya went back in great anger. Looking at this, the father of Māra [Kṛṣṇa] said to the brother of Dharma [Arjuna].

The first half of this song, describes the stage business to be enacted by the actor playing Śalya's role. The second half in an indication of the song to follow, which will be Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna.

(c) The maximum number of songs of any prasanga belong to the third category of songs that depict the dialogues between characters. The 'contents' of these songs are enacted through dance and emotive representation by the actor/s, when the bhāgavata sings them. At the end of the song-dance sequence, the 'content' of the song is developed through improvised text by the actor/s. The main development of the narrative take place through these songs.

These songs not merely contain what the actor develops through his dance and speech but also the detail as to who speaks the dialogue and to whom. Expressions like 'said Arjuna', 'declared Indrajitu' appear as parts of the song and are sung by the bhāgavata. As an example, we can take the song quoted earlier, which states that the song to follow is spoken by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna. Thus, the audience not merely see the visual representation on the stage but also hear it described through the song sung by the bhāgavata. The implications of this aural and visual articulation are discussed later in the chapter.
3.3.2. The Structure of the Prasanga

As has already been mentioned, a yakṣagāna prasanga deals with only a small episode from the epics or purāṇas. Most often, these are incidents that deal with battle or wedding or both. (There are a few notable exceptions to this.) Every prasanga begins with a certain traditional structure which consists of songs in praise of gods like Ganapati, Sarade, etc. The narrative history of the epic, regarding who narrated the story for the first time and to whom are also provided.

The prasanga usually consists of loosely structured scenes of chronological events. These scenes are usually episodic in nature. Scenes in which a number of characters appear are not given great prominence in yakṣagāna. Emphasis is usually laid on scenes that highlight the interaction between two characters. These scenes may be of argument and confrontation or of love and affection. On the whole, the situation that occurs between two characters are always highlighted in the written text, (as well as in performance). So, the prasanga many a time may have a succession of such scenes involving two characters. These scenes are thought of as the highlights of the prasanga and are elaborately developed. At such moments, the progression of the narrative may become impeded. But the ‘development of the story’ assumes only secondary importance in yakṣagāna as the familiarity of the audience with the story is assumed.

In order to understand, the structuration of a prasanga and the way the incidents are developed in the written text, one particular prasanga, Kīcaka Vadhe, has been analysed. Structural analyses of narratives (and drama) try to find an
underlying deep structure or grammar to which the narrative can be reduced. Whether it is Valdimir Propp’s analysis of folk tales or A.J. Greimas’ application of structural semantics to literature, the basic assumption is that the surface structure of the narrative is derived from the deep structure. Etienne Souriau, the French theorist of drama, proposed that any dramatic text can be reduced to six actants (similar to Propp’s concept of functions). The analysis attempted here, does not try to reach the deep structure. It can be taken as a preliminary exercise, where tracing the progression of the narrative is taken as the primary task.

This has been done by dividing the prasanga into different units. Each unit approximates to what can be called a scene. As has already been mentioned, the prasanga being a continuum of songs, is not divided into scenes. In fact the only division that we find in the text is based on changes in ragas and talas. In order to understand the length of each unit, the number of songs that appear in each unit are also mentioned. Of these, some songs may be long and others short. But, the song numbers as they appear in the prasanga have been taken into account. Often short narrative links appear between these units. They have not been numbered but a mention has been made wherever they appear.

This analysis will also be useful in understanding the ways in which the performance differs from the written text in yakṣagāna. Before the actual analysis, a brief resume of the story of the prasanga is given below, which will help in understanding the way the text is structured.
This is an episode from the *Mahābhārata* and deals with the killing of Kīcaka by Bhīma, when the Pāṇḍavas were living incognito for one year in Virāṭanagar. As per the conditions of the dice match which Dharmarāya had lost to Kaurava, the Pāṇḍavas had to spend twelve years in the forest and one year incognito.

They decide to spend the year in Virāṭanagar. They bundle all their weapons and tie it to a tree outside the town. All of them join the service of the king in different capacities under different names and disguises. Arjuna for example, becomes a dance-teacher to the king’s daughter and Bhīma becomes a cook. Draupadi, under the name Sairandhri, joins the service of queen Sudēṣṇa.

Kīcaka, the queen’s brother (who in fact is the de facto ruler of Virāṭanagar) is attracted by Sairandhri and wants to possess her. He forces his sister to help him but Sairandhri rejects his overtures. He illtreats and molests Sairandhri when she does not accede to his demands. Sairandhri seeks the help of Valala the cook (Bhīma). She asks Kīcaka to meet her alone in the dancing hall where she promises to fulfil his desires. Valala dressed as a woman meets Kīcaka in the dancing hall. A fight ensues in which Kīcaka is killed.

Let us now see how this story is developed in the *prasanga, Kīcaka Vadhe*. 
3.3.2.1. **Analysis of the prasanga, Kicaka Vadhe**

(The number at the beginning indicates the number of the unit. A brief description of the content of the unit is given. The number at the end, is of the number of songs in the unit.)

1. **Introductory Prayers; 10 songs**

2. The introductory part, Pithike - The Pāṇḍavas assemble outside Virāṭanagar after twelve years in the forest; decide to spend the one year under different identities in Virāṭanagar. Bhīma gets angry about their fate. They tie their weapons to a tree. 25 songs

3. Kaṇka (Dharmarāya) meets the king’s gatekeeper; 1 song.

4. Gatekeeper to king; king invites Kaṇka, takes him into service; 6 songs.

Narrative link (about how others joined the king’s service)

5. **Description of Sairandhri (Draupadi)’s entry; 5 songs**

6. Queen Sudēṣṇa takes Sairandhri into service; Sairandhri says she is the wife of five gandharvas; would spend one year in Virāṭanagar; 7 songs

Narrative link

7. Kicaka’s entry; meets his sister the queen; attracted by the beauty of Sairandhri, asks his sister about Sairandhri; 11 songs

8. Kicaka at home; thinks about Sairandhri; 2 songs

9. Kicaka meets Sairandhri; makes sexual advances and is rejected by her; 18 songs

10. Kicaka goes to his sister’s palace; tells her of his amorous desire for Sairandhri, is scolded and advised by her; finally, makes her promise to send Sairandhri to his house; 16 songs

Narrative link

11. Queen Sudēṣṇa forces Sairandhri to go to Kicaka’s house with honey; 7 songs
12. Sairandhri goes to Kicaka's house; description of her sexy looks; 3 songs

13. Kicaka's thrill on seeing her; 4 songs

14. Kicaka appeals to her again; as she escapes, catches hold of her, kicks her and she falls to the ground; 11 songs

15. Sairandhri enters the king's Court; weeps and appeals to all, specially to Kaṇka (Dharmarāya) for help; 9 songs

16. Valala's anger at helplessness; breaks a tree; Kaṇka (Dharmarāya) advises Bhima and Sairandhri; 5 songs

Narrative link

17. Sairandhri appeals to queen for help; 4 songs

Narrative link

18. Sairandhri's sorrow; says a woman's life is a curse; decides to seek Valala (Bhima)'s help; 4 songs

Narrative link

19. Meets Valala; tells him of her predicament; Valala tells her to seek help from the other four husbands; says he is bound by the words of his brother; Sairandhri pouring out her sorrow asks him to permit her to die; Valala promises to help her; 28 songs

Narrative link

20. Kicaka meets Sairandhri; appeals to her again; is told by her to come to the dancing hall; 6 songs

Narrative link

21. Sairandhri meets Valala; dresses him as a woman; 5 songs

Narrative link

22. Kicaka gets ready, enters the dancing hall; sees Valala, embraces, is surprised to find Valala; a fight ensues and Kicaka is killed; 14 songs

23. Sairandhari sees the dead body, embraces Valala; 1 song
24. Sairandhri is blamed for Kīcaka’s death; is caught but saved by Valala; 10 songs

25. The news spreads in the whole town; the queen curses Sairandhari and asks her to leave immediately; Sairandhri says she will leave on her own after thirteen days; 10 songs

Narrative link

The preceding break up of the prasanga, preliminary as it is, will still help us in understanding the narrative strategy of yakṣāgāṇa scripts. Aspects of the story which have potentiality of representation on the stage are dealt with at length and are highlighted, as for example Kīcaka and Sairandhri’s exchange (units 9 and 14), or the meeting between Valala and Sairandhri (unit 19). Certain other aspects which from the point of view of the larger discourse of the epic may appear important, like the disguise and jobs of other Pāṇḍavas in Virāṭāngar, are dealt with here in just one narrative song. This is possible because a prior knowledge of the epic, among the spectators, is assumed. Infact the writer of the prasanga, works with the implicit assumption regarding this shared knowledge.

As can also be seen, the emphasis is on the elaboration of certain bhāvas (emotions). To take an example, the first appearance of Sairandhri (unit 5) is expanded upon at length (women characters never appear in oḍḍālaga in yakṣāgāṇa). It may also be mentioned that moments like these are not necessarily the moments of climax of the story. Expounding leisurely on certain aspects in this manner, the prasanga (and the performance too), creates an aura where the present existential moment becomes important. Infact in theatre, the temporal context is always of the present. As Peter Szondi says, "...the dramatic action always occurs in the present."
This does not imply any staticness; it simply indicates the particular type of passage of time in the drama ... The passage of time in the drama is an absolute succession of 'presents'". 22 This aspect of drama in general, gets further highlighted and emphasised in forms like yakṣaṇa.

Yakṣaṇa prasangas, for the most part, have been written for performance alone. They have rarely been studied as a part of the Kannada literary tradition. More often than not, they are sidelined as an adjunct to the performing arts. In spite of this, it is interesting to note that the written text follows many codes and conventions that are part of the tradition of written literature and never find a prominent place in performance. This aspect will become clear in the next section where the relation between the written text and the performance text will be discussed.

3.3.3. Naḍe—the oral convention regarding performance

We have already seen how the written text of yakṣaṇa does not contain any direction regarding performance. These details regarding performance are to be found only in the unwritten convention regarding it, that has grown up over the centuries. In yakṣaṇa, this is called naḍe (lit. gait/walk). This convention covers aspects regarding performance in general, as well as the way particular prasangas are performed. Details regarding the division of the written text into scenes, the entry and exit of characters, the manner of developing each character through dance and the improvised text, are all to be found in naḍe only. Many a time, roles that are not found in the prasanga, are introduced in performance, for which only the convention
provides the justification. (A fine example of this is found in Kicaka Vadhe. The analysis of the performance of the prasanga, will make this aspect clear).

The role played by the hāsyagāra (clown) in yakṣagāna can be taken as a fine example of the way this convention controls the performance. There is no definite role for the hāsyagāra in most prasangas. He plays bit roles like that of the watchman, messenger, brahmin etc. Some times, the written text may not even have songs for him. But, in the discourse of the performance, he plays a pivotal role. He has the freedom of making fun of the high and the mighty, including kings and gods. He thus provides the counterpoint to the discourse of the superhuman characters, that is the essence of yakṣagāna. By 'deflating' these characters, he makes them more human and thus more accessible to the spectators. Seen in this perspective, his task can be seen as one of mediation, bridging the world of the spectators with the new world of signification created on the stage. The written text provides no idea of this pivotal role played by the hāsyagāra, in the discourse of yaksagana performance. These are details that can only be found in the oral convention.

The convention, has no doubt been built up over hundreds of years, but it is not in any sense static. It keeps growing and changing all the time. Any change in the tradition in the form of addition, deletion or new interpretation attempted by the artistes, if found effective and is accepted, will becomes part of the tradition and will be followed by later artistes. This shows how nāde keeps changing and emerging. It is also to be noted that there may be versions of nāde for the same prasanga. Regional
variations are also there. Looking at the importance that nađe has, in controlling and shaping the performance as a whole, it is surprising that almost no mention is made of it, in the many writings on yakṣagāna.

3.3.4. The Performance text

Just as the 'text' becomes central to the study of written genres, the performance can also be viewed as a 'text'. All the elements pertaining to the performance become part of this text. Each performance becomes a text. In some cases, the difference between 'texts' may be slight as in repeat performances of the same production. But it still becomes a different text because the condition of the stage as well as the composition and response of the audience, condition the 'text' of performance. The performance text is no doubt based on the written text, but it is never the same. For one thing, the media involved in performance, be it dance, music, speech or the human body, being different, the performance becomes a re-creation and so an interpretation of the written text. However closely the performance text follows a written text, it still becomes an interpretation. For another, different performance traditions have different ways of 'interpreting' the written text. In some, there may be a close proximity between the two texts; in others, there may be a great deal of divergence.

In yakṣagāna, the written text alone does not constitute the 'received text' for performance. As has already been remarked, nađe, the tradition regarding performance, also constitutes an important segment of the
received text. This guides and controls the way in which one text (the written) is transformed to another (the performed).

In yakṣagāna, the performance text does not strictly adhere to the written text. In some prasangas as in Gadaẏuddha, the divergence may be very great whereas in others, it may not be so pronounced. But in all cases, the written text is never considered inviolable. The needs of performance alone become the determining factor regarding what is to be retained and what is not. In order to understand the relationship between the two texts, I have given below, the performance structure of Kīcaka Vadhe. In this analysis, attention has been focussed on the scene divisions (as was done with the written text). Other aspects like dance, the improvised text, music, action etc. are referred to, only in passing. A comparison of this analysis with the earlier analysis of the written text will bring out the salient ways in which the two texts converge and diverge.

3.3.4.1. The Performance text of Kīcaka Vadhe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songs used in the performance</th>
<th>Songs in the written text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Oḍḍōlaga- After the dance, pīthike (introductory speech) by Dharamarāya, weapons tied to a tree; Bhima’s anger</td>
<td>6-8 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kaṇṭha (Dharmarāya) meets the gatekeeper</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gatekeeper meets the king; Kaṇṭha taken into king Virāṭaraya’s service; other Pāṇḍavas also join the king’s service (The next narrative link is made part of the scene here)</td>
<td>6 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Sairandhri’s first appearance. This scene is developed in detail through dance and improvised text (though only two songs are used)  

5. Sairandhri meets the queen  

6. Kicaka’s first appearance; this scene is performed in great detail and his character is established here; with him appears Vijaya-the hāsyāgara (the clown); this scene does not appear separately in the written text; Vijaya’s character is not found in the prasanga (of the next scene)  

7. Kicaka meets the queen; is attracted by Sairandhri and wants to know her identity  

8. Kicaka at home; thinks about Sairandhri  

9. Kicaka meets Sairandhri; makes advances and is rejected by her  

10. Kicaka meets his sister; tells her of his desire to possess Sairandhri; is scolded and advised by her; finally she agrees to send Sairandhri to his house  

11. Queen Sudēśna forces Sairandhri to go to Kicaka’s house (scene 12 of written text left out)  

12. Kicaka’s joy on seeing her  

13. Kicaka accosts Sairandhri; tries to molest her, but she escapes. (Scenes 12 & 13, are thought of as highlights and are enacted in great detail)  

(scenes 15, 16 and 17 of the written text are not enacted)  

14. Sairandhri’s sorrow; decides to appeal to Bhima for help
15. Sairandhri and Valala; Valala at first refuses to help her and finally agrees 7-8 28
16. Sairandhri meets Kīcaka; she promises to meet him in the dancing hall 6 6
17. Sairandhri and Valala; dresses him as a woman 4 6
18. Kīcaka meets Valala (dressed as a woman); an argument and fight ensues; Kīcaka is killed 8-10 14
19. Sairandhri filled with joy, embraces Valala - 1

(scenes 24 and 25 of the written text are not used in performance)

A comparison of the analyses of the written text and the performance text will reveal how one differs from the other in significant ways. At the outset, it can be seen that not all the songs of the prasānga are used in the performance. This 'editing' is necessitated as some of those songs that are used, are elaborated through music, dance and improvised text. So, the first reason for such editing is the constraint of time. Another change that can be noticed is that the narrative links between scenes found in the prasānga are by and large, not used in performance. Some scenes are totally left out in performance. As an example, we can take scenes 15 to 18 from our analysis of the prasānga. These scenes do not form part of the performance text. After scene 14 it shifts to scene 18, which highlights Sairandhari's sorrow. It is difficult to say exactly why these scenes are left out. In them the helplessness of Dharamarāya and Bhīma are highlighted. One possible reason for these scenes being omitted, can be found in the shift in the focus of performance that has taken place of late.
Kīcaka was earlier presented as a rogue, a drunken lout trying to seduce Sairdhari. But in the present day performances, he is presented as an idealised character—a generally good character who was infatuated by Draupadi in the past and by Sairandhri now. The scenes mentioned above present a picture of Kīcaka that will not be in keeping with the new 'discourse' that is being presented in present day performances.

The most important distinction between the two texts is found in the first appearance of Kīcaka. The song in the written text goes like this:

"O king listen, I'll narrate to you the trouble faced by the lady of the five men ten months after [they came to Virāṭanagara]. The rogue Kīcaka, brother of the queen of king Matsēṣa, one day, to see his sister the queen, went to her palace in pride and pomp with great joy".26

The next song depicts Kīcaka meeting his sister and paying his obeisance to her. In performance, the song quoted above is depicted as a separate scene and the performance takes about 10-15 minutes. With him appears another character Vijaya (usually played by the hāsyagāra). In the prasanga, there is no mention of this character. He acts as a companion to Kīcaka and helps in highlighting Kicaka's character, not merely in this scene but in several other scenes too.

These and other details show how, in many crucial ways, the performance text differs from the written text. These changes can be traced to nađe, the convention regarding
performance. The performance text is no doubt based on the written text but where necessary, it deviates from it. This divergence takes place not merely because the medium itself changes but also because, the performance score keeps on changing with the changing times, whereas the prasanga is static.

Another point that can be noted is that, in the prasanga, short narrative links are used to connect the different scenes. But these are not used in performance. These narrative links are part of a special narrative mode used in the written texts of yakṣagāna.\(^\text{27}\) In performance, this narrative strategy is not retained and as a result the narrative links are not used in performance.

All these details show how the study of the structure in yakṣagāna demands a study of both the texts referred to earlier and the dialectical tension that binds them.

Another important aspect of the performance text relates to the spectators' response. As yakṣagāna performances are of a long duration extending till day break, the attention of the spectators will not be concentrated and uniform throughout the performance. They usually wait eagerly for certain moments that they consider highlights. At other moments, they either stroll out for a cup of tea or just take a short nap. Martha Ashton and Bruce Christie explain how this behaviour of the audience, appears to one who is unfamiliar with yakṣagāna:

To a Westerner, the audience behaviour may appear disturbingly casual, at times it is casual almost to the point of rudeness. The audience usually is familiar with the story, and individuals will watch
their favourite parts intensely, but during the less interesting parts (to them), they will go to the vendors at the periphery for snacks and drinks and for a chat, or perhaps stay in the audience talking with their neighbours, or else roll out their mats and go to sleep for a while.

This statement can be taken as an example of a typical western reaction to the behaviour of the audience in a yakṣaṇā performance. But this kind of behaviour is taken as perfectly normal, not merely by the traditional yakṣaṇā spectators but even by the artistes. The 'highlights', from the spectators' point of view, are either those scenes where certain bhāvas (emotional states) are elaborated through song and dance (like the scene where Kīcaka expresses his joy on seeing Sairandhri coming to his house) or where the main characters confront each other. It is to be remembered that most in the audience are already familiar with the story and so, those parts of the performance, where the narrative element is most dense are precisely the ones that interest them, the least. The first scene of Kīcaka Vadhe, where Dharmarāya gives all the details of the twelve years that they spent in the forest and how they plan to spend one year incognito in Virāṭanagar, can be taken as an example of such a scene. Using Roman Jacobson's concept of the six functions of language, we can say that the attention of the spectators is least when the referential function is dominant and that the attention is highest when the aesthetic or emotive functions are dominant.

Yakṣaṇā, like classical Indian music for example, does not lay emphasis on concentrated impact on the spectators. Instead, the emphasis is on leisurely and elaborate exposition. The duration of the performance itself (about nine hours) negates the possibility of a show of
uniform intensity. There is also the possibility of physical exhaustion setting in among spectators. This usually happens in the early hours of the morning. Keeping this aspect of the spectator response in mind, most yakṣaṇa performances are structured appropriately. The leisurely expositions of bhāvas (emotional states) through music and dance, are usually found in the first half of the performance, whereas events performed in the wee hours of the morning are usually of faster tempo. We can say that there is a shift of gear at the nearing of dawn. It is the normal practice to perform two prasanga as part of one night's show (unless the single prasanga itself is big enough). The second prasanga will usually have a faster tempo. In consonance with this, by 3.30 or 4 a.m., the bhāgavata's singing also shifts to a higher pitch and the maddale is also changed to keep in tune with the bhāgavata's voice. The faster tempo of performance, usually dominated with scenes of battle, is intended to keep the audience involved and attentive.

3.3.5. The metaphors of battle and marriage

In this analysis, we have so far not dealt with the question of the themes of yaksagana prasangas. The traditional prasangas are based on the epics and the purāṇas. Small episodes or incidents from the vast span of epics, are dealt with in prasangas. (A prasanga literally means an episode.) One factor that strikes us, so far as the themes of prasangas are concerned, is the predominance of themes dealing with battles and marriages. Most of the prasangas bear the name kālaga (battle). Next in number and importance are the pariṇayās (marriages). Even in prasangas that deal with marriages, they are usually preceded by battles. Thus we find that battles and marriages are the two major themes
of most of the prasangas. This makes one wonder why these themes dominate the yakṣagāṇa discourse. In fact, among the traditional prasangas, there are only a few like Kṛṣṇa Sandhāna or Candrāvaḷi, that do not deal with either battles or marriages.

These themes are no doubt taken from the epics. The epics not merely of India but of most parts of the world, deal mostly with battles and heroic sagas. The predominance of battles and heroic deeds in epics the world over, has attracted the attention of scholars of the epic form. H.M. and N.K. Chadwick, who delved deep into the Homeric epics or Nora Chadwick and Zhirmunsky, who studied the oral epics of Central Asia, point out the predominance of heroic themes of battles in all these epics. Chadwick and Zhirmunsky relate the predominance of warfare in the oral epics of Central Asia to the economic conditions of steppe life.

C.M. Bowra on the other hand, studies this question from the perspective of a 'heroic age' and explains how later generations recast the past in terms of 'heroic age'. The need for such a projection of the past is seen by Bowra as a community's way of overcoming the paradoxes and tensions. The heroic age he says, often grows as bulwark against situations like conquest by foreign tribes, when a tribe leaves its home or when a new religion is introduced etc.

The predominance of battle is not unique to yakṣagāṇa, but is a feature shared by most dance-drama forms of South India (as has been seen in ch II). The dominance of battle in forms like kathakali and terukkūttu may be taken as examples. This predominance of battle (and marriage), points to the fact that it is not a mere thematic detail, but it
becomes a metaphor having a symbolic significance, that is related to the lives of the people. For example, we can see these metaphors as a reflection of the feudal structure where the power structure was most often decided by warfare (or by marriage), in medieval South India.

David Shulman in his study of battle as a metaphor in Tamil folk and classical traditions, analyses this question from a different perspective. He relates the metaphor of battle to the Hindu religious perspective that sees creativity as intimately linked to destruction (like sacrifice). So, battle is linked to creativity of land (harvest -thus linked to agriculture) and with creativity of woman (procreation - thus linked to marriage). Commenting on the equation between marriage and battle he says, "... if marriage can be described in Tamil myths as a battle (often fatal for the male combatant), war can be pictured as a marriage. Again, there is a creative side to the destruction wrought in both these forms: the chaotic forces released in sexual union on the one hand and in battle on the other, ultimately serve to replenish and sustain the ever vulnerable forces of life."32

In the above analysis, the metaphors of battle and marriage are seen as related to the process of creativity. Later on in the same essay, Shulman sees the metaphor of battle as the clash between forces of order and disorder. In the battle, ultimately, disorder (as usually represented by the demon) is ritualistically slain and order restored. Evil and disorder are part of man's life as a whole and though defeated in the end, they are ritualistically and symbolically incorporated into the experience of man. So,
the disorder of battle becomes a basic metaphor for all life and the victory over it is a triumph of forces of virtue and purity.

Thus, battle becomes a metaphor, where destruction and disorder get metamorphasised into creativity. This creativity is seen as operating in woman (where it is brought into order through marriage) and in the land (where agriculture brings it to order). Battle thus does not remain a mere fight between epic heroes but becomes a sign for all life where chaos and disorder are ritualistically catharticised into life giving forces.

Mention may also be made here of Peter Edwin Hook's interesting study of the marriage of heroines in the literary works of South and Central Asia. Applying Colin Masica's work on the definition of a linguistic area, the heroines of stories from different regions of Asia are studied by him. He finds that in the stories from South and Central Asia, usually, the marriage takes place and often forms the central focus of the story. Also, the heroine exhibits faithful sentiments towards the hero. In contrast, in the Perso-Arabian tradition, the marriage usually does not occur.

Thus the themes of battle and marriage become important metaphors in yakṣagāna. They may be said to represent the ritualistic victory of order over disorder and chaos thus leading to creativity both in the woman and in the land. The predominance of these themes in South Indian performing arts as well as in the epics (of most parts of the world) is certainly a fruitful area for further research.
3.4. MANGALA - THE CLOSING PRAYER

Every yakṣaṅgāna performance comes to a close with mangala. This is the ritualistic closing of the performance. After the story being performed is concluded, the mangala dance is performed by the strīvēṣa. The mangala dance signifies the stylised and ritualistic finale of the performance. Songs extolling the Mother Goddess, the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu or Śiva are sung here. The sacred flame is waved by the strīvēṣa to the deity or deities. In open-air performances, the bhāgavata also recevies remuneration from the sponsor and announces the blessings from the troupe's deity. With this unit, the performance on the stage comes to an end. The ritualistic frame work of the entire performance becomes clear in this final section. Led by the strīvēṣa, all the performers proceed to the cauki.34

3.5. THE CONCLUDING PRAYER IN THE CAUKI (MAKE-UP ROOM)

After the conclusion of the performance, the bhāgavata and the other musicians, accompanied by the strīvēṣa proceed to the cauki, where again Lord Ganēśha is worshipped. As they come to the Cauki, the following song is sung:

Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are come,
Open the door;
Kāmadhēṇu, the heavenly cow,
Fulfiller of all wishes
Has returned;
Rejoice35

It is with this worship in the Cauki, that the performance comes to a close. The performance which began
with the worship in the cauki, ends also in the same manner at the same place. The entire interregnum of what is performed on stage is taken as part of the same worship. The ritualistic aspect of yakṣagāna becomes very clear here. Shivarama Karanth is of the opinion that this song is clearly related to bālagopālas who appear in the sabhā lakṣaṇa. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa referred to in the song, are Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa according to him and so the entire performance is to be seen as part of God's līla (divine play).

Structurally speaking, we can see how this rounds up the entire performance. Beginning with the worship in the Cauki, the performance proceeded to the stage and at the end is again brought to a close with the worship in the Cauki. Within this larger structure, there is the embedded structure of performance on the stage which also begins with the worship in pūrvaranga and concludes with the mangala. The prasanga or prasangas performed are thus situated in between the parameters mentioned above.

SECTION 2: PARADIGMATIC ANALYSIS

The linear progression of a yakṣagāna performance was the basis of the syntagmatic analysis of the first part of this chapter. For understanding the structure of any system, the understanding of the linear development is no doubt necessary but this by itself is not enough. The structuration should also be studied at another level—the paradigmatic, where the criss cross of relations of different elements of the linear structure will become clear. When these elements—signs or ensemble of signs that relate to other elements of the linear structure are drawn out and
studied separately, new aspects of the structure become clear to us. The relationship of these elements may be one of conjunction or of disjunction. It is at this level that the relationship of apparently unconnected units becomes visible. It is then that the real discourse of the given system which is always immanent, becomes clear. At the level of the paradigmatic analysis, often the linear structures are broken down and new structures posited. Claude Lévi-Strauss' analysis of myths is a classic example of such an analysis.

However, the form under study here, being a performing art, the methodology appropriate for the study of narratives can not be applied in totality. The methodology applied here is an eclectic one drawing from different approaches—from Roman Jacobson to performance theory. The result may be slightly uneven as a result, but as Keir Elam says, is "perhaps symptomatic of the present state of semiotics at large". In this part, certain aspects of the performance already described in section 1 are taken up again. But here, the emphasis will be to find the function and significance of individual parts like sabhālakṣaṇa and oddolaga from the perspective of the entire performance. Thus, the attempt will be to unravel the meanings of these individual units through a nonlinear approach, which in turn, will lead us to an understanding of the significance of yakṣaṅa as a whole.

In the latter half of this section, the performance will be viewed holistically and global aspects concerning the performance like the spatial conventions, the structure of the organisation etc. will be discussed.
3.6. FUNCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SABHĀLAKŚANA AND ODDŌLAGA

We have seen in the preceding part of this chapter, how sabhālakśana or the preliminaries and oddōlaga - the formalised beginning of a prasanga, form an integral part of every traditional all night yakṣāgāna performance. Here an attempt will be made to move from the descriptive to the analytical- to understand the function and significance of these.

3.6.1. Sabhālakśana

Sabhālakśana is also called pūrvaranga and most traditional theatre forms of India have it in one form or the other. Chapter 4 of Bharata’s Nāṭya śāstra deals entirely with pūrvaranga. Sabhālakśana is a constant component of any yakṣāgāna performance and remains the same, whatever be the prasanga performed. Thus there appears to be no manifest relation of these preliminaries to the prasanga proper. Does it mean that these preliminaries are meaningless? What is its significance in the semiosis of the performance as a whole? This is an aspect that needs some analysis.

To begin with, its function as a ritual is clear. Adya Rangacharya, in his work on the Nāṭya Śāstra says "This pūrvaranga in the course of time has become an elaborate ritual. But originally it was ... just sabha pūja. Worship (respectful welcome) of the audience. It is called pūrvaranga because it comes before (pūrva) the performance (ranga prayōga”). In yakṣāgāna, the ritualistic aspect includes not merely the worship of the audience, but also of the stage, the accompanying instruments and of course the
prayer to the deities to bless the performance. Viewed more broadly, the entire performance itself becomes a mode of worship. The worship of the crown in the preliminaries, can be related paradigmatically to the oddolaga (the court of kings and gods) and to the discourse about the ‘crown wearers’.

The function of sabhālakṣana can be analysed in the light of Roman Jocabson’s theory of communication. This theory was proposed by Roman Jocabson with regard to the functions of language, drawing from linguistics as well as from communication theory. His theory can be extended to apply to nonlinguistic communicative processes as well.

Jocabson, in his theory, recognises six elements in any linguistic communication which can be presented as follows:

Of these six elements, three— the sender, the receiver and the message are too obvious to need any elaboration. The three other elements not often highlighted are equally important. A medium is needed to carry the communication. The referent is what the message is about— what it refers to. Apart from these, the message is always framed in a code. The receiver has to have prior knowledge of the code in order to understand the message. The message is not to be confused
Jacobson also recognises six functions of communication which are related to the six elements mentioned earlier. These functions can also be represented by the following diagram.

Regarding these six functions, R.Scholes says, "Most messages are referential, oriented to the context. Some are emotive, oriented to sender as in the interjections used... which express the sender's attitudes. Some are conative aimed at the receiver primarily, as in imperative locutions. Some are phatic, concerned with the contact itself... An orientation to the code itself as in questions about meanings of words and so on is metalingual. Naturally, the speech of young children or others in the process of language learning, is highly metalingual". The other function is the poetic function where the message itself becomes the referent. Naturally, the poetic function is predominant in literature, but it is present, as Roman Jacobson says, in all uses of language. In fact most of the functions are present in every communication though one or two functions may be dominant.
For the purpose of our study here, the phatic and the metalingual functions become important. The nature of the phatic function is to establish the contact and to test if the medium is functioning properly. 'Hello' of the telephone conversation or Shakespeare's 'lend me your ears' are examples of such a function of language. Pierre Guiraud says, "The phatic function plays a very important role in... rites, solemn occasions, ceremonies, speeches, harangues; family conversations or amorous exchanges, in which the content of the communication is less important that the fact of being there and of affirming one's membership of the group". In the metalinguistic function on the other hand, the code becomes the referent of the message. Underlining the words or putting them in inverted commas can be cited as examples. To quote Guiraud again, "The frame of a painting or the cover of a book highlights the nature of the code; the title of the work of art refers to the code adopted much more often than to the content of the message".

In the light of this theory, let us now try to analyse the function of sabhālakṣaṇa. As we have already observed, sabhālakṣaṇa contains almost all aspects of the performance of the prasanga, like music, dance, costume etc. except the improvised text. But unlike the prasanga it has no 'narrative'. The characters also- the bālagopālas and the strīveśa are undefined; neither are they individualised, nor do they have any specific names. So, we can say that the preliminaries have the 'form' but without the 'content'. The question then would be, what are they communicating? The answer in terms of the above theory would be that it performs the phatic and the metalinguistic function.
Yakṣagāna being a highly codified system, a prior knowledge of the code is a prerequisite, for effective communication. If we can take the example of the highway code, the signals would be perfectly clear to one who is familiar with the code but would mean nothing to another who is not familiar with it. In the case of yakṣagāna, even for the traditional audience who are familiar with the code, a process of familiarisation with the code is perhaps necessary before they become mentally prepared to receive the discourse. Sabhālakṣaṇa performs the function of reaffirming and establishing that code and the contact before the discourse proper of the performance can start. This becomes possible because, as has already been noted, sabhālakṣaṇa contains all the elements necessary for the yakṣagāna discourse but without the discourse itself.

Thus, in sabhālakṣaṇa, the phatic and metalinguistic functions are predominant. The phatic function of establishing the contact between the sender and the receiver, to check and see if the medium of communication is functioning properly, is performed by creating the right atmosphere and mental makeup among the spectators. The ritualistic aspect of Sabhāpūja, (respectful welcome of spectators), is also part of the phatic function. It may also be noted here that it is during the performance of the preliminaries, that most of the spectators come and occupy their seats.

The metalinguistic function is performed by familiarising the spectators to the codes of yakṣagāna. As sabhālakṣaṇa does not contain any narrative, the codes themselves become the message of the communication. The songs sung during this performance contain more of rhythmic
patterns than words. As a result, the attention of the spectators is focussed more on the signifiers which themselves become the referent. Seen in this light, the unidentified and nonindividualised nature of the characters of sabhālaksana assume great importance. They are able to perform the functions discussed above, precisely because of this. As such, Shivarama Karanth’s efforts at identifying the bālagopālas as Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa and the strīvēṣas as Rukmīṇi and Satyabhāma, seem misplaced.44

3.6.2. Oddōlaga

The oddōlaga acts as a link between the preliminaries and the prasanga proper. Oddōlaga is one of the constant elements of a performance in that each prasanga begins with it. At the same time, it can also be viewed as a variable element because the particular oddōlaga to be performed, depends on the prasanga to be performed. Oddōlaga is a kind of formalised exposition. It introduces the characters as well as the episode to be performed. We have seen Section 1 of this chapter how the introductory speech in the oddōlaga called pīthike, situates the particular prasanga in the larger discourse of the epics. Infact, the characters that appear in the oddōlaga are called pīthikevēṣa - the introductory roles.

The highly elaborate dance of the oddōlaga, not merely introduces the characters to the audience, it also helps the actor in ‘entering’ the character. The fast tempo of the music and dance with the concomitent physical work involved, creates the mental frame in the actor, whereby the ‘impersonation’ is achieved. This process can be compared to the one in spirit worship (Bhūtarādhane) where the medium
becomes the spirit. When the music and chanting rises to a crescendo, the medium begins shaking and shivering when the spirit is supposed to possess him and he 'becomes' the spirit. Similarly in oddolaga, the fast tempo of the music and the physical energy involved in the vigorous foot work of the dance, help the actor in becoming the character. This process takes place in full view of the audience. We witness not merely the represented character but the process itself whereby the actor becomes the character.

We can take up another aspect related to oddolaga. In yakṣaṇa, great importance is attached to the first appearance of characters (specially the major ones). This may take place either through the oddolaga or through a sudden or surprising entrance. The actor is supposed to define the character in the first appearance itself in yakṣaṇa. It should be remembered that the discourse of yakṣaṇa always works within the larger discourse of the epics and the mythological stories. Among the spectators, most are already familiar with the 'story' and so the new signification is created within the parameters of this shared knowledge. In fact, this is used as the foundation for the creation of the new signification. The formalised entrance of characters can be viewed as a way of acknowledging that shared knowledge. This perhaps explains the importance attached to the first appearance of characters in yakṣaṇa.

One important aspect of oddolaga is the tere, the traditional curtain held by two stage hands. This curtain is very different from the curtain used in modern theatre. The curtain of the proscenium theatre rises and falls with such a finality that Bertolt Brecht, the German dramatist, called it 'guillotine'. As a result the modern curtain has just become a physical object- opaque physically and semiotically.
On the other hand, the tere in yakṣagāna becomes a highly charged sign. Like the drop curtain, it is also no doubt a device for demarcating the two domains— the world of the spectators and the new world created on the stage. But it does not cut off the new domain totally. It exhibits the new domain— slowly and by degrees. This new world of signification created on the stage is too full of mystery and vitality to be exposed to the spectators all of a sudden. By slow degrees, their eyes should get attuned to the grand, awe inspiring spectacle, after which only they can withstand the total vision in its entirety. This practice can be compared to the custom in temples where the image of the deity is hidden from the sight of worshippers until all the decorations are over. The deity is first shown a mirror, after which only the curtain is opened and the worshippers are allowed to have a vision of the deity.

The tere, demarcates the two domains and in yakṣagāna, the exposure of one domain to the other is itself made a part of the performance. By playing with the curtain that divides the two domains, yakṣagāna makes clear the fact that the new world of signification created on the stage is an artifice by 'declaring' as it were, the fact of performance. We can understand the implication of this clearly if we compare it with the practice in modern realistic theatre where every attempt is made to hide the fact of performance. Yakṣagāna on the other hand, flaunts the theatricality of the performance by daring to play with the curtain that divides the two domains. The effect of this can be compared to what Brecht calls *verfremdungseffekt*— alienation effect— in his theory of epic theatre.
The actor emerges from behind the curtain in stages. As has already been remarked, the actor becomes the character right in front of the spectators' eyes. The struggle of the character with the curtain, the pulling and pushing can be viewed as a struggle of the character to be 'born'.

The tere also acts as a close-up device. In the beginning only the top of the headgear and the feet are visible from behind the curtain. As the actor begins to reveal himself step by step, the spectators' attention is also drawn to those parts that are exposed. This can be compared to the close-up shot adopted in cinema. In this process of revelation, the actor begins with the least significant -the back-and by stages reaches the most significant, the front posture of the face, when all the intricate designs of make-up and costume which are signs denoting the type of character- are revealed.

The two stage hands who hold the tere are pointers to what is considered significant in yakṣagāna. These two are in every day costumes and though they are on the stage, they do not partake in the performance. By their nonchalant appearance they make it clear that they are just devices and are not part of the significatory process going on on the stage. The spectators also accept them as such and pay no attention to them.

The convention regarding who can appear in the oddōlaga has already been referred to. This convention becomes a pointer to understanding the value system of yakṣagāna. Only a king or a god can appear in the oddōlaga. The theme of the prasanga will naturally be about such a personage.
The immanent significance of the worship of the crown in sabhālakṣaṇa becomes clear here. Yakṣaṇa is about superhuman beings and about their superhuman deeds.

Women never appear in oddīlaga. This is true even of prasangas where the female characters dominate, like Draupadi Pratāpa or Mīnakṣi Kālyāṇa. In the oddīlaga of Pāṇḍavas for example, Draupadi never appears. The argument that the fast tempo of the oddīlaga dance is unsuited for women characters would be too simplistic an explanation. On the contrary, it is indicative of the position of women as perceived in the discourse of yakṣaṇa. Oddīlaga being a royal assembly, woman finds no place in it. The male dominant attitude of the yakṣaṇa discourse, can be perceived here.

3.7. THE NARRATOLOGY OF THE PRASANGA

In the first part of this chapter, an analysis was made of the structure of the written text and its relation to the performance text. Here, a study is made of the narrative mode, that we find in the prasanga, the written text of yakṣaṇa. This narrative mode naturally has a bearing on the performance, but the analysis here is primarily concerned with the written text and references will be made to performance only when necessary.

Yakṣaṇa is primarily a performance medium and so to speak of narratology in yakṣaṇa may appear incongruous. Narratology presupposes a narrative text and the word narrative has commonly been used only for the ostensible narratives. But the word narratology is used here in a more generic sense. Any genre that deals with a story, presupposes story telling and so involves narratology. The
equation that a narrative involves only 'telling' and that dramatic literature involves only representation appears too facile and unsatisfactory.

It is for example, assumed that the role of the narrator and his nearness/distance with the reader becomes important in narratives. Performance media are assumed to be dramatic where the characters are supposed to be in direct contact with the spectators with no mediation from the author (narrator). The fallaciousness of such an assumption becomes apparent when we look at 'dramatic' conventions like the 'chorus', the sutradhāra or in yakṣagāna, the bhāgavata. Just as narratives contain dramatic representation, plays often make use of narrative devices.

In the study of the novel, one of the kernel propositions on which attention has been focussed in recent critical writings is that of 'distance' and how the author/narrator masks his voice. In dramatic literature, the question we should ask is perhaps the opposite— not how the author masks himself but how he unmask himself. This is because, the dramatic medium normally does not allow scope for the author to mediate directly. The written literature of yakṣagāna on the other hand provides an example of dramatic literature where the narrator speaks directly to the readers/spectators and where third personal narration is commonly used. In order to understand how this unique narrative mode was evolved, we have to look at some of the other performing arts that have influenced yakṣagāna.

3.7.1. The influence of Harikathe

The narrative mode of yakṣagāna, bears a close resemblance to another performing art, harikathe, which is a
living art form even today. It is also known by other names such as kīrthan and katha kālakṣēpa in other parts of India. Harikathe is a solo performance where the performer, through song and narration, relates the story. Certain small parts are also enacted by him. So in the performer, all the functions of the narrator, actor and commentator are rolled into one. He mostly 'narrates' the story, the dramatic element being minimal. So, harikathe evolved a special narratology of its own in keeping with the demands of the form.

Yaksagāna, specially the written text is said to have originated from the harikathe tradition. In fact, Adya Rangacharya says that the origin of folk theatres in Karnataka, Andhra and Maharashtra can be traced to the influence of harikathe artists. Though yaksagāna is a performing art, the narrative mode of harikathe was retained in the prasanga to a large extent and in the performance too though to a lesser degree.

Another possible reason for the evolution of the unique narrative mode of yaksagāna prasangas, may be traced to the fact that yaksagāna originated as a form of music. Most scholars now agree that yaksagāna was originally a form of music, which later became a performing art. The prasanga in all probability, continued the same narrative mode even after yaksagāna became a performing art. Another version of yaksagāna, called tāḷamaddale, may also have been partly responsible for the continuation of the particular narrative mode. As tāḷamaddale, does not have any stage action, the description of action in the songs sung by the bhāgavata, makes up for the stage action.
3.7.2. The narrative mode

As we have noted in the preceding section, the yakṣagāna script is not divided into dialogues of different characters. The songs contain a description of the action, the hint towards the generation of dialogue, as well as the detail about who speaks the dialogue, as the following example from Karna Parva will make it clear:

Thus in the mire of the blood spilled during the battle, Karna's chariot got stuck like the sinking sun. As the son of the sun god [Karna] was struggling to lift the wheel and axle, Kṛṣṇa saw it and smiling said to Pārtha, O Pārtha, listen, now is the time to kill your enemy, take your divine weapon.51

As the bhāgavata sings the song, the scene that is described in the song is enacted on the stage. The spectators thus not merely see the visual representation but also hear the verbal description.

In the song, we also get another small but significant detail, "Kṛṣṇa smiling, said to Pārtha". In yakṣagāna whenever a character's dialogue is given in a song, it is qualified with terms like 'said to himself' 'declared Indrajitu' etc. This is an example of how third personal narration is used in the dramatic medium. In the analysis of Kācaka Vadhe, we have seen how narrative links are used to connect different scenes in the written text. Added to all these, in the beginning of every prasanga, the poet declares that he is going to 'tell' such and such a story. Diachronically, we can see the influence of Harikathe in such narrative features. But when viewed synchronically, they
project a narratology that is unique in dramatic literature. These and other details show how in yakṣāgāna prasangas, we see a mode that freely mixes dramatic as well as narrative features.

These and other details can be studied under what Barbara Babcock calls metanarration which refers to, "...narrative performance and discourse and to those devices which comment upon the narrator, the act of narrating and the narrative both as a message and as a code". In metanarration, she includes both metacommmunicative and metalinguistic details. The metanarrative details of yakṣāgāna prasangas discussed above call our attention to the fact of communication and these details become signs that signify and draw our attention to the act of communication rather than to the message.

Another very significant metanarrative detail is found in the beginning of prasangas. The opening and ending of narratives have often been studied as providing metacommmunicative formulae that frame the discourse. In the beginning of each prasanga, we get a similar convention that frames the entire discourse. In song five or six of each prasanga, the poet declares that he is now going to narrate the story as was first narrated by 'X' to 'Y'. The stories of the Mahabhārata are presented as told by sage Vaiśampāyana to king Janamejaya. The stories from the Bhāgavata are presented as narrated by Śuka Yōgindra to king Parīkṣit. Those from the Rāmāyana are presented as narrated by sage Vālmiki to Lava and Kuṣa (sometimes to Saunaka and others). The mention appears not only in the beginning, but is reiterated several times in the course of the prasanga as well. (This is a tradition not unique to yakṣāgāna but is taken from the original Sanskrit epics.)
All the metanarrative details enumerated above, create a unique narratology where by the act of narration is going hand in hand with the reminder to the listener that he/she is listening to and witnessing only a representation of the story, narrated through visual, verbal medium. Any illusion of reality that is created by the visual, is broken through the verbal reminder that it is a representation and not reality. Thus the narrative mode adopted connotes the presence of art. By declaring itself unreal, it creates a new paradigm whereby the 'reality of a different order' of the discourse can be perceived. To use Roland Barthes' words, "It is a lie made manifest, it delineates: an area of plausibility which reveals the possible in the very act of unmasking it as false". In other words, yakṣagāna never claims itself to be reality or a mimesis of that reality. It declares itself to be an art and invites spectators to enjoy it as such. The spectators, as well as the artists, are all the time conscious and aware of the fact of communication.

This can be perceived in the metanarrative formula adopted in the opening of all prasangas that has already been referred to—the original narrator and the original listener of the story. The poet, even in the process of writing, addresses this imaginary listener, making it clear that his creation is a discourse from one person (the poet) to others (listeners, reader and viewers, of his time and of the future). The communicative purpose of his endeavour is thus verbally stated in the work itself clarifying this to himself as well as to the readers. He refers back to the 'prime listener' repeatedly during the course of the discourse as well. Thus again and again the art unmarks itself drawing attention to the communicative process. The prime listener of the Mahābhārata, Janamejaya, for example, becomes the archetype of all listeners and spectators.
Unlike many other folk theatre forms of Karnataka, yakṣagāṇa has not become either frozen or a museum piece. It has remained alive and vibrant and has retained its popularity even in the face of challenges from modern media like the cinema and television. The geographical area where yakṣagāṇa is popular is fairly small as we have observed in chapter II (a small portion of Karnataka comprising of the two coastal districts and the adjoining Malenad regions). That there are about twenty professional troupes now, each giving about 180 performances per season, is a pointer to the popular appeal of yakṣagāṇa. These troupes survive without any kind of financial aid from the government or any agency but depend only on the support of the audience. Part of the reason for this success of yakṣagāṇa has to be attributed to the organisational acumen that is exhibited by the yakṣagāṇa troupes. So, it becomes necessary to understand the organisational structure that has evolved in yakṣagāṇa.

A yakṣagāṇa troupe is called a mēḷa (a group). These troupes are almost always organised in the names of temples. A troupe includes not merely the artistes, musicians and stage hands but also the workers (staff) and cooks. Some of the troupes have a fairly long history.56

One feature that we notice about yakṣagāṇa troupes, is that all the recognised troupes of yakṣagāṇa are professional. The artistes are all paid and are engaged from season to season by the troupes. (The yakṣagāṇa season extends from November to May). About 150 to 180 shows are performed per season. This professional nature is one feature of organisation that distinguishes yakṣagāṇa from
other folk theatre forms of Karnataka like मुळालापया. This professional nature of organisation seems to have been a feature of याक्षागाना even in the past.

Depending on the type of organisation, the याक्षागाना troupes of the present, can be divided into three types:

1. **Bayalāṭada Mēla** - troupes that perform in the open

2. Tent mēla - commercially organised troupes which perform in temporarily erected tents and charge for admission

3. Amateur troupes and troupes that do not perform on a regular basis.

Of these, the first two are professional troupes, that perform every night during the याक्षागाना season. The amateur troupes, though quite a few in number, are always considered as belonging to the periphery of the याक्षागाना activity and so, only the first two types are taken up for study here.

3.8.1. **Bayalāṭada mēla- 'open-air' troupes**

In the past, before the commercialised troupes came into existence about forty years ago, all याक्षागाना troupes belonged to this category. The troupes moved from village to village giving performances. These performances would be sponsored by individuals who would bear the cost of the performance. They were called harakeāta, because the devout would take a vow to organise a performance if their wishes were fulfilled. So, on occasions like child birth, marriage etc. याक्षागाना shows were performed. It was considered a sacred work to arrange for a याक्षागाना performance. Some
times, several people together would sponsor a show. There was no special day or occasion for performance. It could be and was performed on any day. The troupe being professionally organised, shows were performed almost every night.

The troupes moved from village to village on foot. All the paraphernalia necessary for performance like costume, musical instruments and stage props were carried on head and for this, workers were engaged. They were part of the troupe. The local arrangements, including the preparation of the stage and the cauki (green room) was the responsibility of the sponsor. He also had to provide the necessary provisions for feeding the troupe.

The troupe usually consisted of about five musicians, twenty artistes, ten workeres and two cooks. The tasks to be done by each worker was meticulously divided and it was part of the convention. All the articles of the troupe were packed in six boxes and the costumes in two bundles. Each box had a name and the worker who carried it, was also known by the same name: Gaṇapati petṭige, adda peṭṭige etc. The division of labour of each member of the staff and his work during and after the performance, can be known from the following extract from Martha Ashton and Bruce Christie:

The head of the staff, the Gaṇapati Peṭṭige has the honour to carry the Gaṇapatī image to the next place of performance, and then on arrival it is his job to find and set up the stones for the fire place and prepare the fire for cooking the meal. After the troupe has had breakfast, he smears cowdung on the ground of the eating place to purify it. In the evening around 6-30 or 7.00 p.m. he sets up an image of the deity in the dressing room. In the lid from a cane basket he places two kings' crowns (the Rama Laksmana crowns), the
warrior queen's crown; Kṛṣṇa's weapon, the cakra; Śiva's weapon, the trident; green and red pigment powder used for make-up; peacock feathers and ornaments. In front of the basket lid he places a pot for offering money to the god and a simple oil lamp which he lights. All night he must supervise other members of the staff and when necessary help the actors with their costume and make-up.

Though the troupes were run in the names of temples, the temple management usually had little to do with actual running of the troupe. The responsibility was usually taken care of by a person who became the manager of the troupe. He would hire the artistes, fix their remuneration, get the costumes and other necessary articles ready and fix the performance. The financial risk was entirely his. The first and last shows of the season called Śrīveśṭa, were performed in the temple premises itself.

This was how all troupes were organised in the past. Now, the 'open-air' troupes function more or less in the same manner with the same functions being followed even now. The difference is in the use of a raised platform for the stage and in the mode of transportation. In addition, the 'open-air' troupes of today have in turn been influenced by the commercial troupes. Electric lights and public address system are used by all forms of troupes now. Other than these changes, the open-air troupes follow the old tradition.

Of late, there seems to have been a resurgence of sponsorship of the open-air performance— the harike Āṭa. The Katīlu temple for example, now runs four 'open-air' troupes. Even then, its performances for the next three years are said to have been 'booked'.

One aspect needs special mention here. Among the sponsors now, many are those that have migrated from the coastal districts to other parts of the country. Specially from Dakshina Kannada district, a large number of people have migrated to places like Bombay and have become successful in business there. Of late, many have gone to the Gulf states in the Middle East. For them, though they have settled elsewhere, the natural urge is to gain prestige and respectability in the places of their origin. Sponsoring a yakṣagāṇa performance has now become one way of achieving that recognition.

In the past, only the landlord or the rich of the village, could afford to sponsor a performance. It was thus, a part of the feudal system and sponsorship was associated with prestige and position in society. The migrant neo rich, for all the success that they have achieved elsewhere, yet feel the psychological urge for their success to be recognised in the society, from where they have migrated. Sponsorship of a yakṣagāṇa performance, because of the past associations, provides one way of achieving that end. Many a time, they spend lavishly for decorative lights etc. to make their sponsored shows, more glamorous events than the 'traditional' sponsored shows. This shows how living forms like yakṣagāṇa, far from remaining insulated from the tensions and power struggles of the society, actually become vehicles for the expression of such forces.

3.8.2. Commercial 'tent' troupes.

During the 1950s an important change came about in the organisational structure of yakṣagāṇa troupes. We have seen how in the past, the performances were open to everyone
irrespective of who the sponsor was. But, for the first time, some troupes started performing in an enclosed area where spectators had to pay for witnessing the performance. Though yakṣaṇa troupes were always professionally organised, we can say that with this development they now became commercial. Two reasons can be attributed for this development. The first of course was the desire to 'cash in' on the popularity of yakṣaṇa. Troupes as well as artistes could definitely earn more than what they could, in the 'open-air' troupes. Another reason was the dwindling sponsorship. This was especially true of Uttara Kannada district and Malenad regions where the decreasing number of sponsored shows, led the troupes to a situation where they had to find some other means of survival.

Today, there are about ten 'tent' troupes. They give shows in temporarily erected tents. Admission is by sale of tickets. Chairs are provided for spectators (except for the last denomination of tickets, who have to squat on the ground). Normally only one show is given at a place. The next day the entire paraphernalia of tent, chairs, stage (and the other requirements of a yakṣaṇa performance), will have to be transported to another place and set up again for another all night performance. This process goes on every day during the yakṣaṇa season in which about 180 shows are performed.

Before the actual emergence of these 'tent' troupes, there was an intermediary stage that lasted a few years. That was the stage when initial attempts at commercialisation were being attempted. A temporarily erected auditorium of palm and coconut fronds was built, where a troupe would perform several shows on alternate nights. This system had
the advantage of avoiding incessant travel. In addition, artistes had free time to reflect on their performance, as the mad rush of moving from place to place every day was not there. As the troupe stayed at one place for several days, a close rapport on and off the stage also developed between the artistes and the spectators.59

This system did not last long. It soon gave way to the present system where the troupe itself carried the tent, chairs - in short, the auditorium-along with the stage and artistes from place to place. So now, the 'tent' troupes follow a system where they move from place to place giving one all night performance in each place. The next day, the entire paraphernalia is shifted to another place where the next performance will be held.

The 'tent' troupes also engage the artistes and others for one season and follow most of the conventions of the 'open-air' troupes. The following details of Sri Kadri Manjunātha Swāmi Kṛpaḥpōṣita yakṣagāna Manḍāḷi Mangalore, would give a fair picture of the 'tent, troupes. This troupe has 23 artistes, 6 musicians and 12 workers. The job of the workers, includes the pitching and dismantling of the tent every day, along with the transportation of the chairs. The troupe has hired a lorry and a van for the purpose of transportation. A small generating set (5 H.P.) is used for electric supply and this also is transported every day. The board and lodging facilities of the troupe are looked after by the troupe management itself.60

3.8.2.1. 'Contract' System

In the early years of commercialisation, the troupes themselves took the risk of profit and loss. But now, in
order to reduce the risk, a new system referred to as the 'contract' system has been evolved. In this system, some local person enters into a contract with the troupe to pay a fixed sum for the performance. He takes the responsibility for the sale of tickets and takes care of local arrangements like advertisement, the getting of licence etc. He has to pay the sum assured to the troupe whether the tickets are sold or not. Some times he makes a tidy profit also.

This system has helped the troupes in getting a fixed return and in overcoming the vagaries of the ticket counter. This system has become well established now. Normally, before the commencement of the season, the troupes enter into agreements with these 'contractors'. The rates per show are fixed. Kadri Mēla, referred to above, had two rates for the 92-93 season. Rs 6300 per show for Saturdays and other special days (like a day of the local festival) and Rs 5800 per show for other days. A new breed of yakṣagāna 'contractors' have sprung up in all the towns and villages where yakṣagāna is performed.

The artistic control of yakṣagāna, now seems to be slipping into the hands of these contractors. They decide on the prasanga to be performed. They insist that new prasangas should be performed every year. The importance enjoyed by these people can be understood from the following remark by P.V.Hasysgara, "[To the yakṣagāna] artistes, today, the contractor has become the presiding deity. They are dancing to the tune of the contractors". The commerical compulsions are fast changing the face of yakṣagāna, inspite of the objections from the tradionalists.
In spite of commercialisation, certain ritualistic aspects are still maintained. The troupes are still organised in the names of temples. The worship in the cauki and on the stage are performed with the same devotion. The first and the last performances of the season are always performed in the open in the precincts of the temple of the presiding deity of the troupe.

3.8.2.2. Condition of the artistes

With commercialisation, the remuneration of the artistes has definitely improved. Prior to commercialisation, the amount that the artistes received was no more than 'subsistence wages'. With the increase in the number of troupes, there is a definite demand for the artistes who have 'star' appeal. The manoeuvres that go on before the commencement of every season to book the artistes, can be compared to the transfer of players that takes place in football clubs. The top artistes earn as much as 40-50 thousand rupees per season. The remuneration of the other artistes has also considerably improved.

At the same time, because the performances are given every night and because of the incessant travel, the physical demands on the artistes have become very heavy. The artistes do not normally get any leave facilities or holidays and they have to perform every night. This strenuous load of work, many a time affects their health. They also have no job security.

Within the troupe, there are no caste barriers. All artistes, whatever their caste live together as equals. As the writer of Avalokana makes it clear, "Within the fold of
yakṣagāṇa, differences in caste did not matter. Brahmin disciples often learnt from non Brahmin Bhagavats or players". 64

3.8.3. The economic status

By present day standards, about five to six hundred thousand rupees are needed for establishing a troupe. If salary and other expenses are included, a minimum collection of Rs 4500 to Rs 5000 per show is required to reach the break-even point. Or instead, most of the shows should be booked by the contractors. The managers of many troupes say that they are suffering loss. At the same time, we have a situation where, over the last several years, the number of troupes has actually increased. So, it is very difficult to decide on the actual financial returns, specially because the managements are unwilling to give this information.

3.8.4. The peripheral activities

Mention must also be made of the many tea stalls and snack shops that spring up around the tent, wherever a yakṣagāṇa performance is held. These shops do brisk business throughout the night. They have now become an integral part of the total atmosphere of a yakṣagāṇa performance. As we have observed in the first part of this chapter, every performance has high and low points of interest from the spectators’ point of view. During the 'low' moments, these tea stalls become to them more attractive than the performance. This economic activity has become a part of the environment of the performance.
On the whole, we can say that the ingenuity of organisation, exhibited by the yakṣaṅāṇa troupes has been partly responsible for the survival and popularity of yakṣaṅāṇa. Yakṣaṅāṇa has survived the challenges posed by modern media like cinema and television. This achievement can be better understood if we look at the situation of professional theatre in Karnataka. The first half of this century was the heyday of professional theatre in Karnataka. But from 1950 onwards, unable to face the challenge posed by the growing popularity of cinema, most of these 'companies', as the drama troupes were called, closed down. Only a few troupes are surviving now and they too, face a bleak future.

In comparison, yakṣaṅāṇa has not merely retained its popularity, it has in fact become a commercially successful venture. That more than twenty yakṣaṅāṇa troupes are operating without any aid from any source, is itself proof of the position that yakṣaṅāṇa has, in the cultural ethos of the people.

3.9. THE STRUCTURE OF THE AUDIENCE

Any given society, organises itself on the basis of certain conceptual paradigms and these paradigms are reflected in all the expressive systems of that society. The structure and composition of the audience, can also be studied as one such system reflecting the paradigm. This is specially true of a traditional and ritualistic form like yakṣaṅāṇa. So, for a complete understanding of yakṣaṅāṇa and the society in which it operates, an understanding of the structure of the audience also becomes necessary.
Previous studies have only occasionally concentrated on this aspect of yakṣagāṇa. Infact, rarely does one come across any sustained study of the audience, its structure and its relation/interaction to the performance, of any performing art of India, except in the form of stray comments. The following is one such perceptive remark about the audience of a doqṭāta performance in northern Karnataka by Chandrashekar Kambar. "The audience sit on all sides. Men sit on one side and women on the other... Śūdras, male and female together sit at the back from where demons enter the stage". Several aspects of social structuration are connoted in the above statement. The most obvious one, is how the Śūdras (the last of the four varṇas according to the Hindu scriptures), are spatially equated with the demons. We can also see the segregation of men and women who sit on different sides. But the same segregation is not found among the Śūdras. This exhibits how one segregation, (the Śūdras from the upper castes), gains precedence over another segregation (of Śūdras along gender lines).

Among the audience of yakṣagāṇa, there are people belonging to all classes and castes with different social and educational backgrounds as can be seen from the remarks of Martha Ashton and Bruce Christie. "The audience is a Pot Pourri of collage professors, doctors, lawyers, school teachers, merchants, students, housewives, fishermen, construction workers, factory workers, farmers and servants". In analysing the structure of the audience of yakṣagāṇa performances, a clear distinction has to be drawn between the sponsored open-air performances and the commercial text troupes.
3.9.1. Open-air troupes

In case of the open-air performances also, the situation seems to have changed from what it was in the past. Earlier, the sponsor almost always belonged to the upper caste. The prime places in front of the stage were occupied by the sponsor's family and others belonging to the upper castes. This place was called *Brahma Sabha* (Brahma's Court/assembly of Brahmins). Men and women were segregated and sat on different sides. The lower castes, usually sat at the back or on the extreme sides. But the situation is changing now. Martha Ashton and Bruce Christie say, "Until the late nineteen fifties, people sat in sections according to their caste and sex, but today there seem to be only two seating arrangements: either women and children in one section segregated from the men, or the audience completely unsegregated seated in family groups. The seating arrangement is dictated by the patron". The changing social equations, where the rigid hierarchy of caste and sex are breaking down, are reflected in the changed ordering of the audience that is described here. Perhaps this change was hastened by the arrival of the commercial troupes. This aspect becomes clear when we observe the structuration of the audience in tent troupes.

3.9.2. 'Tent' troupes

With commercialisation and the starting of the tent troupes, a sudden rupture took place from the past system of the segmentation of the audience. Yakṣaṇā became a business venture and so the segmentation of the audience was now based on the rates of admission rather than on concepts like caste and gender. The shape of the auditorium of a tent
troupe and its division can be seen in the sketch of yakṣaṅa stage and auditorium given in the beginning of this chapter. The highest rates are charged for the chairs in front of the stage, whereas the chairs farther away from the acting area are charged less. No chairs are provided on the left and right sides of the stage where the spectators have to squat on the ground. These are the least charged. Here, men sit on one side and women on the other. There seems to be no fixed convention whether men should be seated on the left or right of the stage. The only convention followed is that men and women are segregated. There is no such segregation in the chairs section, where men and women sit together.

If we compare this arrangement with the statement of C. Kambar seen earlier about the audience in a doddāta performance, we can see a clear reversal having taken place. The segregation based on sex has now vanished from the 'chairs' section, but has been introduced in that section of the auditorium which is charged least.

In the segmentation of the audience of the 'tent' troupes described above, we can clearly see a shift having taken place from caste to class as the basis of the division of the spectators. The admission charge for the front row of chairs, is pretty high (almost equal to day's wage of a daily wage earner). But any one who can pay this amount, irrespective of his/her caste, can occupy these chairs. I have seen many daily wage earners, who pay this amount for this 'prestige' of sitting in the chair at least for one show in a season. The urge to equate themselves with the upper castes and classes, at least for the duration of
the performance, finds expression in this. At the same time, it has to be conceded that rarely does one come across a member of the upper caste, in the 'ground' section.

3.9.3. Regional differences

In the composition of the audience of yakṣaṇa, we see regional differences. In Dakshina Kannada, yakṣaṇa is patronised by almost all castes and classes of people. In Utter Kannada on the other hand, the bulk of the audience comprise of the upper castes and some intermediary castes like the Gowdas and Bhandaries. In Malnad regions, the patronage seems to be restricted mostly to the upper castes and the migrant labourers from the coastal regions.

In the above study, preliminary as it is, we have seen how the changing social structures and equations are reflected in the structuration of the audience. This shows how the study of the structure of the audience, becomes important in understanding the performance context of yakṣaṇa and of the society where it operates.

3.10. THE CONCEPT OF SPACE IN YAKSAGANA

In the preceding pages, we saw how the conceptual paradigms of a culture get expressed through the structure of the audience. Similar paradigms operate in the ordering of space as well. The concept of space in yakṣaṇa can also be studied as one such expressive system, where these conceptual paradigms operate.
3.10.1. **The performance space**

With regard to the performance space of yakṣaṅāṇa, we can see a clear movement from the religious space to the social space. Yakṣaṅāṇa, in its earliest form of tāḷamaddale was a mode of worship conducted inside the temple itself. This custom of offering worship, by singing a few songs was performed by the open-air troupes in temples or in the houses of the sponsors, before the commencement of the actual performance on the stage till recently. When yakṣaṅāṇa became a dance-drama, it moved from inside the temple to the temple court yard. Even today many performances are conducted in the precincts of the temple. The sēve āṭa performed by troupes (the first and last shows of the season) can be taken as examples. From the temple courtyard, the next movement was to the open space or the square of the village, and from there to the courtyard of the sponsor’s house. Now for the tent troupes, any open space can become the performance space. This progression away from the temple is a movement from religious space to secular space. This movement is part of the larger process of secularisation of yaksagana.

A yakṣaṅāṇa performance, like that of most other performing arts of South India, always takes place during the night and extends till day break. Why is the performance always associated with the night? Does night and darkness signify anything more than merely the convenient time of performance?

The night is in opposition to the day and the order of the day is many a time reversed in the night. The night can be said to belong to the ‘spaceless’ people. It is not
merely a question of physical space. The people who do not belong to the order and system of the society, are often associated with the night. The equating of the night, in popular imagination with elements like thieves and robbers-who have defied the order of the society and with ghosts and spirits- over which the society can not exercise any control, can be taken as instances. To this 'spaceless' category also belong, people who have been pushed out, or marginalised and so do not find any place in the stratified order of the settled society. Such people create their own space in the spacelessness of the dark night. *Bhūtāradhane* (spirit worship) provides a fine example, where the order of the day is reversed in the performance, which takes place in the night. The priest of *Bhūta* worship comes from the lowest caste but during the performance, embodies the all powerful spirit and is treated with fear and respect by all, including those belonging to the higher echelons in the hierarchical order of the society. The performing arts of many of the nomadic tribes can also be taken as examples. These are people who have been marginalised and have been made 'spaceless', literally and metaphorically by the dominant settled society. Such people create their space in the reversed order of the night, which lasts till day break when the order of the day is restored again.

But in the discourse of *yakṣagāna*, the dominant structure and value system of the society gets emphasised. It does not thus give expression to the marginal voices. The social order and value system of the epics and mythologies get represented and reinforced in performance. On the other hand, in *yakṣagāna*, we can find the marginal voices expressed in the 'unofficial ideology' of the discourse, to use Bakhtin's words. In *yakṣagāna* for
example, the actors who enact the divine and super human characters, most often, belong to the backward castes, but during the performance, they 'become' the heroes and gods worshipped by all. It is also worth noting that till recently, the artistes were looked down upon and did not command any respect, in society. They were thus marginalised. But in the night during the performance, they occupy the 'centre stage' enjoying the prestige and perhaps the power as well, but only till day break when the performance comes to an end and the order of the day is restored.

Though the yakṣaṇa stage is now constructed in any open space, the stage is not supposed to face certain directions during certain days of the week. This is related to the belief that Rāhu, the evil force will be present in different directions on different days of the week. For example, on sundays and thursdays, Rāhu is supposed to be facing east. So on those days, the stage is constructed in such a way that the east will be either to the left or to the back of the stage. This custom is followed by all troupes even to this day. Any how, this convention does not apply if the performance is to be given within the precincts of a temple. This shows how the sacred space of the temple overrides the power of the profane forces. But in other spaces, adequate measures have to be taken, to protect the performance from the profane force-Rāhu.

3.10.2. The Stage Space

After these global considerations, let us now consider the conventions regarding stage space in yakṣaṇa. Here a distinction has to be made between (a) The represented space and (b) The conventions regarding stage space.
(a) The yakṣagāna stage is always bare with no use of painted curtains or stage props (except for the seat at the back, called chariot). The yakṣagāna discourse moves freely from the human world to the divine and to the world of the Rākṣasas (demons like Rāvaṇa, Hiranyakāšapu etc.) The yakṣagāna stage has to represent all the three worlds and the bareness itself helps it in representing any domain and in shifting from one domain to another. The transition from one domain to another is suggested by an exit and entry of the characters or even by going round the stage once. Thus the yakṣagāna stage, though bare, has the potentiality of representing all the three domains of Hindu cosmology. We can even say that the bareness itself gives scope for representing any space.

(b) Compared to the modern stage, the yakṣagāna stage is small. The usual stage is about twelve feet wide and fifteen feet deep. Within this space, yakṣagāna has a highly codified convention that governs aspects like the acting area, the distance between characters, the places where the actors should stand etc. An understanding of these conventions is necessary to understand how the stage space is utilised in yakṣagāna.

The physical distance that individuals maintain between them can also become a sign. E.T.Hall in his The Silent Language, shows how the distance that two people maintain between them, can itself signify the relationship that exists between them - if they are friends, lovers or just strangers. A study of this as a signifying system is called proxemics. (The meaning of the spatial distance may change from culture to culture.)
Theatre, in particular, makes great use of the distance/nearness between characters, as a signifying device. In addition, the stage space is divided into strong and weak areas. The meaning attached to stage space as well as to the distance/nearness of characters are different in yakṣagāṇa. They are governed by the codes regarding these, which are a part of the convention.

3.10.3. The Conventions

The yakṣagāṇa stage makes use of one curtain at the back. (This practice is only about thirty-forty years old, but is followed by all types of troupes now.) The entrance of characters is always by the left and the exit is by the right of the bhāgavata. This rule is invariably followed and very rarely broken. When two characters are on the stage, the character who is dancing or speaking is always on the right and the other character stands to the extreme left of the stage. The major portion of any prasanga consists of scenes that depict the meeting or confrontation between two characters. These scenes are structured in such a way that instead of a dialogic, what emerges in the performance is actually a series of alternating monologues. As an example, we can take the following songs from Kīcaka Vadhe (scene no.9 of the earlier analysis). Only a rough summary of the songs is provided here, to help us in understanding the way the performance progresses on the stage.

Sequence 1 (4 songs) Kīcaka appeals to Sairandhri to fulfil his sexual desires; says he has been defeated by her and that she should fulfil his desires

Sequence 2 (3 songs) Sairandhri, afraid that this villain will not leave her, tells him not to desire another's wife. He will go to hell and suffer like a worm for such a sin. So, instead of inviting death, he had better go home quietly
Sequence 3 (2 songs) Kicaka tells her that he cannot go home as he has been caught in her trap. His life has no meaning until he enjoys her beauty.

Sequence 4 (2 songs) Sairandhri tells him that her five husbands who are Gandharvas will surely kill him. He had better take care of his life and return home.  

(The scene continues like this for seven more songs)

In the enactment of sequence 1, Kicaka occupies the centre stage and Sairandhri stands at the left corner. She hardly reacts during the song-dance sequence of Kicaka. When he completes his dance and speech, and at the commencement of sequence 2, Sairandhri moves to the right and Kicaka, now comes to the left corner and stands there, until the beginning of sequence 3, when he moves to the right again and Sairandhri, having completed her sequence, moves to the left. The position is again reversed with sequence 4, which 'belongs' to Sairandhri.

In the above description, we can see how the active character is always on the right and the recepient of the message is always on the left. When the sender-receiver roles of the message are reversed, the positions on the stage are also changed. This convention regarding stage space is followed irrespective of the position or relative hierarchy of characters. The exceptions are discussed later.

The left-right opposition has often been analysed with the help of conceptual paradigms like sacred-profane, pure-impure etc. Commenting on Robert Hertz's work on the subject, Veena Das says, "He had argued that the right and the left sides can be shown to be associated in a consistent manner, with the sacred and the profane (in the sense of
negatively sacred) respectively, in a large number of cultures. But in yakṣaṅgana, the left-right opposition of the stage space does not seem to be related to the oppositions mentioned above. It can be better understood in terms of the opposition of active-inactive. The right side is always the active side on the stage and the left is always the inactive. The one on the left is always the recipient of the message. When he becomes the sender of the message, the places are changed and he occupies the right.

This equation changes when the chariot or seat at the back is used. There are definite conventions regarding who can make use of the seat. The king in his own court, may sit on the chariot while the other characters has to stand. In such cases, when the king becomes the inactive character, instead of moving left, he will move back and sit on the chariot. When the song that pertains to him starts, the other character as usual moves to the left. Sometimes a king himself may offer the seat to a sage or a god. In such cases, the power and position of the seat is shifted to other person and the king now has to move to the left corner when he becomes the recipient of the message.

Thus we can say that, the chariot represents prestige and position. A servant or a hunter even when he is alone can not make use of the chariot. When two or more characters are on the stage, the 'superior' character has the right of using the chariot. In a scene of Pândavas for example, only Dharmarāya can sit on the chariot.

The chariot, being the only heightened place on the stage, becomes a signifier for a throne, a chariot, a mountain- infact any place that is distinguished from the
rest of the represented space. If lord Śiva and Pārvatī stand on it, it becomes Mount Kailas, Lord Śiva’s abode. It is also used, sometimes to express a heightened emotional state. Kīcaka, when he sees Sairandhri coming to his palace, may dance standing on the chariot. The significance of this is to be seen in the heightened emotional state of Kīcaka.

The movements on the stage in yakṣagāna, are usually circular or semi-circular (excepting in the battle scenes where diagonal movements are used). The circular motion is always from left to right. There seems to be no fixed convention about when the circular movement is used. It perhaps represents a ‘shift’. The shift may be from one emotional state (bhāva) to another, from one stanza of the song to another or from nṛtta (pure dance—only rhythmic patterns) to nṛtya (emotive acting accompanied by dance). The completion of any of the phases mentioned above and the beginning of another, is punctuated by this circular motion.

Yakṣagāna has very definite conventions regarding stage space and its utilisation. The meaning attached to distance/nearness in real life does not apply here. It has to be understood according to the codes of yakṣagāna regarding space and its signification.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. In the past, with open-air troupes, it was the custom to sing a few songs in praise of the gods, either in the local temple or in the house of the sponsor of the particular performance. See Kota Srinivasa Naik *Yakṣagāṇa Bhāgavatānobbana Anubhavagalu* [Experiences of a Yakṣagāṇa Bhāgavata], (Kundapura: 1977), pp 30-31. The commercial troupes do not follow this practice.


4. The relationship between ritual and theatre, specially with reference to yakṣagāṇa has been discussed in Chapter V.


6. In the Sabhālakṣaṇa edition referred to above, a number of such set pieces of the clown and his assistants are listed.

7. The Sabhālakṣaṇa contains a number of these songs of which only a few are used in performance.


9. Peter Claus, quoted in ibid, p.12.


14. R.Vijaya Kumar, "He has Enriched it Beyond Measure", [An article on the contribution of Shivarama Karanth to Yakṣagāna], *The Hindu*, October 8, 1993, p.19.

15. Now with electric lights replacing traditional lighting system of oil torches, this custom that had the potential of creating the atmosphere of mystery and awe, has almost vanished.


20. Visnu Bhagavata (16th century) "Kicaka Vadhe" [The Killing of Kicaka], *Virāṭa Parva* (8th imp. Udupi: 1986). "Kicaka Vadhe" is one of the two prasangas in *Virāṭa Parva*, the other being "Uttara Gōgraḥaṇa" [After the capture of Cows]. Either, these two prasangas are performed as part of one night's performance or "Kicaka Vadhe" is performed with some other prasanga.

21. The exact definition of what constitutes a scene has been a matter of dispute in structural analysis of drama. The word is used here to represent a spatio temporal unit. When either changes in the action represented, it constitutes a new scene.


23. In the past, in this scene, when Kicaka was about to catch hold of Sairandhri, either Valala (Bhima) or some stage hand in disguise, used to enter stealthily, shower heavy blows on Kicaka and exit unnoticed. Now a days, Sairandhri merely runs away and escapes from the
clutches of Kīcaka. Only in the beginning of scene 16, Kīcaka explains that some unknown force showered blows on him.

24. In the performances in the past, some of these narrative links were used in performance. They were sung by the bhāgavata, at the completion of one scene and before the commencement of another when the stage was bare. But in present day performances, these narrative links are rarely, if at all, used.

25. This trend of idealising the 'wicked' and 'evil' characters is part of the general trend of secularisation found in Yakṣaṇa now. This has been dealt with in chapter V.


27. The narrative mode of yakṣaṇa prasangas has been dealt with, later in this chapter.


30. Chadwick and Zhirmunsky, op.cit., p.94.


34. As with many other ritualistic aspects of yakṣaṇa, the mangala has also been retained in a curtailed form in commercial troupes. The implication of the custom in open-air performances, on the performative context, is discussed in chapter V.

36. Keir Elam, op. cit., p.3.


38. Attempts are now being made to present shorter versions of yaksagāna performances of two and a half to three hours. In them, Sabhālaksana in usually not performed.


43. ibid., p.9.


45. This process of transformation can be said to begin in the cauki (make-up room) itself when the actor begins his make-up. One of the interesting features of yaksagāna is that the cauki is partially open to the spectators, who are allowed to come and witness the proceedings in the cauki. Thus we can say that the different stages of transformation are open to the public gaze.

46. John Fuegi, Bertolt Brecht: Chaos According to Plan, (Cambridge: 1987), P.98. In order to overcome this feature of the curtain, Brecht, made use of ‘the half curtain’ in many of his productions.


48. Adya Pangacharya, Bhāratiya Rangabhūmi [The Indian Theatre], op.cit., p.82.
49. The role of the *bhāgavata*, can cited as an instance of the influence of *harikathā* on performance; for example, the way he talks to the characters while introducing them, and how he provides the narrative link.

50. *Tālamaddale* is a popular form of *yaksāgāna* performance even now and is performed mostly during the rainy season (June to October) inside the precincts of a temple or in a big house. In it, only the music and *vācīkabhinaya* (lit. speech acting; = using voice and speech for emotive representation; here it comprises of improvised dialogues) are used. The performers are in every day costumes. They expand on the songs sung by the *bhāgavata*, through their dialogues. Its main attraction lies in the new and sometimes illuminating interpretation that they give to the songs and to the characters that they represent. Sometimes, sharp exchange of arguments and counter arguments take place where each actor tries to denigrate the other. This is also considered a chief attraction of this form.


53. It may be of interest to note here that this convention is found in the *Mahābhārata* but not in the *Rāmāyana*.


55. A perceptive analysis of the narrative mode of the *Mahābhārata* can be found in Manu.S.Shetty’s "The Bhagavadgītā in the Mahābhārata" (unpublished article). In it he has analysed the different layers of embedding of the story from Vyāsa to Vaishampāyana to Ugrasravas, and how this makes the epic an eternal dialogic and always open ended. His analysis also reveals how in the *Mahābhārata*, the past, "is not passively transmitted, but on the other hand is dialogically reclaimed from the vantage point of the present". p.6.

56. For example, the Hasyayara troupe of Karki is said to have existed since 1650. Mandarti troupe is said to have a history of continuous performance of at least 165 years.
57. For details, see Martha Ashton and Bruce Christie, op.cit. pp.50-51.

58. ibid., pp.52-53.

59. The information regarding the intermediary stage was given by Sri Sambhu Hegde, the famed Yakṣagāṇa artiste during a personal interview. He is of the opinion that it is better to revive this system to overcome many of the ills of the present 'tent' system.

60. Details provided by D.Mohan Kumar, the manager and lead artiste of the troupe during a personal interview. With minor variations, these details are true for other troupes as well.

61. No licence is needed for the performance itself, but the troupes have to get licence for the use of the public address system and for the use of the land.


63. These changes and their implications are discussed in chapter VI.


66. Martha Ashton and Bruce Christie, op.cit., p.4.

67. ibid., p.4-5.

68. See P.V.Haryagara, op.cit., p.70n.

69. This aspect has been analysed in chapter V.

70. Bakhtin, in his The Dialogic Imagination, (Austin: 1981), comments on the polysemy of voices in the discourse of the novel. This is equally true of most other art forms, where the official ideology is tried to be projected by the establishment, but unofficial ideologies also get expressed. See chapter V for more details and for an analysis of yakṣagāṇa in terms of Bakhtin's ideas.
71. In Hindu mythology, Rāhu in the demon responsible for the solar eclipse. Rāhu is generally considered as bringing ill luck. Certain periods of the day are also designated Rāhukāla (Rāhu's time). No important work is done by the devout during this period of the day.

72. As the yakṣagāna stage has spectators on three sides of the stage, the directions regarding left and right are used here from the point of view of the actor or to be more precise, from the point of view of the bhāgavata. This applies to all further references to directions.


74. This convention stands in contrast to the convention in kathakali where according to Philip Zarelli, "The character of higher status will normally be on the stage right side, with the character of lower status to his left". P.Zarelli, op.cit., p.165.


76. In yakṣagāna, the seat at the back of the stage, is called ratha (chariot). Earlier, it had wheels and was pushed on to the stage when required. Now a days, it has become a fixed feature of the stage. It resembles a throne or a sofa.
RITUALS IN THE CAUKI (MAKE-UP ROOM)

Pic.1. Deity and crowns, cakra, etc, being worshipped

Pic.2. Musicians and actors during worship
Pic.3. Dance of the Bālagopālas

Pic.4. The Bālagopālas worshipping crown (tenkutittu)
Pic.5. Strivēśa - Female characters

ODDŌLAGA - FIRST APPEARANCE OF CHARACTERS

Pic.6. One character revealing his back behind traditional curtain
Pic.7. All the five characters behind traditional curtain

Pic.8. Showing their profile
Pic.9. Tent used by commercial troupes

Pic.10. Yakṣagāna stage
DANCE AND BATTLE

Pic.11. Karna with bow and arrow

Pic.12. Battle of maces
YAKŠAGĀNA MUDRĀS OR HASTĀBHINAYA (HAND-ACTING)

Pic.13. Hatred, enmity, etc.
Pic.14. Love, friendship, etc.

Pic.15. Horse
Pic.16. Rāma
Pic. 17. King, power etc.

Pic. 18. 'listen'

Pic. 19. Forest

Pic. 20. Krsna
Pic.21. A typical yaksagāna posture

Pic.22. Duryodhana and Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa Sandhāna
Pic. 23. The marks on the forehead: vertical (left) and horizontal (right)

Pic. 24. The different headgears of heroic characters: Duryodhana (sitting-crown), Kṛṣṇa (centre-kēdige mandale) and Vidura (right-munḍāsa)
Pic. 25. Sage Visvāmitra, King Hariscandra, Prince Rōhita and commoners

Pic. 26. A clown and a king (tenkutittu)
Pic.27. Karna and a brahmin (clown)

Pic.28. Hanumantha and Lankini (a female-demon)
Pic. 29. The changed costume structure of demonic characters like Kaṃsa, Jarāsandha, etc. in present day performances

Pic. 30. A scene from a Tuḷu yakṣagāna performance
Pic.31. The changing costume structure: Muslim characters as represented in a recent performance

Pic.32. A yakṣagāna poster