

**Transfiguring the Aesthetics of Theatre: A Study of Four
Key Statements of European Experimental Theatre in
the Light of Bharata's *Natyasastra***

Thesis submitted to
Jawaharlal Nehru University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
by
Ajeet Singh



**Centre for English Studies
School of English Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India
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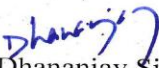
Centre for English Studies
School of English Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

Date: 18-07-2016

Certificate

This thesis titled “**Transfiguring the Aesthetics of Theatre: A Study of Four Key Statements of European Experimental Theatre in the Light of Bharata’s *Natyasastra***” submitted by Mr. Ajeet Singh, Centre for English Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

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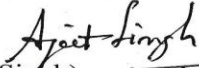

(Dr. Dhananjay Singh)
Supervisor
Dr. DHANANJAY SINGH
Assistant Professor
Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067


(Dr. Saitya Brata Das)
Chairperson
Chairperson
CES/LL & CS
J.N.U., New Delhi-67

Date: 18-07-2016

Declaration by the Candidate

This thesis titled “**Transfiguring the Aesthetics of Theatre: A Study of Four Key Statements of European Experimental Theatre in the Light of Bharata’s *Natyasastra***” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.


(Ajeet Singh) 18/07/2016
Ph.D student
Centre for English Studies, School of Language,
Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

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(Ajeet Singh)

Ph.D student

Centre for English Studies, School of Language,
Literature & Culture Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Contents

Declaration

Acknowledgements

1.	Introduction	1-18
2.	Formulating ‘Wordless’ Language of Theatre: Artaud’s <i>Mise en scene</i> and Bharata’s <i>Abhinaya</i>	19-53
3.	Exploring the ‘gestic principle’ of Theatre: Bertolt Brecht’s ‘Gestus’ and Bharata’s <i>Abhinaya</i>	54-89
4.	Articulating Theatre as ‘Language’: Augusto Boal’s ‘Spect-actor’ and Bharata’s <i>Angikabhinaya</i>	90-124
5.	Locating Theatre’s Essence in Human Body: Jerzy Grotowski’s ‘Poor Theatre’ and Bharata’s <i>Angikabhinaya</i>	125-158
6.	Conclusions	159-172
	Select Bibliography	173-183

Introduction

Human culture and civilization are considered as the complex of relationship between various signifying cultural forms which are identical with the human communication system. Theatre is an ancient art which lies at the roots of human civilization and culture. As an art form, it signifies the very basis of human communicative system. Every civilization or culture celebrates the expression of its rudiments through this art form. In this way, theatre has been a part of every culture in one form or another. Even it may be assumed that the very existence of civilization and culture is realized through theatre because all the cultural forms which constitute the signifying system are constructed through this art form. All types of cultural forms get their signification value established through their communicative ability. Hence this world of meanings which is known as culture comes into existence through theatre i.e. the most natural and spontaneous tool of communication. As life grows, culture and civilization become more complex and the relation among its various forms begin to be more difficult to understand; their complexity requires an artistic communicative system which is aesthetically developed to such a level where it may be perceived as a proper mode of representation of this complexity. The complex structure of culture and civilization and their inherent relation with life is expressed through theatre which has been developed into a dynamic art form whose codes of aesthetics, consequently, become more complex. Therefore, theatre has been with human life constantly from its beginning to its most complex stages.

Theatre in Europe has a history of more than twenty five hundred years. As European intellectual tradition is rooted in Greek civilization, consequently, European theatre also has its genesis in the Greek roots. Traces of ancient Greek theatre are found in the initial cultural forms of Greek civilization. Greek theatre developed gradually and simultaneously with the changing reality of its cultural forms. European theatre, in all its forms and practices refers to Greek tradition. Due to this common source of reference, different theatrical modes have been brought under this umbrella term i.e. 'European Theater'. The first seminal theoretical text of European theatre, which established its philosophical foundation, is Aristotle's *Poetics*. The long

tradition of theatrical performances in the form of classical plays by Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus and Aristophanes etc. left Aristotle with very little to say on theatre in his theoretical discourse on drama. The treatise *Poetics* discusses theatre not as an independent art form but as a minor and not so significant element of drama. It may be assumed that Aristotle's discourse determined the future course of theatre in Europe where it was never considered as an independent and autonomous art form by the forthcoming generations of playwrights, scholars and theatre artists. This is why, in European theatrical tradition, theatre is perceived as an offshoot of drama.

In Renaissance, Greek classical learning was transported and translated in modern European languages; consequently, Aristotle's *Poetics* was introduced to other European dramatists which gradually became a biblical rule book for almost all the dramatists and theatre directors of England, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal etc. Until radical developments pertaining to theatre art in twentieth century, theatre in Europe has not been discussed as an independent art form separately from drama. It does not mean that theatre in Europe was never performed or practiced separately. Notwithstanding the fact that the tradition produced the stalwarts like Shakespeare and Ben Jonson in this field and thus established a rich tradition of play writing and public performances, the whole tradition is without a foundational theoretical text or treatise dedicated and devoted to theatre.

In Europe, theatre has been produced, received and understood in terms of drama. Considered as a subsidiary to dramatic art, theatre was not theorized as an independent art form in European intellectual tradition. The tradition does not have a single theoretical text devoted to the aesthetics of theatre except Aristotle's *Poetics*, Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* and Samuel Johnson's *Preface to Shakespeare* (which are primarily devoted to dramatic literature). Having its roots in dramatic tradition, European theatre lacks a proper poetics and a sound theoretical grounding to guide its developments. Most of its categories of analysis are taken from drama or dramatic literature. The basic tools of dramatic art are considered as constituent elements of theatre in their already existing aesthetic forms in the absence of a proper theory pertaining exclusively to theatre. Ironically, theatre in Europe, in all forms,

couldn't free itself from the tyranny of drama that was considered its ultimate source. It is a matter of inquiry for any scholar of European theatre, why this dichotomy between drama and theatre is so severe in European tradition till twentieth century that it almost ceased any aesthetic development in theatrical art.

The paradigm shift in European intellectual tradition begins towards the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century. New researches in Linguistics, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology and Politics problematized European metaphysics resulting in the emergence of a host of critical approaches in twentieth century European academics. These approaches opened new ways of looking at phenomena or reality. No aspect of life or knowledge remained unaffected or uninfluenced by this intellectual onslaught. Theatre was also not an exception. This intellectual onslaught or shift broke the twenty five centuries old theatrical conventions of Europe. This complete breakup with the existing conventions of European theatre ushered it in a new era of experiments. Scholars or Historians of European theatre designate this breakup or rupture as 'Experimental Theatre' in a consolidated form to represent all types of changes or transformations that appeared in the aesthetics of this theatre. The European theatre entered a new era where it attained a complete divorce from dramatic literature and claimed an independent and autonomous status as an art form. It was no more considered as a subsidiary to drama. It evolved with a poetics of its own thus creating a structure of independent categories and terms of analysis. The term Experimental Theatre consolidates different modes of theatre i.e. Brechtian theatre, Theatre of Cruelty, Theatre of the Absurd, Poor theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed etc. into a single identity. The theoreticians and practitioners of these theatrical modes, beginning with Alfred Jarry and then Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud, Samuel Beckett, Piscator, Stanislavisky, Jerzy Grotowski, attempted various types of experiments with conventional theatrical tools with great success and redefined their functions and operations. The four representative key statements of Experimental theatre which have been taken for the study are Bertolt Brecht's "A Short Organum for the Theatre" and other writings, Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and its Double*, Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* and Jerzy Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre*.

The term, Experimental Theatre, is used more or less interchangeably with the term *avant-garde theatre*, which literally means threshold literature, an attempt at something new. It altered the audience's mode of reception by introducing a marked use of language and innovative use of body positions and stances and established thereby a more active relationship with the audience. Physically, theatre spaces took on different shapes, and practitioners re-explored different ways of staging the performance. The given conventions of space, movement, mood, situational tension, language and symbolism stand altered. With these movements in twentieth century European theatre, the age old conception of theatre in Europe was redefined with a complete break with the earlier one. The theatre directors and practitioners not only looked at various tools of theatrical performance in a new perspective but also the concept of theatre itself was transformed. With these experiments, a new metaphysics and aesthetics of theatre was created thus turning it into one of the most powerful tools of expression in Europe.

It is a subject of inquiry: why all these experiments happened in theatrical space and why all these alterations in theatrical space are called experiments? These alterations have been designated as 'experiments' because all the visionaries of theatre deviated from the expected modes of perception of reality presented at theatrical space. And all this happened at the turn of the century as the altered ways of philosophizing phenomena in Western metaphysics problematized the European thought. But this does not seem to be the only reason behind this theoretical transformation in theatrical space. Another possible reason may be that the European theatre directors became conscious of other powerful theatrical traditions like Indian, Chinese, Japanese or Oriental theatre as a whole. This is why, despite of their individual and independent modes of presentation, the aesthetics and poetics of European theatre have close resemblance to the conventions of Oriental theatre. Though there may be more reasons behind such developments, due to the specificity of purpose and lack of space it is not possible to enumerate all of them.

This study, without considering the content and specific form of 20th century theatre, focuses on its poetics especially with an attempt to explore the essence of

Experimental Theatre. It does not deal with any classification of European theatre as such but emphasizes upon a single point of reference to locate the indispensable tool of theatrical performance i.e. human body. This common point of reference with its functions and operations shows a very close resemblance to Oriental theatre traditions and especially ancient Indian theatre. The four key statements of Experimental Theatre which are taken for the study attempt to locate the metaphysics of theatre in carnal resources making an analogy with the ancient Indian idea of theatre. This study attempts to critically analyze the four representative theoretical statements of Experimental Theatre in the framework of Bharata's *Natyasastra* i.e. one of the most comprehensive theoretical treatise that deals with the science of theatre in all its possible dimensions thus establishing a poetics of theatre as an art form where it can be mastered technically.

Prof. M. Christopher Byrski in his book, *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre* mentions:

Commenting upon the seventh verse of the *Natyotpatti adhyaya* Abhinavagupta says that the creation of *Natya* (theatre) cannot be compared to an ordinary making of things, which is *vyavaharasiddha* as for instance, making of a pot by a potter. On the contrary, *Natya's* (theatre's) existence is due to inborn original knowledge possessed by Brahma – due to his *upjna*.... Thus, Abhinavagupta accepts the fact of the divine creation of *natya* (theatre). Taking into consideration the role of Brahma as the creator of the universe we can assume that Abhinavagupta understood the creation of *natya* and the events which accompanied it in a similar way to the creation of the universe – which is equally beyond human perception. Apparently the faithful account of the creation of *natya* was not, according to Abhinavagupta, the only purpose of Bharata. His second important aim was to furnish a pattern of behavior for all those who wish to organize a theatrical performance....Consequently the

story of *natyotpatti* is for him a description of events transcending ordinary human perception. (3-4)

This description of the concept of ancient Indian theatre makes it clear that theatre in India is perceived not as an ordinary art form rather it has a divine origin parallel to the Creation. The term *natya* which Bharata used in his theoretical treatise has its metaphysical roots in *Rigveda's* core concept of *yajna* and its etymological roots in Panini's text. Therefore, the origin of *natya* may not be attributed to Bharata but his *Natyasastra* certainly is the first text in Indian tradition which constitutes a proper poetics of *natya/theatre*. Even Bharata claims in the very first chapter of *Natyasastra* i.e. *Natyotpatti adhyaya*, that *natya/theatre* is given to him by Lord Brahma Himself. It is mentioned to be created through the four basic elements of the four *vedas*. And it is called as 'fifth *veda*' which includes the essential elements of the four *vedas*. Bharata claims that the text imbibes the articulated-spoken word (*pathya*) from *Rigveda*, body-language (*abhinaya*) from *Yajurveda*, music (*geeta*) from *Samaveda* and *rasa* from *Atharvaveda*.

Natyasastra serves as a single cohesive fountainhead for all the arts, although primarily for theatre, and includes poetry, dance and music etc. The text lays down the foundation of a theory and practice of the Indian arts which theoreticians and practicing artists have been following for a period of more than two thousand years consistently throughout the subcontinent. In Indian tradition, Bharata is considered as the originator of 'categories' for all arts, particularly drama, dance, poetry and music etc. The generic term *natya* encompasses all the essential elements of various art forms. He develops an unprecedented system of communication between the material and spiritual, physical and psychical, ethical and social. His synthesis of diverse disciplines attained through a refinement of the senses establishes that theatre art has the potency of bringing all aspects of life together.

Natyasastra assimilates Bharata's discourse over the whole range of creativity from the source of creation, inspiration of the artists, artistic process, expression through the principal instrumentalities of the verbal and corporeal, communication

and response to the final product. It is a *sastra* of *prayoga*, a framework of principles of 'praxis' in real sense. The whole text consists of thirty-six chapters. It is necessary to mention a sequential narration of all the thirty-six chapters to reveal the inner theoretical design of the text. The text is a thick design of unified vision with an integral structure and a methodology of discourse which progresses on many levels through different circuits. The structural pattern of the text is circular like his notion of plot (*Itivrta*).

The framework of the text is like a circle because its sequential progression is along the circumference of a circle with an unseen but real centre and point. Chapters I, II, III, IV & V form a group which outlines the spatial and temporal relations between various aspects of *natya*. Chapters VI & VII form the second group where a spectrum of *rasa- bhava* is created to capture the abstract form of life through it. Chapters VIII, IX, X, XI, XII & XIII form the next group where all the possibilities of human body for theatrical communication have been explored under the rubric of *angikabhinaya* (body-language). Chapter XIII denotes a pause in the structural movement of the text where he discusses the methodology of transforming the theatrical space into place on stage. Chapters XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII & XIX create a grammar of sound, speech and verbal expression under the rubric of *vacikabhinaya* (linguistic). Another major break-up occurs with chapters XX & XXI which deal with *itivrta* or *natyasarira* or structure of drama with its various layers in a sequential framework. Chapters XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXV & XXVI form the next group which creates a structure for *aharyabhinaya* (costume) and *saatvikabhinaya* (inner states). Chapter XXVII deals with the *sidhi* or outcome and achievement of theatrical performance. Chapters XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXII & XXXIII focus on music and its role in theatrical performance. And the next two chapters (XXXIV, XXXV) discuss the distribution of role. In chapter XXXVI, the textual circle of *Natyastra* completes and returns to the origin of drama and its descent from heaven.

The formal structure of the text reflects that *abhinaya* is the core concept of Bharata's dramaturgy around which all other dimensions of *natya* are discussed.

Bharata divides *abhinaya* into its four possible categories: *angikabhinaya* (body-language), *vacikabhinaya* (linguistic), *aharyabhinaya* (costume) and *saatvikabhinaya* (inner emotional states). All types of *abhinayas* or the instruments of expressions have been analyzed through structural and formal aspects. On this textual structure of *Natyasastra*, Kapila Vatsyayan writes:

This grand design Bharata executes as a master conceiver of a great orchestra. He assigns a role to each instrument lays down the plan of each group of instruments, their interactions with each other, the phasing and the movement, never forgetting that all this is for the evocation of a ‘mood’, a state, where once each instrument and player has played a part, they are no longer important and meaningful. Like the actors of his drama, the *angika*, the *vacika*, the *aharya* and *saatvika* must transcend their individual identity and merge in the totality. Just as the instruments of an orchestra have their distinctive identity and special techniques of playing, each *abhinaya* is distinct and clearly identifiable, has a role to play in the totality, but is never absolutely autonomous. (99)

Abhinaya is assumed as the grammar of *natya*/theatre around which the structure of Bharata’s theatrical universe is constructed. Bharata devotes the largest portion of his discourse on *abhinaya*. It is evident from the structure of *Natyasastra* that Bharata considers *abhinaya* as the nucleus of theatre without which performance cannot be imagined. Dr. C.R. Srinivasa points out the significance of *abhinaya*:

If *rasa* is the purpose of Sanskrit drama then the tool, which is utilized to bring about *rasa*, is *abhinaya*. The word *abhinaya* means that which brings the thing to the spectator, or the different ways in which the actor brings the play with its meaning and feelings to the spectator. The word is derived from the

root *ni*‘ which means *take*‘ or *carry*‘, with the preposition *abhi*‘ meaning *towards*. ‘This is what the traditional verse says—the root *ni*‘ with the preposition *abhi*‘ which means *towards*‘, is given the word *abhinaya*, because it carries(*ni-*) the performance towards the audience (*Natyasastra* ch.8 par. 5-10). *Abhinaya*, therefore, occupies the foremost place in Sanskrit drama. But for *abhinaya* the very purpose of Sanskrit drama that is the realization of *rasa* will not be achieved. Thus, the concept of *abhinaya* expounded in the *Natyasastra* is a comprehensive one, covering the whole range of acting possibilities. (25)

Ironically, the term *abhinaya* is generally considered as an art of expression and translated as acting only. This general understanding of the term makes it difficult to realize its actual potentialities as a theoretical concept. In order to appreciate the essence of *abhinaya*, it is imperative to study Bharata’s *Natyasastra* which carries an exhaustive and unparalleled theoretical structure of *abhinaya* that seems to cover all the possible dimensions of human body as a tool of theatrical communication.

In the beginning of chapter VIII of *Natyasastra*, Bharata defines *abhinaya*. He says, “*Abhipurvastu nin dhaturabhimukhyarthanirnaye / yasmatpadarthannayati tasmadabhinayah smrtah*” i.e. *abhinaya* is derived from the root *ni* with the prefix *abhi* which means ‘it carries the performance towards the main objective or meaning (*Natyasastra* VIII 2: 6). In the next *sloka*, he adds, “*Vibhavayati yasmacca nanarthan hi prayogatah / sakhangopangasamyuktastasmadabhinayah smrtah*” i.e. it is called *abhinaya* as it communicates various meanings with its *sakha*, *anga* and *upanga*, through performance (*Natyasastra* VIII 2: 7). He further adds, “*Caturvidhascaiva bhavennatyasyabhinayo dvijah / anekabhedavahuyam natyam hyasmin pratishitam*” i.e. the *abhinaya* which is employed in theatre is of four types and that includes the theatre with all its possible dimensions (*Natyasastra* VIII 2: 8). Bharata’s *natya* does not exist beyond *abhinaya*. Therefore, he projects *abhinaya* as the nucleus of

performance where theatre is created, performed and transmitted. Lyne Bansat-Boudon points out:

The *samanayabhinaya*, the account of which only appears in Chapters XXII of *Natyasastra* – that is, rather late, has embarrassed both theorists and exegetes. It is true that acting process or *abhinaya* is developed on two occasions within the treatise where it is firstly defined as a fourfold element including *angikabhinaya*, or corporeal acting, *vacikabhinaya*, or vocal acting, *sattvikabhinaya*, or emotional acting and *aharyabhinaya*, or ornamental acting. Gesture, Voice, Emotion, and Make-up: such is the epitome of the actor's art. And yet in chapters XXII and XXV, we are presented with a twofold classification of *abhinaya* consisting of a *samanayabhinaya* and *citrabhinaya*. (67)

Bharata discusses four possible dimensions of *abhinaya* i.e. *angika*, *vacika*, *aharya* and *sattvika*. He begins this discussion with *angikabhinaya* which he categorizes as *sarira* (body), *mukhaja* (on the face) and *cestakrta* (movement). It is called *angika* because it involves the whole body. The whole body is divided into *angas* (major limbs) and *upangas* (minor limbs). The major limbs to be employed are the head, hands, chest, waist sides and feet. Further, Bharata discusses the possible movements of each major and minor limb with their respective *bhava* and resultant *rasa*. This *abhinaya* is also termed as *sakha*. Due to its ability of inner manifestation, it is also known as *ankura*. It is also known as *nrtt* (dance) as it is based on various limbs of the body and their respective movements, which developed into an independent art form in Indian aesthetics.

Bharata views nothing beyond 'words' in this world. He believes that all the *sastras* are composed of and rests on 'words'. His linguistic philosophy conceptualized *abhinaya* in another form i.e. *vacikabhinaya*. Under this category, he explores the possible range of human language in theatrical communication. Starting

from the phoneme, syllable, morpheme to syntax etc. he analyses language on all its possible levels and creates a structure where it is employed in performance as an effective tool of theatrical expression.

Further, Bharata gives his exposition of *aharyabhinaya* where he creates a grammar of costumes, masks, colours of face, decoration etc. Through his discussion of various *vrttis*, *parvrttis* and two types of *dharmi* i.e. *natyadharmi* and *lokadharmi*, he creates a structure where all types of decoration on human body performs the role of theatrical language. And in the end he takes up *sattvikabhinaya*. Though Bharata discusses it with *rasa* and *bhava*, later he gives an exposition of it under the name of *samanyabhinaya*. *Sattvikabhinaya* is endued with the quality of *sattva* (purity). Under this category, Bharata enumerates eight possible states of mind caused by natural emotions i.e. *stambha*, *sveda*, *romanchara*, *swarabheda*, *vepathu*, *vaivarnya*, *ashru* and *pralaya*. These are called as *sattvika bhavas* as these reveal the reality of an emotion arises out of external feelings or sympathy for others.

Bharata's discourse on *abhinaya* creates a theoretical structure or framework with different categories of analysis capable of evaluating or interpreting any theatrical performance. In the light of this observation, it seems possible to analyze and explain the aesthetics of European Experimental Theatre in the framework of *Natyasastra*, especially its core concept i.e. *abhinaya*. Experimental Theatre rejects and refutes the 'scriptal' tradition of European drama and locates the essence of theatre in human body. In opposition to the existing dramatic tradition of Europe, all the theatrical modes of Experimental Theatre seem to resemble the basic idea of ancient Indian theatre. Like Bharata, all the theorists discussed here, explore the metaphysics of theatre in the communicative possibilities of human body. Therefore, Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* seems to be an appropriate framework to analyze their theoretical formulations on theatre. The textual pattern, structural organization, theoretical framework, different taxonomies and theatrical categories of *Natyasastra* give it a trans-cultural and universal character despite of the fact that it is firmly embedded in the specific Indian culture.

This diversity of theatrical modes and consequently the variety of plays in twentieth century make the institution of theatre problematic for understanding its nature and function. Each of the theatrical modes tries to define/redefine the nature and function of the art of theatre in its unique or peculiar way. Despite this fact, an epistemological concern may be discerned that appears to be central to most of them – a concern that has to do with a redefinition/reconsideration of the metaphysics of theatre; its nature or essence, without imposing similarity/shared categories on these theatrical modes and theories. And it is this very concern that stimulates a scholar to explain the theoretical postulations of European Experimental Theatre in the framework of Bharata's *Natyasastra* beyond any particular linguistic, regional or national boundaries. The textual pattern, structural organization, theoretical framework, different taxonomies and theatrical categories of *Natyasastra* give it a trans-cultural and universal character despite the fact that it is firmly embedded in the specific Indian culture.

The first chapter of this study deals with Antonin Artaud's *Theatre and Its Double* which marks the beginning of the radical theatrical movement in the twentieth century Europe. His theoretical text *Theatre and Its Double*, constitutes his theatrical vision and philosophy. It is a collection of essays, first published in French in 1938. Artaud digs at the roots of European tradition of theatrical performance and shakes its foundations, and propounds a new conception of theatre entirely opposite to the Occidental theatre. He proposes a theory which redefines the art of theatre, locates its essence in *mise en scene* i.e. a French expression that refers to everything in theatre including direction, production and staging except script. Artaud's text explores the relationship between theatre and life (reality). To him, theatre and life exist in separate spheres; they double each other.

Artaud projected the theatre with its true nature and its genuine function, as an art form. He asserted, "This new theatre very importantly, must repudiate the written text" (Artaud 34). He rejected the long scriptal tradition and the status of the nature of *logos*. He rejected the long scriptal tradition and the status of the nature of *logos*. He proposed a theatre where the poetry is corporeal and all creativity is produced at the

stage, finding its expression in a deep psychic impulse which constitutes the speech anterior to words. He declared, “We must be rid of this theatrical superstition of the text and written poetry” (Artaud 34). His attempt was to explore and construct a theatrical mode where the limitations of the verbal/ideational are transcended. He proposed to develop a physical concrete language of performance through which the sources of creativity other than the intellect can be tapped. His idea of theatre takes its genesis in his philosophy of language which is very close to ancient Indian linguistic philosophy. His theoretical formulations on theatre are called ‘Theatre of Cruelty’. He believes that the real theatre must appeal to senses before it communicates to mind. Through his concept of *mise en scene*, he introduced a new theatrical language which changed director into the creator instead of a translator. Artaud’s theatrical vision is inspired by Oriental theatre, especially Balinese theatre which epitomizes an extreme and pure version of theatre and functions through metaphysics-in-action on stage. Artaud’s idea of the specific language of performance includes everything on stage like gesture, music, light, space, costume etc. He explains:

I say that the stage is a concrete physical place which asks to be filled and to be given its own concrete language to speak.

I say that this concrete language, intended for the senses and independent of speech has first to satisfy the senses, that there is poetry of senses as there is a poetry of language, and that this concrete physical language to which I refer is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of spoken language. (Artaud 37)

The chapter attempts to critically analyze all his theoretical formulations on the ‘wordless’ language of performance and his philosophical vision in the framework of *Natyasastra*, especially *abhinaya*. This study not only deals with the broad dimensions of his theoretical vision but also some limitations of the methodology of his discourse. His theory of *mise en scene* is viewed through the broad spectrum of

Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* to explore its theoretical potency as a philosophical statement on the aesthetics of theatre.

The second chapter moves to another theorist of twentieth century European Experimental Theatre, a German theatre practitioner, Bertolt Brecht who revolutionized the stage with his concepts like *verfremdungseffekt* and *gestus*. His theory as well as practice of 'Epic Theatre' is his most significant contribution to twentieth century European Experimental theatre. Any discussion on the radicalism of the theatre in twentieth century Europe is incomplete without Bertolt Brecht's philosophy of theatre. As a theorist and practitioner, he is able to search out and develop the radical 'gestic' potential of the theatre in a political ambience. Through his theory, Brecht altered the theatrical space and added substantial quality both to theatrical experience and to political thought. He didn't write a theoretical treatise like Artaud, but his theoretical reflections on the aesthetics of theatre given in the form of interviews are organized and structured in a text by John Willet, titled as *Brecht on Theatre: The development of an Aesthetic*.

The chapter explores Brecht's 'gestic principle' of theatre in terms of Bharata's concept of *abhinaya*. The 'gestic' potentialities and possibilities of theatre as an art form have been analytically discussed. Brecht took 'gestus' from German language and developed it into a theoretical category of theatrical aesthetics. His dramaturgy is mainly based on two ideas. First, that of the bracketing or the suspension of belief required by 'Verfremdungseffekt', and second, the radicalization of this act in his idea of the theatrical 'gest' as the raw material of performance. However, it is in the idea of 'gestus', that the corporeal dimension of the epic theatre is most explicitly located. The 'gestus' in the real world, is a complex one, but worked on by the actor, stylized and expressively recast, in order to manifest its meaning and to make it a theatrical 'gest'. The 'gest' is not an entity in the real world, but a conception of theatrical aesthetics; at once social and corporeal, typical and opaque.

'Gestus' has been discussed from its etymological roots to the status of an aesthetic category of Brechtian theatre. It is not a simple way or just a technique of acting but carries the essence of theatre and formulates a theory through which true

spirit of theatre as an art form is realized. From its simplest definition to its most complex status as a theory, it is interpreted in the perspective of *abhinaya*. The concept of *abhinaya* in all its varieties; *angika* (physical), *vacika* (linguistic), *aharya* (costume), *sattvika* (emotional states) is employed to explore the theoretical dimensions of ‘gestus’ as an aesthetic category. Though we do not have textual evidence of Brecht’s indebtedness to Bharata yet his dramaturgy especially the idea of ‘gestus’ has close affinity with Bharata’s concept of *abhinaya*. Brecht was well versed, as he claims in one of his interviews, in Asian theatre especially Chinese theatre. It may be assumed that all Asian theatres have undertones of ancient Indian theatre.

The third chapter deals with ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’, a term coined by Augusto Boal. Boal considers theatre as a language which is accessible to all. This theatre is rooted in the educational philosophy specifically the popular education method introduced by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. It is a participatory theatre that employs democratic and cooperative forms of interaction. The chapter critically analyzes Augusto Boal’s theoretical text *Theatre of the Oppressed*. It is a series of theatrical analysis and critiques developed in 1950s and 60s. This text constitutes the philosophical foundation and the theoretical framework of this particular theatre. In this text, Boal redefines theatre and challenges its traditional techniques and tools of expression. The central concern of the Theatre of the Oppressed is the reconsideration of the relationship between spectator and actor. The core concept or the catalyst of this radical transformation is ‘spect-actor’.

Boal recognizes a unique ability in humans, to take action in the world while simultaneously observing themselves in action. He maintains that the human is a self-contained theatre, an actor and a spectator in one. And through this ability, he can amend, adjust and alter his actions for different impact and for changing this world. Boal states, “We can begin by stating that the first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body, the main source of sound and movement. Therefore, to control the means of theatrical production, man must, first of all, control his own body; know his own body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive”(164). In his text, Boal

proposes a systematized plan for transforming the spectator into actor in the form of the following general outline of four stages:

1. Knowing the body
2. Making the body expressive
3. Theatre as language
4. Theatre as discourse

This chapter discusses these four stages, one by one, in the framework of *Natyasastra* where the possibilities of human body as a tool of theatrical expression have been explored.

These four stages constitute the aesthetics of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal creates a formal structure with these four sequential stages with their respective exercises and movements for the attainment of the art of theatre. The first two stages *knowing the body* and *making the body expressive* theoretically refer to Bharata's concept of *angikabhinaya* (physical). Bharata defines *angikabhinaya* as a semiotic structure of movements in human body where meaning can be constituted and communicated through various gestures. The configuration which Bharata creates for *angikabhinaya* is the source of exploring all the theatrical possibilities of human body. In all the chapters related to *angikabhinaya*, he looks into the communicative possibilities of human body to its core. Similarly, Boal's theory explores the immense possibilities of human body as a theatrical tool. Moreover, Boal doesn't see the existence of theatre outside human body. The Indian term *natya* conveys what Boal attempts to establish theoretically through Theatre of the Oppressed. Bharata explains human body as a theatrical language through the term *abhinaya*, particularly, *angikabhinaya*. The chapter discusses the term 'spect-actor' in terms of Bharata's *abhinaya* to explore the potential of human body as the language of theatre.

The fourth chapter deals with one of the latest developments of the twentieth century European Experimental Theatre i.e. Jerzy Grotowsky's theory of 'Poor Theatre'. Jerzy Grotowsky is one of the most remarkable innovators of the Experimental theatre movement. He terms his theatre as 'poor' because all the technical resources of 'rich' theatre (a theatre of external spectacle) were stripped off

from it. Grotowski writes, “We know that the text *per se* is not theatre that it becomes theatre only the actor’s use of it” (12). He makes the actor’s voice and body central to the performance. His theory attempts to explore theatre in a new dimension which goes beyond drama. He worked out a theatrical style where physical and emotional responses are taken in such a way that impulse and reaction become concurrent.

Grotowski’s *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968) which he wrote together with Ludwik Flaszen constitutes his theoretical principles. Eugenio Barba, an apprentice of Laboratory Theatre, was instrumental in revealing Grotowski to the world. He edited this seminal text *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968). The text is primarily, a compilation of interviews and lectures given by Grotowski at various places. The chapter discusses his theatrical vision as propounded in the form of ‘Poor Theatre’ and a specific style of acting which he proposes for his actors. It attempts to understand the fundamental aspect of his theory which locates the essence of theatre art in actor’s body beyond the ‘rich technicalities’ of the stage. Grotowski shares his theatrical vision with Bharata in making the human body as the central point of performance. His entire focus, in theory as well as practice, is on the art of actor or acting. He proposes one of the most comprehensive styles of acting in contemporary times, where he creates a structure of innovative exercises and movements for human body to attain perfection in actor’s craft. He expects utmost honesty and morality on the part of actor. His theory is based on various experiments with human body especially, *via negativa* to explore its possibilities as a tool of theatrical expression. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of Grotowski’s concept of ‘poor theatre’ and especially, his innovations on actor’s craft in the framework of Bharata’s *abhinaya* and its various categories.

Hence, this study, in four chapters, puts forth the changing conception of theatre through the most representative theoretical voices of twentieth century theatre i.e. Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal and Jerzy Grotowski. All the critical statements have been discussed separately and independently from each other. These have been seen through the broad theoretical spectrum of Bharata’s *Natyasastra*. The study makes an analogy between these theoretical voices of

twentieth century Experimental Theatre and the concept of ancient Indian theatre with a specific emphasis on various dimensions of human body as a theatrical tool.

Formulating ‘Wordless Language’ of Theatre: Artuad’s *Mise en scene* and Bharata’s *Abhinaya*

Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) was a French Playwright, actor, poet, theoretician, and theatre director. He had a great influence on twentieth century European theatre better known as *avant-garde* theatre. He was one of the pioneers of the twentieth century European Experimental Theatre movement. Primarily, a member of surrealist movement, Artaud eventually developed his own theories of theatre. The specific form of theatre which he developed is known as Theatre of Cruelty. This theatrical mode denotes a break with the existing theatrical conventions of Europe. His philosophical reflections on the art of theatre are found in the form of a critical treatise entitled as *The Theatre and Its Double*. All his conceptions of the art of theatre and especially his theory of *mise en scene* influenced the aesthetics of theatre in twentieth century Europe. With his theory of *mise en scene*, he revolutionized contemporary European theatre. He explored a new physical language of performance which is metaphysically constructed through human body. This chapter attempts to analyze Artaud’s idea of physical language of theatre in terms of Bharata’s theory of *abhinaya*.

The Theatre and Its Double is Artaud’s profoundest critical statement on the art of Theatre. Artaud digs at the roots of European/Occidental idea of theatre which is conceptualized by Aristotle in his theoretical treatise *Poetics*. Artaud begins his theoretical discourse on the art of theatre with a general criticism of contemporary idea of European culture. He observes an intellectual confusion at the roots of contemporary culture due to a rupture between things and words. His reflection upon this condition concludes that this cultural crisis is a result of the existing philosophical understanding of language in Europe where it is perceived as a mode of representation of reality. He finds it the most potent hindrance in communicating the true nature of the phenomenon. At this state of affairs, he finds the existing philosophical systems of European tradition inadequately formulated as they do not support life directly. To him, the intellectual legacy of Europe or ‘knowledge’ seems helpless because it does not form a part of being. He proposes an idea of ‘culture-in-action’. It is not

something external to us but forms an essential organ of our whole being. It is something internally connected to us which guides all our actions ranging from base to sublime. Even the distinction between the terms like 'culture' and 'civilization' is artificial to him because both of them signify an identical function.

He further maintains that this existing culture has infused such an absurd faculty in human beings where they choose to perceive their acts in an imagined form instead of impelled by their force. And this propensity is a human one. He considers it as a kind of infection which contaminates/destroy the divine element of human soul. It pushes us away from life. The idea of culture, which he proposes, is basically a protest against the idea of culture that is distinct from life. It is dichotomous with life. It opposes the futile restrictions inflicted upon the sense of culture and diminishing it to the level of an unimaginable pantheon inculcating idolatry.

Artaud begins his theoretical treatise with his reflections upon the philosophical roots behind the existing cultural crisis in European intellectual tradition. In European tradition, art and culture are not considered consequent upon each other. This passive and incapable conception generates deterioration. He brings forth the distinction between the functions of true culture and art where the earlier operates through force and exaltation while the later attempts to divorce the mind from vigor but addicted to ecstasy. He observes that the Occidental/European idea of art causes the loss of culture. Otherwise, it should have been a 'culture-in-action' (a famous Artaudian term). On this idea of culture, Artaud writes:

To our disinterested and inert idea of art an authentic culture opposes a violently egotistic and magical, i.e. *interested idea*....

How hard it is, when everything encourages us to sleep, though we may look about us with conscious, clinging eyes, to wake and yet to look about us as in a dream, with eyes that no longer know their function and whose gaze turned inward. This is our strange idea of disinterested action originated, though it is

action nonetheless, and all the more violent for skirting the temptation of repose. (11)

Here, Artaud connects the idea of true culture with theatre. Like all cultures, true theatre has its shadows or double too. And theatre is the only art whose shadows do not permit any restrictions. He considers the Occidental/European idea of theatre as petrified because of the equally petrified idea of culture without shadows. It has no sense of life but seems to be full of it. And it is here, Artaud seems to come to his idea of true theatre which does not differ from true culture that creates shadows and where life goes on freely with its own pace. He writes, “The theatre is in *no thing*, but makes use of everything- gestures, sounds, words, screams, light, darkness- rediscovers itself at precisely the point where the mind requires a language to express itself” (Artaud 12). He does not see theatre to be fixed in a single language consisting of written words, music, lights, and noises. Otherwise, it will indicate theatre’s imminent death.

Artaud establishes an analogy between theatre and culture as both functions through creating shadows/doubles. He further explains that the true theatre which is not fixed or confined to a particular form or language not only destroys fallacious silhouettes but also opens the door for new ones around which the true spectacle of life is structured. To him, theatre is created to generate a sense of life. Otherwise, it loses its essence by means of representation constructed through the existing idea of culture where the language is the only tool of expression. Helga Finter and Matthew Griffin refer to as ‘Theatre of the Real,’ claiming that “only a discourse of the Real can actually touch the spectator” (19). They point out “the immediate presence of real qualities (fear, danger, violence) in Theatre of the Real that directly work against the fantasy within theatre” (20). Jacques Derrida comments on Artaud’s conception of theatre, “The Theatre of cruelty is not representation. It is life itself, in the extent to which life is unrepresentable. Life is the non-representable origin of representation” (294). And it is this conception of theatre and culture which leads us to a realization of the limitation of human being and infinitely opens the sphere of what is called ‘reality’. In her book *The Sense of Performance* Susie J. Tharu writes, “His attempt, therefore, was to locate a theatrical mode that transcended the limitations of the

verbal/ideational. What he had hoped to evolve was a language of the stage through which he could tap sources other than the intellective and thus move out of the constriction he experienced” (65). What Artaud wants to put forth is a theatre that is essentially ‘metaphysical’, not psychological. It does not designate something paranormal or extramundane or even ahistorical in the Derridean sense of ‘presence’. Rather it speaks of a fusion of our vision and the object that transforms substance into knowledge. “Artaud’s aim was to take the theatre out of the context of mere entertainment and into that of education, or rather initiation into a higher spiritual reality” (Goodall 67). And it redefines the anatomy of knowledge which is finally mysterious and outside the scope of human cognition, simply outside the human ‘rationality’. It is realized with the ease and the simplicity with which the universe itself is lived by us. It is never a fact but always an experience. He does not take Human being as merely a recording organism. He believes in a sense of life resumed through the art of theatre where human beings command over what does not yet exist but bring it into being. Ellen Mackay identifies the importance of dramatic interpretation as it is used here “as an art form that is not just culturally meaningful but intended to be socially constitutive” (71).

For Artaud, the art of theatre originates into actor’s totemism and impersonal action that creates shadows/doubles. The Theatre, for him, makes use of everything on stage and breaks all restrictions. Artaudian theatre is not associated with a single form or language or ‘thing’. Basically, it is ‘everything’ on stage or *mise en scene*. Artaud’s understanding of the essence of theatre seems to be a double/shadow of Bharata’s philosophy of *natya*/theatre. That is why Bharata’s *Natyasastra* provides a theoretical framework to understand Artaud’s theatrical vision in a better way. For example, in one of his statements quoted above, he maintains that theatre makes use of everything on stage, be it gestures, sounds, lights etc. He does not attach theatre with any specific thing or form. Similarly, more than two thousand years ago, Bharata in his *Natyasastra* conceptualizes *natya*/theatre as a shadow/double of life where it is seen as *anukirtana* (recreation) of the essences of the universe. In the opening chapter (Origin of *natya*) of this great treatise on theatre, Bharata in his discourse claims that Lord Brahma Himself created *natya*/theatre for human beings. It is a divine creation

rather than a human one which resembles closely to the creation of the Universe. He attributed Lord Brahma with the creation of *natya*/theatre as Lord Brahma is considered as one of the 'Holy Trinities' and also the Creator of the Universe in Indian mythology. Here, Bharata maintains: there is no art, knowledge, skill, technique, Yoga that does exist/find in *natya*/theatre.

Artaud explores a strangely possible metaphysical analogy between theatre and plague. His account of the contagious disease is not historical or biological but a metaphysical one. He witnesses certain apparently inexplicable dimensions of the disease; its incongruity, mysteries, characteristics and traits and in these, he claims, exist its metaphysical truth. He goes on to describe and reflect on what he calls the mental physiognomy of the disease, a physiognomy whose laws cannot be scientifically specified. The disease affects only those organs of the body where the will-power, consciousness and intelligence exist. Like plague, theatre strikes the being unexpectedly and communicates through perturbing its processes by creating ruptures in the imaginative. And in such a state of existence, the theatre is born. Artaud writes, "The Theatre, i.e., an immediate gratuitousness provoking acts without use or profit" (24). He further states, "The condition of the victim of the disease who dies without physical destruction, with all the stigmata of an abstract epidemic is identical with an actor entirely penetrated by emotions that do not correspond to his real condition. Everything in the physical aspect of the actor, as in that of the victim of the plague, shows that life has reacted to the paroxysm, and yet nothing has happened" (Artaud 25).

Artaud recognizes that the theatre, like plague, is delirious and communicative. Its similitude with plague is not because it influences important organs and perturbs them in a similar way. It is, as he states, "A social disaster so far-reaching, an organic disorder so mysterious – this overflow of vices, this total exorcism which presses and impels the soul to its utmost – all indicate the presence of a state which is nevertheless characterized by extreme strength and in which all powers of nature are freshly discovered at the moment when something essential is going to be accomplished" (27). Plague functions through a quiescent disorder and

instantly transforms it into a paramount gesticulation. Similarly, theatre also operates on gestures and gesticulation of body and drags them to the farthest limit. The magnitude of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty is expressed by Martin Esslin, who describes it as a force that would "swoop down upon a crowd of spectators with all the awesome horror of the plague...with all its shattering impact, creating a complete upheaval, physical, mental, and moral, among the population it struck" (76). It employs the concept of hieroglyphs and archetypes which operate on the body. It rehabilitates our quiescent disorders and all their forces known as archetypes or symbols. "For there can be theatre only from the moment when the impossible really begins and when the poetry which occurs on the stage sustains and superheats the realized symbols", Artaud asserts (29). Artaudian theatre truly, destabilizes the repose; release the latent unconscious and a virtual revolt permeate the whole being, thereby, producing a spirit that is both difficult and heroic. Like plague, theatre is an inexorable call to the deep psychic forces that strike the being through an illustration of the genesis of its conflicts. Like the epidemic, theatre is the externalization of a dormant or unconscious ferocity through which all the recalcitrant possibilities of human mind are manifested. It is the success of unconscious forces that are fostered by a faculty even more intense until vanished. "It releases conflicts, disengages powers, liberates possibilities, and if these possibilities and these powers are dark it is not the fault of the plague or the theatre but of life", he concludes (Artaud 31).

Artaud's discussion on theatre and plague ends with his observations that theatre is a conflict or catastrophe, like plague, which is settled through death or cure. It is the supreme equipoise which cannot be attained without cataclysm. Hence, plague and theatre are seen as metaphysically same. Artaud's ability as a visionary of theatre lies in the fact that by going deep down into the spiritual physiognomy of the disease, he was able to touch the metaphysical roots of theatre. The analogy between plague and theatre enables him to conceptualize the soul of the art of theatre. But his theoretical discourse remains largely abstract as it lacks a concrete methodology of application. It is very difficult for an actor to replicate such a vision of theatre into practice. Even, it wouldn't be possible or easy for a scholar to interpret or explain this Artaudian aesthetics due to its abstract nature of the argument. Notwithstanding this

fact, his philosophical vision of theatre has close resemblance to the idea of ancient Indian theatre elaborated and enumerated in Bharata's *Natyasastra* or 'Science of Theatre'.

The two primary constituent elements of *natya/theatre*, *abhinaya* and *Rasa*, which are developed as the major theoretical concepts of *natya/theatre* by Bharata, may throw some light on Artaud's epistemological analogy between plague and theatre. Theatre and plague, both, are equated on the basis of their operatives. They signify the extreme stage or condition where the difference between body and soul, conscious and unconscious become blurred and a new sense of life and an extent of existence is reached or attained. The analogy between theatre and plague can be more meaningful if seen in terms of the concept of *abhinaya*. Bharata made it the nucleus of theatrical performance. The whole being of *Natya/theatre* is dependent on *abhinaya*. And it is conceptualized with its four possible dimensions i.e. *angika* (physical), *vacika* (linguistic), *ahariya* (costume) and *sattvika* (states of feeling) covering the whole being of *abhinaya*.

After the detailed discussion on the origin, preparation, intent, and the non-individualized and abstract content (*rasa*, *bhava*), the artistic inspiration and process of impersonalization in the earlier chapters of his text, Bharata's discourse moves towards the formal aspects of the art of theatre, especially, its system of communication and response from chapter VIII (*Natyasastra*) onwards. It begins with the analysis of the body – the motor and sensory system. Here, human anatomy, and especially the joints rather than musculature, is the focal point of discussion. A profound understanding of the nervous system is obvious from the enumeration of physical stimulus, response, psychic states and the expression through physical movements. The chapters devoted to *angikabhinaya* do not consider body-language merely as gesticulation, poses and postures. Bharata divides the anatomical structure into its principle parts – the head, trunk, pelvis and the upper and lower limbs. The possibility of physical motor movement of each part is traversed and explored. The whole discourse on anatomy and physiology is exact and precise. The whole anatomical structure is divided into major and minor limbs or *anga* and *upanga*.

Artaud also discusses physical aspect of an actor's performance but he does not provide such a detailed account of it.

Further, in his text *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud's discourse brings his central aesthetic concept *mise en scene* to the fore. He analyses a masterpiece of painting entitled 'Daughters of Lot' by Lucas van den Leyden using his theory of *mise en scene* which can be roughly understood as the language of performance. He observes that the painter has certain secrets of linear harmony that strike the mind instantly, like a physical agent. The painting carries the ideas which are metaphysical. It is like the externalization of the spirit of nature which is reflected through a powerful intellectual harmony. He brings the uselessness and impotence of speech to the fore through this painting. Artaud claims, "I say in any case that this painting is what the theatre should be, if it knew how to speak the language that belongs to it" (37). Here, Artaud comes to his idea of 'theatrical language' which is specifically in contrast to the language in general.

Through his discussion, Artaud demonstrates one of the major limitations of Occidental theatre that is its entire dependence on script. In Occidental theatre, language/dialogue dominates the mode representation. Occidental theatre does not see theatre beyond dialogue/language. In Europe, theatre is taken as merely an aide to the history of the spoken language. Artaud remarks, "I say that the stage is a concrete physical place which asks to be filled, and to be given its own concrete language to speak" (37). He further remarks:

I say that this concrete language, intended for the senses and independent of speech, has first to satisfy the senses, that there is a poetry of senses as there is a poetry of language, and that this concrete physical language to which I refer is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thought it expresses are beyond the reach of spoken language. (37)

The analogy between painting and theatre helps Artaud in realizing the specific language of theatre which he conceptualizes and reaches to inner cores of theatre

through it. He brings the limitation of language (language in general) as a tool of communication to the fore. And this conception of language, Artaud maintains, is responsible for the petrified idea of culture in Europe. And from his general criticism of the existing conception of language, Artaud comes to his idea of true theatre which functions through a concrete physical language of stage.

His conception of the concrete language of performance or *mise en scene*, a French expression of it, refers to Bharata's concept of *natya*/theatre. The concrete physicality of the language which Artaud proposes for/of theatre may be extracted from the very term *natya* itself which Bharata uses for a performance as well as for the title of his text *Natyasastra*. Etymologically, the term *natya* goes back to Sanskrit root *Nat*, a performer. *Nataraja*, the iconic image of Shiva captures the god of dance in a frozen moment of a stance and a position and gestures.

Further, Artaud discusses the determinants of this physical language. He notices that it is this concrete physical language of body through which theatre differentiates itself from speech. He says, "It consists of everything that occupies the stage, everything that can be manifested and expressed materially on the stage and that is addressed first of all to the senses instead of being addressed primarily to the mind as is the language of the words" (38). And this differentiation between the language of senses and the language of words is what Artaud talks of theatre as a form of expression.

On the other hand, Bharata traces the sources of four dimensions of *natya*/theatre to the four Vedas: *pathya* from *Rgveda*, *geeta* from *samaveda*, *abhinaya* from *Yajurveda*, and *rasa* from *Atharvaveda*. The first three elements (*pathya*, *geeta*, *abhinaya*) are the means to achieve the 'end' i.e. *rasa*, the art experience. Of these four, the most substantial exposition, in almost 23 Chapters, is of *abhinaya*, 'acting' / enactment. *Abhinaya* is considered as the nucleus of performance/enactment on which the aesthetic experience (*rasa*) depends. "Etymologically *abhinaya* has been derived from Sanskrit root 'ni' and has 'abhi' as prefix. It means that it brings the performance towards the 'end' / theme" (*Natyasastra* VIII 2: 6-7). In the first chapter, (*Natyasastra* I 1: 107) Bharata says, "*Natyaveda* does not represent the character of

devas and *asuras* only, rather, this *natya/theatre* represents (*anukirtana*) all the *bhavas* (essence) of the three worlds". In the same chapter (*Natyasastra* I 1: 121), Bharata says that all the existing tendencies of the world (*Loka privrtiyan*) consisting of both *sukha aur dukha* (happiness and sorrow) are considered as *natya/theatre* when performed with four kinds of *abhinaya*. Further, in chapter 22 of *Natyasastra*, Bharata discusses *itivrta*: body of *natya/theatre*. *Itivrta*, considered as the structure of performance, contains five well defined stages of action. Hence, *rasa* and *itivrta* are the soul and the body of *natya* respectively, dependent on *abhinaya* that is the nucleus of performance. *Natya/theatre* is contingent on *abhinaya* and the nature and structure of its constituent elements is the subject-matter of *Natyasastra*.

Hence, *abhinaya*, and its theoretical structure which Bharata expounded, is considered as the concrete physical language of performance which Artaud in his theory of theatre emphasized upon. In *Natyasastra*, *abhinaya* is formulated with its four dimensions i.e. *angika* (*Physical/Gestural*), *vacika* (*Linguistic*), *aharya* (*Costume*) and *sattvika* (*Emotional*). Artaud designates the concrete physical language of performance as *mise en scene* which means everything on the stage that constitutes theatre. But, unlike Bharata, Artaud's discussion of this concrete physical language of performance or *mise en scene* is abstract without proper or concrete terminology or categories pertaining to theatre. Artaud's exposition of his theory is more of a philosophical nature than a concrete methodology of application. As compared to a seminal text like *Natyasastra*, Artaud's philosophy on theatre seems to be inadequate on practical grounds.

Artaud designates this concrete physical language of performance as 'poetry in space' which can create material images identical to images in words. And it can take or assume many forms or shapes: especially those which are the means of expression that can be used on stage such as music, dance, plastic art, pantomime, mimicry, gesture, intonation, sound, lighting and scenery. All the possible forms and aspects of this 'poetry in space' may be traced in full details and with all the technicalities involved, in the framework of *Natyasastra*. For example, in *Natyasastra*, 'dance' one of the independent art forms, is treated under *angika* (*Physical*) *abhinaya*, in more

than seven chapters, which enumerates the range of all possible and meaningful physical/bodily movements. In the same way, *vacika* (Linguistic) *abhinaya* covers intonation, phonetic patterns, tones and different kind of phonemic and syllabic combinations with all possible and meaningful words and their corresponding articulation to create a theatrical effect.

This language of theatre arouses images of passionate poetry in the mind. It creates a sense of the 'poetry in space' that does not depend on spoken language but an inherent element of life ever-existed which finds its true essence in the theatre. Artaud finds it very unfortunate that this language of gestures that exists apart from the text or script is taken in Occidental theatre as 'craft' and identified merely as a technique of staging or production. Artaud further adds, "And in opposition to this way of looking at things, I shall say that to the degree that this language derives from the stage, draws its efficacy from its spontaneous creation on the stage, to the degree that it struggles directly with the stage without passing through words (and why not conceive of a play composed directly on the stage, realized on the stage) – it is the *mise en scene* that is the theatre much more than the written and spoken play" (41). On the other hand, in *Natyasastra* which is an exposition of the idea of Indian theatre, the opposition between drama and theatre does not arise because the Indian term for theatre i.e. *natya* captures the essence of the art form for which it is constructed. Furthermore, there is no discussion over written script in *Natyasastra* as language is considered as *pathya* or articulated speech having its own possibilities as a tool of theatrical expression in Indian conception of the art form. *Natya*/theatre discovers this active and anarchic language which transcends the customary limits of feelings and words. Artaud seems to have similar conception of theatrical language. As he states, "In any case, and I hasten to say it at once, a theatre which subordinates the *mise en scene* and production i.e. everything in itself that is specifically theatrical, to the text, is a theatre of idiots, madman, inverters, grammarians, antipoets, grocers, and positivists i.e. Occidentals" (41).

Artaud is against the psychological tendencies of theatre as he finds it essentially inimical to its character or nature. To him, theatre is not meant to analyze

character or to reveal a man's thoughts etc. and even the particular physical language in which it is carried, is not competent enough to do this like the verbal language. On the other hand, Occidental theatre, from the very beginning, is monopolized by this psychological character or nature. He remarks, "The contemporary theatre is decadent because it has lost the feeling on the one hand for seriousness on the other for laughter; because it has broken away from gravity, from effects that are immediate and painful – in a word from danger" (42). It is separated from the spirit of profound turmoil which is at the genesis of all poetry. He further remarks, "True poetry is, willy nilly, metaphysical and it is just its metaphysical bearing, I should say, the intensity of its metaphysical effect, that comprises its essential worth" (44).

Artaud maintains that Oriental theatre of metaphysical tendencies is opposed to Occidental theatre which is monopolized by psychological tendencies only. The physical and poetic effects of the concrete physical language of Oriental theatre are developed on every level of consciousness, which are necessary to induce thought to adopt profound attitudes and which is considered, in a famous Artaudian expression, *metaphysics-in-action*. And this term *metaphysics-in-action* refers to Bharata's theory of *rasa* which is the 'end' or aesthetic experience of *natya*/theatre. *Rasa* is considered as the soul of *natya*/theatre. The term can be translated as 'states of being' and it is metaphysical in nature. That is why it cannot be produced and communicated through verbal language. The reality or knowledge which theatre constitutes is a metaphysical one that cannot be expressed through verbal language; it can be enacted or produced through *abhinaya* or the concrete physical language of theatre and experienced in the form of *rasa*.

Bharata created a comprehensive theoretical structure of *rasa-bhava* relationship, in chapters VI & VII of *Natyasastra*, to capture the reality which is essentially metaphysical in nature. Therefore, what constitutes the meaning of a theatrical performance is the understanding of *bhava* and the experience of *rasa*. Bharata (*Natyasastra* VI 1: 32) claims, "*nahi rasadrte kascid artha pravartate*" i.e. without *rasa*, no meaning gets established. Bharata presents, in his text, a logical structure of *rasa-bhava* which encompasses the range of human emotions for creating

experience. Bharata demonstrates that the enumeration of the whole range of emotions born of experience, and empirical analysis of the structure of those emotions in terms of cause, physical correlate and their effect on man's being is possible. At the same time, the *rasa* theory surpasses its aesthetic dimensions in being a structural analysis of the totality of human experience and cognitive mechanism. The theory, thus, explains the nature of theatrical experience which is generated in empirical human reality. This *rasa* theory explains empirically, the Araudian concept of *metaphysics-in-action*. In his text, Artaud says, "For me theatre is identical with its possibilities for realization when the most extreme poetic results are derived from them; the possibilities for realization in theatre relate entirely to the *mise en scene* considered as a language in space and movement" (45). The above statement can be understood in terms of *abhinaya* which is the language of performance on which the aesthetic experience (*Rasa*) depends.

Artaud believes that the most poetic results in a theatrical performance can be derived through creating metaphysics of its means. As he states, "And to make metaphysics out of language, gestures, attitudes, sets, and music from a theatrical point of view is it seems to me, to consider them in relation to all the ways they can have of making contact with time and with movement" (46). In this regard, he appreciates Balinese theatre because it is rooted in the traditions which employ gestures, intonations, and harmonies in connection with the senses and on all possible levels.

Further, as a part of his discussion, he brings forth an analogy between theatre and Alchemy. He even goes to the extent of calling it as 'alchemical theatre' because both of the processes share an enigmatic identity of essence. Both of them operate at spiritual and imaginary level with the same process of a deepest principle in which the physical world transforms all matter into gold. Both of them are tacit or virtual arts without having any 'end' or reality within themselves. On the basis of his observation of all the principles and processes of alchemy, he constructs a vision of true theatre that is very close to Oriental theatre. For him, theatre like alchemy is the spiritual double of the operation which functions on deepest reality which is not primarily

moral or human. It refers to those natural unconscious processes where human mind with all its instruments/tools of rationality and reasoning dare to touch upon. Theatre which resembles to alchemy in its processes is the only art that can create metaphysics of this reality. As discussed earlier, these philosophical abstracts about theatre can be interpreted in terms of Bharata's *Rasa-Bhava* structure. True theatre, as Artaud believes, is a mirage as for alchemists any alchemical symbol is. Both of them deal with virtual reality where their operating symbols evolve. He defines and describes a kind of archetypal and primitive theatre in a substantial manner where he finds the materialization and externalization of basic drama which carries the fundamental principles of all dramatic art and an infinite perspective of conflicts. He observes that this essential drama exists in the image of something subtler than the world itself. Artaud states, "We must believe that the essential drama, the one at the root of all great mysteries, is associated with the second phase of creation, that of difficulty and of the double, that of the matter and materialization of the idea" (51).

On the other hand, in India, the long tradition of drama originates in the *Rgvedic* core concept of *yajna* which, for Bharata, is a kind of archetypal theatre. Since *yajna* claims to be the pattern for all happening in the universe, all its elements will naturally remain a true expression of the universe as well. On the other hand, as *natya*/theatre is claimed to be the representation of the true state of the three worlds, it deserves the name of the *yajna* itself. Artaud's theatre also claims to exhibit the underlying processes that are fundamental to the Creation itself. He states, "It seems indeed that where simplicity and order reign, there can be neither theatre nor drama, and the true theatre, like poetry as well, though by other means, is born out of a kind of organized anarchy after philosophical battles which are the passionate aspect of these primitive unifications" (51).

The first chapter of Bharata's *Natyasastra* gives *natya*/theatre a mythical origin. It is stated that Lord *Brahma*, the creator of the universe, created *natya*/theatre after reflecting and meditating on the subject-matter i.e. all the four *vedas*, thereby, deriving the four essential elements of *natya*/theatre from them, and designated it as the fifth *veda* (a source of knowledge). This mythological narrative of the origin of

natya/theatre reveals and determines the basic processes and operations required for a theatrical performance. And Artaud's alchemical theater offers itself for a better understanding to this mythological narrative. Describing the essence of true theatre through alchemy, Artaud states:

The theatrical operation of making gold, by immensity of the conflicts it provokes, by the prodigious number of forces it throws against one another and rouses, by this appeal to a sort of redistillation brimming with consequences and surcharged with spirituality, ultimately evokes in the spirit an absolute and abstract purity beyond which there can be nothing, and which can be conceived as a unique sound, defining note, caught on the wing, the organic part of an indescribable vibration. (52)

Artaud refers to Balinese theatre many times in his text, which he believes, constitutes the essence of true theatre. In fact, Artaud admits in his text that once a spectacle of Balinese theatre at Paris gave him a sense of true theatre which he was conceptualizing deep down in his consciousness. In Balinese theatre, the spectacle evolves as a conflict of spiritual states that transforms into gesture-hieroglyphs. It is not a spectacle which is the result of a conflict of feelings. Director of the performance, in this theatre, with all his/her creative ability eliminates words. Every portion of stage is utilized to create a new physical language of gestures in this form of Oriental theatre. This theatre demonstrates the superior worth of a theatrical convention which possesses a language of gesture for every situation of life. Here Daniel Meyer-Dinkgrafe remarks, "Artaud reformulated the principle of a physical language which he discovered in Balinese theatre in the context of his own views on culture" (Meyer 2). And about the language of theatre Artaud himself says, "By language, I do not mean an idiom indecipherable at first hearing, but precisely that sort of theatrical language foreign to every spoken tongue, a language in which an overwhelming stage experience seems to be communicated, in comparison with which our productions depending exclusively upon dialogue" (57). Balinese theatre,

which Artaud refers to, may be assumed as an offshoot of ancient Indian theatre as all the forms of Oriental theatre have their roots, explicitly or implicitly, in the basic idea of ancient Indian dramaturgy.

Artaud exposes the most striking aspect of Balinese theatre i.e. 'matter as revelation' disseminated in symbols or signs which reveals the metaphysical reality and inculcates this in the form of gestures. He remarks, "In this theatre all creation comes from the stage, finds its expression and origins alike in a secret psychic impulse which is speech before words" (60). This theatre does away with 'author' in favor of 'director' who is a kind of manager of magic. And the matter on which he operates; the issues he brings to pulsate life are taken from Nature. What the director puts in motion is exhibited. In this theatre, everything is calculated with minute details without leaving anything dependent on Chance or personal initiative. Artaud describes this theatre as a type of dance, where actors first of all perform like dancers; where everything is regulated and impersonal. It gives a sense of reflective mathematics that guides everything on stage.

Artaud does not interpret Balinese theatre as a mere source of entertainment. These productions are constructed at the very heart of matter i.e. reality. The thoughts it targets, the spiritual states it constructs, the transcendental solutions it provides are triggered and grasped instantly. He observes that this theatre offers a staggering realization, subdues all possibilities of using words for the illumination of abstract themes and invents a concrete physical language to be created in space, a language which does not communicate meaning except in the performance on the stage. Balinese theatre depends on a condition which is prior to language and it creates its own music, gesture, movement and words. He notices that these theatrical performances function on themes essential to theatre on which the performance confers an intense equipoise, a complete experienced gravity. This theatre utilizes a language of spiritual gesture which structures feelings, states of the soul and metaphysical ideas. Artaud remarks, "This theatre of quintessence in which things perform a strange about-face before becoming abstractions again" (66). It reflects a

kind of psychological alchemy which creates a gesture of a state of mind to solicit the perfect or pure.

The Balinese theatre constructed a non-verbal and physical concept of the theatre art which is performed within the limits of everything that happens on a theatrical stage and independent of written text. And this idea of non-verbal theatre is deeply rooted in the ancient Indian philosophy of theatre where written script for a theatrical performance does not exist. Bharata takes *natya*/theatre as a performed text. But in European theatrical tradition, 'word' exists for everything and there is no possibility of expression outside it.

In opposition to Oriental theatre, Occidental theatre is completely dominated by the supremacy of speech. Even the performance on stage is considered as a mere reflection of the text. With this perception of theatre as subordinate to speech, how can the true sense of the art of theatre be realized which has its own language and how can it be possible to consider it as an independent and autonomous art, like music, painting dance etc. Artaud identifies the concrete language of performance which the Occidental theatre lacks, with *mise en scene* which is the visual materialization of speech and as the language of everything that can be performed on a stage independently of speech. He mentions, "One therefore understands that theatre, to the very degree that it remains confined within its own language and in correlation with it, must break with actuality" (70). Artaud realizes that the theatre should be connected to the expressive possibilities of forms; restored to its essence; reinstated in its spiritual and metaphysical aspect and reconciled with reality.

Occidental theatre utilizes speech to communicate psychological conflicts of life. This theatre has a moral interest. But Artaud discovers that these conflicts do not need a theatrical stage to be resolved. The Artaudian theatre does not operate on psychological level but on physical. That is why, he conceptualizes a special and spatial language of theatre. He adds, "All true feeling is in reality untranslatable. To express it is to betray it. But to translate it is to dissimulate it. True expression hides what it makes manifest. It sets the mind in opposition to the real void of nature by creating in reaction, a kind of fullness in thought" (71). He further explains, "That is

why an image, an allegory, a figure that masks what it would reveal has more significance for the spirit than the lucidities of speech and its analytics” (71). Here, the idea is not to suppress the speech in theatre but to change its role because theatre is created to manifest the way various emotions conflict and clash with one another.

The role of speech in theatre is transformed by using it in concrete and spatial sense, integrating it with everything in theatre. It is interesting to find that the cluster of chapters devoted to *vacikabhinaya* (Linguistic) in *Natyasastra* expounds all the possibilities of the theatrical use of speech as discussed in Artaud’s theory of spatial language of theatre. Bharata’s exposition of *vacikabhinaya* (Linguistic) deals with the whole field of pronunciation, intonation and rhythm in language. Similarly, Artaud’s theory of *mise en scene* is considered as the manifestation of all the objective consequences of gesture, word, sound, music, and their combinations. As he observes, “In the Oriental theatre of metaphysical tendency, contrasted to Occidental theatre of psychological tendency, forms assume and extend their sense and their signification on all possible levels” (72).

Through his conception of theatre, Artaud constructs an anatomy of spatial knowledge of signs or images and sources of inducing them. He considers theatre as the only art that directly affects the being. This art discards psychology, reconsiders the extraordinary, manifests natural conflicts, natural and subtle powers, and projects itself primarily as an extraordinary power of redirection. He needs theatre to stir nerves and heart. He perceives, “Everything that acts is a cruelty. It is upon this idea of extreme action, pushed beyond all limits, that theatre must be rebuilt” (85). Further, he states, “We cannot go on prostituting the idea of theatre whose only value is in its excruciating, magical relation to reality and danger” (89). This theatre through its physical aspects requires expression in space. It allows mystical means of art and speech to be employed organically and altogether. What Artaud wants to establish is that theatre cannot operate on its peculiar forces of action till it is provided its language. Hence, Artaud suggests that it is essential to devise a unique language of gesture to liberate theatre from the dominance of the script. And this language has the possibility for vigorous expression in space as opposed to the expressive possibility of

spoken language. This concrete physical language is organized into veritable hieroglyphs by employing symbolism in relation to all organs.

In order to liberate it from 'human interest', Artaudian theatre creates metaphysics of speech, gesture and expression. This objective and concrete language of theatre spellbinds and enmeshes the body. It glides into the sensibility. It extends the voice. It ultimately frees itself from the intellectual domination of language by communicating the sense of a new and latent intellectuality which constitutes the gestures and symbols. This language of theatre uses human nervous magnetism to transgress the ordinary limits of arts and speech, for realizing, a kind of total creation.

This Artaudian language of performance is constituted through *mise en scene*. It is not simply a refraction of a text upon the stage, but a point of deviation for all theatrical creation. The duality of the author and director is dissolved through this language. And the creator of performance comes into existence who accepts the double responsibility of spectacle and plot. His purpose was not to subjugate the speech, but of providing the language a symbolism. He emphasizes on finding or creating a new means of codification of this language. This codified language is valuable for transcribing voices. And it is here that Artaud's conception of the language of performance seems suitable to be interpreted in terms of Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* which is basically the codified language of *natya*/theatre. Bharata creates a theoretical structure of this language with all its possible dimensions and it seems that nothing remains inexpressive outside its scope. The theatrical use of tones of intonations is essential to this language. It employs a particular use of intonations which constitutes a kind of rhythm, a distortion of speech, rearticulated at will. In the same way, numerous or countless expressions of face captured in masks concretely and symbolically form this language of the stage.

Artaud conceptualizes a concrete idea of music where the sounds and harmonies are like characters which lose themselves at the precise introduction of words. From one means of expression to another, a concrete form of communication and its different levels of development are created. In Artaudian theatre, even the musical devices are considered as objects and as part of the stage. Similarly, Bharata

also treats music as an object of theatrical aesthetics. His discussion seems more refined and comprehensive than Artaud. It covers almost six chapters (XXVIII-XXXVI) of *Natyasastra*. Bharata constructs a theoretical structure of musical sounds where its possibilities for theatrical communication are explored. In the beginning of chapter XXVII, he begins his discussion of music and calls it *atodya*. He says, “*Atodyavidhimidanim vaksyamah / Tatam caivavanaddham ca ghanam susirameva ca / Caturvidham tu vijneyamatodyam laksananvitam*” i.e. here the process of *atodya* is described. It is of four kinds respectively: *tatam*, *anvaddham*, *ghanam* and *susiram* (*Natyasastra* XXVIII 4: 1). These are basically the four possible dimensions of music as an art form. Bharata takes up the above mentioned dimensions of music separately and discusses them at length in the forthcoming chapters. Further, Bharata describes the form of musical art and terms it as *gandharva*. He says, “*Yattu tantrikrtam proktam nanatodyasamasrayam / Gandharvamiti tajjneyam svaratalapadatmakam*” i.e. the musical structure which is based on various kinds of *atodya* and manifested in the form of *svara*, *tala* and *pada*, is called as ‘*gandharva*’ or ‘music’ (*Natyasastra* XXVIII 4: 8). In this way, Bharata provides a theoretical structure of music which not only explores its possibilities as a theatrical tool but also lays down the foundation of the art of Indian music.

Artaud observes the element of cruelty at the root of the concrete physical language of theatre. He states, “Without an element of cruelty at the root of every spectacle, the theatre is not possible. In our present state of degeneration it is through the skin that metaphysics must be made to re-enter our minds” (94). In one of his letters written on 15 Sept. 1931 to Mr. M.B.C., Artaud talked about the language of theatre and *mise en scene*. Here he mentions that if the theatre is considered as written script which is dominated by the text then *mise en scene* as an art will become acquiescent and minor. And the situation remains same until the text is substituted by *mise en scene*. The director works with *mise en scene*, which constitutes the theatrical part of the performance, to show the theatre’s feasibility of production. The autonomy of theatre as an art is discerned when it differs from text, language, drama etc. Further Artaud states, “It has not been definitively proved that the language of words is the best possible language. And it seems that on the stage, which is above all a space to

fill and a place where something happens, the language of words may give way before a language of signs whose objective aspect is the one that has the most immediate impact upon us” (107). In this way, *mise en scene* attains a kind of intellectual ability through gestures to become properly a communicative language. He condemns the European tradition for being incapable of giving a proper interpretation or evaluation to Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare. It may be the result of the loss of the sense of their theatre’s physics. Artaud proposes that it is through this concrete gesture or *mise en scene* that the deep humanism of their theatre can be restored.

The existence of Artaudian theatre lies in a specific mathematical way of utilizing the theatrical space. It resides in a conflagration of human emotions and experiences at a given point, creating states that are conveyed in concrete gesticulation. The concrete gestures make us to neglect the necessity of speech. Artaud writes here, “In a word, the theatre must become a sort of experimental demonstration of the profound unity of the concrete and the abstract” (108). A culture of gestures exists at side of culture of words. Theatre is the most dynamic and methodical site for immense analogical upheavals where ideas are held in space at some point in their transformation into the abstract. The culmination of theatre connects us to ‘becoming’ and reveals the transmutation of ideas into things. Artaud concludes here, “It seems also that it was with just such an intention that the theatre was created, to include man and his appetites only to the degree that he is magnetically confronted his destiny. Not to submit to it but to measure himself against it” (109).

Artaud notices that it is all about changing the point of artistic creation which leads to a transformation into the established conventions of theatre. He proposes a substitution of the spoken language for a different language of gesture, whose communicative efficacies are equivalent to verbal language, but its genesis lies at a point still deeper, more far from thought. Robert Brustein points out that “the language in the theatre of Artaud is not used for communicating social or psychological concepts, but it is used for its emotional colouring and incantatory tone” (372). A grammar of this language is to be established or constructed. The

matter of this language is gesture. It constitutes the primary laws of human expression. It rediscovers artistically the track that is culminated in the creation of language. Artaud claims, “For I make it my principle that words do not mean everything and that by nature and defining character, fixed once and for all, they arrest and paralyze thought instead of permitting it and fostering its development” (110). This language encompasses and utilizes ‘the extension’, that is to say space. Further he claims, “I will not perform written plays, I extend the language of the stage and multiply its possibilities. I am adding another language to the spoken language, and I am trying to restore to the language of speech its old magic” (110). Eric Sellin adds that “It is not a question of suppression of the articulated word, but of giving to words approximately the importance they have in dreams” (11).

In Artaudian theatre, the text is composed in nature itself, in real space rather than in the brain of an author. The author determines what belongs to the *mise en scene* as well as what belongs to him and becomes a creator that destroys the absurd duality between author and director. The essence of this theatre in space lies in incongruity, dispersion, and the dialectic or analytical discontinuity of expression. No one calls himself the author except the person who controls the stage directly. Artaud notices that the most vulnerable point of Occidental theatre is its dominance of language and the propensities and powers of language assigned to it. This theatre conceives the text as everything. Moreover, a written script is given the same importance as the performed dialogues. Its laws are determined by the language of speech.

On the other hand, Artaud observes that Oriental theatre maintains a certain extensive value in words because word in itself is not everything for them. It has its music which communicates directly to the psychic states. That is why, he does not find spoken language in Oriental theatre. He observes a language of gestures, attitude and signs in this theatre. Light, sounds, and gestures everything on stage assumes the pattern and order of an actual language. And the director controls or regulates this immediate and concrete language through his creativity. “What so impressed Artaud about the Oriental and especially the Balinese theatre was the importance accorded to

gesture and facial expressions and the relatively unimportant role delegated to the spoken word. He described the impact of the physical action on stage and its effect upon man's conscious; the emergence of the latter not only by means of the spoken word, but also by means of gesture, which should be looked upon as a kind of hieroglyphic or symbol" (Knapp 2). The *mise en scene* of this theatre contains gestural use of everything available on stage. Albert Bermel points out that "his tribulations with speech may have motivated his interest in departing from the texted based language in traditional theatre as he experimented with sound and speech in a different way, enlarging the theatre's vocabulary" (15). Thus, he suggests the repudiation of the theatrical superstition of the text and dictatorship of the writer.

In the essay XI of his book *The Theatre and its Double*, Artaud admits that the Theatre of Cruelty is created to modify theatre in such an art form where an intense and spasmodic conception of life is perceived. And it is in this intense precipitation of all the theatrical operatives that the underlying cruelty of it be understood. The cruelty which Artaud talks of is identified with extreme moral purity which reflects the essence of life. He discusses the peculiar themes and subjects of his theatre of cruelty. This theatre deals with some of the rudimentary feelings of human beings in their crude form without any cultural or civilized contamination. Artaud believes that the true worth and propensity of theatre lies in the externalization of those rudimentary and fundamental feelings and emotions of human life which unfortunately, the Occidental theatre lacks. The subjects and themes which constitute such kind of extreme passionate states will be cosmic and universal in nature without any culture-specific identity and liable to be interpreted with the parameters drawn from the most ancient knowledge traditions of the world which have survived through the test of time. The theatre of cruelty does not characterize the man with a fragmentary sense of life without having the faculty of seeing it as a composite whole. This psychological and social man is a victim of his own cultural forms which take him away from his natural self that makes him an essential part of the creation. This theatre renounces human being in such compartmentalized (social, political, cultural, civilized etc.) forms to address itself to a total man whose basic and simple activities communicate the cosmic or natural forces of creation at work. Artaud states:

And it will cause not only the recto but the verso of the mind to play its part; the reality of imagination and dreams will appear there on equal footing with life. Furthermore, great social upheavals, conflicts between people and races, natural forces, interventions of chance, and the magnetism of fatality will manifest themselves either indirectly, in the movement and gestures of characters enlarged to the statures of gods, heroes, or monsters, in mythical dimensions, or directly, in material forms obtained by new scientific means.

(123)

The theatre which Artaud conceptualizes, deals with the aforementioned themes and subjects, appeals to the senses and physical poetry of extreme emotional states. It needs *mise en scene* (Artaud's term for everything on stage) and not the script to transpire the natural and cosmic conflicts that involve rudimentary passions, and also to give them immediacy i.e. these themes appear as movements, expressions and gestures before appearing in words. Artaud adds, "Thus we shall renounce the theatrical superstition of the text and dictatorship of the writer. And thus we rejoin the ancient popular drama, sensed and experienced directly by the mind without the deformations of language and the barriers of speech" (Artaud, 124). He conceptualizes a theatre which is based upon the spectacle before everything else and he even goes on to redefine the notion of spectacle as space utilized on all possible levels. This theatre which organizes the quantity of movements and physical images at a point of time contains both silence and rhythm and physical vibrations composed of expressions, objects and gestures. He remarks, "It can be said that the spirit of the most ancient hieroglyphs will preside at the creation of this pure theatrical language" (Artaud, 124). He defines the 'spectacle' as space utilized at all possible levels, and is contrived in such a way that it abolishes the stage and seizes the spectators physically and submerges them into images, movements and noises. Artaud does experiment with the traditional stage design and creates a specific stage for his theatre of cruelty where the spectators are expected to be the participants in the action directly. They

watch the images and movements around them in all their sublime dimensions. Artaud remarks, “Just as there will be no unoccupied point in space, there will be neither respite nor vacancy in the spectator’s mind or sensibility. That is, between life and the theatre there will be no distinct division, but instead continuity” (126).

Finally, Artaud gives his statement on the preparation of actor and the style of acting in the essay XI of his text. He does not provide a structured analysis with minute details of it as given by Bharata. Primarily, his reflections on the body of his actor who performs the theatre of cruelty are abstract in nature without a theoretical structure. Artaud designates it as ‘affective athleticism’. He coins this term which refers to the carnal localizations of feelings. He states:

The actor is like the physical athlete, but with this surprising difference: his affective organism is analogous to the organism of the athlete, is parallel to it, as if it were its double, although not acting upon the same plane. The actor is an athlete of the heart. The division of the total person into three worlds obtains also for him; and his is affective sphere. It belongs to him organically. The muscular movements of physical effort comprise an effigy of another effort, their double, and in the movements of dramatic action are localized at the same points. (133)

Artaud’s analogy between actor and athlete is important here to understand the kind of language he seeks to create for his theatre of cruelty. Actor’s body becomes very important on which the theatre’s true image is built. Both the actor and the athlete depend on the same organism but actor’s course is altogether interior.

Artaud gives a list of sports activities like boxing, wrestling, hundred yard-dashes, high-jumping etc. which are analogous to the actor’s organic basis in the movement of passions; they share the same carnal points of prop. But a seminal difference in the movement is observed. Like in breathing, an actor’s body is supported by breath, and on the reverse an athlete’s breath is supported by body.

‘Breathing’ is one of the important theatrical movements in Artaudian theatre; it controls and determines the actor’s expressions. The nature of expression determines the breathing pattern of the actor. Artaud states, “It is certain that for every feeling, every mental action, and every leap of human emotion there is a corresponding breath which is appropriate to it. The tempos of the breath have a name taught us by the Cabala; it is these tempos which give the human heart its shape and the movements of passion their sex” (134).

He terms the performer as a ‘crude empiricist’ who works on indistinct instinct. A gifted actor knows it how to utilize and emit forces or strengths. It is a kind of surprise for him to know that these forces are within him of which he is ignorant. Jaquiline Martin tells: “how Artaud brought out the inner self of an actor” (61). He uses his emotions just like a wrestler uses his muscles. He perceives human being as a double. It is a never completed plastic image on which he imposes the forms of his own sensibility. This theatre configures this incorporeal image and the actor in it performs with his heart. And it is here only, the actor is conscious of the affective world.

The performer in this theatre believes in the fluid materiality of soul. He connects to it physiologically. He treats passions as plastic fluctuations of material that extends the limits of our mind. And he becomes a master of his craft when he reduces soul and passions to a physical, fluid material reality. With his craft, he gives the soul a corporeal expression and it helps him to connect with this soul and to relocate its essence by carnal analogies. A new concept of time based on passions as an aspect of this theatre comes into existence. David Bradby points out: “Artaud formulated his acting techniques based on Chinese acupuncture points and on breathing methods from the Jewish cabala” (44). Artaud maintains that this tempo or rhythm of time is located by analogy; it is produced in the six ways dividing and preserving the breath. He observes, “Every breath has three kinds of time, just as there are three principles at the root of all creation which find a corresponding pattern even in the breath” (136). Furthermore, he states:

The Cabala apportions the human breath into six principal arcana, the first of which, called the Great Arcanum, is that of creation:

ANDROGYNOUS	MALE	FEMALE
BALANCED	EXPANDING	ATTRACTING
NEUTRAL	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE

I have had the idea of employing this knowledge of the kinds of breathing not only in the actor's work but in the actor's preparation for his craft. For if the knowledge of breathing makes clear the soul's color, it can with all the more reason stimulate the soul and encourage its blossoming. (136)

Breathing pattern is an important aspect of Artaudian acting style. The actor produces these breathing patterns with effort and consequently the effort has the tempo of the artificially produced breath. The actor produces his character on the edge of this patterned breath. On the six possible principal combinations of breath for actors, Artaud argues:

Breath accompanies feeling, and the actor can penetrate into this feeling by means of breath provided he knows how to select among the different kinds the one appropriate to the feeling. There are six principal combination of breath.

NEUTER	MASCULINE	FEMININE
NEUTER	FEMININE	MASCULINE
MASCULINE	NEUTER	FEMININE
FEMININE	NEUTER	MASCULINE
MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
FEMININE	MASCULINE	NEUTER

And a seventh state which is beyond breath and which, through the door of highest Guna, the state of Sattva, joins the manifest to the non-manifest. (137)

The actor carries this principle of seventh state in him like a metaphysician because the theatre is the most perfect and complete symbol of universal manifestation of this state of *Sattva*.

The localization and patterned division of breath through the activity of contraction and release enables the actor in using his body like a monitor through which human will moves. To have a sense of the localization of emotive thought, is one of the important aspects of this acting style. And the actor attains it through effort. The points which support the carnal effort and the emanation of emotive thought are same. To unleash the affectivity in full force and to provide it a silent but profound range of extreme violence, the actor has to be aware of his physical obsession of muscles convulsing with affectivity. Artaud states, “Thus it appears that any actor whatsoever, even the least gifted, can by means of this physical knowledge increase the internal density and volume of his feelings, and a full-bodied expression follows upon this organic taking-hold” (139).

In this theatre, poetry and science are identical. Every emotion which is produced has organic bases. The actor cultivates the emotions in his body in such a way that these emotions deliver the appropriate energy for expression. This combination of poetry and science enables the actor to have a sense of which points of the body to touch, because that is pivotal to provide the spectators the sense of a magical trance. Robert Leach points out that “his was a theatre of magic, which would transform its audience” (172). The actor constructs the magical chain by fixing the points of localization of emotions into the body. Artaud finally argues, “And through the hieroglyph of a breath I am able to recover an idea of a sacred theatre” (141).

A brief look at one of his plays reflects his ideas at work. Artaud’s earliest work, *The Sprout of Blood*, a short play, published in *Umbilical Limbo* has, in embryo, most of his ideas. The play begins with a web of anaemic words that quickly breaks to

reveal horrible or awful, covert violence. Here, a superb example of ‘playing against the text’ is given:

YOUNG MAN. I love you and everything is fine.

GIRL. (*in a quickened throbbing voice*) You love me and everything is fine.

YOUNG MAN. (*lower*) I love you and everything is fine.

GIRL. (*lower still*) You love me and everything is fine.

YOUNG MAN. (*suddenly turns aside*) I love you.

Silence

YOUNG MAN. Face me.

GIRL. (*same business, faces him*) There.

YOUNG MAN. (*on an exalted high-pitched tone*) I love you, I am great, I am lucid, I am

Full, I am dense.

GIRL. (*same high-pitched tone*) We love each other.

YOUNG MAN. We are intense. Ah, What a well made world! (Artaud, *Collected works* 62)

The repetition reduces the speech to a play of tones that transform the quality from ‘deep throbbing’ to ‘highly pitched’, a shift so sudden; it serves only to make even the tonal quality unpredictable or uncertain. The well created world trembles or convulses. A slight touch is enough to break it apart. What erupts in the silence that follows is the imaginative embodiment of that which is crusted over by this impassioned or oratorical speech.

The heavens, the stars, thunder, lightning and a whirlwind lift the action off the psychological. While the pace and rhythm in which the action moves seems to require of us a response not so much of anger or disgust but of awful sadness. A linear

plot or narrative is not required here. The action here develops vertically, not horizontally, delves down through sensuous layers beneath the calm of everyday forms to discover the appalling underneath. The personages that appear, (it is not possible to call them characters, for that would require a psychological coherence that they do not have), are generic – the priest, the beadle, the whore, the judge – and represent voices that weave a certain texture, social as well as in Artaud's sense, metaphysical, composing the landscape. Christopher Innes points out:

The action-sequences in *The Spurt of Blood* have hallucinatory shock effects of a surrealistic film. All characters here are symbolic of varieties of spiritualized love. The actions revolve round many bizarre sequences such as the visible alteration in character's physical shapes, the introduction of the cascade of objects, bodies and even abstractions. There would be swift transitions and variations in speed "from frantic acceleration to vomit inducing slower. (91)

Artaud's technical moves are understood, but it is not possible to delineate or trace the feeling of awe, humour, visual amazement and sheer physical disgust all of which are rhythmically diverted by the suddenly speeded up tempo producing a kind of 'alienation' effect. The play proliferates in the sudden transformations and materializations, persistently astonishing and disorienting the spectator who has hardly taken in one movement before he is confronted with another, even more astonishing one. The last words come from the girl who reappears at the end – for the first time after that strained opening sequence. The young man shouts "Don't hurry Mummy" before he and the whore "fly off like mad" while the wet nurse is giving birth to swarms of scorpions through "a vagina which shimmers and becomes transparent like the sun". The girl gets up, dazzled, but enlightened. "The Virgin!" she says, "AH! That's what he was looking for." It is a mysterious and aberrant quest, through mysterious and unfamiliar lands, but apparently a clear one. What but the stage can question the utter conviction of those words?

The ‘theatre of cruelty’ is perhaps the first explicit attempt to form the aesthetics and poetics of performance grounded entirely on carnal perception and expression. However, to conceive Artaud’s work as primarily related to the establishment of these new modes of theatrical communication is to miss the wider implications of his theory of performance. He seeks to have a new concrete language in theatre that is of the senses or the body and not of the abstract or verbal forms of the mind within a lived space dominated by the abstraction of an idealist episteme.

Artaud’s concept of *mise en scene*, which can be considered central to any theatrical performance, is an ambiguous term carrying so many interpretations with it. It may be roughly translated as language of performance. It is interesting to interpret Artaud’s text in the theoretical framework of *Natyasastra* as both these texts are rooted in entirely different intellectual spheres. These texts elaborate upon concepts pertaining to theatrical aesthetics having different terminology and methodology from each other. Notwithstanding this fact, it is academically significant to take up one of the concepts out of the larger theoretical discourse of a European theorist and interpret it in terms of an ancient Indian theoretical framework. Moreover, Artaud’s indebtedness to Oriental theatre that is evident from his reference to Balinese theatre, paves the way to interpret his theory in Oriental theoretical framework. Balinese theatre may be assumed as an offshoot of ancient Indian theatre as all the artistic expressions of South-East Asia are rooted in Indian aesthetics. “The discovery of Eastern theatre was decisive for Artaud’s theories, and Artaud retained as principles of his ‘Theatre of Cruelty’ features which we know to be characteristic of the Balinese theatre. Yet Artaud’s theatre is cruel, in the sense that such cruelty proceeds from a tragic vision of man and the universe, a tragic vision which is altogether unknown in Asian theatre, whether Indonesian or Indian” (Boudon, 353). Bharata’s *Natyasastra* seems to provide a methodological source to Artaudian theories. Hence, Artaud’s concepts like *mise en scene* may be deeply understood and explained in terms of Bharata’s theory of *abhinaya*.

The theatrical universe of Bharata constitutes the world of the ‘audible’ and the ‘visible’. The senses, sense-organs and perceptions play a crucial role in the evolution

of this theory, as well as the techniques of each of the four instrumentalities of expression or *abhinaya* – *vacika* (sound, word), *angika* (body language), *aharya* (decor and dress), *sattvika* (internal states). At structural level, Bharata creates an analogue to the physical layout of *yajna*. The whole text of *Natyasastra* is divided into thirty-six chapters and has a sequence. The structure of the text may be restated in terms of the concern of the author to present all levels of the artistic experience, forms of expression, nature and levels of response. On the conceptual foundation, it creates the physical structure of the theatre. The physical space replicates cosmic space. There is an analogy between theatre and the ritual space of the *yajna*. The physical space of theatre thus is a neutral performative space with the potential of being transformed into space of any order. The world of creativity and imagination is given a physical space here. Finally, Bharata stresses that through all that he has suggested; it is possible to present the infinite variety of the world in an innumerable number of *rupa* (forms). Kapil Vatsyayan gives a critical analysis of the text and writes, “It is a unified single vision manifested in multiple forms. He does synthesize the world of essence, the world of reflection and feeling with that of structure and grammar” (89).

Bharata has a command over the whole range of creativity from the source of creation, inspiration of the artist, to the artistic process and expression through the principal instrumentalities of expression of the verbal and corporeal to the final product, communication and response. He says, “Just as the garland-maker makes garlands from various kinds of flowers, the drama should be produced similarly by gestures and different limbs, and by sentiments and states” (*Natyasastra*, XXVI, 3: 115-116). His organizational pattern is also circular like his notion of *itivrtta* (plot). Bharata executes this grand design as a master conceiver of a great orchestra. It provides the basic framework and a pan-Indian vocabulary which guides the theory and practice of Indian arts.

The central concern of Artuad’s discourse in his treatise *The Theatre and Its Double* is to conceive a concrete physical language of theatre which is materialized in gestures, movements and expressions. He uses a French term *mise en scene* for it. He seeks an appropriate grammar for this language so that its determinants may be fixed.

On this question of physical language of theatre, Artaud seems to agree with Bharata who also does not see the existence of *natya*/theatre outside this sensorial language. Bharata, almost two millennia ago, created a perfect language of theatre which he termed as *abhinaya* and made it the nucleus of the performance. The grammar of this physical language of theatre which Artaud seeks, finds its codification in a structural manner in Bharata's theory of *abhinaya*. The purpose of the discussion is not to give an exposition to the concept of *abhinaya* but to show that the theoretical structure of *abhinaya* with all its possible dimensions has the potential to explain Artaudian theory of *mise en scene*.

Throughout his text, Artaud attempts to establish the metaphysics of gesture through the concrete physical language of theatre. He begins his discussion with an analogy between theatre and culture and then goes on establishing other such analogies between theatre and plague, theatre and painting, theatre and alchemy etc. Ultimately, the central concern of his discourse is to find a concrete physical language for European theatre which was dominated by the written script or text. Artaud was against such a tendency of Occidental theatre where 'text' is central to a performance and everything except text is considered as a support. His understanding of the theoretical limitations of Occidental theatre became more concrete after witnessing Balinese performance. He proposes that theatre in Europe must create a language of its own if it has to revive from the dead existence. Artaud in his *The Theatre and Its Double* conceptualizes a concrete physical language for theatre which he interprets as speech before the words; a conception of language that resembles to Bhrtihari's concept of *sphota*, another ancient Indian theorist.

Bharata's whole structure of communication in a theatrical performance, overtly or covertly, provides an adequate ground to explain Artaud's idea of *mise en scene*. Though Bharata identifies four kinds of *abhinaya* i.e. *angika*, *vacika*, *aharya* and *sattvika* but they transcend their individual identity and merge in the totality of performance. Each kind of *abhinaya* is distinct and clearly identifiable, has a role to play in the totality of performance, but is never absolutely autonomous and does not function in isolation but as an organic whole. Bharata's rendering of each *abhinaya* as

an instrument of communication in a performance is codified in a pattern which is an analogue of the universe or life. In a way, it may be assumed that through his theory of *abhinaya*, Bharata creates a grammar of life which codifies the natural, unconscious processes of the organism. And Artaud's vision of the physical language of theatre may be interpreted and evaluated through Bharata's theoretical framework of *abhinaya*. Not only the language of performance but also his conception of true theatre which he conceives through a performance of Oriental theatre, offers itself to Bharata's text for explanation. Artaud partially shares Bharata's vision of *natya*/theatre where a performance is deeply rooted in the metaphysics of life. The exteriorization of this underlying unconscious reality is *natya*'s highest function. On the same conception of *natya*, the true spirit of twentieth century European Experimental Theatre is established which Artaud formulates. This theatre goes against the established theatrical conventions of Europe in favour of something which is conceptualized and discussed in ancient India. The conception of theatre as physical space and a peculiar concrete language where speech precedes words is not new or alien to ancient Indian theatre. It is evident from Artaud's theoretical discourse that his radical ideas on theatre are a reaction to the underlying absurdity of existing European culture and unknowingly resemble to Indian world-view which is based on orality of culture.

This comparative analysis of two entirely different theoretical paradigms on the art of theatre explores the metaphysics of the art form and touches its essence deeply rooted in the anatomical structure of human body. The critical survey of two apparently different philosophies conclude on somehow similar pattern of the conception of the language of performance. This study also brings forth various possibilities of perceiving theatre with different terminologies which ultimately get amalgamated on a single point. Despite of being different on spatial, temporal and consequently cultural planes, these two philosophical as well as theoretical paradigms conceptualize a new language of theatre that is entirely different from the 'word' whose manifestation is possible only through a deep understanding of the potential expressive ability of human body.

This comparative study is not conducted to analyze two different propositions only but also to redefine the metaphysics of theatre reviewing its essential and potential elements through different categories altogether. This critical survey may be seen as an exploration of Artaudian theories of theatre beyond any time bound or culture-specific cognizance.

Exploring the ‘Gestic Principle’ of Theatre: Bertolt Brecht’s ‘Gestus’ and Bharata’s *Abhinaya*

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), German playwright, poet and theatre reformer who through the successful performances of his plays, established a new genre of theatre popularly known as ‘epic theatre’ which paved the way for European Experimental Theatre movement in twentieth century. The term ‘epic theatre’ was coined by Ervin Piscator but later developed into a popular theatrical mode by Bertolt Brecht. As one of the pioneers of Experimental Theatre movement, he revolutionized the stage through his theory of ‘*verfremdungseffekt*’ and the specific acting style ‘*gestus*’, he introduced for his productions. He established this new way of acting by employing certain well thought out effects in music, costume, set and dialogue etc. Brecht employed these techniques to remind the spectators that the performance is only a representation of reality not reality itself. Through highlighting the contrived and structured nature of spectacle he exposes the spectator’s reality which is equally constructed and changeable. His specific mode deflected from the conventions of theatrical illusion and developed the theatre as ideological forum for Marxist causes. As Wolfgang Haug states, "behind Brecht's world fame as a playwright and poet it is still a widely kept secret that he was one of the most outstanding Marxist philosophers" (113). His earlier works were influenced by Dadaism and Expressionism but gradually he developed his own style which suited his vision of theatre.

Any reflection or discussion on the theatre of twentieth century, more particularly on the experimental theatre remains incomplete without a reference to Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and especially his theory of ‘epic theatre’. Though he remains a controversial figure due to his political views especially Communist ideology, as a playwright and performance theorist, he is undoubtedly influential. However, last plays of his career are aesthetically successful and transcend his political ideologies. He is a visionary of theatre art whose work cannot be determined by any propagandist ideologue. Only a comprehensive theoretical discourse on theatre can measure up to the scope of Brecht’s theatre. His faculty for theatre lies in the fact

that he developed the gestic potential of theatre in a political–ideological sphere. He has modified the scope and essence of both theatrical experience and political thought through his conception of theatre. In his theatre, it is understood that, performance and Marxism correspond and coexist. Norman Roessler points out that "as a dramatist/philosopher of historical consciousness, Brecht somehow always falls between the cracks of theatre and philosophy, of Marx and the Frankfurt School..." (153).

Brecht's revolutionary ideas on the aesthetics of theatre do not form a single text rather they are found in scattered or fragmentary form. He didn't compose a theoretical treatise on theatre like Antonin Artaud. His theoretical discourse consists of interviews, lectures, talks etc. on various occasions. He has written only one theoretical document on theatre i.e. *A Short Organum for the Theatre*. This text and his other discourses have been translated from German into English and compiled in a book entitled *Brecht on Theatre: the Development of an Aesthetic* by John Willet, one of the scholars on Brecht. Due to the limitation of a coherent theoretical discourse, except his *Organum*, it is a difficult task to constitute a unified and coherent Brechtian dramaturgy. Another difficulty in dealing with his dramaturgy is to separate his theory of theatre from his political ideology. The political influence of Marxism on Brecht deflects his discourse on the aesthetics of theatre. A possible challenge here is to analyze his aesthetic concerns independently from that of his political ones.

Brecht's dramaturgy does not show any sign of direct influence or his indebtedness to Indian aesthetics and especially Bharata's *Natyasastra*. Despite of his unawareness of Bharata's dramaturgy at all, his conception of theatre and especially the concept of 'gestus' has some aesthetic resemblance to the most comprehensive theoretical framework of theatre i.e. *Natyasastra*. This covert similarity of conception attracts scholarly investigation into his theatrical aesthetics in terms of Bharata's dramaturgy. This chapter primarily focuses on Brecht's concept of 'gestus', the very basis of his theory of epic theatre, in terms of Bharata's theory of *abhinaya*. 'Gestus' is the nucleus of Brecht's aesthetics of theatre around which all his dramaturgy is

structured. In the theoretical dimensions of ‘gestus’, Brecht explores the metaphysics of theatre which is considered his greatest contribution to Experimental Theatre. The second most important concept of Brechtian dramaturgy is *verfremdungseffect*. These two key concepts ‘verfremdungseffect’ and ‘gestus’ form the very bases of his deep intellectual insights on the aesthetics of theatre. The first term translated as ‘alienation’ is primarily ‘entfremdung’ as used by Hegel and Marx. But Brecht coined the term ‘verfremdung’ and makes it famous. It is also known as ‘A-Effect’ or ‘V - Effect. It is taken as ‘bracketing’ or the suspension of belief. And the second is the radicalization of this act in his idea of the theatrical ‘gest’ as the raw material of the performance. The concept may be considered as the ‘end’ of Epic theatre to be attained through the ‘means’ i.e. ‘gestus’. A very important conceptual similarity is evident from a comparative analysis of the two theorists of theatre i.e. Brecht’s concept of ‘gestus’ and ‘verfremdungseffect’ similarly takes the earlier as the ‘means’ and the later as the ‘end’ as found in Bharata’s concept of *abhinaya* and *Rasa* where *abhinaya* is considered as the instrument to attain the ‘end’ of *natya*/theatre i.e. *rasa*.

The simplest way to understand ‘verfremdungseffect’ is to treat it as a limited set of theatrical devices such as flat lighting, ‘third person’, acting, interruption, songs, banners and so on, employed to censor emotional identification and ensure a completely objective, cognitive response fit or suitable for the Epic theatre. “Bourgeois theatre”, Brecht argues, “by requiring the spectator to identify with the characters, taking their immediate feelings for granted as natural and universal, forfeits its primordial ability to question these feelings or the situation that gives rise to them. And such plays reinforce the actual social relations that underlie the action on the stage and the value constructs that uphold them” (Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting 150). Further he remarks:

In the film *Gunga Din*, ...I saw British occupation forces fighting a native population. An Indian tribe – this term itself implies something wild and uncivilized, as against the word ‘people’ – attacked a body of British troops stationed in India. The Indians were primitive creatures, either comic or

wicked: comic when loyal to the British and wicked when hostile. The British soldiers were honest, good-humored chaps and when they used their fists on the mob and ‘knocked some sense’ into them the audience laughed. One of the Indians betrayed his compatriots to the British, sacrificed his life so that his fellow countrymen should be defeated, and earned the audiences’ heartfelt applause.

My heart was touched too: I felt like applauding, and laughed in all the right places. (Brecht, *Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting* 151)

Any theatrical performance good or bad is the shadow or image of the world. In Aristotelian theatre, the spectator is tempted to take this image uncritically. Such a ‘culinary’ approach has no place in Brechtian theatre. Brecht views modern theatre in the form of Opera which is technically equal to it. He considers the modern theatre as the ‘epic theatre’. The following table from his “The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre” reveals the shift in emphasis between the dramatic and epic theatre:

Dramatic Theatre	Epic Theatre
Plot	narrative
Implicates the spectator in a stage situation	turns the spectator into an observer
Wears down his capacity for action	arouses his capacity for action
Provides him with sensations	forces him to take decisions
Experience	picture of the world
Spectator is involved in something	he is made to face something
Suggestion	argument
Instinctive feelings are preserved	brought to the point of recognition
Shares the experience	spectator stands outside, studies
Human being taken for granted	it is the object of inquiry
It is unalterable	alterable and able to alter

Eyes on the finish	eyes on the course
One scene makes another	each scene for itself
Growth	montage
Linear development	in curves
Evolutionary determinism	jumps
Man as a fixed point	man as a process
Thought determines being	social being determines thought
Feeling	reason (Brecht 37)

And on the character of an 'Epic' performance in "Conversation with Bert Brecht", he states:

In my plays I don't just give my own private mood, but also the whole world's.... I don't let my feelings intrude in my dramatic work. It'd give a false view of the world. I am at an extremely classical, cold, highly intellectual style of performance.... The one tribute we can pay the audience is to treat it as thoroughly intelligent.... I'm prepared to bank on my knowledge of human beings. But I leave the maximum freedom of interpretation. The sense of my plays is immanent. You have to fish it out for yourself.... It's more a pleasure than work. People's opinion interests me for more than their feelings. Feelings are usually the product of opinions. They follow on. But opinions are decisive.... Every act comes from a realization. (Brecht 15-16)

Brecht does not find any possibility of radical transformation of the theatre through any aesthetic or artistic whim. He believes that the thinking pattern of the age is to be transformed radically. That is why he considers theatre as an 'ideological superstructure' for a concrete, pragmatic reorganization of our ways of life. His radical ideas resulted in 'epic theatre', the new school of play-writing and theatrical

style of his time. The 'epic theatre' appeals less to the feelings than to the audiences' reason. The spectator does not share his experience but comes to grasp or seize the things. In "Form and Subject Matter" Brecht argues, "Difficulties are not mastered by keeping silent about them. Practice demands that one step should follow another; theory has to embrace the entire sequence" (26). He explores the new subject-matter to lay bare humanity's new mutual relationship. For Brecht, Art follows reality.

His reflections on the new subject-matter impose a new theatrical form on performance. This new form is achieved by a complete change in the theatre's purpose. The purpose of his 'epic theatre' is the new pedagogics. Brecht believes that theatre does not hold any value as an art form until intended for learning. His 'epic theatre', with its materialistic viewpoint and its lack of interest in spectator's emotions, has only a finishing point with its interest in the individual. Brecht in "The Literarization of the Theatre" argues, "Today, when the human being has to be seen as 'sum of all social circumstances' the epic form is the only one that can embrace those processes which serve the drama as matter for comprehensive picture of the world" (44).

Echoing Artaud's antagonism towards the 'base sensuality' of Surrealist and other empiricism, Brecht refutes and repudiates a theatre where, through richly evoked incidentals, the audience is provided with quite definite sensations. He discards this bourgeois theatre where the audiences are seized up in the enthralling momentum of the narrative and cannot pause to ask. He believes that this hedonistic involvement with emotions, with inner experience of the characters not related to the world, is the connection between objects, and the falsity of the whole. And such hedonistic art provides relief. He observes that the ambiguity and contradiction of the real world is substituted with the consistency and coherence of the world of illusion in bourgeois theatre. In "A Little Private Tuition for my Friend Max Gorelik", Brecht writes:

The theatre of our parasitic bourgeoisie has a quite specific effect on the nerves, which can in no way be treated as equivalent to the artistic experience

of a more vital period. It ‘conjures up’ the illusion that it is reflecting real-life incidents with a view to achieving more or less primitive shock effects or hazily defined sentimental moods which in fact are to be consumed as substitutes for the missing spiritual experiences of a crippled and cataleptic audience. (160)

In opposition to bourgeois theatre, Brecht proposes a theatre which strives to create a performance that does not peddle dreams, but interrogates reality. His ‘*verfremdungseffekt*’, like a phenomenological bracket, rejects connivance with the world on stage, insisting rather that the spectators realize the coming into being of that world. Through this technique, his theatre excavates and exposes the human archeology of this world. He designed this technique to liberate the socially conditioned experience from the familiarization which hampers spectators’ investigation of it. He devised it to render the familiar world as strange, not to impose a new meaning on the existing world but to ground the world such that its meaning becomes perceptible for human being. Margaret Eddershaw points out that “Brecht’s appropriation and development of Piscator’s ‘epic theatre’ in reaction against traditional Aristotelian dramatic forms of theatre involves techniques to prevent the spectator’s emotional identification with the characters and to ensure that the spectator ‘stands outside, studies’; that is, remains objective to the performance” (11).

The transmutation brought about by this technique brings a significant shift where an instant involvement is transformed into a signifying relation. It breaks the spectators’ hypnotism by arousing their critical sense. In this new mode of performance, spectators do not experience the suffering of various characters rather learn to understand their suffering. The entire theatrical ensemble including stage effects, sets, music, acting, text works towards transforming the familiar world into spectacle. It denotes a shift from inner to outer, from identifying with the character’s emotions to a critical investigation of the gesture. “It is important”, Brecht says, “that both the familiar and the spectacular should be held together in performance. The spectators must also notice the world that is being distanced as their everyday one.

The spectator is no longer in any way allowed to submit to an experience uncritically by means of simple empathy with the characters” (Building up a Part: Laughton’s Galileo 164). Brechtian theatre puts the act through a process of distancing that is essential to all inquiry when something seems the most obvious thing in the world.

This dramaturgy does not rely on ‘identification’ of the audience with the performance as the Aristotelian theatre does, and holds a different attitude towards other psychological effects i.e. *catharsis* a performance have on audiences. The main target or purpose of this dramaturgy is not the attainment of *catharsis*. The hero, in this theatre, is not the victim of an inevitable fate, nor is the spectator the victim of a hypnotic experience. In fact, its purpose is to inculcate a certain critical attitude in the spectator. Basically, the conventional European drama is essentially static; its object is to represent the world as it is. On the other hand, the epic theatre is essentially dynamic; its object is to represent the world as it transforms or changes. Brecht proposes, “We need a type of theatre which not only releases the feelings, insights and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which the action, takes place but employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help transform the field itself” (A Short Organum 190).

Technically, the distancing is achieved through certain specific and carefully worked out effects, some designed to break the illusion, others concerned more with imitating and developing an interrogative attitude in the spectator. The performance in this theatre is always experimental; the result determines the efficiency of the technique. It is not applied mechanically. Brecht requires for instance, that the sources of light be made visible and suggests that the actor can even speak the stage directions out loud, thus, drawing the spectator away from an immediate acceptance of the illusion to an awareness of the illusion as constructed. He proposes that lighting be flat, not ‘romantic’ and that sets be spaces constructed to bring the underlying gest to the point of recognition. Similarly, Brecht makes his actor speak in quotation marks, as it does not identify with the feeling of the character, but draws attention to his/her simulation of the gesture, representing it through histrionic stance for investigation. The gestural transformation into the third person not only makes for a transfiguration

of the empirical into the typical but also demands that the spectator take nothing for granted. The spectators are made to look and react rather than identify with the characters. Here even costume is not clothe, but a show, as the music, the set and the banners.

In order to extend this critical distancing, the epic theatre persistently disturbs the action to foreground the gesture for inquiry. And by doing so it ensures that the rhythm of an automatized response is violently broken. This theatre does not expect to take common pattern of life habitually in order to arrive at the transcendental essence, but a momentary staying of the flux, for looking at the world we ordinarily live in the stage spectacle with wonder. Brecht's writings on theatre give several examples of how it is achieved in different productions. His famous example of this technique was of Chinese acting and performance. He mentions that the performance always does not work at the level of signification and the sign has to maintain a strict frugality. He does not allow any scope for 'repetition' or 'décor'. He discusses the style of performance where an overstatement turns the description into narrative; transforms the act of showing into that of telling a story and thus makes for an abdication of the critical function. In his poem "On Everyday Theatre" the man on street corner who shows us what happened, must always be careful to keep our attention focused:

Look – the man at the street corner re-enacting

The accident.

Thus he gives the driver at his wheel

To the crowd for trial.

Thus the victim, who seems old

Of each he only gives so much

That the accident be understood

Yet each lives before your eyes

And each he presents in a manner

To suggest the accident avoidable.

So the event is understood

And can still astound... (Brecht, 6)

In Brechtian theatre, a sign which is imaginatively conceived makes a carnal, poetic statement. It holds a suggestiveness that flashes itself out for the spectator. Brecht believes that an over determined sign demands a verbal rather than a carnal response and hence it is more likely to be reabsorbed into the habitual mode. He speaks of Casper Weher, his stage designer, for instance as a 'Poet' who never lets inessential details or decoration deflect him from the thought or assertion which is an artistic and intellectual one. Brecht notices that Casper Weher always looks for and presents the 'gestures' with great care. The recognition of it remains with the spectator. It arouses the spectator's imagination. Brecht comments on the importance of the thrust of this imaginative signification, "There is no building of his, no yard or workshop or garden that does not also bear the fingerprints, as it were of the people who built it or who lived there. He makes visible the manual skills and knowledge of the builders and the ways of living of the inhabitants" (Brecht, *Stage Design for the Epic Theatre* 231). He believes that the radical act of performance is to contrive visualization of a world inhibited in our experience and destruct memory of habit. This new theatrical form is the inevitable result of his new theatrical intention.

In the very first paragraph of his "A Short Organum for the Theatre", Brecht made it clear what he thinks of the purpose and nature of epic theatre. He states, "Theatre consists in this: in making live representations of reported or invented happenings between human beings and doing so with a view to entertainment. At any rate that is what we shall mean when we speak of theatre, whether old or new" (Brecht, 180). Further he adds in the second paragraph, "To extend this definition we might add happenings between humans and gods, but as we are only seeking to establish the minimum we can leave such matters aside. Even if we did accept such an extension we should still have to say that the 'theatre' set-up's broadest function was to give pleasure. It is the noblest function that we have found for theatre" (Brecht, 180). Brecht's concept of theatrical 'pleasure' is derived from his specific theatrical

intentions in which his concept of ‘*verfremdungseffekt*’ or V-effect translated as ‘alienation’ or ‘distancing’ plays a pivotal role.

Brecht propounds a specific ‘stylization’ for the enactment or the performance of his plays where an aesthetic distance is expected to be attained with certain well calculated, worked out effects so that the represented world may be seen objectively. He believes that such a performance philosophically places the lived world before spectators’ eyes for rectification. This is the nature of the ‘knowledge’ which Brecht wants to create through his theatre by employing V-effect. The nature of this ‘knowledge’ and the particular ‘stylization’ or the technique of ‘acting’ which Brecht proposes in his theoretical writings is the object of inquiry here.

Brecht is very well aware of the ancient Indian or Asiatic theatre. He wrote a complete essay entitled “Alienation Effect in Chinese Acting” where he listed all the ‘stylized’ effects of Chinese acting and characteristics of performer. In fact, it is assumed that Brecht had learnt a good deal on V-effect in ‘acting’ from Chinese theatre. Brecht argues, “Traditional Chinese acting knows the alienation effect, and applies it most subtly. It is well known that Chinese theatre uses a lot of symbols.... The alienation effect is achieved in Chinese theatre in the following way. Above all, the Chinese artist never acts as if there were a fourth wall besides the three surrounding him. He expresses his awareness of being watched....The actors openly choose those positions which will best show them off to the audience, just as if they were *acrobats*” (Alienation Effect in Chinese Acting 92-93).

Brecht never said anything similarly on the Indian theatre; but his attraction towards Indian classical theatre is evident from his exploration for artistic impulses which connects centuries and continents. These lines are from the fragmentary “Song of the Playwright”:

I studied the presentations of the great feudal lords

By the English, rich figures

To whom the world is good for unfolding their grandeur.

I studied the moralizing Spaniards

The *Indians* masters of beautiful sentiments

And the Chinese, who present the families

And the motley destinies in the cities. (Brecht 76)

His veneration for ‘the Indians’, enters his name into the list of German admirers of Indian classical theatre, which includes such great names as Goethe Von Humboldt and Schlegel.

If Brecht’s dramaturgy is taken into account, his ‘*verfremdungseffect*’ is found to be more of a deep philosophical concept than a mere casual allusion. His dramaturgy and especially his V-effect shares aesthetic grounds with Bharata’s *Natyasastra*. Both, Brecht and Bharata trace social origin of drama/*natya* with the common intention of instruction and entertainment of the people. In the beginning of his paper entitled “On the Experimental Theatre”, Brecht writes:

For at least two generations now the serious-minded European theatre has existed in an era of experimentation. The diverse experiments have not as yet produced any unequivocal, clearly discernible results, but the era is by no means at an end. It is my opinion that the experiments followed two separate courses, which, though they occasionally intersected, can, when separated, be individually pursued. These two courses of development are distinguished from one another by means of their individual functions: *entertainment* and *instruction*, that is to say, the theatre organized the experiments which were to increase its powers of entertaining, and experiments which were to increase its powers of instruction. (3)

Bharata in the first chapter of *Natyasastra* states, “*Vedavidyetihasanamakhyanaparikalpanam / Vinodakaranam loke natyametadbhavisyati*” i.e. this theatre/*natya* provides pleasure by constituting all kinds of knowledge systems, skills and mythological narratives for the common

masses(*Natyasastra* I 1: 119). In the next *sloka*, Bharata states, “*Srutismrtisadacaraparisesarthakalpanam / Vinodajananam loke natyametadbhavisyati*” i.e. this theatre/*natya* entertains people by constituting meanings of all kinds of knowledge texts and social behavior (*Natyasastra* I 1: 120). Similarly, the purpose of Brechtian theatre is also to entertain people with instruction. In the third paragraph of his “A Short Organum for the Theatre” he states, “From the first it has been the theatre’s business to entertain people, as it also has of all the other arts. It is this business which always gives it its particular dignity; it needs no other passport than fun, but this it has got to have” (Brecht, 180).

The pleasure of which both Bharata and Brecht talk of is not gross pleasure or entertainment; a consequence of mundane or trivial activities of human beings. Rather this supreme pleasure/*ananda* is the result of the specific knowledge or experience which theatre/*natya* constitutes. For Brecht this knowledge is created in theatre through performance by employing V-effect or alienation effect through a particular style of acting. This ‘distancing’ (*tatastha*) is consistently implied and is an underlying tenet of the *Natyasastra* also.

In the first chapter of *Natyasastra*, Bharata states, “*Dharmyamarthyam yasasyam ca sopadesyam sasangraham / Bhavisyatasca lokasya sarvakarmanudarsakam and Sarvasatrarthasampannam sarvasilpapravartakam / Natyakhyam pancamam vedam setihasam karomyaham* i.e. after reflecting on all the four *Vedas*, Lord Brahma decides that – I will create the fifth *Veda* with its history, that will guide people in *dharma* and *artha*, help people in getting success, educate people and consist of all kind of meanings. It will reflect or represent all the actions not of this world only but the potential world and also provide the meanings of all kinds of knowledge texts and skills (*Natyasastra* I 1: 14-15). Through his conception of theatre/*natya*, Bharata shows that *natya*/theatre encompasses everything. Nothing remains outside of it. In another *sloka*, of the first chapter, Bharata states, “*Na tajjanam na tacchilpam na sa vidya na sa kala / Nasau yogo na tatkarma natye smin yanna drsyate* i.e. there is no knowledge, skill, art, architecture, contemplation/ concentration or any activity of the world that does not appear or find a place in

theatre/*natya* (*Natyasastra* I 1: 116) . In this way, both Bharata and Brecht perceive theatre/*natya* as the image of the world. Bharata in one of the *slokas* of first chapter states, “*Naikantato’tra bhavatam devanam canubhavanam / trailokyasyasya sarvasya natyam bhavanukirtanam* i.e. this *natya* does not imitate the characters of particular people but it represents or recreates all the essences of the universe (*Natyasastra* I 1: 107).

Brecht considers alienation effect as an essential element to enlighten the spirit of the audience in any theatrical performance so that they can objectively view this world which appears as a spectacle before them for inquiry. He captures the essence of the art of theatre through the concept of ‘*verfremdungseffect*’ and employs it with a technique of acting in his theatrical performances. But he does not provide a theoretical methodology for it to give a proper exposition to this concept. This may be considered as the greatest limitation of Brecht’s theoretical discourse where his concepts are not followed by concrete methodology of application and his theoretical writings lack properly defined categories of theatre.

The anatomy of the specific knowledge which is created through theatrical performance is constituted in ‘*gestus*’, a concept, Brecht propounded as the raw material of performance. This is the second most important concept of Brecht’s dramaturgy. The category ‘*gestus*’ has been derived from the word ‘*gest*’. Brecht introduced the important term ‘*gestisch*’ in the essay “The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre”. ‘*Gestus*’ denotes both gist and gesture and ‘*Gestisch*’ is the adjective of it. It refers to an attitude or a particular aspect of an attitude, expressible in language or actions. The obsolete English word ‘*gest*’, which means ‘bearing’ or ‘carriage’, is taken in any English translation of the term as the nearest possible parallel, together with its adjective ‘*gestic*’. Brecht gave its full definition for the first time in his essay “On Gestic Music”. He states, “‘*Gest*’ is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic movements of the hands, but of overall attitudes. A language is gestic when it is grounded in a *gest* and conveys particular attitudes adopted by the speaker towards other men” (104). Lessing employed the term in his *Hamburger Dramaturgie* as different from ‘*geste*’, or gesture proper; and Weill

himself seems to have applied this term even before Brecht. Hector Maclean points out that “it is at once gesture and gist, attitude and point: one aspect of the relation between two people, studied singly, cut to essentials and physically or verbally expressed” (81).

In its first sense, ‘gestus’ represents a particular aspect of a character. It does not focus on the psychological dimensions of his personality. A character's social relations and the causality of his deportment or behavior are visualized through this ‘gestus’. “Every emotion” when treated under the rubric of ‘gestus’, Elizabeth Wright explains, “manifests itself as a set of social relations” (Wright 34). Tim Mehigan has added that “Gestus is an external revelation of concealed ideological relationships. It has a special type of visibility that marks out and fills the inter-social spaces between human subjects” (93).

the second sense of the term ‘gestus’ denotes the performer’s attitude as integrated in his act as telling or narration through which an actor understands his role and its scope and status within the narration of the performance as a whole. Brecht considers the actor’s viewpoint and the choice he makes a major element of his craft. He expects the actor decides it outside the performance. ‘Gestus’ resembles to Brecht's other important technique, the ‘fabel’ in this sense. Brecht does not treat ‘gestus’ as a truism or a rubber stamp. His actor carefully works on a character's ‘gestus’ and develops it through a process of inquiry and exploration of concrete physicality of the character. Denise Varney adds here:

Reflecting on the 1980s, it is apparent that the emerging field of theatre semiotics drew productively on Brecht’s technical terms to develop a methodology for analyzing the discourse of performance. The emphasis on what transpires between the stage and the auditorium opened up an untheorised space in performance studies that ‘gestus’ went some of the way towards filling. It was understood to make the social point of the play clearer, accessible and more readable and to explain the relay of messages from the

actor's to the spectator's body. Importantly, 'gestus' would be the key to unlocking the mystifications of performance and its ways of communicating textually, gesturally and also corporeally. (116)

It is in the idea of 'gestus', however, that the corporeal dimension of Brecht's 'epic theatre' is most explicitly located. Brecht develops the idea of 'gestus'; it comes to mean gesture and explored for its gist, its social significance, its typicality within the intersubjective world. Brecht does not take all gesticulations as social gesticulations; the social gesticulation, to him, is the gesticulation which is connected to society; it allows the interpretations to be made of the social circumstances. "The actor," Brecht writes, "observes his fellow men with all his nerves and muscles in an act of imitation which is at the same time a process of the mind. For pure imitation would only bring out what had been observed; this is not enough, because the original says what it has to say with too subdued a voice" (A Short Organum for the Theatre 196). It is crucial, Brecht tells us, that in investigating the gesticulation, the actor retains a carnal relationship with its physical materiality, not allowing discursive or abstract forms to intervene medially. In paragraph 61 of his "A Short Organum for the Theatre" he argues:

The realm of attitudes adopted by the characters towards one another is what we call the realm of gesticulation. Physical attitude, tone of voice and facial expression are all determined by a social gesticulation: the characters are cursing, flattering, instructing one another, and so on. The attitudes which people adopt towards one another include even those attitudes which would appear to be quite private, such as the utterances of physical pain in an illness or of religious faith. These expressions of a gesticulation are usually highly complicated and contradictory, so that they cannot be rendered by any single word and the actor must take care that in giving his image the necessary emphasis he does not lose anything, but emphasizes the entire complex.... The actor masters his

character by paying critical attention to its manifold utterances, as also to those of his counterparts and of all the other characters involved. (198)

As Brecht considers, Laughton's performance of *Galileo* so successful as he built the part up through a mode of performance and repetition. He developed even the most fundamental gests and represented them in three dimensions in actual performance. Brecht believes that this involvement through externals with the opacity of character is really a means of knowing the character without reducing him or her either to a ruling idea or to a series of traits. To him, the act of knowledge is not cognitive; but carnal and intuitive. He states in the sixty four paragraph of his "A Short Organum for the Theatre":

Splitting such material into one gest after another, the actor masters his character by first mastering the story. It is only after walking all round the entire episode that he can, as it were by a single leap, seize and fix his character, complete with all its individual features. Once he has done his best to let himself be amazed by the inconsistencies in its various attitudes, knowing that he will in turn have to make them amaze the audience, then the story as a whole gives him a chance to pull the inconsistencies together; for the story, being a limited episode, has a specific sense, i.e. only gratifies a specific fraction of all the interests that could arise. (Brecht 200)

Brecht believes that everything in a performance depends on the narration or the sequence of events. He considers it as the essence of the structure of performance and it provides what occurs between people that reflect on what they can discuss, criticize, and alter. In a Brechtian performance the story's episodes are more important than the person's character because they provide the person necessary texture for meaningful movement; it is the characteristic features of the episode that can fit a person more than once into it for reaching fulfillment. In this regard Brecht

argues, “The ‘story’ is the theatre’s great operation, the complete fitting together of all the gestic incidents, embracing the communications and impulses that must now go to make up the audience’s entertainment” (A Short Organum for the Theatre 200). Significantly, in Brecht’s work the gest is nearly always seized and shown as metaphor, as when the gangsters in *Three Penny Opera* speak and act as bourgeois townsmen. Brecht believes that the gesture in the real world holds in all its embodied complexity, but worked on by the actor, stylized, expressively recast, so that its meaning is manifested, makes for the theatrical gest. However, he warns against the temptation to simplify these gests in the process of searching out their social significance.

In Brechtian theatre, every act or incident in a performance holds its basic gest. Brecht proposes that the characters and their movements on the stage must be organized in such a way that their beauty is obtained by the grace of the specific gest which represents the world to the understanding of the audience. In his theatre the individual episodes of the story are arranged in such a way that the links between them are easily recognized or revealed and provides the spectator enough time to interpose their judgment. Brecht sets off all episodes in the narration one against another in such a way that each seems to hold its own particular structure. In this regard Brecht argues, “What needs to be alienated, and how this is to be done, depends on the exposition demanded by the entire episode; and this is where the theatre has to speak up decisively for the interests of its own time....The exposition of the story and its communication by suitable means of alienation constitute the main business of the theatre” (A Short Organum for the Theatre 201-202). Brecht does not give paramount importance to actor though he acknowledges that nothing can be done without taking him into account. He considers the concept of ‘story’ in a broad aesthetic framework. For him ‘story’ refers to the whole performance which is set out, put forth and represented or enacted in the theatre as a whole, by actors, stage designers, mask-makers, composers and choreographers. In a Brechtian performance all these jointly work together of course without losing their individual identities. In Brechtian theory this concept of ‘story’ does not refer story in ordinary sense of the word but it’s a structure of incidents which works on gestural ground. It can be

understood or explained in terms of Bharata's concept of *itivrtta* or the structure of incidents which he discussed in five clearly identifiable stage of action.

Brechtian theatre operates on the viewpoint which people keep towards one another, wherever it is socio-historically significant. Brecht constructs situations where characters keep such viewpoints that the social laws under which they are functioning bring into sight. Therefore, Brecht gives epic theatre a practical concern. He shows human behavior as alterable. He looks at 'being' as a resultant of specific socio-political circumstances and at the same time competent in altering them. In other words, he makes the audience to analyze the human behavior in social context and the spectacle as a performed historical reality. W. A. J. Steer argues that "the spectator observes how the political, economic, and social environment determines the characters' actions and is shown the means by which those onerous conditions could be done away with" (641). Further Brecht adds, "This means, from the aesthetic point of view, that actors' social gest becomes particularly important. The arts have to begin paying attention to the gest. The gestic principle takes over, as it were, from the principle of imitation"(On the Use of Music in Epic Theatre 86).

The music particularly 'gestic music' has an important role in Brechtian theatre. Brecht himself wrote two essays "On the Use of Music in Epic Theatre" and "On Gestic Music" and discusses 'music' as an object of theatrical aesthetics. Brecht explains the character of 'gestic music' through establishing the social purpose of his new methods. He believes that 'gestic music' is the music which makes the performer to show certain fundamental gests on the stage. Brecht argues, "A good way of judging a piece of music with a text is to try out the different attitudes or gests with which the performer ought to deliver the individual sections: politely or angrily, modestly or contemptuously, approvingly or argumentatively, craftily or without calculation.... In this way one can judge the political value of the musical score"(On Gestic Music 105).

After 'gestic music' further Brecht takes choreography as an essential element of the employment of gestic principle in theatre. To him, it is wrong to assume that choreography has no role to play in the true representation of the world as it is. He

argues, “If art reflects life it does so with special mirrors” (Brecht, *A Short Organum for the Theatre* 204). He believes that such kind of representations cannot be considered unrealistic until it reflects the processes and principles of real life and it cannot be unrealistic just by changing the proportions. Brecht employs stylization to extend the natural element; it does not remove it. Brecht comments, “Anyhow, a theatre where everything depends on the gest cannot do without choreography” (*A Short Organum for the Theatre* 204).

In his theoretical exposition of the gestic principle of theatre Brecht’s next concern is gesture. He argues here that everything to do with the emotions has to be externalized; it is to be transformed into a gesture. His actor finds a concrete physical expression for his character’s emotions, preferably some gestures that reveals what is inside or within him. He proposes that the emotions in performance should be brought out and liberated from all restrictions. He employs special grace, force, and beauty of gesture to bring about the V-effect. Brecht adds, “A masterly use of gesture can be seen in Chinese acting. The Chinese actor achieves the A-effect by being seen to observe his own movements. Whatever the actor offers in the way of gesture, verse structure, etc., must be finished and bear the hallmarks of something rehearsed and rounded-off...The attitude which he adopts is a socially critically one. In his exposition of the incidents and in his characterization of the persons he tries to bring out those features which come within society’s sphere”(*Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect* 139).

In Brechtian theatre, the social gest underlying every incident is to be distanced through V-effect. His social gest represents the gestural expression of the social relationships existing in a society. Brecht says, “It helps to formulate the incident for society, and to put it across in such a way that society is given the key, if titles are thought up for the scenes. The titles must have a historical quality. This brings us to a crucial technical device: historicization. The actor must play the incidents as historical ones”(*Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect* 140). To Brecht, the gest, as it is evident, is not an entity in the real world, but a conception of theatrical aesthetics; at once social and

physical, archetypal and mysterious. It is through *gest* that Brecht perceives corporeally imaged totality which allows Brechtian aesthetics transcend what becomes in Lukacs a narrowly defined sense of the proletariat. Brechtian dramaturgy is primarily concerned with all forms of reification. Elin Diamond even argues that “feminists have adapted *Gestus* for revealing the social determinations and hierarchies of gender” (76).

However for Brecht, *gest* is not merely a means of arriving at a significant typification of character; there is also the sense, more so in Brecht’s later plays, that what is searched out in performance is the gestural gist of a whole situation. He employs the corporeal style that delineates the object, as it is. The complexity of this Brechtian concept which includes the manner in which gestural relations establish the world – indicates the origin within everyday experience of its sense – as well as the sense of social institutions as sedimented gesture. What Brecht expects to attain through it is the corporeality implicit in a Marxist praxis of historicisation. The action, in a Brechtian performance, episode by episode foregrounds the gestural dynamics that creates the commonly understood, the uncontested sense of the world we live in. But the episodic sequence in such a performance does not merely represent a linear story line. And Brecht believes that it is not a rational working out of an idea which is presented graphically for easy consumption. As his actor captures the character through the remote *gests* but through the act that transcends them and is more than the sum of the parts, as it is, the audience captures the world that is presented in its embodied totality. In a Brechtian performance the temporality and the totality of the act produce rationality, but not the transparency. Lukacs believes that “in this way, Brecht was attempting to penetrate the veil of reification” (86).

Through Brechtian performance the space is revealed as event. The action reveals what is conventionally regarded as milieu, or character, or even fate as an event of human creation or as a result of social processes. In Brecht’s work this appears to be the principle meaning of historicisation which becomes not only a question of looking for the chronological origins of social relations and labeling them as feudal or bourgeois or imperialist, but of recouping the meaning of a space as it

comes into being in contemporary experience. Here we have the word at work in the other sense. Space is revealed as event here. This is something that Barthes also addresses. Barthes argued for a “historicized reading of events and texts in order to place them within the larger social context. This is done not by examining the form, but by interpretation of what the form signifies” (89). In this kind of performance, the act of revealing is at the same time one of creation. In this performance, the world that emerges is organized into an experiential depth centered in the spectator, where it attains meaning. Brecht through his performance expresses a memory that is restrained appears and makes corporeal sense in relation to a human future. In Brechtian performance the present appears as a fluidity that makes change possible, even indispensable. Brecht constitutes Marxism in the body. His realization of the carnal dimensions of history produces a poetic casting of the theatrical action. His carnal figures come near to the imaginative and in that it escalates the imperative of the body. Brecht notices that this transformation does not seek an abstract image or makes materials things unrecognizable rather it merely starts the body’s routs within the work. Roland Barthes points out that “rather than a closed and autonomous object, the text is read a moving play of signifiers without any possible reference to one or some signified” (10).

It is necessary to find this idea, developing it in some detail, partly because the more naturalistic aspects of Brecht are well known and partly because it is this trend toward what traditional Marxist critics called abstraction that is most controversial in Brecht. His autobiographical description of the process of writing *The Business Affairs of Herr Julius Caesar* is a good starting point here:

While I am looking through a stack of historical tomes and attempting, full of skepticism, to verify a particular fact, rubbing the sand from my eyes the whole time, so to speak, I have vague notions of colours at the back of my mind, impressions of particular seasons of the year; I hear inflections without words, see gestures without meaning, think of desirable groupings of unnamed figures, and so on. The images are extremely undefined, in no way exciting,

rather superficial, or so it seems to me. But they are there. The ‘formalist’ in me is at work. As the significance of Claudius’s Funeral-Benefit Associations slowly dawns on me and I experience a certain pleasure in the discovery, I think: ‘If one could only write a very long, transparent, autumnal, crystal-clear chapter with an irregular curve, a kind of red wave-form running through it. (Brecht 71)

Brecht, by his own admission is at an early stage of his work here. But he sets this against his comments on the finished form of Elder Breughel’s paintings. The pictorial contrasts there, Brecht tells us, deal in contradictions. For example:

In the Great War painting *Dulle Griet* it isn’t war’s atmosphere of terror that inspires the artist to paint the instigator, the Fury of War, as helpless and handicapped, and to give her the features of a servant. The terror that he creates in this way is something deeper.... Such pictures don’t just give off an atmosphere but a variety of atmospheres. Even though Breughel manages to balance his contrasts he never merges them into one another.... (Alienation Effects in the Narrative Pictures of the Elder Breughel 157)

One must not fail to notice that the here the contradiction is a contradiction of atmosphere, of tone. Brecht believes that the atmosphere is evoked through a costume, set off against the atmosphere evoked in another costume; the associations of one style against the associations of another – but the most important, all these are presented within one experiential landscape into which the audiences are required in some way to resolve these contradictory elements and to compose them into a single experience of depth.

Brecht strives after a similar effect when he requires the titles which in his plays announce a scene or form part of the set, to make a gestic statement, infiltrating

a tonal commentary into the action. “The titles,” he writes, “must include the social point, saying at the same time something about the kind of portrayal wanted, i.e., should copy the tone of chronicle or a ballad or a newspaper or a morality” (Brecht, *A Short Organum for the Theatre* 201). His production of *Galileo* conceives of the scenes developing in terms of color. He mentions that it is in much the same mode that the Berliner Ensemble production of *Mutter Courage* made use of:

Such materials as were available in the military encampments in the seventeenth century; tenting, wooden posts lashed together with ropes, etc. Structures like the parsonages and the peasants cottage were introduced three-dimensionally using realistically building methods and materials, but in the form of an artistic indication, giving only as much of the structure as served the acting. (Brecht, *From the Mother Courage Model* 217)

The Brechtian theatre requires that the spectator’s response should be rational or logical. It is important to understand that to do this is not merely to reshape the old world, to substitute one complex with another. It has not revolutionized the stage merely for displacement, a reshaping, and hence a reforming of the discipline such a new vision becomes possible, but a radical change in the nature of the subject. It is a shift from a flat transcendental field to the temporal openness of one with depth. Brecht makes the rationality an essential component of theatre for the first time. In this regard Brecht argues, “The theatre leaves its spectators productively disposed even after the spectacle is over. Let us hope that their theatre may allow them to enjoy as entertainment that terrible and never-ending labour which should ensure their maintenance, together with the terror of their unceasing transformation. Let them here produce their lives in the simplest way; for the simplest way of living is an art” (*A Short Organum for the Theatre* 205). He worked out the performance to bring into being a new spectacle and with it to recover a lived world and makes rationality possible through this very act. In this theatre, different perspectives cohere within an existential and rationality appears where the known has the conviction the lived.

Brecht reveals that rationality and existential knowledge are not entirely independent of each other rather one is the precondition for the other.

The Brechtian theatre is fundamentally a group theatre, or more correctly, a workshop theatre. Here meaning is explored collectively in action, in communication and in reflection. For expropriated spectators, this is no mere a means of theoretical verification. For them it is crucial that this act of reclaiming a speech and knowledge be social and political. Brecht believes that each one is victim to a consciousness he or she has painfully been forced to internalize, principally through fear and guilt. But when in Brechtian performance this personal act is picked up and celebrated as common, indeed as of the community, it is not just rationality, but solidarity that is born. The spectators arrive not at the transparency of the absolute but knowledge sufficient for an act that breaks the static present and intends a human future. Brecht believes that unlike bourgeois rationalisms which are essentially arbitrary, and can only be received and logically worked out, his rationality has a material structure in common with a lived corporeal knowledge and its subject matter is an unredeemed past, not a merely personal past, but the past of a class. A. Squiers & N. Roessler points out that “this is especially true of Brecht who was a great master of exposing and showing the contradictions of bourgeois society” (119).

Brecht determines the function of his theatre in the crystallization of this meaning, latent but suppressed, mute, alienated. Therefore it cannot be assumed as realist as it does not provide a total representation of reality, either bourgeois or proletarian. It makes rather for a theatrical action that is part of the continuing process of life. Brecht speaks of Epic theatre as working not from but towards a Marxist knowledge. Barthes put it more graphically: “In Brecht’s theatre the Marxist elements always seem to be recreated. Brecht’s real greatness, and his isolation, lies in the fact that he keeps inventing Marxism” (74). The Epic theatre makes the means of arriving at an expert theoretical knowledge available to people – and the corollary: it makes people’s actual experience available for theoretical reflection.

The Brechtian theatrical conventions are always surrounded by scepticism. Although he formulates the dramatic theory based on his work, but some aspects of it

are still vague. His theatre is characterized by rational didacticism, influenced by his Marxist beliefs. It is assumed that Brecht devised various theatrical techniques to incorporate Marxist ideas in his works. Verfremdungsteffekt/alienation effect, didacticism, breaking the fourth wall, gestus, narration and use of song all such techniques constitutes Brecht's theory of Epic Theatre - a convention first developed by Irwin Piscator and is the major starting point of Experimental Theatre movement. Brecht's formulation of a specific technique of acting called 'gestus' is his most important contribution to experimental theatre. 'Gestus' is a combination of gesture and facial expression and body language contrived to construct meaning and convey it to the audience. It is beyond doubt that Brecht's writings have influenced the use and the critical analysis of theatrical structure in twentieth century Europe. His theatrical structure is devised with a definite purpose: to communicate the message to the spectators. The message in Brechtian theatre is delivered to the spectators through a variety of alienation effect techniques such as visible lighting, music that underscores message, scene fragmentation, showing rather than 'being' a character, and making each spectator conscious of the fact that it is a theatrical production. Alison Hodge points out that "the actor increases the critical distance and is able to present the Gestus; the 'social heart' of an action. Gestic acting heightens spectator participation since it allows a situation to be presented 'dialectically for discussion and judgement'" (105).

However, all his techniques must be considered as only one part of a theoretical discourse in the process of evolution. His theatrical structure may not be taken as fixed in form and in complete opposition to traditional theatre. According to Patrice Pavis, Brecht was continually revising his thoughts on dramatic structure:

...the centre of gravity is constantly shifting: Brecht formulates his critique of Aristotelian dramatic form in reaction to the notion of identification and catharsis; then he shows his interests in the possibility of imitation and critical realism; finally "theatre dialectics" gives him the chance to propose a method

of analysis of reality and to go beyond the overly stressed oppositions between epic/dramatic, formalism/realism, showing/incarnating etc. (Pavis 76)

Brecht's theatrical structure needs careful investigation before employed on stage. It is understood that without analysis, characters that are defined in social or political identities can be turned into stereotypes unable to communicate the performance's true essence. Characters in such a performance and the techniques used on stage can easily be debilitated by a careless production.

The analysis of 'Gestus' as a concept and its connection to the action compels me to conclude that it is the most complex in Brechtian theory. 'Gestus' refers to any kind of gesture beyond every day or conventional gesture. In this regard, Patrice Pavis argues:

The question of its extent is as complex as that of its specificity. 'Gestus' may be a simple bodily movement of the actor (facial expression) or a particular way of behaving (gestuality) or a physical relationship between two characters or a stage arrangement (a figure formed by a group of characters) or the common behavior of a group, collective attitudes of characters in a play or the gesture of global delivery from the stage to the public via *mise en scene*... What would appear in its slightest manifestation, as the index of an attitude, becomes an intentional signal emitted by the actor. The actor constantly controls his gestuality, in order to indicate the character's social attitude and way of behaving. (Pavis, 41)

The Brechtian actor while in action does not merely replicate stereotypes or cliché. He does some work on prominent social relationships in detail and exhibits his understanding of it through a subtle use of 'gestus'. Brecht's idea of 'gestus' has two aspects: the first one is 'social gestus', that designates an actor, and the second one is 'basic gestus', which denotes a particular action. When discussing the connection between an actor creating a character and 'gestus', Patrice Pavis points out that,

“Brecht’s ‘gestus’ assures mediation between bodily action and character behavior; it is situated midway between the character and the determination of his possible actions. As an object of actor’s research, it becomes more and more specific in defining what the character does, and consequently, what he is... The proper use of ‘gestus’ lets the actor constructs the story or the sum total of ‘gestus’ and the relationships between the characters” (43).

In a Brechtian performance ‘gestus’ works on two levels i.e. ‘shown’ and ‘showing’. The gap between the two levels produces ruptures in the movement and allows reflection and observation on the action on stage. By creating the gap between the actor and spectator, the director in this performance places the responsibility for transmitting the message on the words spoken. The Brechtian actor employs ‘social gestus’ in ‘showing’ the character’s attitudes through intonation, tone and timing. To explore the semiotic possibilities of ‘gestus’ in theatre, Brecht extends this idea to music and text as well. Patrice Pavis believes that “‘gestus’ is the principle of alienation, and it lies at the core of alienation effect where the thing is simultaneously recognized and made strange, where gesture invites us to reflect on the text and text contradicts the gesture. The signifier or the gesture adopted is divided into two signifieds: a concrete object that is delivered and an abstract object of knowledge criticized and alienated” (45). Brecht believes that an appropriate understanding of gesture ushers the spectators from ‘concrete’ action to ‘abstract knowledge’ and finally to a critical sense of the socio-political conditions that determine the character’s behavior.

Brecht expects a spontaneous and unrehearsed performance from a character which guides him to formulate the aforementioned technique to bring out the prowess of the actor rather than his emotional depth. He believes that the ‘gestus’ is the only technique which makes the performer able to bring out and elucidate the emotion within him and the context around. In Brechtian performance an incident is captured in a ‘gest’ and a ‘gest’ is located within the incident. It gives the audience the attitude of a society towards a particular issue and lays bare before them by this ‘gest’. The incidents of a structure of action in a Brechtian performance do not flow into each other rather the knots which tie them are revealed to interpose the judgment. Brecht

created an episodic theatre through the technique of 'gestus'. Through this technique of 'gestus', he makes the spectators to analyze their own body language, their social class and the mannerisms and customs included. Hence, Brechtian 'gestus' is a socially encoded expression that an actor consciously employs to attain the V-effect. Through this technique, Brecht achieves a structure of gesture, body language, movement and voice, and the playwrights and actor's attitude towards the character to produce a virtuous social meaning. He considers it as a carefully thought out technique to communicate a particular message rather than a spontaneous or unrehearsed one. It is. He allows some sort of exaggeration of some sort to make the message is clear. His actor on the basis of principle of selective realism develops the character's 'gestus' through an observation and analysis of his concrete physicality. It reveals a character's social relations and the causality of his behavior. "Every emotion when treated under the rubric of gestus", Elizabeth Wright explains, "manifests itself as a set of social relations" (Wright 34). Brecht believes that the performer achieves the critical distance from his character through 'gestus' to attain 'creative pleasure' and it provides an opportunity to the spectators to observe and appreciate a special skill. He rejects a mere imitation and 'exact' portrayal of character. As mentioned in one of his poems "On Imitation":

"He who only imitates and had nothing to say
 On what he imitates is like
 A poor chimpanzee, who imitates his trainer's smoking
 And, does not smoke while doing so.
 For never will a thoughtless imitation
 Be a real imitation" (Brecht 7)

Brecht makes his actor to work at expressing social attitudes in a coherent, intelligible and stylized ways. He expects to encapsulate the 'gestus' in the dialogue so that the right stance, movement and intonation are forced upon. He creates a 'gestic' language through a subtle use of rhythm, pause, parallelism and

counterpointing. In Brecht the songs are even more 'gestic'. Like street singers produce a coherent and intelligible attitude with explicit, direct, grand but simple gestures, so, in delivering songs, the Brechtian actor produces objectivity in expressing a basic attitude. Everything which forms part of a scene in a Brechtian performance reveals the significance of the basic 'gestus'.

Brecht avoids the identification between actors and characters, just to show them as a type. That is why, Brecht's characters frequently have typical names, such as 'The Soldier' or 'The Girl' etc.. He emphasizes on the character's social role and its relevant behavior rather than reflecting on its emotional motivation so that the character and its circumstances are evaluated without having an empathy with him. He believes that a theatrical gesture conveys the part of the story immediately or character to the audience instantly and clearly, but whatever the gesture conveys it becomes very generic. He proposes to add the specific attitude to this gesture which provides more depth to it and consequently it gives more depth to plot or characters as it conveys the spectators how they experience the emotion behind the gesture. Brecht finds it easy to communicate with the audience through dialogue embedded with the gestures. It conveys the message to the audience and the gesture supports the incidents. Through his theory and practice Brecht achieves this combination of dialogue and gestures that supports and strengthens the performance. Hence it can be said that 'gestus' is very crucial to Brechtian theatre; as the gestures are simple stances, just how you stand with your body or a slight action, but it expresses a lot about who the character and its type. That is why 'gestus' is essential for a Brechtian performance as it conveys the audience and the actors a lot about the character without identifying actor with character.

The 'gestic principle' which is fundamental and central to Brecht's theory of theatre is a significant arsenal of theatrical aesthetics to define and determine the semiotic possibilities of theatre art. Brecht developed the acting style 'gestus' on the basis of this principle. Through this technique of 'gestus', he explores the 'gestic' possibilities of everything that is used on stage in a theatrical performance. To him, anything without 'gestic' value has no place in theatre. Brecht's vision of theatrical

aesthetics does not allow him to see theatrical action outside the sphere of 'gestus'. In fact, it may be assumed that Brechtian theatre is constituted through 'gestus'. Theoretically, it is an eclectic, complex and dynamic concept which constitutes the whole dynamics Brechtian theatre. Brecht's 'gestus' and Bharata's *abhinaya* have some crucial parallels as objects of theatrical aesthetics denoting the semiotic value of theatre as an art form.

Similarly, the Indian term *natya*, for theatre, which is derived from the Sanskrit root *nat* that refers to the 'gestic principle' implied in everything in the universe. Bharata in his *Natyasastra* created theoretical structure of this 'gestic principle' and termed it as *abhinaya*. Bharata in the first chapter of *Natyasastra* lists *abhinaya* along with three other basic constituent elements of theatre/*natya* i.e. *pathya*, *geeta* and *rasa*. The aesthetic significance of *abhinaya* is evident from the space Bharata gives it in his theoretical discourse and made it the nucleus of theatrical performance. Bharata's discussed it in more than twenty three chapters of the text of *Natyasastra*. In the chapter eighth of *Natyasastra*, Bharata introduces *abhinaya* theoretically and says, "*abhipurvastu nin dhaturabhimukhyarthanirname, yasmadpadarthannayati tasmadabhinayah smrtah*" i.e. etymologically *abhinaya* is derived from Sanskrit root *ni* with *abhi* as the prefix denoting 'it carries the performance towards the main objective of *natya* (*Natyasastra* VIII 2: 6). Therefore, it is termed as *abhinaya*. In the next *sloka* of the same chapter Bharata states, "*vibhavayati yasmacca nanarthan prayogatah, sakhangopangasamyuktastasmadabhinayah smrtah*" i.e. it is called *abhinaya* also because it communicates all kinds of meaning with through its all dimensions (*Natyasastra* VIII 2: 7). Further Bharata states, "*caturvidhascaiva bhavennatyasyabhinayo dvijah, anekabhedavahuyam natyam hyasmin pratisthitam*" i.e. The *abhinaya* which is employed in theatre/*natya* is of four kinds. And the *natya*/theatre with all its dimensions exists or takes its birth in *abhinaya* only (*Natyasastra* VIII 2: 8). From the above statements, it may be concluded that to Bharata like Brecht, *natya*/theatre does not possible outside *abhinaya*. That is why Bharata considered *abhinaya* as the nucleus of theatrical performance.

One limitation of Brecht's theoretical discourse on 'gestus' is that it reduced the fundamental concept of 'gestus' to the status of a particular acting technique only. It seems that in his discourse, 'gestus' has not been discussed in a proper theoretical perspective to realize its potential as an object of theatrical aesthetics. Moreover, throughout the world scholars on Brecht interpret and term 'gestus' as merely a style of acting developed by Brecht for his 'epic theatre'. Therefore, the 'message' in Brechtian theatre is understood as something external to the performance and render 'gestus' as a media to communicate it to the audience. Therefore, it seems that Brecht in his discourse conceptualizes and discusses 'gestus' philosophically without constructing a grammar of it for providing it a concrete methodology of application. On the other hand Bharata realized the 'gestic principle' of *natya*/theatre through the concept of *abhinaya* and creates a theoretical structure of it which provides a grammar of it to define and determine all the semiotic possibilities of theatre. To Bharata, *abhinaya* is not just acting rather it denotes the 'gestic' language of theatre art which creates, articulates and communicates the theatrical performance. It constitutes the anatomy of theatrical knowledge which a performance creates to communicate to the spectators.

Brecht mentions that 'gestus' is not gesticulation alone. It means both 'gist' and 'gesture'. It is a combination of both a gesture and social attitude to create meaning and communicate the message to the audience. Bharata conceptualizes *abhinaya* with its four possible dimensions; *angika* (physical), *vacika* (linguistic), *aharya* (costume), *sattvika* (emotional states). In this regard Kapil Vatsyayan states:

Like the actors of his drama, the *angika*, *vacika*, *aharya* and *sattvika* must transcend their individual identity and merge in the totality. Just as the instruments of an orchestra have their distinctive identity and the special techniques of playing, each *abhinaya* is distinct and clearly identifiable, has a role to play in the totality, but is never absolutely autonomous. (99)

In the same way Brecht also conceptualizes 'gestus' as a combination of 'gesture' and 'social attitude' to carry the meaning towards audience. But unlike Bharata, he does

not elaborate on its anatomical structure. Bharata discusses and explores *abhinaya* to the extent where it seems nothing remains untouched about it and gives it a scope where it seems nothing remains outside it. He makes the nucleus of theatrical performance on which the soul (*rasa*) and body (*itivrta*) of *natya* depends.

Bharata begins his discussion with the analysis of the body i.e. *angikabhinaya*. He breaks the anatomical structure into its principal parts i.e. upper and lower limbs. He creates a structure of physical or bodily movement pertaining to each major and minor parts of the body and enumerates the possible physical stimulus and their corresponding physic response and states and their respective expression as well. Through this structure of physical movements, he creates a language of the body where its semiotic possibilities are explored. For example, he takes the head and face as a unit and then analyzes all possibilities of movement of each part from the eyes, eyebrows, eyelids, pupils to the whole eye (*drsti*), nose, cheeks, upper and lower chin, mouth, color of the face and neck. Thereafter, he explores direction, height, movements away from the body and towards the body. Every single part of the body and its possibility of movement are then co-related with its potential for giving expression to a particular emotion or state. He uses the word *viniyoga* to denote the dimension of applicability.

Further he provides a comprehensive structure of movement techniques where the whole body is involved. He mentions that *vyayama* (exercise), proper training and health is basic to this system. The basic units of movement emerge from the control of body in sitting, standing and reclining positions. These classified as *sthanas*, *asanas* and *mandalas* from which a variety of movement possibilities emerge. He terms, the first of these movements as *cari* (walking or moving) and further develops these *caris* into the specific *gatis* (gaits). He relates these *gatis* (gaits) with specific character-types, to different temperaments and passions, and different tempos. To denote the rhythm or measures of these movements, he develops *karanas* and *angaharas*. He gives an amazing range of sitting postures and gaits to suit gender, character, occasion, mood and dramatic situation.

Chapter XIV of *Natyasastra* on *kaksavibhaga* and *pravritti* discusses all orders of 'space'. The chapter covers the concepts of style (*vrta*), regional schools (*pravritti*),

as also of the two modes of representation, namely *natyadharmi* and *lokadharmi*. The group of the four notions of *kaksavibhaga* i.e. energetic and delicate (*tandava* and *sukumara*) modes as also *daivika* (divine) and *manusi* (human) levels guide not only physical movement (*angika*) but also the other two *abhinayas* namely *vacika* and *aharya*.

Further Bharata takes ‘word’ and ‘speech’ under *vacikabhinaya* and devotes four long chapters to it. He considers *vacika* (articulated word) is the body (*tanu*) of drama. He asserts the primacy of word in unambiguous terms: “In this world the *sastras* are made up of words, rests on words; hence there is nothing beyond words, and words are at the source of everything” (*Natyasastra* XV 2: 3). He divides *pathya* (the articulated word) into two, Sanskrit and Prakrit. Thereafter, he provides a minute analysis of first, the principle units of structure, nouns, verbs, particles, propositions, nominal suffixes, compound words, euphonic combinations and case-endings and it follows the further break-up into vowels and consonants, words, verse and prose, metre and rhythm, syllables, rhyme and feet in couplet. He considers the units of language at their primary level. He adopts the same method as in the description of the parts of human body.

After dealing with *angika* and *vacika* (body and language) , Bharata takes up the other two, first the external *aharya* (dress, costume, décor, props, and masks) and then the internal *sattvika*. He provides a lot of information on color, correspondences and understanding of types of make-up for particular characters, people from different parts of the country and techniques of constructing stationary and mobile props, and a variety of masks. He sets up a sequence of correspondences. Bharata says, “According to one’s pleasure, colors can be changed” (*Natyasastra* XXIII 3: 97).

Bharata discusses the ‘inner states’ of the total personality and its involuntary expression under *sattvikabhinaya*. Basically, he refers to a feeling (*sattva*) which is unexpressed, but it can be discerned through physical signs such as tears, horripilation, etc. In an earlier chapter Bharata says, “*Rasa* arises from the forty-nine types of *bhava* – eight *sthayi bhava*, thirty-three *vyabhicari bhava* and eight *sattvika bhava*, when they are imbued with the quality of *samanya*” (*Natyasastra* VII 1: 6). “The state proceeding from the thing which is congenial to the heart is the source of

rasa, and it pervades the body just as fire spreads over dry wood” (*Natyasastra* VII 1: 7). Bharata’s purpose here is to show the universality and pervasiveness in theatre. Here he takes up the fundamental issue of the relationship of the senses and the mind, physic states and involuntary reflection through physical reflexes. Bharata gives his classification and categories of ‘personality types’ and different types of human temperament. Bharata points out: “A person out of his mind (*mana*) cannot know the objects of senses which come through the five sources” (*Natyasastra* XXIV 3: 86).

This comprehensive analysis *abhinaya* determines and defines its importance in theatrical aesthetics. The typologies and taxonomy of his discourse on *abhinaya* reflect on the possibilities of human body as theatre in itself. Bharata’s theoretical structure of *abhinaya* provides a theoretical ground where Brechtian concept ‘gestus’ may be understood and interpreted with all its potentialities as an object of theatrical aesthetics. Theoretically, Brecht’s ‘gestus’ refers to Bharata’s all the four kinds of abhinayas namely, *angika*, *vacika*, *aharya* and *sattvika*. But unlike Bharata, Brecht does not make ‘gestus’ a central concept of his theatrical aesthetics. Brecht discusses ‘gestus’ philosophically as a tool to achieve V-Effect in the performance. His discussion of it lacks a proper methodology of application. Therefore, ‘gestus’ remains a particular stylization or technique of acting in Brecht’s theoretical discourse. For example, when Brecht tells us that ‘gestus’ includes ‘gesture’ and ‘social attitude’, then he does not specifically mention or elaborate on the anatomical structure of ‘gesture’. Unlike Bharata he does not discuss how the various parts of human body produce a gesture and what meaning any specific gesture controls. To understand the theatrical semiotics of gesture, it has to be understood in all its possible dimensions. Bharata’s discussion of *angikabhinaya* may be considered the most appropriate example of gestural semiotics of theatre.

Brecht’s idea of ‘social attitude’, one of the senses of ‘gestus’, seems more or less an observation on the ‘states of mind’ that an actor adopts during the performance. Bharata elaborates on *sattvikabhinaya/samanayabhinaya* and provides a theoretically solid ground to interpret the ‘social attitudes’ a person adopts in real life situation or in a theatrical performance. Brecht does not elaborate on the nature and structure of ‘social attitude’ which he expects that the actor adopts toward other

person or situation during a performance. Bharata gives a structural analysis of the relationship between mind and senses and the resultant physic states in the chapter on *samanayabhinaya*.

Both Bharata and Brecht in their respective theories of theatre explored the ‘gestic principle’ of theatre and termed it as *abhinaya* and ‘gestus’ respectively. It is beyond doubt that they have realized the ‘gestic’ value of everything that constitutes theatre. This ‘gestic principle’ is the most crucial point of comparison between both these philosophers of theatre. Bharata created a proper theoretical structure of *abhinaya* which like the grammatical structure of a language explores all the semiotic possibilities of theatre. Brecht discusses this ‘gestic principle’ through his concept of ‘gestus’ which is termed as an acting technique. His discussion does not provide ‘gestus’ a theoretical structure where all the semiotic possibilities of theatre may be realized. The study attempts to interpret and explain Brecht’s idea of ‘gestus’ in terms of Bharata’s theory of *abhinaya* where its potential as a an object of theatrical aesthetics are realized. Moreover, this discussion brings forth Brecht’s deep insights on theatre and especially his ‘gestus’ and evaluates his significant contribution in Experimental Theatre.

Despite, understandable similarities between Brechtian dramatic theory and Bharata’s dramaturgy, the theoretical and structural difference between their discourses on theatre cannot be denied. The study does not impose Bharata’s theoretical pattern on Brecht’s vision of theatre rather interprets the central concept of Brecht’s dramaturgy in terms of Bharata’s theoretical framework of *abhinaya* to explore the possibilities of ‘gestus’ as a universal concept of theatrical aesthetics that transcends its cultural and temporal limits.

Articulating Theatre as ‘Language’: Augusto Boal’s ‘Spect-actor’ and Bharata’s *Angikabhinaya*

Augusto Boal (1931-2009) was a Brazilian theatre director, writer and politician. He established ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’, a form of theatre where theatre is considered as language not a spectacle, accessible to all. His ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ was a result of his experimentations in participatory and interactive theatre in 1960s at Arena Theatre in Rio de Janeiro. His experimentations at Arena Theatre with this new form of theatre had an extraordinary impact on traditional practice. This particular type of theatre is rooted in the pedagogical and political principles developed by the Brazilian liberatory educator Paulo Freire, the author of the acclaimed *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, for his revolutionary education methods. This mode of theatre was practiced by “spect-actor” that bridged the gap between actor and spectator. Because of his experimental work in the field of theatre, he was considered as a cultural activist. He was exiled to Argentina in 1971 by the military dictatorship of Brazil where he published his first major theatre text *The Theatre of the Oppressed* (1973). His exile ended in 1986 with his coming back to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he established a major centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed (CTO-Rio). The forum theatre and Image theatre, the two famous forms of theatre, were developed by Boal here. In 1992, his second major text, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* was published which was a basic introduction to the entire range of TO theory and practice. His third major book *The Rainbow of Desire* (1995) elaborates on the psycho-therapeutic application of Boal’s theatrical techniques. In the year 1997, Boal was awarded the Career Achievement Award by the Association for Theatre in their national conference in Chicago.

Critics and historians throughout the world consider Augusto Boal as one of the major figures of twentieth century European Experimental Theatre movement. Though of Brazilian, origin yet Boal’s work forms to be a part of the group of European experimental theatre. The first reason of his inclusion into the group is that his work is a part the same European tradition which begins from Greek onwards. It is evident from his seminal text *Theatre of the Oppressed* that his form of theatre was a

result of his experimentations with the established European theatrical conventions. Boal's theory and his key concepts on theatre are a result of his refutation and repudiation of the existing theatrical convention of European theatre beginning from Aristotle onwards to Brecht. His philosophy of theatre and the resultant aesthetics like the other modes of Experimental Theatre denotes a complete break-up the earlier prevailing theatrical philosophy of Europe. And the second reason, though not an important one, is that most of his works are composed either in Spanish or in Portuguese, the two important European languages.

Augusto Boal begins the Preface to the 2008 edition of his book *Theatre of the Oppressed* like this:

The Book was published for the first time in Buenos Aires in 1973, at the beginning of 16 years of exile from my own country, Brazil, which was at that time under a cruel and murderous civic and military dictatorship. It has been reprinted dozens of times in dozens of languages since then. What has changed?

In itself, nothing has changed. It is the philosophical foundation of the whole system of the Theatre of the Oppressed, so it cannot change because I have not changed my opinions about theatre, about history, or about the voracious political systems that prevail in most part of the world. I only have, I hope, coherently enriched that vision and my practice. I have developed other forms of Theatre of the Oppressed which are not described here, like the Rainbow of Desire, Legislative Theatre and the Aesthetics of the Oppressed.

However, when I read this book today, I do so from a much broader perspective than I did when I wrote it. At that time, I was concerned with

theatre as theatre, and about its relationship to social human beings. Now, I am more concerned with human beings as theatre.

I was a teacher of theatre. Now, I understand that there is no such thing. Those, like myself, who are teachers – and students – of theatre, in reality we are students and teachers of human beings. This book can be read again from that perspective.

When we study Shakespeare we must be conscious that we are not studying the history of the theatre, but learning about the history of the humanity. We are discovering ourselves. Above all: we are discovering that we can change ourselves and change the world. Nothing is going to remain the way it is. Let us in the present, study the past, so as to invent the future. (IX)

Boal perceives human body as theatre. To him, theatre does not exist outside human body. His perception of human body as theatre paves the way for exploration of innumerable possibilities of theatrical communication in it. Therefore, he considers theatre as language and the human body is the first vocabulary of this language. S. Leigh Thompson points out that “the theatrical language is the most essential human language. Everything that actors do, we do throughout our lives, always and everywhere. Actors talk, move, dress to suit the setting, express ideas, reveal passions just as we all do in our daily lives” (1). Further, Boal adds that “the only difference is that actors are conscious that they are using the language of theatre, and are thus better able to turn it to their advantage, whereas the woman and man in the street do not know that they are making theatre” (30).

His dramaturgy is constructed on the dynamics of the relationship between spectator and actor. In his discourse on theatre, he traces the roots of this relationship in beginning of theater as an art form in Greek tradition. He explores that the theatre as an art form is rooted in an attitude of a complete freedom from all sorts of

restrictions that the specific cultures impose on human beings. To him theatrical expression is not possible under any kind of bondage of rules and regulations. He wrote preface to the 2000 edition of his book *Theatre of the Oppressed* in which he discusses the genesis of theatre and its further developments like the dichotomy between actor and character etc. which appears in the art form with the passage of time. He tells us that gradually, in the due course of time, the art of theatre corrupts itself by doing away with the complete the freedom of the artist. According to him, the artist is separated from this freedom through the introduction of the choreographer, dramatic poet and all the other necessary preconditions of the performance. Boal argues, “A necessary contradiction. When it was free, the body could invent the dance, which came from inside; free, the body could dance in space and time. The choreographer turned up and charted the movement, explained the gesture, defined the rhythm, and limited the space. The dramatic poet came and wrote his verses. No more freed thought and creative chaos” (XI). With all these advances in theatre art, he believes that the artist had been done away with this freedom.

Boal begins his discourse on theatre with the example of Thespis from the history of ancient Greek theatre. He considers Thespis as a true artist who uses his own thought without any external influence thus creating the concept of protagonist for the Greek theatre. Further Boal mentions that Solon, the dictator of that time did not tolerate such kind of freedom in theatrical performance because it helps people to have their own thought and consciousness that may further create problem for him. So according to him, Solon threatens Thespis of dire consequences by giving an example of Prometheus. But as a true artist Thespis did not stop and created character that differs from actor through mask. Boal believes that it was Thespis who invented disguise in theatre: the Mask and Costume. He mentions that in Greek theatre Actor and character had been dichotomized and made into two: Man and Mask. Boal believes that, in those times Greek theatre was subject to censorship and all the developments and advances in the art of theatre were the results of this censorship which striped off the essence of theatre thereby making it identical with hypocrisy.

Boal introduced this initial corruption in theatre in Greece and then he mentioned Aristotle who introduced another term *empathia* for the art of theatre that refers to the influence of protagonist's thoughts on the mind of the spectators consequently incapacitate them of taking any decisions. Centuries later Bertolt Brecht, the German theatre director, writing about Aristotle, made a suggestion or statement in this regard. He says that: "This *empathia* was all right for the ruling classes; but it would not suit the workers, for it helps to perpetuate exploitation" (Boal 24). Therefore he introduced another method *verfremdungseffect* which loosely means 'distancing'; it refers to the person who observes, thinks and draws his or her own conclusions without emotional identification. With this change, Boal believes that the performer now does not hide himself behind the mask, directly opposes it and involves into conflicts with it. He mentions that what Thespis had done with chorus, Brecht now did with protagonist through V-effect and the actor, not the character, has become the real protagonist.

Boal maintains that in Brecht's dramaturgy, however, the unbridgeable gap between stage and audience is the mark of theatre. He believes that in it the theatrical stage with its occupied 'space' is constructed for the characters and actors whom the playwright creates and in that way it is considered his or her private or personal property, his or her space or territory. He maintains that in this form of theatre, the playwright or director and the actor speaks the truth for the spectator; it is the playwright or the actor who determines the dialogue. To him, it is a great development in the aesthetics of theatre where the actor is influenced by the character. Augusto Boal suggests that it is to go further where the spectators not only set free its critical conscience, but its physical body too and it is to use the stage too and participate to change the image that is presented there in the performance. Further he argues:

To transform is to be transformed. The action of transforming is, in itself, transforming. The members of the audience must become the character: possess him, take his place – not obey him, but guide him, show him the path

they think right. In this way the Spectator becoming Spect-Actor is democratically opposed to the other members of the audience, free to invade the scene and appropriate the power of the actor. With their hearts and minds the audience must rehearse battle plans – ways of freeing themselves from all oppressions. (Boal XXI)

Toward the end of the *Preface* of his book, Augusto Boal speaks plainly on this relationship between actor and spectator. He proposes the spectator to assume the role of the actor and pervade the stage and offers solutions. Boal considers it as a process of transformation where the spectator changes into ‘spect-actor’ a term which he coins to denote the relationship between them. He believes that even the fiction on the stage may be transformed through this process because the ‘spect-actor’ is living at the same time in his social reality and in this process he transforms himself also. Boal mentions that this annexation or takeover by the spectator of the stage epitomizes the infringement that one attempts to get freedom from his/her state of oppression, and the limits of cultural norms imposed. Further he adds, “To free ourselves is to trespass, and to transform. It is through a creation of the new that which has not yet existed begins to exist. To free yourself is to trespass. To trespass is to exist. To free ourselves is to exist. To free yourself is to exist” (Boal, XXII). Boal connects theatre art to the freedom of human self and he turns theatre into a tool of attaining this freedom.

He views theatre as a political activity. To him ‘politics’ is the highest art and no aspect of human life is abstained from it. He believes that theatre is one of the arts which is primarily a human one and performed by human beings. Peter Barry, a scholar on contemporary literary and critical theory, sums up the twentieth century European thought in the beginning of his book *Beginning Theory*, in these famous five statements: “Language is constitutive, Meaning is contingent, Truth is provisional, Human nature is myth, and Politics is pervasive” (22). And the last statement “Politics is pervasive” seems to convey what Boal understands of theatre. It is evident that the ‘dialectical materialism’ of Marxist thought is the guiding principle

behind all the aesthetic statements of Augusto Boal. He perceived the functioning of this principle of thought in ancient Greek theatre centuries before even Karl Marx was born. To him, theatre from the very beginning is necessarily a political activity and it is used as a weapon of ideological domination throughout the human history.

Boal's vision of theatre seems to be influenced by Peter Barry's statement 'Politics is pervasive'. Therefore, he does not see anything in human life beyond 'politics'. To him 'politics' is the most powerful principle of human life that determines all human relations. Therefore, theatre for him is a potential ideological apparatus. He proposes to employ it for social change and freedom of the poor classes. He introduced all his experiments pertaining to theatrical productions to transform the theatre into a political weapon. He argues:

This book attempts to show that all theatre is necessarily political, because all activities of man are political and theatre is one of them. Those who try to separate theatre from politics try to lead us into error – and this is a political attitude. In this book I also offer some proof that the theatre is a weapon. A very efficient weapon. For this reason one must fight for it. For this reason ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theatre and utilize it as a tool for domination. In so doing, they change the very concept of what 'theatre' is. But the theatre can be a weapon for liberation. For that it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. Change is imperative. (Boal XXIII)

Boal considers all the terms and categories pertaining to the art of theatre like Spectator, Actor, Chorus, Protagonist etc. as a result of political-ideological considerations of ruling classes throughout the human history. He believes that ruling classes have constructed these theatrical categories and terms to exercise domination over the working classes, thereby making theatre as an ideological apparatus for inculcating their dominant ideologies. He does not mind it and have no problem with

that. In this regard, he seems to be in agreement with all the earlier theorists of theatre. But on this strong philosophical foundation, he attempts to overturn the things for theatre. He proposes to use it as a weapon for liberation rather than for domination. He constructs his own poetics of theatre of the oppressed for using theatre as an ideological weapon. He proposes certain experiments in the practice and production of theatre and thereby brings a new conception of 'theatre' which later famously known as Theatre of the Oppressed. According to Seyla Benhabib, "All struggles against oppression in the modern world begin by defining what had previously been considered private, non-public, and non-political as matters of public concern, issues of justice, and sites of power" (100).

He attributes the divorce between Actor and Character in theatre to the ideology of aristocracy in ancient Greece and the division between protagonist (aristocrats) and chorus (working class) was also the result of the same system. He maintains that this process denotes that some people go on stage and act; others remain seated, passive, and receptive – these are the spectators, the masses, the people. He attributed Aristotle to it who introduced a coercive system of drama or tragedy that works in such kind of theatre. To him, then came the bourgeoisies that transformed the protagonists who are no more the objects of carrying moral values but are multidimensional subjects with exceptional qualities which separate them from masses, as new aristocrats. He terms it as the poetics of *virtue* introduced by Machiavelli and in a later development; Bertolt Brecht constructs a poetics of his own theatre on the basis of Hegel's theorization of character as absolute subject transforming him into an object. Boals perceives here that the Hegelian paradigm is reversed by the Marxist model where social being determines consciousness not Ideas governs this world as proposed by Hegel, thereby, the character in this performance becomes an object of socio-political and cultural forces not of moral values of superstructures. Therefore, to complete this cycle of development of theatrical aesthetics, Boal proposed another paradigm where the gap or line between actor and spectator and further between protagonist and chorus is completely eradicated to arrive finally at the *poetics of the oppressed* as a weapon of liberation and transformation of society and human being. He relocates the essence of theatre in

human body through his concept of 'spect-actor' which he created in his various experiments with people's theatre.

Augusto Boal begins his discourse from his discussion on Aristotle's philosophy of theatre with this Arnold Hauser's statement in his books *The Social History of Art*:

Tragedy is the characteristic creation of Athenian democracy; in form of art are the inner conflicts of its social structure so directly and clearly to be seen as in this. The externals of its presentation to the masses were democratic, but its content, the heroic sagas with their tragic-heroic outlook on life, was aristocratic.... It unquestionably propagates the standards of the great-hearted individual, the uncommon distinguished man it owed its origin to the separation of the choir-leader from the choir, which turned collective performance of songs into dramatic dialogues.

The tragedians are in fact state bursars and state purveyors – the state pays them for plays that are performed, but naturally does not allow pieces to be performed that would run counter to its policy or the interests of the governing classes. (qtd. In Boal 1)

The statement itself is enough to reflect on the sociology of Augusto Boal's theatrical aesthetics. He traces the connection between theatre and politics from its very inception in the ancient times. He notices that the Greek philosophy from the very beginning addresses the educational and instructive purpose and function of art. He mentions Aristotle especially who declares the independence of poetry in relation to politics. To him, the earliest poetic-political system of menacing of the spectator, for eradication of the illegal tendencies of the audience was produced by Aristotle.

Boal begins with problematizing Aristotle's definition of 'Art' i.e. 'Art imitates Nature'. First he isolates this statement from Aristotle's philosophy and then redefines it: "Art re-creates the creative principle of created things" (Boal 15). For a further clarification on this principle of 're-creation' he precisely mentions the ideas of some of the philosophers who had constructed their theories centuries before Aristotle. Boal mentions Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Cratylus, Parmenides, Zeno and Plato. He demonstrated it diagrammatically, how does the system of tragedy which Aristotle introduced function on the poetics of *Catharsis* brought about by *Hammartia* or tragic flaw in the character. He shows that before *Catharsis*, there are three important stages in the spectacle: first stage *peripeteia*, second stage *anagnorsis*, and third stage *catastrophe* finally ending in *Catharsis* of the character. Augusto Boal argues:

Nature tends toward certain ends; when it fails to achieve those objectives, art and science intervene. Man, as part of nature, also has certain ends in view: health, gregarious life in the State, Happiness, Virtue, Justice etc. When he fails in the achievement of those objectives the art of tragedy intervenes. This correction of man's actions is what Aristotle calls *Catharsis*.

Tragedy with all its qualitative and quantitative aspects exists as a function of the effect it seeks, *Catharsis*. All the unities of tragedy are structured around this concept. It is the centre, the essence, the purpose of the tragic system.

Unfortunately, it is also the most controversial concept. (23)

This is how Boal determines the ultimate function and aim of tragedy in Aristotelian system. He shows five kinds of possibilities in relation to *Hammartia* and social ethos in Aristotle's system of tragedy. He notices that Aristotle propounded a potent structure of purgation, to do away with what is not commonly accepted and it is designed to inculcate in the individual such value system where he/she adjusts oneself to what pre-exists. In opposition to this Aristotelian system, Boal wants to persuade

the spectator to bring a change in the existing social circumstances by performing action. Therefore, he proposes a paradigm shift in the poetics of theatre or we can say that he introduces a new poetics theatre.

Coming to the Middle Ages, Boal views that the theatrical productions were now more or less controlled by clergy and nobility. To him, the aim of theatre art, in Middle Ages, was to paralyze the society by preserving or extending the existing system and resembles to the aims of both clergy and nobility. He believes that theatre art in this time fosters depersonalization and abstraction; it is oppressive, coercive, instilling in the people a sincere attitude of pious respect for the existing state of affairs; it represents a finished and complete world characterized by uniformity where transcendent values are considered important rather than the discrete ones. To him, Medieval theatre resembles to Aristotelian as its function is also cathartic, as a purifier of the people and demonstrates the same intention to put an end to the spectator's ability to change the society; it inclines towards abstraction and inculcation of content. Boal notices that the resources it uses are quite different from Aristotelian as the feudal characters in this theatre are not concrete but abstract that epitomize abstract values like Lust, Sin, Virtue, Devil etc and do not represent the character-subjects of the performance, but objects acting as agent of the sense or values they represent. He views that even for feudal nobility, everything was likely to change; nothing would remain the same; even the social and political systems were replaced by other systems. Augusto Boal argues, "With the rising bourgeoisie there arose a new type of art, a new poetics which began to give expression to new knowledge, acquired and transmitted according to the new perspective. Machiavelli is one of the witnesses of those social and artistic transformations. Machiavelli initiates the poetics of *virtue*" (49).

Boal believes that bourgeois owes everything to his own virtue without depending on good fortune or fate, attains them through money, free initiative, and his rationality to give method to his life and does not enjoy any privileges as a birth right; with his virtue and ability he overcomes all the impediments that come to his way; all his life is governed by his own virtue that is the law and his behavior is determined by

the praxis otherwise he renounces all his relations to the convention. Therefore, he notices the two principal features of the bourgeoisie are virtue and praxis and this society produces a new art radically different from the earlier one which intends to create a concrete 'virtuous' man of flesh and blood. Boal on commenting the characters in bourgeoisie theatre argues:

In the theatre, the abstract figure of the Devil, for example, disappeared and individualized Devils appeared – Lady Macbeth, Iago, Cassius, Richard III, and others of lesser power. They were not merely the 'principle of evil' or 'diabolic angels' or some equivalent, but live men who freely opted for the paths considered to be evil. They were 'virtuous' men in Machiavellian sense, who took advantage of all their potentials trying to eliminate every trace of emotion living in a purely intellectual and calculating world. The intellect absolutely lacks moral character. (52)

He believes that with Shakespeare the 'individualized man' is introduced in the theatre and the character in the theatre is assumed to be the subject not the object that develops on the basis of the bourgeoisie conception which does not represent all men but only specific with exceptional qualities, or endowed with 'virtue'. He notices that the spectators in this theatre persist in the background, easily manipulated and passively welcome the transformation of characters as their consciousness is subject to manipulation by the will of 'virtuous' man. To him, this theatre constitutes one condition only: the exceptional individual in contrast to those privileged.

Augusto Boal considers Machiavelli's *Mandragola* as a classic example of the metamorphosis between feudal and the bourgeoisie theatre as the characters in the play are equally abstract as well as concrete that are not completely individualized yet they are not objects for abstract values; a combination of abstract values and individual characteristics. Boal further argues:

Mandragola is one of the most successful examples of popular dramaturgy....

Mandragola relates to the spectator in an intelligent manner, when it succeeds in moving him, it does so through reason, through thought and never through an empathic, abstractly emotional bond. And in this resides its most popular quality. (62)

To Boal, Machiavelli presents man as liberated from all moral values and Shakespeare employs the similar vision but with certain restrictions on this character without harming his/her freedom of thought. He believes that this is Hegel who proposes that character is free; his inner movement is capable of being exteriorized, without any impediment and this freedom of character does not refer to something arbitrary power but only in matters of situations and values common to all mankind. To him, Hegel's character constitutes the ethical principle and his freedom lies in the exteriorization of that principle in real life; abstract moral values are presented in concrete forms as characters in dramatic action; the conflict is possible between the characters that possess opposite values and the dramatic action is resultant on *peripeteia* caused by such conflicts; the action is to be conducted to a level where the equilibrium is fixed; the culmination of this theatre is 'rest' and harmony.

Emile Zola introduces Naturalism in theatre and propounds that: "Theatre must show 'a slice of life' without taking sides, display life exactly as it is, without even being selective" (qtd. In Boal 62). Boal believes that there is another way, contrary to this – toward a growing subjectivity. To him, except Shakespeare nobody gives a multidimensional image of man on stage and this subjectivity brings a lot of movements in theatre; expressionism, impressionism, surrealism that incline to give a subjective freedom to the character which start appearing with abstract emotions. He notices that even the realism in theatre reduces man to psycho-algebraic equations and pursues his inner ways. He mentions Eugene O'Neill who through his mysticism represents the relations between man and God and if God does not exist then some mysterious and supernatural power is shown on the stage. Further he talks of Eugene Ionesco whose 'antitheatre' represents man as incommunicable not in the sense that

he cannot express his emotions but all his ideas and feelings can be translated into one: 'chat'. Augusto Boal comments on the further development of theatre and argues:

This has been the path of development followed by the theatre since the appearance of the modern bourgeoisie. In opposition to that theatre, another must rise: one determined by a new class and which will dissent not only stylistically but in a much more radical manner. This new theatre, dialectically materialist, will necessarily be also a theatre of abstractions, at least in its initial phase. Not only superstructural abstractions, but also infrastructural. Its characters will reveal, in some plays of Brecht, their condition of mere objects, objects of determined social functions which, by coming into contradiction, develop a system of forces that directs the movement of dramatic action. (68)

Boal views it as a new theatrical mode that rejects all the conventional forms and its theory is a result of practice. He mentions that Bertolt Brecht applies 'epic' to his theatre but before him, Erwin Piscator used the same term for his theatre as he used motion pictures, slides, graphics and all that represent reality in a theatrical spectacle. He believes that this absolute freedom of theatrical mode is designated by Piscator as 'epic' form and the richness of this form helps to break the emotional tie and produces a critical *distance*; later Brecht employs it with great success.

Boal believes that Brecht's dramaturgy is a reaction against Hegel's idealist poetics as, Brecht devises the expression 'epic theatre' in opposition to Hegel's conception of epic poetry. He notices that in Hegelian scheme of things poetry is divided into three types: epic, lyric and dramatic; 'epic' poetry represents this world and reality objectively while 'lyric' poetry is subjective by nature and the 'dramatic' poetry is a combination of both 'objective' and 'subjective' styles which not only gives an objective exposition to it, but also discovers its source in the ideal life of an individual. To him, in the 'dramatic' mode the action is introduced not as it is in the

epic, as something already happened, but rather as something that happens at the moment in which we witness it. In short in Hegel's own words: "Epic Poetry 'recalls'; dramatic poetry 'relives'" (qtd. In Boal 90). Therefore, Boal observes that in dramatic poetry there is a combination of subjectivity and objectivity but in Hegel the former precedes the latter; spirit is the subject that decides or fixes all external actions. Further Boal adds:

Hegel thinks that we have the need to see human acts and relationships presented before us alive and direct. But he adds, dramatic action...is not confined to the simple and undisturbed execution of a definite purpose, but depends throughout on conditions of collision, human passions and characters, and leads therefore to actions and reactions, which in their turn call for some further resolution of conflict and disruption. It offers the continually moving spectacle of struggle between living characters who pursue opposite desires in the midst of situations full of obstacles and dangers.... The denouement arises out of the dramatic conflict; it is like the action itself, both subjective and objective. It is the repose that comes after the tumult of human passions and actions.... In short, the character is the absolute subject of his actions. (74)

Boal believes that the Marxist poetics of Brecht is in opposition to the very essence of Hegelian idealist poetics as Brecht proposes that character is not *absolute subject* but the object of socio-economic circumstances in which he reacts and acts. He notices that in idealist poetics, social consciousness determines social being but on the other hand in Marxist poetics, social being determines social consciousness. He finds Brecht is in complete opposition to Hegel where in Hegel's terms, the subjectivity resonates with the theatrical action but in Brechtian terms, the character's social relations produce the action. To Boal, Brechtian poetics is Marxist not 'epic'; it holds all kinds of poetry, lyric, epic and dramatic and for Brecht 'human nature' is not permanent or fixed therefore, for him nobody is what he is 'just because'. He finds

that in this Brechtian theatre, hero is segmented, deconstructed, and reconstructed; the process does not refer to realism rather a scientific demonstration through artistic means.

As discussed earlier, for Hegel the disturbance in human emotions and actions produce the spectacle which is followed by a state of rest and harmony. Boal finds that in the same way, Aristotle introduces a system of wills that constitutes the legitimate ethical values, and which are contradicted because one the tragic flaw of the character; after the catastrophe, when the flaw is removed, equanimity returns certainly; equipoise is re-established. He notices the two philosophers seem to agree that world returns to its perpetual stability, its cosmic equipoise, and its ever-lasting repose. On the other hand, Boal believes that, Brechtian theatre does not end in 'rest' or harmony; equipoise is not to be established; it represents the manners in which society is deprived of its balance, the way it is moving, and how the transformation takes place; it elucidates concepts, reveals truths, unveils contradictions and propounds changes; the theatrical spectacle is the beginning of action; the equipoise is achieved through transition in the society, and not by eradicating the individual of his necessities. In this regard Boal remarks: "To understand Brecht more clearly here, we should recall that in his view that artist's duty consists not in showing true things but in revealing how things truly are" (92).

Boal considers empathy as an awful weapon in the arsenal of theatrical art. Boal clarifies it with his statement:

Its mechanism (sometimes insidious) consists in the juxtaposition of two people (one fictitious and another real), two universes, making one of those two people (real one, the spectator) surrender to other (the fictitious one, the character) his power of making decisions. The *man* relinquishes his power of making decisions to the *image*.... The juxtaposition of two universes (the real and the fictitious) also produces other aggressive effects: *the spectator experiences the fiction and incorporates its elements*. The spectator, the real

living person – accepts as life and reality what is presented to him in the work of art as art. Aesthetic osmosis. (93)

Augusto Boal formulated his Theatre of the Oppressed as part of the development in the aesthetics of theatre beginning with Aristotle onwards and culminating in Bertolt Brecht. Boal's vision of all these developments in the aesthetics of theatre is a political one. To him, theatre originates in the absolute freedom of human being. "It was", in his own words, "a dithyrambic song; free people singing in the open air. The carinival. The feast" (Boal 2). He believes that gradually this art form acquired political dimensions thus separating *actors* from *spectators* and the protagonist from the masses and this is how the coercive inculcation of theatre begins.

Boal's conception of theatre which is ultimately a reaction against the political metaphysics of theatre, compels him to christen the art form once again as *theatre of the oppressed*. It is meant to liberate people from all kinds of oppression and thus converting theatre into a public property to democratize knowledge. Under this rubric of the *theatre of the oppressed*, Boal introduced other various important forms of theatre: invisible theatre, forum theatre, image theatre etc. to put an end to the practice that makes the stage a private property of the characters and replaces it with 'Joker' System of individual actors. Through his conception of *theatre of the oppressed* Boal revolutionized the institution of theatre and its function. The aesthetics of his theatre is built on a political vision of the art form. He explores the roots of European theatre beginning since ancient Greek times. In his conception of theatre which is different from the traditional one, the conventional dichotomies of actor/spectator and protagonist/chorus/masses are submerged and eliminated to rationalize the nature or essence of the art form (theatre) where an entirely different (from the earlier one) function of theatre is thought upon. The idea of this new theatre is introduced as a part of the experiments carried out in August 1973 in the cities of Lima and Chiclayo within the programme of the Integral Literacy Operation (ALFIN). The programme is introduced by the Government of Peru to eradicate the illiteracy at national level. The method employed by ALFIN in the literacy programme is taken from Paulo Freire.

The theatre was utilized as a pedagogical apparatus in ALFIN programme to teach people how to express themselves. The idea of introducing theatre in a literacy programme was so radical that it opened the doors for looking at the art form (theatre) from a different perspective rather than in its traditional image. It added a new dimension to theatre where its potentialities as a pedagogical apparatus were brought to surface. Pineau points out that “the basic premise here is that by means of active embodiment, the students not only learn the material but also authorize it or at least share in the authorship of it. Understood as ‘critical performative pedagogy,’ this learnby-doing method situates the performing body at the center of theory and practice” (41). Boal revisited the entire aesthetics of theatre since its beginning to the present day to explore its possibilities and potentialities as a tool for bringing social change. Boal redefined its aesthetics by assigning it a new function of liberating people from all kinds of oppressions, and thus converted it into a tool of transformation at socio-cultural level. He considered theatre as form of language which every individual is capable of using without requiring any specific artistic talent for it. He developed a new poetics of theatre where it is made available to anybody to discover himself/herself. Victor Truner points out that “in conceptual terms, this crafting translates to the understanding that we construct a self and, in turn, we can construct a self in inventive and creative ways” (27).

In order to have a sense of the poetics of theatre which Boal put forth, it is necessary to consider the specific function that he attached to the art form. To him, it is a great tool of change and social transformation where people can sense and feel the theatre in themselves (in their body) rather than outside it. Through this new form of theatre, its aesthetics gets redefined where the conventional dichotomies like actor/spectator are deconstructed thus creating space for an entirely new vocabulary of theatre. Through this new theatrical mode, he explored the potential for change and taking action in ordinary human beings. In this entirely new type of theatre, the spectator is capable of becoming actor. It allows this freedom to him. To make this happen, he introduced a new structure of performance where traditional roles of actors and chorus replaced with the active participation of the spectators in the dramatic action. Boal argues here:

Aristotle proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the dramatic character so that the latter may think and act for him. Brecht proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates the power to the character who thus acts in his place but the spectator reserves the right to think for himself, often in opposition to the character. In the first case, a ‘catharsis’ occurs; in the second, an awakening of critical consciousness. But the *poetics of the oppressed* focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonic role, change the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change – in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action. (98)

As Boal considers theatre as a potential weapon of transformation and liberation then it is to be transferred to common people for theatrical production. This is what we assume, is Boal’s most significant contribution to the aesthetics of theatre in contemporary times; converting it into a weapon for transformation and liberation; exploring its potential as a form of art for attaining self realization. Boal realizes the capacity of human body for action in his conception of theatre. To him, human body and theatre are identical. Human body, for him, is theatre in itself. Theatre cannot be separated from its fundamental source that is human body. He does not observe theatre as something external to human life rather it is the codification of the processes and functions that the body performs in the world. He states, “Perhaps the most paramount of concepts behind Theatre of the Oppressed is the idea that theatre is

the most human of all types of expression. Theatre is the human language par excellence. Some of us make theatre all of us are theatre” (Boal 7).

Boal introduces some techniques with respective exercises through concrete examples to manifest the functioning or working of these theatrical experiments. He shows how this transference to be achieved. He gives example of Estela Linares, who was in charge of photography section of ALFIN programme. Here photography is used as a language with theatrical potentialities which expresses people’s thoughts and emotions. Boal observes the existence of theatre in all the activities of life ranging from base to sublime. Photography also helps people in discovering valid symbols for a whole society or community. Otherwise, sometimes it is difficult for the artists to communicate with the mass audience who do not share the meanings of those symbols. But it is obvious that doing photography is easy with a camera but producing theatre is not an easy task because here one has to deal with human body rather than an electronic gadget. To him, it is more difficult to conduct human body than a photography camera. Boal adds:

We can begin by stating that the first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body, the main source of sound and movement. Therefore, to control the means of theatrical production, man must, first of all, control his own body; know his own body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive. Then he will be able to practise theatrical forms in which by stages he frees himself from his condition of spectator and takes on that of actor, in which he ceases to be an object and becomes a subject, is changed from witness into protagonist. (102)

The above statement puts forth Boal’s conception of theatre and the specific codes aesthetics which he created for it. He does not see the existence of theatre outside human body. To him, it is not something external to human body rather the body itself is the primary source for all theatrical movements without which any

theatrical activity cannot be possible. He creates a carnal metaphysics of theatre through human body; the genesis of sound and movement. He even goes to the extent of saying that human body is the first word of theatrical vocabulary. The main controlling point of any theatrical performance is the body which helps us to identify/imagine the concept of actor in theatre. Body controls all the movements of the actor. It is only through his/her (actor's) body that the character expresses himself/herself. Ruth Bowman points out that "lastly, music is used as an independent language that can enhance or contradict the meanings of the spoken text or action" (140)

Augusto Boal proposes four seminal stages to systematize the general plan of transforming the spectator into actor. These four stages constitute the framework of the *poetics of the oppressed*. The four stages denote a carefully worked out structure in a logical sequence to create the kind of theatre he is claiming to be revolutionary in contemporary times. The following are the four stages:

First stage: *Knowing the body*. For this stage, Boal designed certain exercises to make each person conscious of his own body, its possibilities and limitations, and the social distortion felt because of the kind of the job he does. He believes that every type of physical work in a due course of time imposes certain kind of physical distortion on the structure of human body that conveys a social reality. He makes it important for theatrical performance. He expects each one to observe the 'muscular alienation' (In Boal's words) inflicted on the body by the work. He designed these exercises with the pattern which helps in undoing the carnal structure of the participants. They help in isolating the physical points for investigation and evaluation. He believes that it helps in raising the level of their consciousness that enable them to observe the structure of their own body and understand and interpret even the slightest reaction produced in it by any socio-political phenomena. He adds, "If one is able, in this way, to disjoint one's own muscular structures, one will surely be able to assemble structures characteristic of other professions and social classes; that is one will be to physically 'interpret' characters different from oneself (Boal 104)". Philip Auslander notes that Boal's 'analysis of the social deformation of the body is based directly upon Marx's

account of alienated labour' and 'because the mechanisms of oppression shape the body, it is through the body and its habits that those mechanisms can be exposed" (128). Certain athletic exercises Boal proposed to disassemble the physical structure of the participants. Certain examples of such disjunctive exercises are given: *Slow – motion race, Cross – legged race, Monster race, Wheel race, Hypnosis, Boxing match, Out West*, etc. All of these exercises and others included in Boal's book *200 Exercises and Games for the Actor and Non – actor Who Wants to Say Something Through Theatre*. At this stage, Boal designed all these exercises to enable the participants to investigate their own the anatomical structure. He clarifies his point with this example. He says:

A simple example will serve to clarify this point: compare the muscular structure of a typist with that of the night watchman of a factory. The first performs his or her work seated in a chair: from the waist down the body becomes, during working hours, a kind of pedestal, while arms and fingers are active. The watchman, on the other hand, must walk continually during his eight-hour shift and consequently will develop muscular structures that facilitate walking. The bodies of both become alienated in accordance with their respective types of work. (Boal 104)

Second stage: *Making the body expressive*. At this stage, Boal introduces a series of games with the intention to develop expressive ability of the body. Otherwise, he believes, human beings are habitual of expressing everything through words without involving body as a method or itself a language to communicate that reality which is beyond the reach of linguistic expression. He believes that due to the availability of language for communication, the expressive abilities of the body remained underdeveloped or rather they are ignored in the affairs of life. These 'games' may help the performers to begin to use their carnal recourses for self-expression. Here in this stage, he persuades the participants to play the characters rather than to interpret them. He finds that in these two stages, the number of games

do not matter, but the participants are motivated to devise other games for themselves and not to be acquiescent receivers of pleasure coming from outside. He clarifies his point through this example. He says:

For example: In one game pieces of paper containing names of animals, male female, are distributed, one to each participant. For ten minutes, each person tries to give a physical, bodily impression of the animal named on his piece of paper. Talking and making noises that would suggest the animal is forbidden. The communication must be effected entirely through the body. ... What is important in games of this type is not to guess right but rather that all the participants try to express themselves through their bodies, something they are not used to doing. Without realizing it they will in fact be giving a 'dramatical performance'. (Boal 107)

Third stage: *The Theatre as Language*. Here, Boal proposes to treat theatre as language that is alive and existing. He differentiates between human language and theatre as language. He asserts that this is the most crucial limitation of human language where it functions like a finished product representing the already existing reality. To him, theatre is also a language which is more active and dynamic producing reality itself. But this theatrical language operates at various levels or degrees. Boal finds the three possible degrees at this stage for the actors to perform. They are: *Simultaneous dramaturgy*, *Image theatre* and *Forum theatre*; each one representing a particular degree of unmediated involvement of the spectator in the performance. He believes that at this stage, the spectator is inspired and motivated to participate in the action, thus relinquishing his object position and undertaking a subject position. He observes that the first two stages are preparatory or preliminary emphasizing on the physical structures of the participants and in the third stage, the primary focus is on the thematic discussion that leads the participants toward the action. Boal gives the example of the first degree i.e. *simultaneous dramaturgy* where

the spectator is invited to intervene without making his physical presence necessary on the stage; the actors may stop the performance and persuade the spectators to provide solutions in a situation of crisis; they extemporize instantly all the proposed solutions and the audience are given the privilege to intervene, to amend the actions or dialogues of the actors. Therefore, he makes the audiences prepare the work and the actors perform it simultaneously; with the actor's assistance and support, the spectator's opinions and ideas are debated and explored theatrically on the stage; solutions, opinions and suggestions are displayed in theatrical form. He views that the participants take part in this form of theatre with great excitement and start breaking the wall between actors from spectators. Boal argues here:

Some 'writes' and others act almost simultaneously. The spectators feel that they can intervene in the action. The action ceases to be presented in a deterministic manner, as something inevitable, as Fate. Man is Man's fate. Thus, Man-the-spectator is the creator of the Man-the-character. Everything is subject to criticism, to rectification. All can be changed, and at a moment's notice: the actors must always be ready to accept, without protest, any proposed action; they must simply act it out, to give a live view of its consequences and drawbacks.The actor ceases to interpret the individual and starts to interpret the group, which is more difficult and at the same time more creative. (112)

Fourth stage: *The theatre as Discourse*. At this stage, Boal makes the spectators and actors both to create spectacle as per the requirement for discussing specific themes and rehearse action. He gives certain examples of various possible modes of this stage: *Newspaper theatre*, *Invisible theatre*, *Photo-romance theatre*, *Breaking of repression*, *Myth theatre*, *Trial theatre* and *Masks and rituals*.

Boal believes that the 'spect-actor' through these four stages rehearses a real act even though he performs it in a fictional manner and his experience is a concrete

one within its imaginary form. He does not expect or demand a cathartical effect from performance. Boal's theatre in all its forms does not demand or take something away from spectators, rather arouse in them a wish to do in actuality the act he has rehearsed in theatre. Therefore, his theatre may be not sweeping or thoroughgoing in itself, but the forms of performance are beyond doubt a rehearsal of revolution.

Boal considers all the modes as forms of *rehearsal-theatre* and not a *spectacle-theatre* which is developed under the *poetics of the oppressed*. Through this distinction between *rehearsal-theatre* and *spectacle-theatre*, Boal created the difference between bourgeois theatre and theatre of the oppressed. He finds that the bourgeois theatre is the form of *spectacle-theatre* and the theatre of the oppressed is *rehearsal-theatre*. To him, in bourgeois theatre, the spectacle constitutes the image of a complete and finished world. In opposition to this, Boal believes, as the oppressed classes do not aware of the image of their world, therefore, in their *rehearsal-theatre* spectacle does constitutes a complete or finished world. He finds that the 'oppressed' people's code of behavior is contrary to bourgeois code as it permits and motivates the spectator to put questions, to dialogue, to participate. Feldhender notes that "in Boal's aesthetic space, every participant is involved in a process where 'subjective and objective realities meet', therefore the participant 'becomes an active protagonist in his/her own life'" (104). Some of the forms of this theatre which Boal developed and practiced in Peru, Brazil, Argentina and other Latin American countries are *Newspaper theatre*, *Invisible theatre*, *Photo-romance*, *Breaking of repression*, *Myth theatre*, *Analytical theatre*, *Rituals and masks* etc.

Boal concludes his theoretical arguments with a discussion on the 'spectator'. It may be assumed that his theoretical discourse on theatre is articulated and constructed around the specific sense of the term 'spectator' which he created. It wouldn't be fair to boil down such a comprehensive theory of theatre to a single word 'spectator'. But the importance which Boal attaches to this term 'spectator' and the specific sense that he provides to it, render it the central term of his theatrical aesthetics. Boal takes up this term from the ancient Greek theatre and considers it throughout his discussion of the European theatre up to his own time. He finds

‘spectator’ one among the other terms i.e. actor, character, chorus etc. in European theatre, as an object of theatrical aesthetics. But it may be assumed that it was Boal who explored its deepest possibilities as a tool of theatrical aesthetics. Boal considers ‘spectator’ as a bad word. He says:

Yes, this is without a doubt the conclusion: ‘Spectator’ is a bad word! The spectator is less than a man and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore to him his capacity of action in all its fullness. He too must be a subject, an actor on an equal plane with those generally accepted as actors, who must also be spectators. All these experiments of a people’s theatre have the same objective – the liberation of the spectator, on whom the theatre has imposed finished visions of the world. And since those responsible for theatrical performances are in general people who belong directly or indirectly to ruling classes, obviously their finished images will be reflections of themselves. The spectators in the people’s theatre (i.e. people themselves) cannot go on the passive victims of those images. (Boal 134-135)

Boal in the very first chapter of this book mentions that the poetics of Aristotle is the *poetics of oppression*; it represents a world that is complete and finished, and all its ethics are inflicted on the spectators, who depute the characters to act and think in their place; in the process they do away with their tragic flaw – that is, of something competent in transforming the society. Boal observes that the dramatic action is a substitute of real action. In Brecht’s poetics, he finds, the world is put forth as subject to change, and the change emerges on the stage itself. Boal believes that, here the audiences do not depute the characters to think and act for him, although he continues to hold power to himself and in such performance, the theatrical experience works on the level of consciousness but not on the level of action. He maintains that it lays bare the processes of real action and the spectacle here is rehearsal for action.

In his theoretical discourse, Boal attempts to create the *poetics of the oppressed* which, to him, is essentially a poetics of liberation. Boal adopts Freire's concept of conscientização, or conscientization for his theatre. Freire describes it "the process of becoming more human by developing ones consciousness, and involves viewing pieces of the world at an objective distance so one can understand and interpret with a keen critical eye" (17). He considers it as learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality"(Freire 17). In his performance, the spectator does not depute the characters to think and at act for him rather the spectator thinks and acts for himself. Boal perceives theatre as necessarily action itself. He puts it like this: "Perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution! (Boal 135)". Boal introduced *Zumbi* system of performance in Arena Theatre which concludes the stage of 'destruction' of theatre and beginning of new forms of theatre. He introduced 'Joker' system as a permanent form of theatre – dramaturgy and performance. Shutzman and Cohen-Cruz point out that "in addition to localizing content, another key aim of the Joker System is to explore "multiple interpretations of diverse realities"(1). Through it, Boal brought together all the experiments and discoveries in the Arena Theatre; it may be considered as the sum of all that Boal introduced in Theatre of the Oppressed.

Boal's conception of theatre, which is primarily a political one, is developed strictly on the Marxist lines. In the beginning of his discourse on theatre, Boal claims that theatre is essentially and primarily a political activity, a thought which is alien to the Indian world-view. The present discussion of Boal does not include his Marxist leanings. Rather his experiments in theatre which were concluded in his influential theatrical mode through which he proposed to create a specific form of knowledge which is akin to human body only, is the subject of inquiry here. Like the other European experimental theatre theorists, Boal also locates the metaphysics of theatre in human body. He even goes to the extent of calling 'human being' as theatre itself in the *Preface* to his seminal theoretical work i.e. Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal worked, philosophically and theoretically in European tradition and developed the art of theatre through his experiments to such a level where it may be utilized for socio-

political transformation. He begins his discussion of theatre from ancient Greek tradition and then, gradually, explores the major European paradigms of the art form and, finally, he comes to his own revolutionary mode where he redefines all its categories and terms to attain the metaphysical roots of theatre. He constructs his conception of theatre around 'actor-spectator' relationship which, he finds, is politically determined throughout the history of mankind. In his discourse, Boal deconstructs the theoretical sense of all the conventional concepts of theatre like - actor, stage, character, chorus etc. He structured his performance in such a way where the imaginary line between actor and spectator was eradicated and an entirely new category of 'spec-actor' emerged where the spectator assumed the role of the protagonist.

Boal's central term of his theatre 'spect-actor' is the result of his conception of a theatre which originates in human body. He perceives human body as the primary source of all the theatrical actions. He believes that the socio-political and cultural transformations and changes are consequent upon the transformation at the individual level first. Therefore, to him, theatre is a weapon of change only first and foremost at the individual level and then social or cultural changes are possible. So he observes that the shift from actor/spectator to 'spect-actor' is possible only when the spectator changes himself first and to him, this change begins first at the level of consciousness. In Boal's scheme of things an individual can be an actor and spectator simultaneously and observes and changes himself before changing the world. Through this, Boal creates a specific form of knowledge necessary for change and transformation in the existing existential/social conditions. In his discourse, Boal proposed four seminal stages with their respective processes to regulate and control theatrically the human body which is for him the main source of sound and movement. He systematized the transformation of 'spectator' into 'actor' and then 'spect-actor' in these four stages. He finds that human body possesses great expressive and communicative abilities, therefore, constitutes the nucleus of theatre.

While describing his conception of theatre in four seminal stages, Boal treats theatre as form of language at the third stage. It corresponds to his conceptualization

of the art form. The series of exercises and games that he proposed at this 'stage' are designed to develop the communicative ability of human body. Boal believes that theatre art is language and human body constitutes its vocabulary. He identifies the possible difference of degrees where one employs the art form as a language. Boal observes that at the first degree of this 'stage' *simultaneous dramaturgy* is possible where the spectators may compose simultaneously with the actors. He maintains that the second degree denotes *image theatre* where the intervention of spectators in the dramatic action is possible; they intervene directly through the images constructed with the actor's bodies. Boal views the third degree as *forum theatre* which corresponds to the intervention of spectators into the action directly. He finds that at this point spectator attains or acquires the sense of theatre completely and utilizes it to transform himself into 'spec-actor' where he performs the action and observes his/her action at the same time. Boal believes that gradually, this 'spect-actor' through his direct intervention in the dramatic action, creates 'spectacle' for himself according to his requirements. Boal maintains that at this stage theatre functions as discourse and a host of theatrical forms like *newspaper theatre*, *invisible theatre*, *photo-romance theatre*, *myth theatre*, *trial theatre* etc. appears.

These four stages in a sequence i.e. *knowing the body*, *making the body expressive*, *theatre as language*, *theatre as discourse* are very crucial to understand Boal's idea of theatre. All of them refer to human body as the concrete physical language of theatre which constitutes its metaphysics. Therefore, for Boal, theatre is language which originates in human body and realized through the concept of 'spec-actor' where the traditional identities of 'actor' and 'spectator' seem to be merged. To him, theatre does not exist beyond human body which is the source of all theatrical movement and sound. Boal explores the immense pedagogical possibilities of theatre as an art form. His experiments with the existing forms of theatre construct a dramaturgy that takes away the theatre art from the hands of some experts and put it among the common people for the realization of their potential for a revolutionary action. Through his conception of theatre, Boal establishes that every human being despite any formal training is a potential theatre performer. In his conception of theatre, Boal merged the two separate identities of 'actor' and 'spectator' creating an

entirely new category of artist as ‘spec-actor’ that can perform action and simultaneously observe it to make necessary changes. Jan Cohen-Cruz and Mady Schutzman state, “Theatre has been tarred with a kind of metaphysics of presence, the idea that the live act is authentically self-generative and self-contained” (26).

Boal’s theoretical discourse does not provide any evidence of his indebtedness to Bharata’s *Natyasastra* or any other form of Oriental theatre. He locates ‘politics’ at the root of all theatrical activities that reflects his Marxist vision of theatre. His Theatre of the Oppressed is the product of such a vision that sees all the progress in human world is a result of political struggle for power among different social classes. Boal considers ‘human being’ as a product of social circumstances. He believes that theatre constitutes a knowledge which reveals all the ideological processes at work in a society and it liberates people from all the hegemonic and interpellative forces to think for themselves and take decisions for the world they inhabit. In this regard, L.M. Bogad writes, “Resisting catharsis is ideal for social movements development of collective action frames and tactical and strategic praxis; a social movement seeks to galvanize, to agitate, to articulate dissent and dissatisfaction, and so the purgation of social complaint through catharsis is anathema” (49).

Bharata’s text makes it clear that he shares the world-view of his predecessors, its cosmology and mythology. He shows that the inspiration for the creation is acausal and trans-mundane, born of reflection and meditation (*sankalpa* and *anusamarana*). This is why, at the level of articulation, *Natyasastra* is cosmic and comprehensive and its scope is all-embracing. It encompasses all branches of knowledge (*vidya*), the sciences and arts, all dimensions and orders of ‘space’ and ‘time’ etc. It deals with universe (*sarvaloka*). “*Nanabhavopasampannam nanavasthantaratmakam/ Lokavrttanukaranam natyametanmaya krtam* i.e. this *natya*/theatre consists of various *bhava* existing harmoniously in different situations and follows practice of the world” (*Natyasastra* I 1: 112). “*Na tajjnanam na tacchilpam na sa vidya na sa kala/ nasau yogo na tatkarma natye smin yanna drsyate* i.e. there is no knowledge, architecture, skill, art, yoga, and any action or activity which cannot be found in *natya*/theatre” (*Natyasastra* I 1: 116). To Bharata, nothing

in this universe remains outside the scope of *natya/theatre*. Unlike Boal, he does not see 'politics' at the root of all theatrical activities. Rather theatre to him is an art which represents the essence of this universe.

Bharata creates a dynamic structure of *natya/theatre*. He makes the two primary sense perceptions of sound and speech as its fundamental tools. To him, *natya/theatre* deals with visible and audible; it employs body language (gestures), speech, music, dress, costume and different psychic states, which involuntarily reflect themselves in physical body. He designates *natya/theatre* as *Natyaveda* i.e. a discourse of knowledge. Unlike Boal who traces its genesis in the ultimate freedom of human beings, Bharata draws on the mythological origin of *natya/theatre* where it enjoys the same processes of creation which are necessary for the cosmos. Bharata perceives *natya/theatre* as a divine creation which does not follow the pattern of human rationality rather based on natural processes. Bharata maintains in *Natyasastra* that *natya/theatre* is created by Lord Brahma Himself, one of the Holy Trinities in Indian mythology. The *Rgvedic* core concept of *yajna*, for Bharata, is the archetypal theatre which is considered as the model of all happening in this universe.

Bharata's vision of *natya/theatre* is rooted in the entire cosmology and mythology of Indian tradition whereas Boal's conception of theatre is a result of his rejection of the existing European conventions due to his Marxist leanings. Therefore, both these conceptions of theatre are produced in entirely different intellectual atmosphere and have different relations with life. But Boal's conception of theatre as language which is constituted in human body shares some fundamental formulations of theatre art with Bharata. Both of them locate the metaphysical roots of theatre art in human body and created their respective conceptual structures around human body. This is the commonality between Bharata and Boal that brings them together to understand the aesthetics of theatre.

Boal's revolutionary conception of theatre with its four seminal stages echo back to Bharata's concept of *abhinaya*. In Bharata's conceptual framework of theatre *abhinaya* is the language of performance without which *natya/theatre* cannot exist. Bharata finds human body as the ultimate source of *abhinaya*. To him, human body

constitutes all its possible dimensions. Therefore, even for Bharata *natya*/theatre is to be found or produced in human body. This is why, it is the most common point between these two philosophers of theatre. Bharata's conceptual structure of *abhinaya* has the potential to explain Boal's concept of theatre. Boal's conceptualization of human being as theatre and human body as its language which functions as a discourse, has close resemblance to Bharata's concept of *abhinaya*. In his theoretical discourse Boal, created a formal structure with four sequential stages with their respective exercises and movements for the attainment of the art of theatre. The first two stages *knowing the body* and *making the body expressive* refer to Bharata's concept of *angikabhinaya* (physical). Though *abhinaya* is a composite theoretical category, however Bharata perceives its four dimensions in theatrical performance. These are *angika* (physical), *vacika* (linguistic), *aharya* (costume) and *saatvika* (emotional states). To him, *natya*/theatre is created, communicated and received through *abhinaya* only. His *angikabhinaya* is a semiotic structure of movements of human anatomical structure where theatrical meaning is constituted and communicated. Through it, he created configuration of human body to recognize all its theatrical possibilities. In a cluster of chapters devoted to *angikabhinaya*, Bharata explored the communicative possibilities of human body. Bharata's comprehensive structure of gestural movements in human body later developed into another a very important art form known as Dance.

Bharata begins his discourse on *abhinaya* with the analysis of the human body. In the chapter eight of *Natyasastra* Bharata says, "*Trividhastvangiko dyneyah sariro mukhajastatha / tatha cestakrtascaiva sakhangopangasamyutah* i.e. this *angikabhinaya* is of three types. These are the types: *sarira*, *mukhaja*, *cestakrta*. These three further developed into *sakha*, *anga* and *upanga*" (*Natyasastra* VII 2: 11). Further, he says, "*Tasya sirohastorahparsvakatipadatah sadangani / netrabhrunasadharakapolacibukanyupangani* i.e. this *abhinaya* consists of these six *anga*: *hasta*, *vaksthala*, *katipradesa*, *cokha* and *pera*. And *netra*, *bhothen*, *nasika*, *kapola* and *cibukanyu* are the *upanga*" (*Natyasastra* VII 2: 13). Then he begins with *mukhjabhinaya* and gives a detailed description of *mastkabhinaya*. He provides a list of thirteen possible postures on the face i.e. *akampitam*, *kampitam*, *dhutam*, *vidhuta*,

parivahita, adhuta, avadhuta, ancitam, nihancitam, paravrtta, utksiptam, adhogatam, lolitam. After the description of face, he goes on to describe *drsti* and its characteristics under *nayanabhinaya*. He found eight types of *drsti* i.e. *kanta, bhayanaka, hasya, karuna, adbhuta, raudro, vira, bibhitsa.*

In chapter nine of *Natyasastra*, Bharata takes up the form of *abhinaya* that is performed through hands. Here, he provides a list of twenty four possible postures of hand in theatre. The following are the postures of hand: *pataka, tripataka, kartarimukha, ardhacandro, arala, sukatunda, mustisca, sikhara, kapittha, khatkamukhah, sucyamukha, padmakosasca, sarpasirsakah, mrgasirsah, kangulako, alapadma, caturo, bhramara, hamsasyo, hamsapaksa, sandamso, mukula, urnanabha* and *tamracuda*. Then, he gives list of thirteen possible postures of both hands. He divides hands in four basic parts i.e. *apavestitam, udvestitama, vyavartitam* and *parivartitam*. In this way, he further describes in minute details the remaining parts of the body and their theatrical application. He creates a theoretical structure where each and every single part of the body acquires a sense for theatrical purpose. He lays bare the entire human nervous system where he records the cause, physical manifestation and underlying emotion of every possible reaction of human body. Due to lack of space, it is not possible to explain all the terms and categories which Bharata created for the exposition of *angikabhinaaya*. The first two stages of Boal's theory i.e. *knowing the body*, and *making the body expressive* may be explained in a better way in terms of Bharata's concept of *angikabhinaaya* as it provides a comprehensive structure of all possible movements of human body. Though, philosophically Boal was very close to Bharata in tapping the theatrical sources in human body but unlike Bharata he didn't create a theoretical structure where every single movement of body may be given theatrical sense. Boal's theory of theatre comes down to four stages namely, *knowing the body, making the body expressive, theatre as language* and *theatre as discourse*. He also devised some basic exercises and movements for each stage. As compared to Bharata, it seems to be more an abstract philosophical statement rather than a sound theoretical structure that may explain all the objects of theatrical aesthetics.

Like the other theorists of Experimental Theatre, Boal's critical work also shows the same tendency of rejection and refutation of the existing conventions of European theatre and considers human body as the epistemology of theatre. He, along with the other theorists, locates the essence of theatre in its carnal resources; he goes even one step ahead in this direction in declaring human body as theatre. Therefore, his theoretical statements may be interpreted and explained in a better way in terms of Bharata's theoretical framework. Moreover, Boal shares this limitation with other theorists of Experimental Theatre where their theory lacks a unified vision due to their rejection of the tradition. Therefore, his theory seems to lack the theoretical structure required for critical exposition of a subject. One reason of this limitation may be his complete rejection of existing conventions of European theatre.

Without being aware of Bharata's *Natyasastra*, Boal seems to have close affinities with the idea ancient Indian theatre as he also finds human body as the main source of theatrical action and movement. Bharata does not see the existence of *abhinaya* outside human body. His four types of *abhinaya* actually mark the limit of human body's possibility of any communication. Therefore Boal's critical statements may be understood in the framework Bharata's *abhinaya*. Boal begins with the description of human body and says *knowing the body* is the first step towards attaining the art of theatre. Except some exercises and movements, he didn't provide a detailed structure of human anatomy like Bharata. He does not, like Bharata, quantify and segment human body into theoretically meaningful parts. Therefore, the exercises and movements pertaining to the first two stages may be interpreted in terms of Bharata's structure of *abhinaya*.

Boal considers theatre as 'language'. Theoretically, this is the most crucial idea of Boal's discourse on theatre. Unlike Bharata, he does not provide a grammatical structure of this theatrical language as we find in *Natyasastra*. Boal believes that theatre as a language differs from the ordinary mode of communication and human body constitutes the vocabulary of this language which replicates theatre. But his critical discourse does not constitute the grammar of this physical language which epitomizes theatre. Bharata in his *Natyasastra* creates a theoretical structure of

this concrete physical language of performance which provides an appropriate grammar of it. He terms it as *abhinaya*.

The fourth stage of Boal's theory i.e. *theater as discourse*, refers to coalescence of the 'actor' and 'spectator' into 'spec-actor'. Boal does not reflect on the structure and organization of this 'discourse' which is constituted in human body. Bharata also considers *natya*/theatre as discourse. But to him, it is not a simple discourse rather it is equivalent to *Vedas* which are one of the finest philosophical documents of the world. He called it as *Natyaveda*, a discourse of knowledge. Bharata claims that this discourse is designed to reveal the nature of Creation itself. Therefore, he created a theoretical structure of this 'discourse' entitled as *Natyasastra* i.e. 'science of theatre'. Hence this discussion attempts to understand Boal's conception of theatre as language in terms of Bharata's theoretical structure of *abhinaya* and especially *angikabhinaya*. It also brings out the common spirit of these four critical statements of European Experimental Theatre where they explore the metaphysical roots of theatre in human body.

Locating Theatre's Essence in Human Body: Jerzy Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre and Bharata's Angikabhinaya

Jerzy Grotowski, theatre director, theoretician, educator and creator of acting methods, was born 1933 and died in 1999. Theatre critics consider him as one of the greatest reformers of twentieth century theatre. It was during his study at Lunacharsky Institute of Theatre Arts in Moscow, he learned about the acting techniques of Stanislavsky, Vakhtangov and Meyerhold etc. A 1957 production of Eugene Ionesco's *The Chairs* at the Stary Theatre in Krakow marked his debut as a director. He also produced radio plays for Polish Radio Theatre. In collaboration with Ludwik Flaszen, he created an *avant-garde theatre*. He focused on building his own 'program' and conducted research into the relationship between stage and the spectator and consequently between the actor and the audience. His method leads him to the creation of signs as a set of pattern and a search in the realm of organic human reactions. His theoretical text *Towards a Poor Theatre* sums up the ideas of his first creative period during which he emphasized on shaping different acting methods and formulating the idea of 'poor theatre'.

Jerzy Grotowski created the Theatre Laboratory in 1959 in Opole, Poland. His close collaborator Ludwik Flaszen, the well known theatre practitioner and critic, was the co-creator of Theatre Laboratory. At present it is known as *Institute for Research into Acting*. The nomenclature of the institute indicates the nature of the undertaking. It is not a theatre in the conventional sense of the term, but rather an organization dedicated to conduct research into the field of theatre and especially the actor's craft. The productions of Theatre Laboratory constitute a kind of functioning model in which the latest research into the actor's art is put into practice. Peter Brook writes, "Grotowski is Unique. Why? Because no one else in the world, to my knowledge no one since Stanislavsky, has investigated the nature of acting, its phenomenon, its meaning, the nature of science of its mental-physical-emotional processes as deeply and completely as Grotowski" (11). In the domain of theatrical art, it is recognized or known as Grotowski's method. Besides its systematic research and the productions, it also offers the instructions to actors, producers and people from other domains who

have something to do with theatre. Grotowski sought collaboration with specialists from other disciplines such as psychology, phonology, cultural studies etc., as he sees theatre in close relation with the other domains of life.

Grotowski relocated theatre to its metaphysical roots through his idea of ‘Poor theatre’ and ‘Theatre Laboratory’. His reflections on the aesthetics of theatre reveal the source of its true essence. Through his various experiments with the existing European theatrical conventions, he came to his revolutionary idea of ‘poor theatre’ which reflects the essence of all the productions of Theatre Laboratory. His theoretical discourse seems on theatre art seems to be an extension of the tradition of other European experimental theatre theorists such as Antonin Artaud, and Stanislavski etc. In his seminal critical statement on the art of theatre i.e. *Towards a Poor Theatre*, he admits or accepts the influence of other theatrical traditions on his philosophy of theatre. He says:

I have studied all the major actor-training methods of Europe and beyond. Most important for my purposes are: Dullin’s rhythm exercises, Delsarte’s investigations of extroversive and introversive reactions, Stanislavski’s work on ‘physical actions’, Meyerhold’s bio-mechanical training, Vakhtangov’s synthesis. Also particularly stimulating to me are the training techniques of oriental theatre – specifically the Peking Opera, Indian Kathakali, and Japanese Noh theatre. I could cite other theatrical systems, but the method which we are developing is not a combination of techniques borrowed from these sources (although we sometimes adapt elements for our use). (Grotowski 16)

Jerzy Grotowski’s most significant theoretical principles on the aesthetics of theatre are found in the form of interviews and lectures conducted and delivered on various occasions at different places throughout the world. Therefore, all his seminal critical statements do not form part of a single composition like Bharata’s *Natyasastra*

or Aristotle's *Poetics*. He didn't attempt such a theoretical composition in his career. All the theoretical principles of his 'poor theatre' are primarily a result of his reflections on his practice in Theatre Laboratory. The text of *Towards a Poor Theatre* came out as a compilation of his theoretical principles propounded by him on various occasions. In one of the essays included in this book, he alleges Artaud for lacking a concrete methodology and having an abstract vision of the theatre. However, it seems that the theoretical structure of his text *Towards a Poor Theatre* also has the same limitations that he alleged Artaud for. Notwithstanding its limitation of discourse, the text contains his most significant ideas about theatrical aesthetics. He weaves the structure of his theatrical aesthetics around one key term that he designates as 'poor theatre'. The idea of 'poor theatre' captures the spirit of his philosophy of theatre which he formulated out of his experiments at Theatre Laboratory.

In the very beginning of the first article entitled "Towards a Poor Theatre" included in his text *Towards a Poor Theatre*, he makes two seminal statements on the type of theatre he wants to develop and perform. He says:

Our Theatre Laboratory productions are going in another direction. In the first place, we are trying to avoid eclecticism, trying to resist thinking of theatre as a composite of disciplines. We are seeking to define what theatre is distinctively, what separates this activity from other categories of performance and spectacle. Secondly, our productions are detailed investigations of the actor-audience relationship. That is, we consider the personal and scenic technique of the actor as the core of theatre art. (Grotowski 15)

The above statements give us a peep into Grotowski's conception of theatre in which where he does not allow any kind of eclecticism in the art form and explores its essence in the actor's performance. Grotowski's idea of 'poor theatre' seems to have close affinities with Bharata's concept of *natya*/theatre. But on the question of eclecticism in theatre art, the two philosophers seem to have differences. In Bharata's conception of *natya*/theatre, the art is seen as a representation of the essence of the

whole cosmos or universe. In the very first chapter of *Natyasastra*, Bharata maintains that “*Na tajjanam na tacchilpam na sa vidya na sa kala / nasau yogo na tatkarmanatyē’smin yanna drsyate* i.e. there is no art, skill, learning, architecture, knowledge etc. that has not been found in *natya/theatre*” (*Natyasastra* I 1: 116). And further in the same chapter, he mentions, “*Sarvasastrani silpani karmani vividhani c / asminatyē sametani tasmadetanmaya krtam* i.e. we can conclude that in ancient Indian aesthetics, it is seen as a composite of the whole world and its processes (*Natyasastra* I 1: 117)”. According to its mythological origin, it is created by Lord Brahma Himself from the four *Vedas* which are considered as the repositories of the knowledge of the whole creation. *Natya/theatre* is believed to be originated with the *rgvedic* core concept of *yajna* which is understood as an archetype of the universe. Therefore, Grotowski’s vision seems to be narrow in scope as compared to Bharata’s comprehensive universe of theatre. In fact through his *Natyasastra*, Bharata created a universe of theatre parallel to the real one. Grotowski does not consider theatre as a composite of other arts or disciplines and separates it from the other categories of performance. He locates its essence in actor’s art or acting and makes the relationship between actor and audience crucial for the performance. In that, he seems to be close to Bharata’s framework as in *Natyasastra* he considers *rasa* as the end or soul of *natya/theatre* which determines the actor-audience relationship in *natya/theatre*. In Bharata’s conception of *natya/theatre* everything including *rasa* is dependent on *abhinaya/acting* which, to him, is the nucleus of performance. Bharata constructs his theory of *rasa* on the basis of actor-audience relationship and it can be attained through *abhinaya* only. Similarly, Grotowski considers ‘acting’ or *abhinaya* as the core of theatre art. Therefore, it is logical to discuss Grotowski’s ideas on theatre in the framework of *Natyasastra*.

It is inevitable that any discussion on Grotowski’s theatrical aesthetics is to begin with his concept of ‘poor theatre’ as it is the ultimate fruit of his experiments and reflections on theatre art. At the same time it may be considered as one of the most revolutionary concepts of European theatre in twentieth century. The idea itself is very interesting and arouses curiosity in readers’ mind as what does the word ‘poor’ reflect here; how can one make theatre poor; and, why does Grotowski want to

make it poor? These obvious questions may be considered as the subject of inquiry while analyzing Grotowski's discourse. In this regard, Grotowski himself states:

Through practical experimentation I sought to answer the questions with which I had begun: What is the theatre? What is unique about it? What can it do that film and television cannot? Two concrete conceptions crystallized: the poor theatre, and performance as an act of transgression.

By gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theatre can exist without make-up, without automatic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage) without lighting and sound effects etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, "live" communion.... It challenges the notion of theatre as a synthesis of disparate creative disciplines – literature, sculpture, painting, architecture, lighting (under the direction of a *metteur-en-scene*). This 'synthetic theatre' is the contemporary theatre, which we readily call the 'Rich Theatre' – rich in flaws. (16)

This may be seen as the central point of Grotowski's theory of theatre. He considers contemporary European theatre as 'rich theatre' as it is constructed on the artistic kleptomania borrowed from other domains and produced multidimensional spectacle barring its essential form yet presented as a work of art that is organically constructed. He finds that in this way, this 'rich theatre' attempts to come out of the deadlock created by cinema and television. He believes that technically, film and television are superb but the 'rich theatre' opposes it with a call for 'total theatre'. Grotowski takes the amalgamation of these borrowed apparatuses as a technically constructed sophisticated structure that inspires a base and dull response in the audience. In his theatre, he does not approve it. He says:

No matter how much theatre expands and exploits its mechanical resources, it will remain technologically inferior to film and television. Consequently, I propose poverty in theatre. We have resigned from the stage-and-auditorium plant: for each production, a new space is designed for the actors and spectators. Thus, infinite variation of performer-audience relationship is possible.... The acceptance of poverty in theatre, stripped of all that is not essential to it, revealed to us not only the backbone of the medium, but also the deep riches which lie in the very nature of the art-form. (Grotowski 19-21)

Grotowski observes that in Europe, theatre as an art form takes into considerations all the other related art forms which extend support to the performance. He rejects all such considerations for his theatre and proposes a poverty of theatre which separates it from its class or category that is the 'creation' and its processes. Erik Chistoffersen says, "Poor Theatre removes all unnecessary elements from the theater such as make-up, props, and costumes" (14). His vision of poverty of theatre seems to be in opposition to Bharata's idea of *natya/theatre*. To Bharata *natya/theatre* is not separate from cosmos or universe and its processes. In fact, through his text *Natyasastra*, he created a theatrical universe parallel to this one. To him, *natya/theatre* is the microcosmic representation of the universe through human body. He shows that just as *yajna* is performed to complete the processes of the universe, in the same way *natya/theatre* is performed through human body. But Bharata, like Grotowski, didn't separate *natya/theatre* from other ancillary art forms rather in his structure of performance, they seem to be an integral part of it.

At the very outset, Bharata's text makes it clear that he shares the world-view of his predecessors, its cosmology and mythology. Bharata maintains that the inspiration of the creation is logical and divine, and is a result of reflection and meditation. To him, *natya/theatre* is all-embracing by nature that encompasses all dimensions and orders of 'space' and 'time'. Therefore, he created a metaphysically

cosmic structure of *natya*/theatre and it embodies body language, speech, music, dress, costume and an understanding of psychic states.

Despite these understandable differences between his idea of ‘poor theatre’ and Bharata’s concept of *natya*, Grotowski’s reflections on actor-spectator relationship and his perception of actor’s art or ‘acting’ as the core of theatre art draw him near to Bharata’s philosophy of theatre. Grotowski considers human body as the main and primary source of theatrical movement. He makes his actor’s voice and body central to theatrical performance. Through his experiments, Grotowski attempts for something beyond traditional art of drama. His reflections on theatre art lead him to develop a structure of physical and emotional responses in human body where the instinct or intuition and its outer reaction are synchronous. In this regard Grotowski adds:

We do not want to teach the actor a predetermined set of skills or give him a “bag of tricks.” Ours is not a deductive method of collecting skills. Here everything is concentrated on the “ripening” of the actor which is expressed by a tension towards the extreme, by a complete stripping down, by laying bare of one’s own intimacy – all this without the least trace of egotism or self-enjoyment. The actor makes a total gift of himself. This is a technique of the “trance” and of the integration of all the actor’s psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct, springing forth in a sort of “translumination.” (16)

Through these reflections on the actor’s technique, Grotowski explored the essence of theatre art. He believes that the true theatre or theatre *per se* is born or originated only in the actor’s body. Therefore, in his Theatre Laboratory, the primary focus was on the actor’s training. Due to his in depth research on the actor’s training, Grotowski introduced quiet unconventional and unusual methods of acting. At Theatre

Laboratory, actor's training focus on the unconscious aspect of human personality. He specially designed this training, so that the line or barrier between unconscious and conscious aspects of actor's personality may be removed and the actor does not face any obstacle in feeling and its expression. Grotowski termed this stage as "ripening" where the actor communicates his unconscious feelings spontaneously without any inhibition. He believes that at this stage, the actor eliminates his/her Ego/Self and in a position of reverie, he/she expresses himself with all its abilities and potentialities embodied in him/her.

To attain this stage, Grotowski proposed a training method for the theatre actors. He argues:

The education of an actor in our theatre is not a matter of teaching him something; we attempt to eliminate his organism's resistance to this psychic process. The result is freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction in such a way that the impulse is already an outer reaction. Impulse and action are concurrent: the body vanishes, burns, and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses. Ours then is a **via negativa** – not a collection of skills but an eradication of blocks. (Grotowski 16)

This statement on the training method of actor clearly puts forth Grotowski's vision of theatre where he sees the possibility of all creativity of theatre in human body. He believes that to acquire the actor's art, the focus should not be on learning something external to the body or some specific prowess, rather it is all about the removal of the body's resistance to all kinds of psychic procedures. Grotowski's statement here seems to be an echo of Bharata's theory of *abhinaya*. But Grotowski, like Bharata, did not construct a theoretical structure around actor's art. Otherwise it may become an object of his theatrical aesthetics. In Bharata's conception of *abhinaya* this dichotomy between impulse and reaction/action does not exist. Rather, he makes both of them

part of a single process that moves from various stages to manifests itself in the form of *rasa* or aesthetic experience. Notwithstanding, this difference in their respective of theatre, both philosophers seem to be close in affinity on the point that the core or essence of theatrical performance lies in *abhinaya*/acting which originates in human body. Peter Brooks on Grotowski's theatre writes:

Slowly we worked towards different wordless languages: we took an event, a fragment of experience and made exercises that turned them into forms that could be shared. We encouraged the actors to see themselves not only as improvisers, lending themselves blindly to their inner impulses, but as artists responsible for searching and selecting amongst form, so that a gesture or a cry becomes like an object that he discovers and even remoulds. (Brook 35).

Grotowski introduced various processes or techniques for the training of actors that help them in producing the inner states without any inhibition or delay. He perceives theatrical stage as the pinnacle of the performance where the inner instincts or unconscious of the actor is visible as part of the spectacle. He proposes a specific method i.e. *via negetiva* to accomplish it in a performance. The term *via negetiva* implies that theatre art is to be attained not through some external skills but it is already there in human body. He believes that the process demands an appropriate training which enables the body to compose and communicate its inner states. Grotowski maintains that the body does not need any external language for the performance; rather, the training transforms the body into a theatrical language where the feeling and its reaction becomes concurrent. Slowiak and Cuesta write, "Grotowski, with his interest in a poor theatre, wanted a space, which served the work and disposed of the traditional illusionary setting. Ultimately, he wanted a space where the actor and spectator were compelled to a new responsiveness" (16).

Grotowski suggests some specifically designed physical activities and exercises to begin with. He observes that this process demands concentration,

confidence, and exposure from actor where he almost dissolves himself into the acting craft. Grotowski, plainly states in his text, “The requisite state of mind is a passive readiness to realize an active role, a state in which one does not want to do that but rather “resigns from not doing it (17)”. He believes that it requires long time and consistency of efforts to attain such a state of mind where an actor’s craft gets ripeness and the role which he/she takes is performed without conscious efforts. He observes a kind of spontaneity permeates in actor’s whole being and he/she keeps on performing just like one does things unconsciously in life. At Theatre Laboratory, he makes the trainee actors to explore through their efforts the possibility of making such a process visible. He maintains that in their every day training, the actors do not focus on the spiritual technique but on the configuration and constitution of the role, on the anatomy of the form etc. To him, the Spiritual training and theatrical preparation are not contradictory in their functions. He believes that a sensible articulation of inner psychic process it is to be conveyed through a well constructed theatrical role. To him, the carnal configuration does not obscure the metaphysical but actually it paves the way for it. Grotowski argues here:

The forms of common “natural” behavior obscure the truth; we compose a role as a system of signs which demonstrates what is behind the mask of common vision: the dialectics of human behavior. At a moment of psychic shock, a moment of terror, of mortal danger or tremendous joy, a man does not behave “naturally”. A man in an elevated spiritual state uses rhythmically articulated signs, begins to dance, to sing. A sign, not a common gesture, is the elementary integer of expression for us. (18-19)

The above statement confirms Grotowski’s difference from Bharata’s conception of theatre. Bharata in his *Natyasastra* maintains that all the tendencies/*parvritti* of the world becomes *natya*/theater when performed or communicated through four kinds of *abhinaya*. In opposition to it, Grotowski

excludes all the forms of natural behavior which consists of natural tendencies from the ambit of theatre as these don't constitute truth of human life. Here, he seems to reiterate the famous Freudian psychology in which the essence of human being is seen in the 'Id' or 'unconscious' part of human psyche, the store-house of all unfulfilled desires. In Freudian psychology the 'Ego' or 'conscious' is like an envelope of various inhibitions prevailing in our body to prevent the 'Id' or 'unconscious' to come to the fore or surface. That is why Grotowski considers natural behavior of man as something contrived to hide the unconscious desires of his psyche. He expects from his actor that he/she with his/craft remove or eliminate all the masks of common human behavior and reveal the truth that is assumed to be present in deep unconscious. Grotowski considers theatre art as a means to bring this deep truth to surface. On the other hand, Bharata's dramaturgy does not rely on this opposition between 'unconscious' and 'conscious' elements of human psyche. Notwithstanding this visible difference, both philosophers locate the essence of theatre art in human body and its movements. This is the subject of discussion and analysis where Grotowski's idea of 'poor theatre' is interpreted in terms of Bharata's theory of *abhinaya*.

Grotowski in his critical discourse couldn't remove the ambiguity or the dilemma of his position whether the elements in his productions are resulted from a consciously composed program or extracted from the structure of his imagination. His vision of theatre does not seem to be a consequence of a particular philosophy of art but it is the result of the practical discovery and the application of the dictum of theatre. Therefore, he decided to leave the conventional stage-and-auditorium theatre. He proposed that for each performance, a new space should be created for the actors and spectators. Therefore, Grotowski explores the space for the feasibility of infinite variation in actor-audience relationship in theatre. His central concern was to perceive the proper actor-spectator relationship for each type of performance and reveal it in the corporeal disposition of the role. In his 'poor theatre', the performance refutes all kinds of technically formal effects like lighting, sound, etc. to unveil a wide range of possibilities for the actor's application of such materials. In his 'poor theatre', Grotowski abandons all that is external to the actor and his craft i.e. costume, make-

up, masks etc. He believes that it is very theatrical on the part of the actor that transforms from one character to another character through his body and craft only. Further he adds: “The composition of a fixed facial expression by using the actor’s own muscles and inner impulses achieves the effect of a strikingly theatrical substantiation, while the mask prepared by a make-up artist is only a trick” (Grotowski 21). Similarly, he shows that a costume is without autonomous value; it exists only in relation to a particular character and his pursuits and in contrast with the actor’s functions, it can be changed before the audience. He believes that the actor conducts the creation through the most fundamental and tangible devices and removes such kind of substance, which have a life of their own, from the theatre. Further, Grotowski argues: “By his controlled use of gesture the actor transforms the floor into a sea, a table into a confessional, a piece of iron into an animate partner etc.... We know that the text per se is not theatre that it becomes theatre only through the actor’s use of it – that is to say, thanks to intonations, to the association of sounds, to the musicality of the language” (21).

For Grotowski, theatre exists in the world for the fulfillment of human life. He does not take it as a finished product that refers to a permanent condition, but an ongoing operation or process which brings on surface and makes transparent whatever deep, dark and unconscious is inside us. He believes that this art assists us in stripping-off our cultural veils. He observes that theatre is able to confront itself and the spectators by subverting the accustomed stereotypes of vision, feeling and judgment and due to its capacity for visuals it becomes as a place of incitement for him. To him, the most important thing of theatre is that it is composed and formed in human organism’s breath, body and inner impulses. Grotowski maintains here:

In my work as a producer, I have therefore been tempted to make use of archaic situations sanctified by tradition, situations (within the realms of religion and tradition) which are taboo. I felt a need to confront myself with these values. They fascinated me, filling me with a sense of interior

restlessness, while at the same time I was obeying a temptation to blaspheme: I wanted to attack them, go beyond them, or rather confront them with my own experience which is itself determined by the collective experience of our time. This element of productions has been variously called “collision with the roots,” “the dialectics of mockery and apotheosis,” or even “religion expressed through blasphemy: love speaking out through hate.” (22)

Grotowski after getting recognition as theatre practitioner then he moved in another direction and began to explore the history of theatre in relation to other disciplines or domains of knowledge. He took up the concept of myth and evaluated it rationally, which, to him, was a complex archetype prevailing independently in the psyche of different ethnic or cultural groups. To him, theatre and religion are closely associated with each other and theatre generates spiritual energy for the related cultural group and it assimilates myth and desecrates it and sometimes rather transcends it. Grotowski believes that theatre educates the spectator to have a fresh perception of his individual private truth as part of the myth and they attain catharsis through this mystification of life. Grotowski observes a completely different and transformed condition of contemporary culture. He finds that in contemporary culture the identities of the Social Groups are less defined by religion; their conventional mythic forms are losing ground, vanishing and are reincarnated. He observes that in this culture spectators’ sense of meaning is more and more individuated in its relation to the myth as a collective truth and their reasoning and rationality is commonly determined by faith. Grotowski believes that the nature of contemporary culture poses a challenge before the art of theatre of evoking a blow or upset essential to bring at surface those psychic layers behind the life – masks. Therefore, to him, in the present civilization cultural recognition with myth – the relation between individual truth and universal truth – is practically impossible. Grotowski argues here:

What is possible? First, confrontation with myth rather than identification. In other words, while retaining our private experiences, we can attempt to incarnate myth, putting on its ill-fitting skin to perceive the relativity of our problems, their connection to the 'roots' in the light of today's experience. If the situation is brutal, if we strip ourselves and touch an extraordinary intimate layer, exposing it, the life-mask cracks and falls away.

Secondly, even with the loss of a 'common sky' of belief and the loss of impregnable boundaries, the perceptivity of the human organism remains. Only myth – incarnate in the fact of the actor, in his living organism – can function as a taboo. The violation of the living organism, the exposure carried to outrageous excess, returns us to a concrete mythical situation, an experience of common human truth. (23)

Grotowski admits that his theoretical propositions are not derived from other humanistic disciplines though he employs them for evaluation. He claims to devise an entirely new method where anatomy of human action takes the form of concrete; the specific model of psycho-physiology of human being is articulated. But he does not rule out the possibility of influence of the existing cultural forms and traditions from the areas of life peculiar to a civilization. Though he claims to be a part of the general tradition of the Great Reform of the theatre from Stanislavski to Dullin and from Meyerhold to Artaud yet his sphere in theatre is a unique one. His theatrical formulations focus entirely on actor's art. To him, theatre takes its birth in actor's body and performs all its functions around it. In that way he may be the first theoretician of theatre of 20th and 21st century. He maintains that:

There is something incomparably intimate and productive in the work with the actor entrusted to me. He must be attentive and confident and free, for our labor is to explore his possibilities to the utmost. His growth is attended by observation, astonishment, and desire to help; my growth is projected onto him, or, rather, is found in him – and our common growth becomes revelation. This is not instruction of a pupil but utter opening to another person, in which the phenomenon of “shared or double birth” becomes possible. The actor is reborn – not only as an actor but as a man – and with him, I am reborn. It is a clumsy way of expressing it, but what is achieved is a total acceptance of one human being by another. (Grotowski 25)

In an answer to Eugenio Barba’s question in an interview conducted in 1964, Grotowski tries to attempt an appropriate definition of theatre and discusses its possible interpretations. He says, “To the academic, the theatre is a place where an actor recites a written text, illustrating it with a series of movements in order to make it more easily understood. In that way it is understood as a useful accessory to dramatic literature” (Grotowski 26). He shows that in this conception of theatre, the text or script is the most important element, and the theatre is secondary which is there only to provoke certain intellectual arguments and discussions. Yao-Kun Liu writes, “In turn, in his investigation and experiments in methods of theatre, also Grotowski criticizes traditional Western theatre where the text is the most important element, and the theatre is there only to plug certain intellectual arguments, thus bringing about their reciprocal confrontation” (2). Further, he adds, “To the average theatre-goer, the theatre is primarily a place of entertainment. Even the people who belong to field of theatre themselves do not usually have an altogether clear conception of the art form”(Grotowski 26). Further, he concludes his arguments like this:

To the average actor the theatre is first and foremost himself, and not what he is able to achieve by means of his artistic technique. He – his own private organism is the theatre. such an attitude breeds the impudence and self-satisfaction which enable him to present the acts that demand no special knowledge, that are banal and commonplace, such as walking, getting up, sitting down, lighting a cigarette, putting his hands in his pockets, and so on. In the actor's opinion all this is not meant to reveal anything but to be enough in itself for, as I said, he, the actor, Mr. X is the theatre. (Grotowski 29).

Finally, in this regard, Grotowski elaborates on what is indispensable to theatre. For that, he asks three questions and simultaneously answers himself:

Can the theatre exist without costumes and sets? Yes, it can.

Can it exist without music to accompany the plot? Yes.

Can it exist without lighting effects? Of course. (Grotowski 32)

And he confirms it from the history of theatre that it exists without a text. He observes that in its evolution as an art form, text is considered the least important and probably the last part to be added. The most important question he asked: “Can the theatre exist without actors” (Grotowski 26)? To answer this question, he does not find any relevant example in the history of theatre. To him, theatre cannot be possible without actors or actor's craft. And on the question of audience, he makes it clear that at least one spectator is essential to make a performance possible. Therefore, Grotowski maintains that actor and spectator are the two essential and mandatory elements of theatre without which any theatrical performance cannot be possible. In this regard he adds: “We can define the theatre as ‘what takes place between spectator and actor’. All the other things are supplementary – perhaps necessary, but nevertheless supplementary” (Grotowski 32). The actor, to him, is a person who performs in public sphere through his body and offers it publically. He believes that if

actor's body shows resistance to itself to demonstrating, it reflects then that it cannot perform this spiritual act. Therefore, Grotowski propounds the concept of holiness for actor's craft where his body liberates itself from all kinds of resistance to any deep, inner unconscious impulse and unveils itself by removing its everyday mask. He marked this process as 'holiness' where an actor does not sell his body but surrender it and this process enables the spectator to assume a similar process of self-penetration.

On the basis of this process, Grotowski creates two separate categories of actors i.e. 'courtesan actor' and 'holy actor'. He believes that the difference between them is of the same nature as we find between the expertise of a courtesan and the attitude of self-sacrifice which originates from genuine emotions of love. To him, the 'holy actor' removes every disturbing element to attain the ability to traverse every conceivable limit. He finds that the technique of 'holy actor' is of removal of every kind of resistance while that of 'courtesan actor' is an acquisition of skills; to the 'courtesan actor' the body exists but for 'holy actor' it is non-existent entity. Grotowski argues:

The actor who undertakes an act of self-penetration, who reveals himself and sacrifices the innermost part of himself – the most painful, that which is not intended for the eyes of the world – must be able to manifest the least impulse. He must be able to express, through sound and movement, those impulses which waver on the borderline between dream and reality. In short, he must be able to construct his own psycho-analytic language of sounds and gestures in the same way that a great poet creates his own language of words. (35)

Further, in his discourse, Grotowski focuses on the actor's body as acting organism. He finds that pliability and flexibility of the actor's respiration and vocal system is infinitely more developed than that of the ordinary common man; this

system is capable of producing sound reflexes so rapidly that mind does not have time to intervene. He believes that the actor is capable of discerning all the complications of his anatomy accessible to him and is aware of how to move the air to those organs of the body where sound is produced and intensify and magnify by a type of resonator. Grotowski maintains that in actor's body infinite number of resonators exists; he employs not only his head and chest, but also the back of his head, nose, teeth, larynx, belly, and spine as well the whole body as a total resonator. He believes that an actor cannot penetrate and reveal himself if he is conscious of his body; every type of resistance is to be eliminated from the body and virtually it becomes a non-existent. Grotowski finds that the actor with the help of certain basic exercise removes all the concrete impediments he comes across and everything participates in it: movement, pliability of the body, gesticulation, the forming of masks by means of facial musculature and in fact the whole body. He observes that the actor's technique of self-penetration is the most important and decisive element of this process. Grotowski argues:

He must learn to use his role as if it were a surgeon's scalpel, to dissect himself. It is not a question of portraying himself under certain given circumstances, or of 'living' a part; nor does it entail the distant sort of acting common to epic theatre and based on cold calculation. The important thing is to use the role as a trampoline, an instrument with which to study what is hidden behind our everyday mask – the innermost core of our personality – in order to sacrifice it, expose it. (37)

Grotowski believes that the performance of this act of self-penetration and exposure demands a mobilization of all the physical and spiritual prowess of the actor who is always in a state of idle readiness, a passive availability, which is essential for an active acting score. He finds that the most determinant factor in this process is actor's modesty i.e. an inner inclination: not to do something, but to abstain from

doing something, otherwise the excess becomes impertinence instead of sacrifice. He shows that the actor always performs in a state of reverie. He says, “Trance is as I understand it, is the ability to concentrate in particular theatrical way and can be attained with a minimum of good-will” (Grotowski 38). Further he adds:

If I were to express all this in one sentence I would say that it is all a question of giving oneself totally. One must give oneself totally, in one’s deepest intimacy, with confidence, as when one gives oneself in love. Here lies the key. Self-penetration, trance, excess, formal discipline itself – all this can be realized, provided one has given oneself fully, humbly and without defence. This act culminates in a climax. It brings relief. (Grotowski 38)

Grotowski here emphasizes on the special anatomy of the actor which helps him in locating the body’s various points of concentration for various kinds of acting, looking for the parts of the body which he considers to be the sources of energy. He believes that the actor articulates all required parts the body in an order as undisciplined self-penetration creates form of biological chaos rather than induces liberation. While talking about the process of elaboration of artificiality, Grotowski proposes a particular type of acting which is near to sculpture than to painting. He states, “Painting involves the addition of colours, whereas the sculptor takes away what is concealing the form which, as it were, already exists within the block of stone, thus revealing it instead of building it up” (Grotowski, 39).

For the search of this artificiality, Grotowski proposed a series of exercises that form a scaled-down score for each part of the body. He finds in it the whole principle of expressiveness in theatre where the more one engages in what is within him, in self-penetration, the more firm or unyielding is the external order, the form, artificiality, the sign. To Grotowski, theatre is not there to satisfy the ‘cultural needs’ of the spectator; its purpose is not to dispense any kind of *catharsis* to the spectator, rather it fulfills the genuine spiritual demands of the spectator which helps him in self-

analysis. He believes that the theatre puts the spectator in an inexhaustible process of self-development, where his specific restlessness or inquisitiveness leads him towards a journey for self-exploration and truth of life. Schechner writes, “For Grotowski, theatre is more than just performance; instead, theatre functions like an ‘elevator going towards the higher connection’” (482).

Grotowski believes that the ‘holy actor’ through his craft attacks the myths of socio-cultural values that people embrace in life with such a sincerity receiving them as natural. He observes that the actor in this special process of self-discipline and self-sacrifices, self-penetration, does not resist or hesitate in surmounting the acceptable limits and acquires a state of harmony and peace of mind; through this act of self-revelation the actor connects to himself. “That is to say, an extreme confrontation, sincere, disciplined, precise and total – not merely a confrontation with his thoughts, but one involving his whole being from his instincts and his unconscious right up to his most lucid state”, “Writes Grotowski”(57). He finds that the performance captures a type of psychic conflict with the spectator; it reflects a sort of encounter. He adds:

For me, a creator of theatre, the important thing is not the words but what we do with these words, what gives life to the inanimate words of the text, what transforms them into ‘The Word’. I will go further: the theatre is an act engendered by human reactions and impulses, by contacts between people. This is both a biological and spiritual act. (Grotowski 58)

Grotowski in Theatre Laboratory avoids giving props to anything external to theatre. He prohibits everything absolutely that is not already there at the beginning of the performance. He proposes to do away with the paraphernalia that refers to the term ‘sets’. He employs each object on the stage as to participate not in the meaning but in the dynamics of the performance and its ultimate value is relative to its range of applicability. But he makes it certain that the ‘living organism’, the actor, is the creative force of this whole process. He believes that the actor constructs an organic

mask through his facial muscles and transforms himself into a sort of hybrid being who performs his role polyphonically. He observes that the actor employs gestures, positions and rhythms characteristics of pantomime to attain depersonalization of character. He finds that all this take shape in the actor; in his body, voice, soul.

Grotowski in his discourse on theatre alleges Artaud of being philosophically abstract whose proposals, he admits, are almost impossible to carry. But that does not make Artaud's contribution irrelevant or insignificant. The only limitation marring his discourse is that it does not offer a concrete methodology of application. Grotowski seems to agree with Artaud in considering theatre "as an act carried out here and now in the actors' organism, in front of other men, when we discover that theatrical reality is instantaneous, not an illustration of life but something linked to life by analogy, when we realize all this, then we ask ourselves the question: wasn't Artaud talking about just this and nothing else?" (Grotowski 118). Both Grotowski and Artaud dreamed of a theatre where the performance prohibits everything i.e. costume, sets, make-up, lighting music etc. and the actor transforms himself before the spectators by employing his inner impulses and his body. But Grotowski's critical discourse seems to be marred by the same limitation which he alleged Artaud for. Notwithstanding his objections to Artaud's discourse, whatever Grotowski learnt from Artaud, he put it in all details in his discourse on theatre.

Grotowski believes that the nucleus of the actor's art is a 'total act' in which his entire being involves, and his rationality does not control even a slight instance of mechanical gesture. He observes that no thought of any range can lead the entire organism of an actor in any living way. He does not take theatre and even less so actor's craft as a scientific discipline which develops on inspiration or other such arbitrary factors as talent or an instant growth of creative possibilities. Unlike other forms of art, the actor's creation, to him, is imperative: composed at a particular moment of time that does not wait for a moment of creativity or inspiration. In the article "Methodical Exploration" Grotowski points out conditions essential to the art of acting and that can be put to methodical investigation:

- a) To stimulate a process of self-revelation, going back as far as the subconscious.
- b) To be able to articulate this process, discipline it and convert it into signs.
- c) To eliminate from the creative process the resistances and obstacles caused by one's own organism. (129)

He believes that these conditions are not achieved through reasoning and rationally calculated processes. To him, the actor's craft or 'acting' is not about learning or acquiring new skills rather relinquishing the old habits. He finds that when the actor is liberated from his everyday resistances and sincerely gets out of himself through gesture, then from methodical point of view his work is successful or productive. Grotowski adds: "Any method which does not itself reach out into the unknown is a bad method" (130).

After exploring human body's potentialities of theatre art then Grotowski moves to another important area where he focuses on the relationship between actor and audience. He makes this connection between the audience and the actor essential for the performance. Keeping this relationship in mind, he starts his discussion with the motto: "The essence of theatre is the actor, his actions and what he can achieve" (Grotowski 184). Grotowski's idea of 'poor theatre' is dependent on the actor and his art only. He says, "My main principle is: Do not think of the vocal instrument itself, do not think of words, but react – react with the body. The body is the first vibrator and resonator" (Grotowski 185). Most of the exercises, prescribed by him for the budding actors, seem to be based on the principle of *Yoga* as he refers to this Indian term many times in his discourse. He does not impose any stereotype of acting on his actor as every actor takes his/her own way and his whole body acclimatizes to every moment, however small. He believes that theatre does not operate on symmetrical action rather on organic moments. Therefore, he does not permit any kind of preparation in actor's craft as it makes acting symmetrical. Richard Schechner gives the aims of actor-training as follows:

Performers are trained, first of all, to interpret the dramatic text. Then the training is to transmit the performance-text. The third function of training is the preservation of secret knowledge which belongs to specific family or groups as in ritual arts. This secret knowledge gives performance a power. Achievement of self expression is the fourth function of training. It helps the performer to get the inside out. (60)

At the beginning of an interview titled as ‘The Actor’s Training’ in the text *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Grotowski establishes a difference between methods and aesthetics. And to explain his point, he refers to Brecht, Artuad and Stanislavisky. He says:

All conscious systems in the field of acting ask the question: “How can this be done?”. This is as it should be. A method is the consciousness of this “how”. I believe that one must ask oneself this question once in one’s life, but as soon one enters into the details it must no longer be asked for, at the very moment of formulating it, one begins to create stereotypes and clichés. One must then ask the question: “What must I not do?”. (Grotowski 207)

Grotowski observes that once one recognized the actor’s natural type of respiration, then it is possible to determine the components which act as impediments to his spontaneous reactions and the main purpose of the exercises is then to eradicate them. This is how, Grotowski’s method essentially differs from of others. It seems that methodically, it is a negative technique rather than a positive one. During the training of his actors, he tries to locate the resistances and obstacles that block the actor on his way towards the ‘total act’ which engages all his psycho-physical resources.

In developing his method, Grotowski explains what he means by actor's 'total act'. He says:

It is not only the mobilization of all the resources of which I have spoken. It is also something far more difficult to define, although very tangible from the point of view of the work. It is the act of laying oneself bare, of tearing off the mask of daily life, of exteriorizing oneself. Not in order to "show oneself", for that would be exhibitionism. It is a serious and solemn act of revelation. The actor must be prepared to be absolutely sincere. It is like a step towards the summit of the actor's organism in which consciousness and instinct are united.

(Grotowski 210)

This idea of 'total act' constitutes Grotowski's vision of theatre which he summed up in his concept of 'poor theatre'. To Grotowski, 'human body' is the single source of all theatrical creativity and the 'total act' of actor is the culmination of theatrical art. Therefore, he made 'stimulations' 'impulses' and 'reactions' very crucial to his idea of actor's craft. He believes that one cannot go by ready-made methods. In his Theatre Laboratory, he does not make his actor to learn, how to perform a particular role, how to pitch his voice, how to deliver or walk. To him, ready-made methods in acting only lead to stereotypes. During the training, the actor recognizes himself his limitations, his impediments and resistances and how to solve them or eradicate them. He believes that anything may stimulates or provoke an actor; that is the fundamental principle of the art of theatre. Therefore, in his acting method these three terms i.e. 'stimulations' 'impulses' and 'reactions' are very crucial.

Grotowski considers human body as the epitome of theatre. It is, to him, the most important and the only source of theatrical action and movement. He weaves his theoretical discourse around actor's body and its innumerable possibilities of creating theatrical 'voice'. He says:

Our whole body is a system of resonators – i.e. vibrators – and all these exercises are merely training to widen the possibilities of the voice. The complexity of this system is astonishing. We speak on an impulse, in contact with something or someone. The various positions of the hand change the resonance of the voice. Movements of the spinal column also change the resonance. It is impossible to control all this with the brain. All these exercises with resonators are only a beginning to open the possibilities of the voice and afterwards you must live and act without calculated thought.... Then there will come a day when your body will know how to resound without prompting. It is the turning point, like the birth of another voice, and can be achieved only by completely natural vocal actions. (Grotowski 228)

He maintains that the body utters through its own language. He finds that the actor develops and enhances step by step, in all sincerity without limitation, involving all his personality and body and attains what is personal and intimate through finished impulses and reactions and a score fixed details. In this way, Grotowski observes that the actor achieves a complete annihilation of the body by removing all its impediments, resistances and it reacts totally as its impulses are liberated. He believes that in the performance the actor surrenders his body and does not perform for himself or for the audience. Grotowski introduced the concept of “secure partner” in relation to actor’s communication to himself. He believes that in the process of this discovery the actor surrenders himself completely; his search is directed from his inside to the outside and it offers the actor his greatest range of possibilities.

Towards the end of his text, Grotowski made a statement of the ten principles that summarizes his diverse thoughts and philosophy on the aesthetics of theatre which is a result of his experiments and practical experience at Theatre Laboratory. He begins with his discussion of the character of contemporary life in modern

civilization. To him, the rhythm of modern life is denoted by rapidity, pressure, anxiety, a feeling of disaster and catastrophe, the desire to conceal our personal motives and the managing of a variety of roles and disguises in life. He observes that the rupture between thought and emotion, intellect and instinct that creates the spurious divide between body and soul characterizes modern life. He finds that in a search for liberation people face a biological chaos and suffering from an absence of totality, dissipating the self or life.

Grotowski offers a solution to this contemporary condition of life in the art of theatre. He shows that theatre – through acting or *abhinaya* provides an opportunity for a composition or an integration of life, the removal of masks, and bringing out of the real substance. But he cautioned that it is to be performed in a restricted manner and with a consciousness of all the responsibilities. He fixes the therapeutic function of theatre for the people of modern civilization. He made it clear that theatre operates only through the actor's act which is an encounter with the spectator. He believes that this actor's act – discarding half measures, revealing, emerging from himself – is like an enticement to the spectator. On the function of theatre, Grotowski writes:

Why do we sacrifice so much energy to our art? Not in order to teach others but to learn with them what our existence, our organism, our personal and repeatable experience have to give us; to learn to break down the barriers which surround us and to free ourselves from the breaks which hold us back, from the lies about ourselves which we manufacture daily for ourselves and for others; to destroy the limitations caused by our ignorance and lack of courage; in short, to fill the emptiness in us....Art is neither a state of the soul nor a state of man. Art is a ripening, an evolution, an uplifting which enables us to emerge from darkness into a blaze of light.... Theatre only has a meaning if it allows us to transcend our stereotyped vision, our conventional

feelings and customs, our standards of judgment....In this way – through shock, through shudder which causes us to drop our daily masks and mannerisms – we are able, without hiding anything, to entrust ourselves to something we cannot name but in which live Eros and Caritas. (257)

Grotowski believes that the laws of art are not fixed by the common morality. He sees that everything pertaining to theatrical art sums up in the ‘actor’ who is courageous enough to reveal himself but not shamelessness or exhibitionism. He marked it as a passive courage. He finds that the actor does not demonstrate but fulfill an act of the soul through his own body. He believes that an act of theatrical creation that requires a maximum of silence and minimum of words is not accomplished through either externals or conventional human gentility or good manners. Like Bharata, Grotowski does not rely on conventional human language in theatrical action as it obstructs the actor’s maximum creativity. He observes that creativity in theatre arises through living organism and its actions not through their explanations. On the actor’s creativity Grotowski says:

Creativity, especially where acting is concerned, is boundless sincerity, yet disciplined: i.e. articulated through signs. The creator should not therefore find his material a barrier in this respect. And as the actor’s material is his own body, it should be trained to obey, to be pliable, to respond passively to psychic impulses as if it did not exist during the moment of creation – by which we mean it does not offer any resistance. Spontaneity and discipline are the basic aspects of an actor’s work and they require a methodical way. (261)

The above statement makes it clear that Grotowski locates the act of creativity in theatrical art in human organism only. To him, this organism is a disciplined, sincere and controlled enough that no scope prevails for any kind of resistance. He even goes

to the extent of calling the actor ‘an individual’ with a complete existence. Jennifer Lavy points out that “Grotowski believed that opposites, technique (discipline) and impetuosity (spontaneity), fuel each other. Together the two opposites allow the actor to transcend the ordinary in a dynamic way”(9).

The main principle of Grotowski’s theatre is that his actor does not try to attain any kind of specific skills or tactics. Grotowski does not treat theatre as a place for accumulating all kinds of methods of expression. Rather, he believes that the force of gravity of theatre art thrusts the actor to an inner ripening which conveys itself through an inclination towards eradicating the barriers, to search for an apogee, for totality. Further Grotowski adds:

Before an actor is able to achieve a total act he has to fulfill a number of requirements, some of which are so subtle, so intangible, as to be practically indefinable through words. They only become plain through practical application. It is easier, however, to define conditions under which a total act cannot be achieved and which of the actor’s actions make it impossible. (262).

Grotowski’s indebtedness to different forms Oriental theatre is evident in his theoretical text *Towards a Poor Theatre*. He didn’t give any direct reference to any ancient Indian theoretical text and especially Bharata’s *Natyasastra* in his theoretical text. In his discourse on theatre, he mentions some of the important names of his predecessors and contemporaries whose work was significant the movement of European Experimental Theater.

His ‘Theatre Laboratory’ and the compilation of a series of interviews conducted at different places by different people into a critical treatise *Towards a Poor Theatre* both contributed significantly towards the aesthetics of Experimental Theatre in twentieth century and introduced new methods for the art of acting and training of actors. His influence is not restricted or confined to Polish theatre only

rather his revolutionary acting methods and his theatrical mode are applied and employed throughout the world. It seems that through his conception of 'poor theatre' he tried to provide a concrete methodology to Antonin Artaud's vision of theatre.

The aesthetics of his 'poor theatre' reduces theatre art to human body from a conglomeration of various arts. To him, real theatre does not need anything external like sound, light, costume etc. rather, it is created by the actor through his body only. Therefore, he proposed that it should be made poor by stripping off all *mise en scene* from it. The central point around which his theoretical discourse is structured, is his peculiar perception of human body as potential theatre. To him, human body is the ultimate source of theatrical action. The motive and importance which he attaches to theatre encourage or compel him to view theatre in the 'total act' of the actor. His actor does not learn anything from him rather he liberates himself from all the knowledge which creates obstacles or impediments in the expression of his psychic impulses. Grotowski calls this method as *via negativa* where the actor does not try to do something consciously rather he resigns not to do it. He believes that through training the actor may reach to a stage where the gap between his innermost impulses and their expression becomes negligible. Thomas Richards writes, "A physical action is more than movement, more than gesturing, more than activity. Physical action is extraordinary. It is exciting and original, and actions contain an actor's desires and wishes" (76).

Grotowski created the concept of 'holy actor' to reveal his idea of theatrical truth. He considers theatrical truth as the most genuine of all kind of truths. He does not believe in any kind of philosophical truth except theatrical truth. He observes that the 'holy actor' is a person who through his honesty, sincerity and commitment creates this theatrical truth. Grotowski proposed a series of vocal and physical exercises for the actor's training to provide a concrete methodology to his philosophical investigations. All his conceptions pertaining to theatre i.e. 'poor theatre' 'Theatre laboratory' 'holy actor' 'actor's total act' and related processes like *via negativa* etc. provide a unique structure to the aesthetics of his theatre which is entirely different from his contemporaries. The theatrical creation and the truth value

which he attaches to his theatre, generate in human body and through human act only which is performed with utmost sincerity and honesty.

Grotowski's theory of 'poor theatre' seems to be constructed around the actor's art or acting. His theoretical discourse focuses on the actor and his art only. He does not see the presence of theatre outside actor's (performer's) art or his body. The composition and structure of this theoretical text gives us a peep into his understanding of the art of theatre. From the structural framework of the text, one may assume that it carries his vision of 'poor theatre' without a theoretical framework. He established his Theatre Laboratory to train the budding actors or theatrical performers in his own acting methods. Theoretically, his discourse may have some methodological limitation but in practice Grotowski achieved great success through his Theatre Laboratory.

At the beginning of his discourse on theatre, Grotowski claims that he is aware of the ancient Indian theatre and other forms of Oriental theatres as well. Moreover, he studied Antonin Artaud also whose text *Theatre and Its Double* mentioned Oriental theatre especially Balinese theatre. Therefore, it may be assumed that Grotowski has enough information on ancient Indian theatre. But on the basis of this reference, it may not be concluded that he owes his philosophy of theatre and especially his concept of 'poor theatre' to Bharata's *Natyasastra*, a theoretical treatise on ancient Indian theatre. Nevertheless, Grotowski's theory of theatre seems to be in close affinity with Bharata's concept of *natya*/theatre.

Bharata created his theatrical universe parallel to the Creation of the universe. In the very first chapter i.e. *Natyotpatti* (origin of *natya*), of *Natyasastra*, Bharata mentions the mythological origin of *natya* (theatre) by Lord Brahma, one of the Holy Trinities in Indian mythology. Its divine creation reveals its importance in human life. Bharata's text (a complete circle of its conceptualization in 36 chapters) may provide a theoretical ground to understand and analyze Grotowski's idea of 'poor theatre' which was a result of his seminal experiments in the field of theatre. In fact, it may be assumed that Grotowski's experiments and their theoretical implications do not go

beyond Bharata's *natya/theatre*. *Natyasastra* provides a better explanation of all the concepts and terms pertaining to 'poor theatre'.

Bharata's two theoretical concepts *abhinaya* and *rasa-bhava* provide the framework to interpret and explain Grotowski's whole theoretical paradigm of 'poor theatre'. As it is clear from his discourse that Grotowski does not see theatre *per se* beyond human body which is to him, is the primary source of theatrical action. For Grotowski, actor's art or acting constitutes theatre's essence. In his theoretical text, he devoted two complete chapters on actor's training and introduced some sets of exercises pertaining to that. On the other hand, Bharata's concept of *abhinaya* which covers the largest part (almost 23 chapters) of text i.e. *Natyasastra*, is given a structural exposition that makes it the nucleus of theatrical performance. Bharata made *abhinaya* as one of the most important object of his theatrical aesthetics which carries the sense of theatre. In its four dimensions i.e. *angika*, *vacika*, *aharya* and *saatvika*, *abhinaya* embodies all that theatre is meant for. In his discourse on *abhinaya*, Bharata not only discusses its conceptual sense but also provides a grammar of it which makes it the language of performance. Bharata's *abhinaya*, basically, covers human being in all its possible dimensions. Unlike Bharata, Grotowski didn't provide a sound theoretical structure of actor's craft where his whole anatomical structure may be interpreted in terms of its semiotic possibilities for theatre. In other words, it may be said that Grotowski didn't create a grammar of actor's body that may help it to become the language of performance.

Grotowski's discussion actor and his art give the impression of arbitrariness as it consists of his vision without theoretical structure of categories around it. The exercises and the methods which he introduced in his Theatre Laboratory for actors seem to be without a theoretical structure which is necessary to create theatrical meaning through every single possible gesture. Bharata also does not see theatre beyond or outside *abhinaya* and its ultimate realization in *rasa* i.e. the aesthetic experience which is the theatrical truth created by the actor through his/her performance. The configuration which Bharata gives to *abhinaya* ultimately makes it the most important category in the art of theatre.

Grotowski discussed acting/*abhinaya* in all its dimensions through his exposition of actor's art. In his theory of 'poor theatre', he made the actor's voice and body central to the performance. He maintains that the complete elimination of the gap between the impulse and its reaction is the culmination of the actor's art. He realized it as a vision in his discourse. He didn't provide a theoretical structure pertaining to the physical exercises which he proposed for the actor's training. Bharata created a theoretical division of the whole anatomical structure of human being, thus, determining its possibilities as a tool of theatrical communication.

After a detailed discussion on *Rasa* and *Bhava* in 6th and 7th chapters of *Natyasastra*, Bharata started his discourse on *abhinaya* in chapter 8th. First, he attempted a proper definition of the term according to its etymology. Then, he focussed on *angikabhinaya* (physical) as the first dimension of *abhinaya* and devoted eight chapters to it. He mentioned three kinds of it which include *Sharira*, *Mukhaja* and *cesthakrt*. He divides *angikabhinaya* (physical) in its six basic *angas* (parts) i.e. *mastka*, *hasta*, *vakshasthala*, *katipradesh*, *kokha*, and *pera*. Further, he created theoretical structure with meaningful categories of each of these six basic parts of body. Through *angikabhinaya* (physical), he created such a grammar of human body which can explain the sense of its slightest. This kind of structural analysis of human anatomy is completely missing in Grotowski's text. However, Grotowski's vision of theatre art has close affinities with Bharata's framework as he also, like Bharata, locates the essence of theatre in human body. Therefore, his theory of 'poor theatre' may be interpreted and explained in terms of Bharata's principle of *abhinaya*. Bharata's enumeration of different parts of human body and their corresponding theatrical importance or meaning in *Natyasastra* help us analyze Grotowski's idea of actor's craft.

Bharata begins his discussion of *abhinaya* with the analysis of the body and its structure. The structural analysis of *angikabhinaya* (physical) reflects his understanding of the nervous system. He created a structure of physical stimulus, psychic response, psychic states and their expression through physical movement. After discussing the different parts of the body and their possibilities, Bharata

provides a structure of movement techniques where the whole body is involved. This is something which is missing in Grotowski's text. The training of the body is basic to both systems of theatre. Both the philosophers in their respective dramaturgy focus on it. Both of them seem to share that without exercise and proper health and nourishment, nothing is possible *abhinaya*/acting. Grotowski's discourse does not constitute a proper analysis of movements. Therefore, all the exercises introduced by him for actor's training may be analyzed properly in terms of Bharata's system of *angikabhinaya* (physical). In Bharata's system, each single part of the body and its possibility of movement are co-related with its potential for giving expression to a particular emotion or psychic state. On the other hand, in Grotowski's system all the movements and exercises have been framed without naming its corresponding emotion. This is why, it may be said that Grotowski's theory lacks concrete methodology of application.

Bharata, in the latter chapters of his *Natyasastra*, focussed on *vacikabhinaya*, *aharyabhinaya* and *saatvikabhinaya*. In these three forms of *abhinaya*, Bharata explored the spheres of sound, speech, music and costumes. To him, *vacika* (articulated speech) is the body of drama. He says, "In this world the *sastras* are made up of words, rests on words: hence there is nothing beyond words, and words are at the source of everything" (*Natyasastra* XV 2: 3). Grotowski, in his text, didn't discuss anything on the possibility of speech in acting or *abhinaya*. On the other hand, Bharata explored all the theatrical possibilities of speech and made it one of the basic or primary constituent elements of *abhinaya*. But this essential element of actor's craft or *abhinaya* i.e. speech is absent in Grotowski's theoretical analysis. Therefore he couldn't explore the theatrical possibilities of language, the most important aspect of human body. To Bharata, the term *vacika* does not mean language in general; it refers to very special and theatrical way of articulating speech. The articulated word (*pathya*), Bharata divides into two, Sanskrit and Prakrit. Thereafter, he gives a minute analysis, as in the case of body-system, of first, the principal units of structure, nouns, verbs, particles, prepositions, nominal suffixes, compound words and case-endings. Specifically, in Chapter XIX of *Natyasastra*, Bharata limits himself to the modes of address and intonation. Further, Bharata discusses the remaining two *abhinaya*

(*saatvika and aharya*). He discusses music as a distinct category. His discussion is not restricted only to the tangible structure of drama. The study does allow us to take up each chapter of *Natyasastra* to discuss all the typologies in full detail here. The purpose of this discussion is just to give a peep into the comprehensive theoretical structure of Bharata's *abhinaya*. It brought out on surface the limitations of Grotowski's theoretical discourse.

Grotowski's idea of 'poor theatre' seems to be without sound theoretical structure. One possible reason of this limitation may be due to Grotowski's refutation and rejection of the existing theatrical conventions of Europe. The concepts of his theatrical aesthetics are not rooted in the European tradition of theatrical criticism as he rejected it. Therefore, they tend to become his personal opinions. His seminal idea of 'poor theatre' which he conceptualized through his reflections on the existing character of theatre art, as a creative act generated only in human body, is explained and interpreted through Bharata's dramaturgy. Grotowski's claim in his discourse that human body constitutes theatre can be explained through Bharata's exposition of human body and its theatrical possibilities.

Grotowski's discourse reflects that, unknowingly, he draws on Bharata's idea of theatre. It seems that in his idea of 'poor theatre' and actor's craft, he is more near to ancient Indian theatre than to European tradition. Grotowski's experimental thoughts, which are the result of his rejection of existing European tradition, refer to Bharata's theory of *abhinaya*. Therefore, the chapter discusses Grotowski's idea of 'poor theatre' in terms of Bharata's framework of *abhinaya*.

Conclusions

Theatre has a history of more than two thousand years with different phases of development. Various modes of theatrical production are found in different civilizations across the world. Human life in different cultures is manifested through the art of theatre hence establishing a close relationship with this art form. As a common expression of life, it flourished in almost all the cultures of the world. This is why, despite of the specific technicalities involved in production due to the cultural specificity of different communities, its essence or metaphysics remains unchanged. One of T.S. Eliot's critical statements makes the point clear here. In one of his most celebrated essays "Tradition and Individual Talent" he maintains that "...the poet must also realize that art never improves, though its material never remains the same" (Eliot 23). Theatre directors and theoreticians across the world in their theoretical discourse refer back to the fundamentals of this art and realize that the technical advancement in the contemporary age may seem to have affected theatrical performances on a large scale but its metaphysics or essence remains unchanged. This unaltered essence of theatre inspires scholars across the world to theorize it and to review it with their philosophical visions in the form of multiple theoretical paradigms.

Twentieth century Europe witnessed a paradigm shift in its more than two thousand years old theatrical tradition. Historians of theatre acknowledged it as a radical movement and designated it as European Experimental Theatre. Theatre directors employed a lot of experiments in their productions, altering the traditional conventions of theatrical space, characters, stage, gestures, acting style, sound etc. An entirely different use of language and body to transform the mode of perception of the spectators was employed in order to seek a more active relation with the audience. Experimental theatre brought new methods of creation where the hierarchical methods of creating theatre were challenged to achieve a different social context of performance with physical effects and an altered and dynamic role of the audience. The boundaries between various disciplines like Dance, Music, Visual arts and Writing became blurred. This radical transformation was a result of the altered

conception of reality in European thought. The functions of all the essential elements of theatre were redefined and perceived with new dimensions. Even the objective of the theatrical representation was also redefined through these experiments. Theatre, for the first time, attained the status of an independent and autonomous art form and completely liberated from the tyranny of drama; earlier everything in theatre was subservient to dramatic script. Now with this new movement, the director assumed the role of creator. Theatre was no more just a redoing of the dramatic script. Metaphysical roots of theatre were discovered in human body which was considered the main source of theatrical movement and sound.

The century witnessed a long list of theorists and directors including Antonin Artaud, Eugenio Barba, Julian Beck, Samuel Beckett, Carmelo Bane, Augusto Boal, Giannina Braschi, Bertolt Brecht, Peter Brook, Robert Cohen, Jacques Copeau, Dario Fo, Richard Foreman, Joel Gersmann, Andre Gregory, Jerzy Grotowski, C.J. Hopkins, Sophie Hunter, Young Jean Lee, Tadeusz Kantor, Dimitris Lyacos, Judith Malina, Hainer Muller, Vesvolod Meyerhold, Luigi Pirandello, Brian Reynolds, Viola Spolin, Robert Wilson etc. and many more. All of them individually as well as collaboratively created and introduced their different modes of theatrical production. It is neither practical nor feasible to include all the names here as the scope of the work does not allow it.

In order to understand the aesthetics of Experimental Theatre of twentieth century Europe, it is imperative to seek a common pattern in the theoretical framework of the existing theatrical modes of the movement. Therefore, the study included four major representative critical statements of Experimental Theatre which are theoretically the source texts of their respective theatrical modes. These include Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*, Bertolt Brecht's "The Organum of Theatre" and other writings, Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* and Jerzy Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre*. These theoretical texts constitute the source of the four most representative theatrical modes of Experimental Theatre.

The two most important commonalities and parallels were observed in these four critical statements of Experimental Theatre, which help in extracting a common

pattern of the aesthetics of theatre. Firstly, all the theatrical modes under consideration i.e. Theatre of Cruelty, Epic Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed and Poor Theatre, represent a complete rejection and refutation of the existing theatrical conventions of Europe. The theorists or practitioners of these theatrical modes entirely discard the philosophy of theatre prevailing in Europe for more than two thousand years. Their theory primarily deviates from the established dramatic tradition of Europe. And their dissatisfaction with the existing norms of theatre determines their theoretical discourse. Their modes of production require an entirely new aesthetics as the existing categories pertaining to theatre do not serve the purpose. Some of the categories have been retained but with a new function and meaning ascribed to them and some entirely new ones have been created as per the requirement of their visionary approach. One of the most possible limitations of their theoretical discourse that the study found is their philosophical abstraction which lacks a substantial methodology of application. The limitation of the textual structure and the resultant theoretical framework of these four critical statements of Experimental Theatre, reflect an absence of analytical categories pertaining to theatre art in their theoretical statements in dearth of a sound theatrical tradition.

The second commonality is that all of them find the metaphysical roots of theatre in the physicality of human body. All the four theorists do not see the existence of theatre outside or beyond human body. They have made, in their respective theatrical modes, human body central to theatrical production which is the primary source of theatrical action and movement. They have created a new metaphysics of European theatre through human body. The immense possibilities of human body as a tool of theatrical expression are explored through their theatrical modes. Artaud proposes a physical and concrete language of theatre which he terms as *mise en scene*; Brecht makes 'gestus' the central concept to his dramaturgy; Augusto Boal devises a new term 'spect-actor' to merge the traditionally separated identities of actor and spectator into one by perceiving the essence of both in a single human body; and Jerzy Grotowski's concept of 'poor theatre' denotes that the real theatre is created in actor's body.

This commonality in their vision of theatre, in spite of the technical and methodological differences in their practice, brings them back to the fundamental root of ancient Indian theatre i.e. human body. Despite of some visible differences in function, object, methods of production etc., this study found a common point in the theoretical discourse of these four pioneers of Experimental Theatre that the essence of their theatre art lies in human body. And due to this commonality into their conception of theatre, they come very close to ancient Indian theatre. Through their different modes of production, they establish a complete breakup or divorce from their own tradition. Unconsciously, in their experimental pursuit, their philosophy, vision and theory of theatre resemble significantly to the idea of ancient Indian theatre.

Etymologically, even the Indian term for theatre, *natya* goes back to Sanskrit root *nat*, a performer. *Nataraja*, the iconic image of Shiva captures the god of dance in a frozen moment of a stance and a position and gestures. *Natya* is contingent on *abhinaya*, and the nature and structure of its constituent elements is the subject-matter of *Natyasastra*. The Indian term *natya* for theatre captures the metaphysics of the art form more specifically than any other term. It reflects the spirit of the philosophy European Experimental Theatre. Unlike, these four critical statements of Experimental Theatre, Bharata's *Natyasastra*, does not reject and refute the existing Indian intellectual tradition. Bharata's conception of *natya*/theatre is not a result of a revolt against the existing theatrical or intellectual conventions; it is an extension of a world-view deeply rooted into its mythology and intellectual tradition. Bharata employs the existing categories of knowledge in Indian tradition and the earlier conventions of theatre to create a science of theatre i.e. *Natyasastra*. In his text, he extends the existing vision of Indian theatre. Therefore, *Natyasastra* seems to be the result of a unified vision, a world-view and its cosmology which serves as a guide to this grand design of theatre.

The grand structure of *Natyasastra* is the evidence of the richness of Indian tradition which is an amalgamation of different schools of thought ultimately serves a single end i.e. *dharma*. As compared to the four theoretical statements of

Experimental theatre, the text of *Natyasastra* is more comprehensive in design; more coherent in structure; more perfect in methodology; more detailed in terminology and categories of analysis. The study not only attempts a comparison between them, but also reveals that grand textual structure of *Natyasastra* has the ability to explain and interpret the representative critical statements of European Experimental Theatre.

Furthermore, it has been observed that, Bharata's categories of *natya*/theatre are deeply rooted in Indian culture but at the same time without losing their capacity for attaining a trans-cultural or universal character. In fact, Bharata created a grand theoretical design with its own categories of analysis that carry his vision of theatre. Bharata's *Natyasastra* constitutes a theatrical universe parallel to the world. That is why, Bharata's *natya*/theatre is a representation of the essence of the world. He maintained that all the tendencies of the world transformed into *natya*/theatre when carried through four kinds of *abhinaya*. Bharata made *abhinaya*, one of the constituent elements of his *natya*/theatre, the nucleus of performance that makes *natya*/theatre possible. Therefore, *abhinaya* and its various kinds i.e. *angika*(physical), *vacika*(linguistic), *aharya*(costume/attire), *saatvika*(inner states), is the subject matter of *Natyasastra*.

The study through this grand theoretical framework of *abhinaya* interprets and explains the aesthetics of European Experimental Theatre. The broad spectrum of *abhinaya* is used to explore the basic theoretical formulations of these four modes of European Experimental Theatre. The study helped us to bring out the true implications of the ideas of these pioneers of European Experimental Theatre. The research also explored the metaphysical affinities between the aesthetics of European Experimental Theatre and the ancient Indian theatre. Moreover, it provided the opportunity to realize the theoretical implications of the basic concepts of these four modes of European Experimental Theatre.

Artaud's announcement of his 'Theatre of Cruelty' in his theoretical treatise *The Theatre and Its Double* (1938) may be considered as the beginning of the movement of Experimental Theatre in twentieth century. *The Theatre and Its Double* constitutes all of Artaud's theoretical formulations pertaining to his 'Theatre of

Cruelty'. Artaud constructs the theoretical structure of his 'Theatre of Cruelty' through the concept of a 'wordless language' of performance. He termed it as *mise en scene*. Before coming to his particular idea of true theatre, Artaud discussed 'theatre' epistemologically with 'culture', 'plague', 'painting' and 'alchemy'. He brought out the internal similarity of functions between theatre and these four terms to arrive at his idea of true theatre.

Artaud, in his text, claims that the idea of true theatre he got from a spectacle of Balinese theatre which is essentially a form of Hindu theatre. He compared it with Occidental theatre or Western theatre. He rejected the idea of Occidental theatre as it was primarily based on written script or dialogue. He found that theatrical performance in Occidental theatre was merely a redoing of whatever is already written or scripted. To him, only the Oriental theatre carries the true spirit of theatre through spectacle. He maintains that theatre is 'everything' on stage i.e. gesture, sound, music, space etc. except written dialogue. Artaud termed this 'everything' on stage as *mise en scene*, a French expression for theatrical space. Through his theory of *mise en scene* he puts forth a specific concrete physical language of theatre which, to him, is 'speech before words'. He believes that this theatrical 'wordless' language directly speaks to senses and physically affects the audience. Artaud's idea of *mise en scene* or the physical 'wordless' language of performance has metaphysical affinities with Bharata's theory of *abhinaya*. Bharata's theoretical structure of *abhinaya* constitutes the grammar of *natya*/theatre thus providing a framework for evaluating Artaud's theory of *mise en scene*.

Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* and Artaud's *mise en scene* both refer to concrete 'wordless' language of theatre which is empirically analyzed in *Natyasastra* or 'science of theatre'. Unlike Artaud, Bharata didn't give a philosophical generalization of his theory of *abhinaya*, rather his discussion of it is deeply rooted in empirical methodology which provided a taxonomy of categories of analysis. Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* reveals that human body can be subject to grammatical analysis like a language. Artaud's theory of *mise en scene* also refers to the same idea of theatrical language but does not provide a concrete methodology of analysis like

abhinaya. Notwithstanding all the limitations of his theoretical discourse, his theoretical formulations establish him as the first theoretician who explored the metaphysical roots of the art form, later which revolutionized the stage. With his theory of *mise en scene*, he connected the theatre to the fundamentals of human existence and thus gauged the essence of life through it. Through his idea of *mise en scene* he touched upon the soul of theatre as an art form, thereby fixed a worthy purpose for it.

The second chapter of the study focused on Bertolt Brecht's theoretical formulations that are found together in the work *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* by John Willet, one of the scholars on Brecht. He didn't attempt a theoretical treatise in his career. Primarily, Brecht was not a theorist still he has one of the most influential theoretical formulations of twentieth century to his credit. His theory was basically the result of his practice of Epic Theatre. Whatever he has said on theatre, is radical and revolutionary because of the innovative method of production which he developed for his 'Epic Theatre'. Brecht's theory of 'Epic Theatre' is weaved around the two central concepts i.e. 'verfremdungseffekt' and 'gestus'.

Brecht formulated the 'gestic principle' of theatre through 'gestus', a term which he took from German language. In fact, Brecht explored the essence of theatre in 'gestus'. To him, it is the theatrical gesture which can render the lived world or life objectively into theatre for inquiry. Therefore, 'gestus' has become the central concept of Brecht's dramaturgy. Though, Brecht never claims, in any of his interviews or writings, his indebtedness to the ancient Indian theatre yet he mentioned the influence of Chinese acting style and Asian theatre on his theory in one of his writings. His theory of 'gestus' has close resemblance with Bharata's concept of *abhinaya*. It is discussed and explained in the framework of *abhinaya* where its semiotic possibilities in theatre are realized. Brecht maintains that 'gestus' constitutes the 'making' of theatre because 'everything' in theatre is used in 'gestic' form. Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* provides the grammar of this 'gestus' to give it a proper theoretical structure. Otherwise, for a common reader it is merely an acting style

which is radically developed by Brecht for his theatrical productions. Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* and its structure revealed the semiotic value of Brecht's 'gestus' in theatre. Brecht determined the character of theatrical communication through 'gestus'. He believes that 'gestus' brings out the theatre's ability of rendering this lived world before the audience in 'gestic' form for an objective inquiry of it. To him, everything in this world has a 'gestic' value. Nothing remains outside its scope. This special 'knowledge' takes its origin in a theatrical gesture and developed through it and finally conveyed through it to the audience. Unlike Bharata, Brecht, couldn't create a theoretical structure of 'gestus' therefore, it is considered merely a style of acting. Hence, the study discussed 'gestus' as a theory of the semiotic possibilities of theatre and explained in terms of Bharata's grammar of *abhinaya*.

The third critical statement of Experimental Theatre that the study takes up in the next chapter is Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979). Augusto Boal, though a Brazilian by birth yet his work is included in the European theatrical tradition. Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* is a result of his dissatisfaction with the existing theatrical conventions of Europe. He, like the other theorists and practitioners of Experimental Theatre, rejects the existing form of theatre in Europe and introduces his own theatrical mode based on his experiments. His conception of theatre is influenced by Paulo Freire, an eminent educational philosopher. He proposed to employ theatre for pedagogical purposes and explored its possibilities of communication. He revolutionized the European theatre by challenging the existing its existing conventions like 'actor', 'character' 'spectator' 'space' etc. He devised a new term 'spect-actor' for his theatrical mode, where the two already separate identities of actor and spectator are merged into one. He believes that human being has a unique capacity to perform both the functions simultaneously, spectator as well as actor, in a theatrical performance. It reveals our ability to take action in the world while simultaneously observing ourselves in action. He believes that the human is a self-contained theatre, an actor and a spectator in one. He maintains that as we can observe ourselves in action, so we can amend, adjust and alter our actions for different impact and for changing our world.

Augusto Boal maintains that theatre is a language and human body is the first word of this theatrical vocabulary. He considers human body as the primary source of sound and movement. Therefore, theatre, for Boal, does not exist outside human body. He observed that theatre as an art can be mastered only through knowing one's body and its abilities of expression. In his conceptualization of theatre, Boal proposed the process of transforming the spectator into actor into four stages i.e. *knowing the body, making the body expressive, theatre as language, theatre as discourse*. He designed specific exercises for each stage. Through his theoretical formulations, Boal established that theatre as an art form takes its origin in human body and its limitations and possibilities for communication determine theatre's dimensions. In considering theatre as language and human body as the only source of this language, he comes to terms with Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* which constitutes the grammar of this concrete physical language of theatre. Bharata's concept of *angikabhinaya*, one of the forms of *abhinaya*, laid bare in a structural framework the semiotic possibilities of human body in theatrical communication. Through *angikabhinaya*, Bharata created a grammar of physical gestures for theatrical use which captures even the slightest movement of human body and turned it into a meaningful theatrical gesture. Therefore, the chapter discussed Boal's concept of 'spect-actor' and explained it in terms of Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* and especially *angikabhinaya*. The study brought out close affinities between Boal's conception of theatre and Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* and especially *angikabhinaya* where theatre is articulated as 'language' which is created through human body.

In the fourth chapter of the study, another critical statement of European Experimental Theatre i.e. Jerzy Grotowski's theoretical text *Towards a Poor Theatre* has been discussed. Though, Grotowski didn't intend to write a formal theoretical treatise on theatre yet his theoretical formulations are very significant which he produced in the form of interviews and lectures and published as *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Therefore, Grotowski's theory seems to be marred by the limitation of the methodology of discourse. Primarily, Grotowski's theory of 'poor theatre' is the result of his refutation and rejection of the existing theatrical conventions of Europe and he coined this term for his specific mode of production. Through his experiments at

Laboratory Theatre, Grotowski observed that only ‘poor theatre’ constitutes pure theatre or theatre *per se*. He came to the conclusion that in contemporary times, in technical terms, theatre cannot compete with cinema or television as they are the far more technically sophisticated means of communication. In his theory, he proposed that theatre should be stripped off all its external technical tools. He maintained that it should be made ‘poor’. He believes that theatre originates with the actor’s art or doing of it. Grotowski doesn’t see theatre outside actor’s body thus, made actor’s voice and body central to theatrical performance.

Grotowski’s conception of ‘poor theatre’ and its aesthetics is weaved around actor’s body. In his popular Laboratory Theatre, all the radical methods of acting developed by him focus only on actor’s body. In his theoretical formulations pertaining to ‘poor theatre’, he developed a series of physical exercises for the training of actor’s body for theatrical production. Here, Grotowski laid bare potentialities of human body for theatrical communication. He observed that theatre is an inbuilt ability of human body and these exercises are designed to remove all the obstacles in realizing it. Therefore, Grotowski developed a method which he termed as *via negativa* where the actor does not try to do something consciously rather he resigns not to do it.

In his conception of ‘poor theatre’ and actor’s craft as the essence of theatre, Grotowski, unknowingly, shares close affinities with Bharata’s framework of *abhinaya* in his *Natyasastra*. Bharata considers *abhinaya* as a category of theatrical aesthetics which involves in the ‘making of theatre’ and treats it as the nucleus of performance. Therefore, Grotowski’s idea of ‘poor theatre’ is analyzed and explained in the framework of Bharata’s theory of *abhinaya*. Bharata and Grotowski both in their own respective theoretical discourse explored the capacities of human body as tool for theatrical expression and determined its possibilities through a comprehensive analysis of its slightest movements in a meaningful way and created a theoretical structure of its categories of analysis for all the movements. In fact, Bharata’s theory of *abhinaya* denotes a complete grammar of human body which is sufficient enough to

explain its slightest motion into a meaningful way. Therefore, Grotowski's conception of 'poor theatre' has been discussed in terms of Bharata's theory of *abhinaya*.

All the four critical statements of twentieth century European Experimental Theatre have been discussed and analyzed separately and independently from each other. The theoretical discourse of the four representative voices of Experimental Theatre is a result of their unique understanding of theatre which is eventually reflected through their specific modes of production. Though these critical statements establish an innovative dramaturgy, the methodology of the discourse lacks a unified vision. This limitation of the theoretical structure of these critical statements becomes apparent when discussed in the grand theoretical framework of *Natyasastra*. Bharata gives a structured analysis of human body in all its possible dimensions i.e. *angika* (physical), *vacika* (linguistic), *aharya* (costume/attire), *saatvika* (inner states). Through this theoretical framework of *abhinaya*, he captures the slightest movements of human body making it available for theatrical analysis in a meaningful way. As compared to this grand and detailed description of *abhinaya*, these statements appear as abstract philosophical observations as these do not offer a concrete methodology of application like Bharata's *Natyasastra*.

The theoretical discourse of the four theorists reflects their dissatisfaction with the prevailing philosophy of theatre in Europe and hence a complete break up with their own tradition. They reject and refute the existing conception of theatre in Europe and create a radical space in the theoretical world of European theatre. The four theorists as discussed in the four chapters bring forth a new, innovative and peculiar style of performance in theory as well as practice establishing their unique theatrical modes. Their observations as guided by their individual understanding of the art of theatre are not in symmetry or an extension of the existing conventions of European theatre but bring a paradigm shift in contemporary Western theatrical criticism. This study brings these theoretically and practically different critical statements of Experimental Theatre together and finds a commonality that human body is perceived as the nucleus of performance in all of them with a redefinition of theatrical space in their own specific ways. Despite being different on categorical and philosophical

plane, these critical statements locate the essence of theatre in a common source. The focal point of the four as observed and analyzed is their basic idea of theatre that it originates in human body and its dimensions determine the range of theatrical communication. Each critical statement, in its own specific way, explores the possibilities of human body as an indispensable tool of expression in a theatrical performance. They consider everything, except this carnal medium, secondary in theatre. Despite, their independent origin and theoretically autonomous status, all these critical statements carry forward the true spirit or essence of Experimental Theatre of twentieth century i.e. the radical transformation of conceptualizing theatre as a separate entity different from dramatic literature. All the four theorists conceptualize theatre as an independent art form as different from drama for the very first time in the history of European theatre and perceive the essence of theatre in the actor's performance (enactment) on the stage not in the written script. Notwithstanding, their technical and theoretical differences, the theatrical vision seems to have a common point of reference or a 'conceptual river' in which these four different streams of thought fall. This 'conceptual river' here, symbolizes the metaphysics of pure theatre/*natya* which these representative critical statements of Experimental Theatre carry or formulate.

It is principally the pre-thematic perceptual poetry of the body in the world that this study attempts to locate and describe in all the above mentioned key statements. Artaud's concrete physical language of theatre, Brecht's 'gestus', Boal's 'spect-actor' and Grotowski's 'poor theatre', all refer to the physical or carnal source of theatrical creativity. The study elicits a common yet unexplored pattern in placing incessant emphasis on performative action in these different modes of Experimental Theatre. The study also reveals that in locating the source of theatrical creativity in human body, all of them share close affinities with Bharata's *Natyasastra* and especially with his theory of *abhinaya*. Bharata's theory of *abhinaya* provides a grammar to explore the concrete physical language of theatre which finds its genesis in the carnal resources of theatrical creativity.

This study not only extracts a common epistemological pattern in these four critical statements of Experimental Theatre and reveals their close affinity with the ancient Indian theatre but also puts forth the most significant aspect of theatre, *abhinaya*, which has been partially neglected by scholars in their obsession with *rasa* and other prominent categories of *natya*. Bharata's *rasa* is considered as the soul of drama and focal point of his dramaturgy. In any discussion pertaining to Bharata's *Natyasastra*, his theory of *rasa* holds the centre stage. Most of the critics and scholars locate the essence of theatre in *rasa*. This study views *Natyasastra* from a different perspective and gives the centre stage to *abhinaya* instead of *rasa* in its discussion of the metaphysics of theatre. The study brings to light an unexplored aspect of the textual structure of *Natyasastra* where *abhinaya* has been taken as the nucleus of performance. This study establishes that *abhinaya* is one of the most significant aspects of *natya*/theatre which determines the 'end' of *natya* i.e. *rasa*. This study covers the critical appreciation of all the twenty three chapters of Bharata's *Natyasastra* that deals with *abhinaya* to reveal the communicative and performative potentialities of human body not only in this ancient Indian theatrical text but also in twentieth century European Experimental Theatre.

The study provides a common platform to two entirely different conceptions of theatre and reveals the transcendental nature of theatre. It fills the temporal and spatial gap between ancient Indian idea of theatre and twentieth century European Experimental Theatre by extracting a common point i.e. human body and its theatrical potentialities. This study marks the beginning of a theoretical dialogue between two entirely different traditions of theatre. It creates immense possibilities for further comparative research in ancient Indian theatre and twentieth century European theatre by exploring a common pattern of theatrical aesthetics.

The study, once again, validates the universality and transcendental character of the argument constituted in the classical texts like Bharata's *Natyasastra*. It reveals that the theatre as an art form, even after a long journey of more than two thousand years in different civilizations of the world, goes back to its metaphysical roots where its true essence lies. The study refers to European Experimental Theatre which is,

despite technological advancement and cultural revolution in all forms of creativity, an expression of those fundamentals of theatre which have been the very basis of this art form ever.

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