

**INEXHAUSTIBLE POSSIBILITIES: PERFORMING POLITICS
IN 'POLITICAL THEATRE'**

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It is certified that the thesis titled, *Inexhaustible Possibilities: Performing Politics in 'Political Theatre'*, submitted by Anirban Kumar is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in this University. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree in this University or any other University and is his own work. I recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis titled, *Inexhaustible Possibilities: Performing Politics in 'Political Theatre'*, submitted by me at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre and Performance Studies, is an original work and has not been submitted so far, in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma in this or any other University or Institution.

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CERTIFICATE

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theatre expanse in the region, every interaction with them have sprinkled myriad shades of enticing *qisse*.¹ In some ways, I have had the privilege of listening to these *qisse*, as their personal experiences outweighed the quintessential memorable moments. Among other aspects of these *qisse*, one facet about memorable moments is an illustration which comes out from the fact that they all seemed to have an enthralling experience of their life time and especially so, when narrating these *qisse*. In fact, what these *qisse* had in common with character of a play, is flair of memories expressed with a tinge of proximity to inimitable personalities in real life. In many cases, interviewees every now and then would comment that how they never got time to reflect on their own work as they were just too busy in carrying out the task first. In fact their nonchalant attitude of narrating about a life threatening incident would make me feel awkward as I would be sitting in front of them and recording their memorable moments while claiming to be carrying out an exemplary work par political. By sharing and reliving unforgettable moments from their activism days, the duration of these interviews not only made them nostalgic but also earmarked a sense of relief by partaking in discussion on subject matter which made them the person that they are now. They didn't utter about their own lives as autobiographical notations, on the contrary they expatiated *with* their memories and *through* its dilation of time.

¹ *Rekhta Online*, s.v. "qisse," accessed June 7, 2019, <https://www.rekhta.org/urdu-dictionary?keyword=qisse>. The dictionary entry of the term *qissa* the range of variations by mentioning it as a "a tale, story, narration; a romance; a fable;—a thing, affair, business, matter, theme; a case; matter or subject of dispute; a dispute, quarrel:—*qiṣṣa uṭhānā*, v.n. to raise a commotion or dispute, get up a quarrel:—*qiṣṣa pāk karnā* (-kā), to put an end to a quarrel, to settle a dispute; to put an end". The word, *qisse* is plural form of *qissa* which literally means a story. *Qisse* or *qissa* entail a sense of explanation which comes as a default with the form of telling a tale. The word has acquired a range of attribute usage and application in literary as well as performing tradition. Especially in the performing art form of *Kissāgoi* and *Dāstāngoi*, Prof. Shamsur Rehman Farooqi notes that the centrality of narration holds the pivot of these performative traditions. Prof. Farooqi in *Sahir; Shah, Sahib-e-Qurani, Dastan Ameer Hamza ka Mutala* capture a breathe of fresh air in Urdu literary criticism, as he comments by pitching for the oral tradition of storytelling, wherein a *qissā* or a *dāstān* forms the basic unit of a saga about a person or a legend.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates into the domain of ‘political theatre’, in the region of Allahabad, Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh from 1960-2000. In doing so, the thesis moves away from the traditional understanding of ‘political theatre’ that typifies a theatre loaded with mere political subversion and satirical overtones. Instead, the thesis considers that the relationship between politics and theatre needs to be examined from a vantage point which neither belongs exclusively to theatre or politics. The thesis tries to engage with the changing template of ‘politics’ while taking into account the discursive readings of ‘political theatre’ adjuvant to our contemporary times. While studying these changing templates the thesis intends to lay out thematic cues in the concern and debates of ‘political theatre’. As a mainstay conjecture of the thesis, performing ‘politics’ portend towards *inexhaustible possibilities* in ‘political theatre’ which acts as the driving force to present a new form of mediation in theatre.

From the perspective of mediation in theatre, a relationship between politics and theatre becomes imperative to analyse aesthetics of ‘political theatre’. Thus, the thesis envisages to deal *with* particular performances, and tries to tease out concerns and debates *through* the peculiarities of themes that appear from the study of five separate performances. In effect these performances shall become a mediator in themselves so as to proffer encounters at the ‘site of mediation’. Thereby, the thesis attempts to examine the mediation of ‘political theatre’ from the point of view of a relationship between politics and theatre. By allowing the material to appear at the nodal cusp of mediation, the research welcomes to hear out the material in its dynamic form of reflexivity. In this respect, the thesis encounters with the emergence of four signs in the course of research – *with-through*, *tarīkā*, *perform-e-bility* and *affective sublation*. These signs are proposed as lens of critical inquiry for research methods in the field of theatre and performance studies. As each of these signs are mapped from the material of the research, they are weaved together as a malleable component for a guiding principle of thematic arrangement. In this vein a conversation with theatre, politics, aesthetics, history, environment studies, science, gender studies and philosophy is envisaged in an eclectic approach for an understanding of *inexhaustible possibilities* in ‘political theatre’.

INTRODUCTION

I

This thesis attempts to probe into the spectrum of ‘political theatre’ in the locale of Allahabad, Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh from 1960-2000. The thesis deals with theatre groups such as – *Prayag Rang Manch*, *Jan Sanskriti Manch*, *Jan Natya Manch*, *Sanchetna/Itihaas Bodh Manch* and *Samanantar*.¹ In doing so, the research strategises to make an entry point through five performances, which are as follows, *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī* (1960), *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* (1978), *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* (1989), *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha* (1985) and *Yerma* (1996). Each of these five performances have been selected respectively from these theatre groups so as to weave together a thematic string of signs that can connect them together through the fluctuation of spatio-temporal events. Keeping in mind that studying the spectrum of “political theatre” inevitably tends to formulate new topographic feature of performative mediation, it is the working of a cartographic mapping of concerns

¹ The theatre groups in the ambit of this research are as follows with their brief overview. First is *Prayag Rang Manch*, which was formed on 30 July, 1961 in Allahabad and Dr. Satyavrat Sinha was one of the co-founder of the theatre group. Along with other theatre practitioners, Dr. Sinha directed Rabindranath Tagore’s novel *Gora* which also happened to be the first theatrical performance of *Prayag Rang Manch*. Second group in focus is *Jan Sanskriti Manch*, Lucknow Unit. The group shaped up as a fully fledged cultural front in 1976-77, when another theatre group by the name of *Navchetna* merged with *Jan Sanskriti Manch*. This period of merger was overseen by the activists of CPI (ML). *Janta Pagal Ho Gayi Hai* became their collaborative work and was performed throughout the industrial belt of Nadarganj in the outskirts of Lucknow. The third theatre group is *Jan Natya Manch*, Allahabad unit. This local unit came into existence right after the assassination of Safdar Hashmi and conceived its formal structure on April 12, 1989. On this day the group came up with *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* as it became their first performance in Allahabad. *Sanchetna* is the fourth theatre group. Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma led the group and eventually became its guiding principle. Later on, he headed a literary-cultural front by the name of *Itihaas Bodh Manch*, when Prof. Verma shifted to Allahabad in early 90’s. And lastly the fifth theatre group that this thesis ropes in is *Samanantar*, Allahabad. Co-founded by thinker and veteran theatre artist Anil Ranjan Bhowmick, the *Samanantar* ménage has acquired three name to its credit – *Samanantar Intimate Theatre*, *Samanantar Centre for Performing Arts*, *Samanantar Rangmandal*. Till date the extended group has performed over sixty plays, which includes *Bhoma*, *Spartacus*, *Juloos* (Badal Sircar’s plays), *Manthan*, *Yerma*, *Courtmarshal*, *Thekedaar*, *Mantonaama*, *Asmanjas Babu*, *Topi Shukla* (*Samanantarnama*, 2).

which weaves together the thread of debates at the performative ‘site of mediation’. Then on one hand, these ‘sites’ of performative mediation are modelled *with* the method of imagination and on the other hand, cross checked *through* a technique of communicative quotient about information’s creativity.

Identified as the ‘site’ of performative mediation, a prolegomena of concerns and debates related to aesthetics and politics shall chart out a critical historiography by examining five different performances from each of these theatre groups. In effect by working *with* theatre and *through* its performative mediation, an imperative focus of the study intends to dovetail particular performance as a ‘site of mediation’ that fills-in and provide snapshots of element of theatre, politics, aesthetics, history, environment studies, science, gender studies and philosophy.

Indubitably, the period from 1960-2000 is critical in the region, as different theatre groups belonging to various political affiliation and contrasting aesthetic principles were dynamically active. And this leads the thesis at the the logic of this above mentioned time period by not falling back on mere historical reconstruction or cultural contextualization. Instead, it is important to look at these five performances to understand the spectrum of issues within which, these different groups were performing the changing configuration of mediation at the ‘site’ of performance. Interlinking the moments of ‘unique-ness’ at the ‘site’ of performative mediation, the thesis attempts to work out thematic pattern of signs, and would intermittently uncover the concerns and debates of theatre, politics, aesthetics, history and philosophy from time to time. Following up on the chords of impulses emerging out of these thematic pattern of signs, the research keeps on attending to the vibrational

tone of a self-reflexive question i.e. how politics is performed in political theatre? Taking a cue from such a point of entry, the thesis deliberates that elements of theatre, politics, aesthetics, history, environment studies, science, gender studies and philosophy are not the prerequisite foundation of performative mediation but are to be considered as parallel arcades that can open up an affective realm of encounter. They are objects of study in this encounter because at the 'site of mediation', an *affective* encounter may *sublate* into a glance through passages of information arising out of thematic pattern of signs. In turn, these elements can then create an enriching experience of understanding political theatre *with* performative moments and *through* its nature of treatment, as presented in theatre practices.

Ironically the balance of political power rests with states which have more number of seats in parliamentary democracy. And Uttar Pradesh being one of these states unavoidably marks a central pivot in the political outcome affecting the whole country. In this respect, rationale for studying the spectrum of 'political theatre' is positioned vis-à-vis the intensity of political orientation and its degree of impact at the 'site' of political mediation. Which is say, that reading a co-ordination of changing dynamics in the range of political proclivities, the 'site' of performative mediation offers a tool to feel and think about all the hues and all the shades of a scape that incorporate disparate affinities of thinking politics and practicing the thinking. Which is why, the thesis is imbued with the mapping of a cultural cartography from a perspective of 'aesthetico-scientific' temper about theatre historiography and engages through theatre practice in the eastern quarter of Uttar Pradesh.

Following up on the historical bearing of material conditions in theatre practice of the region, and in the context of the research, it is imperative to clarify that the mode of study articulates itself *with* the medium of theatrical performances and *through* their performative mediation. Which means that rather than a study on theatre groups and their specific historicisation within a time frame, the thesis orient its outlook by anticipating a dialectical play of possibilities – simultaneous possibilities which are present and yet can go *missing* in the “jetztzeit” (Benjamin 2003, 395) of mediation. By placing the pivot around Walter Benjamin’s *Theses ‘On the Concept of History’* the research shall be guided along the driving force of *inexhaustible possibilities* at the ‘site of mediation’. Thus provoking the condition and praxis of possibilities, the thesis is invested in an exploration *with* the mode of mediation and *through* a voyage of patterns emerging out of *now time*. With a operation of mediation added to “now time”, *inexhaustible possibilities* therefore takes into account all the necessary register of possibilities which insist the category of ‘political theatre’ to be researched at its kernel.

As a ‘site of mediation’, the treatment of these five performances not only articulates an explication of issues related with normative disciplines but also ensure to undertake a task to study the changing spectrum of theatrico-political idiom. While limiting the array of knowledge and power created and disseminated through theatre, the disparate stream of disciplines seeks a confluence of systems at the pool of performance. Thereby as a ‘site of mediation’, performance becomes a ‘technique in method’ that can formulate a methodological approach by initiating the research’s priority in reading the malleable material as vectors, working through the changing grammar of theatre, rhetoric of politics, conceptualisation about aesthetics,

experiences from history/philosophy, and finally dissemination of affect at the ‘site of mediation’.

Without conflating the term ‘site’ with the coordinates of location, performances as a ‘site of mediation’ is treated along with the Benjaminian trajectory of “now time”, for one simple reason, which is, that the ‘site’ of performative mediation stands apart from the “homogenous empty time”. Contrary to the “formal notion of time measured in segments” (Trigg 2009, 87), ‘site of now time’ moves away from an apparent incommensurability between ‘site’ and the time of “jetztzeit”. In other words, the ‘political’ too gets performed in this “now time” and follows a synergisation of two prepositions in mediation. These prepositions are *with* and *through* which rather than collapsing onto each other, offer a trampoline to conceptualise performance as a ‘site of mediation’ that delimits the ‘political’ along the axis of “now time”. Therefore bringing the spotlight back at the ‘site of mediation’, these five performances are to be studied as creations of art work in their respective “now time”, while enabling our understanding to envisage a simultaneous condition of two possibilities at least if not more. First possibility is, what I term as *missing* possibility which immanently keeps lurking as a present-continuous creative moment in waiting (delayed simultaneity),² and also which may act as an agent contemporary in the present. Second, a possibility that entices a relationship of “now time” with its mediation in the performative space-time. So instead of looking at “now time” as a break away moment out of time per se,

² Jay Lampert, *Simultaneity and Delay: A Dialectical Theory of Staggered Time* (London; New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 19. The author distinguishes between simultaneity and delay by illustrating an example of a person walking down a street who happens to be a part of one of the differential time scale among other events taking place at the same time. The example elaborates that when the person is “chewing a sandwich, while a bell goes off and someone throws water off a balcony, which hits the ground a moment later, at exactly the same time the person is at a certain point in taking a step, chewing the sandwich, and hearing the second verse of a song on iTunes.” Therein the simultaneity occurs at the “crossover of differential time flows” whereas the “temporal coordination and re-ordination” indicates toward the delayed simultaneity.

performance as a 'site of mediation' introduces *inexhaustible possibilities* as a way of bringing the constellation of "two nows" (Lampert 2012, 151) on the plane of instantaneity.

Herein, instantaneity is located *with* the 'site' and *through* the "now time" of performative mediation. It acts as a kind of heave that rolls over in a rhythmic fashion, cutting *with-through* ('instantaneous-simultaneous moment') distanced geographies and timelines. So, on one hand, the 'site of mediation' corroborates the series of events with temporal fragments of a differential timescale, while on the other hand, a constellation of 'two nows' are employed to seek out a coupling of simultaneous moments. Then at the plane of instantaneity, *inexhaustible possibilities* can be unfolded *with* the method of anticipating a 'same-ness' of symptoms and *through* its technique of thematic presentation within the ambit of mediation. Then performance as the 'site of mediation' augur that time being non-synchronous with itself is linked to change and movement at the same time. And precisely for this reason, performance as the 'site of mediation' yields a paradox of time brought in unison to identify and and pronounce in an interchangeable manner. Therein, performance as the 'site of mediation' tenders a humble demarcation between the particularities of performances over profiles of theatre groups and thus prioritises the former over latter. And the reason for the same stems from the fact that each of these performances on one hand, can open up a wider theme of concern and debate about theatre and performance, which otherwise takes a miss in the formal reading of a regional theatre practice. Concomitantly, initiation from performances shall guide the thesis to explore through an arrangement of network which can cut across various timelines and the topographical order of localisation.

II

To begin with the cultural practices especially that of ‘political theatre’ of the region hitherto remains understudied. Whatever little has been documented of political theatre, a sense of cultural supremacy about the region itself has tendentially crept in within the discourse of theatre criticism. These tendencies have not only clouded the articulation of a rigorous debate around cultural practices but has also ended up in hindering an approach to study the subject matter itself. By carrying the baggage of cultural chest thumping, cultural practices have been put under the weight of preponderance. Without blaming the practitioners or theatre director themselves, this lackadaisical approach towards a critical understanding of cultural practices can be seen in the antipathy to even follow up on the documentation process of its literature. So, the thesis does take a direction towards a simultaneous process of unearthing and documenting the primary literature in terms of play texts, personal entries in diaries, acting and directorial notes, newspaper reviews and personal interviews with a wide range of personalities which include, theatre artists, poets, directors and social activists.

Since many of these performances were simultaneously happening both on proscenium and street, their political idiom, language and choice of aesthetic modulation in terms of presentation were nevertheless different between the text and its spatial transformation. To explicate this fore mentioned observation, *Jan Sanskriti Manch*’s performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* brings in the point of reference from the thesis in exploring performances with “now time “ and through their ‘site’ of performative mediation. As a case in point, Adiyog of JASAM corroborate about

the fact that quite often the group members would collectively decide to alter the name of a specific character and incorporate local dialects in their performance. So at times the character of a capitalist was changed to *sabhāpti* in order to localize the performance. And it once happened that while on a tour in the Kumaoni belt of Uttarakhand (erstwhile Uttar Pradesh), the group members had to run for their lives as they came under direct physical attack while performing *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*.

So we had changed the word capitalist to Sabhapati with a Kumaoni flavor of sarcasm added to the addressal. At one provincial location in Uttarakhand, this real Sabhapati was present with four of his strongmen. And the moment when the character of Sabhapati made entry, they started hurling abuses and came for our lives with sticks and rods.³

In terms of first reactions at the aforesaid performative moment, one can say that by adapting the name and addressal of *sabhāpti*, a certain kind of association about this figure did manage to strike a consonance with the local problem. But unfortunately, this association happened to have triggered a precarious situation for the actors. As in, the association with the figure of *sabhāpti* synced in so aptly that the ‘real-life’ *sabhāpti* present with his henchmen at the time of performance, made it sure that the actors had to escape the ‘site’ of performance. Facing a threat on life and bearing the brunt of assault for a mere portrayal of a figure from real life does portend towards a reality check of intolerance. That too considering the fact that the performance merely tried to illustrate issues such as of atrocity, high handedness and domination at the grass root level of society via the figure of a local administrator. Now, others can argue that at the max, this attempt created a symbolical assertion by challenging the status of *sabhāpti* in the ‘real time frame’. But then the moot question hinges on the

³ Personal telephonic interview with Adiyog on 24 June, 2018. (Translation mine)

certitude of reciprocal act which in itself goes on to vindicate that a symbolical subversion at the 'site' of performative mediation may wrest a reaction from the spectators. Here, three questions transpire out as prompters. First, is a 'real' possibility of subversion extracted at the moment of symbolical challenge to the status of *sabhāpti*? Second, how could this provocation by the actors play out an 'excess' and transform the antagonism? Third, in what way did a *political* issue of hierarchy treated its subject matter at the 'site of mediation'? Therein, these set of prompters ventures into an inquiry *with* the politics of antagonism in "now time" and *through* its performative "excommunication" at the 'site of mediation' in theatre.

Taking cue from Alexander Galloway, Eugene Thacker and McKenzie Wark, *Excommunication: Three Inquiries in Media and Mediation* (2014), the context of changing forms of "(ex) communication" converse with the "central question" (2014, 9) of mediation with respect to "now time" of 'political theatre'. It is the title of the book "excommunication" that provokes the most enticing part about mediation itself. Going by the general parlance, *excommunication*, infers a complete suspension or rejection of a person from a clique like that of a religion or sect. It also means an act of damnation from a society, group or institution. Frequently referred as "the act of official exclusion of someone from participation in the sacraments and services of the Christian Church",⁴ excommunication if posited vis-à-vis performance, can throw fresh light on the 'site of mediation'. Moreover, as the performative "excommunication" intends to unravel dynamics of an operation at the 'site of mediation', "now time" of political theatre rejuvenates the topicality of concerns and

⁴ *Dictionary.com Online*, s.v. "excommunication," accessed June 10, 2019, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/excommunicate>. The dictionary entry of the word "excommunication" originate from the Latin term of *excommūnicātus* that means to, "put out of the community (past participle of excommūnicāre)".

debates about conditions of survival while facing an excommunication. Therein, to revert at the core of political performance and its relation with “now time” these set of prompters try to calibrate the thesis by juxtaposing performative moments *with* “now time” in theatre and *through* its mediation at the ‘site’ of performance.

In the context of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, challenging the status of *sabhāpti* and the actor’s subsequent suspension from the ‘site’ of performance entails an act of censure that constitutes a political decree of non-engagement in communication. In other words a disavowal of communication gets manifested at the ‘site of mediation’, which in effect spur a series of messages in negation to the act of communication in itself. Whether or not the provocation stands up to the measure of being deemed communicable, the performative “excommunication is the communication of ‘no longer communicating,’ the silence of ‘nothing more to say’” (emphasis in original, Galloway et al., 2014, 16) at the ‘site of mediation’. The thesis therefore argues that to stop at ‘symbolical spectacle’ of challenging the status of *sabhāpti* would fall short of a critical possibility in engaging with the politics of mediation and would take an uncalled for stance vis-à-vis political performances. Instead it is imperative to unpack the logic of an excommunicative order precisely because of its “paradoxical anti-message” (2014) in antagonism, communicated at the performative ‘site of mediation’.⁵ Excommunication then occurs in this “now time” of performative mediation and becomes an indicator of paradoxes. Saying this, it shall be kept in mind not to fall in the trap of “theophany of media” (McLuhan in Galloway et al.,

⁵ This “paradoxical anti-message” of excommunication in our contemporary times is percolating throughout social networking ‘sites’ of communication and transference of information. The excommunication of banning, unfriending, trolling, hate messages, fake news to mobilise opinion, suggests to study the emerging patterns of behaviors among netizens and articulate the contravening presence of users in “now time”. More than ever before as the global order of mediation is kicking in it is all the more important to simultaneously host ‘new’ methods and techniques of research methodology in theatre and performance studies.

2014, 13) that has a kind of glazed self-contemplation, wonder struck by overburdening everything under the sun as mediation. Moving away from the “theophany of media” the relationship of medium (theatre) with that of mediator (performance) intends to have an impetus toward an interdisciplinary approach which shall guide this thesis *with* the politics of “now time” and *through* its performance at the ‘site of mediation’.

In this vein, the thesis takes into consideration the cliché of ‘old’ media and ‘new’ media by engendering a bifurcation counter-posed in the work of Alexander Galloway, Eugene Thacker and McKenzie Wark (2014). The authors scout at this bifurcation by asking, “do media always have to be ‘new’ to be an object of a theory? Is it even possible to think about new media without thinking about media in general? Likewise is it possible to think about media without thinking about the temporality of media, about why they are labelled new or old?” (1). These questions then lead up to the fact that the division between ‘old media’ and ‘new media’ keep propping up in the spectrum of discourse on media and mediation. Although an immediate response is sought as to not get bogged down by the divide between ‘old media’ and ‘new media’, an exigency towards the discourse suggests to pilot through the variant point of views about the bifurcation and acknowledge them on face value. And for this reason, media and mediation are not judged separately in the book as they are considered part and parcel of the wider network of communication.

Therefore “excommunication” when foregrounded from the material of analysis only tries to draw symptomatic parallel of vindictive measures between a normative structure of religion (old media) and that in the performative mediation of

provocation/antagonism (*Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* as a case in point for new media). Here, the division between old media and new media tries to unpack an interesting move by arguing that in both cases, the reactionary measure of “excommunication” does put up a strong case of resonance in the manner in which the act of excommunication is carried out which is, organised par excellence.⁶ And to that extent excommunication gets communicated in the most methodised way, satiated with “the fantasy of an absolute end to all communication” (2014, 16). Such an organised and methodised operation of a fantasy-charged excommunication, executes an instantaneous moment of mediation at the performative ‘site’ of proclamation – a proclamation of emergency.

Often referred as ‘the Emergency’ in India, the proclamation of Emergency declared on 25 June, 1975 was unparalleled in the history of independent India, because of the reason which was stated and promulgated by the Government of India. It was based on assumptions of apparent threat to the security of the nation by “internal disturbances”. It also said, “the right of equality under Article 14, the right of fundamental guarantee against deprivation of life and personal liberty according to procedure established by law also stood suspended and the protection against arrest and detention could not be challenged before the courts. Also in the same Article 352 of *Constitution of India* in Part XVIII, it mentions that the provision for the ‘Proclamation of Emergency’ can be exercised, “if the President is satisfied that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India or of any part of the territory

⁶ Sumit Sarkar et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993), 2. The authors addresses that communal riots, “at Meerut, Maliana, Delhi, Bhagalpur and many other places, the very meaning of communal riots changed into something very like genocide with connivance.” This citation also appears in Uma Chakravarty et al., ‘Communalization of Khurja’, *The Hindu*, 17 June, 1991.

thereof is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or 1 [armed rebellion], he may, by Proclamation, make a declaration to that effect, 2 [in respect of the whole of India or of such part of the territory thereof as may be specified in the Proclamation].⁷

Linking the vector of “excommunication” with proclamation of Emergency, the thesis brings out the quotient of instantaneous mediation in the form of “a message that proclaims: there will be no more messages” (2014, 15). In extension to intermittent reference to Emergency in the history of Indian politics, declaration as a performative ‘site of mediation’ assists in providing a historical framework in order to understand the dynamics of “now time” in political theatre. Therefore, by keeping a tab open on the imperative question of ‘excommunicative mediation’ made as that in the proclamation of Emergency, the juxtaposition of sound with respect to scape, shall explicate an “*impossibility* of communication” (emphasis in original, 2014, 16) presented through the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*.

Created through a declaration, an organised proclamation of Emergency situates the ‘site’ of sonic mediation, which excommunicate the people of its right to act, react, operate and express themselves in a free manner. Therein, in the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, performative moment of declaration probes the ‘site’ of affectation *with* the loud thuds of *nagārā* and *through* the scape of word projection of *hośiyā...r ! khabardā... r !* (Be Alert! Be Alarmed!). This enforcement of behavioural

⁷ *The Constitution of India* (New Delhi, India: Government of India, Ministry of Law and Justice, 2018). Here, (1) stands for Forty-fourth Amendment of 1978, which substituted the previous terminology of “internal disturbances” and 2 represents the Forty-second Amendment of 1976 which was inserted and became a law w.e.f. 3-1-1977.

expectation from the *actor-jantā*, catches a glimpse about how the people at large are programmed to follow over particular set of codes.

As the people are instructed about the directive in the opening proclamation, the *actor-sarkār* in the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* leases itself at the supreme command unchecked. Acting in an authoritarian way for not being able to mitigate the anticipated commotion by the people, an emergency like proclamation is performatively excommunicated. Therein unfurling an excommunicative declaration, a situation similar to Emergency is conspicuously communicated so as to legitimise the message of forsaking humanitarian value of tolerance and acceptance of divergent activities. While presenting this situation of Emergency, “excommunication” of peeping, lampooning and farting further indicates at the travesty of governance carried out by the *actor-sarkār*. Thus, in the performative mediation of excommunication, the paraphernalia of Emergency ‘sites’ the futility of a para-legal appendage to the existing norm of governance, and unfolds an uncanny soundscape of fear guaranteed through a form of constitutionalism. Thereby, defining the very situation of Emergency as an ‘organised-anarchy’.

One argument about defining 'political theatre' can be about their sheer dynamism of action or commitment toward their own respective ideologies. But for a moment, keeping aside the partisan aspect of it, what becomes intriguing is the question of whether as a political theatre group, were they exercising something that was completely new? Or, were their action of performing a play underlay a primary exigency to anyhow perform in a post-riot scenario, legitimizing their kind of theatre activism as more ‘radical’? Then, can it be argued that political theatre was trying to

expressing an uncharted area that could claim uniqueness? Even if a unique characteristic can be attributed to each of these groups, the real question is that how a performance like that of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, could extract a performative idiom of mediation from the political situation itself.

III

Without being guided by a doctrinaire understanding, three different approaches can be charted-out as a starting point, for a framework of 'political theatre' in the concerned area – 'Theatre of the Absurd', 'Agit-Prop' and 'Third Theatre'. Herein, it is imperative to do a mapping of available discursive patterns on these three categories so that the patterns not only identify the paradigms of 'political theatre' but also provide a window for their relevance to research material. Thus, keeping in mind that their overlapping nature is at times non-differentiable, this attempt is merely schematic.

Theatre of the Absurd

At a lecture delivered amongst theatre practitioners of Lucknow on Saturday 15 March, 1975, Dr. Satyavrat Sinha informs the audience about the relationship of absurd plays with that of theatre. Collated in an article form titled, "Visaṃgati Kā Nātak Aur Rangmaṃc", Dr. Sinha opines that a constant churning on Theatre of Absurd took a proactive deliberation towards a range of debates. He charts out three variations in these debates. One, which is cautious about the 'adverse effects' of 'Theatre of the Absurd' on Indian theatre, because of the latter being positioned at a

nascent stage with respect to its spectatorship. Second, a debate which follows the cliché that only with a positive purpose can an art make a contribution to life. According to Dr. Sinha, people who argue along this line are those who in the name of belongingness with life, culture and heritage encourages status quo. Third variant of the debate tries to seek theatre as a tool for revolution. And since ‘Theatre of the Absurd’ doesn’t meet that end, it is tagged with “petty bourgeois” or “decadent” nomenclatures (2009, 97).

Contrary to these views, Dr. Satyavrat Sinha observes that the genesis of ‘Theatre of the Absurd’ can be traced back to the horrors of Second World War. Confronting with a complete loss of meaning about human existence, a system of thinking as a form of theatre expressed itself “in the field of creativity, words, colours and sounds” (Anand 2009, 98, Translation mine). And thus, ‘Theatre of the Absurd’ was born out of uncanniness, chaos, disorientation and the farcical nature of anything and everything related to humans. Dr. Sinha shares a similar sentiment regarding ‘Theatre of the Absurd’ which follows up on Samuel Beckett’s train of thought that tried to anticipate a complete rination from meaning, sense, purpose in the human condition of living. Martin Esslin in, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961, Reprint 2001) supports the view that at the core of this movement, a drive “to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition” made it stand apart from other theatrical practices. Stressing on the condition of human life in a post-war situation, ‘Theatre of the Absurd’ relates to one and all, especially those who happened to be in the creative practices. The far reaching affect of this type of theatre, Esslin (1961) predicts, “may provide a new language, new idea, new approaches, and a new vitalized philosophy to transform the modes of thought and feeling of the public at large in a not too distant future”

(Preface). Therefore, it can be argued that honing a passion because of a penchant towards expressing anxious moment of his own time, Dr. Sinha's involvement with the presentation of Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot (Godo Ke Intezār Mem*⁸) in 1972 testify to the fact that voicing the thought of absurdity runs deep *with* the medium of theatre and *through* its performative mediation at the 'site' of theatre. Therein, cutting across timelines and differential coordinates on a geographical scale, 'Theatre of the Absurd' can provide a crucial impetus for the practice of 'politics' in political theatre in India.

Third Theatre

In 1982, *Samanantar* felicitated a ten day workshop on 'Third Theatre' and the person conducting the workshop was none other than Badal Sarkar himself.⁹ Being approached by Ashok Bhowmick and Anil Ranjan Bhowmick at his home, 53, Chittaranjan Avenue, Badal Sarkar was impressed when he heard that a group named *Samanantar* in Azamgarh had staged his play *Julūs*. He got fascinated by this team of young theatre artists that he decided to do the workshop *pro gratis*. It was to the credit of members of *Samanantar* Azamgarh, that having performed *Julūs* by then, they were ready to take a step forward to pursue their passion for alternative theatre. This initiation indicates the far reaching appeal of Badal Sarkar's idea of 'Third Theatre' which was breaking new grounds in an approach of how to communicate in

⁸ The play, *Godo Ke Intezār Mem* was translated by Krishna Baldev Vaid from French to Hindustani, and was staged by *Prayag Rang Manch* at Palace Theatre in Allahabad on 6 March, 1972.

⁹ This workshop on 'Third Theatre' was attended by Bhaktvatsal, Virendra Kumar, Nisha Tripathi, Kishor Srivastav, Narendra Seth, Neeru Seth, R.P. Singh and twenty other theatre enthusiasts participated along with them for ten days (*Samanantarnama*, 6).

theatre beyond the ‘paraphernalia’ of proscenium theatre and more importantly in an age of cinematic expression.

Communication is essential in every art form; the artist communicates to other people through literature, music, painting, acting. But the methods of communication are different. A writer writes – he does not have to be present when his writing is being read. So it is with the painter and the sculptor. In cinema, the film artists do not have to be present when the film is being projected. But in the theatre, the performers have to be present when the communication takes place. This is a fundamental difference. Theatre is a live show, cinema is not. In theatre, communication is direct; in cinema it is through images.¹⁰

Sarkar further expounds that the concept of ‘Third Theatre’ was trying to engage with the nature of communication in an art form. And for that, first of all it became a necessity to sever away from the conventional way of looking at theatre itself and simultaneously inject an approach of flexibility to ignite a change of attitude in reshaping the relationship of spectator to that of performer. To actualise this change, Sarkar’s experimental fervour lead him to the ‘site’ of performer’s body which according to him could galvanise the overall imagination of being present at the same time, both of the performer and the spectator. Ashok Bhowmick in *Bādal Sarkār: Vyakti Aur Raṅgmaṅc* (2009), observes, that an outline for a model of ‘Third Theatre’ gets its inspiration from an intermingling of actor and spectator. And since the performer became a crucial link to communicate, a physical training of the body derived a quotient towards an aesthetics of corporeal body.

¹⁰ Badal Sircar, “The Third Theatre,” *On Theatre* (Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2009).

Agit-Prop Model

In *Right to Perform*, Safdar Hashmi (1989), clarifies the underlying feature and historical context of political theatre in the twentieth century. He states that, “contemporary Indian street theatre has been drawing in equal measure from our folk and classical drama as well as from western drama . . . (It is) a twentieth century phenomenon, born of the specific needs of the working people living under capitalist and feudal exploitation. (Street theatre) is basically a militant political theatre of protest. Its function is to agitate the people and to mobilise them behind fighting organisations” (Hashmi, 1989, 11-12). Therein, *Jan Natya Manch* becomes one of the benchmark for an approach to read through the framework of ‘political theatre’. Although the vibrant culture of Progressive Writers Association and *IPTA*’s legacy cannot and should not be disowned, the present study focuses on intervention made as active stakeholders in the topography of theatre after 1960.¹¹ According to author and playwright Ajeet Pushkal, the trajectory of ‘Agit-Prop’ theatre continued to flourish even after *IPTA* had run out of steam. This happened precisely because the influential Brechtian model was alive and kicking amongst theatre enthusiasts of 70’s generation. It gave them a ray of hope to work and experiment with local forms of expressions which could be treated in tandem with the broader socio-political movement to affect social change.

¹¹ This statement is corroborated with two factual notations, first, barring a few performances (*Afeem Ke Phool*, *Vande Mataram* and *Bakri* as popular productions of *IPTA* in Eastern U.P.) and active engagement in the domain of political theatre, the *IPTA* unit of Allahabad had become partially defunct, if not obsolete. Dispatches via Nemichandra Jain and Rekha Jain were communicated to the theatre activists but throughout 1950s and 1960s nothing much was happening on the theatre front. (Personal Interview with Zia ul Haq at his residence in Allahabad on 24 November, 2012. Second, in the national capital too, the Delhi unit of *IPTA* had gone into an hibernation mode since the late 1950s and was finally resuscitated by student activists of Students’ Federation of India (SFI) (Deshpande 1997, 7).

Lot of individuals moved on after participating on the front of IPTA...but the spirit of IPTA gave them tools, in their respective fields. What I want to say is that political theatre is very much omni-present. Street theatre is one form of this theatre...another one can be based on a small, very small incident but it says something which is politically extraordinary... Brecht was a master in this art of combining elements of folktale and political situation of his own time.¹²

Here it should be fitting to acknowledge Brecht's influence on political theatre scene, and thereby, ascertain a simultaneous reading of the 'Agit-Prop' model *with-through* Brecht's Epic Theatre. In, "The Street Scene: *A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre*" (1968), Brecht draws an example where an eyewitness is demonstrating how a traffic accident took place. The bystanders may not have observed what happened, but the point is that the demonstrator acts the behaviour of driver or victim or both in such a way that the bystanders are able to form an opinion about the accident (1968, 85). What it entails is the nature of 'political theatre' through its logic of interruption and detachment from the character portrayed. Michael Kirby brings out two crucial points in his article, *On Political Theatre* – intent and efficacy. In his articulation, political theatre is a performance that is intentionally concerned with the government, and which is intentionally engaged or consciously takes sides in politics. Here an interruptive mode should be distinguished from an oppositional mode in so far as these literatures try to investigate the various theatrical idioms and creatively subvert existent modes of representation.

These three actor-director module around/of 'political theatre' are quite diverse and which more or less inform the literature of the same to theatre and performance studies scholarship. Yet in the context of this research, what can be identified as a shared concern is to focus on a critique of representational theatre. On one hand, they

¹² Personal interview with Ajeet Pushkal at his residence in Jhansi, Allahabad on 12 September, 2014.

manage to draw out the inadequacy of generating meanings, simply through a process of representing any historical reality. And on the other hand, their method of approaching the problem of representation in relation to theatre is varied, wherein their *problem* with representation remains more or less a problem with mediation. It is this mediatory logic of presentation that not only operates at the level of modal binaries like universal/particular or model/imitation, but also with which these methodologies try to criticize. So, with an understanding to bring together the disparate energies on a level playing field, all these three approaches tend to view theatre as a place of generation of meaning, which need not find its signified elsewhere. In the case of 'Agit-Prop' we find a process of generation of meanings where the boundary between political reality and theatrical representation becomes indiscernible. In the case of 'Theatre of the Absurd', the infinite play of empty signifier becomes the very 'site of mediation'. While 'Third Theatre', minimalises the very use of signifier, to introduce a theatrical 'site' which orients itself towards performance, rather than the enactment of dramatic texts. Thus, throughout all these methodological trends a new theatrical idiom follows a logic of meanings at surface level. They all point towards the danger of producing representational depths through the *language* of theatre. Such performative orientation, becomes a methodological point of departure for this thesis. It goes without saying that to mention about mediation's creative potential, wherein a tendency of theatre that operates only and only at the level of surfaces is presented in the precise mode of mediation 'as it is'. Which means that mediation is to be studied in terms of treatment of the object. Rather than a formalisation of a subjective reading, performative mediation's objective treatment garners strength because the thesis neither refuses to acknowledge the potential of spectacles nor does the thesis finds itself trapped within

the trope of representational depths created in such mediation of spectacle. On the one hand, the political power of performance is that, through its refusal of the conventions of role-playing and its active rejection of the authority of representation, it reveals the universal content of social issues – nuanced, as empty and always subject to re-configuration. Contemporary theory would describe such consciousness in materialist terms, as a perspective – to use Walter Benjamin’s term – abandons the “eternal image” (Benjamin 2003) of the past to privilege a unique experience of the present.

By invoking a simultaneous play of “now time” and performative ‘site of mediation’ within theatre production, this research grounds 'political theatre' as presentation of paradoxical possibilities. Saying this, is to reiterate that the treatment of political theatre is not be a problem of *derivative* practices because as an incommensurable affix to each other, “now time” and performative mediation can break the schematic tension between the universal and the particular, the predicament of method and technique, the quantum and the general. Thereby, nurturing toward a reading of theatre historiography from an internationalist, nationalist and ‘local’ context all at the same time. Such focus on the present offers critical perspective without inscribing an alternative-dominant history. Moreover it must not be conflated with an anti-historiography project. On the contrary, the thesis interrogates an *affirmative-simultaneous* historical approach to events and their nature of unfolding in historical time.

In the current work, I need to focus on two conceptual paradigms. One, is that of politics and the other which is understood in terms of its aesthetic dimension in

theatre, i.e. political theatre.¹³ Although these terms have huge historical baggage, I shall not give in to their conventional logic of mundane consecration, instead my intervention is at the level of operational dynamism of these two non-categorical dimension of expression, which can cut across variant time-lines. The reason for the same arises from the fact that in scholarly debates the dichotomy of aesthetics and politics have been in the discourse for quite a long time now, where one school of thought has categorised arts as something that can overcome its self-limitation and then go on to form a ‘life’ of its own independent to the subject presented through its form. Whereas the other extreme on the spectrum has disowned the political aspect of art and left it stranded in lieu of something greater by calling out for a separation from life¹⁴ itself (Rancière 2006, 6).

In the conceptual framework, Jacques Rancière in *The Politics of Aesthetics-The Distribution of the Sensible* (2004) allows the research to foreground a “common sense” of politics and political art. According to Rancière, “politics itself is not the exercise of power or struggle for power. Politics is first of all the configuration of a space as political, the framing of a specific sphere of experience, the setting of objects posed as *common*... Politics first is the conflict about the very existence of

¹³ In relation to aesthetics Rancière proposes that, “art in itself does not infer an object which aesthetics refers as art theory. Aesthetics is properly speaking a specific regime for identifying and thinking the arts – the aesthetic regime of art...aesthetics refers to the distribution of the sensible”. The third category for Rancière is, distribution of the sensible. It is the production of systems of self-explanatory facts or givens. Thus it stands for both, “forms of inclusion and also exclusion.” Then distribution of sensible in aesthetics has, ethical regime of images, representative regime of art and the aesthetical regime of art. Whereas in the political realm, Rancière analyses police (as “a totalizing account of the population”) and politics (which disturbs the police “by the subjectivization of those who have no part in it”) (2004, 85).

¹⁴ Jacques Rancière, “From Aesthetics to Politics?” *Paragraph* Vol. 28, Issue. 1 (March 1, 2005): 13-25, <https://doi/10.3366/para.2005.28.1.13>. The author opens up about his primary concern on aesthetics and politics by saying, “throughout my historical and political research was to point out the aesthetic dimension of the political experience”. He goes on to explain that aesthetics shares a sensibility of time and space but clarifying that time and space ought not to be seen as forms of “*presentation of the objects of knowledge*”, instead as forms of “*configuration/distribution/assignation*” of the common and private place.

that sphere of experience, the realities of those common objects and the capacity of those subjects” (2006, 1). He explains that ‘politics’ (*La Politique*) only exists in intermittent acts of “distribution or re-distribution” that lack any overall principle or law...the essence of politics thus resides in acts of subjectification that separate society from itself by challenging the ‘natural order of bodies’ in the name of equality and polemically reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible. (Rancière 2004, 90)

In his article, “The Politics of Aesthetics/ The Aesthetics of Politics” (2006), Rancière further informs that art is political, not because of its the mien with which it typify social structures, contentions or particularities, but by “its own practices that shape forms of visibility and re-frame the way in which practices, manners of being and modes of feeling and saying are interwoven in a common sense, which means a *sense of the common* embodied in a common sensorium” (Emphasis in original, Rancière 2006, 1). In some sense, what Rancière is trying to say is that there is a kind of inseparability between politics and arts since these two are not *permanent realities*. He reiterates that, “each of them is a conditional reality, that exists or not according to a specific partition of the sensible”. Which is why Rancière reiterates that political art must strive to present the “collage” of both the opposing politics, one in which “art suppresses itself in order to become life and second where “art does politics on the condition of doing no politics at all” (2006, 6) In such a context of political art, the thesis intends to follow up on the lead of mediation in political theatre, perhaps, to hyphenate politics and theatre in its “now time”. Therein a relationship between politics and theatre is construed *with* politics and *through* theatre, thereby, proposing an ‘aesthetico-scientific’ disposition with respect to mediation and performance. By following a dialectical approach to aesthetics and politics, this relationship between

mediation and performance orients the thesis to open up simultaneous register of possibilities – politics of possibilities and possibilities of politics. Thus they are knotted with each other and analysed at the ‘site’ of ‘political theatre’.

Thereupon, the thesis attempts to lay out 'political theatre' from the point of view of this encounter, while foregrounding what I mark as *inexhaustible possibilities*. In doing so, the thesis moves away from the strand of discursive understanding of political theatre that emphasizes an approach to 'political theatre' only through a ‘modal logic’ (Maoilearca 2014) of the term. Rather than studying political theatre groups as directly folding onto political parties they were associated with, the thesis problematises the relation between politics and theatre by taking into account the spectrum of performative signs created at the ‘site of mediation’. By exploring specific case studies, the thesis offers to throw fresh light into the central role of performance in redefining political possibilities.

IV

This thesis requires a strategy of conducting interviews, oral narratives, and recollections. Hence memory of individuals as practitioners/activists certainly becomes a focal point of engagement, but more importantly as a method to access various 'other' archives. As the thesis proceeds with contestation within these oral memories, the study at present does not intend to be a work exclusively on the question of contestation of memories. Using the interviews as reference points, the thesis posits them as 'truths', in order to maximize their intensive value, as opposed to their factual incompleteness. Thus, an 'other' archive have to be consciously risked to

explicate those incidents of performance/events which were trying to recreate representation on stage or on streets.

On one hand, these performances tried to steer a new sensibility of social consciousness with concerns of human values, equal rights, ecological responsibility and gender issues, while on the other hand practised *through* the politics of possibilities at the 'site' of performative mediation in theatre. Foregrounding instances from these performances, material from its retrospective claim becomes a galvanizing literature towards a study of "now time" with relation to mediation. As the study ventures along the line of performative moments in these plays, a gamut of stratification through its dissemination is acknowledged *with-through* a redressal mechanism. Such a stratification involves the method of invoking memories at one level, whereas relive those memories at the same time in the present. The present task to relive memories converts the glee in one's eye into a wishful exhilaration of living those times over again. It picks up a fragment of memory, while performing an act of "detour" (Löwy 2005, 5 quoted in Ridout 2013, 8). Rather than a modal inquiry per se, performative moments is approached *with* the logic of affect, and simultaneously treated *through* a process of *sublation*.¹⁵ This means that while these moments are

¹⁵ G.W.F Hegel, *The Difference Between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy* (Atascadero, C.A: Ridgeview Publications, 1978). *Sublation* is derived from the German verb *aufheben*, whose etymological root means to pick up, to abolish, or to cancel. Hegel applies this term as a determinant of dialectical interplay for a concept in which it is both preserved and altered when it comes in contact with another concept. Although, Hegel maintains that as a category in historical process, its uniqueness is about its absence, yet is always a necessary part of change. *Sublation* literally translated from the German word *Aufhebung* means, to pick up, to suspend, to cancel, to abolish, to negate, to preserve, to transcend all at the same time. Used extensively in Hegelian philosophy, the word *aufhebung* comes from the conjunction of 'auf', 'heben' and 'ung'. *Dartmouth.edu*, s.v. "suffixes," accessed February 21, 2019, <https://www.dartmouth.edu/~deutsch/Grammatik/Wortbildung/Suffixes.html>. Here going by German grammar, 'auf' indicates a prefix that act as preposition, either applied with akkusativ or dativ verb. By dictionary meaning, 'heben' stands for, to lift, to heave and raise, whereas 'ung' provides a suffix in order to generate a noun, particularly feminine in nature. In another reference to *aufhebung/sublation*, Ryan Krahn in his doctoral thesis, "The Sublation of Dialectics: Hegel and the Logic of Aufhebung" Ph.D Thesis (Ontario, Canada: The University of Guelph), observes that

entireties in their own respect, their purpose in terms of remembrance officiates a substitution. What gets replaced or substituted, does have retrospective element, but being brought back into the modal logic, a com-possibility of *with-through* works out affectively through these performative moments. In that sense rather than a prescriptive substitution, *affective sublation* predicates a ‘non-decisional determination’ in approaching *with* the material and *through* its mediation in this research.¹⁶

Simon Mussell in *Critical Theory and Feeling: The Affective Politics of the Early Frankfurt School* (2017), opines that contrary to the “happiness industry” (Davies 2015, quoted in Mussell, 43) of a global capital, an alternative practice of building up solidarity with the suffering of other beings can pave the way for a conscious unhappiness. He argues that by “renouncing the ersatz pleasure” the substitution for happiness can be a act of renunciation, which can then live by this decision. *Ersatz* is a German word whose etymological derivation comes from the word *ersetzen*. *Ersetzen* means to replace, substitute. But in English, the word has acquired a negative connotation, in the sense that something gets substituted from the original, into a fake, inferior or an illusionary one. Taking a departure from this line of thought, I propose that instead of demeaning *ersatz* as something which is not up to the mark, *affective sublation* orients a determination that is not governed by the reclusive decision but rather pulls up an act of collision in performing all the abilities

sublation does not simply mean a synthesis of two opposing concepts but the concept itself operates what he calls as the “quadruplicity of sublation”. In other words, the “quadruplicity” acts *with* the difference of thesis and antithesis and *through* a synthesis of both.

¹⁶ Simon Mussell, “Thinking Through Feeling: Critical Theory and the Affective Turn,” in *Critical Theory and Feeling: The Affective Politics of the Early Frankfurt School* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

at the same time and thus expressed in the conceptual framing of *perform-e-bility*.¹⁷

Which is to live at any given condition, come what may.

Taking examples from performative moments, concern's 'application' to contemporary debates shall only portend to help through collision of time line. It is then only, an instantaneous moment in the present, might dare to conceive a condition for bringing disparate events in collision (in particle physics, collision is seen as the meeting of particles in which both the units are put into action in a transference of energy, direction.)¹⁸ Not to mean that these moments bear a purposeful pact in resting

¹⁷ Laila R. Schmidt, *Urdu: An Essential Grammar* (London: Routledge Publications, 2010), 84-85. Here the *ezāfat* or *izāfat* (from its Persian derivative in Urdu) is devised by introducing the vowel 'e' in between performance and ability to ideate upon the knotting of adjective with that of presentation. *Ezāfat* / *izāfat* operate as a *zer* and is usually applied at the end of a word. It functions like a diacritical mark. In addition to this, *ezāfat* has a unique operation – it signals the relationship of the expression constructed between two nouns or a noun followed by an adjective. If the second word is determined as to be a noun then the construct is possessive, whereas if the second word is a noun then the formulate compound is descriptive. Interestingly the second word has a simultaneous possibility – it can be determined as a noun or as an adjective.

The collision of 'performance' with 'all kinds of abilities including disability' proposes the concept of *perform-e-bility*. In the present context, *perform-e-bility* seeks to form noun from adjectives because if the adjective 'it consists as an activity'; the way to perform is to present nouns, i.e, a verb-name (Badr-e-Alam). Concomitantly, the presentation of verb name can be altogether an abstract one that must not commence a need to feel the necessity. Rather, the formation of such an abstract verb name is aesthetically political because it syncopates the verb root in correspondence with *lakshanalankar*. That is why, the 'suchness' in *perform-e-bility* breathes a way out of perform-ability and carries the subjectification simultaneously, without being internecine (mutually destructive) to the process of *sublation*.

¹⁸ Amit Goswami, "Elementary Particle Physics: The Quest for Elementarity" in *The Physicists' View of Nature Part 2: The Quantum Revolution* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publisher, 2000). With reference to the (Fig. 12.1), the author in this chapter gives the reason why elementary particle physics can also be called high energy particle. He writes, "when we hit our particles with these high-energy projectiles, the outcome of the collision is usually a larger collection of particles. But we must not jump to the conclusion that the resulting particles are the constituents of the target particle. That is not true because of a strange aspect of the relativistic equivalence of mass and energy." Leading into an inference, Dr. Goswami argues that many a times it is observed that certain amount of "energy manifests itself as mass that takes the form of these particle that come out-of course, subject to all the other law of physics..." While explaining the process of collision, he goes onto incorporate the event which takes place inside the bubble chamber. He draws an analogy of particle physicist's with that of the character of Winnie-the-pooh, who is constantly looking out for 'woozle' – in this case, an elementary *missing* particle which goes undetected in the bubble chamber. Then the collision event referred to in the context of performative moments are an engagement with the pawmarks of Winnie-the-pooh that at times appears to be there and sometimes isn't there at all. These collisions of performative moments are then gleams in the instantaneous *perform-e-bility* of search for a wozzle.

the case for contemporaneity, but their exchange allows an encounter of *perform-ability*. So, to say the least, these opening remarks or statements serve as potential promulgation for simultaneous inquiry into today's redressal of anticipation. Insofar as the study takes into account a monadic structure, the debates won't be conflated in the particularities of the case study. For one simple reason that the monad is heard speaking to one-and-all. Which means in a way, that each particularities at their innate imbrication (patterns of tiles on a roof), resembles in the overlapping pattern of a wounded time. They cry for their liberation on one hand, whereas on the other hand, commend a unity of all the *missing* energies.

Thereafter, collision can be read as an encounter *with* affective passion in concerns, and *through* the reason of debates that allow a space for *sublation*. Bringing both the constituting force of mediation in this collision of an encounter, *with-through* may appear to work as an extrapolation from such performative moments. But because the 'site of mediation' confer upon itself the positing of "now time", these collisions seeks to open up new dimension of possibilities. In this vein, a rider to the collision argue that these performative moments not only holds onto a possible futurity but also earmark a journey of simultaneous possibilities which exists as an anomaly in the present moment of mediation. Thus the conceptual formulation of *inexhaustible possibilities* explores by arguing in support of an anomaly that bears an imprint of anticipation of, all the time in/at one time.

I develop this framework of *inexhaustible possibilities* from Walter Benjamin's *Theses 'On the Concept of History'* (*Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, 2003). For Benjamin the philosophy of history's theory of progress is always homogeneous that

becomes complete, in propriety of self-referential fulfillment. His major concern is to break this deceptive progression of history which is based on cause and effect. In correlation, this project's ideation is to map out these simultaneous events on one hand, as indicating the realization of such a *missing* aesthetics and politics. Whereas on other hand, while presenting the groups point of view, the thesis does not hold onto the argument of fulfillment of the *missing* possibilities by these non-established theatre groups. Since the *missing* cannot be a homogeneous category, it emerges and performs in precision within the non-continuum constellation, in the differential temporal impulses, without co-ordinates. Hence, in the practices of these theatre groups, the thesis puts forward the term *inexhaustible possibilities* that encapsulates the driving energy in terms of pushing the boundaries of relationship between arts and politics.

Therein, the thesis' concern is to move away from an understanding of theatre historiography, while at the same time formulating a line of thought beyond the redemptive horizon which is theological, and is part of a dominant contemporary 'anti-political' interpretation of Benjamin.¹⁹ One of the central propositions on redemption is "Thesis II", where Benjamin accentuates his take on the concept of history while at the same time debunking the progression of historicism. His disapproval about the continuity in history as an illusion offers an enswathing idea of political messianism.

¹⁹ Aniruddha Chowdhury, *Post-deconstructive Subjectivity and History: Phenomenology, Critical theory, and Postcolonial Thought* (Leiden, Netherland: Brill Publications, 2014), 87. The author intervenes with a refreshing departure from a theologically driven interpretation of Benjamin. Chowdhury illustrates, that the pressing question is whether or not historiography can be reconciled with the singularity and the eventness of happening, and can yet retain the critical dimension of thought without being totalizing. He further explains that a historical thinking is on one hand responsive to singularity and on the other hand works against the grain of totalization.

There is happiness – such as could arouse envy in us – only in the air we have breathed, among people we could have talked to, women who could have given themselves to us. In other words, the idea of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the idea of redemption. The same applies to the idea of the past, which is the concern of history. The past carries with it a secret index by which it is referred to redemption. Doesn't a breath of the air that invaded earlier days caress us as well? In the voices we hear, isn't there echo of now silent ones? Don't the women we court have sisters they no longer recognize? If so, then there is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Then our coming was expected on earth. Then like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* messianic power, a power on which the past has a claim.

(Benjamin 2003, 389-390)

Thus, 'political theatre' is neither a trick-play, in which an issue is performed and 'public knowledge' is disseminated through its 'enactment' of the act, nor is it a stance, where theatre at the basic premise is not considered as a space credible enough to create serious intervention in political sphere. In lieu of such a vocabulary of 'political theatre' that could imply a sense of the past with its *nostalgic elation*, the task here is exactly to logically see the radical possibility in such a *nosta-redemptive* rupture in the present. Centring on the discourse of redemption and *weak* messianic power, I argue that past-present split and its futuristic maxim in redemption cannot be contingent on a distant realization, instead derive its 'thinkability' from the not so past and not yet future *missing* possibilities. Thereby opening up an immense portion for "now time" entangled *with* the 'site' and *through* its mediation. Thence, a *nosta-redemptive*²⁰ equation can only become a tool without falling prey to the schematic way of messianic power because the "now time" is filled with continuous radical

²⁰ *Nosta-Redemptive* stands for nostalgia and redemption. What I mean by *nosta-redemptive* is that a conflation of these two should not be seen as one completing the other or as an unified goal. *Nosta-Redemptive* equation is then to equip the spirit of struggle without fixating itself into its own schema of either's fulfillment.

impulse which is happening at every moment – contracting to such an extent that an indispensable division creates simultaneous events.

Redemption for Benjamin is messianic, where things need to be amended in relation with past generation. In *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'*, Michael Löwy writes, “according to extracts from *Mikrokosmos*²¹ cited by Benjamin in *The Arcades Project*, there is no progress if the souls that have suffered are not entitled to happiness and fulfilment/completion” (Löwy 2005, 30). In other words, Löwy is suggestive of the fact that by means of a non-closure of past generations and then to think its natural outcome in the form of further fulfilment would not only be pre-emptive about forgoing a conclusion but also follows a danger of giving up to the logic of lackadaisical lottery making that sits idle waiting for the inevitable to happen.

So, rather than shelving the redemption as a complete whole, what must be kept in mind is a critical assessment of any proclaimed fulfilment or even non-fulfilment that considers the teleological progression of history as *the* only parameter. Then, redemption is no longer messianic and does not intend to subjugate or conform the constituents of salvation; though never possessing over the susceptibility of elements struggling against any kind of conformation. Therefore, a revolutionary potential cannot be only brooding, but needs to be performed in the “now time”, which doesn't necessarily be known or acknowledged as redemptive.

²¹ Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'* (London; New York: Verso Publications, 2005), 32. According to Löwy “Mikrokosmos” was written by Hermann Lotze, a German philosopher whose above specified work dealt with ethical and religious philosophy of history that attracted attention in the late 1930's.

V

The thesis raises the following set of questions. First, what precisely are the categories of a 'political theatre'? Second, without falling prey to chronological-progression of theatre history, how can research methodology envisage and comprehend the 'phenomenon' of emergence and effacement of 'political theatre'? Third, historically, there is a certain deficiency of extracting political *possibilities* from given historical realities. Then, were these theatre groups formulating the paradigms of 'political theatre' by examining and re-articulating an anomaly within political theatre? Fourth, within the ambit of theatre historiography, how does one problematise "representation of past", without naturalizing the discourse based on collective memory, oral history or remembrance? Fifth, is it possible to consider the limitations of archive (absence of textual material) as a standpoint from where a new historiography can take off toward uncharted possibilities?

VI

The thesis is distributed into a format of five chapters, with an introduction and a conclusion. While the introduction discusses an entanglement of "now time" with performative 'site of mediation', the thesis threads together four signs across a sequencing of five chapters. These signs are, *with-through*, *tarīkā*, *perform-e-bility* and *affective sublation*. They become a tool to for a methodological approach for this thesis, while thinking through modalities of possibility in the idea of 'political theatre'. At the same time, these five chapters also test out conceptual realm of these four signs by arranging thematic components arising out of the material. Therefore,

the thesis is arranged according to these components, which can be thematically designed as – *problematik* of ‘presentation’, a critique of *guṇ-doṣ*, non-decisional determination in *tarīkā* (method/technique), aesthetics of harangue, the figure of a *tamāshbīn*, *alamkār* as a mediator, *saṃpreṣaṇ* of horror and tragedy, *ehsās-bodh* of a dabbler, adaptation of mythology, *udhāran* (examples and illustration) from mythology, and utility of ‘props’ as aesthetic of minimalism.

Miṭṭī Ki Gārī: With the Concern, Through the Debate of Presentation in Theatre

The chapter tries to open up debates on issues related with acting and directorial concerns of Dr. Satyavrat Sinha. With a focus on his own critical observations on the performance of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*,²² Dr. Sinha’s analytical writings, letters, discussions and self-criticisms informs and guide these debates. Rather than merely revisiting these texts, writings and letters, this chapter opens up concern through a redressal mechanism. Since these concerns become debates as part of an ongoing discussion around various streams of activity in theatre and performative expressions in the process these documentations can become an imperative index to explore modes of redressal. In a way, a redressal of concerns and examination of debates in the theatre practice of *Prayag Rang Manch* looks out for possible stimuli to affect new initiations in understanding what went *missing* while forming the debates. Which means that the fault lines at the ‘site’ of performative mediation is not to be automatically explicated *in* debates but rather explored affectively *with* the concerns and *through* the debates. By doing so, the gamut of debates related with acting in

²² Anupam Anand, *Hindi Rangkarm Ke Amritputra: Dr. Satyabrat Sinha* (Allahabad: Hindustani Academy Press, 2009), 293. *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī* was staged by the theatre group, Prayag Rang Manch on 4 March, 1960. The play was translated from Shudrak’s Sanskrit drama, *Mrichhakatikam* to Hindustani by Dr. Satyavrat Sinha and he himself played the character of Shudrak. The translated copy was published by Parimal Prakashan, Allahabad in the same year.

theatre and direction of plays shall be foregrounded at the outset in order to look forward and put to test foreclosure of debates.

While foliating (the state of putting forth of leaves) the discussion on *guṇ-dos*, hyphenation as a literary category is explored in terms of conceptualization of how these two distinct categories of *guṇ* and *dos* come together. More than a correction from the point of view of a fault by default, the combination of the word *guṇ-dos* assists to see through an act of bringing together a simultaneous movement in expressing the device of hyphenation. It is in pursuance *with* attributes and *through* the process of hyphenation that the device is argued as a *tarīkā* (technique in method) which modifies an equal status of these two words – *guṇ* and *dos*.

Perhaps, rather than prepositioning of counterparts, hyphenation in *guṇ-dos* explicates the *tarīkā* of calibrating a collision of paradoxes. With help of such collisions, a suggestive approach to concerns is charted out, in order to experience the incommensurable measure of paradox. *With* the concern and *through* the paradoxes, contradistinction of formulated concerns, intend to unswerve (swerve means the act or cause to turn aside swiftly and in an abrupt manner) along the existing normative hypothesis. Because an unswerving commitment to normative hypothesis gathers a form in approach from the cursive conviction, they flow *with* the concerns and *through* the debates. Thus, finally leading the area of current research onto an explicative gesture of picking up generic peculiarities that convinces to glide over the ‘surface’ of hypotheses. In effect, etching a typeface with the particularities may uncannily resemble a free flowing style in the cursive conviction. Thereby, cursive conviction in hypothesis can be seen as a ricochet in collision of paradoxes that warrant *inexhaustible* patterns to emerge in the *meaning-making* of theatre.

Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai: Political Aesthetics of Organising a Commotion

The chapter navigates through the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, created by the theatre-cum-cultural group *Jan Sanskriti Manch* of Lucknow Unit in the year 1978-79. Through a prefatory opening of a declaration, the chapter attempts to undertake a study the meanings of call for congregation to construe the means and methods of performative junctures in the play. Herein, the overture of the musical instrument of *nagārā* and word projection of *hośiyā...r ! khabardā... r !* (Be Alert! Be Alarmed!) tries to bring out an imperative question of declaration, made as that in the proclamation of Emergency. Thereby making a outreach in the domain of ‘aesthetic application’ commonly used at the beginning of street performances, the call for a congregation in an Emergency situation explicates affectation as a phenomenon which is unfurled in extraordinary times.

By testing out the affective markers of political theatre in relation to aesthetic devices, the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* attempts to bring out specific instances from personal anecdotes. Excerpts from the personal interview with Adiyog of *JASAM* grounds an entanglement of of two words – *with* and *through*. As the pairing orients itself to study the modes of public declaration as a performative field of inquiry, the call for congregation advocates a spatial stimulus, otherwise put on suspension. *With* the proclamation and *through* an elongated projection, the two prepositions assists to provide a working of affectation. Therein the loud disclaimer of *hośiyā...r ! khabardā... r !* (Be Alert! Be Alarmed!) tease out performative declaration in the due course of inquiry, *with* the means of methods and *through* an application of technique.

Connecting affectation with the term “internal disturbances”, the chapter seeks to contextualize Emergency, with the performative moment of *striking a pose* in being alert and alarmed. The performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayi Hai*, it is argued, inaugurates an attentive and alarming posture in the space of performance. With the beat of *nagārā*, and proclamatory declaration, it simultaneously presented a moment of affectation in being alert and alarmed. The *nagārā* affect the order of space by prescribing an obligatory pose of being alert and alarmed. Whereas on the other hand, to strike a pose, the proclamation influences the inauguration and assigns ‘a pose’ for everyone in the audience. Thus enforcing a corporeal experience for congregation *with* the sound *through* the scape, as if calling for a wartime.

Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin: A ‘Performo-Magical’ Act in People’s Language

The chapter ventures to test out elements of demonstration, lyrical narration and magical qualities within the ‘performo-magical’ act of *madārī-jamūrā* in the political performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*. By foregrounding a colloquial style of narration in the performative oration of *tukbaṁdī*, the chapter argues that contrary to the stage shows where magical performances are carried out as visual spectacle, the *tamāsā* of *madārī-jamūrā*²³ interject a constant drive of politically charged quips and satirical statements in the form of banter. Similar to a passing comment and easy to pick up in terms of remembering the couplets, this application of rhyming words in

²³ John Zubrzycki, *Jadoowallahs, Jugglers and Jinns: A Magical History of India* (London: Pan Macmillan India, 2018), 9. *Madārī-Jamūrā* combo according to the author falls under the big umbrella of magicians who perform tricks and sleight of hand as a means for their living. With their repertoire of entertainers and showmanship he enlists them under the category of ‘jugglers’ who as master story tellers and conjurers have picked up the profession from their ancestors. He traces their rooted in the peripatetic tribes coming from lower castes and marginal communities. Situating the intriguing figures of street performers, jugglers and magicians, the figure of *madārī-jamūrā* will try to keep a paranthetical reference at the back of mind while dealing with nuanaces of *tamāsā*.

tukbaṃdī offer a unique blend for communicating ‘politics’ in a political performance. Moving on with the popular dimension of *tukbaṃdī*, the chapter undertake a performance criticism of the play *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* by proposing that a lightness of expression in the ‘performo-magical’ show of *madārī-jamūrā* act, affect the spectator with the magic of listening to *tukbaṃdī* and simultaneously prepare a political *tamāshbīn* (spectator).

Understanding the orientation of *tukbaṃdī* and the political possibility through a mediation of language, the figure of *tamāshbīn* is envisaged as an onlooker who become ‘a part of the whole’ to performance. The *tamāshbīn* (spectator) participates in the performance as an onlooker, who enjoys the experience of standing by the event of performance and in an unapologetic manner may comment or react to her/his taste of feelings. The spectator may judge the *kartab* (daring acts) of *madārī-jamūrā* as an ‘object’ for scrutiny and thus felicitate a milieu of expectation in the improbable nature of the *kartab* itself. The magical awe in completion of a *kartab* (daring act) entail a ‘pleasurable show’ by empowering the *tamāshbīn* with an imperative tool of judgement like that of a connoisseur. Akin to the a connoisseur, the *tamāshbīn* does not hold back her/his opinion and makes it known in the public domain with a simultaneous sense of robustness and sophistication. The *tamāshbīn* in a way is a ‘professional onlooker’ as it brings together a dialectical play of ‘ability’ to demarcate between the tastes of feeling with that of a performance of expressing feeling of taste with a sense of smell. Thereby, *with* the taste and *through* the smell the connoisseur in *tamāshbīn* taps onto variant sensory faculties and receives a prompt of thoughtful emotions. It mediates *with* the method of knowledge and encounters *through* the technique of wisdom, so as to opine like a an expert onlooker

whose observation senses each and every taste at the same time, all at once, in one stroke. Thus eclectically bringing the ‘ability’ of taste, smell, feeling, memory and more importantly their thought to express in the form of *perform-e-bility*. The *tamāshbīn* inculcates a *tarīkā* of judgement which she evolves organically in the realm of appreciative criticism.

In the voice of *jamūrā* through which an oratory promulgation is supposed to declare an edict about times untold, follows a logic of communication. And it happens to be the figure of *jamūrā* who embodies the magical method and technique of communication, both at the same time, to necessitate all the possibilities for a communication. His becoming a medium, officiates a performative demonstration of the magical feat and reveals not only an ability to invent a mode for communication but also constitute a *perform-e-bility* of the medium. A *perform-e-bility* which brings together an affect of magic *with* the voice of *jamūrā* and sublate *through* its performance. Thereby, presenting a mediation of magic in the performance that plays out *with* the medium and *through* magical moment. Rather than a forced substitution in mediation, the performative moment of magic between the *jamūrā* and an unknown consciousness introduces an ability to perform magic that has a proximity to present two consciousness simultaneously at the same time, that is, to get affected and carry out a process of *sublation*. One consciousness affected with the voice and the other reckoned as an equality of ability to perform magical *sublation* through the form of *tukbaṁdī*.

Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha: Ehsās-Bodh of a Tragedy

Contextualised in the backdrop of Bhopal Gas Tragedy (December 3, 1983), the chapter opens with the figure of Tuli and Tanu as two central characters who present distinct modes of thinking in the performance of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*. Reading through their ‘performative mien’ about music (ghazal) appreciation, the contradictory perspective of the two characters take a note of how gender plays an important role in ways of perception and thinking. Herein, Tuli’s persuasion to listen to the voice of oneself, without taking ‘help’ of *ghazal*, propel the question of ‘experiencing’ feeling of thought and the thought of feeling. Presenting the performative play of verbal exchanges between these two figures, the chapter treats the figures of Tuli and Tanu as a case in point to layout a dialectical coupling of the Urdu expression, *Dil-o-Dimāg*. The expression, *Dil-o-Dimāg* gives a prompt to think *with* the mind and feel *through* the heart as a unique blend to create a perspective and approach about ways of understanding life in a crisis situation. Connecting the eclectic expression of *Dil-o-Dimāg*, with the method and technique of hearing out oneself, the chapter works through the crucial aspect of mediation in performative act of ‘contemplative mien’. Referred here as *tarīkā* of mediation in communication, the dialectical coupling of ‘Dil’ and ‘Dimāg’ have a bearing on disparate modes of method and technique in creating ligature of ‘thinking of the heart and the feeling of mind’.

The chapter attempts to follow up on the lead of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*, a performance which deals with the crisis and resolve to struggle for human life in the face of industrial disaster. In doing so, the chapter tries to study a cross-medial

interweaving of issues, debates and their articulation as ‘aesthetic presentation’ from an experiential first hand recollection about the disaster. By foregrounding a life changing experience of Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma, a historical condition of the tragedy is examined through his recollection of events. This would entail a thorough probe into triggering points from where a creative artist sought inspiration to express her/his concerns about a ‘tragedy’. Moreover this inquiry tries to indicate that how this experience of a horrific incident lead to an artistic expression that had *saṃvednātmak-samajhdārī* in the performance of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*.

Referring to snippets of personal interview with Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma, the chapter attempts to delve *with* the concern and *through* the debate of ‘tragedy’. In doing so, the chapter carries out a ‘philosophico-aesthetic’ debate on how ‘tragedy’ was conceptualised in the performative moment of being *vikṣipt* (unsound mind) at a penultimate juncture in the performance of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*. Reading through the idea behind the performative moment of being *vikṣipt* the chapter argues that the ‘site’ of actor’s body re-articulated the magnitude of tragedy by communicating a sense of loss through the body’s ‘inability’. Presenting the ‘inability’ to gather oneself in the performative moment of being *vikṣipt*, the *tarīkā* of body’s ability to perform an ‘inability showcases the ‘aesthetico-philosophical’ dimension of *perform-e-bility*. Therefore, it brings together the *saṃvednā* and *samajhdārī* of ‘tragedy. *Perform-e-bility* performs the dialiectic of ‘ability-inability’ *with* thinking of heart and through the feeling of mind as it transfigures the presentation of being *vikṣipt* into a *saṃpreṣaṇ* (communication) of the same by performing an ‘inability’ through the ability of mediation. Working with these simultaneous vantage points the chapter keeps switching between concerns, emerging

from the performance itself, historical moment of Bhopal Gas Tragedy, and the referral adjunct of interviews with Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma.

Yerma: A Coupling of Affect and Sublation in Their Contradistinction

The chapter is divided into three sections. First section of the chapter introduces the performance of *Yerma*,²⁴ which was staged by the theatre group *Samanantar*, Allahabad. Set against the backdrop of a countryside, forte of the text evokes strong emotive articulations about injustice, pain, desire in a ‘lyrico-musical’ ballad form. The performance deals with themes such as taboo, infertility, chastity, motherhood and the sensual/sexual aspirations of women. The narrative plot of the play assists to give a panopticon view on the kind of helplessness women have to bear in the name of maintaining societal codes and sanctity. In context of the performance, taboos that are associated with childless mother becomes a nodal point, so as to bring forth questions related to adaptation techniques and thereby focus on the debate of ‘originality in theatrical adaptation’.

Referring to personal interview with actor, director and writer Anil Ranjan Bhowmick, excerpts and instances from rehearsals, workshops and improvisation inputs informs the second part of this chapter. Drawing from parables and of *Mahabharat*, an engagement of theatre with myths and its legendary figures prompts

²⁴ Anupam Vatsyayan, “Earth Woman: *Yerma*,” *Re-Visiting and Re-Staging* (New Castle upon Tyne, U.K: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 71. Written originally in Spanish by Federico Garcia Lorca in the year 1934, *Yerma* has been adapted into several languages and performed widely in India since 1969. The author recounts four adaptations of the play, the first being Ebrahim Alkazi’s adaptation of *Yerma* in 1969. Other adaptations include Neelam Man Singh’s presentation of *Yerma* at the All India Drama Festival, New Delhi (1992), a collaborative work of Yavanika Theatre Group, Chandigarh with students of National School of Drama in 1999 and Kusum Haider’s 2008 production at India Habitat Centre.

the chapter to probe into the theme of *use*. As the use of myths and mythic figures in theatre articulate a narrative of its own kind, their weaving in the contemporary political context examines the ‘use of themes’ from mythical narratives as a counterpart to the particulars of being contemporary *in theatre*. Therein, this parable from theatrical performance of *Maṁthan* is juxtaposed vis-à-vis the debate around contemporaneity in theatre. This positioning of proximities further deliberate on questions related to the dialectic of utility and usability of myths in theatre.

The third section of the chapter foregrounds theatrical props and their transformation in the space of theatre to investigate the political potentialities it opens up. While the simple transformative uses of a ‘prop’ of such as *lāṭhī*, a heavy stick used by the police, is taken for granted in theatre, and often goes un-remarked, this section of the chapter centres around contradistinction of opening out questions on conditioned theatrical or aesthetic choice, and thus involve the concept of *perform-e-bility* which can propose to a thinking afresh about imagining ‘objects’ in creative manner.

Chapter One

Miṭṭī Ki Gārī: With the Concern, Through the Debate of Presentation in Theatre

In this chapter, the concerns reflected in the writing of Dr. Sinha become a primary instrument to follow a consorted effort at adducing the material for the debate. For this Dr. Sinha's short write up titled "The Clay Cart: Acting and Adaptation" makes an adjoining reflection at the performance.²⁵ As a collated literature of its own kind, these concerns range from technique and method in adaptation to *problematik* of presentation in theatre. In the case of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*, the central concern is that of *problematik* of presentation in theatre. For example, the section on *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī* brings forth a critical statement uttered by a poet who also happens to be a friend of Dr. Sinha. Here the comment does not only initiate a discussion on the comment itself, but tries to set up the debate related with *problematik* of presentation in theatre. Keeping in mind that such a redressal won't entail an insatiable outlook that undermines its own historical specificity and context, these debates shall certainly try to deliberate on concerns facing theatre and performance studies in today's perspective.

²⁵ Original title in Anupam Anand, "Miṭṭī Ki Gārī: Abhinay aur Rūpāṃtaraṅ," *Himḍī Raṅgkarm Ke AmritPuṭra: Dr. Satyavrat Sinha* (Daraganj, Allahabad: Hinduatani Academy Press, 2009).

To place a critical concern at the table from the word go, is to maintain the focus at debates which undercut and run through other sections of the chapter. This helps the debate to gradually pan out and retest the overarching concerns cutting through the debates of theatre. For example, towards an introductory proposition of debates around acting, an initiatory inflection of two feminine nouns shall be put to test. These initiatory inflections are of *sātviktā* (integrity, righteousness) and *rasiktā* (playful, jocular). Drawn from their adjectives both these feminine nouns express the *bhāv* of being *sātvik* and *rasik*. Herein, the former implies an attributive quality of honesty, righteousness and integrity. And the latter comprises of tendencies, related to playfulness, creativity, appreciative and being joyful. Thus, initiating the concern of *sātviktā* (integrity, righteousness) and *rasiktā* (playful, jocular), as stated in Dr. Sinha's write-up, debates around the emphasis on particular acting style follow-suit the technique and method of adaptation. Precisely, because the feminine nouns, *sātviktā* and *rasiktā* are derivation from their adjectives, the noun whispers-in an attributive sense of tendencies. This in turn teases out the conceptualization of the word *guṇ-dos*.

Mainstay of the chapter is around the presentation, approaches, treatment of dramatic and theatrical moments, the task at hand doesn't afford to allow an infinite recession. Nonetheless, at a functional level, excerpts from these literatures not only provide a baton for a double-track sprint, but also see through the simultaneous act of *saṃvednā* (feeling) and *samajhdārī* (sensibility) in Dr. Satyavrat Sinha's artistic practice. Because, the study at hand not only convinces the literature to speak for itself and find a solace in it, but also allows a diagrammatic cut to be illustrated in order to make a *collision* of concerns. Instead of a violent means to bring about a

collision, here the diagrammatic cut *sublates* the predicament of interaction. As in, this predicament is not between an interactive concern and a non-interactive concern. Or, what was non-interactive initially, overcomes the decision and finally interacts. But the diagrammatic cut illustrates a ‘non-decisional determination’, in picking up what was left in the predicament, so as to bring together disparate concerns into an affectionate piece of artwork. Diagrammatic cut is characteristic of a swoosh that affectively intends to make a collision of *perform-e-bility*. It pronounces all non-interactive concerns while thinking and practicing the pronunciation through listening. Such is the technique and method of *perform-e-bility*.

Dialectic of *Sātviktā* & *Rasiktā*

After the *prastuti* of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*, one of my most respected friend, who also happens to be an acclaimed poet of Hindi, remarked that a sense of righteousness overburdened Charudatta's acting and its character had less playfulness.

(Anand 2009, 151, Translation mine)

Dr. Sinha sets up an incognito tone by asking the reader to join him with the moment of remembrance. As the moment of remembrance invites one and all to participate in a throwback flip from his memory lane, an incognito tone motivates the reader to fetch the time of reference for themselves. In effect, he pitches himself for conducting the narration of the criticism through an upfront write-up on the performance of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*. Dr. Sinha introduces a rejoinder in this scathing assesment, while at the same time holds a mandate of prescriptive sincerity which enjoin the fact of officiating an injunction, deemed to fall in line with feeling of the thinkable. Instead of discarding such a criticism, Dr. Satyavrat Sinha tries to engage with the comment as an authorial

figure. To put forth the heart of the issue, although being slightly discombobulated, he manages to probe through the shortcomings in the performance of *Mittī Ki Gārī*. And to that extent of an immediate reaction to the performance, words of the poet friend gets an opinionated overture.

What made the poet friend express such a thought provoking statement became a matter of concern because the criticism had not only inflicted a response in the form of a short write up, but also warranted that the degree of a scathing criticism necessitate a rectification via dialogue. For that, one must be willing to answer the hard questions. At least in this case, Dr. Sinha tries to overcome his trepidation that is set in motion by the statement of the poet friend. While trying to find an appropriate answer, he connives at a series of literary orientated presumptions in conjunction with a complete disavowal for the character's influence on the play. And to reason out the lacunae in adapted characterization, the search for an apt reply kept Dr. Sinha on a war foot. He even contemplates to the extent of passing the buck onto the director of the play. As this contemplation rested on a false premise, a supposition that the choice of focus on particular characters were not made by him could only muster up an accusation towards the director. It more or less stood as a lame duck argument to hide his own fallacy. So an apt answer other than his own fallacy could only satisfy his ego and settle down for a temporary defense.

In order to delve into the process of finding an answer, Dr. Sinha prod an enquiry at the statement itself. First, he begins by asking that what did this poet meant by the term of *sātviktā* and *rasiktā*? Second, were these categories the only parameter of assessment in which the poet friend tried to place the conventional character of

Charudutt? Third, borrowing directly from Sudraka's Sanskrit play, *Mrichhakatikam*, did the poet friend mark an anxiety in its adaptation? If so, then what sort of attributive comparison did he want to explicate through his comment? Fourth, was Dr. Sinha himself tried to pursue a reflection back upon these two category in order to work upon them in future? Fifth, was the poet friend implied at the connotative part of the character, which was projecting a type in acting out the role of Charudutt? Sixth, was it a routine kind of judgement/opinion that friends usually make just to provoke others?

In terms of an approach to inquiries undertaken by Dr. Sinha indicate towards his understanding of vigorous thinking about theatre and its creative practice amassed through criticality. He knew that such an overarching observation about a character that too from a Sanskrit Drama, was readily available for any critique, but the specific criticism was not just for the sake of criticism. Because this close friend happens to be a poet of some stature, if not considered a stalwart, the critical opinion was unsettling for Dr. Sinha, who was grappling to reason out an overall approach to the performance of *Mitī Ki Gārī*. Whether or not reasoning out the criticism was at all legitimately well positioned, the comment had acquired a meaning and a sense of criticality of its own, at least on the face value. This compelled Dr. Sinha to reflect back upon the remark and address the shortcoming by taking the concerns head-on. For him, not for a second does this entail a superficial reading about the said remark. And why so, precisely because that an annotation to the remark was indicating towards the possibilities of theatre-making. The remark's speculative aspect could minimally galvanize probable meanings. So, instead of going in the depth of the remark, the procedure herewith held onto a lead of the remark, and gets affected *with*

the concern and *through* an unraveling of debates. Thus while attributively crosschecking it *with* the contemplative concern and dealing *through* the discussion of *sātviktā and rasiktā*, the chapter commences for the search of reasoning out Dr. Sinha's sense of accountability. Because the spirit of accountability according to him was of paramount importance and could then have a purpose for a theatre practitioner. For this accountability, he sets the motion of criticism with a rejoinder to the remark.

A Rejoinder to the Remark

Supporting the poet friend's criticism, Dr. Sinha ponders over the comment which was directed at the overall approach, in conjunction to the performance of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*. In the opening paragraph of his write-up titled, "Miṭṭī Ki Gārī: Abhinay aur Rūpāṃtaraṇ," Dr. Satyavrat Sinha pens down a rejoinder where he tries to address the concern of his poet friend. Recalling the comment the write-up initiates an inner dialogue which appears to be more on the lines of a rejoinder. It must be noted that the rejoinder here is connotative of a reprisal situation like that in warfare, where retaliation is inflicted against an enemy. Here the enemy is not the poet friend, but it is the *fault* in the characterization of Charudutt that is being recognised as a foe. In this context of a rejoinder, the terrain of theatre augur towards its own limitation of identification with a possible exposition of finding the fault. To that end the overall configuration of a director's disposition suits best to examine and interrogate one's own shortcoming, and engage with the fault at the 'site' of acting.

It is here at the ‘site’ of acting that a judgment is made vis-à-vis the characteristics of Charudutt. The remark was, “a sense of righteousness overburdened Charudatta's acting and its character had less playfulness”. Therein, the statement made by the poet friend literally means that integrity and righteousness was more than the playfulness in the acting of Charudutt. A noun placed in contradiction to the other differs on the ground of characteristics, as both the orders are used to define the parameters of Charudutt. Without a doubt, the poet friend’s comment, strives to pinpoint towards a lack in the acting of Charudutt. Here, the degree of lack is overtly placed in a comparative frame. So the lack when expressed, displays two registers of acting – *sātviktā and rasiktā*. On face value, neither integrity as such has anything to do with playfulness, nor does playfulness have a necessity to correspond with integrity. Yet both the registers are taken into account for the purpose of judging a character.

In this case, the comment on Charudutt’s acting stretches out²⁶ a space between contradistinction for a fascinating parenthesis. The relationship between *sātviktā and rasiktā* is foregrounded so as to grasp a sense of contradistinctions in judging a character. As mentioned above, both these registers do operate on a differential plane. But even then being pitted vis-à-vis each other, the contradistinction explicates about

²⁶ *Dictionary.com Online*, s.v. “subtend,” accessed January 25, 2018, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/subtend?s=t>. In Botany subtend is like a bract which holds the flower from below and allows it to blossom. The word comes from the Latin root of ‘sub’ and ‘tendere’, that which is corresponding a combined expression, which is “to stretch beneath.” *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v. “subtend,” accessed January 26, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/subtend>. Because, it is imperative to gather together, what the nature of a comment does bring to the table – a contradistinction considers the vital principle of an organism. Drawing a parallel between the comment and its functionality, subtend can be thought through a qualifying word that captures the sense of extension. Here subtend means, to underlie or that which is inherent in an object *used* with a verb designation. Therein, the comment extends its proximity to that of a bract. It is as if, the comment in itself acts as a bract of a plant that supports the bud of a flower to bloom.

a *non-internequine coupling*. It places both *sātviktā and rasiktā* not in a confrontational mode, but rather marks off an extension in interval. The contradistinction then brings about an interceding act that informs the interval about a device for mediation. This device for mediation creates a ‘site’ of expression in which the signs of a simultaneous positioning of possibilities does exist. As if, in a method for creating such ‘sites’ of expression, the concern pockets itself safely and stands au courant (cognizant) *with* the comment. While at the same time, the concern illustrates an indication *through* a parenthetical technique. Thereby, even if the concern hides behind an annotative criticism, the corridor of an observation can communicate a certain kind of delimitation. Then the comment rightfully extends that Charudutt’s acting was being more righteous than playful, elegant and passionate. Taken on a prima facie account, in a way, the comment provides a bract for criticism so that the flower of creative solemnity can blossom from beneath.

On the one hand, an overwhelming character of Charudutt’s sacrifice and correctness is visualized, whereas on the other hand, an affectionate love for Vasantsena²⁷, positions *sātviktā and rasiktā* in a relationship of contradistinction. Both, *sātviktā and rasiktā* are feminine nouns but neither of the two nouns are in tandem with each other. As both of these nouns are impervious to each other, their dissemblance incurs a simple distinction of differential qualities. And without a doubt, their compactness is also impenetrable because they can only possibly resonate simultaneously *with* oneself and *through* the other. They need not necessarily be pitted against one another but can be conceived as a resonating variable at the ‘site of mediation’ that is here the fulcrum of acting. By extension of this argument, the resonating variables at the ‘site’

²⁷ Vasantsena is the female protagonist in the play *Mrichhakatikam*. She is a courtesan who falls in love with Charudutt.

of acting are basically betwixt and between of mediation that withholds two nouns of acting as the parenthesis initiates an incongruous reading of both the noun-markers at the same time. Therefore, the technique of fulcrum is the parenthetical method in acting, wherein, the method, so it seems to be of a balancing nature, if not destructive to either of the noun.

In the trajectory of understanding the gravity of the situation, Dr. Sinha ultimately subscribe to the fact that if he himself resorts to an excuse then it would be a futile exercise of a wishful arrogance. Since he was singularly responsible for everything starting right from conceptualisation to the characterization and topicality of the play, a proportionate accountability had to prevail over a foisted penitence, if the presentation of *Mrichhakatikam* was indeed to be adapted onto *Mitti Ki Gaadi*. More than ever, the topicality of *Mrichhakatikam* in *Mitti Ki Gaadi* had to make a move other than the guise of a contemporary play. If at all the forte of charade was supposed to be put into an anxious moment of inspection, the rejoinder ought to be self invective as an imperative element of acceptance to face off dogmatism.

Hyphenation in *Guṇ-Doṣ*

Being well defined to be a noble man, Charudutt is supposed to perform the qualities ascribed to him. And these nomenclatures have the sense of poise, elegance and uprightness. He survives as someone who guides the principle of integrity through himself and does not make compromises. By living an austere life, he sets an example in *Mittī Ki Gārī*. But then, he falls in love with Vasantsena, a courtesan at

the *darbār* of King Palaka. Picking up on this aspect of Charudutt, the poet friend of Dr. Sinha settles down for *rasiktā* as the main template for his countenance.

The responsibility of Charudutt's *guṇ-dos* ultimately fell upon me and that's why after the *prastuti* of the play, I accepted that an excess of *sātviktā* in the acting had been committed on my part. With this acceptance the picture got crystal clear and instantly the problem was resolved.

(Anand 2009, 151, Translation mine)

For Dr. Sinha, the question of *sātviktā* vis-à-vis *rasiktā* became paramount. As far as a counter positioning between these two nouns was concerned, he agrees that one of them had been given more preference over the other. Whether or not it was just to do so, was not going to drive home the point of being immaculate in directorial sense. It is because of the reason that the acceptance of flaw in Charudutt's acting had decanted the need for a redressal. But with what characteristic either of these nouns was going to be set aside? Was an evaluation inutile to the *problematik*? Or, what stood out to be suggestive in the rebuttal of criticism could become its own anticipatory resolution?

In order to make a concision in the process of critical evaluation, Dr. Sinha addresses the *problematik* with the word, *guṇ-dos*. Two words combined as one in an expression unfurls two qualities which are quite antithetical to one another. As an oxymoron *guṇ-dos*, holds together an attribute which is adjunctive²⁸ to the quality within, but has a defect and flaw inbuilt as in the system. So, more than an oxymoron *guṇ-dos* bring both the aspects of incommensurability *with* one and interactive

²⁸ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v. "adjunctive," accessed June 4, 2019, <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/adjunctive>>. The word is an adjective which means, "added to something else as a supplement rather than an essential part".

through another. Incommensurable precisely because of the reason that it makes an interaction possible, by simultaneously keeping them apart and yet present at the same time while being disjointed in their sense of conception. Even though, one and the other are incommensurately interactive, neither of the two bows in front of each other. Much ado happens and takes place at such a polemical interaction of hyphenation²⁹ wherein the contradiction of perseverance between *guṇ* and *doṣ* can go *missing* without a whisker.

Therein, hyphenation is addressed in reference to the various techniques and methods which are applied to form a new word. Especially in the context of the word *guṇ-dos*, how words take shape by bring about chiasmic exchange of sonic properties. As a distinguishing nature in the chiasmic exchange, hyphenation in *guṇ-dos* needs a consorted follow up because the argument suggests that it is that of sonic properties instead of derivative practices (morphological derivation) in word formation which are concatenated in order to bring about a declension? Michael Meier-Brügger (2003) in his book, *Indo-European Linguistics* chart out an exposition at the occurrence of verb stems forming a compound from separate words. Arguing that this occurrence doesn't stop at being recognized into a nominal composition, Meier-Brügger in the chapter section, "The Proto-Indo-European Lexicon", under the suheading, 'Word

²⁹ *Dictionary.com Online*, s.v. "hyphen," accessed January 31, 2018, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/hyphen?s=t>. Hyphenation is the use of hyphen which is denoted by the sign '(-)'. Seldom, but at certain times it is also referred as minus. Hyphen is applied as a punctuation sign '(-)' to conjugate words into nouns or for syllabification in linguistics. The hyphen is indicated through the sign which is then applied between syllables of the word. In this particular context, hyphenation will as of now suffice to bring onto nouns. For example, "mother-in-law". Also hyphenation is imparted onto the new formation to give a comprehensive overview to ascertain the accentuation of a word. In other words this means that an inflection is performed onto an existing word(s), sound-word, or two and more words into a single encapsulation. In lieu, hyphenation also makes way for a partitioning order into the process of carving out a novel meaning. *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v. "hyphen," accessed January 31, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hyphen>. "The sign (-) is used to join words to indicate that they have a combined meaning or that they are linked in the grammar of a sentence (as in a pick-me-up, rock-forming minerals,) to indicate the division of a word at the end of a line, or to indicate a *missing* element (as in, short-term and long-term).

Formation Using Suffixes', prods about adjectives which gives a sense of association or "in relation to" or "belonging to" does have a missing act in possession (2003, 281). Four different suffixes that he cites are "the verbal -io-, a nominal -io- with a vague meaning (according to its origins, presumably an -i-stem with a thematic vowel), a nominal -ih₂-o with a special indication of possession (by its origin, possibly an -o-derivation from an abstract noun featuring -ih₂-)" (282). Meier-Brügger, goes further to make a point regarding the "vanishing of the laryngeal of H, which when occurring in type II, leads to merger with type I and finally by generalization in the IE languages of *-iio- in type I, such that after the vanishing of the laryngeal under *-iio-, both true-iio- forms and those that were originally *-io- and *-ih₂- forms can be united. Whereas the double consonant can be restructured by the phonetic consequence where the locative as well as the derivative first co-existed and then merged" (282).

Similarly, in *Himḍī Vyākraṇ* the expression for compound words is known as "samās". An example of *samās* is as follows, handcuff, and comes from a combination of hand + cuff or bookstore from book + store. In a way what *samās* does is, it injects to bring a compound of lexemes. Samās is of six types, namely as *avyayībhāv*, *tatpurush*, *karmdharya*, *dvigu*, *dvaṃdva* and *bahubrīhi*. *Guṇ-doṣ* falls under *dvaṃdva samās* because of its nature of being a copulative compound and there is a com-possibility of simultaneous interpunction. What I mean by simultaneous interpunction is that, in the context of hyphenation in acting, styles of acting have intermediary punctuations. Then as indicated above, *guṇ-doṣ* is not a mere conjugation, it's a subtle breakage of "putting of points in between" *guṇ* and *doṣ*. Therein, a disappearance of hyphenation isn't antithetical to the move of such a

breakage through which the conjugation becomes permeable. Because, the exhilarating aspect of being a *rasik* is a joustful magic, it goes a complete circle with the *missing* act of “vibhaktiyon ke cihn”. *Vibhakti* here implies declension, in the sense of condition or aspect without attribute that instills a pattern of inflection in case, gender and name.³⁰ The separation or termination in which *pratyay* is not only taken to be a suffix advocates an accordance through which the phonic mood is with the spirit of nomination.

Certainly, what deems to be fit in bringing together a simultaneous movement goes by the naming of hyphenation. Herein, hyphenation procures a *magic-al* character, which is *with* the punctuation and *through* the *missing* act of inflection. On one hand, *gun-dos* agrees to be incommensurable but on the other hand, it conditions an interaction of the two being still conversing at each other. Such an adjunctive interaction invites a ‘composure of a possibility’, which may divulge to envisage an extraordinary inception.³¹ In return, what the simultaneously movement of incommensurability and interaction misses is the register of conjunction. Therefore, without *missing* the hyphen in between which reiterates an ever incommensurable

³⁰ Omkar N Koul, *Modern Hindi Grammar* (Springfield, VA: Dunwoody Press, 2008), 33.

³¹ In extension to English language usage of terminologies, words from Hindi Vyakaran and Urdu nomenclature would be brought in to convey similarities in differences and explicate declension. In Urdu poetry Nazm or Ghazal are popular genres of poetic expression. Both have their own set of rules and patterns in word formation, but some basic terminologies are used to identify difference and similarities in Nazm and Ghazal. The word “*Kāfiyā*” is a specific device which is applied as a rhyme. The other device being refrain in the poetic literature called as “*Radīf*”. As an example from a Nazm, written in the wee hours, at Sabarmati Hostel, JNU, the following excerpt suggests a demarcation between “*Kāfiyā*” (बेशुमार, यार) and “*Radīf*” (ए).

ऐसी कैफियत-ए-खयाल, जहाँ मैं बेशुमार
 बजाये बेरुखी के, बज़्म में शोखी-ए-यार
 कह लेता अफ़साने, कुछ जदीद हाल-ओ-फिकरे यार
 ना तलब-ए-यार, ना दिल-ए-यार ...

interaction, the word formation of *guṇ-doṣ* coruscate a simple and yet polemical indication, that is of hyphenation in the critical analysis of Charudutt's acting.

Therefore, accepted on face value, an attribute which is of righteousness in Charudutt is taken to be a *guṇ*. Whereas with the criticism of the poet the same attribute (righteousness) becomes a *guṇ-doṣ*. Quite oxymoronic as it may seem, an indispensable attribute is affixed, at the same time simultaneously, to a counter attribute. In this case the counter attribute happens to be *rasiktā*. Replete with such an attribute, hyphenation as an idea of emendation has an agreement with severance. This emendation moves along the line of rectification that has a tendency of auto-correcting itself. As the decision to correct itself involves a pact with the law preserving division, an initiation of relationship with the pre-constitutive *non-use*, locates an anomaly within that particular attribute. Whether or not this non-use gets indexed as an excess, its sampling is performed by an excretophore. Just like the surface of a leaf functions as a perfect organ for the method of photosynthesis, hyphenation also makes way for an excruciating joust of diffusion. It converts the surface of *guṇ-doṣ* into a cell unit, which proceeds from consignment into a task of abscission. Herein, just like the apparent excretophore involves the processes of transpiration and guttation, hyphenation's detachment mechanism can a technique in method in the physiology of acting.³² Then in a way, can *guṇ-doṣ* be addressed as an excretophore?

³² Brian J. Ford, "Even Plants Excrete," in *Nature*, Vol. 323, Issue 6091 (30 October 1986): 763, accessed February 23, 2018, <https://www.nature.com/articles/323763a0>. In this short interview with Prof. Brian J. Ford agrees to the fact that as an organ integral to the plant, leaves do behave and function like an organ. He comments by saying, "it appears that these organ have two discrete functions. In addition to acting as the plant's metabolic centre, the leaf is also the structure that — at the end of its useful metabolic life — is systematically stripped of its vital constituents and charged with metabolic waste materials. The yellowed leaf becomes an 'excretophore' and the shedding of the leaf may be seen as the plant's excretory mechanism".

A *Tarīkā* to Approach the *Problematik*

Whether or not *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī* was played within the parameters of a contemporary play is up for debate. At least to the part of acting this supposedly had to be in tandem with the pretext of producing the narrative for modern times. And to that issue, adapting a play from Sanskrit drama was not only a challenge, but also a reverence (astonishment) of posterity, acted to be in the present. To that end of posterity, neither plot of the play nor the characters were an impediment. Instead it was the adaptation of ten acts that besieged a particular *problematik*.³³ And that *problematik* being the presentation style (here the style also gives a notion of stylistic), in accordance with the supposed universal aspect of Sanskrit literature.

Probing through the vital principles of assessing a performance, through its own independent elements, what becomes an appurtenant feature in this analysis is its communicative aspect. In order to reach onto a conclusive result on how to adapt *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*, Dr. Sinha positions his entry point from the perspective of the *sūtradhār*. He develops on the proactive part of *sūtradhār* in the dramatic text of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī* suggesting that the way *Mṛcchakatika* has been introduced, invites a theatre practitioner to use his own imagination. While conceptualizing the nitty-gritty of how to start with its Sanskrit performance, the *problematik* of specific presentation style came at the fore. All the more, since the play did comprise of ten acts, it might have been the case that the presentation style had incorporated all ten scenes on the

³³ *Problematik* is the term used in German language which expresses the noun word of *samasyā*. I opt for this word, instead of problematic because the nature of doubt becomes a qualitative one. *Problematik* is a noun, feminine, that adduce an adjective parallel to the Hindustani expression of *samasyātmak*, which is about the state of the problem.

Duden Online, s.v. “*problematik*,” accessed February 4, 2018, <https://www.duden.de/suchen/dudenonline/Problematik>.

stage at the same time. Yet this speculation didn't suffice at the practical level, in which such a presentation style was actually meant to be followed. Contradicting to the fact that what could be inferred from the technique of presentation style, Dr. Sinha deduces about image-creation. He argues that the play's audience had a stage which was open, broad and didn't have curtains. So, the curtains didn't figure in the front stage set up and also didn't have any system to support the curtain roll.

Actor's modus operandi and the technique of scenography as noted in text of *Mṛcchakatika* suggests one thing for sure which is that of words creating this imagination. It means that the observer have had to independently imagine the meaning of the symbol. Like a basket of flower would project out the mise-en-scène of a highway, the entrance of a palace, a slaughterhouse, or even a courtroom through actor's *śabd-śravaṇ*.

(Anand 2009, 153, Translation mine)

In other words, with the usage of words in itself, Dr. Sinha contents that at the level of communication, such a method would have been sufficient for an audience reception in a Sanskrit drama. He refers to specific objects in Sanskrit drama that acquired different meaning at the same time. For example, the flower pot would transform itself into an untidy garden, while at times it refers to the ancient city of Ujjayini and its royal way to the palace. Then at one point it acquires a space like that of a porch in a palace. Primarily because of the reason that all these scenes were mostly choreographed via the imaginative power of words, the help from *śabd-śravaṇ* in the making of scenography differed in terms of word creation and the association of meaning attached to it. Also because most of these scripts were written in a way that offered a poetic mood for the audience, the action or verb sense in these stances of image-creation were directed at the audience in a poetic style. As every other situation in the play involves a space for imagination, a certain kind of poetic mood got emphasised on *śabd-śravaṇ*.

In extension to *śabd-śravaṇ*, actor's behavioural gestures were also given much importance. Dr. Sinha notes that this can be corroborated with their action plan (*kārya vyāpār*). Mostly such action-plans had a blueprint that would commence for an account of actor's portrayal of gestural suggestion. Dr. Sinha accepts this logic of imagination on the ground of instances and concrete references related to the working of directive for actors. These gestural suggestions were indicative of behaviors that the characters needed to communicate as a form really taking place on the stage. Like, Vasantsena enters while sleeping, or she climbs up the balcony and watches over Charudutt to leave. Or, the instance when Arya is running away on a bull, or when Charudutt enters the stage with a posture in *āsan* (Anand 2009, 153). All of the above gestural behaviors suggest some form of action. And these were communicated with the body of the actors, while acting through the gestures of the actors. In some sense, an image-creation via "make-believe" (*pratīti*) was a locus in Sanskrit drama that for Dr. Sinha could no more hold the attention of contemporary audience.

Understanding about the 'workability' of scenes while presenting *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*, Dr. Sinha moves further in his train of thought by making an intervention. This intervention is made at the very heart of a trope in Sanskrit drama, which is that of a poetic "make-believe". He goes onto argue that in today's context of adapting a classic, it becomes all the more important to convince the audience with contemporary issues. But for that, one has to acknowledge at first that asking today's audience to hang on to this 'make-believe' not only stands far-fetched but also reek of over expectation. Largely because, the contemporary audience doesn't look at plays as poetic but more like contradictions which are affecting their daily lives, its creative potential comes from this fact of 'mundane-ness' of everyday life. Also, this audience

narrows down the kind of enjoyment in theatre and narratives of a play to the level of something which appears to be closer to their situations of life struggles (2009, 153). Which is why for them poetics is part and parcel of life of life but not everything. An audience of contemporary times then must look out for poetical aspect in plays instead of grand narrative and hyperboles. Thus, an affective association with situations from each and every ones condition may actually be the only way forward. If at all an audience of modern times can be called a spectator, it has to have these creative intervention of affective positioning in theatre reception. Such is the identification of theatre-making that Dr. Sinha envisages vis-à-vis presentation technique in adaptations.

Since the argument is in the context of *Mrcchakatika*, presentation shall become the focus of the debate rather than modern playwriting. In ancient times there must have been an assimilation of mechanisms to present the plays but in present times, science and technology have offered a slightly different *tarikā* to theatre.

(Anand 2009, 153, Translation mine)

Here, the reason for such a departure in understanding adaptation of classic texts comes from Dr. Sinha's engagement *with* the form and its expression *through* the medium of theatre. While accepting the fact that mechanisms for theatrical presentation must have been a part and parcel of Sanskrit drama in earlier times, Dr. Sinha makes a point with reference to science and technology. The distinguishing natures of both science and technology had according to him have shifted the dynamics of theatre application. With new innovative techniques and method, proscenium theatre has opened multifarious dimensions in the modern presentation styles of theatre. Such technique and method, simultaneously does help out different components of theatre in co-ordinated manner. In the context of modern theatrical

presentation, *taknīk* (technique) and *vidhi* (method) ensure that the usage of technical intervention in theatre is carried out by the word *tarīkā*.

Like with the appropriate application of *dr̥śya-baṇḍ*, *maṃc-dīpan*, and *dhvani-saṃket* (tableaux, lights and sound cue) when put together on stage, presents a creativity in co-ordination. Similarly, in the sphere of acting, *tarīkā* takes into account bodily, gestural techniques and psychological, receptive methods at the same time, while bringing all these components into a novel creation in the treatment and approach to adaptations (Anand 2009, 154). And precisely because of the reason of how to adapt a classical text, with all its baggage, that Dr. Sinha provokes at the *problematik* of presentation style. His provocation directed at the process of theatre-making in adaptations, issue a warrant in real-time by positioning the *tarīkā* of performance in contemporary times. One that *Tareeqa* must not be conflated into a whole idea of application. Second, that with the concepts of technique and method (*taknīk* and *vidhi*), their functionality may ‘work-in’ simultaneously.

Approbating the *Problematik* in Presentation

My misconception about Sanskrit play and its view about cosmic realities, being noble, got a sense of balance. Although it is quite correct that Sanskrit literature has a tone of nobility, but as an experience this literature moves along divinity and does not rest at a ritual plane. It compels the soul to move towards a definite, tranquil mood. In fact this is one of its major accomplishments.

(Anand 2009, 151, Translation Mine)

Here in the excerpt, a certain kind of notion about Sanskrit play and literature gets addressed at the behest of presumptions. Sanskrit plays according to Dr. Sinha, over a

period of time had inculcated a tone and tenor of nobility. Whether it is the wishful view of a fulfillment in cosmic realities or the bidding for being noble, this projection of nobility for him is not completely incorrect. Because Sanskrit literature not only projects to be as such in a noble form, but has a ubiquitous nature of a certain degree of divinity. Apart from the conditions of non-divinity where other schools of thought may intervene in the stream of consciousness, it doesn't cease to manifest itself only and only at 'other worldly' realm. For Dr. Sinha there exists a tension of coercion in such a noble form of literature. Through his own experience, he reiterates that literature in Sanskrit tradition does have a tendency of driving at/to a state of "definite and tranquil mood" and that is supposedly its most "valuable achievement" (Anand 2009, 152, Translation mine).

In a way, the tendency of tranquility then affects the mind, soul and the body to an extent, where the drive tends to fulfill servitude towards a state of fiefdom. Ironically, if considered as a estate's precondition then the 'other worldly' realm of can be unaffected by a *problematik*. The only problem seems to be in standing up against an approbation of the *problematik* itself, which somehow gets a treatment with comportment (philosophical demeanor towards error). The reason being that the domain within which tranquility has already set in, can have one and no one's problem. The *problematik* is supposedly undeterred by anything influential that might have a bearing of a problem. And because the singular problem of "divinity" is not hidden, the *problematik* of presenting the "definite and tranquil mood" must be for everyone to see. It is right there, if one wants to see through the *problematik*, not as an obscure operation to overcome, but more towards a direction of how to work *with* problems *through* a *problematik*.

It becomes quite evident that at first instance an acceptance may appear to be striking a cord with bowing down before the grand range of Sanskrit literature. But the question that comes at the fore as a concern for Dr. Sinha was, how to work without the sense of bowing down or paying curtsy in accepting the *problematik*. While the mood in the above mentioned quote does indicate a sense of concern, the consideration of a problem tries to work around with the shortcomings of 'presentability'. The above quoted views of Dr. Sinha indicate toward an understanding which is about how to work *with-through* a *problematik*. And as to that end, Dr. Sinha tries to work out his own way of constructive criticism by creating a space of approbation.

But as an artist, I should have breathed on every aspect of Charudutt. Which means that I should have untied the knots of contradictions and not succumb under the conventional notions of my understanding. An open-ness of an artist can be the only way to make Sanskrit dramas congenial to modern theatre.

(Anand 2009, 151, Translation mine)

The above passage moves simultaneously on two planes, one that it draws onto an introductory premise of Charudutt's acting and second, that the passage brings *problematik* of presentation back on the table. While agreeing about the lacunae and concurrently taking all the quarters as an equal candidate for playfulness and righteousness, Dr. Sinha entertain the idea of emphasizing on every aspect of Charudutt. As a self assessment of dealing *with* the concern and *through* the debate on acting, the above quote prompt a diagrammatic cut and tries to put the *problematik* of presentation in the context of presenting particularities *with-through* their

peculiarities. Therein, connecting the thread from *gun-dos* to *problematik* of presentation, this diagrammatic cut makes move toward an epilogue on approbation.

Here approbation with respect to *problematik* of presentation can be seen as drawing an analogy of crying. Likewise in crying, one gasps *with* breath while sobbing *through* tears, the *problematik* of presentation is akin to gasping *with* the problem of *gun-dos* and sobbing *through* an approbation of the same. That means, simultaneously, on one hand, acknowledging the problem of a particular literature ‘as it is’, whereas on the other hand, understand and empathize with its peculiarities on *prima facie* account. Thereby, the cry of epiphanies no longer blinks through a nictitating membrane or oodles an agreement of “analysis”. But prefigures a sense of revelation *with* the struggle of acknowledgment and *through* the treatment in acknowledging the *problematik*. Thus, even though a certain dynamism of approbation works out in moments of introspection, the positioning of a keen vision synced with gasps may miss out on breath. More so than an anticipation to stumble upon new findings, the breath skipped are ounces of air which goes *missing* while exhaling a sigh of relief. To hold one’s breath in the process of revelation is along the same vein of sending instinctive stimuli to the heart and brain at same time.

But it would be pathetic to count the gasps and make a compendium out of it. So, as the struggle of acknowledging the problem of *gun-dos* may come with a portion of being nonchalant about it, the *problematik* of presentation count heavy breathes that came before the sigh of relief. Such is the joy of approbation, that the cry of liberation from one’s own dogmatism subsists a covenant of remembrance. The challenge then is to listen carefully to the thought of heart and passion of mind.

Despite the fact that one may declare approbation as a necessity to struggle against its own endorsement, specially, in order to procure a sublunary (other worldly) altruism. Nevertheless, declaring approbation as a necessity for an acceptance of altruism, cannot become an impediment to renunciate the predicament of crying out loud from within oneself. Therefore, an overcoming of such a predicament is to impugn (cast a doubt upon) at resolution which shall forthrightly accept the shortcomings and then illustrate it via the slingshot of susceptibility. If at all the outlook is supple, the pull toward a regressive force guarantees the gravity of approbation to allow a *swooshing* affect on the tears. It doesn't tear down the breath, but conduits (passage of fountain) a way to steady the gasps as *slingshot* right across the system of organs.

On one hand the logic of joyful approbation is replete with a split between gasps and breath, whereas on the other hand, crying out loud against one's self dogmatism casts a proximity with heavy breathes. Even though the conundrum of *problematik* is chaotic, an incessant drive to keep correcting oneself evolves out *with* the gasp and *through* the breathe, so as to communicate with all the impulses of the past by remembering them with dry eyes in the present. The dry eyes enliven as it breathes and respire in a manner of ease. Never to forgo what can be tested against its own reality which is still hypothetical. Though the dry eyes insinuate these heavy breathes, they are nonetheless directed away from sulking into the socket of sounds. Because without a tensed muscular movement near the eye lids, the desuetude muscle of the face has composure like that of a canoe. Wherein, this canoe crafted out from a log carries a similar tapering at its toe end, as it is near the desuetude muscles having a shape up at both ends of the eye lid. Which is why, the dry eyes keeps a keen watch over the *problematik* with heavy breathes in the tidal shifts of a voyage as they are

inmates to schematic concerns but are still independent and autonomous to debates at the same time via an exploration. Thereupon, riveting is the joust in crying over and over again in the happiness of stumbling upon new geographies with eyes wide open.

Perform-e-bility as Quarters of Process in Performance

For being at the receiving end, the coinage of the word *gun-dos* communicates a dynamism within the working process of theatre-making. Particularly, in the case of *Mittī Ki Gārī*, Charudutt's *gun-dos* governs as an accredited principle that not only indicates, but also helps out how to address the conditions of possibility in quarters of processes. On one hand, these quarters are presented to be as praise worthy as an actor's kindness in delivering the part of something other than itself. On the other hand, its representative recommendation approves the decision worth mentioning, only to acquire a steady discharge of properties. Their exhibition is replete within the ambit of an observable reception. Even though counted as a single unit, quarters don't have an impediment for being a measurable carrier for transmission. Then, these quarters are like those of chequered boxes in a board game which can only accept a maximum of seventeen space move at a time. The board comprises of a starting and finishing position, with castle squares at different positions on the board. They are meant to secure the pieces from opponent's pieces. As a means of approval or disapproval, pieces do have a marker of 'compar-(e)-bility' with other players on the board. With each player having their own home quarters, all four pieces needs to be put across the finishing line. Likewise the conditions of possibilities in quarters of processes have all the options on the way of throwing the shells, an actor has a unique probability of bringing together all the (dis) abilities in making the game as an

interface of *perform-e-bility*. She has everything at her disposal to come at the board and follow a valid move so as to count and move the cowries.³⁴ Similar to the frame of reference, quarters of process in theatre-making are meant to be procreated, just in order to be perfected and then lost into oblivion. Once an experiment of *perform-e-bility* is induced, these quarters gets slit and behaves like interference of patterns emerging out of attributes in acting. Its perfected nomenclature as the body of the actor exhibits a noun presenting a character. This noun without forgetting exudes a simultaneous equilibrium of integrity and playfulness.

As that on a theatre stage, these quarters of *perform-e-bility* are not only endorsed to outmaneuver its spatio-temporal impediment, but also encouraged to become a vassal for communication. Like that as in subsurface scattering,³⁵ these quarters emit and absorb a ‘technique in method’. In that way, a *perform-e-bility* can be anything, but not a perfunctory charge against the grain of particles *missing* on the stage. Here, the *missing* stands for nothing else other than ‘it’ self, which more or less confides into the waves of performative spins. These spins have a quantity attributed to that of a vector with a definite direction and magnitude. They acquire a unit less function in addition to which an account for a singular parity holds the spin in a momentum. This

³⁴ Colin MacKenzie and Irving L. Finkel, *Asian Games: The Art of Contest* (New York: Asia Society, 2004), 47. In the game of *Pachisi*, all the four pieces are eligible to quote the turns, if it gets divided amongst them. While at the same time the game play is on for the pieces to reach there logical conclusion, each space-move holds the piece as a potential passenger – space-moves are indivisible singular squares in relation to the home square. Even though all these parts may be divided, they are nonetheless casual entries of a cast to die with each passing pieces. At a time, the piece may have either more value or a less value, depending upon the designation of the cowrie. Repetition of same value, nullifies the throw. Anything in excess cancels out the higher value and marks the consecutive throw to stand as a barred move.

³⁵ Wang Lili et.al paper titled “A Method of Real-Time Rendering for Subsurface Scattering Based on BRDF,” in *Procedia Engineering* 29 (2012): 1565-1572. Subsurface scattering is commonly known as SSS with its abbreviation also referring to SSLT which means subsurface light transport. Its a mechanism in which the transportation of light particles is determined for applying a rendering process in the texture of a material. This technique has become immensely popular and highly recommended in motion films for their application in graphic art and design.

unit less function always keeps the vector protracted towards the surface. Wherein, the protraction is a rendering of vibration in motion, *with-through* the surface. The *missing* may acquire a non-localized node, only to be detected and observed as information. In effect, *missing* can minimally register a default that can be gauged in correspondence with the bond, spatially formed. What is *missing* on stage becomes the vassal of entrust to name it without a citation. So, instead of mitigating the name in citation, *missing* adjudgates (adjugate: matrix – the gerund form within these quarters), as to what takes place in subsurface scattering. *Missing* forms and issues a stratum of interactive re-emission that overall allows a texture to appear in real-time, colluding with the fact that the quarter (medium) is also pretty much an actor (mediator).

Chapter Two

Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai: Political Aesthetics of Organising a Commotion

The chapter navigates through the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, created by the theatre-cum-cultural group *Jan Sanskriti Manch* of Lucknow Unit in the year 1978-79. Through a prefatory opening of a declaration, the chapter attempts to undertake a study the meanings of call for congregation to construe the means and methods of performative junctures in the play. Herein, the overture of the musical instrument of *nagārā* and word projection of *hośiyā...r ! khabardā... r !* (Be Alert! Be Alarmed!) tries to bring out an imperative question of declaration, made as that in the proclamation of Emergency. Thereby making an outreach in the domain of ‘aesthetic application’ commonly used at the beginning of street performances, the call for a congregation in an Emergency situation explicates affectation as a phenomenon which is unfurled in extraordinary times.

By bringing in snippets and performative moments from the play, the chapter interrogates the times of political upheaval *with* the figures of *sarkār*, *jantā*, *police*, *pāgal* (freak) and *through* their acting at the ‘site of mediation’. With the figure of *jantā*, the performance testifies symptoms of growing disenchantment and civic concerns regarding the state of affairs of the people living hand to mouth. Every time,

jantā gets an assurance from *sarkār*, it has to behave in a particular way, so as to avail the facilities. Mandatory to perform a *pose of being alert and alarmed*, *jantā* must not peep, jump or fart. Herein, the pressure to act upon the call for congregation adduces expression of performance that compels the common gentry to strike a *pose of being alert and alarmed* – introducing affectation as a critical way of reading through the question of giving an impression in political theatre.

Call for Congregation

The performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* commences with a cue in the form of an announcement via *nagārā*.³⁶ On the *thāp* (beat) of *nagārā*, the declaration begins

³⁶ Neville H. Fletcher and Thomas D. Rossing, *The Physics of Musical Instruments* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1991), 520. The authors in chapter no. 18 on drums, classify two groups of modern drums, one which has “a strong sense of pitch and those that do not. In the former group are the kettle drums, tabla, boobams,; in the latter group are the bass drums, snare drums, tenor drums, tom-toms, bongos, congas and countless other drums...”. Thus the categorisation of *nagārā* as a percussion instrument is slightly different and kept outside the ambit of those of the likes of snare drum, bass drums, *mṛdaṅg* (mridang) that have two membranes which are paired together by an empty hollow air cavity.

Going further, the authors take the case study of CV Raman, who in his published paper titled, “The Indian Musical Drums” for Proc. Indian Academy of Science (1935) argues that there are five overtones which are fundamental to harmonics rather than the established four tones. Studying the acoustic properties of *mṛdaṅg* (a drum used in Carnatic musical composition, sometimes also referred as Pakhwaj), C.V Raman contended that there are five successive tones coming from nine modes of vibration in harmonic sequence. This study at that point in time had moved away from a physical oriented study of *mṛdaṅg* (mridang), and had observed key departure points in the manner of how the tones in harmonic sequence does superpose forms of vibration. The experiment one by one notes down all the five modes of tone by putting together a detailed observation of how the membrane vibrates. This detailed observation is derived out by applying the technique and method of strewing fine sand over the top of the membrane. And in turn carefully infer the results from the behaviour of membranes. In the first case, the tone is produced “by bringing down the flat of the palm of the hand smartly on the centre of the drum-head and then quickly removing it.” In the second one, tone from the membrane is obtained by striking the edge that in turn expresses “strewed” fine sand on the membrane along a nodal diameter. This scattering or splintering over the membrane along a nodal diameter or in some cases along the nodal line formulates a “relationship between the normal modes of vibration and the series of harmonic tones”. From these observations a pattern emerges so as to suggest that the modes of vibration acquire distinct and identical similarity to that of a stretched string.

S.A. Siddiqui, *Madhya Pradesh Sampurna Adhyayan* (Agra: Upkaar Prakashan, 2015), 260. In the section on ‘Maach’, the encyclopedia describes how *ḍholak* as an instrument is put to use with other components of the performance, whereas *nagārā* has an extensive utility in *Nautamkī*,

by an alarming declaration that intervenes in the field of the performative act. It intervenes by declaring an abridged interpunction by the percussion instrument of *nagārā*, while at the same time intersects with an alert call pervading throughout the performance space. Therein, a declaration inflates the sonic impression, as the ears on which it affects, does demonstrate to hear and act upon the verbose narration.³⁷ As the propensity of declaration adjusts the alert call, an assistance of separating the call from other noises in public space, brings about the gravity of the call. And for this reason, on the cue of a call for being alert and attentive, the co-actors are supposed to follow certain directions after listening to the decree.

(On the beat of drum, the Sepoy comes at the performance site and announces a declaration)³⁸

Sepoy: Be Alert...! Be Alarmed...! Emperor of Democracy!
Lord of the lords! Jan-Gan-Man Adhinayak! Bharat

“ ढोलक माच का महत्वपूर्ण वाध है। गायक, कलाकारों के बोल नर्तक तथा टेक झेलने वालों की सामूहिक स्वर-संगीत ढोलक की गत पर चलते हैं। जिस तरह नौटंकी में नगाड़ा और कथकली में चेंडा की आवाज खानगी पैदा करती है, उसी तरह माच में ढोलक की थाप और गत रंग प्रदर्शन में प्राण फोनक देती है।” Herein, bass and treble are identified by the vernacular expression of '*thāp aur gat*'. These are the two patterns of strike on the membrane of *ḍholak*. The smaller one for treble and the bigger surface is for bass. In many of the popular forms of performance like *Nautāmkī*, *Swāmg*, *Nāc*, *Māc* of Madhya Pradesh, just to name a few, *ḍholak* is an integral instrument. Being a concise database of the region of Madhya Pradesh, Upkaar publishing house have been instrumental in bringing out series of general knowledge editions. These compilations of facts and data are extensively read for competitive exams in particular. In another work of ethnomusicology, *Study of Nagara Drum in Pushkar, Rajasthan*, Kathleen Toomey charts out a classification of different rhythms of the musical instrument *nagārā*. She put them into four types of *tāl*, which are as follows, “Ek Taal, Tin Taal, Rupak Taal and Jap Taal” (29).

³⁷ Jean- François Augoyard and Henri Torgue, *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2014). The author goes into a detailed analysis of how the sonic mediation can be construed from a booming thud produced by the musical instrument. Here the thud of *nagārā* compliments with that of a declamatory environment. This lofty and rhetorical application of sound effect with the help of *nagārā* not only situates the condition for an overdrive in resonance but also has an imposing glug. The glug is almost onomatopoeic in creating a sonorous stretch by pouring out a soundscape that combines *nagārā* and oratorical declamation of *hośiyā...r ! khabardā... r !* (Be Alert! Be Alarmed!).

³⁸ For clarification, I have kept the word *ḍholak* instead of *nagārā*, as it was scripted in the play script. Although the text refers to the use of a *ḍholak*, the performance in Uttarakhand had incorporated *nagārā*.

Bhagya Vidhata! Government of India is ascending! Be Alert! Be Alarmed! Mr. Government here it comes... Peeping, lampooning and farting stops now... Be Alert! Be Alarmed!

(Shivram 2016, 9, Translation mine)

In this case, the simple fact that people are expected to gather around the the figure of sepoy beating the *nagārā* in the space of performance, indicates a unique moment of declaration. As if, the beat of *nagārā* by default invoke a sense of urgency to which people should respond in their own ways. They can gather together around the ‘site’, or stop over in a casual manner so as to watch out for the announcement. Referring to this call for congregation by means of announcement and drum beat, a presentation of a performative moment of declaration invites an investigation into the relationship of politics with aesthetic device. And one of the aesthetic devices that were commonly ‘used’ and ‘applied’ at the beginning of street play was the call for a congregation.

Police Officer: Being restless, you called the ‘janta’
Often it is regarded that a gesture is enough for
a clever person
I order the people, come to the court
The government summons them, gather in
support
As per your wish my ‘sarkar’ I shall go to every
corner
And catch hold of this worthless ‘janta’ by your
order
(Departs) Sepoys!

(Shivram 2016, 10, Translation mine)

The alarming declaration similar to that of a senatorial promulgation brings in affectation to follow through an order by decree.³⁹ On one hand, the *nagārā* lends a lead to be followed up, not as a directive per se, but more like a pose. Whereas on the other hand, to strike a pose, the declaration simultaneously seeks to keep a tab of affectation in being alert and alarmed. By inviting a gathering at display, the declaration's addressal can be seen as pompous in nature, wherein the drum beat sets up the tone and tenor of what is supposed to be followed without fail. Concomitantly the declaration influences the inauguration and assigns a pose for everyone in the audience. And this pose for the audience becomes that of an active participant. It partakes into the role of *jantā*.

Jantā: Oh my government, my caretaker, my lord
 Didn't get a glimpse in fifty years of accord
 The wealthy have looted and plundered my victual
 Chewed by bones and flesh, as in ritual

(Shivram 2016, 11, Translation mine)

Coordinating a grandiloquent declaration via the help of *nagārā*, the way of carrying out the form of sonic mediation bids to assert a definitive reaction from the audience. On one hand, the bombastic announcement by the narrator ardours an attitude of splendour, whereas on the other hand, *actor-jantā* acquires an intensity through the

³⁹ Kathleen Toomey, "Study of Nagara Drum in Pushkar, Rajasthan" in *Asian Music*, Vol 13, No.2 (1982), 39-54, (Retrieved and archived in SIT Digital Collections, 2014). *Nagārā* is a 'membranophone' instrument, which functions as a complete kettledrum system. It is "largely made up of animal leather" and has a construction like that of a "round bowl-shaped body". Hollow from inside this kettledrum system may comprise a set of drums, one as 'nagara' and the other as 'nagari'. Both of these drums have respective pitches, one low with a deep pounding, the other 'nagari' serves with one membrane of smaller diameter. In most of the cases, it is either goat skin or buffalo skin that makes for the counterpart membranes. The author suggests that the instrument has connotations with that of 'order' (2014, 6) as it has been extensively used at the gates of royal palaces and during wartime proclamations. She refers from the work of Abu'l-Fazl Allami's *Aini Akbari*, a testifying account of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, that indicates how *nagārā* was roped in as part of an 'ensemble' to keep a sense of time in a day. The 'loud reverberation' of *nagārā* espoused and instilled a "love of order" (emphasis in original, 2014, 7).

act of reaction. What follows as a reaction to an excitement of astonishment, settles for a quid pro quo in passionately submitting to the pretension in the declaration.

Establishing an order with the beat of the drum, this promulgation inaugurates an attentive and alarming posture in the space of performance. These beats proffer a soundscape in the air to give a shock effect at the first instance. As the beat introduces a surprising effect, its sonorous thud amplifies a temporal departure in the medium. And then makes a move away from shock treatment towards a corporal experience in congregation. Whereby, the corporal experience of *actor-jantā* informing the bodies to collect itself in the realm of congregation. It intervenes with the sound of the drum, and removes anything that may stand to establish normative posture in the space of performance. Even while, the sound of the drum disperses *with* the medium of air, an irregularity of soundscape connects *through* the intervention within the medium. Though this intervention comes off as a conventional requirement, it nevertheless summons the people to be in congregation with a thumping demand.

The demand bursts out an attestation to the fact of a desired pose. And because of the blow of the beat, *pose* which is demanded from the congregation, imparts a disturbing palpitation. A palpitation that displays a bodily reaction in being attentive and alarmed. Always on far foot, the implication of palpitation makes an impact on the body that unveils how the reaction of attention and being alarmed gets a response. Hereby, the demand of formally asking such a pose, orate itself under an indemnity of declaration that needs to be followed in-toto. Its order is the order of the day. The order comes with a compensation by default. A compensation that has a liability

attached to it, of such a default. Its only compensation rests in the duty to follow the posture of being attentive and alert, always, all the time.

Government: (restless) Police!

Nearby are elections, famine has gripped over and
masses are starving on empty stomach
Expenditure is expensive and unemployment costly
Clamour is in every street, opposition are on the beat
Will meet people and the common
So that don't we lose their summon
Public is like an organ
Will chant their slogan
Police! I want to meet the 'janta' immediately.

(Shivram 2016, 10, Translation mine)

Howbeit acting in accordance with the declaration, the drumbeat and the addressal enforces an alarming directive to summon the *jantā* at the behest of *sarkār* (government). As a decree by the police officer's utterance the alarming directive catapults a rhythm of a call, to fall in line for a congregation. Hereby the call officiates a response from the subjects, while delivering an appearance of control and power. Such a posture of putting up the show of pretension and attitude, undertakes a task of behaviour on part of the the *actor-jantā*. The task is a demand in a direct way of asking to *strike a pose* of loyalty and allegiance. Herein, the pressure to act upon the call for congregation adduces expression of performance which compels the common gentry to *strike a pose of being alert and alarmed*. In other words affectation of gestural compliance can be a critical way to look at the presentation of loyalty and allegiance performed in political theatre. It is argued that a call for a congregation via the use of *nagāṛā* and utterance of words as *hośiyā...r ! khabardā... r !* (Be Alert! Be Alarmed!) introduces a complimentary affectation in the space of performance which brings out an imperative question of a decree, made as that in the proclamation of Emergency. Performed with the help of percussion instrument *nagāṛā* and a corollary

pitch in of *hoṣiyā...r ! khabardā... r !* (Be Alert! Be Alarmed!) affectation at the call of congregation, then tries to initiate a probe into the nature of such an alarming declaration.

Affectation During the Period of Emergency

It was in the backdrop of Emergency that a spree of political performances sprang up across the country. Factory gates, insurance offices, university lawns, public parks and school periphery became the performative ‘site’ of participation where *nukkad sabhā* and public gathering were convened. At these performative ‘site’ of participation, the platform for an organised rebuttal of government policies were laid and the resentment against the government grew were voiced. Political theatre too galvanised momentum towards this end and started experimenting with its form of presentation. Incorporating proscenium and street space both as a space to intervene, political theatre drew its strength from its extemporaneous mode of participation in socio-political movements. Adiyog an erstwhile member of *Jan Sanskriti Manch*’s Lucknow Unit,⁴⁰ in a personal interview recollects about their intense nature of participation in these mass movements wherein shows of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* were performed by the number of hundreds.⁴¹ He opines that as a cultural-theatre

⁴⁰ In a personal telephonic interview with Adiyog of Jan Sanskriti Manch, Lucknow Unit, he divulges the fact that prior to the formation of JASAM, as it was popularly referred to, a theatre group by the name of “Navchetna” was active during the period of 1973-74. Later on, during the time of Emergency, some where between 1976-77, *Navchetna* was merged with *JASAM*.

⁴¹ Participating in the mass movement for separate statehood of the region of Uttarakhand, *JASAM* was invited by “Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini” in early 80s. The movement played a crucial role during the Chipko Andolan and the demand for separate statehood for Uttarakhand. Working with a range of political outfits, the Sangharsh Vahini was formed in the year 1977 (Kumar 2006, 187). To the credit of autonomous movements across the state, the period of 1980’s till 2000, saw an emergence of female activists asserting their rights in a vocal manner. The front including firebrand feminist leaders like Kamla Pant, Uma Bhatt and Sheela Rajwar among many other women activists championed a space for women movement. The Vahini was active among the

group, *Jan Sanskriti Manch* (cultural front of the then underground CPI [ML]⁴²) would make sure that on a day to day basis the members of the team would build close contact with workers in the factory. This gave the team members a perspective about the issues of workers that they had to face day in and day out. And when their call for strike was announced, *JASAM* members would make sure to attend these calls and express their solidarity with the Karmachari and Workers' Union by going to the 'site' and perform a play.

Adiyog specifically remembers about their theatre activism while performing *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* in the industrial belt of Nadarganj in Old Lucknow. Here at the entrance of Everready Battery and Vikram Cotton Mills, the environment simmered with enthusiastic protest songs, demonstrations, and slogans as activists, leaders and political heavyweights from different organisations poured in from nearby localities. The programmes were scheduled in such a manner that session of meetings and addressal often overlapped each other. And when there was no programme then *JASAM* was invited as *nāṭak maṇḍalī* to perform and gather the crowd for subsequent proceedings. Expressing their solidarity with the agitating factory workers, team members of *Jan Sanskriti Manch* used to perform *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* at a rate of six to seven shows per day.

people of the region for the cause of prohibition against liquor consumption and articulated women's voice from the underprivileged section of the society. Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini also had a leader like Shamsher Singh Bisht who back in 1972, got elected as the President of Kumaon University. Later on, he along with Pradeep Tamta, P.C. Tiwari and others had already made a huge impact against forest deforestation, under Parvatiya Yuva Morcha formed in 1974 (Joshi 2016).

⁴² In the aftermath of Naxalbari uprising, the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries was formed which was then followed up with the formation of Communist Party of India [Marxist-Leninist] on 22 April, 1969. The CPI [ML] conducted its First Congress in Calcutta in the month of May 1970 where in-total a 21 member Central Committee was formed, headed by its first General Secretary, Charu Mazumdar. Following Charu Mazumdar's death in 1972, CPI [ML] started splintering into numerous other outfits.

Performed extensively in the region of Lucknow and its adjacent areas, the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, attempted to showcase the ramifications of Emergency in a rhetorical tone. By addressing the extraordinary times of Emergency, infamously known as *āpātkāl* in Hindustani expression, the author of the play, Shivram⁴³ pens down the script of an iconic play. The script of the play was written in the year 1974 *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* which later on was translated in many other Indian languages as its performance started to receive appreciation from every corner of the society. The characters in the performance became a common household name of reference, within a short span of one year, *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* made a huge impact, wherever it interacted with its audience. Herein, to cite an anecdotal reference from one of the performances of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, theatre actor and director Srinjay writes that being performed extensively by a range of theatre groups across India, the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* was extremely popular as a street play, especially during the period of Emergency. Written in the year 1974, the performance of this play got its due credit during a tumultuous period, which was also the most exciting times in Indian history. Because of the play's contemporaneity to situations in Emergency, not only it became success in terms of mass viewership but also gave impetus to express discontent through the medium of theatre.

⁴³ Shivram, *Janta Pagal Ho Gayi Hai: Shivram Ke Pratinidhi Jan Natak* (Kaithal, Haryana: Sambhav Prakashan, 2016). Born on 23 December, 1949 in Karauli Rajasthan, Shivram was a laureate in his own right. He completed his diploma in mechanical engineering meanwhile being a voracious reader of Hindi literature, History, Political Economy and Philosophy. Apart from studies in academic discipline, Sivram was influenced by Marxist-Leninist stream of thought which made him politically socially active in the public domain. He was also the founder member of "Vikalp", "Janvadi Saanskritik-Samaajik Morcha" and also served as president of "Rangkarmi Ekta Sangh", "Shramjivi Vichaar Manch", "Pragatisheel Naagrik Morcha". Among his published works, an anthology of collected plays have been published, which are namely -- "Janta Pagal Ho Gayi Hai" (2001), "Ghuspaitiye" (2001), "Punnarv" (2009), "Ghatak Churma" (2009). Whereas two poetry collections also have been published -- "Maati Mulkegi Ek Din" (2009), "Kuch Toh Haanth Gaho" (2009).

Shivram utilizes the useful and dynamic elements of his popular and dynamic elements by mixing the transformative ideology in it and preparing one such chemistry, which makes the people not live alone, they move on to the path of converting them into the masses.⁴⁴

According to Srinjay, the playwright of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, Shivram had mastered the use of picking up popular forms of spoken dialect and channelizing it for the use of a theatrical language. He recollects that after the performance they would ask for audience's opinion where spectator's reaction at times would be over enthusiastic. Especially among women, who were rather shy and not speak up in public domain, would react and express freely. They would be moved by the actors, who were enacting the role of *jantā*. For these actors they would painstakingly go all the way to their house and grab a piece of loaf and water, and fetch it back to the performance space. If the offer was turned down the women would untie their apron string and contribute two rupees for the performance. At the gesture of *sipāhī* approaching to collect those two rupees the women promptly threw a quirky remark, "hat ghūskhor! tujhe toh hum ek cavannī bhī nahīm denge" (step aside you corrupt ! you won't get even a penny). The quip at the actors meant that in some sense, an interactive level of affective coupling was exchanged and poured over onto the actors involved in the performance. In fact many a times, the actor who played the role of the capitalist, by sheer luck escaped from being thrashed up at the hands of the audience. Whereas, the *sarkār* had to face the wrath of abuses from the audience. More so with the antics of the freak, timid reaction from children enthralled the audience members while the gesture of *sipāhī* as a horse made them giggle and a sight to laugh at. The most interesting moment for Srinjay came when the spectator

⁴⁴ "Preface" in *Janta Pagal Ho Gayi Hai: Shivram Ke Pratinidhi Jan Natak* (Kaithal, Haryana: Sambhav Prakashan, 2016), Translation mine.

responded by tuning into the slogans of *jantā* when the latter would revolt. The spectator, for Srinjay was an educator in itself.

Concurring on the fact about spectator's reaction, the affective principle of a political performance such as *Jan Sanskriti Manch* provokes us to think in terms of its communicative quotient. As in, when a series of appellations are addressed to the spectator, like 'shehenshah' (king) of democracy, lord of the lords, first among the equals, Mr. Indian government, how can a political theatre ensure that the instruction with complimentary do's and don'ts in acts such as peeping, jumping and farting, comes with a note of subverting the normative structure of anticipation in such acts. Which is to say that since 'site of mediation' injects a narrative of barring these three activities from the congregation, does the communication to convene the addressal from the first moment of initiation instruct a case of overt compulsion of orders to be followed in an Emergency by default, or if and when introducing a barrage of instructions, tantamount to evoke an imagination of a nation? Therein a performative moment of debarring behaviours like peeping, farting and jumping, intersperse with the idea of commotion in a state of Emergency, especially when the spectators are asked to be alert and attentive.

“Internal Disturbance” in Peeping, Jumping and Farting

As both the posture of being attentive and be alarmed seeks to put an end to a commotion, the how about of behaviours in *tākā-jhāmk kūda-phāmd chīṃka-pādi* (peeping, jumping and farting) draws a direct parallel with the connotation of “internal disturbances” in Emergency. *Tākā* comes along with *jhāmk*, *kūda* goes with

phāṃd, and *chīṃka* gels up with *pādi*. On one hand these behaviours appear to be foolish acts but on the other hand, their ‘bizarre-ness’ in carrying out the compound action, invokes a comical permeation (Scott 1990, 179). More than a foolish act, the latter saturates a presence which apparently seems to pass through from one verb to the other. Herein, both the parts are simultaneously put affront to each other that does not necessarily complete a whole. But complete the counterpart, as their part, common to both. They are not in contradiction to each other but are in contradistinction to counterpart. To that extension, *tākā-jhāṃk kūda-phāṃd chīṃka-pādi* percolate from one action to the other, so as to bring about a complementing nature in barred behaviours. In each of the restricted actions, a comical proximity to bizarre behaviour, expresses a classification.

And what is this classification? First and foremost, it’s a classification that somehow appears to be constitutive for commencement of a congregation. *tākā-jhāṃk kūda-phāṃd chīṃka-pādi* (peeping, jumping and farting) are behaviours, which gets entry into as a taxonomic exclusion. On one hand peeping, jumping and farting are identified as behavioural symptoms that need not be entertained for the sake of a congregation. Whereas on the other hand, these are also unwanted behaviour at the ‘site’ of congregation. These are unbecoming acts within a congregation that doesn't go down well with the convention of a gathering. Not only these behaviours are barred from the congregation, they are in absolute contradiction to a space whose proceedings are presided over by the *actor-sarkār*. They are identified to be irregular from the familiarity of accepted behaviours in a congregation. Secondly, at the same time, the classification inspects the congregation from within its inconsistency. More than a problem, the classification urges to present itself as a parameter for

incongruity. Therein, the classification guides to form or suggest a way of performing anomalous behaviour to a congregation. Then by definition, the best suited exclusivity identifies with naming of behaviours that are inappropriate in a congregation. Where, not only the space of the congregation conform an arena of exclusive behaviour, but also it does have a bearing of being guided by a misnomer. They are inappropriately identified as ‘disturbances’ and are deemed to be excluded from the congregation. These behaviours are identified as disturbances, as peculiar behaviours in a commotion.

Insofar as a public confidentiality has to be maintained through an exclusion of behaviours an analogy of peeping, jumping and farting can be seen as an insinuating remark to the logic of “internal disturbances”. In the “Third and Final Report” of *Shah Commission*, appointed under Section 3 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952), the word “disturbances” appears specially with reference to detention and arrest of student leaders a number of times. In report no. 19.28 (iii), it states that, “many students were detained on flimsy grounds like creating disturbances in the examination hall, misbehaviour with the Principal or taking a delegation to the college authorities for pressing students’ demands. Action under MISA was taken against them in addition to expulsion from educational institutions and hostels, etc. MISA was used extensively against those student who had taken part in student agitations in the years prior to 1975. Many students were detained for having taken part in Nav Nirman Agitation in Gujarat and JP Movement in Orissa and Bihar in the year 1974 and in many cases, no recent agitational activity was mentioned in the grounds of detention. [Cases of Shri Rajeev Kumar Dubey student of District Raipur (MP), Shri Vijay Kumar Patil, District Ujjain (MP), Shri Aditya Narain, District

Ujjain (MP) and Shri Prakash Preshthala, District Rajkot (Gujarat)].” (August 6 1978, 44) The coinage of ‘internal disturbances’ was later amended in the forty fourth amendment of 1978 to “armed rebellion” during the Janata Party government led by Morarji Desai. It introduced safeguards in the provision of declaring a state of Emergency.

One of the main pretext of arrests during the period of Emergency was that, anything remotely considered to be “internal disturbances”, would be acted upon with most stringent measure. Public gathering, meetings and street performances had to face police crackdown, as these were not allowed because assembly and congregation were a means and method of “creating disturbances” in the eyes of government. Without buying into the dominant narrative of measuring a political play by means of its success rate, the backdrop of Emergency helps to locate the demand and nature of exigency of such performances. With specific indications to imposition of draconian laws such as MISA and TADA,⁴⁵ the chapter deals with the reference point of Emergency. Thereby, running throughout the play, the condition of precariousness of common people during the phase of Emergency becomes a referral adjunct to follow-up a paradigmatic reading of the play text itself.

Noorani remarks that the genesis of MISA (1971) and NSA (1980) act can be found in the Prevention Detention Act of 1950. He questions the will and intent of “academics who have a strong commitment to civil liberties to study the malaise in-depth, to go to the roots of the problem, and to challenge the fundamentals on which the case for preventive detention rests?” Moreover in the lack of research on these

⁴⁵ A.G. Noorani, “Preventive Detention in India” in *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 26, Issue 46 (November, 1991): 7-8.

fundamentals that MISA and NSA were put in place after PDA had expired in 1969. For a brief on MISA, It was passed by the Parliament in 1971, giving power to the Indian law enforcement agencies to detain, seize property without a warrant etc. The legislation became infamous for its disregard of legal and constitutional safeguards of civil rights, especially when “going all the way down” on the competition, and during the period of national emergency (1975-1977) thousands of innocent people were believed to have been arbitrarily arrested, tortured and in some cases, forcibly sterilized.

In relation to the context of Emergency, the term “internal disturbance” was invoked under Article 352, Part XVIII of the *Constitution of India*, and was ratified to be the reason to declare a state of Emergency by the then President of India, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. A day later, on 26 June, 1975 All India Radio broad casted Mrs. Gandhi’s infamous declaration of Emergency in which she laid out her government’s legitimacy to impose Emergency on controversial ground of “internal disturbances”. On legal front the imposition had prohibited, “the right of free speech and expression, right to assemble peacefully, to form associations and unions; to move freely throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory; to acquire, hold and dispose off property and to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business, which were guaranteed under clause (1) of Article 19, could not thereafter be exercised” (6). What immediately followed post declaration was a complete lack of democratic space and freedom in the domain of public life. Opposition leaders were arrested on frivolous charges under the draconian law of MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act). It was passed by the Parliament

in 1971; giving power to the Indian law enforcement agencies to detain, seize property without a warrant.

Therein to situate the performative moment of debarring a commotion at the onset of the play does sediment out a place in congregation in order to restore an imaginary pretext for settling down things in order and then to be ticked off as legitimate enough. For this reason, a consideration for an ordered congregation keeps the imaginary portal in identification open for indexing the ridiculous behaviours. But it nevertheless frames the denunciation of behaviours in an imaginary way, so as to apply the names of behaviour in a limbo. Although naming of the congregation is not inappropriate, it does exclude through an exclusive nature. Only that the form of mistaking a 'disturbance' as the very basis of congregation, catapults a commotion at the register of imagination. Therefore, the commotions are as real as their imaginary counterpart.

And why the commotion is designated in terms of imaginary because, till the point of series of electoral doles, everything related to unruliness does not exist. Thus the basis of a congregation gets twitched (a sudden motion) upon certain prohibitory acts. As for these prohibitions, they are not to be rectified but out rightly done away with at the offset. In a sense that prohibitions amplifies the possessive command of inflecting a punishment, by controlling it as a move of interdiction. These prohibitions are made rule as an interdiction, where not only a punishment is carried out but also a punitive measure is affixed. Rather than acknowledging a contempt of prohibitory acts at the first instance, the condition of rectification forbids a case for congregation. In effect, prohibition strikes down the communion of congregation

with a ‘non-valent’ force of exclusive inclusion. Prohibition of *tākā-jhām̃k kūda-phām̃d chīm̃ka-pādi* (peeping, jumping and farting) invites the *actor-jantā* to take it upon themselves and see through their act in a congregation as an act as of exclusive communion. These behaviours are cleansed of any enticements which keeps resisting a congregation to take place at/in the present time. Moreover, the ‘non-valent’ force of *actor-sarkār* does not have the currency to pull off a dominion of congregation which only excludes, but has to simultaneously involve a participatory behaviour of exclusivity. Participation behaves in a way that performs an exclusivity and *poses* for a performative moment, under bearing a form of resistance. This is where a relationship between pose and its performative moment in the form of resistance to an exclusivity, draws out new conditions of ‘theatricality’.

Then the question which remains to be asked is firstly, as to how a performative moment of resistance can be imagined with respect to commotion? Secondly, where does this commotion locates itself to be in conflation with reality? Thirdly, does a commotion invite strategies of intense vitriolic so as to disturb the normative order of social hierarchy? Fourth, what if the vitriolic which tries to disturb the normative order, fall in the same trap of counter-posing a performance of disturbances? An answer to these questions has a corresponding affinity with the presence of people in a congregation. Their presence in the space of performance orders a gamut of relational positioning and how they are amassed around a focal point of identification. To address a response to the above mentioned questions an inquiry regarding the performance of disturbances must be undertaken. And for that, rather than seeking a direct answer, the inquiry deliberates on how the performance of disturbances proved to become an integral denominator of an aesthetics of harangue.

Tarīkā of Tukbaṃdī: Performing An Aesthetics of Harangue

Herein, a procurement of peace which supposes the functionality of commotion to be worked out in the form of a withdrawal, manages to indulge in an unimaginable operation of the performative act. Even though the scale and degree of the operation for *perform-e-bility* becomes so real, that a call for procurement of peace also displays every iota of impossibility. And yet the amazement of ‘unimagine-ability’ seems capable in producing abundance of expression with aghast, from the gory image of commotion. That is where the imagination of putting an end to the imaginary commotion is never at rest. When put into non-compliance with the desired *pose*, the real commotion uses a lingua which is of harangue⁴⁶ (to address a person or group of people with a forceful persuasive manner).

It happens in the performative moment, when the figure of *pāgal* (a freak) makes an entry in the space of non-regulated movement of *actor-jantā*. The freak disturbs a congregational homogeneity in behaviour and outplays the commotion in the performative space. With his antics of dance-gesture and loud entry the figure of freak de-regulates the conformity of the congregation. Although the ‘site’ of commotion is the performative space, it’s also the space to disturb the commotion

⁴⁶ Marcela Andoková and Silvia Vertanová, “Is Rhetoric Ethical? The Relationship between Rhetoric and Ethic Across History and Today,” in *Graecolatina et Orientalia* XXXVII – XXXVIII, (2016): 133-145. The authors chart out an analysis of rhetoric in this paper, by giving a historical perspective on rhetoric at first and then stimulates the role of rhetoric in the history of oratory by bringing in several viewpoints of Greek philosophers. Starting from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and Isocrates’ *Antidosis*, rhetoric cuts out a basic template of participation in the function of civic life as an art that orients and directs public character of a society. In going at length on the topic of rhetoric, the authors delve into Cicero’s treatise, *Orator*. Referring to an excerpt from *Orator*, the authors argue that Cicero demarcates between “a private controversy and a public harangue yet both the one and the other come under the notion of reasoning. But mere discourse and argument belongs to the logician, and the art of speaking gracefully and ornamentally is the prerogative of the orator.” (2016, 143).

itself. And to that end of reality of disturbance other than commotion, the figure of a freak does not want to settle for peace at the first place. He completes the figure of a rabble-rouser, whose wish is not merely to dismantle the structure of the congregation, but also tries to lay bare the commotion of its own perils. He isn't a peace seeker, he just passes by as a dabbler whose function to the performative space nullifies every 'operationality' of acting that is expected out of a 'capable actor'.

Herein, dealing with a round of pejorative statements and condemnations, the form of persuasive appeal by the figure of *pāgal* (freak) provokes a series of question. The first in the series of question that needs to be interrogated is – as an alluring act, can harangue become a concise rhetorical tool for an action in waiting? Second, whose judgement does the form of harangue affect? Third, even if persuaded by the freak in a most vociferous manner, can the act of listening to a harangue be that effective, so as to take a call of judgment? Fourth, in terms of inducing the *actor-jantā*, how does the figure of the freak tries to translates a harangue,⁴⁷ into a persuasive call of judgment? Fifth, if at all, a violent action presents itself in its most bare form in a performance, by what means is it justified to correspond such a situation? One may concede to the fact that with the charged up passion of harangue, figure of the freak affects the spectator of the performance. But that won't go without saying that other figures in the performance also did affect its audience. Because overall the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* was a genuinely popular play and which cannot be reduced to one particular figure.

⁴⁷ John Locke, "Book III: On Words", *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 452. Even though the 'site' of locating such a change is the performance space, the device of harangue makes an exposition about the abusive ways in which people respond, react, troll, demean others in these times of social networking platforms.

As the commotion of *tākā-jhām̃ki kūda-phām̃di chīm̃ka-pādi* (peeping, jumping and farting) gets barred from the congregation, the figure of *pāgal* (a freak) abruptly slashes a sudden break to the rule of the congregation and polemically subverts everything. He challenges the dominion status of *actor-sarkār*, police officer and their entourage by lampooning at their collusion of power. Outrightly, not only does the figure reject their nexus, but tries to intervene in the proceeding of the congregation. The *pāgal* starts off by presenting a disposition, which is coarse and sarcastic but slowly peaks at the moment where he vents out his emotions full of loath. In an erudite manner the attempt of spilling out the beans out its bag earmarks the task undertaken by the freak. It comes out openly in the public domain as the freak counter-poses a forceful act of mocking in contrast to the cajoling manner of persuasion by the *actor-sarkār*. Repeating the overdrive of *actor-sarkār*'s modus operandi of fetching of votes to garner electoral victory becomes the point of attack and the subject of mocking for the freak. Directed at no one in particular, the figure of freak begins by cursing the electoral system of voting and makes a case in point for his polemical intervention. It dances and makes the case in point by ridiculing the very desire of garnering votes from *actor-jantā*.

Freak: (To people) Cast your vote!

Do vote my brother ! Vote the boot man !

Do vote my brother ! Vote the baton man !

Do vote my brother ! Vote the rich man !

Victorious stands my brother, victorious is the baton man

By booth capturing, victorious without the votes

One pie deep fried, rest of them jail side

(Holds the janta by their hand and take them in a corner. Meanwhile, 'sarkar' and Police officer is amazed)

(To people) Cast your vote!

Hehe...Hehe...Hehe...Please cast your vote...

(In anger) Kill them! Shoot them! Exterminate this police officer
Hurt this cruel government at its heart
It has murdered by brother in the railway strike
This inhuman government has taken away the life of
my kid

(Shivram 2014, 15, Translation mine)

As the figure of freak underscores to interlock a series of diatribes, it vents out a repetitive emphasis on the word ‘vote’. By saying it again and again, as a suffix to everything that even doesn’t have any relation with voting as such, the freak goes onto construct a charade around the process of electioneering. It caricatures the ways of how people are influenced and literally bought at a price for votes. By referring to the use of money muscle power, the freak draws onto an insidious nature of paraphernalia around elections. Wherein, the paraphernalia goes till the extent of capturing of polling booths and flouting of every democratic process in elections. He squarely puts the blame on *actor-sarkār* and its lackeys by charging at their presence, while cursing them with colloquial proverb, “ek kacaurī tel mem, bākī jantā jel mem”. He cracks a joke about the situation of *actor-jantā* who is ready to be sacrificed and put in jail, whereas the people in the corridor of power enjoy and rule the roost. Meanwhile he gets hold of the *actor-jantā* and takes them away from *actor-sarkār* and the police officer. Separately, in a conniving manner he laughs again about voting that leads upto an appeal to the *actor-jantā*. An appeal which has a motivation and a sense of plea at the same time. It seeks a support from *actor-jantā* in a persuasive way, so as to motivate and streamline their anger towards a violent action. A violent action which involves the heinous crime of killing someone.

This appeal informs the *actor-jantā*, somewhat in an erratic manner, about his painful and excruciating effect of losing a family member in the railways general strike. Not

only he loses his temper but channelizes his angst in a particular appeal, which is to dismantle the power and position of the *actor-sarkār* and the police officer. The freak condemns and rebukes both the *actor-sarkār* and the police officer. He slowly infuriates into a mode of violent posture by inciting *the actor-jantā* to kill the police officer and annihilate the *actor-sarkār*. He generates a strange atmosphere as his incitement configures the most disturbing passion in the form of an unruly behaviour that indicates towards an aberration. This aberration takes place in the theatrical space which till now was barred from any kind of commotion. Because the normative function of the congregation was kept at a distance from *tākā-jhām̃k kūda-phām̃d chīm̃ka-pādi* (peeping, jumping and farting), the figure of the freak disrupts the congregation with his lengthy speech by ranting out things not to be heard in public. It breaks all the codes of congregation by saying which is not acceptable in public forum.

Freak: Vote means chapati
 Your mother in law fatty
 Vote means bread
 Your dear mother unwed
 Vote means throne, vote means authority
 Vote means power, vote means royalty
 Vote means licence to loot, five years more
 Vote means cheated, five years in store
 (To people, with affection and love) Public!

(Shivram, 2010, 18, Translation mine)

Attuned to the projection of an aggressive pontification, harangue takes the help of *tukbaṃdī*⁴⁸ that pervades throughout the performance of the play. But once performed

⁴⁸ *Tukbaṃdī* style of poetry has been quite popular in the performances tradition of *Rāmlīlā*, *Nauṭāṃkī*, especially in the region of Uttar Pradesh. Known for its plain and simple style of poetic relief, *tukbaṃdī* has influenced other art genre such as Naqal, Swāng and Qawālī. Derived from the combination of two words, ‘tuk’ and ‘bandī’, *tukbaṃdī* amalgamate a unique characteristic of meter in poetry. Especially when discussed within the nomenclature of *Chāṃd* in contemporary Hindustani poetry, *tukbaṃdī* is considered to be an integral part for rhyming ideas, concepts, expressions and pedagogical sayings in a playful manner, whose pivot rests on the principal of an

with the harangue and *through* the figure of *pāgal* (freak), the dimension of *tukbaṁdī* strikes at the spectator with a sense of mutual participation. The rhythmic verse ending with simple vowel sounds like *roṭī, moṭī, khoti* follows a pattern of catchy reception among the spectator. The brevity of each verse advocates a precise meaning which does not mix up with what it wants to convey. Rather than considering what to say and what not to say, the *pāgal* says it all amongst everyone. The utterance of scathing charges with passion and crudeness in oration, follows a didactic nature, which asserts such emotions with concision. If not anything else, the *tarīkā* of *tukbaṁdī* provides a precision in hitting the nail on its head.

Herein, the device of harangue via the *tarīkā* of *tukbaṁdī* is brought forth, so as to tease out performative aesthetics of organising a commotion in political theatre. The performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* contextualises the intent and approach of applying *tukbharī* style of short verses as it also assists to analyse the performance from a literary orientation. In doing so, the excerpts from various vantage points on Shivram's style and approach to playwriting becomes a case in point to chart out an elucidating format of verse presentation which made difficult ideas and notions about injustice communicate to its spectator. This in turn allows to study and formulate the application of technique and method of harangue *with* the speech and *through* the act of *pāgal*.

As the drive to listening ensures rebarbative backlash at the listener, by cancelling out the prohibitory commotion, the freak figure extends the harangue into an incessant

affective gratification in celebrating what one hears out while speaking up. It is also referred as a prosaic expression of dialogues which in itself does not account for aesthetic beauty in terms of language and poetry. *ShabdKosh English Hindi Dictionary Online*, s.v. "तुकबंदी," accessed on June 17, 2018, <https://www.shabdKosh.com/search-dictionary>

drive of a tirade that speaks of angst, dejection, and absolute apathy towards the governmental system and its representatives. The harangue works out as a complete abjuration to whatever the government representative and the police officer asks and demands from the *actor-jantā*. This denial and rejection performed in a subversive way, provides the perfect challenge to the affectation of being alert and attentive. Then it can be said that harangues are in effect deployed to convey an idea with minimal words, but extended in the very form of communication.

John Locke in the chapter “Book III: On Words” in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1997) goes at length in the subsection on figurative speech which he considers as an abuse of language. Locke observes that, “the ends of language in our discourse with others being chiefly these three: First, to make known one man’s thoughts or ideas to another. Secondly, to do it with as much ease and quickness as possible; and, thirdly, thereby to convey the knowledge of things: language is either abused or deficient, when it fails of any of these three....But yet if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats; and therefore, however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided, and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or person that makes use of them” (452). Likewise the factor of misleading a judgement in the case of aesthetics of harangue in *Jantā Pagal Ho Gayi Hai*, brings the concern of affecting the *actor-jantā*. This

connects that the rhetoric applied in the harangue of the freak not only capitalizes the sheer anger towards the policemen or the *actor-sarkār*, but also manages to manipulate and affect a real change in the course of action.

Counter-posing this situation to the aesthetics of harangue, the example extends that not only does the intent of harangue becomes a premiss for a conclusive attack, but also tries to open a front contrary to the manner *actor-sarkār* would be coaxing. Mediated *with* the harangue and the *through* the figure of the freak, the style of harangue puts to test the faculty of judgement by persuasion on one hand and on the other, pitted against the *actor-sarkār's* lure, initiates a spectrum of phonotonic. By bringing into an application of *tukbandī* into the mode of harangue, the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, locates an intermittent passage of phonotonic⁴⁹ in declarations. The passage of phonotonic vigorously produces an energetic spur in the community of congregation to act upon collectively. To a large extent, about what seems to be waiting in declaration, the congregation in a collective manner has a sense of elation. Even though these passages of phonotonic are short lived, they do have an etching mark on the means of communication. They outlive their own tenacity of fizzling out before time. These passages are created by overcoming their

⁴⁹ Jean François Augoyard, "Introduction," in *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2014), 17. Hereby, phonotonic is understood in terms of an effect that "characterizes the feeling of euphoria provoked by a sound perception. Sometimes it induces a behaviour directly, such as a renewed activity, a collective movement, or a reflex gesture. Musical listening often plays this functional role in individual or collective work". The author in his long list of thematic nomenclature on sound effects, identifies phonotonic under the psychomotor effects. Out of the five effects – Elementary Effects, Composition Effects, Effects Linked to Perceptive Organization, Psychomotor Effects and Semantic Effects, each of them puts together a "common scheme" between the relationship of environment and human beings. The fourth one, which is termed as psychomotor effect explicates the categories of acoustic effect and is defined as that which "imply the existence of a sound action (be it a minimal movement) of the listener, or a scheme in which perception and the motor function interact, examples: chain, niche, attraction, phonotonic" (2005, 17). The purpose of going at such length is to bring to notice, the area of study around sonic reception and its understanding which continues to baffle and challenge that how the affect of phenomenon in attention does unravels through a duality of attraction and repulsion.

own impediment of regimentation that takes place at the first instance of declaration. At the moment of suspension of traffic noise, the passage of communication performs the congregation of the co-actors around the constable, who especially, like that of a magician, doesn't consider each of these etching marks as a node in transmission. Likewise, both method and technique are simultaneously put at work, so as to present a magical passage of reality existing at the same time of its unreality. Rather than prescribing a method of calling a congregation, a magician acquires a method and technique of becoming an actor-magician by a presentation of coming into being. Diad of the announcement and its reception/reaction reach a magical integer, i.e. one is to one – *with* the beat of *nagārā* and addressing the audience *through* declaration. As in, the integer inspires for a common minimum ratio between the declaration and its reception. Only that the exchange that systematizes a quid pro quo action, computes neither an analogous part of one method of proclamation nor a contra part of technically one reception. Instead the integer presents an expression of an incompatible 'magic-al' pact – *with* the soundscape produced by *nagārā* and mediated *through* the performative act of declaration. Thence, *with* an arrangement of *nagārā* and mediated *through* loud declarations, the order of things happens to skim across the medium of surrounding space and affect a mediating rumbling.

Phonotonie can then be understood with an analogy of operation in as that in a ricochet. And what does a ricochet mean? It simply means, an act of flicking at the pucks made to skid away over a surface. Similar to how a ricochet happens in a game of carrom, where the striker aims for either a black or white pucks. The striker is used as a piece-object to skid over the surface of the carrom board and initiate a point of contact with the pucks. The deflection manages the flick in a manner that has a

possibility to rebound the piece-object and come back after an impact. At times, to pocket the pucks, the striker has to go for a direct hit but many a times the player has to make adjustments at the angular push in order to make a deflection on the opponents' pucks. Even though the objective of the game is ultimately to pocket and cover the queen, many a times a direct hit isn't a call for the day. In such situations, the player sometimes strikes the wall of the board so as to make a ricochet. A unique technique, applied to strike the puck from an unusual position. As the striker glances over the carrom board, the ricochet frames all the method for a successful pot in a split second. To perform a ricochet with the help of striker disk and the board walls can be seen both as a technique and a method. A ricochet can be then envisaged as a rebound in which the energy transmitted at a puck has been carried on, *with* the technique and *through* the method. A simultaneous action in invention, spurs the *tarīkā* of ricochet to be a candidate for observing a collision of technique and method both at the same time.

Chapter Three

Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin: A ‘Performo-Magical’ Act in People’s Language

The chapter attempts to tease out inquiries related to the demonstrative principle of a ‘performo-magical’ show within the political performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*. Written by the members of *Jan Natya Manch*,⁵⁰ Delhi in 1980 and performed by its Allahabad unit in the year 1989,⁵¹ *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* will be a case in point so as to guide an inquiry *with* the demonstrative performance of *madārī-jamūrā* and *through* the magical playfulness of their act. This task is taken up by

⁵⁰ “Jan Natya Manch”, New Delhi, India (website), accessed March 16, 2019, <https://www.jananatyamanch.org/aboutus.htm>. *Jan Natya Manch* also known as *JANAM* is a Delhi based theatre group which has been active since 1973. Some of their initial street plays are *Machine*, *Gaon Se Shahar Tak*, *Hatyare*, *DTC Ki Dhandhali*, *Aurat*, *Raja ka Baja*, *Samrath ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*, to name a few. The group recognises itself as a ‘consciously political and partisan, and sees itself as a part of, and contributing to, the growing democratic movement in the country.’ The genesis of the theatre group came into existence when a ‘bunch of young Students’ Federation of India (SFI) activists had revived the Delhi unit of *IPTA*, dormant since the late 1950s, in 1970-71 and began doing large proscenium plays in the open for mass audiences of thousands’ (Deshpande 1989, 7). Their contribution to the street theatre movement has been phenomenal, especially in the post Emergency era. Safdar Hashmi, one of the founder member of *JANAM* and later to become an iconic figure of the street/political theatre movement of India, was assassinated while performing *Halla Bol* by the goons of the then ruling dispensation in 1989 at Jhandapur, Sahibabad Delhi.

⁵¹ According to Jamuna Ram, the Allahabad Unit of *Jan Natya Manch* was constituted in the month of March, 1989. And this happened exactly after two months of Safdar Hashmi’s assassination on January 1, 1989. For him it was a crucial moment in the history of political performance in India. The moment marks the date January 1, 1989 with the murder of Safdar Hashmi co-founder and leading political theatre artist of the time and other two members of the *Jan Natya Manch*, at Jhandapur, Sahibabad in Delhi. People at large were shocked and disgusted with this incident but at the same time were making resolve to fight on for the cause for what Safdar Hashmi stood by and gave up his life.

focusing on two aspects of the performance. First, being that of complimentary response as a performative-cum-demonstrative duel between *madārī-jamūrā* and second that of their engagement through a sequence of magical acts. On one hand, the complimentary duel of responses between *madārī-jamūrā* provides the ground to study and delve into the realm of lyrical language used between them in the performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*. Whereas on the other hand, the ‘performo-magical’ acts simultaneously helps to interrogate the demonstrative strategy of narration through lyrical *tukbaṁdī*.⁵² In effect, this section of the chapter foregrounds the performance of oration with a demonstrative approach to the magical act and work upon a deliberation *with* the characters of *madārī-jamūrā* and *through* their magical performance.

While showcasing a visual anticipation for a ‘performo-magical’ act, the section on *tukbaṁdī* argues that unlike in stage shows where magical performances are carried out as visual spectacle, the *tamāśā* of *madārī-jamūrā* involves a constant flow of exchanges, in the form of banter, quips and satirical statements. It conditions a possibility of affecting the spectator on two planes at the same time. One being the visual wonder *with* a moment of exhilaration in magic as something extraordinary. And the other, working *through* an arrangement of words expressed in *tukbaṁdī*

⁵² Samuel W. Fallon, *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary: With Illustration from Hindustani Literature and Folklore* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), 879. In the dictionary, entry of the word *tukbaṁdī* makes an appearance with respect to the Hindustani literary expression of *qāfiyā-bandī*, which means rhyming. Where *qāfiyā* directly refers to the word ‘tuk’. The author notes about the application of *qāfiyā* for a ‘following’ of ‘tuk’. In other words, *tukbaṁdī* literally means string of repetition of same sounding alphabets, consonants or vowels. Applied extensively as rhyming couplets, *tukbaṁdī* many a times has been considered to be an “indulgence in rhyming” (Trivedi 2010). But at the same time exhibits a peculiar potential for satire and pun. In music also such as Qawwali and in the popular tradition of *Mushairah* (performing poetry in front of large gathering), *tukbaṁdī* for performers has always been a “musico-literary form” (ibid) on which they have fell back upon. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 241. The author has noted down *tukbaṁdī* in the section of “Qawwali Musical Vocabulary” by stating it as, “putting verse together (indiscriminately), a string along of verse inserts inappropriately connected with the texts of the Qawwali song.”

style, the magical act pour out a conduit of meanings in the performance. Both, *madārī-jamūrā* duo does not refrain themselves from commenting on each other's action, and take liberty to add passing remarks with a sense of comic relief. They bring together an expertise and command over colloquial expressions and apply 'tuk' in a lyrical pattern, striking a chord with the spectator. Keeping on these two tabs of character and magical act running side by side to each other, popular overtones of criticism over the form of *tukbaṃdī* is put to task, thereby, informing a literary inspection into the 'application' of *tukbaṃdī*.

In order to follow up on the debate of *tukbaṃdī* as a popular mass form contra generic diminutive stature in the pantheon of literary genres, personal interview with an erstwhile member of *Jan Natya Manch*, Jamuna Ram and Allahabad based Hindi poet Yash Malviya is referred to, in the course of argument so as to keep practice and criticism working in tandem with each other. In the case of Jamuna Ram, his personal experience while performing the play *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* orients the chapter in providing anecdotal narratives. Still fresh and vivid in his remembrance from yesteryear, individual specific quirks around performative moments and instances highlights his experience of encountering 'politics' in political theatre. While, an excerpt from personal interview with Hindi poet Yash Malviya is roped in through the discussion on *tukbaṃdī*, he himself stands as a staunch proponent as well as critic of *chaṃdabaddh kavītā*. His criticisms and viewpoints on the literary aspect of *chaṃd* helps to situate the fulcrum of *tukbaṃdī* that explores novelty of expression around rhyme and jingles.

According to Yash Malviya, *tukbandī* as a “musico-literary” (Trivedi 2010, 39) art form has been neglected in practice and criticism. Either it has been denigrated as negative and sub-standard or connoted contemptuously (Burckhardt Qureshi 2007, 202) by the measure of literary form, let alone being considered remotely poetic. He considers the main reason behind this attitude as something which more or less has been a case of cover up, in the face of sheer paucity in creativity. Whether or not a certain lack of creativity opines the case for neglect and disavowal, the chapter instead of proposing or supporting a foregone conclusion, construes an arrangement of provocation *with* the performative concerns and *through* anecdotal criticisms of performance. By moving along in the trajectory of genre criticism, this section of the chapter routinely draws on references from performance texts, interviews and comments on lyrical poetry. And at the same time presents through them that how in the works of *Jan Natya Manch* the grammar and idiom of political theatre tried to constitute and chart out a new terrain of people’s theatre for the marginalized, downtrodden and deprived section of the society.

Taking cue from Safdar Hashmi’s *Right to Perform* (1989), it is argued that the performances of *Jan Natya Manch* was trying to incorporate and articulate “elements of social satire” from popular forms of performance traditions across the world and was attempting to link it with the ground realities of India. Thereby, adhering to an internationalist approach the group actually undertook a robust intervention in conceptualizing political theatre movement in India. It is argued that *Jan Natya Manch* was trying to create a distinct nature of political theatre, which understood the affective currency in the popular forms of performance traditions in India. And at the same time, sublated the radical/militant nature of “topical references and comic

episodes” (1989, 7) from these performance traditions. In effect, allowing a politics to appear in political theatre, not only their work became an extension of previous attempts to galvanize political theatre movement in India but also took a departure from merely ‘representing’ elements of traditional performing arts in street theatre, and therefore articulated to ‘present’ itself *with* the people and *through* their concerns.

Performative Interjection

This section of the chapter attempts to focus on the figure of two lampoons, who play out a cliché of ‘agent provocateur’ as crowd-pullers at the beginning of performance. As a performative tactics, both of the lampoons carry out a political subversion in the space of performance, while they speak up unabashedly and self-critically. Not only do they intentionally comment on their own act of lampooning as crowd-pullers but also create a passage for criticism by exposing the functionality of their antics. While deliberating on performative moments, the repeated usage of words like “bas, bas bas bas bas” with that of reciprocal mannerism puts forth an imperative exposition about the method and technique of interjection. The chapter attests that the figure of lampoon offers a ‘sublative grammar’ for subversion by speaking the language of the spectators in proposing interjections. Therein, the two lampoon’s mannerism and gesture is read under the lens of interjection.

Sharing and expressing a distaste for the job delegated to them, the lampoons reach a climax of disapproval when the first lampoon orders the other to take a pause and ‘let it be’. In uttering and performing a repetitive interjection, “bas, bas bas bas bas” the lampoons actually share a common emotion with that of the spectator. The repetitive

interjection intervenes with a sharp ‘No’ almost by performing a concatenation. By saying what’s not supposed to be shared in common space, the self-critical comment as if, vents out the individual actor’s apathy/frustration for the responsibility they have been assigned to. For a moment, their actor-character role sheds off what the lampoon is supposed to act and becomes one from amongst the spectator. The reason being that even though they act as crowd pullers, their functionality does not suffice with a punch of passive spectatorship. They talk the language of the spectator.

The performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* commences with the entry of two lampoons who are jumping around at the arena of performance. Their agility and remarkable body movements become a sight to watch, as both of them intervene in the space of performance, by simultaneously creating it. Although, neither do they introduce themselves nor give a hint of their participation, but an intention of athleticism dominate a certain kind of presentation, directed at the performance. Without a name or a character to associate with, the lampoons charge up the space of the performance by sheer dynamism. To the credit of lampoons, tone and tenor of the performance gets somewhat established as they lead an anticipatory spectacle from the front. While being detached with the characters of the play, the two lampoons assert their own exclusivity when the first lampoon instructs the other to give a rest to his spectacular jugglery and acrobatics.

(Two actors hop around)

First Actor: Alright, alright, alright, alright. Enough of your daring acts. People have gathered now. Start the play.
Second Actor: Here you go right away.

(*Nukkad Janam Samwad* 2002, 34, Translation mine)

Arresting an exuberant over enthusiasm of the second lampoon, the first one informs that they have shown enough of what was required from them and it was time to let the play commence. The first actor suggests that as the required number of people have gathered around for the performance, it was no more necessary to keep pushing with their antics. And what needs to follow post-antic, they themselves declare right in front of the spectator, preferring the prelude to be over even before it could take off. Thereby, commenting on their own functionality in the larger scheme of play and with all the energy spent up on gathering the crowd for performance, the task of these two lampoons needs to come to an end. Therein, cutting through the buildup of the performance right at the beginning, as if, dropping down the narrative on its head. A deliberate downsizing of their lampooning act not only exposes the functionality of their formal introduction but also captivates the spectator's attention in full focus towards the lampoons. This sharp interruption by the lampoons anticipates the spectator's expectation for a street play and on their behalf expresses a desire to witness the performance immediately. As if, the actors have come to know what must be running through the spectator's mind and are themselves amused to have judged their nerves. By passing a self-critical comment, and provoking the spectators by borrowing their thought and emotions, the lampoons per-assign a role for themselves. They become an 'agent provocateur', donning the role of the spectator and speaking their tongue.

Removed by one degree from the actuality of gauging spectator's language in literal terms, the metaphor of 'speaking their tongue' on one hand gestures a kind of comparison between the spectator's gathering and lampoon's 'in-waiting' behavior and on the other hand, the metaphor explicates the relationship of this comparison by

means of a performative utterance. Such an utterance possibly can only acquire an emotive gesture that uses the language and at the same time suggest an action out of it. Thereby, not only the utterance come out of its own, but it also tells what could be the intensity of a gut reaction. Especially in this scenario, when the spectators are witnessing the two actors outstretching an introduction of a performance, they are bound to react or comment on something they feel uncomfortable with. Herein, emphasizing on what I mean by talking their language is precisely in terms of metaphorically speaking how the lampoons muster up a spontaneous reaction which supposedly fine tunes with their spectator's gut reaction. The fact that the lampoons snap back at their own act of theatrics, end up by relaying a synced up utterance on behalf of the spectator.

Instead of giving up on the commencement of performance, their comment is laced with a tone and tenor that asks the performers to speed up and start the main part of the play as soon as possible. So, how does the comment gets incorporated within the performance? It finds an expression that is teasing in nature and does something amusing. The lampoons ridicule themselves through a spontaneous banter which dislodges the functionality of their act. A lighthearted provocation winds up the spectator and puts them in a position which is inviting enough to play a prank on the offset of performance. They not only put themselves in the firing line as an object of ridicule, but let the spectators partake *with-through* the lightness of their performative utterance. Without an ominous speculation about how the spectator's might have felt and reacted under these circumstances, the point of study here becomes that of utterance.

Therefore the question that remains, follows as such – first, how the performative utterance might have been expressed, given the condition that it would be an anticipatory interjection⁵³ coming from the performers themselves. Second, was the technique of banter apt in providing a conducive space for the performers to bring along the spectator on board with the characters to follow? Third, whether the preliminary comment had set the tone of the performance or not, can the banter be applied as a method in technique? Fourth, if so then how can such an application of method (banter) be read in terms of performance criticism? To deal with these set of questions, it's imperative to cross check on some basics first. This would entail a recourse to interrogate banter via means of speech act theory, primarily because the utterance of the words “bas, bas bas bas bas” demands an inquiry into its linguistic locus standi.

Herein, I draw on the seminal work of socio-cultural cognitive linguist Felix K. Ameka,⁵⁴ *Interjections: The Universal Yet Neglected Part of Speech* (1992), where he outlays the multifaceted overview of what can be considered as an interjection. By linguistic definition, interjections are “relatively conventionalized vocal gestures (or more generally, linguistic gestures) which expresses a speaker’s mental state, action

⁵³ *Oxford Dictionary Online*, s.v. “Interjection,” accessed December 19, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/interjection>. The dictionary entry of interjection is, “an abrupt remark, especially as an aside or interruption”, “an exclamation, especially as a part of speech (e.g. ah! dear me !). The word indicates an expression which is loaded with emotion and somewhat pops out as a reaction to a feeling. See Felix Ameka, “Interjections: The Universal Yet Neglected Part of Speech” in *Journal of Pragmatics* 18 (1992) 101-118. The author charts out three main categorizations which is as follows, “expressive, with the focus on the speaker’s state, the conative, with emphasis on the speaker’s wishes, and the phatic which has to do with the establishment of contact.” (1992, 113)

⁵⁴ Felix K. Ameka is a socio-cultural cognitive linguist whose area of interest is in West African languages. Formulating a structure of changing meaning of a language, the special issue on “The Ghana-Togo Mountain Languages” in *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung*, showcases his work on Kwa languages. It includes Ghana-Togo Mountain languages that deals extensively with the relationship of community and its language. He inspects the social interaction as a bedrock of contacts and exchanges within a community.

or attitude or reaction to a situation...” (1992, 106). Referring to case studies and examples, Ameka moves along the genealogy of the word by first taking up the case of Greek and Latin grammarians. He notes, that according to the Latin grammarians they considered interjection to be non-words, syntactically independent and indicate a feeling or a state of mind (1992, 102). While deliberating further on the subject, Ameka draws out the shift line in the discourse of linguistics by bringing to the fore what was considered between the Latin grammarians and those such as the likes of Campanella and Wilkins. The former’s take on interjection was that it ought to be included as a part of speech, whereas the latter’s way of approach to interjection was like an element of syntax (103). This split was later on taken up in the twentieth century by Jespersen and Bloomfield, where both these figures contributed immensely. Ameka initiates an important observation on function and categories through Jespersen by emphasizing that “non-elliptical utterances should not be put in a separate class” (104). By stating the issues at hand, Ameka moves away from Bloomfield on the nomenclature of secondary interjections, as he argues that secondary interjections “be referred to as interjectional phrases” (104).

Beginning with a discursive reading on the topic, Ameka further elaborates on typology of interjections. He distinguishes it between primary and secondary interjections. In the former’s case he goes on to define as those “little words or non-words which in terms of their distribution can constitute an utterance by themselves and do not normally enter into construction with other word classes, for example, ouch!, wow! Gee! Oho!, oops!, etc. They could be used as co-utterances with other units.” (1992, 105). Therefore, primary interjections are tipped off as “phonologically and morphologically anomalous.” (105). Whereas, secondary interjections he

contends is somewhat different, (he points it out in the footnote stating that his use of the term ‘secondary interjection’ move away from that of Bloomfield) by the very usage of the term. Their value is characterized by an “independent semantic value”, and which can also be put to application in a formulaic way. Thus it can be generated by means of self-expressive modes whereby secondary interjections “refer to mental acts too” (111). Under secondary interjections, falls such alarm calls and attention getters as Help!, Fire!, Careful!, and swear and taboo words such as damn!, hell!, heavens!, Christ!, and other emotive used words such as shame!, bother!, drats! (1992, 111).

In the context of this present issue on interjection, Ameka’s work tries to bring out contrasting views and different paradigms on interjection. Not only does it assists to see through a universal pattern of categories working across varied methodological approaches but also invites new forms of functional interjection to be observed in fresh light. Coming from a varied range of interpretation about interjections across linguistic insights, the phenomenon of interjection is still relatively understudied because of its degree of importance in different language structures. In some cases, interjections seem to occupy an integral position within part of speech whereas in some case it is nothing more than ‘peripheral’. Either they are considered ‘paralinguistic’ or “accompaniment to language or communication rather than being a form of linguistic or verbal communication themselves” (112). Since interjections stand at a crossroad with respect to its indexical peculiarity, topical linguistic research undertakes particular case studies by building on conventional readings in linguistic discourse. These conventional reading at times regard interjections as ‘phonological aberrance’ in accordance with the language system. While at times, working with

such contradictions the class of onomatopoeic words too are convoluted with interjections (112).

An emerging linguistic discourse related with performance studies at the edge, verbal and “non-verbal” communication does take an uncharted terrain into observation which otherwise has been interrogated dominantly via the lens of linguistic anthropology.⁵⁵ This area of uncertainty can be specially observed in the case of ‘backchanneling interjections’, which can be ‘cognitive’ as well as involve the mental state in the ‘on-going communication’ (114). These are associative but do not necessarily have an audience. Yet it may provoke a response from a by-stander (114). Ameka takes into account the example of the English responses yes and no. He separates the same words into interjection, particle and/or formulaic. While yes becomes an interjection when applied as a backchannel, it can be formulaic when ‘used as a response to a polar question’ (115).⁵⁶

Linking ‘back channeling’ with forms of communication in the context of the example, “bas, bas bas bas bas”, the function/category of verbal and “non-verbal” units draws an attention upon forms which ‘can have multiple categorisation’ (115).

⁵⁵ One of the sharpest criticisms which come against linguistic anthropology is positioned vis-à-vis speech act analysts. Alessandro Duranti, *Linguistic Anthropology*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 227. According to Duranti, speech act analysts go by the logic of introspection from where a generalization can be drawn out. This leaves the analysts with speculative situational deductions without observing the ‘real life interactions’.

⁵⁶ Felix Ameka, “Interjections: The Universal Yet Neglected Part of Speech,” in *Journal of Pragmatics* 18 (1992): 101-118. The author prescribes to the fact that American and Australian counter parts are quite different in the case of yes and no responses. Referring to a private conversation with Jane Simpson, Ameka elaborates by giving a situational example how backchanneler may work out in different contexts. He refers to a person ‘A’ who mentions about a news by stating, “Fred got married to Sue last night, to which ‘B’ express a ‘No’. Here the ‘No’ stands for a wonderful and unbelievable news which the latter wants to keep listening to and by saying no, gives in an information that she or he had no clue about the same (115). In terms of how these responses become an informed conversational exchange goes onto show that depending on region specific ‘auditor feedback’ they are particular and peculiar at the same time, to a response constitution in the positive or even negative.

Now this gestural expression of “bas, bas bas bas bas” can simultaneously be a ‘mental act’ when said as a ‘feedback signal’ and can be categorised as a ‘speech act’ if uttered as a response. Here, the only and primary difference between ‘yes and no’ example and the utterance “bas, bas bas bas bas” is that of what is said prior to the answer. Therefore, the gestural expression “bas, bas bas bas bas” does not fit in the category of formulaic words because no propositional question has been asked. These words are expressed by the lampoons right at the beginning of the performance. Only their gestural extravaganza precedes the interjection. With a continuation of hoop-la acts they themselves decide to cease and give away to the fact that the actual performance follows an interaction post their entertaining act.

Acknowledging the crowd’s own presence in the performance space, one of the two lampoons speaks up his mind and does a favor to the spectators by advocating to start the play. As if, the lampoons are capable of reading the spectator’s mind and uttering an interjection on their behalf. The moment of abrupt interjection, the words “bas, bas bas bas bas” aptly captures the resonance with spectator’s spontaneous reaction. Figurative in nature the abrupt interjection uses the language of commoners and presents before the spectator a way to intervene and instruct what they don’t feel like to see or hear. If in the case of complete non-adherence, the interjection needs to be repeated and stressed as *statim* (Latin, immediately) as possible.

This performative moment, precisely projects a vector towards a reading of interjection which the lampoons introduce as a performative expression. As a symptomatic interpretation, the interjection of “bas, bas bas bas bas” does not necessarily state the mental framework of the lampoons. Even though they do want to

showcase it as such, the overburdening of their role as crowd pullers make them react in an unapologetic manner. Then, does the lampoon figures establish and maintain a communicative contact that expresses their mental attitude towards the on-going discourse? Or, does it signal a ‘back channeling’ feedback like *mhm, uh-huh* which can be classified as phatic interjections? (Ameka 1992). If under no circumstances the words “bas, bas bas bas bas” fall under the nomenclatures of two types of interjections, then it remains to be seen whether it can be assessed from the perspective of conative interjection. And how are conative interjections defined?

Conative interjections are those expressions which are directed at an auditor. They are either aimed at getting someone’s attention or they demand an action or response from someone of a speaker’s wants. ‘The aim of conation’, as Isačenko (1964: 91) points out, ‘is to provoke a reaction on the part of the listener’. For instance, *sh!* ‘I want silence here’; *eh?* ‘I want to know something’...

(Ameka 1992, 113)

According to Felix Ameka, conative interjections are recognized with utterances and expressions which are provocative in nature and follow a responding nature of reaction to an action. It stands fast against any kind of expression that merely states an attitude of emotion or conveys a feeling per se. On one hand, they are addressed in a way where a listener ought to be present vis-à-vis its speaker. And on the other hand, speaker’s mutual action deems fit to fulfill the criteria on part of the listener. Therefore, a performative extraction stands ‘coterminous’ in conative interjection (114). It expands the horizon of the utterance whereby the direction simultaneously prescribes and suggests the performative gesture. Engaging actively to the degree of cognitive correspondence the prescription of an action suggests to act upon a designated plan and as the performative action gets carried out, it suggests a follow through communicative performance. This can be read in the above mentioned

quotation where ‘sh’ prescribes a specific kind of gesture while suggesting the action concomitantly. Putting a finger over lips or stressing on the pout by making the sound ‘sh’ elongated, concurs an immediate reaction for the listener. Following which, the listener no longer knows only about the mental state of the actor but herself/himself actively becomes a co-actor. She listens to the silence by partaking in the noise of ‘sh’.

In other words, while making mockery of oneself, both the lampoons manage to voice a compounded concern at the same time. One, that is their own actors playing the lampoons to assemble crowd and the other of the spectator’s concern. The lampoons don’t represent anyone as they present a case for a refreshing communication *with* their characters and *through* the concerns which connects with the spectator at an intimate level. It invents a space where the spectator can participate even while not being in a position to say something upfront. On their behalf the two actors say it loud and clear that which is supposedly not to be said. But as in when, the moment of relief comes from the actors themselves, a bridge between the performers and the spectator follow through, betting the odds against their own act of lampooning (Davis 2008, 5). The actor who act as lampoons, make way for a coterminous concern as they make sure to register their voice of common discontent. This bridge connects a common interest between the performer and the spectator by making one’s “experience legible to others” (5).

Therein, series of interjection acts as contextual indication that carries a meaning specific to the time and place of the performance. But all the more what it does in terms of engaging the spectator is something *pro bono*. The utterance comes off

without any provocation or any sort of propositional question hurled at the lampoons. As a voluntary voice of the spectators, both the lampoons undertake an incredible profession, which is to act on spectator's behalf. That too without seeking any sort of permission, the lampoons make way for their. On top of that they express the utterance by passing a banter onto each other and making a judgment on their extended comical act. Once the ice is broken, the performance becomes a commune of people's space where they can freely and unhesitatingly partake *with* the characters and *through* the performative acts.

With Madārī-Jamūrā, Through Tamāshbīn (Spectator)

Holding onto the node of spectatorship, this section of the chapter takes a byroad *with madārī-jamūrā* and *through* the figure of *tamāshbīn* in the performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*. Scripted down in the year 1980 the play *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* was originally named *Mehengai* '(price rise)' (emphasis in original, Ghosh 2012, 52). In the backdrop of a newly elected government at the centre led by the Congress Party, it was performed at a moment when the general election for seventh Lok Sabha had recently been concluded in the month of January, 1980. The play dealt with pressing issues related with daily livelihood, price rise and systemic corruption. An undercurrent thematic of the play was to expose the unholy nexus of government officials with the big business class of society. Contemporary to the times of an era which saw massive disenchantment⁵⁷ against Janata Party regime,

⁵⁷ Iqbal Narain, "INDIA 1978: Politics of Nonissues", *Asian Survey*, Vol XIX, No. 2 (February 1979): 165-177. Narain opens the article by quoting Douglas Pike saying, *as more of the same*, what he had termed the annual survey of 1977 in the context of Vietnam War. On the same note, Narain brings up the "Indian Situation" in 1978 and compares it with the heading emphasised by Douglas Pike. He then goes onto write a retrospective analysis of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's political resurgence and shares the sentiment in following words, "the close of 1978 saw the beginnings of

Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin's subject matter invoked the concern of peasants, workers, daily laborers and common masses of the country.

In the play, the executive arm of the government gets represented by the police officer, the public servant through the character of *maṃtrī*, and the the business class by the figure of *bania* (money lender). Locating the worldly impediment of public services for the downtrodden and working class *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*, incorporate the 'site' of public distribution system as corruption ridden and hugely biased against the poor. The performance showcases public distribution system, working as a perfect vehicle for the powerful business houses, the executive and the public servants to mint money at the expense of people's dependency. By making themselves richer in the process, this conglomeration always come together to form a diabolical nexus among themselves to rule the roost, who so ever comes to power.

Madari: Without a touch of hair, the snake is bald as a coot
See how it sits coiled up, a pair in cahoot
When it hides itself under a jasmine root
Follows to bite one without a gulp to moot
But then, why does Adam's kid plays with it?
Because of this evil hunger of stomach
Vow by your God Hindus and Muslim by The Holy
Quran
So my patrons and matrons, I shall begin my play
Jamura: Yes my master
Madari: May I begin the play
Jamura: Begin the play

(*Nukkad Janam Samwad* 2002, 34, Translation mine)

disenchantment with Janata, and also the slow but steady and calculated efforts on the parts of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to stage a comeback on the political scene in her own style of individualistic politics" (165).

The performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* introduces the “Madari-Jamura device” (Ghosh 2012, 53), in order to communicate this systemic inequality existing between the rich and the poor. As the *madārī*⁵⁸ enters with his grand oratorical style, he pitches for his show by playing with characteristic riddles about the fierce and poisonous creature like that of a snake. Put on display, *madārī* reiterates salient features of the snake, how it crawls under the jasmine plant, ready to swing and come in action. He presents the snake kept in a small bamboo hamper by sharing with the spectator about its bite being the most poisonous and so lethal that one can die in a split second. For *madārī*, human beings bring these creatures for show-making out of desperate need for money. Out of life’s compulsion he too has to make compromises and put his life at risk. Guaranteeing that he speaks no lies in front of the spectator and that the statement made by him stands true to his knowledge, the *madārī* quickly pledge by the holy text of Hindus and Muslims while swirling around the arena of performance. With a sharp prompts at his *jamūrā* the *madārī* provokes whether or not he should get on with the show. To which the *jamūrā* almost instantly responds ‘yes’, at the same time expecting his master to inaugurate the magical world. But before the magical performance kicks off, the *madārī* gets excited that there ought to be a

⁵⁸ John Zubrzycki, *Jadoowallahs, Jugglers and Jinns: A Magical History of India* (London: Pan Macmillan India, 2018), 9. The author lists out a range of street performers by naming them as follows – “jadoowallahs, tamashawallahs, jadugars, madaris, mayakaris, maslets, qalandars, sanpwallahs, sanperas, katputliwallahs, bahurupis, peep-showwallahs...” He argues that these types of show makers come from “an ancient collective of ‘strolling players (*barah pal*)’ which encompasses jugglers, snake charmers, animal handlers, puppeteers, ventriloquists, storytellers, impersonators and acrobats.” Bonded across groups of castes and creed, Zubrzycki argues for an ancient lineage of street performers, who under limited conditions and availability have been following a cardinal principal of magic. And that is skilful presentation of whatever these performers have at their disposal. To the contrary of Western conjurers, Jadoowallahs and his likes, work under with extreme constrains and limited resources (2018, 10).

In the introduction of the book, ‘So Wonderfully Strange’, Zubrzycki raises a concern that given the plethora of such an elaborate classification of performers already existing in a society, not much scholarship has been carried out on Indian magic, apart from few exception in scholarly interests. He refers to few recent works, like *Net of Magic* by Lee Siegel, *The Rise of the Indian Rope Trick* written by Peter Lamont and *Conjuring Asia* by Chris Goto-Jones that have done fair amount of justice to this widely popular form of performance.

conventional round of cheer and applause from the spectator. As a leitmotif gesture, with a brief pause the *jamūrā* does not seem to be convinced by the spectator's reaction and in a witty manner stands disinterested to perform on his master's call.

Madari: Patrons and matrons, give a round of clap before the play commences. So, what say you Jamure shall the play begin?
Jamura: Maestro, it seems that the *tamāshbīn* haven't had food today
Madari: Patrons and matrons, my jamrura here has a real bad habit. Untill he hears a loud clap he doesn't starts the show. So, give a round of clap. Now it is ok?
Jamura: yes my maestro that is something like it.

(*Nukkad Janam Samwad* 2002, 34, Translation mine)

The '*madārī-jamūrā* device' fulfill the role of a street magician cum juggler who finds a company in his yes man acrobat. Here, even before the performer duo have shown their performance piece, they are now supposed to be greeted so as to enhearten and boost up their morale. Till this point as the spectator does not seem to be included as a participant, they are strategically incorporated in the performance by a suggestive reaction from *jamūrā*. He deliberately pokes the spectator indirectly by questioning their interest through his master *madārī*. For him, the people gathered around the performance have come on empty stomach or have not had proper meal. In effect, the sole reason of a disinterested response, the *jamūrā* deduces, arises out of starvation and inadequate health support from the government and its welfare schemes. Referring it directly to the general situation of hunger and poverty, he takes a leaf out of the political discourse in India and makes a satire on the condition of poverty.

Taking a quip over the spectator's response for not paying enough attention, *madārī* swiftly opts to offer another chance at the gathering, almost by putting the sound of accolades in the hands of *tamāshbīn* (spectator). Following which, he immediately asks for *jamura*'s confirmation to do a round of applause to satisfy him. Without waiting how it may have sounded, the *madārī* switches hastily over to continuation of the performance, nodding by himself with a momentary approval. Corollary to the gestural nod as the next cue to move on with their act, *madārī-jamūrā* duo introduce an adjutant rider – i.e., to clap and acknowledge henceforth. Herein, this rider comes with a term and condition, for an unfolding of series of further acknowledgment as viewing and responding from time to time in the duration of performance. Like a child listening to a bed time story, the *tamāshbīn* needs to keep up with an onomatopoeic nodding sound (hmmm) at the narrator's pauses from moment to moment, the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) must fulfill this role as an active player in the performance. Their accolades and cheers follow a rhythmic energy folded up onto the performative acts which are then cherished by the performers unfurling a moment of magic with a new act at their disposal. This way, the rider provides an accord of mutual citation for acknowledging subsequent magical acts on one hand, and at *the same time* cements a trust for spectatorship through this accord. Thereby, without making the spectators a privileged entity, the performers open up a space of non-graded spectatorship which may act autonomously, as and how one feels to react to something exciting and appealing. These acts then are to be performed in the presence of accolade and applause as feedback responses, in which expression of approval stands vindicated of the fact that the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) are party to the performance as an equal. They are to cherish and rejoice *with* the characters and *through* magical moments in the performance.

From the moment of their approval through claps, spectators at once become ‘a part of the whole’ to performance. A simple action of inviting the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) to offer accolades and public gratification puts both the performers, the *madārī-jamūrā* combine, in a position of judgment in the eyes of spectator. Whereby, without any mistake, neither the judgment has been adjudicated nor yet examined. Offering the accolades simply makes a petition for a non-arbitrate appreciation. That too on the invitation of *madārī-jamūrā*, this appreciation conveys a token gesture which at the most can bring legitimacy to the act of acknowledging the presence of spectators, with respect to performers. Although, neither does the gesture of inviting the gathering for approval put the spectator on a pedestal, who simply pronounces a forgone conclusion to the magical act. Nor do they themselves unequivocally measure up each other’s appreciation for an endgame in supremacy. But nonetheless, apart from everything else, *madārī-jamūrā* manage to draw attention towards themselves and at once become an ‘object’ for scrutiny. Their character and magical act here referred to as *kartab* in the performance text becomes the focal point of observation for the spectators. As if, from here on each and every move they make, shall come under the scanner of spectatorship. If they can charm the spectators with their magical acts, and pass their imagination of *kartab* then they qualify for further appreciation. But if, by chance they don't live up to the expectation then their act must face the spectator’s jeer and unenthusiastic reaction. More than a vocal and an apparent sound signal communicated by the spectator, an unenthusiastic reaction often gets expressed or rather noted as no reaction at all, which suggests that the performance was below par than expected. Thus a prospective *kartab* may get completed only when it ticks all the boxes of entertainment and the hype weaved

around it. There the hype pitches itself with the momentum, by building up for a climax in the performative moment of *kartab*. An element of danger cuts through all the boxes of what can be deemed as *kartab*. These boxes vary between the ranges of wonder, magic, skill and last but not the least, the box of improbability.

Going all in with the hype around the magical act, the *kartab* gives a sense of achievement of astonishing feats. Wherein, it rests upon an imaginative amazement that simultaneously creates an atmosphere of expectation for the spectators. Whether or not a particular act by the street magicians passes off as an act of daring, hinges on the fact that the spectator's expectation ought to match up with an unexpected outcome in terms of probability. What the *tamāshbīn* have counted out from the equation, happens as a singular disjuncture of improbability in real time. To that improbable outcome from the performance, *madārī-jamūrā* combine invent a magic right in front of the spectator. Which in turn lets the *tamāshbīn* reconfigure the space of performance with a gasp of exhilaration. Often by taking a moment, expressed through a spell bound reaction in awe. And sometimes by ceasing to react in the middle of an act, as if withholding their approval in order for completion of a round of trick.

Perform-e-bility of a Tamāshbīn

On one hand the magician's daring acts to come, become a candidate for sharp examination, whereas on the other hand, as a 'pleasurable show' the *kartab* provide a key tool at the hands of *tamāshbīn* (spectator). This spectator in *tamāshbīn* has the most important tool, which is that of a character fulfilling the role of an onlooker. The *tamāshbīn* (spectator) participates in the performance as an onlooker, who enjoys the

experience of standing at the event of performance and in an unapologetic manner may comment or as per her/his taste of feelings. The spectator as a *tamāshbīn* bears a common trait with that of a connoisseur. It simultaneously expresses itself tout de suite and acts pronto in the form of expressing her/his feelings. More than a reflex reaction to what might affectively appeal in terms of individual personal taste, the connoisseur isn't held up with an 'acquired ability' per se, but holds dear to the immediacy of relieving a 'thought of taste'. Neither does she bank upon the sophistication handed over to her at different instance in time, nor does she 'remember' a particular palate referring to a memory. Instead the connoisseur performs an expression of all the tastes, simultaneously at the same time. To express her/his taste of feelings, the connoisseur commits to a novelty in practicing her/his profession. She enjoys the palate anew each and every time *with* the knowledge and *through* wisdom of flavors. She brings together the 'ability' to distinguish between variant tastes of feelings by smelling, and simultaneously perform her feeling for an aesthetic taste *through* the appreciation of palate. Thus, the connoisseur discovers a peculiar taste *with-through* the particular palate, so as to stumble upon new dimensions of flavor.

Herein, the new dimension of flavors not only adds up a new entry in the catalog of a connoisseur, but also realizes this unique aroma as a singular sensation which becomes particular to olfaction.⁵⁹ Although, the process of chemo reception

⁵⁹ Olfaction is understood in terms of a smell-breath oriented reception system in the nasal cavity of human body. It conducts chemosensation to "mediate safety, nutrition, sensation of pleasure and general well being" (Pinto 2011). With recent interest in the area of toxicology, olfactory stimulus theory has come back in the focus of study with respect to behavioral studies. In the article, "Olfaction: Anatomy, Physiology and Behavior" published for the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* (1982), Vernon Benignus and James Prah state that, "olfactory receptors are immune to exposures and appear to function by retaining molecules on their surface, air pollutants and toxic substances have a high potential for producing olfactory damage". This is primarily because of the reason, olfactory system does involve multifarious modulations in airflow, which in effect

(Pequignot 2003) in sensing distinct aromas of flavor involve an ability of smelling, the affect of such aromas also does offer a condition for performative *sublation*. At the affectual level, the connoisseur in *tamāshbīn* connects with other sensory modalities, prompting an instantaneous evocation of emotions pertaining to the sense of smell (Hughes 2014). And simultaneously facilitates a grounding for *sublation* so as to carry out a performative mediation in memory. The connoisseur's 'stomach' for taste and smell becomes a brain. It associates with specific episodes in memory with respect to feelings of smell and taste (Hughes 2014). Each and every memory carries along with itself an inherent capacity to trigger or produce impulses of "odorous stimuli" (2014, 1) and while recollecting, uses that retrieval mechanism in smell and taste to incur an objective memorization of reality. She/he may have a 'gut-feeling' about an information, which has yet not been processed over the roll of a tongue.

Then, neither this *sublation* imply to represent a choice of recollecting a taste, nor does it mean a synthesis of two odd tastes, coupled so as to work in tandem with each other. Instead, the *sublation* constitutes a cross-medial interface that communicates a new language of thought par excellence in passion. Such a passion for a new smell or taste does not get cancelled vis-à-vis an old one, but rather 'picks up' and adds 'anew' into her/his range of taste. They become ingrained as part of palate memory. To 'pick up' and preserve these senses of smell and taste for accessibility, performative

changes the way neural tissues affects the overall physiology of human body (Benignus and Prah 1982).

Considered to have been understudied and often pushed aside from the debate on memory, I intend to interject with olfaction and argue that memory and remembrance have a smell and taste of their own. Not only do they store a moment to remember but also provide a methodical tool to locate the magical world of sensation with respect to gastronomy. It informs a crucial bridge which in recent research have been termed as "cross-modal effect", *with* memory on one hand of the debate and olfactory sense working *through* emotional passages in the present. Olfaction refers to a central system in physiology, which has impetus in neurochemistry too. It directly puts stimulus equation in human behavior at the centre of examination. For further reference, see Michael D. Gershon, "The Enteric Nervous System Now" in *The Second Brain: A Groundbreaking Understanding of Nervous Disorders of the Stomach and Intestine* (New York, NY: Quill, 2003)

sublation officiates a rewiring of stimuli in galvanizing emotional information across memory lanes. The process of performative sublation then conceives an aleatoric incursion through snaps of memory lanes, wherein to pick and choose from evocations are laden with feelings that are not contained merely as memories. They become historical, by means of recollection *with* the past and *through* the present, which are decided as determination in the present-future.

Corollary to such a determination, the connoisseur articulates within oneself a thought by inculcating that to make a decision of spelling out her/his expertise, nothing can possibly stop performative *sublation* from determining what gels up spontaneously. Whether it be in the liking or not, *sublation* conducts a contingent association of disparate tastes to come together for gastronomical pursuit. It happens so, that in sublation the connoisseur cherishes a non-reactionary attitude to each and every authentic taste. And because her/his determination in sublation comes without an aorta of a reaction, *sublation* allows multiple memory lanes to reveal itself at an instantaneous moment in determining which culinary suits best. Thereby, sticking to a basic principle of commensurable anxiety – to live up to historical moments by the measure of passion for life. The *tamāshbīn* tastes and smells as she/he stumble upon life.

Because this stimulating affect of a peculiar taste provides a run down in memory perception, blending the unique *with* knowledge and *through* wisdom, an emotional component (Hughes 2014) registers an actual integration with all other sensations. Then the connoisseur in *tamāshbīn* does not merely tastes something just in order to brag about her/his expertise in respective knowledge field, but inaugurates a

performative *sublation* of remembering the precise flavor quite distinctly. On one hand, laying out disclaimers about her/his dislikes with precision, the connoisseur finds a ‘method in technique’ to address and express an overall mood around her/him. Whereas on the other hand, the connoisseur mediates *with* knowledge and *through* the wisdom of flavors to specify a ‘unique-ness’ in mediation. This can be defined as *perform-e-bility* of a connoisseur.

A *tamāshbīn* (spectator) too, may very much take a liking for *perform-e-bility*. She or he does not hold back, what comes to them at the very first moment. It reacts at the presence of being witness to the performance. But more than a reaction in circumventing ‘a mutuality of meaning making’ between the performer and the spectator, the *tamāshbīn* like a connoisseur presents a sense of *perform-e-bility*. It does mediate, but on a slightly different terrain. Rather than a mere modification of cultural objects, in which it is suppose to bring in ‘the relationality of liveness to mediation’ (Auslander 1999 in Davis 2008, 4), the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) works *with* the method of knowledge and interacts *through* the technique of wisdom. Thus, the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) does something unique to what it experiences – s/he commits to the act of testifying in what appears and disappears from her experience. More than ever, she/he keeps steady to watch over and let the information sync in, as and when knowledge and wisdom come to fight it out at the ‘site’ of performance. Whether critical or of boastful nature, her/his acknowledgment of witnessing the performance does not hold any sort of grudge against a commitment towards ‘testification’, instead her acknowledgment commits to build a trust by herself as against an absolute non-engagement with an encounter. The *tamāshbīn* does not at all comply with a reaction which can be called as a knee jerking reaction. So, by definition there exists no

waiting for such an onlooker, or in this case the *tamāshbīn* (spectator). An expert observation unlike a critique comes to the fore primarily because, palate of the *tamāshbīn* senses each and every taste at the same time, all at once, in one stroke. For if, to enjoy a particular performative moment anew, the *tamāshbīn* ought to process *with* the knowledge of an amateur and *through* the wisdom of a ‘new spectator’.

There the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) has no time for a reflective response but goes ahead *with* the expression of appreciation and *through* offering an acknowledgment to what it witnesses. Thus allowing an encounter of two prepositions – with and through – at par with each other. Neither the former preposition ‘with’ dominates ‘through’, nor the latter preposition ‘through’ prevail over ‘with’. But rather, both come along as a substantiated medium in its own right. Each one distinctly and autonomously bear the imprint of their respective existence and allows an unfolding of encounter between these two prepositions. Through this expression of feelings, the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) calibrates itself at par with everyone else gathered around the performance space. Whether it be a pedestrian or a hawker or a daily commuter, expression of feelings becomes common for all. They all may partake into the act and shed down their prior strangeness to each other.⁶⁰

Such a category of spectator, referred to as *tamāshbīn* inspects her/his overall duty towards the performance. Wherein, each and every individual onlooker bring together their respective appreciation adding up to the milieu of the performance. And not to

⁶⁰ Andrew Carlin, “Working the Crowds: Street Performances in Public Space,” in *City Imaging: Regeneration, Renewal and Decay*, ed. Tara Brabazon (Dordrecht: Springer Publications, August 2014), 157-169. The author argues that what makes up the city space does not and cannot be zeroed down upon the so called architectural small wonders of modern society. According to his study on street ethnographies, “busking, juggling are complexes of activities and appearances” which can test out the contribution of street performances in creating a public space.

forget, there appears no time bound interaction for this *tamāshbīn*, precisely because it can take off or withdraw from the performance at any given point in time. It may very well resist to empathize with the whole act of standing by and make a move out of the space in a split second. Like a bystander reacting to an off the mark incident, it may or may not commit to an episodic event. But as and when, the *tamāshbīn* does partake into a performative appreciation, it performs the most basic ‘function’ of an onlooker. The onlooker opens up a collective dimension of spectatorship in determined companionship. The *tamāshbīn* apart from everything else does take a moment out of her/his routine and schedules a mediation in testimony *with* knowledge and through wisdom.

***Sūtradhār* as a “Natural Ally”**

Because of *jamūrā*’s habitual attention seeking antics, the *madārī* lets him take a potshot at the spectator when he expresses that may be the audience today has had not proper food. Instantly a participatory moment gets unfurled as the *madārī* begins the performance by pausing for a moment to get back the approval from the spectator in the form of applause and cheers for his sidekick. This gesture of inviting an approval from the spectator can be gauged as a customary appeal on part of the performers, especially in the case of street magician shows. Arjun Ghosh in his book, *A History of the Jana Natya Manch: Plays for the People* (2012) notes that the form applied through the *madārī-jamūrā* device traces its root from “the traditional North Indian Street Magician’s show” (2012, 53). Coming from a lineage of street performers which include jugglers, tricksters and street magicians, the *madārī-jamūrā* play brings together a unique blend of the figure of *sūtradhār* – one who intervenes and

holds together the narrative of the performance. At times, he provokes the spectator into specific gestures of agreement or disagreement while asking an answer in return. Whereas, at certain junctures, the *sūtradhār* becomes a “natural ally” of street performances. He can mold how a narrative pattern emerges from his temporary injunctions and even guide the direction to an end of a performance.

Referring to Manish Manoj of the *Jan Natya Manch*, Delhi, Arjun Ghosh specifies about an incident at Satyawati College in Delhi. It happened during one of the shows of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*, when a rabble-rouser among the audience was dragged inside the performance space, as his intention was to disturb the play. Realizing that he has been picked out, the boy ran away and did not come back till the end of the play (2012, 55). Here both the actors playing *madārī-jamūrā* became *sūtradhār* and responded to a situation right then and there. In a blink of an eye, they communicated among themselves to take upon the charge at the nuisance to pull off a deliberate prank. The prank played upon this stranger boy not only came out of the blue but also threw up a challenge at the boy to perform while the performance was underway. To bring the person in full public view while the performance was happening, both the actors of *Jan Natya Manch* ensured that the boy’s act of disturbance gets outplayed by their prank. And this prank involved a gesture of disturbance over the boy’s disturbance.

At a point, when they were supposed to look out for the ration sack of cereals and pulses, animatedly represented through the figure of *borā*, they barged in the spectator’s column and pick up a random person. Instead of the *borā*, *madārī-jamūrā* got hold of the boy who was creating ruckus from among the spectators. Without

giving him a chance, *madārī-jamūrā* duo play *with* the character of jugglers and *through* a role of the *sūtradhār* by connecting disparate nodes of the performance. One node passively holds onto an action-in-waiting, when the actors playing the character of *madārī-jamūrā* hang on till an opportune moment to pick up on the boy. While the second node erupts into action when they finally get hold of the boy and make him lie down in the arena of the performance. The play's usual structure doesn't get altered as it keeps up with the pace of internal factors interacting within the performance but realigns a momentary shift with respect to an external factor through theatrical improvisation. This external factor manages to become an internal one, and corresponds to an immediacy in the action of actors. Rather than a thought to be followed up in action in hindsight, the actors playing *madārī-jamūrā* prefer to lock horns with the disturbance and act pronto. This in return, gives them a slight edge to maneuver around two simultaneous nodes of action, as they siphon out a stem in *perform-e-bility*.

The two unrelated portions of nodes run across *with* the character of *madārī-jamūrā* and *through* the performance of *sūtradhār*. It intersects the flow so as to make sense of a “willing suspension of disbelief” (2012, 55). Rather than an interruption, intersections of *sūtradhār* proffer a concurrent dimension of narrative. It creates a piece of artwork in progress that weaves together contrasting performative nodes into a stem which can vibrate *with* and *through* musically. The *sūtradhār* performs to its own ‘ability’ of cutting the narrative vertically on one hand, while on the other hand leaves the stalked blade of the stem horizontally. Such a situation gives a brief account of how street performances, that too of political nature are very much unscripted and many a times only an improvisation saves the day. Especially when

the condition of performance does not allow a bench warming attitude, the figure of the narrator or *sūtradhār* becomes that much imperative.

(Madari covers his pellet drum with a handkerchief and raises the hand)

Jamura: yeahhh... I see it
Madari: what did you see?
Jamura: a pigeon in the hand of jādūgar
Madari: alive or dead?
Jamura: alive and kicking but terrified
Madari: what kind of pigeon?
Jamura: legally right
Madari: what, a kite!
Jamura: no, a real pigeon in line of sight
Madari: what does it have in its beak?
Jamura: a ration card
Madrai: now what's that?
Jamura: the pigeon has a subscription of ration card

(*Nukkad Janam Samwad* 2002, 34-35, Translation mine)

More than a character figure, *sūtradhār* offers a versatile performer figure. His presence emanates throughout the performance, without risking the “opening and closing” (Carlin 2014, 8) acts. He can appear at any given moment of the performance and wishfully remains present or absent while having a go with a parallel narrative of its own. Before the spectators *sūtradhār* can very well guard the vectors of a performance in the unfolding of events. It lets the narrative of the play flow through an end to end synchronization. In this case, the *madārī-jamūrā* duo pull up a much required task that fits the bill of a *sūtradhār*. Rather than a single corporeal unit, the *madārī-jamūrā* fine tunes a presentation of a duel through a singular figure of *sūtradhār* by galvanizing a back and forth plays of commentaries. Considered hard-hitting for creating a critical discourse, the *sūtradhār* in *madārī-jamūrā* bypass cliches of ‘functional necessity’ in the performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh*

Gosāin. Both jointly create a mood of pun intended jokes while letting the quips and banter take over their own demonstrative narration for a magical act.

As in the above quoted play text, the *madārī* reacts to the answer of *jamūrā* when he puts his ‘damru’ (pellet drum) under a handkerchief. Confirming what does the *jamūrā* observes under the handkerchief, *madārī* tries to play a prank by deliberately saying ‘*cīl*’ (eagle), instead of hearing it as ‘*aslī*’, which means real. Choosing to toss up light remarks over each other’s statements, the duo keep up the tempo of comedy of errors and apply banter with a sense of ease. Neither does it seem forced nor planted but more so, as a moment of comic relief in ‘theatricality’. They choose to play with an appearance and disappearance of this tempo, by magically weaving a narration around their act. Thereby, floating a *sūṭradhār* as a ‘commoner-commentator’ who reprises at his own will. His appearance at crucial junctures stands incumbent to his intervention that spurs a new momentum in highlighting particular moments of the magical act. Whether it be the “summons” (Carlin 2014, 7), or flamboyantly spoken intermittent repetitions of the same phrase, *sūṭradhār* bears it all upon itself.

The performative gesture of welcoming the spectator’s appreciation while making a quip about their hesitation goes on to indicate the nature of coquetry that plays *with* the character of *madārī-jamūrā* and *through sūṭradhār*. Adjunct to this, *madārī-jamūrā* both keep switching this role of the *sūṭradhār*. The *sūṭradhār* maintains the role of an ‘explainer’ via *madārī* when the *jamūrā* asks for laurels, but simultaneously switches *jamura* into a mediator’s part when the *madārī* opts to act as a second fiddle. The *madārī* takes cue from *jamūrā* of what he demands and then

addresses the spectator by reiterating naive wishes of *jamūrā*. Whereas *jamūrā* follows his master's instruction by paying heed to the task and does coquetry through these wishes. Even though the wishes of *jamūrā* are naive they are not requested from the spectator on pretext of some credulous need of his own. But more so as a convivial gesture from the spectator that can fulfill a sense of admiration for their whole act.

Tukbaṁdī Through Magical Act

This section of the chapter probes through instances of 'performo-magical' act and argue that *with* the character of *madārī-jamūrā*⁶¹ and *through* their magical acts, visual spectacle of *tamāsā* involve a dynamic exchange in the form of banter, quip and satirical statements. Foregrounding such 'performo-magical' acts, the performance of banter, quip and satirical statements simultaneously helps to interrogate the demonstrative strategy of narration through lyrical *tukbaṁdī* (Qureshi 2007). Thereby, proposing that 'performo-magical' act conditions a possibility of affecting the spectator on two planes at the same time. One, being the visual wonder through a moment of exhilaration in magic as something extraordinary. And the other, with working through an arrangement of words expressed in *tukbaṁdī* style, the 'performo-magical' act pours out a conduit of meanings in the performance. This exposition of magical *tukbaṁdī* can be seen in the *madārī-jamūrā* duo not refraining

⁶¹ While taking upon the characteristics of *madārī-jamūrā*, the chapter also tries to situate the intriguing figures of street performers, jugglers and magicians, with its repertoire of entertainers and showmanship. Performing tricks and sleight of hand as a means for their living, *madārī-jamūrā* combo according to John Zubrzycki (2018) falls under the big umbrella of magicians. He enlists them under the category of 'jadoowallahs' who as master conjurers have picked up the profession from their ancestors. He traces their rooted in the peripatetic tribes coming from lower castes and marginal communities.

themselves from commenting on each other's action, while taking liberty to pass remarks with a sense of comic relief. The duo brings together an expertise and command over colloquial expressions and applies *tuk* in a lyrical pattern, striking a chord with the spectator. In effect, the usage of *tukbaṁdī* in the style of short counter questions between the two not only incorporates a robust language while performing the magic spell but also entails a range of lexicon back and forth via the popular form of *tukbaṁdī*.

Madari: Lay down. Gili gili gili choo
 (Jamura lies down under a black cloth)
 Join your palms for the rising sun, and say goodbye to
 the setting one
 Wish the Muslim and the Hindu with greetings from
 everyone
 So my patrons and matrons, I show before you magic,
 various sorts of magic
 Turn the girl into a boy and dog into a goat. So Jamura,
 who are you?
 Jamura: Who am I?
 Madari: Come back to this realm Jamura
 Jamura: I am here my master
 Madari: Boy, speak up about the past, present and future
 Jamura: All in one breath?
 Madari: Nahh. Tell it slowly-slowly, else the play will be
 finished like a death.
 Where is your concentration boy?

(*Nukkad Janam Samvaad* 2002, 34, Translation mine)

The *madārī*, preps up his magical act by extending his legerdemain (Zubrzycki 2018) spell in a demonstrative way. His competence in wizardry gets highlighted through the usage of magical words such as, “gili gili gili gili cūk”. In itself, the words do not mean anything but persuades an absurdity of words, jumbled up together as magic charm. Although, they are suppose to have an apparent meaning within themselves, these arrangement of ‘incoherent’ words in prose structure claim to put its listener

under the spell of the *madārī*. By muttering the *mantar* (disambiguation for mantra) the *madārī* swaps his introductory incantation with summons of magical prowess under his command. On one hand, the characters of *madārī-jamūrā* instill a sense of comic relief, and on the other hand a sense of amazement grips through the nonsensical magic words spelt out as *mantar* that beholds a power inexplicable to sensory reception. But yet, the magic words in itself has a life of its own and brings to the fore a simplicity of imagination in performing the absurdity of these magical words. The chants uttered by the *madārī* are close to incantations as they are supposed to bear supernatural power and used in order to play out the improbable within the performance arena. Such a magical formulae incorporates a specific way of presenting the act publicly. The *madārī* pumps up a rhetorical application of rhymes by paying respect to both Hindus and the Muslims in a single breath and launches the spectrum of his expertise of magical acts. He claims to have the power that can alter the shape and size of a girl into a boy, and convert a dog into a goat. With an intelligible language of magic on his side, the *madārī* afflicts the *jamūrā* with a dramatic style of putting him in trance and take a possession of his spirit.

Madari: Jamure, these gentlemen will shower upon us with a
lots of prizes if they are made happy

Jamura: Master this is beyond my capacity

Madari: Jamure come back

Jamura: I am here

Madari: Ok then, now see my magic. Right now with the power
of my magic I will bring the ration. Saint across the
seven seas, rise rise as Socrates.

(*Nukkad Janam Samvaad* 2002, 35, Translation mine)

At times funny and just short of sounding ludicrous, the spectacular way of casting the *jamūrā* into a magical charm, inaugurates the performative moment of para-human possession. By asking him ‘who is he?’, the *madārī* confirms about the state of being of *jamūrā*. Once the *jamūrā* expresses an exclamation about his own existence, the *madārī* reverts back to the playful dramatisation of ambulation as he proffers the *jamūrā* to come back to consciousness. Suggesting that the *jamūrā* has gone through the timelines of the past, present and the future, *madārī* prescribes him to share his experience. In doing so, the *madārī* looks upto the *jamūrā* as a medium, who under possession of his magical spell has become an entity that can speak about the past, present, and future all at the same time. This confers upon the *jamūrā* a distinction of a living body that can wander and move across various timelines at the same time. Its performance of a para human consciousness, invite a moment of magical expertise in the *madārī-jamūrā* playshow.

Madari: Jibrish Bigrish, Speak the truth
Break the spell, abandon the lies
Neem , berries , lizard scorpion snake
Arabic tree, Cuckoo , snake skin
Here come seven who rides the hundred
Unknown , toothpaste , take my grief
Yes you the father of mustache creep
Show the power of belief
Let the truth come out of deep!
(Spellbound like the Jamura)
Mantri: I shall speak the truth and only the truth
Madari: Who are you?
Mantri: Me ?
Madari: Mantri, come back to this realm
Mantri: I am back.

(*Nukkad Janam Samvaad* 2002, 35, Translation mine)

Opening up a possibility for revelation of truth, the human body of *jamūrā* speaks through the voice of a possessed entity. As if, what doesn't seem to be allowed in front of the public can be easily uttered and spoken as freely as possible. The play discloses the plight of ration card holders and the stark reality of public distribution system. As the narration goes on, one by one the myth of its success falls flat as the *madārī* makes the public representative speak truth in an unconscious state. Without any hindrance the *madārī* decides to overturn the rule of the play by getting hold of a public representative (*mantri*) and make him say things in public domain which otherwise he won't speak about. Presenting the bare truth in front of the spectators he gives up on all the secrets in a nonchalant manner. While speaking up under the magical spell of *madārī* his admission of being a crook that includes pitiable smear words for the common people at large comes with no sense of guilt.

The magical spell over *jamūrā* overrides his own conscious state, and takes him to a plane of otherworldly being. In a split second he enters into a realm of consciousness that defies all the logic of his earlier state of being and reverts back again *with* the consciousness of the *medium* but *through* a voice of its own. In other words, the *jamūrā* allows a mediation to take place between the reality of the performance space and that with other worldly spirit. This other worldly spirit sends information via the form of messages relayed *with* the consciousness of the medium and *through* the voice of *jamūrā*. As if, whatever he speaks up gets transmitted through a different state of consciousness altogether. While, the *jamūrā* remains to be in the present space of performance, his presentation as a medium, magically transforms the performance in itself. By demonstrating the act of going into a trance, and then hanging between unknown dimensions of consciousness, the *jamūrā* creates a

mediation *with* his body and *through* his voice. His clairvoyance performs an oration of times that claims to promulgate the truth as it is, instead of prophesying about past, present, and future events. Interestingly, the truth appears in terms of a premonition to a certain extent but when performed to be spoken out as a claim, the truth needs a voice.

Here, the voice of *jamūrā* through which an oratory promulgation is supposed to declare an edict about times untold, follows a logic of communication. And it happens to be the figure of *jamūrā* who embodies the magical method and technique of communication, both at the same time, to necessitate all the possibilities for a communication. His becoming a medium, officiates a performative demonstration of the magical feat and reveals not only an ability to invent a mode for communication but also constitute a *perform-e-bility* of the medium. A *perform-e-bility* which brings together an affect of magic *with* the voice of *jamūrā* and sublate *through* its performance. Thereby, presenting a mediation of magic in the performance that plays out *with* the medium and *through* magical moment. Rather than a forced substitution in mediation, the performative moment of magic between the *jamūrā* and an unknown consciousness introduces an ability to perform magic that has a proximity to present two consciousness simultaneously at the same time, that is, to get affected and carry out a process of *sublation*. One consciousness affected with the voice and the other reckoned as an equality of ability to perform magical sublation through the form of *tukbaṃdī*.

Madar: The python don't attend office and birds doesn't carry
out work
Says the saint Malukadas, all who provides is god
Jamura: These are outdated sayings, doesn't fit in today's time.

Nowadays even a pigeon has to fall in line in order to fetch his portion of food

Madari: Hey, where is your ration card?

Jamura: At times you make me laugh

Madari: (In anger) Jamura ! Hold your tongue else will break you into pieces, like the Janta Party

(*Nukkad Janam Samvaad* 2002, 35, Translation mine)

Sometimes jocular, and often clubbed up with juggler's gesture, the *madārī* throws a rhyme at *jamūrā* in the form of *tukbaṁdī*. Here, these couplets carry a sense of 'well known wisdom', which orients a worldview to express itself through pulsating verses either in open or closed format. Orated and pronounced with rhyming sways in consecutive lines, the proverbial *tukbaṁdī* of "ajgar kare na cākṛī, panchi kare na kām, aur dās malukā keh gaye, sabke dātarām" follows through a unique blend of meaning. The proverb comments and makes a satirical statement on one Saint Malookdas who says that for lazy people the best logic for not doing any work can be captured as, that neither the python does a job nor the birds go out for work. The saint Malookdas had once said, that don't do anything because God is the provider of all. And impromptu, the *jamura* answers it with a witty reply in the form of a banter, that ridicules his master.

By taking a potshot at his master with a banter, the *jamūrā* ensures a method of exchanging pleasantries in the performance. The retort rhymes to the end of last word uttered and provides a simultaneous lead to forge a string of verses with a pinch of black humor. Instead of a forceful retort, the *jamūrā* comes out as a natural jester, who more often than not has a spontaneous liking for quips. Even though the *jamūrā* ought not to resist what his master asks him to perform, he makes sure that his actions

gets registered by the spectator as a mark of dissent. Herein, the former's role as the master who instructs his sidekick to perform his command and latter's as *jamūrā*, being the one who obeys and follows the order, places their duel onto a spool of political subversion that magically weaves out a playful act. And how does the *jamūrā* intervene in his master's command? He tears into the tool of banter and quips which have a sharp characteristic of incurring political pun. Charged with an element of comic relief (social satire), these banter convey a multitude of meanings 'expressed *with-through* the lightness' of *tukbaṁdī*.

Hitherto, it has been argued that the usage of *tukbaṁdī* in the style of short counter questions, back and forth between the two figures, not only incorporates a robust language but also entails a range of lexicon via the popular form of *tukbaṁdī*. While working through an arrangement of verses expressed in *tukbaṁdī* style, a conduit of meanings appears to find a magical spot in the performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*. Herein, I would bring in the excerpts of interview with Hindi poet Yash Malviya on *chaṁd and tukkbandi*. Drawing on snippets of interview with poet Yash Malviya, an understanding of *tukbaṁdī* stands corollary *with* the character of *madārī-jamūrā* and *through* a series of leitmotifs in the performance of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin*. Therefore, the attempt is to explicate that political theatre's central pivot, apart from being easy to connect with the audience, also revived the medium of communication *with* characters like *madārī-jamūrā* and *through* a 'performo-magical' act of *tukbaṁdī*.

Being asked that why *tukbaṁdī* or *chhand kavitā* has been looked down, Yash Malviya sharply intervenes with a partial agreement to the fore asked concern. Yash,

dives right into the core of the issue and addresses both the counter-arguments. He clarifies that an answer on the question of situating *tukbandī* and *chamd* on the parameter of literary criticism must not be guided by a resolution of stylistics. Albeit, it may be considered as a combination of adjectives or jumbled up words in lyrical pattern, but *tukbandī* must be refrained from associating as a mere function of combining *tuk*. His prompt reaction comes without mincing his words. He goes on to provoke that if *tuk* is applied for *tuk* sake only then *tuk* becomes "tukārām śailī kī kavitā".⁶² Which means that *tuk* must not be seen in terms of mere formal application, otherwise it crumbles down under its own weight of stylistic. And there the danger lies to the fact that anything overdone does not gel up to the ears after a point. Even if, the case be of *tukbandī*, going by formal meter and technical aspects of *chamd kavitā*, lyrics loses its rhythmic aspect and becomes recalcitrant to itself. As a poet, Yash Malviya won't subscribe to such an idea of formal application of *tuk* and would prefer a certain demarcation to be drawn at the outset.

He suggests that because many a time *tuk* can, and does offer a new conceptual horizon of meanings, the words expressed as verbatim ideas in themselves may not suffice a condition for a conviviality of discovery. Instead, *tuk* simultaneously must offer and explore unsaid meanings out of rhyme words. They are to be heard with zest and playfulness. Yash Malviya cites Nagarjun informing about a sportive observation on *chamd*. According to Nagarjun, *chamd* and *tuk*, speak to the common people at once. Its power rests in the frolicsome directness in addressing people at large gatherings, and which not only sets a tonal pattern of words but moreover accentuates a melody of meanings. Yash draws a figurative analogy of *tukbandī* with

⁶² Personal interview with Yash Malviya at his residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 29 January, 2019.

that of closed fist, like an ignited *masāl*, like a blooming flower.⁶³ He explains this analogy by giving an example of Shailendra's revolutionary verse, which goes like this – “Bhagat Singh iss bār na lena kāya Bharatvāsī kī, deshbhaktī ke liye āj bhī milegī sazā phāṁsī kī”. The verse allocates the telling tale of modern India, where the poet calls upon the name of Bhagat Singh and pleads him not to be born again as an Indian. The reason being, that he would again be hanged and adjudged death sentence for his revolutionary patriotism. The verse provokes a dark reality of independent India, and especially in today's political context, where students, farmers, workers and the downtrodden section of the society are facing similar threats. And where activists, social workers are being targeted and hounded for expressing their voice of dissent to the policies of government and its executives.

For this simple reason of connecting to our contemporary times, Shailendra according to Yash Malviya, stands out among many other lyricists of his time. Because of his connection with ‘people's concern’ and their aspirations, his *tukbaṁdī* remains to be relevant and hardhitting even today. *Tukbaṁdī* might appear as a mere collection of colloquial words, but the logic put forth by Yash Malviya articulates the spectrum of ‘commonness’ in *tukbaṁdī* with our daily expression and *through* our imperative concern for livelihood. Not only does it propel the language of pain but also reinvigorates the political potential for a new melody of revolution. Herein, seeking a revolutionary potential, the chapter now reverts at the idea of peoples' theatre in the context of *tukbaṁdī*. The ‘performo-magical act’ of *Samrath Ko Nāhi Dosh Gosāin* poses a few questions with regards to an aesthetico-politico orientation of *Jan Natya Manch*. First, did *Jan Natya Manch* grew an affinity towards incorporation of these

⁶³ Personal Interview with Yash Malviya at his residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 29 January, 2019.

specific elements from popular forms as it “achieved phenomenal success only because of the emotional nearness of the themes to the everyday life of the people”? (Hashmi 1989, 16). Second, isn't it crucial to ask here whether the central focus for the theatre group came through the logic of people's presentation or did it solely rested upon 'affective' representation of figures such as *madārī-jamūrā*, *sūṭradhār*, *tamāshbīn*, *kotwal*, *neta*, *bania* for a 'people's theatre' ?

Remarks on 'People's Theatre'

This engagement *with* the character of *madārī-jamūrā sūṭradhār*, *tamashbeen*, *kotwal*, *neta*, *bania* and *through* the magical potential of *tukbamdī*, leads us back to a pivotal juncture in theatre historiography of India. Which is that of 'contemporary contingencies' that shaped the concept and contour of political theatre with respect to the idea of 'people's theatre'. On one hand, working with 'traditional' theatrical figures like that of *sūṭradhār* and *madārī-jamūrā* from the performance tradition of India, it becomes peremptory to locate how *Jan Natya Manch* was envisaging a definition of political theatre in India. And on the other hand, how this idea of 'people's theatre' incorporated topical association *with* people's concern as a method in technique. Concerned with range of issues, this part of the chapter tries to argue that the framework of 'political theatre' which *JANAM* was trying to present, did resonate with the idea of 'people's theatre' in their own language.

Here, I bring in the writings of Safdar Hashmi, who was trying to carve out a radical potential of performance tradition of India and by the same scale rejected the idea of 'traditionalisation' of Indian theatre. In the article, "The Tradition of Street Theatre",

Hashmi (1989) contends with a similar trajectory of concern that primarily seems anxious about the nature of “yardstick” to define street theatre. Experiencing a rampage of calling everything ‘traditional’ and counting them within the ambit of street theatre, Hashmi expresses his discontent with the event of sixteen day long festival of Traditional Street Theatre that was organised by the cultural wing of the Trade Fair Authority of India (TFAI) in 1986. He opines that, “it is one thing to study the links between the external aspects of street theatre and traditional performing arts, and quite another to present them as street theatre per se, albeit ‘traditional’” (emphasis in original 1989, 7). This point of criticism was coming from his own experience with the nature and agenda of the festival, which according to him was doing a disservice to the idea of street theatre on the whole.

With a dissenting opinion, Hashmi saw at the logic of such an initiative that was straight straitjacketing “any drama performed in the open” to be called as ‘street theatre’. On one hand he felt that this kind of clubbing up a ‘loose definition’ of street theatre was something innately ridiculous. Whereas, on the other hand such an endeavor was just trying to serve a naive purpose that remotely could have done any good for the advancement of street theatre. By merely putting up ‘traditional’ forms of drama out in the open, what the festival organisers had conceptualised was something akin to “as ridiculous as calling any play in which the hero dies at the end a tragedy”. This for Hashmi (1989), does not help the cause, neither for street theatre nor traditional dramas. Such attempts at the most end up in “misdefining” street theatre at large. And even if, it succeeds to pull up a definition for “traditional street theatre” then at best it proffers an “anachronism” (1989, 8).

Notwithstanding the dominant argument of celebrating the cultural event with high regards, Hashmi draws on references from Greek theatre to “mountebank shows” during the period of Renaissance, to explicate and put forward an argument that “elements of social satire” were a common threadline in all such “quasi-theatrical forms”. However, most of these performances, especially the Bacchanalian festivals had strong religious and ritualistic tones, their “popular urge to poke fun at the gods and their human custodians” brought out “elements of social satire” (1989, 7).

If one tries to determine the tradition of street theatre, one can perhaps establish many formal relationships with various theatrical and quasi-theatrical forms practised over the centuries the world over. For instance, the Bacchanalian festivals in ancient Greece or the pageants in medieval Europe had strong elements of theatre as well as social criticism of a kind. Despite their religious and ritualistic character, they very often contained ribald portions which were not altogether pious and drew their strength from the popular urge to poke fun at the gods and their human custodians. The mountebank shows during the Renaissance (like their counterparts, the *madaris* in India today) also had elements of social satire which were responsible in no mean measure for their mass appeal. In India, many of our folk dramas have topical references and comic episodes which create humour at the expense of the religious or the secular establishments. The two characters most often ridiculed are the pundits and the kotwal. In that extraordinary fourth century Sanskrit play called *Mrichchakatika*, the Brahminical thief, Sharvalik, actually uses his sacred thread to make measurements before breaking into a house.⁶⁴

In terms of extrapolating an element of social satire, Safdar considered a disposition towards popular performing traditions with an eye on people’s participation in theatre. Here in the above scenario, whether it be the case of *madārī* or stock character like that of *paṇḍit-kotwāl* (priest or constable), Safdar was cognisant of their penchant for humorous and ‘comical episodes’. He even went further to see a performative potential in the act of measurement by Sharvalik in *Mṛcchakatika*. Now, one could easily refrain from looking at these popular forms because of established

⁶⁴ Safdar Hashmi, “The Tradition of Street Theatre”, *The Right To Perform: Selected Writings of Safdar Hashmi* (Delhi: Sahmat, 1989), 7.

notions and prejudices, but as a creative person, Safdar could not afford to not turn around and look out for a driving force. He laments that, “there is no dearth of experts who advise the street theatre activists to seek their inspiration from our folk plays” (1989, 9). Without a diatribe toward these popular forms of entertainment, his attempt becomes that of an engagement instead of avoiding and turning a blind eye toward the “mass appeal” of these theatrical forms. Cautiously he situates the context and the need of street theatre by opining, “street theatre identifies itself consciously with the needs of the modern world, it establishes a more critical relationship with the past. It knows what to accept and what to reject from tradition” (1989, 9).

Interestingly, the memento of *Jan Natya Manch*, “People’s Theatre Stars People” portend towards a key aspect of what the conception of peoples’ theatre meant for the theatre group. Drawing on from *IPTA*’s lineage, *JANAM*’s politics had a bearing for an alternative and assertive way of intervening in the social-cultural sphere. The theatre group envisaged to retain the legacy of *IPTA* and present a ‘people’s theatre’ where the voices of the marginalized, the poor, and the downtrodden people of society could become the bedrock for a ‘peoples’ theatre’. Since the formation of ‘Central Squad’ of *IPTA*, the idea of a people’s aesthetics in ‘political theatre’, overtime had found many expressions in the domain of political performances and similar to their tendential alignment *JANAM* could find a resonance which was an explorative at its essence. This can be sensed in the short write up of Balraj Sahani in “*IPTA* Central dance Troupe's Programme and Tour”. He elaborates that the Central Dance Troupe of *IPTA* left Bombay on 18 December to perform folk-dance and songs at various cities and villages across the country. He adds, that the new program included, “exquisite dances and equally exquisite music”, which took sixteen hundred

hours for rehearsals. Among these “exquisite dance”, India Immortal (in the form of Ballet), Gajan (a Bengali folk-form performed during the month of Chaitra), Chaturanga (classical dance in Tippera style), a Manipuri Dance, The Divine Musician (as a lyric in dance, somewhat like Schubert's Moment Musical) and Nauka Vihar (Boatman's Dance) were the main features of this tour. In terms of experiment, Sahani emphasizes on the contribution of Chitto Prasad for his bold intervention in designing the costume, made out of “gunny-cloth”.⁶⁵

Linking up the debate of ‘people’s aesthetics’ with the “elements of social satire” the genealogy of *IPTA* was something that Safdar recognised in terms of their subversive potential. Rather than following a discursive understanding on the topic of how to ‘make use of elements of social satire’, he tries to formulate a historical temper for the advancement of street theatre. In that, he goes back to the genesis of street theatre in India by linking its root in the “anti-imperialist tradition of our people forged during the freedom movement” (1989, 8). Taking inspiration from the historical role of *IPTA*, Safdar (1989) was aware that it was an ‘anti-colonial’ and ‘anti-fascist’ understanding through which street theatre emerged as a political movement during the Second World War.⁶⁶ And it was precisely around the time of Emergency, a little

⁶⁵ Balraj Sahani, “IPTA Central Dance Troupe’s Programme and Tour” in the official Booklet of Twelfth National Conference & Cultural Festival of Indian People’s Theatre Association, held between 14-16 November, 2005 at Gandhi Bhawan, Kaifi Azmi Nagar, Lucknow. According to Rekha Jain, the term “Central Squad” was also addressed as Central Troop, as she remembers that it was “under the guidance of renowned dancer Shantivardhan, Communist Party of India constituted the Central Squad in the mid of 1944.”

⁶⁶ Ali Hussain Mir and Reza Mir, *Anthems of Resistance: A Celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry* (New Delhi: India Ink, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd. The authors draws on reference from the collection of ten short stories, that came to be infamously known as *Angaare* (Embers), co-authored by Rashid Jahan, Mahmuduzzafar, Ali Ahmed and Sajjad Zaheer in 1932. It was during a closed door meeting on 24 November 1934 at Nanking Hotel in London that their resolve to fight out backlash from religious and conservative organisations gave birth to Progressive Writer’s Association that night itself. The authors explain that an ‘internationalist ethos of progressive Urdu poetry’ was the bedrock of ‘the internationalist commitment of the progressive movement’ (2006, 69). As the movement drew its fervour from ‘the anti-fascist struggles of European literary figures’ it was as

prior to that, when *JANAM* conceptualised *Kursi, Kursi, Kursi* in 1975. Although the short skit “was performed once or twice” (Deshpande 1997, 7) it laid the foundation for a vocal theatre which would continue to carry forward the struggle after the Emergency period. The group realised that due to fund crunch across trade union units, it was up to the theatre group to address the situation and move ahead along with an exigency to perform their plays.⁶⁷ It so happened in the course of events right after Emergency that the group members took stock of their limited resources and narrowed down their priority. The members of *JANAM* formulated that their performance must be “(a) inexpensive; (b) mobile and portable; (c) effective” (1989, 160).

And what followed after Emergency was the performance of an iconic play *Machine* in the year 1978. In their performance of *Machine*, *JANAM* satirises the mechanisation of the human worker who is reduced to a machine by industry and industrialization process. The body of worker becomes a spot which highlights the schematic infliction of horrifying pain. A short, 13-minute play with a cast of six, acted in a circle with the audience on all sides, first performed on October 15, 1978. Safdar Hashmi records that how the idea of *Machine* emerged,

early as 1935 that PWA sent ‘Sajjad Zaheer and Mulk Raj Anand as their representatives to London to participate in the conference of ‘International Writers for the Defence of Culture’ (ibid).

Elaborating on the crucial aspect of ‘people’ as an entelechy (a vital principle for the development of an organism) in political theatre, Sudhanva Deshpande (1997, 5) interjects by saying, “tradition of theatre that the street theatre of the Left inherits” is basically coming from the ‘Agit-Prop’ lineage of First World War. After which during the Russian revolution, political theatre conceptualised an aesthetics distinct in its creation of “art” itself. And how was it distinct? Deshpande states that it was because that “now the term ‘people’ had quite a specific meaning, a meaning defined in Marxian theory in class terms: the ‘people’ now meant all those classes, sections and groups which rallied around the urban and rural proletariat to effect a revolutionary capture of state power” (ibid, 5).

⁶⁷ Safdar Hashmi, “An Interview with Safdar Hashmi by Eugene von Erven”, *The Right To Perform: Selected Writings of Safdar Hashmi* (Delhi: Sahmat, 1989), 160.

There is a chemical factory... called Herig-India. The workers there did not have a union. They had two very ordinary demands... They wanted a place where they could park their bicycles and... a canteen where they could get a cup of tea... The management was not willing even to grant these demands... The workers went on strike and the guards opened fire, killing six workers. So this old Communist leader told me about this incident... and he said, 'Why don't you write a play about it?'

(Ghosh 2007, 59)

Safdar Hashmi (1989) goes on by recollecting that when two of the group members including him finally sat down to shape up the script, the dialogues started flowing almost "naturally". He and his friend had some rough idea about how to put the dialogues in a rhyming pattern, so they didn't care too much about emphasising the conventional format of writing a script. Both the group members stuck to their strength of articulation through 'common parlance' and tried to incorporate complex ideas about exploitation and oppression of workers in the script writing process. They banked upon what they were comfortable at and knew best in terms of easing out their thoughts and ideas into a performance. So at the final call both wanted to keep the script simple, lyrical and with a narrative structure which would provide the performance with moments of comic relief and humour. Sudhanva Deshpande (1997) testifies to this clarity of thought in Safdar's analysis of reasons that made their initial performances a "success". The reason being that more than a captivating performance, these plays could let the audience feel about the thoughts in the reality of theatrical abstraction. Deshpande indicates toward an excerpt from Safdar's recollection of plays by suggesting that even for Safdar, the "success" of the play was primarily for three reasons.

first, because of its not just 'interesting', but stylized, lyrical, near-poetic prose; second because it captures in its abstraction a very real, living truth and trusts its audiences to make the connection between the abstraction and reality; third, because abstraction and brevity lend it a certain simplicity, without rendering it simplistic.

The four elements which Safdar marked as a potent driving force for the group's first seven plays were "language, narrative, songs and humour" (Deshpande 1997, 9). In other words, the four elements were undoubtedly deemed 'necessary' because, not only this template synced with the articulation of 'political theatre' but also allowed to transform elements of lyrical, rhyming and "musico-literary" composition into a blend of Hindustani *tukbaṃdī*. Here, I argue that among other affective format for the script, the *tukbaṃdī* template brought together the simple and communicative presentation of abstraction in 'political theatre'. It connected back with the potential of "social satire" and galvanized a space for demonstrative oration. Moreover, as a unique form in itself *tukbaṃdī* opened up possibilities for a people's theatre as it eventually became a mainstay for *JANAM*'s constituting force in terms of "success". Although the terms "success" carries a loaded connotation but here it would be humbly proposed as an elementary trampoline that catapulted an affective initiation in a performance. Using the language and parlance of *tukbaṃdī*, a mediation was exercised in order to outreach for a "living truth", wherein communication in mediation was played out *with* the abstraction and *through* the reality of performance. Thereby, creating new techniques and methods of political aesthetics.

Extrapolating from Safdar's observation, it can be augured that the domain of 'contemporary contingencies' in the political performances of *JANAM* entertained the idea of lyrical and rhythmic dialogues in a stylized manner. And in extension to stylisation of narration, the theatre group could work out a unique *tarīkā* to communicate the performative abstraction in its reality of mediation. This means that not only did the theatre group tap onto the provincial element of articulation but also saw that how with the abstraction and through the reality of local expression in

tukbaṁdī style, a template for a political theatre could emanate out of theatrical mediation. In other words Safdar's analysis of theatre's 'ability' to perform *with* the abstraction and *through* its real presence in the space of performance portend towards the dynamicity of 'political theatre'. By reflecting back upon the "success" factor, directly or indirectly the question of mediation in 'political theatre' shaped the crucial aspect of how to perform politics in 'political theatre'.

Thus without stopping at the quest for a meaning of 'people's theatre' through figures particularly, the question on people's presentation in the chapter has been put forth in terms of particular choice of people's language and idiom (*tukbaṁdī*). A question on presentation and representation can be a bit confusing here because a certain sense of demarcation between presentation and representation inevitably posits the danger of either pitting both as a *problematik* to each other or that it is incommensurable by definition. Or even that the demarcation in itself operates as a guise of 'antithetical function' which could play the parts as unit in order to resolve both as one. Instead this investigation of 'people's theatre' has attempted to frame an argument in favour of performing 'politics' *with* the people and *through* their concerns, which *JANAM* tried to explore as *inexhaustible possibility* in political theatre. The theatre group I have argued, was testing out multiple *tarīkā*, to radically re-figure 'theatrical elements' so as to present a singular departure for a new grammar of political theatre. This re-figuration of theatrical elements for *JANAM*, offered new meaning and also stood fast against the notion of assimilation. Because presentation of people's concern had to be communicated to the masses, *JANAM*'s politics weaved a 'performato-magical' *tarīkā* of people's theatre. Wherein people's concern brought out a politics to magically appear in political theatre which could 'present' itself *with* the

people and *through* their concerns. With multifarious abilities to affect people by performing their concerns, *JANAM* sought to envisage – *perform-e-bility*, an eclectic *tarīkā* of ‘people’s theatre’.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Trans. [from the French] by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone Press, 1989). The author argues that Resnais and Straubs are the greatest political film-makers. Not because they show the presence of the people but they know how to show what is ‘missing’ or what is absent. For Deleuze, here is the difference between classical cinema and modern cinema. Thus, in modern political cinema, a constitutive element is “the people who were missing...the missing people are a becoming, they invent themselves, in shanty towns and camps, or in ghettos, in new conditions of struggle to which a necessarily political art must contribute” (Deleuze, 1989; 217). Here, one has to be careful with respect to the idea of people who are *missing* as it must not be confused with a mere absence or weakness of popular power. He draws on example from South American cinema particularly, Glauber Rocha's work, which according to him puts the new object of political cinema into a crisis.

Chapter Four

Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha: Ehsās-Bodh of a Tragedy

The play *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha* was first performed by a group of amateur theatre artists under the banner of *Sanchetna* in Gorakhpur.⁶⁹ Written for the stage, in the aftermath of Bhopal Gas Tragedy,⁷⁰ Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma opines that something very personal had struck him when he heard the news about Bhopal Gas Tragedy. Although, till date, he cannot pin point what had struck him, but the event of this tragedy made him realize something at the core.

⁶⁹ The cultural group *Sanchetna* was constituted in the year 1973 in Gorakhpur. The group comprised of Rajaram Chaudhary, Rajesh Upadhyay, Katyayni, Sarvesh Dubey. It was with the help of aforementioned individuals that the performance of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha* came into being. After a couple of shows in Gorakhpur and Banaras, the the play was not staged for the next one decade and finally was staged at the North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Allahabad in the year 1996. Presented by *Itihaas Bodh Manch* Allahabad, this performance of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha* saw participation of Utpala Shukla, Anshu Malviya, Prof. Rajendra Kumar, Urmila Jain and Prof. Lal B. Verma (Verma 2015, “*Pr̥ṣṭhabhūmi*”). Also, Personal Interview with Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma at his residence in Karbari Grant, Dehradun, Uttarkhand, India on 28 July, 2017.

⁷⁰ On December 3, 1983 the Union Carbide factory located at Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh, India, “killed or seriously injured” more than official report of 3000 odd lives. The toxic leak of methyl isocyanate gas lead to a ataclismic event where the count of those seriously effected reached to a scale of 5,70,000 people. Termed as one of the “biggest industrial disaster” of twentieth century, Bhopal Gas Tragedy also later revealed out to be a human made disaster. It had shocked the entire world as the tragedy accounted for the death and suffering of thousands of innocent lives because of the sheer lack of safety measures. Covered by the national and international media alike, e victims of Bhopal Gas Tragedy till date awaits justice.

“1984 Hundreds die in Bhopal Chemical Accident,” BBC (website), accessed on 29 March, 2019, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/3/newsid_2698000/2698709.stm. “How The Hindu Covered the 1984 Bhopal Calamity,” The Hindu (print), accessed on 29 March, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/Readers-Editor/How-The-Hindu-covered-the-1984-Bhopal-calamity/article16260801.ece>.

In all probability, we were returning from Bumbai on 4 December. As the train passed by Bhopal station, it was totally deserted. Not a single person was on the platform... Next day when I read about the disaster in the newspaper, I came to know about the tragedy. Every day, there was something or the other about the accident in the newspaper. It was horrific as the accident exposed the lapses and irregularities committed by the officers of Union Carbide.⁷¹

Expressing his sense of shock that they have been in that place of tragedy while travelling back from Bombay, Prof. Verma follows the news over weeks to come. The magnanimity of the tragedy kept him restless throughout this period as he would flip through various newspaper, magazines, articles, debates and public discussions. Whether one can call it a coincidence or sheer luck, both Prof. Verma and his wife were physically unharmed as they had passed via Bhopal station. Without knowing about the incident, they slept overnight on the train, only when they were back at Gorakhpur, did they realize about what could have happened. Since, an initiation with the event of tragedy was triggered in real time, Prof. Verma accepts that the moment of interaction with the horror of tragedy was duly suspended. It was in retrospection, that the time of the tragedy made sense. As to the extent of utter ‘unimaginability’, their presence for a brief moment at the spot made it feel more than compelling to think about fatal consequences.

Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma shares in retrospection about this consequence of a ‘tragedy’ that made him think about how they could have been victim of an ‘unfair tragedy’. It could have happened to them too, like every other person who got exposed to the gas leak in Bhopal Gas Tragedy. Whether for their liking or not, victims of the tragedy did get affected by losing out on their life and that also

⁷¹ Lal Bahadur Verma, “Preface” in *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*, Laxminagar, New Delhi: Sahitya Upakram, 2015. Translition Mine, 7). Parts of the above quoted text has been cross-referenced from the personal interview with Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma at his residence in Karbari Grant, Dehradun, Uttarakhand on 27 July, 2017.

without being consulted. In their unconscious state of being, to decide about an imminent fate, victims of the tragedy were in no position to even stake a claim for their lives. In the face of an inevitable ‘tragedy’, somehow or other, victims of Bhopal gas Tragedy were subject of an opprobrious act committed by unethical human beings. This means that they could have been subjected to an outcome that was just not fair, because these consequences would somehow or the other, might have taken place without their knowledge. Herein, the people are only at the receiving end while facing the brunt of sheer irresponsibility by people’s management, but as an occurrence of ‘evental accidents’ happening at the behest of unfairness, only can be surmised as a tragedy. Such unfairness, many times do amend the nonchalant approach in one’s life. It can make any one ponder about the briskness of death, while at the same time put up with the ‘helpless-ness’ in the precarious situation of accepting death. And if at all, this ‘precarious-ness’ has anything to do with a prefatory anticipation to life, it is not imaginably obverse to the conducive surrounding of probability. That which is imaginable, has a life. By that logic, an ignominy within a shrift (remissions of sins granted after confession) seems more apt, as against a rectification in the trial of survival. Why so? May be because the rectification ‘unfairly’ wraps up a stake at life in a single glance of retribution. An unimaginable event too has a life, but more than often it turns out to be a tragedy.

In the scheme of things, Prof Verma and his wife had become active participants. Interestingly for Prof. Verma this sense of being subjected to a tragedy was not just a placement of sequences but it lay fragmented in order to be persuaded into a frame of focused pixels. Therein, the question of creative exigency to think about these consequences as an inactive participant to a tragedy of this scale, became a real

challenge for further deliberation. While recollecting about his own unsettling experience and grappling with the situation, he found out via news clippings that a film actress named Suhasini Mulay and a photographer Tapan, along with her were in Bhopal, while this tragedy was being orchestrated. They had been working on a documentary for the Madhya Pradesh government. But after the poisonous gas from Union Carbide factory had engulfed an entire population of the city, they unconditionally participated in the relief work. In an interview, published for, “The Hindu”, Suhasini Mulay herself narrated an anecdotal account of the documentary, *Bhopal, Beyond Genocide*.

It so happened that I was shooting around the Union Carbide factory on a documentary for the Madhya Pradesh government when disaster struck. As usual, the government went into a denial mode, playing down the number of people affected, whereas the people on the spot rose to the occasion with relief work. What started as support through a non-government organisation to provide relief to the slums helped me see what was happening. Soon enough all energy was redirected to make the documentary, which really is an inside view of developments. The first version of the documentary, which came 100 days after the tragedy, gave an overall picture...⁷²

One can possibly approach creative exigency in variation of necessities, but to evolve ways for an ‘immaculate disposition’ in understanding a sense of experience and process the horror of ‘tragedy’, analogy of an obstetrician⁷³ explicates the scientific investigation for a creative practice. Like the historical figure of Agnodike,⁷⁴ “the

⁷² Interview published under the column, “Chronicler of Reality”, in *The Hindu* on 28 July, 2011. This excerpt is a response to the interviewer Bhawani Cheerath, where Suhasini Mulay talks about her entry point into the making of two documentaries, “Bhopal, Beyond Genocide” and “Talking Peace”.

⁷³ Obstetrician generally clubbed up with gynecology in modern medicinal history, falls under the nomenclature of a surgeon. It deals mainly with childbirth, pregnancy and female reproductive physiology during labor. A term that is associated in common parlance to obstetrics is ‘midwife’ and the occupation known as ‘midwifery’. The profession of midwife has been there in recorded history throughout the early period of late Antiquity.

⁷⁴ Helen King, “Imaginay Midwives,” in *Hippocrates: Woman Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 181. In the chapter titled, “Imaginay Midwives”, the author

first woman obstetrician” who struggled against the patriarchal codes of her time and learned the profession of midwifery by taking a guise of a man, Prof. Verma could see the same spirit in actress and documentary filmmaker Suhasini Mulay. She, according to Prof. Verma, shared the similar courage and urge to learn from limited resources she had at her disposal. By stepping up her ante vis-à-vis those who were the real culprits of the tragedy, Mulay’s investigative film making involved a scientific trajectory that transmitted the knowledge and wisdom like that of an obstetrician. It was in the practice of speaking truth to power, while simultaneously putting it into praxis, which made a deep impact on Prof. Verma individually and inspired him to write about Bhopal Gas Tragedy. He credits Suhasini’s defiant act of staying back and continue recording aftermath of the tragedy in Bhopal that gave a crucial impetus for the script of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*.

Coquettish Exchanges

The performance, *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*, open with a preset of household coulisse on upstage as the bright scoop fill up the mise en scène at front stage. At one corner of the stage, seated in a contemplative mood, a man patiently soothes himself to a ghazal tune, while a woman beholding him in her gaze looks stranded with a cup tray.

makes a way to familiarise readers with the profession of obstetricians. King mentions about Agnodice (Fourth Century BCE, Greece) as the quote and quote ‘first woman doctor’. Even though, a lot of disagreement still persist about the legitimacy of Agnodike she is still regarded as a legendary figure in the history of midwifery. Her tales of extraordinary genius went on to be recorded in the writings of Gaius Julius Hyginus. Agnodike was known for her careful attendance, imparting wisdom and outclassing men in the field of embryotomy. As women were prohibited and restricted from learning about medicine and other related practices, among one of the many legends that goes around is, that she managed to attain the knowledge in a covert way by concealing her true identity. Helen King maps out a detailed system of references to the figure of Agnodice/Agnodike that emerged in the literature for and against the notion of women in medicine. What came out to be prominent within the discourse on medicine and people involved in it as practitioners, historically, is that the dominance of men was held up under the garb of efficiency and legality (1998, 175).

With an endorsing effect about their respective thoughts, the ghazal tune sets up a 'realistic' milieu, as the performance introduces two distinct personalities of Tuli and Tanu.

- Tuli: It's almost going to be one hour, and you are like this...
- Tanu: You are with me when no one else is there...
- Tuli: Is there a need for such a situation?
- Tanu: Tuli, listen to the shaer (Ghazal in the background)
- Tuli: Tanu! This attitude of yours' is suffocating me. Why do you take the help of Ghazals? You can say all of this by yourself.
- Tanu: What all? To whom?
- Tuli: May be to me or someone whom you deem fit.
- Tanu: Can you make some tea please.. You really think that I want to say, what is being said through Ghazal !?
- Tuli: I think so...Because otherwise, if you listen to yourself, the voice seems to be coming from far away and one gets immersed with that sound. Tell me isn't it the case?!
- Tanu: Very true. I agree.

(Verma 2015, 135, Translation mine)

These two characters of Tuli and Tanu are brought forward in the opening scene of the play, to establish their gender difference in personality traits. While Tanu's conversation runs through a succession of coquettish (teasing in a lighthearted manner) exchanges, Tuli disapproves of the situation by directly cutting through the mellowed down ghazal mood. She puts her feet down and disavows that she won't put up to his mansplaining. Her veto to the manner of their interaction untangles the established norm of an attitude where from a man's point of view such a conversation become playful without considering a woman's patience. The rebuttal toward Tanu emphasises this crucial aspect of an approach that routinely affects all women on a day to day basis. For Tuli, the teasing takes a guise of an irritating revulsion, wherein the way of Tanu's appreciation for ghazal contraband a primeval experience of

listening. As an independent thinker, she posits the question of whether it was necessary to take ‘help’ of the medium, or is it better to speak up one’s mind for their own good. In this case the overall milieu of ghazal played in the background of their conversation, gets problematised as Tuli persuades Tanu to listen to himself without a necessary ‘help’ of the medium. Performed in a back and forth dialogue form, the mutual commentary between Tuli and Tanu one one hand present an undercurrent robustness in admiration for each other. Whereas on the other hand, issues a notice of being careful by not becoming ‘susceptible to discursiveness’ while partaking into the status of partners as an equal. Despite an intercutting format these exchanges follow a responsive assertion in putting across uncomfortable questions. They are shared with experience of respective thoughts and feelings of the heart and the mind as a ‘malady without malice’.

The opening scene of *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha* engender two individuals whose chiasmic exchange of unsaid emotions find expression through an interplay of dialogues. As both these figures bring out element of their distinct characteristics through an amalgamation of an intense relationship, a series of intercutting provocations stimulate their polemics for an inquiry into each other’s thought process. Their intense relationship imbued within a synchronous dilation of silence between Tanu and Tuli, make the chiasmic exchange of their respective emotions expresses out a form of *common whole* – the tune of ghazal for Tanu and the voice coming from far away in the case of Tuli.

Herein, the tune of ghazal being the medium of expression doesn’t separate a suspension in silence. In spite of possessing everything at his disposal to lay out his

feelings about the situation, Tanu faces an allegation for taking the help of a medium. Seemingly naive, the touch of music leads him to make a palpable sound in favor of a dilettantish appraisal that immediately gets rejected. By the measure of an appraisal about the mood of ghazal, Tanu invites a disapproving gesture from Tuli. In the face of melancholic postulation, Tanu's supposed lamentation doesn't carry the sense of pain but stands prone of being polite about his own feelings. For Tuli, borrowing the mood of ghazal to express one's inner sentiment, doesn't do justice to the voice that may have some aorta of robustness. Tuli provokes Tanu to stop taking 'help' from the tune of ghazal and in the same stretch suggests him how to listen the voice of *Dil-o-Dimāg* without fulfilling a necessity in the condition of pain.

Dil-o-Dimāg: Feeling of Thought and the Thought of Feeling

Here, an old French proverb captures the problem of these uncomfortable questions aptly – “Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas”, which means, “Heart has its reason, which reason knows nothing of”. Such a situation informs the dialogue between Tuli and Tanu as something which appears closer to the expression, *Dil-o-Dimāg*. The expression *Dil-o-Dimāg* tries to possibly capture a sense of being in unison wherein its performance via conjugation, simultaneously brings together, all at once, the heart and the mind. This bringing together of the heart and the mind may seem to canoe through a plausible premise of a ‘dual nature’ in understanding thinking per se. But starting with ‘Dil’ on one side and ‘Dimāg’ on the other side interestingly, a spurs a moment of collision in time to make an adjunctive move with respect to the tenor in combination. Therein, the usage of both ‘Dil’ and ‘Dimāg’ at the same time, confers a novelty of appreciation that is, without being interecine

(destructive to both sides) to one another – takes a departure as a *with-through* act in the utterance of saying, *Dil-o-Dimāg*. Thereby, that which is by default an imperative for conjugation is no more coercive. Tuli hears out, what she says. And she goes onto to persuade Tanu to speak up what he hears from within.

In the case of Tuli, she considers all aspect of the sensorium without prohibiting even the prejudice to be kept aside in utter ignominy. By an outreach she makes an entry through a perspicacious outlook that puts a dynamic empathy at contemplation in contrast to the parochial impediment of positing a problem. Inviting the challenge, Tuli does not conflate her ‘feelings’ vis-a-vis ‘thinking’ of the heart, but instead allows a brief pause in the duration of blink of an eye that can suspend the ‘vision’ for a simultaneous acknowledgement of proximal fascination. This fascination is proportionate to the characteristic of a sibyl, whose magical like quality compel (almost without making it feel like) the eyebrows to initiate an emphasizing extension that carefully manages to condition the neck in a relaxed position. The pliant closure of eye-lids and eyebrows move till it all follows up with the neck movement, making the gesture amenable in accordance – *with-through* the interface of communication. More than a reaction, the ocular movement in thinking *Dil-o-Dimāg* persuade desuetude muscles to engage in an apparent ‘submission’ of being happy *with* a feeling of ‘Dil’ and *through* a thinking of ‘Dimāg’.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Distinct from a congenital quality, *Dil-o-Dimāg* promulgate a completely overwhelming experience, when conjugated with innate ‘thing’ while existing to particular conditions in life. The expression’s non-interdependence to each other promises a ‘incomplete unison’, which otherwise might just fall short of being inchoate, if deduced to a singular unit. Wherein, the etymological root of the word unison comes from the Latin root of “uni”, which means one, and “sonous” means sound.

Dictionary.com Online, s.v. “unison,” accessed October 9, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/unison>. The dictionary meaning of “unison” (n) states it also as, “the musical interval of a perfect prime” and “a sounding together in octaves” and

As if, this mediation of the ‘Dil’ and the ‘Dimaag’ orients a stridency in communication. By becoming a certified collision, the secrecy of such a mediation may follow a contrapunct⁷⁶ with the certification of being promulgated out in the open that can ensure the method in communication as an exigency. With respect to the voice, the communication in mediation might shape the mediator in bringing together the elements of pain, bliss and happiness, wherein this process of mediation as a contingency to communication empower a contemplation and agreement on the point of declension (Koul 2008, 33) (the variation of noun, pronoun, and adjectives by which categories of gender, case and number are identified). Thereby, varying to declension the medium of expression can become the mediator in itself⁷⁷ by helping out a *tarīkā*⁷⁸ of technique + method via transmission.

“simultaneous or synchronous parallel action”. In music, this unison has a coincidental characteristics, that marks an aleatoric synchronicity in interval.

⁷⁶ Dietrich Bartel, *Musica Poetica: Musical-Rhetorical Figures in German Baroque Music* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 144. The author collates a listing of composers and musicians who were influential during the phase of what is today referred to as Baroque period. Under the subsection on Meinrad Spiess (1683-1761), he interjects with his study on Spiess’ 1745 treatise called as *Tractatus Musicus*. Through this reading of the composer, music for him was “sounding numbers and is therefore reverberating Mathematics”. Identifying a distinct style – the a cappella style, Bartel notes that the treatise was penned down primarily keeping in mind the church music which would also consider with respect to being, “skillfull, contrapunctal, serious and dignified...” (p, 145). The term contrapunct is largely associated with its Latin expression, *punctum contra punctum* which means, musical notes against other musical notes.

⁷⁷ The expression "अलं करोति इति अलंकार" / *alamkorati Iti alamkār* means, she who does the act of *alankar* IS the *alankar*. This expression has been profusely extrapolated onto a lexicon that collates a wider range in expressions of truth. For further reference on “Alamkār”, see Guru Kamtaprasad, *Hindi Vyakaran* (Varanasi: Nagaripracarinisabha, 1982).

⁷⁸ Samuel W. Fallon, *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary: With Illustration from Hindustani Literature and Folklore* (Allahabad: Bharti Bhandar, 1879, Reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), 879.

Rekhta Online Dictionary, s.v. “tareeqa,” accessed October 12, 2017, <https://rekhta.org/urdu-dictionary/?lang=1&keyword=tareeqa>.

Personal Interview with Farhat Amez on 18 October, 2017 at 146 Sabarmati Hostel, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. At the time of interview he was pursuing his doctoral research. Dr. Farhat Amez’s Ph.D thesis is titled, “Poetry of Resistance in Iran With Special Reference To Farrokhi Yezdi” has been successfully defended in the department of Centre of Persian & Central Asian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, J.N.U.

Here the word *tarīkā* ropes in a sense of ‘ways to do things’, ‘method’, ‘technique’ and ‘manner’. Simultaneously applied, depending on the context of the subject and verb, the word *tarīkā* encapsulates a unique distinction of carrying both the meanings of method and technique. Although the word’s etymological root can be traced back to the Arabic *lafẓ* known as *tarīkā*, the three letter “ta, ra, qah” is referred to as Madda (root), where the last syllable “h” is written but not pronounced. If one considers to go through a process of syllabification, this absence of the syllable specifically explicates, what in phonology is known as glottal stop. Distinct from the English language example, which usually positions it in between the vowel sounds, the inflection (modulation in pitch/intonation in the voice) of glottal stop at the very end of the word determines the duration, so as to let the word become an *alfāẓ*. As a whole, the word (*lafẓ*) becomes *alfāẓ* that orients the syllable sound to comprehend and apply, all at the same time, to its perfection.

As an expression *Dil-o-Dimāg* becomes an *alfāẓ* by invoking a connotation that is specifically directed at conveying a phonological distinction from its logocentric counterpart, likewise a syllable by a combination adds peculiarities from its extraction of particulars. And here the *tarīkā* of mediation nonetheless procure a mediator that transforms its typographical clusters into a non-integrated whole of technique and method. A non-integrated whole that puts affront these preconditioned splits as a simultaneous codification without confrontation. This expression of *Dil-o-Dimāg* then adopts a *tarīkā* where a lexicon takes into account the varied listings of derivations. Followed up with collocation, the spectrum of expressions, compound words and morphemes, an expression such as *Dil-o-Dimāg* play out an ‘acousmatic alliteration’. While the formation of the expression maintains its prepositional brevity,

the counterparts of 'Dil' and 'Dimaag' are not nit together at a functional level of substitution. Instead, they are sublated onto each other, with a transformative potential on an imaginative and emotional plane, at the same time. *Dil-o-Dimāg* forms a ligature that stands independent of dualism and yet speaks out the thinking of the heart and feeling of the mind.

Hypostasis: *Sublation* Instead of a Decisional Substitution

The voice of *Dil-o-Dimāg* creates a sound *with* oneself and *through* the sound of 'one-ness'. On one hand, the claim made by Tuli about expressing one's thought in your own words, make a comment on the *error* between the medium and the mediator. Whereas on the other hand, her paroxysm (a sudden outburst of emotion) does not take a posture which seeks to construe a comportment (philosophical demeanor towards error) in the gap of medium and mediator. Instead, she advocate a voice with what one (identity of a person) becomes identical to, in its 'one-ness'. Although the voice seems to be coming from far away, the outcry avers (declare in a peremptory manner) to address one's own sound with a singular concision (conciseness). In anticipating such a voice, the sound for concision warrant an emendation (correction, rectification), which nonetheless operate at a level of trimming a verse of ghazal (lop off branches or twigs), but approves this concision in the act of listening.⁷⁹ In effect, a performance of listening configure itself with the simultaneous act of hearing to keep of off-balance the ambiguous nature in situating one within/from 'one-ness'.

⁷⁹ The act of listening stems from the question of what do we hear *in* us. This makes the question neither a speculative induction nor a total withdrawal from an inquiry. But from the standpoint of a speculative inquiry, partakes into a rather sublative process in which the method in technique of listening and hearing is converted affectively.

Being induced (in genetics, it is used as to increase an expression of a gene) in terms of influencing what one hears as a ‘performed version’, the voice from within becomes a fragrance and lets the volume overwhelm with all that is there as energy. Thence, identical to the viscosity of a fluid, (property of the fluid which resists its flow) the voice from ‘within’ decants (separate out sediments) as a sensory superlative out of the density of ‘one-ness’. Every time and all the time, such a partaking makes an unrelenting composure of synchronicity in hearing. But the quotient of being identical to the ‘one-ness’ with energy has a novelty in an all pervading appraisal (music) that takes a skip onto a plane of composition, which is at par as its divisor.

Listening into the interludes of silences, the condition of hearing provides an approval for sublation. In extension, Tanu seeking ‘help’ of ghazal entail an acceptance through submission, wherein the treatment to an idea as a distinct reality conforms how an antinomy plays to an antithetical move in reasoning. Just like amidst the state of hypostasis,⁸⁰ listening to ‘oneself’ treats the suspension of time as

⁸⁰ Hypostasis here would imply its precision of usage, along the line of medicine. According to the dictionary meaning, hypostasis in medicine is “a condition in which the action of one gene conceals or suppresses the action of another gene that is not its allele but that affects the same part or biochemical process in an organism.” “Hypostasis”, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/hypostasis>>, accessed on 13 October, 2017. In genetics, this concealing and suppressing action on another gene explicates the vulnerability through uncertainty. Other than the “allos”, (allele – genes which are accountable for variations in a family) a singular gene is prone to the whole part of the process in which it itself partakes. Thence, instead of formulating and identifying with a contra gene in mutation, the uncertainty in variation associatively exists at a minimum of two places at the same time.

The word runs through various streams of ‘knowledge systems’ and have influence on series of corollary disciplines such as electronics, genetics, linguistics, theology, religion and last but not the least in philosophy. In its classical usage, particularly in Metaphysics, the term ‘hypostasis’, means an underlying foundational principle which is also an essential principle. Placed alongside ousia, hypostasis has a conceptual corollary with the word Prakriti, from the Samakhya school of thought which conceptualizes it as a primal matter (nature). It has three *guna* (गुण) – रजस्, सत्त्व, तमस्. The first attribute being the quality of energy, momentum, passion. The second *guna* is of purity, virtuosity, serenity and creativity. Whereas the third attribute has a quality of inertia, chaos, impurity and ignorance. All three of them have feminine characteristics, as Prakriti itself is placed

a reservoir for sublation. By highlight an eventuality of sublation, the state of hypostasis enjoy an unrestrained compulsion one one hand, whereas on the other hand, this eventuality rests on fideism (theological doctrine) of inevitability, wherein the remainder of doctrinal speculation has a tendency to become dogmatic. An indiscernible condition exists amidst the state of hypostasis. It prevents the sublation from folding back into/upon itself which means, neither a complete racination (uproot) from mediation nor a quiet substitution, rather a prudence (carefulness) of listening that Tuli offers/suggests to Tanu.

To a great extent the medium of ghazal suffices an opulence of vestiges as it invites a quid pro quo (transaction) innuendo in hearing. The exchange in hearing works on a plane of contemporaneity for Tanu while injecting a kind of departure from the façade of outdated nightmares. Because the ordeal of listening in hearing support a reconnaissance of visions, the façade being substantial marks an institutive substitution in the transaction. In addition, innuendo of vestiges ‘rectify’ the error of institutive substitution, corresponding reciprocity in the ‘final act’ of ratification, authors an entire symphony of bookkeeping. But even more so, that which engulfs the very mode of transference becomes inimical to the existence of providence (used in the sense of foresight), while naming the contract of the medium. Here, the contract is named at the instance of recognition for a prejudicial interest, whose principal sum gets calculated even without following the order of operation. This means that the contract always is a defaulter by default. In such a sense the sound of *Dil-o-Dimāg* has a covenant with the defaulter, whose defaulting is replete by sublation instead of decisional substitution. Thereupon, an exchange between two

in contrast to Purusha which has a meaning of dominant, all pervading consciousness. For further reference see Sankaracharya, *The Upanishads*, ed., Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, 2003).

contradictory law of ‘Dil’ and ‘Dimāg’, which appear as antinomy, partake with the *tarīkā* of the transformation through an interface of communication.

Sampreṣaṇ in the Performtive Moment of Vībhots

Tuli’s repudiation of being immersed with the medium of ghazal, and the overwhelming effect of *śāyri*,⁸¹ showcases the tangible force between the medium and the mediator. What gets conveyed between the mediator and the medium is a relationship of two independent entities. But if when a contrary reciprocal gesture of not paying enough attention comes out at the fore it ultimately faces a flak in response to a parochial jingoism of the ‘self’, referring to establish each another. The determination of Tuli in arguing for the ‘voice from within’ and persuading Tanu to listen to it, affect a collision with a magical element in being one with ‘one-ness’. The act of listening to ‘oneself’ for Tuli conjures up a moment of *sampreṣaṇ* (communication) between ‘oneself’ and ‘one-ness’. This communication of listening to the ‘voice from within’ involves an erudition that establishes a relationship blessed by a caressing act of solidarity. That’s why, solidarity of caress has basic tenets of *samvednātmak-samajhdāri*⁸² that at the same time impart a grace without consecration. Because, neither *samvedna* corresponds to a subjugation of *samajh*, nor

⁸¹ Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda and Gisa Jähnichen, *Hindustani Traces in Malay Ghazal: ‘A Song, So Old and Yet Still Famous’* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 177. The authors line up the Urdu language’s influence on Malay poetry (known as pantum) and ghazal as they look out for “Malay syair and hikayat” being “adaptations of Urdu and early Indo-Persian literary works, which were widely influenced by Sufism and Islamism in general.” In a wider pool of literary and critical appreciation, the term *śāyri* prominently denotes a musico-poetic form in Urdu poetry, which expresses myriad connotation of feelings and moods of a poet that also invokes philosophical contemplation about life. Among major traditions in Urdu Poetry, Shaeri is considered to be the popular form other than Ghazal, Rubaiyat, Qawwali, Qasida, Nazm, Marsiya, Manqabat, Hamd, Masnavi and Naat.

⁸² Personal Interview with Prof. Lal B. Verma on 28 July, 2017 at his residence in Karbaria Grant, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

are they in contradiction to one another. *With* ‘samvednā’ and *through* ‘samajhdārī’ of ‘one-ness’, Tuli reveals a compactness of magical entanglement in *sampreṣaṇ* (communication).⁸³

Explaining an interchangeability within form and content for communication, Prof. Verma sees a persuasive characteristic that is constantly at work to adduce (bring forward as evidence) an aesthetic presentation. While discussing on the issue of how to make the form in content an integral aspect of our approach to contemporary theatre practices and its reciprocal figuration, Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma reiterates that form and content should always go hand in hand.⁸⁴ Without making form and content as contrary element that necessarily has to come at loggerhead with each other, he recounts his experience as a theatre practitioner while working within the newly formed theatre group of *Sanchetna*,

...most of the times, the question around form has been unclear (spasht nahi hota) to artists, theatre directors and so on and so forth. Especially, what I have seen in Left (the Left I know of) is a certain kind of an overwhelming trust to the extent of such a belief that whatever we are saying is important and will get communicated however we say it. I realize it now that during theatre rehearsals, not much attention was paid

⁸³ *HindiKhoj.com Online*, s.v. “संप्रेषण,” accessed June 11, 2019, <https://dict.hinkhoj.com/□प्रेषण>. *Sampreṣaṇ* means to get across a word, idea or emotion. The closest term used as a translated expression in English for *sampreṣaṇ* is communication. Although the word has an etymological commonality with ‘सं’ and ‘Co’, both of them differ in their respective application, when put to in the means of derivation. Because the logic of derivation is what makes them stand affront to each other. The word ‘सं’ adds to the form of the medium which transmits the sense of what needs to be communicated. Therefore, it simultaneously issues a nominative and accusative characteristics to the formulation of appendage in ‘सं’. Whereas, ‘Co’ initiates the combination onto a “noun of action from past participles stem of communicare (French)” which means, to make common. *Etymology Dictionary Online*, s.v. “Communication,” accessed September 13, 2017, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=communication.

⁸⁴ Personal Interview with Prof. Lal B. Verma on 28 July, 2017 at his residence in Karbaria Grant, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. He uses an analogy of a proverbial expression (चोली दामन का साथ) that indicates a kind of an inseparability between form and content.

on this area, as we would casually approach it in a way – if it's performed well, it will be all the more attractive.⁸⁵

A certain kind of disposition (configuration, nature) within the theatre group of *Sanchetna*, can be drawn out from the above quoted excerpt of an interview with Prof. Lal Bahadur Verma. One is that of a nonchalant attitude towards 'presentability/theatricality' of performances, wherein the nonchalant attitude entailed circumvention of improvisations but without experimentation. And second, that a performative intermediary in such a situation followed the credence of symptomatic disavowal for the condition of novelty to flourish. This raises a series of to the point questions. First did this nonchalant attitude in effect allowed a conformity to slowly seep in and pervade throughout the theatre making process of *Sanchetna*? Second, can this disavowal be seen as an inadvertent posture in the interception of a nonchalant attitude (hinder, obstructing by monitoring⁸⁶)? Third, the question of *how* the performance was going to be performed intermittently entertained a way of an approach in theatre-making? Fourth, was the theatre group formulating a new grammar a norm in method in the domain of 'amateur theatre'? Fifth, apart from being prescriptive, was a tendential signature of *non-method* style and technique coalesced (to blend into one body or mass) into aesthetics for its own dynamics? Sixth, as the consideration of performance's attendance in history was granted more

⁸⁵ Personal Interview with Prof. Lal B. Verma on 28 July, 2017 at his residence in Karbaria Grant, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

⁸⁶ Here the sense of monitoring is somewhat closer to the expression in colloquial Hindustani, "Khyaal se dekhna". "Dekhna" literally means to watch, see or observe, whereas when put together with "Khyaal se", the expression carries a connotation which has a sense of to observe with caution. This caution is not only to be kept on alert, but also indulges in an act that may instruct if something goes out of the framework. This usage, many a times broadens the conception of surveillance, which otherwise in common parlance is only limited to *overseeing* activities related to human's interaction within the ambit of virtual space/artificial mediated intelligence. By the extension of its *modern* articulation, the fallacy of decision to perform such an activity is taken to be a postulation, if this moderation has indeed a functional output, in terms of catapulting the data desired without information.

importance, did a trend of teleological posterity in appreciation have a form, while revering on the *what* of performances?

Herein, reverting back to a snippet of the interview with Prof. Verma, concept of *sampreṣaṇ* gets explicated through the performative moment of expressing *vībhats* (horrible, shocking). While discussing on a performative moment from the play, *Zindagi Ne Ek Din Kaha*, Prof. Verma recollect the theatrical process of conceiving the tragic moment of Bhopal Gas Tragedy. According to him, more than a question the challenge was how to potray and communicate the sense of *vībhats* (horrible, shocking) on stage. As an anecdote in the interview, Prof. Verma share that the role of a girl child was enacted by his own daughter. She was supposed to imbibe the magnitude of the tragedy in a way which would be minimal in terms of effect, but intense in terms of affect. The horrifying pain was inexplicable for her and that the inertia of her movement on stage had to gather the momentum for a sense of dynamicity in shock. As a director of the play, this was the challenge for Prof. Verma. He convey to the girl child (who happens to be his daughter) by saying, "ऐसे गुज़रो कि 'विक्षिप्त' होती जा रही हो"⁸⁷ which literally translates to, 'walk past the stage as if the horror and shock of the tragedy have made you unsettled and at loss with senses'.

Interestingly, the literal translation of the word *vikṣipt* means, to be in a state of delirium, unstable and demented. For Prof. Verma, a state of being demented when performed on stage "must comprise element of numbness with an aftereffect of shock

⁸⁷ Personal Interview with Prof. Lal B. Verma on 28 July, 2017 at his residence in Karbaria Grant, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

and pain”.⁸⁸ Withal, ‘being vikṣipt’ may consider momentary flash in a sense of unbelievability or amazement, but never to forge an alliance with impossibility of presentation. The reason being that creating a moment of ‘being vikṣipt’, the performative moment salvage a compossibility of the ‘ability’ to present the paradoxical event of an ‘inability’. Thereby to articulate and grasp the horrible nature of an eventful ‘tragedy’, ‘being vikṣipt’ tantamount to a paradoxical body of a living-dead that become devoid of its creator. Although the ‘tragedy’ ought to be communicated at the ‘site’ of actor’s body, but being ‘vikṣipt’ holds the imperative moment of tragic amazement at the localization of a ‘living dead-body’. In transfiguring this presentation of ‘senselessness’ from the tragic event onto the body of actor, the lingering duration of shock and perplexity has to have a resonance *with* the mediator *through* the medium of performance. Which means that *sampreṣaṇ* of being *vikṣipt* had to withhold the dynamicity of horror and shock as a moment in time just at the brink of an affective impasse, before the spectator can pick up a sublative dividend in temporal congruity.

As a motif in Prof. Verma’s way of experiencing and understanding Bhopal Gas Tragedy, the eventuality of incidents retrospectively corroborate with the aftermath of tragedy. His idea of presenting the magnitude of ‘tragedy’ has an indispensable characteristic of an unsettling tale of ‘helplessness’ and a sense of loss. Pertaining to the participation within ‘helplessness’, Prof. Verma devices the performative moment of being *vikṣipt*, so as to module the tragic incident onto the actor’s locale, i.e. her daughter’s body. He conceptualises this moment as if the volume of the tragedy caused by human indulgence not only manages to communicate the affect of loss but

⁸⁸ Personal Interview with Prof. Lal B. Verma on 28 July, 2017 at his residence in Karbaria Grant, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

also draws an attention toward a certain kind of ‘incapability’. In order to come to terms with discombobulation (perplex, puzzle) of ‘incapability’ being *vikṣipt* captures to address the recurrent question of weirdness. Usually referred to as something akin to stupefaction, for Prof. Verma, being *vikṣipt* channelises a shell shocking experience that stands contrary to didactic way of acting. In this case, the concision of being *vikṣipt* could have done something distinct other than a momentous articulation to be magnificent. Being *vikṣipt* has an aesthetic orientation of a implausibility on one hand and simultaneously on the other hand conditions a pliability of suppleness. It is far removed from an adjustment in expressing out the magnitude of the ‘tragedy’. Thereby the intensity to convey *vikṣipt* with a minimal gesture in terms of affect needed to attest a sense of ‘inexplicability’ on the stage.

In some way or the other, at the pith of performance, the question regarding an eventuality of loosing a life and not been able to anticipate the uncertainty of life could be presented through the performative state of ‘being *vikṣipt*’. Here according to Prof. Verma, the peculiarity of uncertainty etches a circle around weirdness that posit a disposition of human struggle for life in a manner which is radically different from accepting the very eventuality of her/his fate. First, the strenuous task to communicate the state of being *vikṣipt* comes with a mandate of performing the tragedy as ‘tragic’. Second, the affect of ‘tragedy’ post-realisation shall certify an encounter with a sense of shock, trauma and absolute breakdown. Third, performing the state of ‘being *vikṣipt*’ it must transmit a relay of expressions that are limiting the acting in itself whereas in concision are also compelling. And fourth, that it ought to raise above everything and ‘performs’ a response with both the ‘ability and inability’ at its disposal.

Therefore, ‘being *vikṣipt*’ induces the *tarīkā* of *perform-e-bility* that presents the effect of tragedy and communicates the affect of *vībhats* (horror and shock). It understands the affect of senselessness in the face of ‘tragedy’ and concomitantly translates the affect of unbelievability with the medium of actor’s body and through a mediation of being *vikṣipt*. To overcome senselessness of a ‘tragedy, communication of being *vikṣipt*, not only advocate a response in mediation but also perform the magnitude, feeling, concept and the horror of ‘tragedy’. Presenting the ‘inability’ to gather oneself in the performative moment of being *vikṣipt*, the *tarīkā* of body’s ability to perform an ‘inability showcases the ‘aesthetico-scientific’ dimension of *perform-e-bility*. It conducts itself at the most innate level and that too as a superlative form by organising a ‘*saṃvednā* and *samajhdārī*’ of ‘tragedy. *Perform-e-bility* performs the dialectic of ‘ability-inability’ with thinking of heart and through the feeling of mind.

Quite ancillary (added support) to the *tarīkā* of *perform-e-bility*, the *saṃpreṣaṇ* of being *vikṣipt* modulate a communication in proximity to the phenomenon of sprite (lightning that occurs above thunderstorm clouds/cumulonimbus). Maintaining an expectancy of lighting, the interest to capture a frame of sprite during lightning itself, the shutter reference of a camera runs a *tarīkā* of *perform-e-bility* whose command line operate at a network’s pace. In effect, this conjugation initiates a passage for the peripatetic field to synergise and galvanize a specific notation of sprite. While in the phenomenon of lightning, an electrostatic discharge makes an impact in the lower regions of the atmosphere, a sprite, on the contrary does a flash, above the thunderstorm clouds. Its halo and the tendril form an immaculate confluence of elusive spur that designate the moment of appearance into a vulnerable wisp. The

discharge of wisp alludes to an elusive material in the form of plasma just like *sampreṣaṇ*.

Sampreṣaṇ then is the working of a passage which allows a unit of non-lexical filler ('aahhaa' – a moment of realisation, illumination) to appear as a expression cum condition for *ehsās-bodh*. It rests in the *tarīkā* of communication as a 'non-decisional determination' that instead of browbeating each other's dominance over the other, take energy so as to make a movement in motion enough to inflect a change. While in the passage of *sampreṣaṇ*, the expression of 'aahhaa' simultaneously register one note of contemplative realisation, while at the same time listens to revelation by appreciating this *ehsās-bodh*. It vibrates all the way from within and says the most crucial aspect about everything happening in the present world. As there appears to be an encounter with a revelatory information, a singular moment in epiphany conditions the *ehsās-bodh* that there can be a possibility of novelty in store to come. Although an insatiable separation in registering and listening does initiate a paradox of realisation, the predicament of novelty propel a dimension of concealment in the courtship of epiphany. This paradox of realisation as a separate entity is replete of *missing energy* which is as present as it is in its absence.

An active and participatory traversal in this moment of realization/illumination proffer a unique characteristic to medium, i.e. the medium becomes a mediator. It is like a transmission through the membrane of an eardrum that makes a covenant with sound in air, without being internecine (mutually destructive) to the world of vibrations that it creates. As much as the membrane qualifies for the *tarīkā* of converting sound in air, it forte rests with the conviviality of amplification. Because

the hospitable quality has already inculcated a maneuver of listening to imperception, the exhalation is meant to stabilize the variation in pressure. Once the stabilization is incurred in the process of expounding a synergetic level in hearing, the cross hyperventilation runs *with-through* a spasm like situation, technically. In return the influence it creates is a permeable exasperation which allows listening to ‘the voice from within’. This puts the amplification in a position of transience, wherein the volume of breathing is listening to its rate of palpitation. The contraction though stems out as something which can exhume an antipathy for exasperation, but the uniqueness of this *lafz* ‘aahhaa’ calibrates the medium to become a mediator.

Tanu as Obfuscator & Tuli as Dabbler

Corresponding to an appraisal of ghazal suits the figure of Tanu as an obfuscator (one who deliberately withholds information), whereupon the figure of Tuli as a dabbler (an amateur, who follows her passion without being called a ‘professional’) follow a caress of *saṃvednātmak-samajhdārī*. On one hand, through the gesture of obscurantist, the passionate trope enriches a visual extension of grandeur and on the other hand, the dabbler proposes a communication between ‘oneself’ and ‘one-ness’ as a ‘deliberate’ mediation. Because the dabbler’s mediation collude to the fact that it’s felt at a level more derisory than the prescriptive conflation of an obfuscator, this mediation of ‘oneself’ with ‘one-ness’ carry forward an extrapolative commitment in a communicative manner. The dabbler communicates not with a transcendental self but finds a *tarīkā* of her own to be in sync with time.

Largely pertaining to a necessity of fulfillment in mediation, feeling of the dabbler can be understood as a condition which follows a predilection of communication. At this level, the necessity of fulfilment in mediation ensure an encounter of the ‘self’ with the feeling. But this also immediately prompt a scathing response from the dabbler as it sneers at the necessity. It contests and struggles against the ‘feeling’ of necessity and prunes it in a verbose way. As the dabbler lops off the contestation generated from feeling, it positions the periphery as excess to the barks of the stem on which it sits. The posture of dabbler sitting on this extension of stems, gradually develops a mannerism, while performing the act of pruning. But when a strong wind blows from all around, the dabbler has no cover. It runs for the dead branches at the ground. While under the shed of makeshift cover, the dabbler goes through a moment of *ehsās-bodh* wherein this moment of impasse presents a gift in the form of a gale within. It hears to the noise of this gale carefully without the need of grace being conferred upon.

All at once, a diptych opens up – one side registers the dabbler’s experience of what she has done while cutting off the branches and second side, scrolls down an awry instance of realization that simultaneously glances over her experience. Since the diptych ungoverns a procedural norm of experience, the realization expressed as ‘aahhaa’, attempts to process the problem of commonality in between the noise of the gale and that which sways her off the ground from a knowledge system. Knowing the method of process, the two distinct registers acknowledge, what ought to be in the courtship of acquired determination. The rarity in epiphany involves a simultaneous innovation, its significance in the manner of ‘commonness’ in realising the gale, initiate a sublative predicate rather than substitution. The common gale gets off the

mark and originate in the the dabbler by exuding a ‘rumbling from within’ and that too without a necessary self loathing. Because otherwise it can muster up only one thing, a self accusatory imposition of sin being benevolently bestowed as an orientation by default. So the dabbler has an answer in the form of *ehsās-bodh* who rectifies the image of gale by creating a real gale that virtually exists both in the dabbler and the obfuscator.

Contrary to the positioning of these two distinct registers i.e. of experience and realization, *ehsās-bodh* is brought at unison by inviting a sense of epiphany. The revision of identifying the noise outside from oneself, at the best, has the propensity of delimiting this extension. Herein, acknowledgement of this whirlpool can have both recognition and identification at the same time. In order to follow through it, dabbler’s ‘non-decisional determinant’ *tarīkā* involves an element of sublation (*aufhebung*). Not only it is the manner through which the dabbler performs the logic of picking up and retaining but also listens to thyself, what to do, while doing and listening. Thinking then is reflective of what one hears out instead of brooding over one’s thought.

Due to the encounter, register of experience continues to manage the conflict at hand and the persistence of this conflict not only places the collegium of perspectives on equal footing, it also administers an obfuscator to become first among the equals. As experiential register concord a unanimity of perspective, the resolution in such a unanimity does fall short in taming the rage of its inner conflict. Here, the self appointed obfuscator is no more showering an appraisal for unanimity, instead looks to impart onto others a precondition of privilege. In a way, obfuscator’s functionality

is characterized by the logic of deter,⁸⁹ as it enjoys a leverage in producing a counter-intuitive hegemony. The operation of an obfuscator is a determination par excellence, which null and voids everything else that may have the probability of being put up as a repellent to its algorithm. Thereon, a link is established between what it chooses to create as an essentialist anathema (someone or something that is detested, “excommunication”) and the scroll that reiterates an auto-deterrent mode through codices. Typified by the constitution of a gubernatorial (relating to the office of a state governor) style, this scroll is made available all the time towards an already null and void repellent. Wherein an obfuscator’s dislike at the repellent subsist by generating a deterministic substitution via hyphenation within brackets. Even though this hyphenation decant (separate out sediments) their inference to property, it is nonetheless privy to an indiscernible enticement for accessibility. The concealment promulgated through the scroll may be determining the factors that comprise the piece in the form of null and void, but the outcome always run with a disclaimer. The disclaimer being that even a punkt can rightfully transform the round bracket into a curly one. As these bracket come in pair, their distance to each other is non-definitive. It can be prolonged to the advantage of fulfilling the purpose of deter, whereas at the same time the bracket executing these series of codes pronounce the *missing* link. Ensuingly, they might conduce an operation in action but the restraining act at the most can delay the purpose of deter. The obfuscator opines for the purging of one’s own lacunas and entails a rectificatory interjection in becoming. Although it says that the self (German: ‘sich’) replenishes into a novel form through becoming, but it has always a sore eye for the dabbler’s ‘non-decisional determinant’ *tarīkā*.

⁸⁹ *Dictionary.com Online*, s.v. “deter,” accessed November 2, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/deter>. Logic of Deter is in cross reference with obfuscator which is specified and commonly used in computing and software designing. Deter means pertaining to the act of thwarting, stalling or checking something vis-à-vis to its occurrence/taking place.

Closing Remarks to the Chapter

In connection to these three overarching variations, working in tandem within a collective practice, the body of work within/of the theatre group of *Sancketna* has been brought forth as a means to augur a historico-philosophical underpinning. While emphasizing on these two separate categories of investigation in history and philosophy, both are brought together as a genus (a subdivision of a family in the classification of organisms, consisting of more than one species), that is malleable in form and formally material in content. As in entelechy which is a vital principle for the development of an organism, historico-philosophical acts as driving energy that induces materialism with respect to its *own time*. This shall further make an exposition about the myriad ways, which interlaced with the group's mediation as an instantaneous medium of theatre and performance. The form they chose had a conjunctional impact not only on the work of art that they were putting up, but also got them to embark on a journey, wherein a sense of *with-through* with time had an everlasting affective impact on the mediator itself.

Such an enquiry into the landscape of political activities in and around the formation of *Sancketna* orients this study to open up the inexhaustible possibilities onto our contemporary times. Instead of marking out an omnipresent particularity of situation that made the theatre group like *Sancketna* come into existence, the peculiarities of presentation in specific singular cases drives this study through the paradox of simultaneous times. Although, what may seem to be an engagement with the potential of a *missing* element in the possibilities of history, an exploration and promulgation

of *inexhaustible possibilities* inflects on the conditions of peculiarities. Wherein, the completion of moments in history no longer remain to be untouched but also not as same as those which have gone by.

Therefore, peculiarities does but present in front of us instances/situations, uncannily similar to what we may have disowned as already *missed*. These peculiarities are not just a sheer identifiable instrument with which this study can entertain a disavowing project of failures. On the contrary, it assists to make way for secession in comprehending our contemporary time that braves away from genuflection (bow before). It is a ‘technique in method’ that becomes a reverent in conceding the conveyance to instrumentality, because the detour is a sojourn across the dimension of realities. And the vehicle for this journey commences at the same time when the curtsy call to the linear progression is not only given up but hears how to listen at the vibration of virtual-hyper dimensions, existing *gleichzeitig*.⁹⁰ That means these peculiarities may exist even without it being named, framed or being indexed as its silence is more enthralling in the gamut of echoes. They are not essential silences which can be made into a certainty. They are for certain amongst us, within us, as these silences are heard without the necessity of it to appear as manifestations. Simultaneously, these silences resonate unconditionally. Heretofore, the non-bearing sense of antithetical adjunct towards this corollary with secession from silence, aids to a collusion of *missed/missing* voices. That undoes the marking of indexicality and lets the secession come to terms of being susceptible to being *missed* again.

⁹⁰ *Linguee Wörterbuch Deutsch-Englisch Online*, accessed on 14 November, 2017, <https://www.linguee.de/deutsch-englisch/uebersetzung/gleichzeitig.html>. *Gleichzeitig* is a German term which has come out from two parts. One is *Gleich* which means same and second is *Zeitlich* that means temporal.

Chapter Five

Yerma: A Coupling of Affect and Sublation in Their Contradistinction

Staged by the theatre group, *Samanantar* Allahabad,⁹¹ first section of the chapter introduces the performance of *Yerma*⁹² (1996) so as to set up the context of contemporary concerns about motherhood, chastity, abstinence relegated to women at large. Set against the backdrop of a rural space, *Yerma* is a lyrical play which weaves a parable of contemporary issues that deals with the theme of taboos and helplessness associated with a childless mother. The play showcases the contradiction of a woman's aspiration in struggling to express her desires while suppressing her emotions and bearing extreme inhuman condition of living for the sake of maintaining societal codes. By working *with* the concern of gender justice and *through* its performative 'site of mediation' in the play, this section of the chapter tries to bring out questions related to adaptation techniques with an emphasis on the debate of 'originality in theatrical adaptation'. Herein taking cue from Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), the chapter maps out various approaches

⁹¹ *Samanantar* was constituted in the city of Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh on 8 September, 1978. Its founding members were, S.H. Khan, Bhakt Vatsal, K.K. Srivastav, V.N. Gupta and Anil Ranjan Bhowmick. The first performance of *Samanantar* was *Rāmbān*, (playwright, Ramesh Bakshi) which was staged at Hariod Kala Bhawan, Azamgarh (*Samanantarnama*, 3).

⁹² The particular performance being referred here was produced for the stage by the theatre group *Samanantar* under the directorship of Anil Ranjan Bhowmick in Allahabad in the year 1996. There were two more shows of *Yerma*, one in Lucknow and the other one in Jabalpur.

in adaptation that has been applied to a range of creative arts, including theatre, visual and cinematic expression of literature. Thereby referring to her seminal work, linkages between aesthetics and politics are knotted with each other at the 'site' of adaptation.

While referring to specific moments in the play, a corollary dimension of writing about theatre production is also be taken into account, in terms of a retroactive engagement with the participants in the performance. Therein by placing the interviews intermittently in the course of the debate, the chapter explicate on concerns related with the relationship of adaptation to its affective field of encounter at the 'site' of performative mediation. Taking examples from selected interviews with Supriya Shukla, performative moments like that of *galchaur* (gossips) make an adjunctive move to enable an encounter of two concepts i.e. *affect* and *sublation*, so as to appear in simultaneity. Herein, the concept of *affective sublation* is brought forth as a collision *with* method of plots and *through* a technique of conceiving them as spirited exchange of argumentation. It is argued that with the performative adaptation of gossips (*galchaur*), allows an instantaneous sensibility of making small talks as the 'site' for debating contemporary concerns. Moreover, the performance of *Yerma* frisks a simultaneous move in terms of politically articulate gender debates without any fear of expressing thoughts about intimate feelings.

Linking the performative 'site of mediation' with an enquiry into the device of theatricality, the second section of the chapter tries to tease out the conundrum of symbol by navigating through issues related with the notion of symbolical unity in theatre. Herein, the question of *symbolical* power of mythical narratives is brushed

against its own formula that seemingly unifies the paradox of appearance and essence.⁹³ In order to carry out this investigation, interview excerpts of theatre director and actor, instances from actor's rehearsal, and workshops about improvisation technique becomes a case in point. In the first part, a parable from *Mahabharat* sets the ground for an analysis into the theme of *use*. In effect weaving together the 'use of themes' from mythical narratives as a counterpart to the particulars of being contemporary in theatre, the parable is made accessible in a theatrical performance. Therein a juxtaposition with the political situation initiates the debate around contemporaneity in theatre and further deliberates on the utilitarian aspect of myths *used* in theatre. Thereupon, this section of the chapter tries to venture into the figures in mythology which are referred to, as presenting a contemporary example (*udāharan*) from myths. On one hand, this will seek to compound the question of 'contemporari-ness' with that of of storytelling art form, while on the other hand, the act of illustration through a bestiary (parable, allegory) in a theatrical presentation shall open up parallel situation in 'historical time'. Thus, rather than the figures as mere symbols, they purport 'figures of time', wherein the tendency to re-purpose parables from mythical narratives gather momentum to treat the idea of movement within mythological whole as antinomies. Without drawing onto a compulsive construction of the symbol, what is at stake is the very analysis of thematic arrangements (*use*) in a genre of theatrical presentation. Therefore, connecting an imbrication of form and content in the mythological whole, an

⁹³ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: Verso Publications, 1985), 160. Benjamin traces this unification of the material and the transcendental object as a constitutive paradox in the theological symbol. For him it's a distortion that posits appearance and essence into a relationship whose construction is at fault, since Romanticism which had introduced it into aesthetics as a conception of the symbol. The conjecture of this construct goes to the extent that an enmeshing of the beautiful with that of the divine in an inseparable whole is an idea of immanence. Whereas the conception of immanence is quite distinct and in contrast in various philosophical traditions to this attainability of transcendence.

indiscernible manifestation of harmony illustrates an extenuation in parables and make way for a condition that will treat these simultaneous arrangements as ‘useful’.

Third part ventures back at snippets of interview, focusing on the *use of* ‘props’. In this vein, usage of *lāṭhī* as a recurrent ‘prop’ (in performances of *Samanantar*) becomes a point of reference so as to investigate the aesthetics of minimalism. Guided via a relationship of political discourse of its time, the veracious tenacity of aesthetic catechism provide a genre of ‘theatre-making’ in the form of psycho-physical training of bodies with respect to ‘props’ as objects. While dealing with the *use of* ‘props’ in a specific form of theatre, foregrounding the object in itself moves away from an overburdened contextualization of material specificity. However, a prefatory engagement with the of usage of *lāṭhī* is envisaged as a indispensable element for giving ‘it’ a life more than ‘a thing’. Thus a critical analysis of semiotics in theatre assists to *afold* temporal disjunction of creativity, while unfolding an artwork of origami. Just as in origami, the paper is folded through various techniques into a complex pattern of a completed model, the analysis of unfolding a paperwork not only project out the traces of the crease, but also at the same time entices a *perform-e-bility* to *afold* a ‘new style in form’. Although the approach to analyse objects do demand a decision, *perform-e-bility* of ‘props’ arrogates the *use of* ‘objects’ (in this case *lāṭhī*) which doesn't require a permission to perform. To such a degree of independence and freedom from permission, *afolding* a ‘prop’ in a style can then become a signature of creativity. Thereon, to ‘site’ the fissures and/or creases of an origami of ‘prop-work’, becomes a point of departure, so as to constantly keep the rigour of dialectic present in the act of unfolding/afolding. And particularly *with* the force of dialectic and *through* a pursuit of exploration, the ‘non-decisional

determination' for a particular 'prop' can channelize the *tarīkā* of reflecting back on theatre historiography and research methodology.

A Life of Her Own: *Yerma*, An Adaptation

For a cradle cradle, cradle
for a cradle we will make
a little cabin in the meadow
and then shelter there we'll take

(Jo 2016)

The performance of *Yerma* opens with a spot light on an ingénue (French: an actress representing the role of a young girl or innocent woman on stage) who is asleep with an embroidery frame at her feet and establishes her character as the leading lady of the play. Gradually as the spot is cross-faded with key light filling the downstage, an imbrication of strangeness composes the milieu with a shepherd entering on tiptoe while his gaze is fixed at Yerma. He leads a child by the hand who is dressed in white, as an onomatopoeic sound of the clock fades in, attuning the movement of bodies on stage. The shepherd follows an exeunt as he leaves the stage with a curse on his lips, setting the tone for anxious moments in the ordeal of life. As Yerma laments for a child not yet born, the presence of a child on stage, runs diametrically opposite to the the *mise en scène* of caress. Her yearning takes a plunge into the cushion of cradle while she testifies a sense of loss via singing a lullaby.

Opening scene of the performance lays out the suffering of its protagonist, embodied at the figure of Yerma, which in literal translation from Spanish means ‘barren’. The excruciating loss of not bearing a child becomes the sordid tale of “fertility and sterility” (Neelam Man Singh in Vatsyayan 2016, 66). Although gripped in the mode of lamentation, the figure of Yerma gesture her arms in a position of caressing a child with utmost affection. As the humming of the lullaby grows louder, the cloth in her hand tends to take various shapes, well in sync with a melodramatic tune of semi-classical ghazal. Supported by the background theme, the tireless longing in lamentation is performed on stage via the use of popular style of singing, wherein a sense of apostasy is reined onto the real relationship Yerma establishes with her *missing* child. It is as if, her longing remains in the realm of a ‘possibility’ to be actualized, and therefore seeks to strike a secret covenant with ‘impossibility’ in the performative gesture of humming a lullaby. While the songs are sung as disclosures in terms of manifestation of such a longing, the languor in lamentation approaches a truth in which the science is to take things as they are.

Where do you come from, my child?

From heights that are icy cold.

What do you need, my love?

The warm feel of your robe.

Let branches stir in the light

and fountains leap in the air!

(Jo 2016)

At the outset of the performance, a non-convivial mood is cast-in between Juan and Yerma as they try to reconcile with the question of not parenting a child. From Juan’s perspective, not to have a child gives an added advantage to him because then his

regular work goes unaffected and they don't have to worry about the child any more. Whereas, feeling disconsolate because of her *missing* child, Yerma's robust tales of anguish and incompleteness produces lullabies in anticipation of an arrival. An arrival that seems only in terms of hope and yet is not an ancillary component for her being. At one level this seems a conspicuous parable of 'longing-ness', and a desire for a child yet not born. Whereas, at another level the form of dramatization in the performance indicates an unbearable sense of tension being played out between Yerma's aspiration and her reality in life. This tension holds to the fact that without despair, she is leading a 'lifeless partnership' with her husband whereas breeding a feeling of repulsion in the unfulfillment of her communion with Juan. While sharing her experience and intimacy with Juan, Yerma engages with emotion of her love not being realized, the way she would like it to be. Therein by singing the lullaby, Yerma tries to ease out the tension and spring to brightness in their otherwise dull routine, whilst fancying her chance to go against the norms of society and its customary necessities.

Ventilating her suppressed feeling and thoughts through singing lullabies, *Yerma* as a Hindustani adaptation provokes an interesting lead at the 'site of mediation'. Thereby in terms of reading the adaptation through the motif of storytelling in a locale format, the performance of Yerma not only the explicate customary technique of theatrical enmeshing of live music with that of performative narrations, but also tries to see through the impulse of tension expressed in the medium of theatre or performance. Furthermore, identifying the 'site of mediation' in the medium of lullaby, the motif of a 'lyrico-musical' storytelling becomes a point of entry to look at the performative adaptation of the medium itself. Responding to questions on the resonance between

the Spanish ballad form and the local imagination of lullaby in the meaning-making process of adaptation, Supriya⁹⁴ observes,

Because it is so much local, its local and difficult. And so many strong associations, which we can't understand. Basically he talks about life, he talks about life he keeps using all those, you know, specific associations which you don't have a clue. *Pāṃchālī*, *Mamthan* too were women centric but *Yerma* was musical and set in the backdrop of a village, supposedly contemporary, a bit new. There is so much commonality between Lorca's poetry and our local imagery.⁹⁵

An incessant enquiry into such a choice for adaptation intrigues and fascinates Supriya. For her, the relationship of the 'particular' with the associative axis in search for an adaptation seems to have a bearing of intertextual conviviality that could easily overpower a performance in adaptation. But without a doubt, in terms of innuendoes, an adaptation does bring in pantheistic approach *with-through* a simultaneous movement of association. As mentioned above, the backdrop of a village, local forms of lullabies might be accessed as an associative axis through which a movement in association can portend at the contemporary fragments of familiarity. But then, she asks, can we afford to invite a simple question about such a procurement of a 'necessary association'. Which is, does the performance work onto a network of principles or processes of reproduction which is 'meta-theatrical'?

⁹⁴ Supriya Shukla is a theatre practitioner, currently based at Hyderabad, India. She became an integral part of *Samanantar* when she had joined the theater group in the year 1996. Later she completed her Post-Graduate diploma in Dramatic Arts from National School of Drama, New Delhi in 2004. She has worked in more than 50 productions, while working closely with renowned theatre practitioners, directors and teachers like Adil Hussain, Anuradha Kapur, Rob Claire, Kirti Jain, Abhilash Pillai, M.K.Raina, Zuliekha Chaudhary, Naseeruddin Shah, Bansi Kaul, David Zinder, Ramgopal Bajaj, Robin Das, Rashid Ansari, Maya Rao, Barry John, Ulrich-Meyer-Horch, Craig Mathers, Cynthia Aspherger. Her research and performance interests are – women and/in performance, feminist identity in performance, Applied Theatre, Theatre for Children, and Art as Social-Political Act. From October 2015 to September 2016 she was a Doctoral Candidate at the international research center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie University, Berlin.

⁹⁵ Personal interview with Supriya Shukla at her residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 3 November, 2016 (Translation mine).

Proceeding with an enquiry about ‘necessary association’, the reading of the play traverses through another associative axis wherein, Yerma’s reaction toward Juan is not that of a ‘loathing reprisal’, but takes the guise of a subtle sensuality. She reminds him of how she didn't weep the first time they were in bed together, and how she muttered about her feelings about the smell of sheets, as if they were laced with scent of an apple. Invoking such strong sensual innuendos in the performance, specially, with the usage of sense/image perception of smell, it is intriguing to explore that how the creative processes of adaptation does gets affected in the pliability of mediating an intimate moment. As a point in case, the reference to the performative moment between Yerma and Juan, discussing about their intimacy on bed, helps to unpack temporal openings at the ‘site of mediation’ that can portend towards *inexhaustible possibilities* of adaptation.

Here, two points need to be kept in mind. First, that sensory image of scent of an apple attempts to initiate a relationship of adaptation with that of re-creating a sense of smell anew, in the liveness of its performative mediation. In other words it means that appertaining by the same token in the contemporaneity of a performance, the question posed is that which sort of sensibility is tapped on, when the scent of bed smells of an apple? Second, to raises a point of order, here it is crucial to understand that while adapting a scent of apple for the “Indian” stage cannot be enucleated from the cultural codifications of sensory associations, the fact that an emphasis only on sense perception certainly follows the track of a cultural specificity, overburdened by the very process of re-creativity in adaptation. Theretofore, the paradox of contemporaneity and cultural specificity shall arrogate the alteration, not because it is bound to happen in the logic of a phenomenological malapropos, but rather,

conditions all possibilities in adaptation to appear at the same time. In effect, what one can't do away with, is the corresponding contingency in the precise aesthetics of presentation. In this sense of our present deliberation in thinking and performing theatre, then can we place the contradiction of “now time” in adaptation with respect to its performative ‘site of mediation’, so that performance can possibly orient the circumvention of duality – *with* word-image and *through* sense-image.⁹⁶

To address the polemical positioning, it is imperative to fall back upon ‘necessary association’ within which the contemporary fragments of familiarity poses itself as a complete *thing in itself*. Such a concern leads us in the direction of a provocation, which is albeit conjectural in nature. The provocation being, is the adaptation complete in generating a *re-creation* of an art work, or, is it that gap between familiarity and association is wide enough to keep reproducing paraphrases of citation in an imagination of ‘meta-history’? What the aforementioned provocation tries to explicate is, that in our own medium of adaptative creation, do we not at times become ‘supra-sanctimonious’ toward the historical moments of mediations? Or for that matter, being *missing* from the tussle between familiarity and association, we present a historiographical exodus? To ease it out in the context of adaptations from earlier work, the question remains that if drawing on inspiration from others' work does galvanize an amalgamation to create something of one's own, then can the transference be seen as a generic pinch for “adaptogenic” (Groensteen 1998, 270) pattern in the theatrical presentation, known as *prastuti* ?⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Demarcated in classical Greek philosophy as three distinct features of modes of persuasion – Ethos, Pathos and Logos. Aristotle in his book *Rhetoric*, categorizes such a mode as ethical strategy in which one's argument is manifested through a demonstrative act.

⁹⁷ *Prastuti* is a term which is commonly used in terms of a theatrical presentation, especially on the brochures and handouts distributed before a play. It is considered as an official terminology of

... it was indeed visually appealing. It was striking, really magical. There was harmony, it was not jarring. Typical group theatre you can say... In small towns, how many of us are now getting influenced by someone to organize an interaction with someone like Ashok Bhowmick, you do a workshop with Badal da and fell in love with his style of work, watch one work of Probir Guha, or see two performances of Balwant Thakur and then you amalgamate all of it and start doing your own theatre. What is the problem in that? As in, you didn't do a so called original. It was not happening in isolation. Simultaneously in so many small cities, Badal da's kind of physical theatre was followed.⁹⁸

Linking the debate on originality from the above mentioned interview, what seems like an imperative conjugality of 'subtexts running through adaptation', the context of mediation becomes topical more than ever before. In another instance, recognizing the need to carry on with *theatre-making*, Supriya provokes at the idea of acknowledging adaptations as not something *original* in theatre, but instead can be envisaged as *rūpāmtaraṇ*. Mapping out the discursive readings on adaptation Linda Hutcheon in, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), tries to tease out the moot point of rebuttals and debates around adaptation. According to her, the joust vis-à-vis a negativity towards adaptation has been a central area of concern throughout the twentieth century (2006, 53). Starting from the debates of interstices between the source text and target text, the idea of originality has always been put at stake. In the present context of 'cross-mediality', the broader theorization around "phenomenon's

plays to be presented before its audience. Although the usage is typical to provinces where Sanskrit language influence had a deeper impact on arts and culture. I stress on this term, mainly because of the reason that the application of the term has been a generic formulation, which is quite distinct from that of representation. Bharat Muni, "The Ancient Indian Drama in Practice," *The Natyashastra* Vol. I, Chapter I-XXVII, (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1959), (LVIII). Herein, the section on "The Representation" does elaborate on the techniques of representation, that brings together four distinct parts in representation, namely – *aṃgīkā*, *vācika*, *āhārya* and *sātvika*. . Demarcated into physical, vocal, costume/make-up and temperament representation, these models have by far stood for "something else" which atleast may be able to capture the essence or the sentiment, relational to what is portrayed on stage. This "something else" may apparently connote to an abstraction residing elsewhere but that which is *pratyaksh* is already present 'without a second'. Then the 'present' comes without a split or a gap, otherwise upheld in the logic of representation.

⁹⁸ Personal interview with Supriya Shukla at her residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 3 November, 2016 (Translation mine).

variety and ubiquity” (2006, Preface) and in the cinematic expression of literature has taken a centre stage. Ranging from the intertextual theory (Kristeva 1980) to unified subjectivity (Foucault 1981), the methods and means of theorizing adaptation has indeed propelled transpositions at various levels. Specially the modes within which the distancing of “secondary” (2006, 4) conjecture of adaptation has transfigured itself, speaks volume that the need for a more immanent approach to ‘transgressive aesthetics’ is the need of the hour. Herein, the idea of novelty in adaptation can prefigure a maze of simulation that can possibly try to trench out the trace of references. Then such an exploration would educate us about the vastness of every transgressive turn which might bear an imprint of *missing* explorations in adaptation. And howbeit linger on with its palette of pleasurable references in the reflection of the maze that inexhaustibly keeps mirroring dimensions of perception as if it was all the same.⁹⁹

At times simulations in adaptation have acted as appendage to sublunary derivation in the process of art making. Whereas at another time, the performative aspect of these simulations provides an insatiable loop of a chronicler's *charade* of re-telling a story. On one hand, simulations through activities provides tool to learn, whereas on the other hand conjoins the aesthetics of *how to do in what we do*. Instead of being pejorative, whether or not to pose the ethical posturing, an adaptive insouciance also make the partaking in indifference, an act of autonomous creativity. Wherein, partaking in indifference does not entail a lack of decision making, but it is the very

⁹⁹ As a provocation at the metaphor of a mirror, the following set of question prompts further inquiries. To begin with, if the necessity of the mirror becomes constitutive for reflecting, as a metaphor, for an “inward experience”, aren't we resolving the paradox of the self with its life image? Wherein, the *missing* silver ought not to be a technique for creating a violent image, but something as a phantasm that drenches our bodies with the silver that may propel instantaneous beings. And at the same time, simultaneously, with its non-fulfillment in the act of getting drained in spite of being drenched!?

withdrawal from the module which radically transforms the new to its ‘contemporaneity’.

As an essential feature in this particular production of *Yerma*, the repetitive use of stylized conversation between the women characters, condition an affect of immediacy in finding a bond and a shared space of solidarity. In an adaptation where the commonalities of popular imagery finds a common ground, these small talks strikes a chord without being inimical to a complete process of racination. And yet colluding with ‘uprooted-ness’ from the Spanish text of Lorca, situations in the performance throws up contemporary narratives in which women can partake in order to fill the moments of fun, angst, hope, dejection and, at the same time, make transgressive¹⁰⁰ corollary pertaining to life.

Throughout the play, there are a lot of usage of small talks. Specially whenever the women are sitting together, what they are doing is basically *galchaur*. They are gossiping over who slept with whom, someone’s wife eloped with somebody's husband. In fact Bhowmick da's wife was present there during the rehearsals and she too would enjoy and make merry with us all who were most of the time just hyberbole on laughter.¹⁰¹

Although a sense of incompleteness lurks in the characterization of *Yerma*, what becomes nonetheless crucial is her interaction with other female characters through

¹⁰⁰ Michel Foucault, “Preface to Transgression,” *Language, Counter-Memory and Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 30-35. The author explains transgression in the context of liberated sexuality that has been pushed to its limit of consciousness that is, at the limit of the law. He argues that, “sexuality is a fissure – not one which surrounds us as the basis of our isolation or individuality, but one which marks the limit within us and designates us a limit” (1977, 30). Then in a sense, transgression is like passing over one circumscription and getting unveiled to a new experience of inexhaustible forbearance, in the quantum present. Therein, “transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes (perhaps, to be more exact, to recognize itself for the first time)” (Brackets in original, Foucault 1977, 35). It comes across as an imminent involvement with limits and constantly tries to break-on through via the act of it.

¹⁰¹ Personal Interview with Supriya Shukla at her residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 3 November, 2016 (Translation mine).

small talks. These small talks happen in an imaginary location which was adapted as a place to wash clothes, creating a space of propositions untenable in an overture of internal conflicts. A ubiquitous substitution of random verbal exchange makes the isolated space of Yerma look like her roughness to be taking shape from an undeveloped condition of utter broodiness. The roughness she carries along with herself can only seem to be thrashed out in a space where these women gather to wash clothes. Even if she makes veridical expressions of love in the form of remembrance that they have shared amongst themselves, to go beyond her complain towards Juan is wrapped up in the structure of playing into the dichotomy of motherhood and barrenness. Enacting the role of Yerma on stage, Supriya contends about the limitation of portraying Yerma as that of a childless mother.

somehow you revolve in and around the literal meaning, where it has a characterisation of Yerma but beyond that one doesn't go – as in, Yerma is a woman who has a idiot husband, she is barren and wants to have a child but it is because of her husband she cannot have children and finally she kills him. So, then what do you do is that you limit her to this whole question of motherhood, societal taboo of not bearing a child that a woman has to carry as a burden, whereas the play has a bigger canvas. You do not give her actually a personal life, a life of her own.¹⁰²

Interpolating a reference from one of the actors in the group, what can be surmised at the first level of analysis, is that the remark problematises the focal point in the narrative of the play. As in, the performance makes strenuous attempts to present her grief, anguish and helplessness, a woman has to carry and literally becomes answerable to anyone and everyone in the society. Even one can't think to express the desire to be a mother or the level of comfort to share her feelings with a male counterpart. This specially happens whenever Yerma encounters Victor. Their contact

¹⁰² Personal interview with Supriya Shukla at her residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 3 November, 2016 (Translation mine).

with each other opens up those slippages that can possibly portend toward an obverse narrative, where Yerma does have *a life of her own*. Then her motherhood need not be read only in terms of a scanty demand. Rather than being sanguine about an accomplishment, such a demand is the radical possibility of not only to look beyond in search of life, but also to simultaneously search for a life within, which is at hand, at our own disposal.

Yerma: Perhaps... (She pauses. The silence is accentuated and without the slightest gesture a struggle begins between the two. Trembling) Do you hear that?
Victor: I heard nothing.
Yerma: It's my imagination. (She looks at him intently and Victor looks back then drops his gaze as if in fear.)

(Jo 2016)

In terms of dramaturgical insight, Supriya explains about the constant play of contrasts on stage that was devised in a way so as to provide a pattern of disparate dynamics within the structure of the performance. While elaborating on the specific use of theatrical games, she points out that the scene between Yerma and Victor was dramatized as an incidental meeting between the two. Without facing each other, Yerma would start her walk from 'upstage left', whereas Victor's position is almost at right angle (slightly away from 'downstage centre') from her point of engagement. She would go across the stage in a curve formation to Victor's movement that also shifts in an entangled equation, so that the diagonal curvature is maintained.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Personal interview with Supriya Shukla at her residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 3 November, 2016 (Translation mine). She adds that the movement ('blocking') was choreographed in tandem with the pattern of lights which also played a crucial part in this scenography. This section from the interview has been paraphrased. Except from same part of the interview appears in another reference in the thesis.

Affective Sublation in the Performative Moment of Galchaur

At an intersection of such liminal encounters, between the performative gestures of Yerma and Victor one can resuscitate an ongoing tussle of both transgression and taboo. The ways and means in which a constant play of these two elements are enmeshed together in an ordeal of unexpressed emotions and desires is kept at a balance. And this balance warrants the mass of each sense image to weigh over the shift of scale in favor of the pull that gets attributed to the motion of swing in silence. The condition for the silences become foisted so as to respond to an overlapping churning which are pleasurable at a glance of being penitent enough in a message of confession by Yerma. Although an acknowledgement of confession is performed, the arbitrariness of the act in coming out with an evocative enthusiasm violates and conforms a communication by the measure of doubt.

First Washer-Woman: I don't like gossip.

Third washer-Woman: Well we talk here.

Fourth Washer-Woman: There's no harm in it.

Fifth Washer-Woman: Whoever wants a good name must earn it.

(Jo 2016)

Through these performative moments of *galchaur*, the performance of *Yerma* presages at an opening of stereotype that works within the finite relaxivity of things said, which otherwise cannot be said in public. The washerwomen, on one hand, contravene within the boundary of 'ordered life', whereas on other hand, their usage of coarse expression about someone else performs a form of litany. It is as if their performance of *galchaur* corresponds to a banality of abashment in proffering the due

course of compliance. Although this compliance is a myth of altruism towards society, the washerwomen's participation for an abstract value of transgression, in turn pays the price by reinforcing a taboo in the form of consensus. By sneering at Yerma's 'barrenness', a paradoxical manifestation takes place at the level of aesthetics, that portend towards an interplay of transgression and taboo. By playing into the stereotypical mode of ridiculing her motherhood, the washerwomen satiate their interaction into an overt function of proposing a lifestyle devoid of solidarity and sensitivity. In this process, they allow to creep in a manifestation of taboo by arrogating the dominant view of a patriarchal society – *a women's life not her own*. Then the rules which are meant to be followed as part of distributive principle in producing an ordered nature of society, makes the performative moment of *galchaur* a candidate for carrying out a tension between transgression and taboo.

In this polemical measure of allowing a template to juxtapose transgression and taboo (Bataille 1992), the performative moment of *galchaur* mitigate annotative remarks through small talks. The washerwomen give opinion about their observation in ways that certify a certain logic against the relationship between Yerma and Victor. In this case, women who have all pervasive participation in nurturing a sense of light heartedness, give impetus to a situation that of gossip. But therein gossips, also offer imagery in proximation with an intense reaction, disapproving all the codifications that defines a taboo. *Galchaur* in a manner are moments with transgressive potential wherein gossips are shared and taboos are challenged. It comes off as an opposition to taboos, pruning them from the measured choices of words that a society asks not to utter, as if being kept under a tutorialship of behavioural sciences. *Galchaur* then

reveals a moment of affecting a transgression and simultaneously *sublate* an emotional diatribe *with-through* an entanglement of *affective sublation*.

Taking examples from the said interviews and performative moments like that of *galchaur* (gossips), this chapter makes an adjunctive move to enable an encounter of two concepts i.e. affect and sublation, so as to appear in simultaneity. Conjoining these two terms, affective and sublation, is to bring together two different concepts whose geneologies have been disparate in their own right. Affect can be traced back in the discourse of psychoanalysis, which invites a wide net of sensory co-ordinates including emotions, therapeutic, tactile visuality and embodiment, just to name a few. Affective encounters have posed questions related to incessant inquiry in performing gender, sexuality and individual association with politico-cultural subjectivization. A. Kuhn (1992) remarks about such encounter in the sense that, “how we construct our own histories through memory, how we position ourselves within wider, more public, histories” (Kuhn in Anu Koivunen 2000, 8). Whereas, *sublation* is derived from the German verb *aufheben*, whose etymological root means to pick up, to abolish, or to cancel. Hegel (1978) uses this terminology as a determinant of dialectical interplay for a concept in which the attributes of contrary thoughts and views are both preserved and altered when it comes in contact with another concept. Although, Hegel maintains that as a category in historical process its uniqueness is about its absence, yet is always a necessary part of change.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ G.W.F Hegel, *The Difference Between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy* (Atascadero, C.A: Ridgeview Publications, 1978). *Affective sublation* here can be seen in terms of a syncopation in music where one modifies a rhythm, note or beat. *Dictionary.com Online*, s.v. “syncopate,” accessed March 23, 2017, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/syncopate?s=t>. ‘Syncopate’ means to place the accents on beats in music or in a rhythm that are were previously unaccented. It is to modify or affect treat a beat rhythm or note by syncopation. Its associated with an interruption in the flow. Derived from the word syncope where the function in grammar is to contract a word by ommiting one or more sounds from the middle. In pathology it means a brief

In the context of *Yerma*, an adaptation of a performative moment of *galchaur* (gossip), without a second thought presents aesthetics of transgression in the very ‘socialibility of theatre’. But then the question which arises is not a putative summary of an artistic production that gets ‘desecrated’ in the functional act of *representation*. Such a question could parallelly open up the debate around the affect of transgression and taboo, for it is, as much as political as to *sublate* its aesthetics through performance. Herein, the contradiction of transgression and taboo takes a second move, which is albeit different from the classical understanding of incongruity between categories. This second move in a singular stroke preface differential sensory variables, and can withhold contradictory attributes simultaneously.

In this vein, a unique potential can be charted out within the performative devise of *galchaur*, if we follow through with the concept of *affective sublation*. Contending on the aesthetic technique of a theatrical tool, in this case – *affective sublation*, one of the subtle nuance between the binary of form¹⁰⁵ and content can be swashed as two palimpsests trying to permeate each other first, with the friction of an already soaked in sound of a call for eternal recurrence. Both of these parchments are dry in fact, and that doesn't cease them to be affront to each other in exploring techniques so that one can prosthesis the other. Hence an affinity towards the (in) ability to permeate

loss of consciousness associated with sudden drop of blood pressure, convulsion, and cerebral anemia.

¹⁰⁵ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: Verso Publication, 1985), 160. Deliberating about the philosophy of art Benjamin draws on the debate around art for a notion of the symbol in “*Allegory und Trauerspiel*”. According to him, in the area of theology the debate has always sided in favor of that there is “nothing more than the name in common with the genuine notion”. He goes on, that it is precisely because of this shunning out of the seemingly symbolical notion of art that it actually invites more the possibility if one goes by the usual notion of a concept that speaks of an indivisibility of form and content. Otherwise the very notion of practice of investigation into the arts and the artistic forms 'in depth' miscalculates in a complete “absence of dialectical rigour”, which should stand to do “justice to content in formal analysis and to form in the aesthetics of content”. For any work of art, if the manifestation of an idea is declared as a symbol, then it serves no purpose to the philosophical enquiry.

remains impenetrable and so the technique bears an imprint of antinomies that are insoluble to one another, only to create admiration in opposition.

While not cancelling each other completely, the method of *galchaur* determines an adaptive transgression. Hence the exuberance in a space where washerwoman are performing their societal compulsion, is no longer performed privately as a symbolical act, it is out in the open. Rather than being an indivisible unit in the idea of theatrical *galchaur*, the method of *affective sublation* in fact does wobble the harmonious counterpart in 'immersiveness'. This can be seen particularly when actors in the performance finds a space to rehearse the lines of the gossips. They share amongst themselves a sense of ease to talk about the character's desire as theirs' laughter becomes their own. Although, it minimally manages to overcome the nature of indexical paradox in transgression and taboo but sufficiently it constitutes a new relationship of interaction with the whole. Just as the desolation might seem to have taken place in the overcoming of the paradox, this new relationship through *affective sublation* doesn't make the fallacy of a prompt decision – that element in the unifying category which pushes out one instead of the other. The decision happens at the last moment so as to introduce the possibility of a bleak affectual interaction. Therefore, a freedom from one affective plunge does not necessarily guarantee a liberty from the complementary flight off the trampoline. Or that once the decision to take a risk is taken suffices the impact of affect. Instead, the wobbling effect takes effect not only in the form of vertical depth, that is at once open onto a decision but certainly allows the mid air force to somewhat determine the dissonance in an immersion which drenches but never drowns.

Mamthan: Performing Mythology in Theatre

Interpolating a simultaneous unfolding of a structural similarity in today's time, Anil Ranjan Bhowmick points out at the performance of *Mamthan*¹⁰⁶ which deals with the story of Ghatotkach Vadh ('Assassination of Ghatotkach') from *Mahabharat*. Its opening scene accentuates a cry when Ghatotkach has been struck with an arrow of Karn. He shouts out to his mother Hidimb, saying that they have been again *used* as it has been the case in history. Mr. Bhowmick recollects about the political situation in Uttar Pradesh, India which corresponded with the tale of Ghatotkach Vadh in contemporary times.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ *Mamthan* was produced for the stage in 1995 by *Samanantar* in Allahabad. The script was written by Vibhanshu Vaibhav and directed by Anil Ranjan Bhowmick. This play has been performed sixteen times in total.

¹⁰⁷ Anil Ranjan Bhowmick suggests that as a counterpart to politics of Uttar Pradesh during this time, the contemporary relevance of such an episodic element from epic narrations gave an impetus to the 'meaning-making' process in theatre. A similar corollary is contextualized by Anil Ranjan Bhowmick in the face of a fall out within the ruling Government of Uttar Pradesh. Dilip Awasthi, "Allies of Convenience," *India Today Online*, accessed 24 June, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19950630-mayawatis-installation-as-first-dalit-cm-of-uttar-pradesh-likely-to-trigger-off-realignment-of-caste-equations-808382-1995-06-30>. As in when BJP had withdrawn weaves its support from the Mayawati government. This coalition had come into being after spatful face off between SP-BSP combine in 1995 after which BJP had extended its unconditional support to Mayawati. To give a background to the above mentioned context from the interview, political scenario of Uttar Pradesh during 1990's gave rise to various formation of organizations in the State. Largely, three outfits had emerged in the aftermath Ramjanmbhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute. Samajwadi Party formed in 1992 under the leadership of Mulayam Singh Yadav gave an articulation of politics which had stemmed from the socialist movement of Ram Manohar Lohia. Bhartiya Janta Party worked as a political front of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and had gained the most politically, after the demolition of Babri Masjid. Apart from these two political organizations, another force came off age in the form of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) which was guided by the philosophy and ideological commitment of B.R. Ambedkar. Founded by Kanshi Ram in the year 1984, the party had mobilized a sizeable electorate in the Assembly elections of 1993. The SP-BSP combine, garnered 176 assembly seats out of a total 425 constituencies. It saw an emergence of Dalit-OBC consolidation, a first of its kind in the political landscape of India. But the coalition didn't last long, after what is now infamously remembered as the "guesthouse kaand" (guesthouse incident) on 2 June, 1995, where allegations of physical abuse and manhandling were levied against Samajwadi Party henchmens by Mayawati herself. At this time, Bhartiya Janta Party came in for unconditional support for Mayawati who was later sworn in as Chief Minister of the State. In the following year of 1996, assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh gave Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) a phenomenal spike of seat share, catapulting it to 174 seats. Being short of a majority to from the government, BJP-BSP arrangement crossed the line where it was agreed that each party will have a CM every six months as a rotation policy. While the first term went to BSP, next six months in Kalyan Singh led BJP regime saw an overturn of orders passed by the earlier dispensation. Alleging an attempt to foist

It was during this time that BJP had withdrawn its support and Mayawati's government collapsed. Likewise in *Maṁthan*, the Ghatotkach tale of Mahabharat indicates a parallel where he will be brought forth in order to save Arjun from a weapon that Karn can use only once. The injustice which is meted out to Hidimb and Ghatotkach is what connects to our contemporary times.¹⁰⁸

Indicating a socio-political corollary by Anil Ranjan Bhowmick might seem to overarchingly contextualize the performance of this play, especially with what can be called as a contemporary theatre. Nonetheless, on the face value of being contemporary to a certain political situation, an eponymous tale of betrayal is associated with Ghatotkach Vadh as the performance of *Maṁthan* brings forth a declaration, which is that of being *used*. Insisting on an allegorical illustration, the performance weaves together a theme around subjugation, foul-play and humiliation as the figure of Ghatotkach disavows the injustice and asks for explanations. His cry for answers becomes a tireless cry as the performance of *Maṁthan* conjures an indiscernible gesture of historical jurisprudence within the narrative of myth.

The parable of Ghatotkach Vadh from *Mahabharat* is one of the many legends which have found to adduce popular narratives in varied forms of artwork. Through its illustration of the central character of Ghatotkach, the parable is a poignant tale which revolves around the half divine and half demon shape shifter.¹⁰⁹ Distinct from an anthropomorphic or even zoomorphic entity, Ghatotkach is endowed with unique

regulations after she had passed on the baton of chief ministerialship, Mayawati withdrew support from the government reducing it to minority.

¹⁰⁸ Personal Interview with Anil Ranjan Bhowmick at his residence in Colonelganj, Allahabad on 26 December, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Ghatotkach in the epic of *Mahabharat* was born to Hidimb and Bhim. As the legend of Ghatotkach goes, he received boon from Krishna, which allowed him the ability to transform his size at will. Born to Hidimb who is mentioned as a demon in *Mahabharat*, Ghatotkach had the natural gift of sorcery skills that could also make him fly.

sorcery skills and magical powers. Being summoned by his father Bhim as suggested by Krishna, in the wake of a crucial phase of Kurukshetra battle in Mahabharat, Ghatotkach runs havoc in the enemy camp. It became unavoidable for Karn to save it later to kill Arjun and had to *use* the weapon against Ghatotkach. Upon Duryodhana's request to *use* his divine weapon gifted by Indra himself to Karn, he charges it at Ghatotkach, killing him instantly and thus indirectly saving Arjun.

Rather than a sense of hate, an acute anxiety to understand the action and *deeds* of fellow mythic characters, the figure of Ghatotkach remembers those junctures in his life-time, where an act of malfeasance became mundane to his and his mother's (Hidimb) existence. At first instance, he recollects how Kunti had *used* his mother Hidimb in order to be safe from his uncle Hidimba. While another situation in the myth asks Ghatotkach to be aware of his bloodline and not kill Abhimanyu. And finally when he is called upon by his own father Bheem at a crucial moment in the progression of the war, he is strategically placed in front of Karn so as to save Arjun from the life threatening arrow. In these moments of outrage that is impeded by a breath of remembrance, the figure of Ghatotkach takes centre stage as an example of illustration, wherein it no more belongs in the realm of symbolically representing a character of mythology.¹¹⁰ It moves away from representing a symbol in Ghatotkach,

¹¹⁰ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, “symbol,” accessed May 9, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/symbol>. The English derivative of the word symbol comes from the Greek word symbolon. It refers to an association of a material with that of an arbitrary sign that represents something else other than itself. It can be a letter, character, a figure or a complex formation of these, which is *used* to indicate something abstract. In semiotics, a symbol is phrase, image or combination of words that plays a part in what is symbolized. Thus symbol uses “something” to communicate, indicate, infer at a whole appearance, performing the operational part through a derivation. Instead of this derivation, inflection can be seen as a modulation which *uses* the figure and adds the deeds, so as to augur an illustration in allegory. Whereas the term which comes closest to symbol in standardised Hindustani is *Prateek*. Prateek captures the unity of material object and the transcendental meaning. Then the question which needs to be addressed is that does Ghatotkach symbolizes an attribute in characterisation which stands for something in the parable of the mythical narrative? Or when, using the theme of *use* to

instead the figure provokes an inflection (distinct from derivation in grammar, inflection here means an affix to produce a change) which is in terms of the *deeds* that names the veneer of myths into an allegorical whole. Foregrounding the problem of *use*, the figure of Ghatotkach *inflects* an attribution of relationship with that of the deeds, by invoking the names of historical instances, where ever he felt a sense of violation. This inflection is an affixation to the figure of Ghatotkach that conjugates two simultaneous movements in the performance that remains incompatible to each other. First, the name of Ghatotkach doesn't conflate or obscure any generality from the epic of *Mahabharat*, and second, the figure of Ghatotkach although does have an operational aspect in the performance, it identifies the *missing* link of *use*.

At this specific instance, where a real political scenario gives rise to a context in the performance of the play, the category of the parable through the moment of *use*, tries to tease out the historical ensnarement of the mythical. On one hand, these tales from epics like that of *Mahabharat* do communicate with a certain kind of popular imagery. While at the same time, construing a non-deductive approach with the junctures of political events that were shaping up situations real and contemporaneous to mythical parables, hyperbolic reference to situations from popular stories in the myths focuses on deliberations that takes into account a tangible instance of approbation (commendation). Their usage in terms of strategies for constructing a contemporary overture provides a call in theatre that can portend toward 'presentability' of paradoxes. This comes as a process of contemplation in terms of what makes theatre contemporary to its time? As in the case of a seemingly conjugal relationship between the political event and a parable, what do become

begin with, can theatre affirm through a figure like that of Ghatotkach, in terms of nominating a declension (not deterioration) that marks out the categories of *naming* in an allegory?

topical are two kinds of usage. One is the theme of *use* which is weaved as a theatrical moment to make theatre contemporary to its time, and second, the usage of mythical narratives in the production of theatre. In view of this aforementioned enquiry, performative ‘site’ then is a space of interrogation where parables from tales coincide to make a myth *become* contemporary in the novelty of presenting an example (*udāharan*) through allegory, while allowing an exploration into the figures of mythology.¹¹¹

To bring in a parallel perspective on the *use* of myths, Safdar Hashmi in *The Right to Perform* (1989) confronts with the question of making ‘use of the epics’ that are available to theatre practitioners in India. Written as part of a collection of selected writings, in the chapter “Face to Face with Mythology”, Safdar opens out by critiquing a “brahminical interpretation” of these epics. He pitches in for a *folk response* to the tales that can have a “critical stream” of engagement. As a point of

¹¹¹ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: Verso Publication, 1985), 161. Benjamin refers to Goethe and Schopenhauer in contrast to each other on the subject of allegory. He remarks on Goethe about his understanding with respect to allegory as something that is not “worthy of great attention”. He brings in a statement by Goethe which according to him can be formulated as, “a posteriori construction of allegory -- There is a great difference between a poet's seeking the particular from the general and his seeing the general in the particular. The former gives rise to allegory, where the particular serves only as an instance or example of the general; the latter, however, is the true nature of poetry: the expression of the particular without any thought of, or reference to, the general. Whoever grasps the particular in all its vitality also grasps the general, without being aware of it, or only becoming aware of it at a later stage”. Contrasting this view on allegory, Benjamin overlaps Schopenhauer's idea on allegory by quoting him, “now if the purpose of all art is the communication of the apprehended Idea...further if starting from the concept is objectionable in art, then we shall not be able to approve, when a work of art is intentionally and avowedly chosen to express a concept, this is the case in allegory...”. The reason this proximity of allegory is being taken into account here, with regard to *udāharan* is precisely because, as the work of illustration is underway for a general idea in the particular concept of form being presented (while using mythical narratives in theatre), moments of instantiation propels modes of imagination (of the general) that are inseparable with the simultaneous present. What it means is – using the example (“*udāharan* ka istemāl karte huye”) through illustration (*vyākhyān*) of deeds (*varnan*) in the parables, may endow a shrift (remission of sins granted after confession) in understanding the device of metonymy. Usually metonymy is defined as the substitution of the name of an attribute or feature for the name of the thing itself (eg. counting of heads); as a figure of speech where the reference to a concept is substituted by changing the name that is referred to. The task of performing politics in political theatre would rebarbate the deeds of figures in parables that can undertake the perils of performing allegory in a way which doesn't *stand for something* else but rather adduce a paradox of verb-name.

reference, taking an example from Saoli Mitra's *Nāthabali Anāthabat* which was performed in the 7th National Drama Festival at Shri Ram Centre, he draws onto the figure of Draupadi. Working through the cracks of stereotypical image of a figure like Draupadi, *Nāthabati Anāthabat* turns around the episodic series of events in Draupadi's life, from her own point of narration.

Saoli Mitra has convincingly displayed that myths, despite their codified and structured cosmology, are extremely vulnerable once they are confronted by basic human questions, in this case the voice of a woman who refuses to acquiesce to the definite role assigned to her by tradition.¹¹²

In a way foregrounding the problematic of questions through the performative figure of Draupadi, the aforementioned articulation, points out at the intertextual instances in the performance that allows an altercation with the current dispensation of normative structures, in the narratives of epic tales. Even if not groundbreaking, the performance of *Naathabati Anaathabat* does succeed to make a minimal move, which is of Draupadi as a figure, who is factually present but enucleated from the mythical narrative. She drives an example of fortitude, resilience and unrelenting quest for answers that the frame of a figure like hers', open up into an ambit of jarring reality. This reality is her violated self that asks for a new image to be cast in view of her factual presence in the mythical narrative.

She questions the concept of Dharm which everybody flaunts and brandishes in front of Draupadi and which is twisted this way and that by the very repository of Dharm, the great Yudhishtir, to suit his political ends. She exposes Yudhistir's alleged surrender to his mother Kunti's unwitting command that Draupadi be equally shared by her five sons by laying bare his calculating mind which knows that unless the brothers can share Draupadi they will fight over her, shattering his dreams of regaining

¹¹² Safdar Hashmi, "Face to Face with Mythology" in *The Right to Perform: Selected Writings of Safdar Hashmi*, published by Moloysree Hashmi on behalf of SAHMAT [Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust], (New Delhi: Pauls Press, 1989), 52.

his lost empire with their help. By thus revealing the hidden link between Yudhishtir's Dharm and his pragmatism, she effectively demystifies him...¹¹³

On one hand, the figure of Draupadi becomes a medium through which an interruption is introduced into the mythical narrative that would have otherwise played into a pre-supposition of types, to be fulfilled. Whereas on the other hand, without getting effaced by the stereotypes of mythical characters, Draupadi's sense of asking questions about truth actuates her reality in contemporary times. This also restricts her from falling under coercion, as quaint figure of a submissive woman. She is undeterred by the fact that even though all that has happened to her, not only bears testimony to the injustice that she has faced, but makes a selection of subjectification with her overwhelming presence, putting across an unfathomable quest for truth.

Contrary to the impediment of mythical characters, being usually cajoled into an indifferent actor on stage (who only performs a routine stock actor-character), the performance of *Nāthabati Anāthabat* by Saoli Mitra does something remarkable. It humanizes the character of Draupadi through impersonation of characters that demystifies them, and at the same time, illustrates a non-sibylline aspect in the figure of Draupadi, who puts the myth itself on scrutiny (Hashmi 1989, 53). Rather than a fete of spiritual ecstasy in theatre, the *use* of myth accentuates the fact (which is “antithetical” to the factual known truth) precisely because its emergence as ‘a truth’ in the parable does not condemn that, which cannot be thought.¹¹⁴ The explanation of

¹¹³ Hashmi, *The Right To Perform*, 52.

¹¹⁴ F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* (Trans.) by Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger, (Albany: State University of New York, 2007). In Lecture II, Schelling begins by persuading the reader to follow him through an active agreement of hesitatingly distanciate (“reluctantly distance”) oneself from the explanation which he had carried out in his previous lecture, i.e. mythology's poetic view. The primarily reason fo such a shift, he

her being *used* time and again in different forms, offers the narrator in the performance to demonstrate a critique by making independent judgements. This in a sense puts Draupadi as a non-conformist *example* within the performance of the myth of *Mahabharat*, and tries to seek a precision of the particular that doesn't stand for something else.

Taking a detour through a figure like that of Draupadi will enable this current task at hand, to bring out varied dispositions of mythology in creative practices. On one hand, the predicament to *use* myths or mythical narrative in theatre has been over the issue of re-affirming/re-enforcing those stereotypical textures of religiosity. Whereas, a complete disparaging of the popular quotient of mythical narratives have lead such a trait, into a denial mode of an insidious nature, which seeks to only decide on the decision of non-engagement.

Rather than either-or positions, deliberating further on an utilitarian aspect of myths being *used* in theatre, this section tries to venture into the figures in mythology that are referred to, in the novelty of presenting an example (*udāharan*). While making a case for the device of illustration, the presentation of examples resuscitates what allegory does best – to perform a figurative harangue in the space of commons. An account of the *deeds* meted out to her being on the receiving end, *repurposes* the story of Draupadi in an allegoric form that itself becomes the content of a presentation in performance. Draupadi as a name is not replaced from normative

states, is because of the following reason -- “ it permits us to come to focus and dwell on the proper and authentic meaning, although it cannot do otherwise, as it moreover at the same time excludes a proper doctrinal meaning.” He elucidates further by making the famous claim that “truth is in mythology but not in mythology as such”. Here is one of the fundamental philosophical split that makes a demarcation point in mythology about truth of the fact, and fact of the truth.

association of the persona but she herself as a figure then doesn't stand for a symbol of theogony. Instead retaining the name and simultaneously making an illustration through an example (*udāharan*), the performance substitutes the concept of Draupadi from a persona to a figure of time.

Such a figure not only seeks to make itself appear at the idea of an essential persona but also asks this figure to speak for themselves in the moment of the performance. Rather than as merely symbolical, these figures purports themselves as interfaces of time which compound the question of contemporary with the nature of allegory in storytelling form. The reason such an affinity to allegory is being taken into account here with regard to *udāharan* is precisely because, as the work of illustration is underway for a general idea in the particular concept of form being presented (while using mythical narratives in theatre), moments of instantiation propels modes of imagination (of the general) that are inseparable with the simultaneous present. What it means is – *using* the example (“*udharan ka istemaal karte huye*”) through illustration (*vyākhyān*) of deeds (*varṇan*) in the parables, may endow a shrift (remission of sins granted after confession) in understanding the device of metonymy. Heretofore, usually metonymy as a literary device, is defined as the substitution of the name of an attribute or feature for the name of the thing itself (e.g. counting of heads); as a figure of speech where the reference to a concept is substituted by changing the name that is referred to. For example, a sceptre stands for power, sovereignty, authority but here in the case of mythical figures without changing the name from an epic like that of *Mahabharat*, what gets substituted are the *missing* deeds. Such is the *varṇan* of deeds that it not only seeks for retribution but inflect a *lakshanalankār* to the figure. By naming the apparent which lets the hidden meaning

take a guise, in the glaring reality of what is unthinkable. Draupadi then not only finds a voice, from the mythological whole but also indexes a verb-name (in this case *use*) precisely as a tendential aspect of metonymy in allegory. This is not to say, that the patterns in illustration doesn't conflate a tendential symptom. But a certain conspicuousness in the functionality of metonymy, being performed as depth through reference, only suffice it till the point of a sign-indicator; which as a correction to the source of meaning can be rebarbative (repel) in persona, to that extent. Whereas undertaking the perils of performing allegory by retaining the name of the figure, that doesn't *stand for something else* may adduce a paradox of verb-name (*use*). Verb name is distinct from noun referentiality in the case of metonymy that influences an attributive character to the idea (power, sovereignty, authority). Its replacement or substitution is not through paroxysm (calling for a justice on the basis of the deed) but rather as antinomies that simultaneously illustrates (*vyākhyān*) and review (*samīkṣā*) the *varṇan* of deeds of mythical figures.

The act of illustration through a bestiary in a theatrical presentation then bears a task which is more relevant than merely relating it with a parallel situation in historical time. It purports these figures as interfaces¹¹⁵ of time, that doesn't affirmatively

¹¹⁵ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v. “interface,” accessed May 7, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/interface>. Interface is considered as an “interconnection between concepts, systems, equipments or human beings”. It also means a shared field of consideration between contradictory disciplines of subjects. In computing, interface stands for a device which can be used as an interacting platform/surface for communication with other systems such as computer and virtual devices. Interface is denoted by a common meeting point between two spaces of reality. In physics, it means as “a surface forming a common boundary between two portions of matter or space for example two immiscible liquids”.

For further reference see Alexander Galloway, “Introduction”, *The Interface Effect* where he lays out various contemporary discourses around new media that analyses different aspects of aesthetics and politics of digital technology. By drawing onto one of the key texts (*The Language of New Media*) on new media by Lev Manovich, Galloway proffers a new understanding on the formal naming of poetics in social interaction. Conducive to a structural framework of pliable applicability in software technology, foregrounding the spatial dimension of montage in cinema, he introduces Manovich in order to test out the case for digital interface. Presented to encourage

decides to penetrate into the mythical narrative as symbols but resonates with the idea of Draupadi within the mythological whole as antinomies (contradiction of two both reached by reasoning – non-dual). This mythological whole has a viscosity marked in the property of being in moments of succession that the episodic event of a parable expresses. Such is the order in specific case of moments that the movement to adduce an authenticity not only circulates a dimension, prefiguring an affirmation, but also brings forth the knowledge of resistance in viscosity. Instead of the knowledge of movement being putative, the pull of the resistance decants the symbolical whole. Just like a snapshot of the frame, that carries not only the symbolical call of sound which reverberates a ‘sense image’, but moreover amends the process of decantation by initiating an acknowledgement of an entelechy (a vital principle for the development of an organism). And the vital principle which comprises this entelechy, is the performance of flip of the hand over the plastic covers that separate the album of mythology into a non-hesitant whole. Although the plastic cover on each page has a corresponding flip, our performer anticipates the other side as an aesthician whose wisdom/no-knowledge of the album is incessant in the acceptance of anticipatory facets. There is no compunction in such an acceptance. Because this acceptance is not a decisional submission, instead it triggers an anomaly in the (im) possibility of coexistence of ‘two nows’. A direct paradox of time within the simultaneous

and stimulate, digital interface as part of an artifact of aesthetic life form, Galloway engages with effects of interfaces, primarily because of its genuine synchronicity and yet paradoxical way of *allegorical virtuality*. Part of a book series, now known as *Allegories of Control*, the last volume brings together an ancillary reading into ways and forms of mediation. This reading into domains of the digital undertakes the task of interpreting the effect of interfaces by considering it as an “autonomous zone of activity”. Without effacing Frederic Jameson's trajectory of approach towards representational form, Galloway infers proximity with the method of “cognitive mapping”. Although this cognitive mapping is somewhat coming from, a conjecture of impossible realities merging in their nature of paradoxes, what becomes valuable in such a reading is the central issue related with that of re-configuration of the self. What it means is that, rather than looking at the process of cognitive mapping as something which overcomes an interstice in learning the hermeneutic split. The action in interpretation can be constituted as a mediation which resonates with the real of the self in inducing, *simultaneity of the non-simultaneous*. Hence the expression interfaces of time. This doesn't mean to fold back into a phenomenological extravaganza. This leads us back to *lakshanalankār*.

movement of inverted images. The paradox of images play out at every turn, but its relationship to the album stands like what a data is to information. While the procurement of historical memories are valuable in all its pieces to the information of album, the ‘presentability’ in reporting an episode from the mythical may produce an expression, vital to the concept and idea of the historical, simultaneously. Thus the rigour to go through every flip, one after the other, does complete the project of appreciating an album (absolute admiration in opposition).

‘Usability’ of Mythology in Theatre

Anil Ranjan Bhowmick maintains that theatre should always be contemporary to its time. He makes a quick comment on the predicament of adaptation and a play's contemporaneity to its time. He confides, what is the point of doing a play if it is not dealing with our present situations of life – theatre must talk about its own time?

Without being contemporaneous to our times, we cannot get across our audience. Even if we talk about epic tales of Raja and Maharajas, the question is why it is relevant even today, we as practitioners must bring out in our works.¹¹⁶

Herein, deliberating on the debate of contemporaneity it would be imperative to address certain features of theatre's relationship in the dynamics of its manifestation with time. As, mentioned in the above interview, can we then think time which is sanguinary in the specification of parables and can emerge in an instance of present-day situation. Especially in the case where a relevance of epic tales has a proffering connection to situations of our contemporary times, does the subsistence of ‘situated-

¹¹⁶ Personal Interview with Anil Ranjan Bhowmick at his residence in Colonelganj, Allahabad on 26 December, 2016.

ness' in parables allow them to converse onto a participative module? Or is it that the participative module, by all means declare an access to a contemporary being? Therefore, to think *with* epics, parables, legends and *through* our present times, time seems as a real timeless moment of bliss in a way, because the proof of present does not need to follow a convulsion with its past, but could remain distinct so as to become contemporaneous *with* being *through* time. What it means is that as a creative process of artwork, theatre's relationship to time cannot only necessarily depend upon a temporal disjunction but can stand veridical with a 'non-decisional determination' in the manifestation of its 'presentibility'.

Drawing on an example from the interview with Anil Ranjan Bhowmick, the question of contemporaneity in theatre further entails an enquiry into the 'usability' of myths. What can be deduced is that, instead of reading the usage of myths in theatrical presentations as a mere tool which fulfils an applicability quotient, it can be rather dovetailed as a distinct modality of mediation. That too as far as the ability to be applicable in theatre remains a *problematik* for aesthetics, the passion in such mediations can forgo a passage of intellect. Only to buckle up a covenant for the love of a poesy which *uses* the parables in myths so as to feel an enumeration of truth. Then an intelligibility in applying myths in theatre somewhat looks like an act of euphemism which cannot be poised as historical. But it absolutely does not rebuke an 'afformative' aspect that induces mythologies from being commensurable in the philosophy of history.

Elaborating on a certain kind of sanctification that is deemed only natural, with a deterministic approach to apply mythical parables in theatre, poet, critic and social

activist Anshu Malviya opines on acts of euphemisms. As part of a socio-philosophical investigation into the nature of mythology, what he addresses is that in the domain of creative arts, there's a lack of an altruistic passion that can render both history and mythology as magical in time. Rather than a simultaneous resonance with the untouched aspect of myths, inspection into the readings of myths rejects the joy of melancholic secret.

A flip slide to re-interpretation is that at times we open up, mythical narratives in order to make history, that it loses out its magical aspect. Then it stands just as a social novel. You know, there is a magical element, a secretive thing in myths, which only myths can do... if you read Narendra Kohli's novel, one can sense a transformation that he applies to myths. Everything has been transformed into a historical re-interpretation. Like, some x person did this or that, and it meant something whereas its *vāstvik*, *bhautik* (actual) meaning was something else. This has been the case, mostly... myth has been made a shadow of *yathārth* (real, practical).¹¹⁷

Parallel to the argument of myths being *used* in theatre or literature so as to proffer a socio-political context, the above mentioned interview indicates a departure from the normative speculation in diatribes. Here the concern is not to satiate a 'conservational' logic of the mythic characters, instead the question becomes how to revivify the dynamic nature of storytelling which can be as critical in its diatribe and also as calm to the denunciation, at the same time, in turning the bearing of commensurable quilt into a magic of allegory. Then it's no more dependent on the need of a necessary referentiality but is replete to the justice of quilt, whose panes are not in contradiction to each other. They are made out of antinomies, which although bears testimony to an interlining of tufts (cluster of feathers or hairs), it's the vestiges of depressions in tufts, that makes a work of upholstery stand at par with *oneness* (not-two is not one) of designs.

¹¹⁷ Personal Telephonic Interview with Anshu Malviya on 4 May, 2017.

In connection to the features of theatre's relationship, certain crepuscular conjectures invariably come to the fore. Starting from the context that deals with the historical conditions, a theatre work gets demarcated in multifarious ways. Among one of the many ways in which it gets demarcated is in the form of, whether uttered in common parlance or not, the sense of *to be with time* have an inclination toward a claim that tends to assign a call. And such is the assignment of this call that it skimpily overruns for citation with respect to the grammar of historical possibilities. Following this thread of argument, contemporaneity with time makes a polemical orientation for a set of questions, which is as follows, (a) that although the differentiation in dynamics has a characteristic of its own, can the relationship with time be acknowledged as a solemn distribution of everyone's claim ? (b) does everyone's claim become instantaneous which is without any ownership to a demand, congruous in the nature of the call? (c) in effect does the secret of communication lay in the compulsion of fulfilling one's own revelatory image? (d) what becomes of the resistance if the pact of secret keeping is broken? (e) as mentioned in the above interview, is the task of the practitioner limited to manifestation in *meaning making* procedure, which is also related to that of the question of relevance?

Benjamin's seminal essay, "The Author as Producer," (1986) deals with the social relationship of a work of art to the relationship of production *in time*. He elaborates by polemically asking, if social relationships are determined by relationships of production, then a work of art can always anticipate from the side of materialist criticism about the social relationship of production of its time. But instead of placing it in such a manner, an obverse opinion can be generated if one asks that how does a

literary work stand in relationship to productions of a period.¹¹⁸ Such a question of contemporariness must not be seen as a mundane recessiveness into an imbrication that treats the idea of being contemporaneous at the expense of a feigned future. Notwithstanding at the arrow of time being drawn as a protracted parable, wherein the circumstances of a complete history nurtures itself-out without even touching or exploring the impossible swerves. The shape of recumbent arrow may indicate an indoctrination of an uncanny similarity that is nonetheless waiting for a force to hinge forth and back the shape's reclining.

Utility and/or Usability of 'Props'

Sharing her reverence for theatre as an active participant of the theatre group *Samanantar*, Supriya expresses a certain kind of magical nature in the 'theatre-making' process of a production. She highlights that especially during rehearsals, the *use* of 'props' does have specific associations that transform the nature of the object in itself. Recollecting an instance of improvisation with *lāṭhī*, Supriya elaborates that how a stick, which they would consider as a simple 'prop' or object, would acquire multifarious meanings to it.

That stick could become anything. What not was the stick doing in the play. Actually, so we can't simply say it as prop-prop, that's a wrong usage for such a kind of an object. That stick which is used in Balwant Thakur's or even Bhowmick's plays can be called as prop!? You know, the word

¹¹⁸ Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writing*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 220. Benjamin introduces and problematizes the concept of tendency with accordance to political and literary criticism. He argues that "the political tendency of a work can only be politically correct if it's also literarily correct." That in effect means a correct political tendency includes a literary tendency. In this edited volume the word for tendency has been translated into "tendentious", whereas John Heckman in another translation uses the word "tendenz" as a footnote to his explication of the word which "means the general direction a writer or his work takes, whether political or literary."

prop comes from a very distinct kind of theatre. It's something else here.
A cup is used as a cup, *lāṭhī* is rarely used as a *lāṭhī*.¹¹⁹

What one can sense is that the *use* of 'props' as an object operates in the playmaking of performance and that it does not merely stand as a representation of the idea of a stick. The various possibilities for its usage, present a stick to have metamorphic value that adds something other than itself. And since the function of a stick doesn't repudiate what it can perform, in so far as to overcome the impediment posed by theatre as a composite whole, a *use* of an object like the stick may transform the connotation of meanings from within the space, available for presentation. Therein, the stick has all the variables at its disposal for being represented as *something*, which can stand for something else. It is as if, an act of *perform-e-bility* is performed in the very introduction of a 'prop' like the *lāṭhī*.

By drawing a non-proximity between the *lāṭhī* and its changed materiality, above excerpt from the interview sets up the debate around the *use* of properties in theatre. Even though it might seem like an outdated and outdone debate with a discourse where properties in theatre have been critically analysed in ways where the assurances given to its necessity has become overqualified, beyond further vilification. Instead, conjectures needs to be put at task so as to unravel the concept of *perform-e-bility with utility and through the usability* of 'props'. In doing so, one must be reminded not to head towards an abysmal stagnancy in scoffing off at this attempt of hypothetically envisaging the dialectic of abilities and disabilities in their own contradistinction. But more than resolving the disparate and distinctive abilities,

¹¹⁹ Personal interview with Supriya Shukla at her residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 1 November, 2016 (Translation mine).

to become determined and work together as each other's support in challenging times.

Hence a distance between what is presented and its representation is always kept at an arm's length. The stick serves a purpose but not exactly as it is. Although whatever the stick does in terms of being presented, it *in itself* doesn't symbolize a concept. As an object of *use*, the stick follows a condition of being not in *use*. It falls as a desuetude¹²⁰ property within the domain of being performed, only to treat an idea of the stick as its concept that is cancelled out. Even though the *lāṭhī* is not enucleated from the 'performo-real' mediation, the pliability of such an object enforces a non-operational aspect, making it more discreet as a 'quasi-property'.¹²¹ Here, I bring this word so as to distinguish stage properties from an object such as the *lāṭhī*, which is distinct from its usual action-specific coordination in performance. Just as in literary emendation that is put into *use* to alter the text so as to revise it from its earlier draft, the *use* of *lāṭhī* does make amends to the emblem it creates. The moment of emblematic revelation takes place when the *use* of stick rallies the resources in favour of belongingness to the concept of reference. Even though a part of *lāṭhī* accentuates the whole of the emblem, the idea of what gets represented does distance itself from the material object.

¹²⁰ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v., "desuetude," accessed May 11, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/desuetude>. The word desuetude is derived from Latin *desuetudo*, which means a state of disuse. In general, usage of the terminology is largely associated with law which entails a sense of a rule or a legal doctrine that is no more followed because it becomes obsolete with passage of time and continual disuse.

¹²¹ 'Quasi property' would be an umbrella term for those properties which are not used as according to their intrinsic characteristic. *Lāṭhī* if used as *lāṭhī*, might symbolize the rule of law, policing, oppression or even a tool of defense. But as expressed in the interview, *lāṭhī* is used as a part to what it creates. I make this demarcation between property and quasi property mainly because of the reason that in amateur theatre, a certain kind of aesthetics evolved that made considerations on the basis of minimal use of properties.

In *The Stage Life of Props*, Andrew Sofer (2003) initiates an imminent criticism related to lop sided analysis of plays which doesn't take into consideration the properties *used* in performances. He goes onto trace such a bias right from Aristotle's *Poetics* that is outrightly peremptory to the elements of “spectacle” in a theatrical event (Sofer, 2003). He argues for the *use* of ‘props’ in performances as something vital which may apparently seem to be virtual in the script, but gives an extrapolating characteristic in terms of visual emblems. His indication comes through a constant reference of Shakespearean and Elizabethan stage actions, where “other distractions” (change of sceneries, illusionistic effect) had been taken out of the equation. Going through a series of signature ‘props’ that had been *used* as an essential part of both these stages, ‘props’ life as their own, does more than a putative calculation of semiotics. Engaged extensively on the issue of subject-object relationship in theatre, Sofer brings forward the ‘prop’ as evidence which challenges a parochial understanding of stage properties. As a central theme of investigation in *The Stage Life of Props* (2003), vitality of five props are considered for analyzing those departure points which connects them at the same time. First is the Eucharist wafer of the medieval stage, second the bloody handkerchief of Elizabethan period, third is the skull from Jacobean stage, fourth being the fan from Restoration period, fifth and last from modern stage is the prop commonly used – the gun (Sofer, 2003).

In each of these case studies a common theme that undercuts is the way ‘props’ signification of symbol provide a subversive condition, as against its already fixed notion of emblem within the logic of representation. Worked out not as an impediment to theatrical usability of such ‘props-in-object’, the severance of an

inherent problem in theatre's classical dualism actually makes a case to erudite oneself for an understanding to move beyond “temporal contract”. Acknowledging its “intertextual resonance” as the moot point of study, Sofer goes onto illustrate what he calls a “semiotic crisis” in theatre (2003, Preface xii). Whereby historical periods within which these ‘props’ were *used* also nictate to interpret the process of symbolization of such objects. An expository note for symbolical value is nonetheless made part of the ‘prop’. And this ‘prop’ carries an imperative category which is that of dynamicity. Its *motion* revivifies the ‘prop’ from being an object that has a limited hovering scale in terms of a structural “action force”.¹²² Rather than being inanimate the force on ‘prop’ allows a splash over an object, while at the same time, sprinkles the object in ‘prop’ with an action of sensory interjection.

But just not limiting the “dynamic nature” (Veltruský, 1970) of relegation which is often attributed to the ‘props’ “becoming a prop”, such an essential duality between subject-centric semiotics of theatre and objectivity oriented ‘props’ might appear to throttle down a discursive pattern attested with symbolization. Instead of defining the ‘prop’ in terms of a tool or even a trope, an object oriented category tries to see through the prudence of dealing with such a discourse that demands an indoctrination more than fideism. Especially as a case in point, what the above quoted interview does explicate is that even though the stick may have its property of its own, the part of this ‘prop’ can refigure the spectrum of the theatrical space. Hitherto, a certain kind

¹²² Jiří Veltruský, “Man and Object in Theater,” *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure and Style*, trans. Paul L. Garvin (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1970, Reprinted 2013). Veltruský was a linguist, semiotician, philologist who wrote extensively on theatre and its intricacies among many other concerns of the Prague School, which was constituted in 1928. It comprised of range of authors, activist, intellectuals and literary critics who were involved in the structural literary analysis. He rejected the idea of fixed categories with respect to both actor and object who are intimately involved in the theatre making process. Instead he vociferously opined in favor of something that can be seen as the concept of living continuum.

of transfixation is attributed to the *use* of ‘props’ that at times tends to cancel out the nature of its non-decisional necessity. For if, their applicability is enforced onto a mere aspect of utility rather than usability, then the part which a quasi-prop like a *lāṭhī* plays as a charged-on extrapolator only succumbs to, of being inutile.

Following the above line of thought, as an omnipresent object on stage, *lāṭhī* is *used* more like an extension of what happens on stage. While visibly seen as a part of theatre, it comes into view as an element for imaginative precision only when this quasi-prop makes an emergence into the real event of theatre. This gets explicated more when Supriya Shukla attends to her recollection about practices and experimentation in workshops and rehearsals. Especially contemplating on the idea of ‘transference of meaning’, she directly hints at the *use* of property exercise which was one of the crucial body-object play in *Samanantar*. Being asked to explain how the meaning of a ‘prop’ such as *lāṭhī* is different from those popular usage of a ‘prop’ like sceptre, (whose genealogy is embedded in Greek tragic plays and European theatre that outlines a slant gesture with which the sceptre was to be held) where its' object *stands for* power, sovereignty, King, Supriya Shukla throws an exciting response,

The use of sceptre in that gesture refers to the meaning what the object is. So the meaning is not different from the object, you know... The object and meaning are same. Here we were trying to change the meaning of an object. And it was not happening in isolation... This sort of theatre was happening at the same time in several places... Actually it's a basic exercise – it's an ice breaking exercise which we know as use of property. That was an essential part of Bhowmick's workshop, and used to be the most fun exercise. People would gradually open up through an involvement of imagination.¹²³

¹²³ Personal interview with Supriya Shukla at her residence in Mehdauri Colony, Teliarganj, Allahabad on 1 November, 2016 (Translation mine).

Moving beyond a phenomenological dimension in theatre semiotics, addressal of such a subtle difference between a sceptre or a *lāṭhī*, demands a crucial intervention of study. As far the system of objects are concerned, for more than once, such disparities might run down as something close to signs and its interpretation only on the edifice of semiotic analysis. Wherein, engaging with such distinctions not only suffices an entry into the repertoire of performance vocabulary, but also seeks to prudently understand the shift lines in etymological gap. Quite paradoxical to the conventional lexicon of signs and meaning-making process in theatre, what the above interview does indicate is that the ‘ice breaking exercise’ was allowing a permeable situation rather than a joust between actors and ‘props’. Although, it would take a while to overcome their respective inhibitions to *use* the property in their own way, the actors initiate an imbrication of thinking and acting simultaneously. Thus a play of an aleatoric exposure, with that of the ‘props’ vital *use*, gets intermingled so as to infer an unknown from a known object. Even when, their interaction with the ‘props’ were introducing a certain leverage of vanishing points with respect to the ‘*use* of property’ like *lāṭhī*, its synchronicity on stage was performing the concrete in the abstract.

Contrary to the general view about stage properties as fixed symbols, the ability of ‘prop’ to become something other than itself overcomes a consecrated meaning which is attached to the object. Whereas on the other hand, by introducing an *aspecific* ‘prop’ (*lāṭhī*), a *perform-e-bility* is worked upon the relationship which can assist the ‘prop’ to illustrate its usability while differing in the apparent sameness of the object. *Perform-e-bility* is then distinct from perform-ability. *Perform-e-bility* takes into account those disparate attributions of stage properties that make it compelling to be

put on equal footing as against those attributive ‘fixated-ness’, that would speculate on the average of modal merit. Though it may act in the differential variation to perform, a singular contradistinction to the mean of merit, reconfigures the sense of performance which is no more as the same to itself. *Perform-e-bility* unravels the distinction from the established meaning and takes a departure so as to make the impediments to change, insoluble. Although conditions available for change are same, the sameness of changed particulars are commensurable to changing conditions. The concept of *perform-e-bility* is like setting the sails to a boat for the idea of voyage. A recourse of expedition might bring up new stop overs and may also involve a repetition of such recourse like any other expedition, but the possibility to take a conceptual shift via the technique and method put together like that in a voyage does not forgo the scope for exploration *with-through* inventions.

CONCLUSION

Fours signs have emerged from the process of this thesis writing. They are as follows – *with-through*, *tarīqā*, *perform-e-bility* and *affective sublation*. Distributed throughout the five chapters, these signs have tried to hold together contour of themes, sometimes as an impressionistic sketch of patterns assisting an imbrication of concerns. While at other times, as toroid shaped passage ways which can generate a simultaneous charge of possibilities around a subject matter and observe the cluster of debates. Thereby, each of these signs have drifted along with the material of the chapters, on their own but with a clear scope of meshing together a network of connections. Their entanglement as a leit motif have kept appearing in the grid of five chapters so as to understand the reticulation from their respective vantage points. Herein, the conditions of these vantage points have been offered through the ‘site’ of performative mediation in conjunction with “now time”. Therefore, it is imperative to go through these themes one by one adjunct to the four signs.

With-Through the Problematik of Presentation

In the performance of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī*, a sign of *with-through* is posited vis-à-vis the *problematik* of presentation. Standing in consonance with the problem of *gun-dos* in characterisation of Charudutt, the *problematik* of presentation in theatrical adaptations and acting styles, unties a crucial knot about a director’s approach who may sit back and reflect on critical reviews received from her/his spectator. In this case, the performance of *Miṭṭī Ki Gārī* helps to spot a starting point of engaging *with*

the attributes and *through* a lacuna in the problem of *gun-dos*. In effect to address an oxymoron such as *gun-dos*, acting and ‘presentability’ becomes the ‘site’ of concern in thinking about theatre, through which the debate of how to deal with criticism draws energy and momentum for further deliberation.

On the one hand, such a discourse of *gun-dos* with respect to performance studies is still at a nascent stage that includes to look at pattern¹²⁴ of hyphenation within the ambit of acting. Whereas on other hand, the *problematik* of ‘presentation’ places the anomaly (dos) as an incommensurable valence to a paradox. Contrary to the extension of discursive paradigms in performance studies, an anticipatory gesture tries to move away from an understanding of delay at the paradoxical moment in time. Therein, through the process of hyphenation, the thesis argues that a varied manifestation of acting and performance can be calibrated with a scope of strategic overview for critical appreciation. In this case, whether it is the concern of technique and method of adaptation, or the *problematik* of presentation in theatre, both these concerns, at the same time, sets off a report in file. Since the anticipation is also conceived as counter intuitive, the decision to comprehend “what works best” looks

¹²⁴ R.J. Herrnstein et.al, “Utility Maximization and Melioration: Internalities in Individual Choice,” *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, Vol 6, No. 3 (1993): 149-185. In this paper, the authors discuss and contemplate on variables, conditions and critique of Rational Choice Theory. Being propounded on the basic tenets of how humans deal with alternatives, rational choice theory’s mainstay comes from the idea of methodological individualism (Forbes 2015). Working through concrete empirical attestation, the paper proposes the word melioration with respect to “the process of choosing that alternative among a set of alternatives which has the currently higher yield in utility.” In a way, the word melioration is an apt expression that captures a sense of sub-optimality in making a decision, which hitherto has been applied to study animal behaviour by using the word melioration. The conditioned choices for a utilitarian project, bares to the fact that a maximization of equilibrium is always espoused for a future utility which is at a default loss.

Dictionary.com Online, s.v “melioration,” accessed March 6, 2018, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/melioration?s=t>. The word melioration is a noun which according to studies in historical linguistics means, “semantic change in a word to a more approved or more respectable meaning”. To put it simply, it is the act or process of improving something, in linguistic process a word which over a period of time grows more positive in connotation.

out for a disappearing act at the ‘site of mediation’. Narrowing down on this ‘site’ of concern, *guṇ-dosḥ* helps to constitute a *fillip* (a stimulus – as for an anticipation) in the spectrum of concern from the same end, and strikes at debates such as, idea of theatre of absurdity, contemporary theatre and experimental styles of acting. This simultaneous act of *fillip* may provide specific counter-intuitive anticipations within the discourse of performance studies. Then, a disappearing act of the decision itself as such can seemingly make an offence for the fault *doṣ*, by placing it alongside with *guṇ*.

With-Through: A Tarīkā for Research Methodology

The thesis is invested in exploring challenges before the contemporary scholarship of theatre and performance studies. By inviting to take a step forward and look out for a *tarīkā* as a technique in method for a methodological shift in research, the thesis focuses to make a pre-emptive move at the call of our times. Rather than a prescriptive *tarīkā*, the ‘technique in method’ for a methodological intervention in research, promulgates to broaden up the table of guidelines and its manner of application. Whether counted as an abled skill or a differently-abled determination, the *tarīkā* provides an eclectic platform. Thus, offering to take on board one and all the abilities of disciplinary protocols, a researcher’s identification with variation of the same material, seen from different vantage points, can instil a rigorous patience to study the subject matter. And *with* this study of the material and *through* the manifestation of performative mediation, the manner of application in *tarīkā* proposes to explore new techniques of articulation. This exploration further invigorates a reenergising push toward an understanding of research’s contribution to socio-

cultural sphere of interaction/communication and anticipates the politics on equal footing by breaking the domain of disparities in political sphere.

Even though these debates may appear to be normative in nature, they are to be dealt through these respective concerns. In each of these cases, concerns are put forth with an understanding of caressing through the debates, so as to make way for their underpinnings in a non-coercive way. Therein, while dealing with such pinpointed concerns, each one of them is allowed to adduce (to bring forward as evidence) their own respective dynamics. Without putting to rest, dynamics of theatre predicates a new dimension of questioning with a driving force of mediation at its manifestation. Thus, the debates carry along the concerns with utmost conformity as in a parley. Because the informal aspect of discussing the terms and conditions affects the particularities by conferring upon them the status of a new material. This *new material* of writing *with* the concern and *through* the debate of theatre comes about, neither as a consignment nor as a symposium of incorporated hostilities. But rather takes into account conditions of vogue (acceptance or popularity) which sets the tempo of parley. In effect, exerting a logical mode of contrariness amongst both the parties in a parley, this truce is unsettling to an extent of being called null-and-void. It happens so, that without assigning a surrender, inflected on either of the party involved in parley, both (concern and debates) shall get *affected* by their simultaneous feeling and understanding.

Herein, the concerns are brought into a discipline of examination without forgoing how the concerns became a catalysing force at the first place. Because the category of concern inspects the impediment to debates of theatre, performance, acting styles and their repetitive motif asks to skim across the peculiarities of expression in theatre-

making. And as to how these peculiarities are to be effectively suggested through the debate is, by placing disparate register of concerns. To that extent, placement of contradistinction takes cognizance of the fact that glancing at these hypotheses invariably invents the premise of ‘how to look for?’ the *peculiar-particular* in the process of theatre-making. Thus, following a companionship *with* peculiarities and *through* particularities, a *fillip* of turning over the generic peculiarities is carried out so as to be careful and vigilant about any kind of circumvention. Here, a *fillip* can be understood as a form of stimulus that galvanizes the case studies as an anticipatory cue. And a cue to what? A cue to an instantaneous simplicity of one-and-the-same-peculiarities in case studies. They might resemble at a very uncanny level, yet are particular in the ‘same-ness’ of concerns. Therein an anticipatory cue not only follows these case studies as an object to study and analyse but also resonates *with-through* the possibilities that these case studies offer. Why so, a *fillip* is in accordance *with* the peculiarities, is a question which needs to be dealt *through* the particularities. Because the concern of research envisages collision, this *fillip* is in accordance with peculiarities of particularities as a way to think through *inexhaustible possibilities*. Peculiarities of the case study then make a room for generalities at the threshold of being called by a name of research.

Affective Sublation: Dil-o-Dimaag as Feeling and Thinking Simultaneously

The expression, *Dil-o-Dimaag* becomes an ‘alfaz’ by invoking a connotation that is specifically directed at conveying a phonological distinction from its logo-centric counterpart. As a syllable, the combination however adds peculiarities from its extraction in characteristics (guṇ). And the *tarīkā* of mediation nonetheless procure a

mediator that transforms its typographical clusters into a non-integrated whole of technique and method. A non-integrated whole that puts affront these preconditioned splits as a simultaneous codification without confrontation. This expression of *Dil-o-Dimaag* adopts a *tarīkā* where a lexicon takes into account the varied listings of derivations. Followed up with collocation, the spectrum of idiomatic expressions, compound words and morphemes, *Dil-o-Dimaag* as an expression play out an ‘acousmatic alliteration’. While the form maintains its brevity, the prosthesis in drawing counterparts does not merely take place at the functional level of substitution. Instead, it’s a *sublation* which is concomitant with a transformative potential on an imaginative and emotional plane, at the same time. *Dil-o-Dimaag* forms a ligature that stands independent of dualism and yet speaks out the thinking of the heart and feeling of the mind.

The Figure of *Tamāshbīn*: Affective Predicate of Performative Sublation

Drawing on from the sense and usage of the word *tamāshbīn* in the context of performance the figure of *tamāshbīn* throws fresh light on ways of looking at spectatorship and bodies in common. Specially in the context of today’s interaction over social media, wherein a different sort of voyeurism has been granted bail to navigate around personal pages, let alone the rampant indulgences of surveillance across these platforms, the figure of *tamāshbīn* stands as case in point of contemporary onlookers. Understanding and maintaining a uncompromising distanciation with its spoken Hindustani application, the figure of *tamāshbīn* shall be considered and associated as an onlooker who is addressed as the same at the ‘site’ of performative mediation.

Therefore, the figure of the *tamāshbīn* has been given a corollary identification that is of a connoisseur, so that the analogy can bring in multiple dimensions of affective encounters. To begin with, the *tamāshbīn* have been illustrated through the analogy of a connoisseur who does not merely tastes something just in order to brag about her/his expertise in respective knowledge field, but inaugurates a performative sublation of remembering the precise flavour quite distinctly. On one hand, laying out disclaimers about her/his dislikes with precision, the connoisseur finds a ‘method in technique’ to address and express an overall mood around her/him. Whereas on the other hand, the connoisseur mediates *with* knowledge and *through* the wisdom of flavours to specify a ‘unique-ness’ in mediation. It happens so that affected by the taste and smell of feeling the *tamāshbīn* cherishes a non-reactionary attitude to each and every taste. Because the stimulating affect of a peculiar taste provides a run down in memory perception, blending the unique *with* knowledge and *through* wisdom, an emotional component (Hughes 2014) registers an actual integration with all other sensations. And her/his determination in sublation comes without an aorta of a reaction, sublation allows multiple memory lanes to reveal itself at an instantaneous moment in determining which culinary suits best.

Neither does this sublation imply to represent a choice of recollecting a taste, nor does it mean a synthesis of two odd tastes. They are coupled together so as to work in tandem with each other. Instead, the sublation constitutes a cross-medial interface that communicates a new language of thought par excellence in passion. Such a passion for a new smell or taste does not get cancelled vis-à-vis an old one, but rather ‘picks up’ and adds ‘anew’ into her/his range of taste. They become ingrained as part of

palate memory. To ‘pick up’ and preserve these senses of smell and taste for accessibility, performative sublation officiates a rewiring of stimuli in galvanizing emotional information across memory lanes. The process of performative sublation then conceives an aleatoric incursion through snaps of memory lanes, wherein to pick and choose from evocations are laden with feelings that are not contained merely as memories. They become historical, by means of recollection *with* the past and *through* the present, which are decided as determination in the present-future.

Perform-e-bility of a Tamāshbīn

Since the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) has a disposition towards *perform-e-bility*, she does not hold back that comes to her at the very first moment. She reacts at the presence of being witness to the performance. But more than a reaction in circumventing ‘a mutuality of meaning making’ between the performer and the spectator, the *tamāshbīn* like a connoisseur presents a sense of *perform-e-bility*. It does mediate, but on a slightly different terrain. Rather than a mere modification of cultural objects, in which it is suppose to only bring ‘the relationality of liveness to mediation’ (Auslander 1999 in Davis 2008, 4), the *tamāshbīn* (spectator) works *with* the method of knowledge and interacts *through* the technique of wisdom.

Perform-e-bility: A Tarīkā of Non-Decisional Determination

Not Two is not One, instead the ‘many *missing*’ has ‘one-ness’ rather than a ONE.

Reverting back to the point of ‘non-decisional determination’ in the manifestation of ‘presentability’, what swerve can a work of theatre invoke, if it has to even contend

by taking the guise of time being separated. Possibly, rather than a convergence or a superimposition over each other, the criterion of time creation can act in singular moments, forming a snapshot of frames. And these frames do carry a proper alphabet that might correspond to a call of sound which reiterates the reverberations of a sense image. Each of these frames are nonetheless declarative in their own capacity that makes them able to snuff the modalities of dual nature in the coinage of interference. But what is besieging this snapshot is the very constitution of a prosthetic blink, which is not a necessary condition for the image to be captured. Its apperceptive quality is somewhat a technique that can see the coin flipping in mid air but frames it the medium of vibrations. With every possible outcome in the domain of possibility, the trepidation of an onomatopoeic particularity outworks a tie with the time of this scape. So, instead of a palindromic effect, the frames do procure a quality which is that of an acrostic value, that is colourfully adhesive in the splash of an epiphany. Hence its 'presentability' is not only explanatory but moreover creative in partitioning a commensurable temporality. Despite this partitioning, the commensurable nature of temporality does not give way to a connotation of all the same repetitive probable outcome. On the contrary it connects those temporal disjunctions into a sense of being *with* the coin that takes a skip in a manoeuvring act, performing *through* the gravity. As if the interdependence is no more a necessity to prove a singular motion. Rather the creative pattern made by the coin enlivens an affect that has a *missing* mark on the energies entangled in some distant part of the world.

Ehsās-Bodh in Affective Sublation: The Tarīkā of a Dabbler

A dabbler (in this case a *tamāshbīn*) has an *ehsās-bodh* who rectifies the lacuna in oneself by creating not an image of *missing* but a real *missing* that is virtually existing in both the dabbler and the obfuscator. A dabbler's *ehsās* that the *missing* pervades other than one's own self, revises the relationship with delimitation. Because an acknowledgement of *missing* then have both, a recognition and identification at the same time. And therefore in order to follow through the simultaneous movement, dabbler's 'non-decisional' *tarīkā* involves an element of affect, colliding with sublation (*aufhebung*). Not only it's the manner through which it performs the logic of picking up and retaining but also listens to thyself what to do while doing the listening. Thinking then is reflective of what one hears out rather than the loop of brooding over of one's thought in 'cognition'. The profession of thinking is neither preset to be a professional act, nor a method in reflection because the technique plus method of inflection, syncopates *with* affect and *through sublation*, at the 'site' of mediation.

Benjamin when writing on Baudelaire had immensely conjured up a melancholic leitmotif that would get illustrated through allegory. In *Le Cygne*, Baudelaire would say, "Tout pour moi devient allegorie..." (Cowan 1981, 110). Which means *everything becomes allegory*. Then, there is an experiential denominator that seeks a quotient of repetition in as many times as the result would produce an *ehsās-bodh*. In turn which informs an allegory to not only acquires an operational *perform-e-bility* for transformation of things/objects but illustrates the deeds of subjects into a technique of *affective sublation*.

Benjamin does not respond to this charge symmetrically, making allegory the opposite of symbol; instead he insists that the concept of symbol, as the Romantics conceived it, is fundamentally misconstrued. Rather than opposing the symbol, he deconstructs it, radically challenging its claim to perform the unitary act the Romantic critics held it capable of.

(Cowan 1981, 111)

Therefore, collision of signs somewhat signals a coming together in symbols, confers upon a medallion of intuition – being although two, it makes it into one. But let the symbol extend a radical articulation. Not two as referred in the sign, doesn't make it 'One', rather the 'one-ness' in *missed/missing* which can pave way for the technique of *affective sublation* via an illustration of *lakshanalankar*. Political Aesthetics of *affective sublation* isn't trickery, on the contrary it's magical.

A Coupling of Affect & Sublation for the *Tarīkā* of Political Theatre

An answer to an entanglement of *affect* and *sublation* is illustrated *with* the phenomenon of mediation and *through* the process of reflection in the metaphor of a mirror. Therein, the omnipresence of mediums inspire us to speak up polemically by saying that, a mirror affectively sublates the feeling and thinking of love, care, emotion, loss, pain, hatred *with-through* a mirror, the mirror may present a face, a body, or an identity but the light striking the surface of a mirror stand true to the test of times that it shows us exactly what we want to see. Therefore, neither we “need” the glass, (literally/metaphorically) nor the ‘silver’ of a mirror. Rather our quest is to search for that silver, which at the back of mirror holds all the ingredients for the technique of light to reflect. Simply because, the silver despite being unknown to the

fact that a beam of light has spectrum of colours, it *uses* the mirror to project a unique reflection of all the possible shades of one's identity.

Here, an instantaneity of positing mirror/silver affront to each other can seemingly present a paradox of *affect* and *sublation*. But our feeling of thinking is not to merely resolve this paradox. On one hand we keep it constantly off-balance – that usually plays and produces (capitalism/fascism) phantasms. And on the other hand, make a movement in thought-action which need not necessarily 'look' beyond phantasm but consider the possibility of minimal contemplation for performing the 'non-fulfillment' of phantasm. Therefore, our bodies can be drenched with silver but it can't be drained with what remains. We look through the mirror not only for depth but for the *missing* silver that constitutes a mirror... A virtual-real silver... And we paint and drench ourselves with that silver. For the longing to paint will remain, yet the silver is a *missing* silver to itself.

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