

# The 'Revolution' through Popular Forms

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## I

A number of leading theatre personalities from all over India were present in a 'round table conference' in 1971 to discuss 'Modern Relevance of Traditional Theatre' organized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, 19-21 Feb, yet the debate seemed to be rather one sided. One paper by Utpal Dutt, on 'The Jatra and its Relevance' was pre-circulated, though a more elaborate one was actually read out and became the subject for a long and controversial debate. A very strong critique came from all the other personalities and is representative of the major issues around culture being debated at the time.

Taking up various points from the paper, on use of mythologies in traditional forms, importing current politics in such forms, urban and rural divides, commercialism, form-aesthetic experience etc, the critique came to centre on the individual- self and to how he/himself as practitioners, at this crucial moment of Indian history, can gain resources and negotiate with 'folk/traditional practices to carve out their own signature styles. The desire to absorb local performance into their individual persona and practice as the repository of 'Indian' culture is a predominant thought and concern. The related other side of the debate here is in context of dissemination of such cultural expressions. Significantly the need for a 'public' or an audience is passed over while there is passing mention of its propagation through school curriculum as part of enrichment of general education.

In consenting to take up solely individual engagement with the folk and the traditional, the dominant position would be to construct a new theatrical culture for the new 'nation' taking from the regional. The over emphasis on the forms and the aesthetics in such cases could have consequences and fail to bring to the forefront the crucial identity issues which comes with the regional and the national in such contexts. In this paper my intent is to take up the non dominant position in the round table. Seemingly represented by one individual, in actuality this was the popular theatre movement which was evolving outside the state's control and all official cultural spaces. This could be seen as the critical narrative of a general history and part of a more political atmosphere it embodied, I would like to describe these theatre activists and their engagement as, 'a class or an alliance of classes which have the will and strength to act as agents of transformation, perhaps even without the aid of an elaborately formulated theoretical apparatus to think out process of change'<sup>1</sup>. Was this other theatre in that sense like what Partha Chatterjee describes as the 'critique of the 1970s- which would seriously damage the old structure of assumptions about the Indian renaissance' and along with it the basic foundation of its 'passive revolution' and the fundamental structure of 'modernity'<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Chatterjee Partha, "Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World, a Derivative Discourse," in *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*, OUP Delhi 1999. p27

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p28

## II

Intending to open channels of communication between the urban based theatre and a non urban form must take into consideration the burden of colonial disdain towards a form like the 'yatra'. In Bengal the colonial hangover of rejecting 'folk' forms was deeply imbibed and as Bengal's representative in the round table, for Utpal Dutt to read a paper on the jatra would denote a more complex motive to the other speakers. Inherent is a sharp critique of the national project, the great euphoric leap into the 'folk' and also a defense of the 'theatre'. Significantly it is also the point of breaking away from the traditional theatre spaces and the beginning of what was going to be known as the progressive theatre movement. The intermediate dialogue with the jatra in that sense is also a history of the new Calcutta theatre at the crucial junctures of making a qualitative shift from a colonial to a post colonial theatre in terms of space, performance and the public.

The general enthusiasm and euphoria of discovering new idioms and alternate performances had to be logically thought out and justified within the new political equations. The idealization of the non proscenium space would now be balanced with the more urgent criteria of a expanded, larger public related to 'people and audience'. Very critically different, from the other directors, who emphasized funding from the government, to sustain its new experiments.

Since in all these debates the 'audience' is the constant factor, it follows that the size and cultural level of the audience must display a part in the resolution of the contradictions. 'The smaller the audience, the less is it a representative of society and its classes and less is its power to influence and catalyze the contradictions on the stage. ...therefore those, who believe in an elitist theatre is actually cutting themselves off from the most important aspect of theatrical dialectics- from their only link with society'.<sup>3</sup> It is too simplistic to talk of an alienated colonial intelligentsia and his/her attempt to open dialogues with the people. The actual process of constructing and assimilating a new cultural language and idiom not as a mere exhibition on the national and international stage, but to its conditioned audience is a far more complex process. How do you use the symbolic non proscenium space as an act of communication? The space associated in cultural terms with agit prop and street theatre experience than a nostalgia of idyllic village greenery. The new intervention would aim to preserve a more interactive space and maybe ward off a number of the changes which the jatra was initiating. For the new theatre enthusiasts who would go to the jatra the preceding incidents and experience of street theatre is very crucial. Dutt one of the first theatre personalities who plunge into an interaction with the jatra, describes an incident in 1952 where elections<sup>4</sup> were creating a new theatrical space which was a novel experience for the Calcutta middle class.

'I particularly remember the general elections of 1952 when Dr. B.C.Roy, the chief minister, was desperately fighting to beat Mohammed Ismail, a tramway worker and communist, and all the notorious criminals of central Calcutta had been hired to break up Ismail's meetings. In a few places we too were beaten up. The climax came during the counting of votes; Calcutta's most important road,

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<sup>3</sup> Utpal Dutt, *Towards a Revolutionary Theatre*, Seagull, Calcutta 2009, p22-23.

<sup>4</sup> 1952 was the first state elections in West Bengal. Earlier, Bidan Ray had been made the chief minister (at that point also called the prime minister) replacing Prafulla Ghosh, by central directives but not elections.

the Chowringhee, was a mass heads-people waiting for the news of Dr. Roy's defeat. As news that Ismail was leading by many votes came from inside the counting centre, the crowd burst into applause and the triple cordon of policemen, on horseback and on foot, grew visibly restless. We were also there in the crowd and a Communist leader suddenly announced that our play would be performed there on the road. We went forward and began playing with the policeman behind us and the massive crowd in front- a rare experience of merging with an exited politically conscious crowd' <sup>5</sup>

A new 'public' is being defined outside the spaces of a 'nation's public' and positioned against the nation's public celebrations. Here the public is a 'critical public' out in the streets with political, social and economic issues left unsolved during the freedom movement and now demanding attention. Seen as a crucial juncture theatre was seen as offering new choices to the public. 'When the government and the ruling class mobilize legal and illegal forces to crush a play, we can be sure that people's resistance is gathering round it. A play can, and has through history, repeatedly become a rallying point for the people's resistance'<sup>6</sup>. The choice and critique were to be pushed to its limits challenging the hegemonic politico economic articulations which determine the specific configuration of a society at a given moment.

The participants in the round table from Bengal, both Badal Sircar and Utpal Dutt had the responsibility of also countering the theatre history of the region. To make a transition from the colonial theatre to a new genre required an understanding and intervening within a historical process. The alternative space and form had to be judged with the critical lense where as Fanon argues, 'the national cultural landscape had become an inventory of behavioral patterns, traditional costumes and miscellaneous customs. Little movement can be seen. There is no real creativity, no ebullience. Poverty, national oppression and cultural repression are one and the same. After a century of colonial domination culture becomes rigid in the extreme, congealed and petrified'.<sup>7</sup> The critique would also be relevant for the jatra as a theatrical form which survives in a close symbiotic relationship with the professional theatre in Calcutta. Fanon resolves the tension within people's politics, 'The people's staying power stimulates the intellectual to transcend the laments. Complaints followed by indictments give way to appeals. Then comes the call for revolt'.<sup>8</sup>

How does a theatrical act prompt a political change? The space of confrontation during the Bengal elections was a 'real' space and in that sense brought theatre out of the illusionary space of the colonial theatre, dependant totally on constructing scenographic realism. The jatra with its deliberate tactics of breaking all illusions of realism was a more 'real' space. This would be the new Indian post colonial theatre space of 'unsafe realism' or 'revolutionary-realism' remnant of the more socialist and Brechtian realism. This in turn, was to be the counter culture to the state's machinery and media, monopolized and owned by the state to create the nation's icons and heroes along with

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<sup>5</sup> Utpal Dutt, *Towards a Revolutionary Theatre*, Seagull, Calcutta 2009, p 44

<sup>6</sup> Utpal Dutt, *Towards a Revolutionary Theatre*, Seagull, Calcutta 2009, p p43

<sup>7</sup> Frantz Fannon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 2004, p172

<sup>8</sup> Frantz Fannon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 2004, p173

the nation's public paying homage. Radio, television and all electronic media would concentrate on enhancing the illusion of the nation's leaders into an iconic illusionary status. The new nation's cultural policy were also constructing new connotations of the 'classical', 'ancient myths', 'Nehruvian visions', 'mixed socialism' etc. Read carefully the process of such reconstructions required a grand strategy of use of illusionary techniques.

It was a historical moment of creating counter strategies and a process of transforming critique into theatrical expressions. Thejatra is unique in that sense it has a large audience base but also survival in the jatra depends totally on success at the box office. Any foray in the jatra industry is determined by the profit the play brings in and the people drawing power of the director/actor or even the playwright.

Confronting the nation through a new theatrical genre, prioritized political content over the aesthetics of the form which came to be expressed through two categories of the new political repertoire.

1. To reconstruct the alternate anti colonial history in a patriotic tone with strong Marxist focus on movements which took into account peasant and working class participation.
2. To depict the history of the proletarian armed struggle of other countries as a parallel narrative.

Fanon (almost in the same tone) justifies, 'The people's encounter with this new song of heroic deeds brings an urgent breath of excitement, arouses forgotten muscular tensions and develops the imagination'<sup>9</sup>. The key tactic is 'change' in the form itself, inert episodes into a new political theme. 'There are attempts to update battles and modernize the types of struggle, the hero's names, and the weapons used. The method of allusion is increasingly used expression "What I am going to tell you happened somewhere else but it could happen here today or perhaps tomorrow".<sup>10</sup> The strategy, in Bengal, is unusually similar and captures a crucial post colonial tension of the nation debating on national cultures; a bourgeois national culture versus a people's.

### III

The new process was to have a crucial impact within the jatra. One of the major problem was to place the nationalist icons, still revered in public memory in the centre stage to be systematically denigrated. The late 60s and early 70s were a very crucial phase when both Nehru and the Congress freedom movement icons had died and what remained was a mass media churning out a hero worship cult. The major problem was to now bring them on stage where there are no illusionistic devices but

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<sup>9</sup> Frantz Fannon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 2004, p174

<sup>10</sup> Frantz Fannon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 2004, p174

make the political connections clear to be able to allow the audience to identify with a process of iconoclastic denigration.

The 'comic' as a technique had been used in the city theatre spaces and is now brought in. Till now the comic in the jatra had been a mode of clowning used as interludes. The Congress leaders, identified by the khadi caps, are now cut down to be little men, men trying to intervene in the real war and appropriate the freedom movement. The new little Congressmen are taught to play with double takes instead of buffoonery and clowning. Such subtle breaks and pauses are unknown in jatra and the effort to communicate the subtlety required undoubtedly a protracted action with the double take far more pronounced than allowed within comic timings. Yet laughter came at every cue. The traditionally comic actor or even the conscience which is now abolished from the jatra take on these roles. This also coincided with a number of professionally run theatres closing down and a number of actors seeking employment in the jatra. These roles would often be taken by them.

In the jatra the only material in the hands of the director is the actor. The jatra companies' major investment is the large salaries paid to its stars. The jatra actors within their own circuit and suburban and rural Bengal have a mass following which no city star of the theatre or film or even in politics ever had. The great star actors are now cast as the Indian 'revolutionary' heroes, or the Anglo Saxon British officers whose gigantic presence must be matched by larger than life heroes. They are also in the make believe world of parallel socialist revolutions as the communist- Marxist icons. The actor's body and expression needed to bring back revolutionary images from history as a real presence.

The actorial tradition of the jatra and the dynamics goes through a great change through these encounters and far more modern methods are adopted. The jatra actorial tradition embodied the nineteenth century classical stylized acting of big gestures, holding on to postures and attitudes. Yet in basic acting methods the new texts required the most drastic and evolutionary shifts. It is very significant that the actors steeped in stardom-egos opened up to the new methods. The new method went beyond display of emotions or realism but almost Brechtian interventions within its own cultural specificities.

The text experimenting with the philosophical ideas of Marxist heroes did not intent to replace one mythical God like character with another. For the revolutionary hero the same gestures would now be used to embody passion, a larger than life persona, robustness, and a body which in its very presence and expansion (practiced in the art of making themselves Gods) fill the entire stage. When the revolutionary hero falls his descent on to the grounds becomes a pictorial expression of martyrdom.

The more complex process was obviously regarding the negative heroes. The directors were incorporating historical ideas of Shakespeare, Goethe's process of creating Faust and trying to work it out dialectically with traditional Jatra villains. Colonial officers and the European bourgeoisies and the ruling classes, were the new negative heroes and the most complex creation within the repertoire. Enlightened, educated, culturally sophisticated they were however the most ruthless killers and Imperialists. The great actors who had raved and ranted through villainous roles were now to play it in cold blooded ruthlessness. Restricting and controlling their

movements and gestures allowed almost an internal struggle, ready to erupt but always on the verge of control and simmering with volatile tension. In moments of great climax the physical manifestation would allow to express the villainous character beneath the apparent benevolent ruler. Those moments of truth were far more effective than the traditional villainous stereotypical movements, gestures and deliveries. The large gestures were to be now methods to create distance, or alienation. The actors used to traditional gestures were now taught to use them not as accompanying speeches but in specific moments to create the alienation effect. To a conditioned audience such changes brought the desired effect. Often the actors known to play only the positive roles would be cast as the negative character .

The actress roles also went an unprecedented shift. The domesticated middle class wives were now characters within a revolutionary space, negotiating with new political dynamics of the texts.

The new repertoire played with theatrical devices of which torture was a very common recurring theme. The women were usually the victim as it could arouse horror. The torture scenes allowed the actress use of her body to express the physical pain which destroyed all illusions of the sacrosanct domesticated body. As a central scene of such repertoires the sacrosanct domesticated body, codified within the nationalist ideology was symbolically violated.

The actors were the first to appreciate the paradigm shift which was taking place and their receptiveness to the interventions also makes them the first group of audience and an active mediator with the new movement and its audience.

#### IV

I would now like to see the new negotiations in the jatra as a transitional phase between abandoning the colonial institutional theatre project and embarking on a new theatre movement (progressive theatre movement). It reflects a need to engage with a form like the jatra in a far more fundamental way. One of the key personalities who embody this transition, Dutt says 'My long association as writer and director with Jatra players has exploded many beliefs I once held passionately with regard to form.... I was awakened to the truth of the statement by watching jatra. All that violence and rage and unashamed dramatic devices were aimed at keeping the vast audience's attention riveted to the play, to the content. Form here is reduced to an elemental power, a savage tribal power, a magical *danse macabre* where the audience and the players became one, a condition hardly to be met in the city theatres. Since content is the most important element of our plays, the Jatra form can be our most important form precisely because of its apparent formlessness, because it has been tested and enriched by the dialectics of audience reaction, it has destroyed the boredom of vast mass audiences unreachable today except by use of the public address system.'<sup>11</sup>

The new theatre intended to explore a 'proletarian myth'. The element from which myths arise are attributed to the vast audience. The new dramaturgy was trying to create figures of history and mythology that were all known to its audience – Indian emperor,

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<sup>11</sup> Utpal Dutt *Towards a Revolutionary Theatre*, seagull, Calcutta 2009, p 171-72

British proconsuls, revolutionary martyrs and even Lenin, Mao and Che, the new mythical heroes. Through the known characters and the stories moving in convulsions of violence, deaths and murders in every act, a new ideological and political critique is to be expressed. What is crucial here is not to adhere and succumb to the jatra's dominant feudal belief system but at the same time also annihilate them. For example in India particularly in the jatra most myths are intimately connected with religious warriors who have died fighting imperialism. Yet in the new repertoire while the heroes would often garb-saffron for the Hindus and blue for the Muslim, to build the myth and draw on cultural memories the new ideological interpretation of the myth would painstakingly break through any religious overtones. Here it was a two way process of engaging with people's culture and beliefs to create a new 'people's myth' while also intervening in traditional beliefs which fell back on pre modern ideas of religion and feudal elements existing in a colonial society.

The theatrical space could construct a space of resistance and working closely with the growing political dissent of the 70s, the theatre movement succeeded in constructing an illusionistic-real world of other possibilities. Sheer economic and commercial expectations prompt the jatra system to adopt its themes and subjects. Sheer number of the plays on radical left politics and international revolutionary scenarios in that sense were also decisions based on audience demand and interest. In that sense the large number of audience of the jatra and its large capital investment and circulation actually makes the component of 'public demand' very pertinent. Yet the illusion of revolution falls short of it actually transforming into a 'real' and operates in the margins of radicalism, it however works out an antagonistic conception of democracy, that according to Mouffe can 'contribute to a revitalization and deepening of democracy'<sup>12</sup>. It positions itself against the state promoted consensus based democracy. In no sense does it mean that religion or traditional ritualistic customs are getting transformed towards or the everyday performative change but a widening of a vision of an alternative world system is interwoven into it. For example at the end of the radical phase in the mid eighties we see coming back of non political myths woven in the same dramatic narrative, while the close ties developing between the theatre and the jatra were becoming more and more tenuous and once again two separate genres.

## V

I would like to mention two particular plays produced in the same year 1970 for the same company (Lokenatya), one was Dilli Chalo (March to Delhi) and the other Samudrasasan (Rule of the Sea\ Samudragupta). The former deals with Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and his Azad Hind Fauj. A play on Netaji is always a critique of the Gandhi-Nehru nexus. Netaji was committed to an all out confrontation with Imperial powers and martyred when probably a Japanese flight crashed in midst of World War II. Netaji was visiting the fascist powers to mobilize support against Imperial Britain in India. The play

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<sup>12</sup> Chantal Mouffe, On the Political, in Tim Prentki and Shiela Preston (ed), The Applied theatre Reader, Routledge, 2009, p 79

deliberately shifts the focus and the narrative on Netaji's soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj (Free Indian army). The four men and women are Netaji's representative and they are the heroes of the play. Netaji is supposed to visit the village in North eastern India and mobilize support amongst the people and explain strategies to his guerilla army. The English commander Brenan comes to know about it and one of the soldiers is arrested. A prolonged torture scene forces Netaji's most trusted soldier to betray the whereabouts of his leader. A British ambush is set for Netaji's arrival. The suspense builds up as the English officers are out in full force, while the informer is booed as the traitor by his fellow mates and all in the village. All watch in sheer helplessness waiting for their leader to come and face British bullets. A man appears in the doorway in full military regalia. Netaji always wore his khaki trousers tucked in his boots. On a stage with no lighting device, no place to darken and create shadows, the well known uniform of Netaji is visible. Bullets shower on him and the man falls. The man is not Netaji, not even an actor impersonating Netaji but a British captain. The entire plan of being arrested; to divulge the details after inhuman torture only, so that the ambush is set up was all clever war strategies to distract the English. Yet the audience screamed when the figure in full light comes in and falls.

The play plays around with a number of larger political issues. It brought the Gandhi-Netaji debates back into the public attention within a post colonial scenario where political opposition was being very systematically silenced. It was an act of countering political hegemony. The hegemonic state was soon to silence all critiques with emergency when all fundamental rights were to be suspended.

The second play in the repertoire *Samudrasaan* was not apparently directly confrontational to the state. The play is placed in ancient India often termed as the golden age of the Hindus (The Gupta period c 5 A.D.). The play exposes the contradictions of ancient slave society and the difference between the hegemonic state machinery and the people's activity. It's a confrontation between the Hindu State and the marginalized Buddhist habitations, the centre of learning, philosophical and scientific research. Its an alternative space to the Empire where strict class and caste hierarchies form the base of society. A low caste woman Indrani is an inmate of the Buddhist ashram and is the repository of the new science and philosophy. She is arrested for her beliefs and education. She is publicly tortured while her master the monk Kalhan is rendered voiceless and speechless by the state. With his tongue cut off it seems that Kalhan is denying the scientific positions which is at the base of the controversy. Propagating that the world is round in effect challenges the very basis of heaven and earth and Gods in heaven who have divested the power in the Emperor.

Often described as a play written in Brechtian epic style, other than the apparent critique of hegemonic state, the play brought in other vital issues of the new nation's projects. The most important one of rewriting ancient Indian history as glorious period. The 1970s also coincide with the new education policy and the nation's project of incorporating new 'glorious' unblemished ancient history into school curriculum. The ancient Hindu ideology almost by default was becoming the new nation's ideological leaning within a formal 'secular' state. Very crucial is also the nation's grand project of reconstructing Indian classical dance as the new Indian culture. The Origin of such reconstruction projects were sought in ancient India particularly the Gupta period. Hitherto plays in the jatra on ancient Indian history were usually placed within a strange mythological and

historical setting. Apsaras and nymphs and kings intermingled in a bizarre Hinduistic tableau. In that sense Samudrasasan looked at the history with a new historical dialectical critique.

## VI

In the post independent period , approaching the traditional arts as ‘formless’ was a sacrilege and an anti positioning to the nation’s agenda. The two accepted categories of writing a post colonial history relate to ‘folk’ projects, as a recent book , ‘Theatre of the Roots’ spells out without any doubt,

1. The official a very direct approach to revive and preserve the folk forms
2. A process to ‘decolonize’ Indian theatre by challenging the colonial construction of theatre as a text-based phenomenon through a (re)turns to ‘indigenous’ performance-driven theatres”<sup>13</sup>. At the most she is ready to include what she terms as ‘hybrid’ where the two text based and supposedly an anti textual position is pitched against each other.

The two directors she uses to show the theatre of roots movement impacting a modern Indian theatre Pannikar and Karnad significantly in the round table conference were speaking the nation’s cultural line. What is deliberately omitted was that there is really no conflict between the direct intervention into so called folk forms and theatre directors in independent India adopting forms to explore new theatrical idioms within a proscenium theatre space. The new nation actually nurtured both.

The phase I see as a crucial historical period marking a self critique and transition from the colonial to a new theatre movement in Bengal are dismissed as ‘certain criticism stems from confusing the roots movements with other projects that use traditional performance’<sup>14</sup>. The ‘other’ project , I assume refers to a political theatre project. Erin Mee’s book itself reveals her own position as a performance study scholar. Performance study has always looked at Indian theatre with its particular methodological approach which idealize certain traditional genres as ‘Indian’ and an unhistorical way of looking at Indian theatre history, which deliberately excludes political and social forces playing out within a post colonial Indian scenario.

The basic problem lies in looking at the jatra as a composite folk genre and studying it as one history and one continued practice. Only a pre assumption, inherent in ethnographic or anthropological studies, believes that folk forms follow a linear history and does not allow it to be studied though its specific performances or as part of any other cultural history. The binaries between theatre and popular performances are thus maintained. Hence no analytical tools applicable for theatre studies are used for looking at landmark representative historical performances in the popular traditions. Jatra’s interaction with theatre or its adoption of theatrical devices is always dismissed as historical aberration by both official history and the performance study methodology. The key to the problem is to frame it within a colonial and post colonial historical focus. The other methods do not accept the vital process of historicization.

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<sup>13</sup> Erin B. Mee, *Theatre of roots: redirecting the Modern Indian stage*, Seagull, Kolkata, 2008, p5

<sup>14</sup> Erin B. Mee, *Theatre of roots: redirecting the Modern Indian stage*, Seagull, Kolkata, 2008, p26

### Conclusion :

It is very significant to understand that colonial modernity had no artistic conflict with the 'folk' or traditional forms. Infact both the colonial theatre and the jatra in Calcutta borrowed elaborately from each other to enhance its commercial status. The colonial ruler's descriptions of the 'native' forms although disparaging were actually adopted and allowed to be exhibited, to stage the 'superiority' of western culture. The history of colonial theatre may also be read as the intelligentsia engaged in negotiating modernity in conditions of colonial subjection, without discarding tradition. The amalgamation was obviously problematic. The colonial theatre in their great admiration of the western theatre model would often weave the presence of the folk elements to actually build on the colonial discourse. Hence K.N. Pannikar argues that 'the intelligentsia strove to create a modern cultural taste and sensibility, responsive to the values and ideas of the West as filtered through colonialism without overlooking the traditional'<sup>15</sup>. Pannikar quoting Memmi, encourages a critical interrogation of both the western and the indigenous. Taking off from his critique the historical explanation of the theatre of roots movement and its adaptation by a number of directors and theater activists would also be interpreted as the 'intelligentsia experienced a cultural crisis arising out of alienation both from the indigenous and the colonial'. He sees the intelligentsia finding a solution of the crisis either in revivalism or alternative modernity'<sup>16</sup>.

Pannikar argues that resistance to colonialism need to build on a creative dialogue between two distinctive tendencies. First to construct a future on the basis of rationality, humanism and universalism and the second drew upon tradition in the construction of future. Alternative modernity had to critique both and intervene in both. In that sense to ignore the crucial phase of dialogue between the jatra and the theatre, a people's forum and a political theater platform is to omit from theatre history the crucial phases of alternative critical modernities. Public memory still sees it as a landmark phase but formal cultural-history writing needs to incorporate its study within a larger history of post colonial resistances. .

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<sup>15</sup> K.N.Panikkar. *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, Oxford University press, Delhi 2007, p23.

<sup>16</sup> K.N.Panikkar. *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, Oxford University press, Delhi 2007, p13.