

CHAPTER: 3

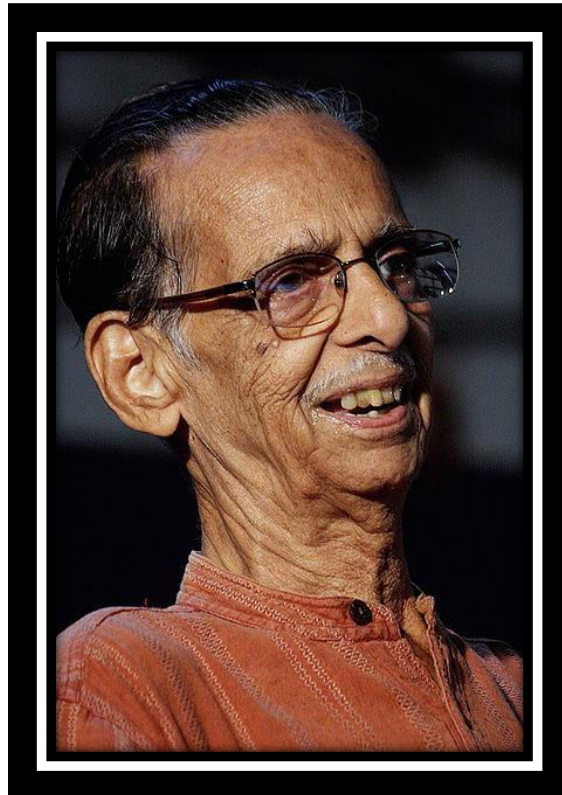
THE THEATRE OF K. N. PANIKKAR:



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- In the 70s, different directors according to their own interpretations, directed Sanskrit Plays on the basis of “Laws and Practices of Natyashastra” along with added their own “Regional Traditional Forms” which are laid down on ‘Natyashastra’ to create their own unique style.
- These are individual approaches to the Sanskrit Play with a stamp of individuality. This aspect gets emphasized as all of them draw more or less from their “Regional Traditional Forms”. These staging experiments of the Classical Sanskrit Plays for the modern audiences are aimed at giving varied theatre experiences for investigating new forms and new style of production, giving new interpretation to bring them to suit the modern times, thus, giving them a contemporary dimension.
- Various modern attempts at staging the Sanskrit plays for contemporary audiences in different styles can be classified in the following broad categories. (*Images – 1 To 10*)
 - ⊗ **PRODUCTIONS REFLECTING “TRIBAL DANCE/DANCE – DRAMA FORMS”.**
 - ⊗ **PRODUCTIONS BASED ON POPULAR “REGIONAL TRADITIONAL THEATRE FORMS”.**
 - ⊗ **PRODUCTION STYLE BASED ON PURE “CLASSICAL/TRADITIONAL DANCE OR DANCE – DRAMA”.**
 - ⊗ **PRODUCTIONS INSPIRED BY A SORT OF MIXED “CLASSICAL REGIONAL TRADITIONAL” AND “RITUAL” – FORMS.**
 - ⊗ **FREE STYLE OF TAKING ELEMENTS OF DIFFERENT FORMS.**
 - ⊗ **PERSPECTIVE DIRECTORS SEARCHING DISTINCTIVE STYLE OF PRODUCTION FOR SANSKRIT PLAYS.**
- But among all the directors, ‘K. N. Panikkar’ is the best example of ways in which the “Presentation Method of Sanskrit Theatre” has redefined “Modern Indian Theatre”.

KAVALAM NARAYANA PANIKKAR



➔ **ARTISTIC JOURNEY AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**

⊗ **EARLY LIFE AND SOCIAL BACK GROUND:**

- Panikkar was born on the (1928 - 2016) in the picturesque village of 'Kavalam', part of 'Kuttanad', once famed as the granary of Kerala. The rustic lifestyle of the agricultural community closely identified with Mother Nature, the scenic beauty of the area where the sacred 'River Pampa' ends its journey by merging into 'Vembanad Lake' all provided an ideal background for the young Panikkar to develop his inborn artistic talents and vision¹.

- However, it was his father, 'Late Godavarama', who introduced him to the world of literature. Panikkar remembers that he was initiated to the fascinating world of great epics like "Ramayana and Mahabharata" by his father. Moreover, a system of intense and regular reading of the epics existed in the house where his mother, grandmother and women from neighborhood participated. This tradition inspired him to organize poetry reading sessions in public later in life, at a time when it was argued that poetry was for private reading and enjoyment.
- Panikkai, after his initial education in local schools in 'Kavalam' and in the nearby village 'Pulinkunnu', joined the famous CMS college in 'Kottayam', that had produced prominent personalities like KPS Menon and Sardar KM Panikkar, the latter being Shri Panikkar's own uncle. He took his degree in Economics from S D College, 'Alappuzha' and later Bachelor of Law degree from Madras Law College.

⊗ **GROWN UP AS ARTIST:**

- Taking inspiration from his surroundings and upbringing, Panikkar had started writing poetry from his schooldays. The poems, rich with rural idioms, were the reflections of a young poet's mind on the archetypal imageries, myths and parables that had profound influence on him. However, he continued to pursue his artistic interests and a breakthrough came when he was nominated as 'Secretary' of "Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi" in the year 1961 and shifted his base to Thrissur, the cultural capital of Kerala.
- The new responsibility gave him a chance to interact with artists from all over the state and get introduced to different art forms, both "Sanskritised and Folk" based. During the period, the Akademi organized many festivals, which gave Panikkar more insights into the rich cultural heritage of the state and its deep rooted and "Indigenous / Folk Traditions". He started his research in the "Traditional, Folk and Classical Arts" of Kerala, which ultimately saw him entering the theatre.
- Panikkar admits that his first few experiments, to write plays in tune with the established and popular realistic theatre traditions, were not successful. But the journey in search of his real identity continued. A turning point in his theatre experiments, especially as a playwright came with the production of "Daivathar". In 1974, Panikkar shifted his

residence to the state capital ‘Thiruvananthapuram’ and a highlight of the period was the staging of his play “Avanavan Katampa”, directed by G. Aravindan.

- The structure of this play and its presentation were truly path breaking. The theme demanded an open auditorium with trees in the background having hanging lamps. The concept of proscenium and picture frame stage with roll curtain divide was broken. The acting area started growing beyond its prescribed limits, creating a sense of involvement and participation among the audience.

⊗ **MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH:**

- A major breakthrough in Panikkar’s career as a director came when he was offered a chance to produce and present a Sanskrit drama at the prestigious “Kalidas Samaroh” in Ujjain. He selected “Bhasa’s Madhyama Vyayogam”, which was his first directorial attempt and on November 2, 1978, it was presented in ‘Ujjain’. The culturally sound audience could feel the strength of the Sanskrit presentation, the usage of body dynamics by the actors and their ability to combine the “Satvika and Vachika Abhinaya”. And above all, the directorial contribution of Panikkar. The impression created in Ujjain had its effect in New Delhi also. Kamaladevi Chatopadhaya, the chairperson of the “National Sangeet Natak Akademi”, was instrumental in inviting Panikkar to New Delhi and the play presented in February 1979.
- Panikkar was requested by Adya Rangacharaya, director of “Kalidas Akademi”, to present Bhasa’s Sanskrit play “Doota Vakyaam” using artists from Madhya Pradesh². It was a great experience for him as well as the artists on the practical implementation of the techniques of “Natyashastra”. Later, at the “National School of Drama”, he produced and directed plays in Sanskrit and Hindi for the students, overcoming the language barriers through creating a ‘Theatre Language’. While dabbling with Sanskrit theatre, Panikkar also wrote and directed a number of Malayalam plays. His first Malayalam play was “Sakshi and Panch Mahabhootam” being the latest.
- Panikkar has successfully introduced indigenous music of the regional “Sopana Sangeetam” as an organic accompaniment to ‘Mohiniyattam’. Famous dancers like Dr. Kanak Rele and Bharati Shivaji have worked with him in this project.

- He has visited many countries, including the erstwhile Soviet Union. He considers his interaction with the Greek Theatre in producing “Iliyayana” a memorable experience worth mentioning. “Iliyayana”, which he produced along with Greek Theatre group Volos, was a combination of Ramayana and Greek epic Iliad.
- He has directed two movies about the greatest Kuttiyattam maestro legendary actor Guru Mani Madhava Chakyar: *The Master at Work* (1994) and *Parvati Viraham* (1993) in Kuttiyattam form featuring Mani Madhava Chakyar as Ravana. As a lyricist in Malayalam cinema, he has won Kerala State Film Award for Best Lyrics.

⊗ **BHASHABHARATI – “SOPANAM”:**

- He is the founder-director of ‘Theatre Troupe – Sopanam’, which led to the foundation of Bhashabharati: Centre for Performing Arts, Training and Research, in Trivandrum. "Sopanam" has tried to discover the basic principles of theatre through various dance and music forms like Sopanam Sangeetam, Mohiniattam, contemporary recreations of epics etc. It seeks to interweave dramatic action with music and dance patterns, so that the spectator can discern the philosophical meanings inherent in epic tales like those of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

⊗ **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION:**

- He was awarded the 1983 Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in Direction by Sangeet Natak Akademi – New Delhi which gave him its highest award for lifetime achievement the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 2002 and Padma Bhooshan in 2007, Nandikar Award in 1998, Kalidasa Samman, Madhya Pradesh Government (1994-95).
- He has also remained, Consultant, Asianet Communications and Vice Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi.

→ **THEATRE ACTIVITIES TIME LINE³:**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>PLAY</u>
1964	Written a Play.	SAKSHI
1966	Directed for Kerala Kalamandalam.	THIRANOTTAM
1972	Written a Play.	JABALA SATYAKAMAN
1973	Written a Play.	DAIVATHAR
1974	Written a Play.	TIRUVAZITHAN
1975	Written a Play.	AVANAVAN KADAMBA
1976	Directed a Play in Malayalam.	BHAGAVADAJJUKAM
1977	Written a Play.	OTTAYAN
1978	Directed a Play in Sanskrit.	MADHYAMA VYAYOGA
1979	Written a Play.	PASHU GAYATRI
1979	Written and Directed a Play.	SOORYASTHANAM
1980	Directed for Bharat Bhavan in Sanskrit.	DOOTA VAKYAM
1982	Written a Play.	THIRUMUDI
1982	Directed in Sanskrit.	SHAKUNTALAM
1982	Directed in Sanskrit for the Seminar in the Kalidas Samaroh, Ujjain.	VIKRAMORVASHIYAM - 4 th ACT
1982	Directed for Nrithalaya Aesthetic Society, Singapore.	OTTAYAN
1982	Participated at the International Theatre Festival at Toga-Mura, Tokyo, Japan and conducted Theatre Workshop.	
1983	Conducted Theatre Workshop at Common Wealth Institute, London and Theatre Laboratory at Wales, U.K.	
1983	Conducted Kathakali and Theatre Workshop at the International Theatre Festival in Kolkata.	
1983	Written and Directed a Play.	KARIMKUTTY

1983	Directed in Hindi for Final Year Student, NSD.	URUBHANGAM
1984	Directed in Hindi for Final Year Student, NSD.	SOORYASTHANAM
1984	Directed in Sanskrit.	KARNABHARAM
1985	Directed in Hindi for NSD Repertory.	MATTAVILASAM
1985	Directed in Malayalam for School of Drama, Thrissur.	MATTAVILASAM
1985	Directed in Sanskrit for Uni. of Wisconsin, USA.	URUBHANGAM
1985	Directed in English for Uni. of Wisconsin, USA.	BHAGAVADAJJUKAM
1985	Presented in Sanskrit for Festival of India.	KARNABHARAM
1985	Presented in Sanskrit for Festival of India.	BHAGAVADAJJUKAM
1985	Participated in the International Theatre Festival at Delphi, Greece.	
1986	Participated in the Seminar on Indian Theatre at the Uni. of Warsaw, Poland.	
1986	Directed for Bharat Bhavan in Hindi.	AVANAVAN KADAMBA
1986	Written and Directed a Play.	KOYMA
1987	Directed in Sanskrit.	URUBHANGAM
1987	Written a Play.	MARRATTAM
1987	Presented in Sanskrit for Festival of India, USSR.	KARNABHARAM
1987	Presented in Sanskrit for Festival of India, USSR.	MADHYAMA VYAYOGA
1987	Directed in Hindi for Second Year Student, NSD.	RAJA
1987	Organized the International Theatre Festival on “BHASA”.	
1988	Written a Play.	KINARVATTOM
1988	Written a Play.	KALANEETHEENI
1988	Presented in Sanskrit for Tokyo International Festival.	KARNABHARAM
1988	Presented in Sanskrit for Tokyo International Festival.	BHAGAVADAJJUKAM
1989	Visited Greece with Sopanam for an Indo – Greek	ILIYAYANA

	Project on the two epics Ramayana and Iliad.	
1989	Organized the International Theatre Festival on “BHASA”.	
1990	Written and Directed a Play.	ARANI
1990	Written a Play.	KAKKUTTAPPADU
1990	Written a Play.	AGNIVARNANTE KALUKAL
1991	Written and Directed a Play.	MARUKIDATHY
1991	Written and Directed a Play.	THEYYA THEYYAM
1991	Participated in Carnantum Festival in Austria.	
1992	Written a Play.	FAUST
1993	Written a Play.	CAVALRY
1993	Directed in Sanskrit.	SWAPNA VASAVADATTAM
1994	Directed in Malayalam.	BHISHMAR
1994	Directed in Hindi for Final Year Student, NSD.	SWAPNA KATHA
1994	Organized the International Theatre Festival on “BHASA”.	
1995	Written a Play.	KUNJICHIRAKUKAL
1995	Written and Directed a Play.	PORANADI
1995	Visited China as a Member of Indian Delegation.	
1995	Presented in Sanskrit for Kalidas Samaroh, Ujjain.	VIKRAMORVASHIYAM
1996	Presented in Sanskrit for Festival of India, Bangladesh.	MADHYAMA VYAYOGA
1996	Directed in Sanskrit.	DOOTA VAKYAM
1997	Participated and Presented in Malayalam for the ITI Festival in South Korea.	MAYA
1998	Written a Play.	APPRAKAN
1999	Directed in Sanskrit.	PRATIMA
2000	Translated and Directed in Malayalam.	TEMPEST
2000	Participated in the International Theatre Festival Lamama, Italy.	

2000	Organized the International Theatre Festival on “BHASA”.	
2001	Translated, Directed and Presented in Malayalam for the Alliance Francaise.	Sartre’s - TROJAN WOMEN
2001	Presented in Sanskrit for BRM, New Delhi.	KARNABHARAM
2001	Presented in Sanskrit for BRM, New Delhi.	TEMPEST
2001	Written and Directed a Play.	KALLURUTTY
2001	Presented in Sanskrit for Nandikar Festival Kolkata.	KARNABHARAM
2002	Written and Directed a Play.	KALANETHEENI
2002	Directed in Sanskrit.	CHARUDATTAM
2002	Presented in Sanskrit for BRM, New Delhi.	KALLURUTTY
2002	Presented in Sanskrit for BRM, New Delhi.	PRATIMA
2002	Directed for Nrithalaya Aesthetic Society, Singapore.	VIKRAMORVASHIYAM
2003	Written and Directed a Play.	KALIVESHAM
2004	Directed in Hindi for Final Year Student, NSD.	THEYYA THEYYAM
2005	Translated and Directed in Malayalam.	MAYA
2006	Directed in Sanskrit.	MALVIKAGNIMITRAM
2009	Written and Directed a Play.	ARAMBAN
2010	Directed in Hindi.	UTTAR RAMACHARITAM
2011	Written and Directed a Play.	NIZHALAYANAM
2011	Directed in Malayalam.	CHANDALIKA
2012	Directed in Malayalam.	MUKTA DHARA
2012	Directed in Malayalam.	NATIR PUJA
2013	Retrospective Festival by Natya Kulam, Jaipur.	6 PLAYS
2014	Directed in Hindi for NSD Repertory.	CHHAYA SHAKUNTALAM
2014	Directed in Hindi.	SANGAMANIYAM
2014	Retrospective Festival by Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.	“RANG SOPAN: 2” - 6 PLAYS
2015	Written a Play	PANCH MAHABOOTAM

THE THEATRE OF RASA:

RASA → AVASTHANUKARANAM → AVASTHANUKIRTANAM



PERFORMANCE STRUCTURE:

DRAMATURGICAL STRUCTURE OF ELABORATION



THOURYATHRIKAM:

NRITA (DANCE), GEETA (VOCAL MUSIC) AND VADYA (INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC)

- “Rasa” creates from “Anukirtanam” which is depends upon a “Performance Structure - Dramaturgical Structure of Elaboration”.
- This “Analogy for Rasa”, Panikkar amplifies and transforms in his creative process:

⇒ The “**Macro Text Vs Micro Text**” means -

⇒ “**Dramatic Structure Vs Performance Structure**”,

⇒ “**Narration Vs Action**”,

⇒ “**Event Vs Character**”,

⇒ “**Vachaya Vs Suchya**”,

⇒ “**Sahitya Vs Abhinaya**”; which is a palimpsest meeting of the “Classic” and the “Contemporary” on the grounds of the relation between “Narration and Action” and ultimately transforms in the “Rasa”⁴.

- However, Panikkar uses the ‘Textual Material’ as an occasion to explore the full range of possibilities of ‘Non-Textual’ staging and communicates philosophical meanings through physical devices of enactment, thus both elaborating and reinterpreting the original which ultimately culminates into the “Rasa”. From these observations we can say “The Theatre of Panikkar” is “The Theatre of Rasa”.

MAJOR PRODUCTIONS OF K. N. PANIKKAR⊗ **KARNABHARAM:** (*Images – 11 To 15*)⇒ **SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY:**

- The Sutradhara after his benedictory stanza hears some noise caused by the warrior messenger of the Duryodhana telling Karna of the imminent fight that is approaching. Karna is however ready in his war dress for the dreadful battle and is proceeding to the battle field with Shalya. So the messenger departs. Karna is seen on the battle field of Kurukshetra in a gloomy mood and preparing himself for his fight with Arjuna. He asks Shalya to drive the 'Ratha' to where Arjuna is. But he is held back by the memory of the fact that Pandavas are none, but his younger brothers.
- Just as Karna was to take up his command of the battle, his mother Kunti revealed to him his actual lineage and pleaded with him that he should not kill his own brother Arjuna in the battle. This put Karna in an embarrassing situation, being unable to neither accept nor reject her request.
- As the Shalya moves on he tells Shalya of the trick by which he won his armour from the sage Jamadagnya. He narrates the whole episode which runs as follows: once Karna went to Parasurama, the scion of the 'Bhrigu Rishi', the destroyer of the warrior class. He went to him humbly saluted and stood on one side. He blessed Karna and asked him about who he was and the purpose of his visit. He then expressed his desire to learn the art of war and the use of every kind of weapon. He told him that he would teach only Brahmans and not the Kshatriyas. Parasurama started teaching him in the use of weapons. One day when Karna went with him to fetch some fruits and roots, grass flowers and fuel. While wandering in the forest, Parasurama became exhausted and started taking a nap with his head on Karna's lap. Unfortunetly in insect 'Vajra Mukha' bored through Karna's thighs. But he did not move and bore the pain with fortitude so that the slumber is not disturbed. The warm blood, oozing out from his thighs, woke him up. Parasurama at once

guessed by Karna's endurance that he must be belonging to a Kshatriya and thus furious Parasurama cursed him that "Useless be thy weapons in any time of need".

- Karna the son of Surya was born with luminous earrings and protective armour over his chest. As long as he possessed these, nobody could kill him. Knowing this, Indra the father of Arjuna comes in the guise of a Brahmana and asks for the armour and earrings of Karna as a gift. Karna, famous for his benevolence, willingly part with them. And this leads to his fall. Shalya warns him not to part with them and when Brahmana leaves, he tells Karna that he has been cheated by Indra. Though Karna parts with his safety but not with his generosity.
- Then Karna and Shalya start for the battle and proceed in the chariot. The former hears Arjuna's conch and instructs Shalya to drive his car to where Arjuna is and with this the play ends.

⇒ **INTERPRETATION WITH DIRECTOR'S NOTE⁵:**

- Mahakavi Bhasa portrays in his classic work Karnabharam the downfall of the mighty epic hero Karna, projecting the inner conflict that develops in him when he enters Kurukshetra to wage a crucial battle with the Pandavas. Karna looks back at his past at this late hour of trial and experiences intense agony and remorse that shakes him to the very foundation of his being. Right at the center of the battlefield he fights another battle within himself which assumes different dimensions. His own conscience transforms to the charioteer, Shalya questioning his avowed and declared intention to avenge all in the battle. He musters all strength in holding his courage; but suddenly falls asunder by developing a weakness for his mother. His mother Kunti on the eve of the battle, which he is to fight, reveals to him his unknown identity and appeals to him to rethink and alter his allegiances in the battle. He has only two options open, either to own his mother and negate serving his cause or disown his mother by rejecting all legacies inherited from her and depends solely on his own merits and might. He ponders over the truth at this crucial

moment of his life whether or not it is possible to succeed by cutting off from his natural links.

- In Karna's case providence has it that he is to fall back on his own but there again a strong rebuff from the past overtakes him; the painful experience which he has to encounter from his guru Parasurama. The whole episode which culminates in the curse of the guru is retold by Karna to himself or rather to his charioteer Shalya who helps Karna to recount his experience by assuming the role of the guru and at the same time the inner conscience of Karna himself. The reporting of a past event is thus re-enacted and re-experienced at a critical moment when Karna faces the stark reality that even his own self-earned faculties leave him in the lurch.
- A man endowed with supreme qualities made out of the best elements of nature failing for no fault of his own. When you probe into the reason you may have to land at the primordial sources of a cosmic microcosm which involves an interruption of the very elements which constitute the inner and the outer being of the individual which readily has to respond to inevitable dictates that come from above. Here two major components of ingredients of nature can be located, one owning zealously and the other disowning strongly the poor man who is ultimately the victim of a universal conspiracy of the celestials. Surya the father of Karna and Indra the father of Arjuna represent the basic sources of the conflict, a phenomenon of universal dimension, reflecting and reacting on a single individual, whose destiny is put to a rigorous test, the consequences of which could not be borne by the fragile mortal frame of the man.
- The eternal interaction of the element of nature is continuously resulting in the downfall of man – an endless story in which the indomitable will of man struggles for ultimate liberation.

⇒ **PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE⁶:**

- According to Panikkar, as mentioned in his director note Bhāsa's Karnabharam evidently portrays the experience of danavira – a hero who gives away his life to the enemy to uphold his cherished values. This is the only one way to presenting the theme of the play. There are many other dimensions to the myth which the text itself suggests. Bhāsa

himself has re-created the Mahabharata myth on Karna and given it an interpretative twist to make a remarkable play of it. While doing the stage version, Karna's character could be conceived as that of a tragic hero in the Aristotelian sense of the term. This, of course, is a comprehension contrary to the established conventions. But from the clues available in the text itself, it could be imagined that Karna is made to suffer because of the spite between the celestials, Indra and Surya, Indra plotting for the downfall of Karna in order that his son Arjuna wins the battle and Surya blessing his son Karna to stand the mortal test such a scene is not present in the text, but the presence of Surya is felt in the context. Such embellishments in a stage version never cut across the message of the myth. They only add to its inner strength. In the gift-giving scene Karna offers many riches to Indra, his arch-enemy appearing in the guise of a Brahman. Karna knows well that Indra will not be satisfied with any gift other than his armour and earrings which are the repository of his life itself. The problem here is to conceive a convincing situation in which Karna's inner conflict gains such intensity that he makes the great gift. In spite of Salya's warning about the inimical design of Indra, Karna decides to opt for his self-destruction. This abnormal behavior, even in the name of justifying the demeanor of a hero of the dana-vir variety, cannot easily evoke convinced reactions in a contemporary mind. Knowing fully well that the myth belongs to a totally different age having a different approach to mortal values, the director will realize that in the theatre of today the presentation of the play should assume the make-believe quality. The mythical vitality alone can provide the tool to overcome the time-bound obsessions.

- In the beginning we find the mighty warrior entering the battlefield with Salya as his charioteer to wage the crucial battle with the Pandavas. Here the use of Kalaripayattu is seen. The movement of the soldier fighting is the example of use of Kalaripayattu. Even at the beginning when two sutradhar explaining about the play the hand gesture used is from Natyashastra. He looks back at his past and experiences intense agony and remorse. He musters all his strength and tries his arrow; but fails miserably. He realizes that this was due to his mother Kunti who, on the eve of the battle, revealed to him his unknown identity and appealed to him to rethink and alter his allegiance in the battle. He has only two options open; either to own his mother and give up serving his cause or disown his mother by rejecting all legacies inherited from her and depend solely on his merit and

might. He ponders over the truth at this crucial moment of his life, whether or not it is possible to succeed by cutting oneself off from one's natural links. In Karna's case providence has it that he is to fall back on his own; but there again a strong rebuff from the past overtakes him, the painful experience which he had to encounter from his guru, Parsurama. A man endowed with supreme qualities, made out of the best elements of nature, is failing for no fault of his own. When you probe the reason, you may have to land at the primordial sources of a cosmic human microcosm which involves an interruption of the very elements which constitute the inner and outer being of an individual, which has to respond readily to the inevitable dictates that come from above. Here, two major components of the ingredients of nature can be located, one owning zealously and the other disowning strongly the poor man who is ultimately the victim of a universal conspiracy of the celestials, the consequences of which could not be borne by the man's fragile mortal frame. The eternal interaction of the elements of nature is continuously resulting in the downfall of man – an endless story in which the indomitable will of man struggles for ultimate liberation. The 'Chari' of Kathakali used by Panikkar for the entry exit of the character in the play which gave an additional advantage to the actor. Even music in the play is sopansangeet and the Shivananjini raag used in the play. At the end of the play when Karna gave gift of his armor and earrings to Indra, here he used a Tribal ritual to make the scene more appealing.

- While directing Karanabharam Panikkar explains "I wanted the main actor, Kaladharan, to bring out the strength of the whole gift-giving situation with a clear understanding of the philosophy which the character was to represent. The build-up of the ascending emotion could be made possible and convincing only if Karna gets possessed in the end. The actor did not get his point in the beginning. He was a little reluctant to get possessed. But he was slowly drawn into a ritualistic mood while experimenting with the visual possibilities and when he once experienced the possessed state he started believing there could be no better way. A possessed dance may not seemingly have any bearing on a dramatic situation like the one in which Karna makes a gift of his armor and earrings to Indra. But in the circumstances in which Karna is caught up, this cannot be communicated through normal behaviour on the actor's part. Offering one's life as a gift

demands quite an abnormal demeanour for the actor, which he has to invoke from the unknown realm within him.

- A man endowed with supreme qualities made out of the best elements of nature failing for no fault of his own. When you probe into the reason you may have to land at the primordial sources of a cosmic microcosm which involves an interruption of the very elements which constitute the inner and the outer being of the individual which readily has to respond to inevitable dictates that come from above. Surya the father of Karna and Indra the father of Arjuna represent the basic sources of the conflict, a phenomenon of universal dimension, reflecting and directing on a single individual, whose destiny is put to a rigorous test, the consequences of which could not be borne by the fragile mortal frame of the man.

✧ CONCLUSION:

- “शल्यराज! यत्रासावर्जुनस्तत्रैव चोद्यतां मम रथः ॥” This sentence is present in the beginning, the middle and also in the end. That’s why it never ends with a Bharatvakya or anything like that. So some scholars believed that this was an unfinished work, which Panikkar don’t believe. The play itself stands unique in its structure.
- Another point relevant to this study is the director’s interpretation of the life of the hero. Panikkar penetrates into the mind of his hero and finds out that he was a victim of a universal conspiracy of the celestial. However, Karna was at the receiving end in all these cases. None helped him nor understood his nobility. This interpretation instills new life to Karna. One leaves the hall believing that honor lies not in victory; defeat to be great, perhaps more rewarding.
- In true sense, Panikkar portrays in ‘Karnabharam’ the downfall of the mighty epic hero Karna, projecting the “**Inner Conflict**” that develops in him when he enters Kuruksetra to wage a crucial battle with the Pandavas. Production gives us a very vivid picture of the inner experience of the character, Panikkar recreates the theme giving stress not only to the moral problem involved in the making up of his character but the whole conflicting experiences that he encounters in the battlefield and his reactions to them.

- In Panikkar's production, the first was the detailed analysis of Karna's experience with Kunti, second with Parasurama and the third was his detailed celebration of charity with Indra in the role of Brahmana. The whole play in a sense is a retrospective narration. Means Karna talks to himself, which is "Vicharabhinaya". Kavalam transforms the inner self of Karna to concrete "Visual Images" and gives the inimitable **"Theatre Language through Visual Poetry"**; therefore epic theme assumes a new dimension. Even Shalyaraja is one such externalization. The three incidents, though different in details, have a common thread — the thought process of a disturbed mind. That process is presented on stage through a series of vocal, gestural and corporal visual signs. So, we can say that 'Karnabharam' is a **"Celebration of Thoughts / Ideas"**⁷.
- In the theatre space thus created, the 'Performane Text' opens a drama which is theatrically vibrant, visually brilliant and interpretatively original. A micro situation in the epic, which is a macro text although intrinsically and thematically pregnant with emotion, is projected as if through a microscope. In this aspect "Karnabharam" develops into "Karnabharatam" or a Bharata of Bhasa's creation with Karna as the central figure.

⊗ **ABHIJNANA SHAKUNTALA:** (*Images – 16 To 20*)

⇒ **SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY:**

- The original play is in seven acts. The present production is an abridged one and intended to bring out the subtext depicting the love theme between Dushyanta king of Hastinapura and Shakuntala. The scene of the four acts takes place in sage Kanva's hermitage at the foot of Himalaya. Later the scene shifts to Dushyanta's palace.
- In the first act King Dushyanta is in the forest with his retinue engaged in the royal hunt. While he is about to shoot his arrow at a deer, he is interrupted by an ascetic who informs that the animal belongs to the 'Ashrama' of 'Kulapati Kanva'. In the 'Ashrama' he comes across three girls watering the flowering plants: At the first sight itself the king falls in love with one of them, who is Shakuntala the adopted daughter of Kanva. The king out of

extreme love for Shakuntala determines to encamp there and engage in his love pursuits. Shakuntala also is struck by the grace and charm of the new visitor.

- In the second act the king is introduced in a love-sick condition with his bosom friend Madhavya the Vidushaka. In the ensuing scene we find both the hero and heroine affected by the malady of love.
- The 3rd Act ends with the union of the lovers in the traditional Gandharva marriage and the king adorns her with a signet ring where his identity is marked. While Shakuntala is alone in the hermitage, brooding over the thoughts about her lover, she fails to offer proper hospitality to sage Durvasa who visits the hermitage as a guest. The hot tempered sage curses her that she would be forgotten by the person whom she contemplates. Her friends Anasuya and Priyamvada plead Shakuntala's absent-mindedness. Then the sage forgives by saying that the curse would cease to have effect on the production of some token of recognition.
- In act-4 Kanva approves the Gandharva marriage and sends her to her husband with Gautami and two of his disciples. The whole scene depicting the departure from the hermitage is touchingly portrayed in the 4th act.
- In the act – 5 at the royal palace the king cruelly denies all knowledge about his relationship with Shakuntala. Shakuntala fails to arouse the king's memory. As a last resort she wants to show him the signet ring which was given to her at the time of parting; but unfortunately it had slipped off from her finger during the journey. Finally she is driven out of the court.
- In the concluding scene we find how the lost ring was regained and how the king's memory was recollected. The play ends with a happy note of reunion.

⇒ INTERPRETATION WITH DIRECTOR'S NOTE⁸:

- The first textual reference “मृगयाविहारीपार्थिवोदुष्यन्तः! Mrgaya Vihari Parthivo **Dushyantah**” clearly indicates the king's disposition and the reaction of his subjects on his hunt at different stages. The second passage appearing at the end of the text “Prakrti hitaya parthiva” also is coupled with this to bring out an interpretative meaning for the production. “प्रकृतिहिताय **Prakrti Hitay**” is “प्रजाहिताय **Praja Hitay**”, (welfare of the people) to which the king is abounding by duty. It is evident from the text that Dushyanta's hunt which started with a hunt for the animal, had ultimately culminated in the hunt of the poor girl Shakuntala. Shakuntala is also another deer of the forest; the textual words lead you to the contextual acting by which Shakuntala represents nothing but nature. This too is amply indicated in the text by Kalidasa where Shakuntala is linked and seen as a fresh flower, as an innocent deer etc, clearly suggesting that Shakuntala is not only a hermitage girl but nature in its most exuberant and pure form.
- Another point to be noted is that there is an interaction between the group and the individual – the king and the people at large - one complimentary to the other, both moving in a causal chain, both coming at cross and both compromising each other. Dushyanta feels that he has no bounds while he dabbles in his own fancies in the sacred precincts of the hermitage. So the note of caution from the people was not cared by him. Slowly by the end of the 3rd act, he responds to the sentiment of the group; but by then he is head and soul deep in his commitment. We find that the same people instead of her mother the heavenly character Menaka, have given refuge to her when she was thrown out by her lover.
- In the final scene of reunion, the same people kindle the king's memory by handing over the signet ring to him.
- The limit of one's own rights irrespective of whether one is the ruler or the ruled has to be prescribed by some super imposed sanction, lest the social equilibrium would be disturbed. Whichever age we belong to, the problem repeats in different contemporary dimensions.

⇒ **CONCLUSION:**

- Accordingly Panikkar, “That means nothing other than the imperative need for diligent observance of duty and responsibility on the part of every one, not to speak of the ruler alone. The limit of one’s own rights irrespective of whether one is the ruler or the ruled has to be prescribed by some superimposed sanction, lest the social equilibrium would be disturbed. Whichever age we belong to the problem repeats in different contemporary dimensions”.
- Panikkar has used the great text with a view to project this thought for which the later portion of the story was not essential. The incidents happening in the play after the sixth act were out of the purview of Panikkar’s scheme of interpretation and hence deleted. Taking only the reunion of the lovers as the denonment, taking shape as a natural and logical evolution of the thought process.

⊗ **THEYYA THEYYAM:** (*Images – 21 To 25*)

⇒ **SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY:**

- ‘Theyyam’ can be roughly translated as the re-incarnation of a dead soul. Sometimes dead war heroes are raised to the status of ‘Theyyam’. ‘Theyya Theyyam’ is thus a double re-incarnation of a dead man’s soul and a dead hero. ‘Theyyam’, a ritualistic art performed in North Malabar on festive occasions, usually represents the dead hero, who is raised to the sublime level of God in the minds of village folk.
- The play ‘Theyya Theyyam’ being performed here is the story of a villager ‘Ramunni’ who regularly used to cast himself as Theyyam in the village festival, as it was his family right. He appeared as “Paranki Chamundi” every year without fail, for which the folk admired him profusely.
- The performance here begins with a flashback which presents the story behind “Paranki Chamundi”. The villagers have a version of Ramayana for themselves – in which Rama is Daivathar, Sita, is Poonkanni, Lakshmana is Angakkaran, Hanuman is Beppuran and Ravana is the pirate Paranki.

- The people of the village are terribly afraid of Paranki who arrives on a sailship. In their version of Ramayana Paranki is attracted by the beauty of Poonkanni, wife of Daivathar and abducts her. Realizing that his strength is in the magic belt tied around his hip, Beppuran snatches the belt and kills Paranki when he is asleep. Thus put to death, Paranki is raised as the Theyyam ‘Paranki Chamundi’ by the people.
- Ramunni, who used to perform the Theyyam in the village, also has a past similar to the story of Ramayana. He is the subject of a landlord named Mekkamthala. When Mekkamthala is about to molest Kannipoo, the daughter of a respectable man named Salguni, Ramunni foils the attempt and kills Mekkamthala.
- That night, Ramunni flees the village with Kannipoo. This sets the police after Ramunni, who is missing, but his mother is confident that he would return to the village on the day of Theyyam, wherever he is. As anticipated, Ramunni returns on the day and performs the Theyyam, as his vow is. Salguni and his people recognize him and beat him to death when he performs the Theyyam. This makes Ramunni the Theyyam of a Theyyam – “THEYYA THEYYAM”.

➔ **INTERPRETATION WITH DIRECTOR’S NOTE⁹:**

- The re-creation and re-enactment of the epic theme of Ramayana in the creative mind of the rustic provide one stream of the plot.
- Ramunni usually performs the main role in the ritualistic village version of Ramayana, - that of Paranki (Ravana). Paranki means the outsider. Parallel to the epic stream there is another flow of the plot – the story of the human beings who transform into the characters in the play. There are instances when the two distinct streams join and then again flow apart.
- The process of transformation and the reversal are significant dynamics lying latent in the play and this is justified in the play by using the acting area with the territorial division as imagined in the Natyasastra concept of ‘Mattavarini’.
- ‘Mattavarini is the geographical area where the process of transformation takes place. Probably the wings of the stage may be the extreme point where the actor transforms into character as it is the area where he encounters the audience.

- But the transformation mechanism happens and should happen in the mind of the actor and that should have happened much earlier than his appearance in the visual range of the audience.
- The mental process of the actor evolves into the realm of the character at several stages and the transformation is not limited to any specific spot; or rather it can happen anywhere in the acting area during the interaction with the audience.
- Sometimes it is contemplated through a series of acting techniques. Sometimes it suddenly sprouts when an actor gets enthused by certain specific motivation. In the production the exact interaction between the reality in an actor and his otherness are worked out to interpret the structural specialties of the play.

❖ **NOTION OF THE TRANSFORMATION IN “THEYYA THEYYAM”:**

- The play does not unfold chronologically. The villagers’ story and the Ramayana story are woven together textually, achieved in performance through the use of chorus. No character exists discretely. They all, both are antagonists and protagonists, emerge from and return to the chorus. Simple acts such as putting on a head-dress, an item of costume, picking up a sickle, or staring in a hand mirror, all achieve the transformation from the choral text to character. Character identities are transient and fleeting, for as the narrative moves on, the performers must move from one plot to the next and also take part in the chorus.
- Accordingly “Brian Singleton”, Irony is dramatized by the transforming ability of performer to the role and this forms the very crux of the play. The villager first transforms by acts of penance into performer, and then from performer, by learning the dance tradition, transforms into character A “Ramunni”. The performer next transforms into character B “Paranki Chamundi” (The Deified Paranki) and still furthers into character A (The Deification of Ramunni). And so the author, Panikkar, takes the mirroring of the two roles and reflects them into infinity. The essence of this modern theatre is the dramatization of the impossibility of totally separating performer from the role.

- This is also taken one step further by highlighting the lack of boundaries between spectator and performer. Although spectators are not invited to perform, the performance of “Theyya Theyyam” can take place even if the divisions between spectators and performers are all their loosest. In an open space, with the performers on the same level as the audience. The actors can emerge from anywhere to perform. As well as breaking down barriers it does much to suggest that theatre takes place in life.
- The stage has an important role to play in the act of transformation. This vital act of transformation in the modern theatre is an allegory of the regional and religious value system. The religious belief represented through theatrical allegory not only resists urbanizing and westernizing rationality, but also any met theatrical self-consciousness on the part of the spectator. Resistance, therefore, becomes theatrical as well as social, religious, and non-rational.

CREATIVE USE OF KERALA’S MAJOR PERFORMATIVE ART FORMS IN PANIKKAR’S THEATRE

- Panikkar spent his childhood in Kavalam where he was exposed to various performing traditions of Kerla like Kuttiyattam, Kathakali, Mohiniattam, Kalaripayattu, Theyyam and Mudiyaattu etc. From young age he started absorbing the pleasure and spirit of these arts so much so that they almost became part of his being. We have seen that the impact of traditional songs and forms are engrossed right from the childhood due to this he made so many classics of Bhāsa. Urubhangam, Karnabharam and Madhyamvyayog etc. Different aspect of his production where he used traditional elements and gave a new dimension to his production.

⊗ **KUTIYATTAM - THE TRADITIONAL SANSKRIT THEATRE OF KERALA:**

(Images – 26 To 28)

- Kutiyattam is the traditional presentation of classical Sanskrit theatre on the Kerala stage. It is one of the oldest continuously performed theatre forms in India, and it may be the oldest surviving art form of the ancient world. Although the precise links between it and the ancient Sanskrit theatre have not yet been determined, Kutiyattam is probably a regional derivation of the pan-Indian classical tradition, a bridge between the past and present.

⇒ **PERFORMANCE STYLE:**

- Performance styles of the temple art form called Kuttu, there are 3 types of Kuttu:
 - (1) Prabandha Kuttu – Its gives emphasis to the verbal (vachika) mode of presentation. Here, Sanskrit narrative poems (prabandhas) are taken up and interpreted in detail, using a simple yet metaphorical language imbued with humour, satire and double meaning, and interspersed with reference to topical events. In this, the Cakyar narrates the story, while the Nambiar plays on the mizhavu.
 - (2) Nangiyar Kuttu – Its lays stress upon histrionic acting (angikabhinaya). Adapted from the introductory scene of Subhadradhananjaya, this art form present the story of Krishna in the form of Nirvahanam enacted by the Nangiyar as a female attendant of Subhadra. There is no place for humour; the Nangiar acts and the Nambiar plays on the mizhavu.
 - (3) Kutiyattam – Kutiyattam is a combination of two Malayalam words: Kuti - to join and attam – acting. It signifies the process of joining with others in acting. In the initial days of performance acting is devoted to ‘Nirvahana’ – retrospection. It is solo acting (ekaharya). The text is presented only after the principle characters have completed mono acting. Kutiyattam as an art form gives scope for combined acting by several characters in the play. Hence, the term Kutiyattam originally denoted this multiple acting (anekaharya). In Kutiyattam, while the hero and the heroine primarily employ angika and sattvika abhinaya the Vidushaka resorts to vachika, which is conveyed through prose, verse, music, Vidushaka’s Tamil, Prakrit and Malayalam. Thus it is an integration of several modes of acting, forms of drama and types of actors.

⇒ **TEMPLE THEATRE - KUTTAMPALAM:**

- Kutiyattam is performed only in temple theatre – “Kuttampalam” till recently. Kuttampalam is the Malayalam name used for the theatre structure in the precincts of temples in Kerala.

⇒ **PANCAVADYA - INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC:**

- There are five main items in the instrumental orchestra for the Kutiyattam. They are referred to as Pancavadya:
 - (1) Mizhavu
 - (2) Talakkootam / Kuzhittala (a pair of small cymbals)
 - (3) Idakka
 - (4) Kuzhal (pipe)
 - (5) Sankha (conch-shell)

⇒ **PERFORMANCE¹⁰:**

- In Kutiyattam, the ‘Performance Structure’ lays stress on the –
 - **Introduction of characters.**
 - **Elaboration of the details of the story / text.**
 - **An actor’s individual performance rather than an ensemble playing.**
- It means, the Kutiyattam ‘Performance’ –
 - **Departs radically (De-emphasizes) from the story / text of the drama.**
 - **De-emphasizes the notion of the drama as a total, integrated, artistic unit.**
- The Kutiyattam performance-enactment of Sanskrit drama is an elaborated ritualistic affair involving following aspects:
 - (1) Purvaranga - The preliminaries rites:
 - Talayilkettuka - Offstage ceremonial preparation
 - Aranguvitanam – the decoration of the stage
 - Purappadu – first entry of the Sutradhara / important character

When purvaranga is over. It is customary to preface the dramatics performance by a ‘flash-back’ method of narration of the previous story. It has three parts.

- (2) Anukarma – denotes the narration of a story backwards in the form of a series of questions, from the time of the entry of the character
 - (3) Samksepa – very beginning of the whole episode and beginning at the very beginning, a previous story is briefly mentioned
 - (4) Nirvahana – recapitulation of the past incidents
 - (5) Kutiyattam – proper presentation / performance of the dramatic text
 - (6) Mutiyakkitta – concluding ceremony / rituals
- These stage manuals are the...
 - Kramadipika – Production Manual:
 - Attaprakaram – Acting Manual:
 - The actors themselves act the verbal portion as in the text in prescribed ragas. The actor explains every verse elaborately. He enacts it in four ways:
 - (1) Recites the verse with handgestures
 - (2) Enacts it without recitation
 - (3) Narrates the meaning in prose order
 - (4) Elaborates the meaning and significance of the verse
 - While describing, the actor can depart from the text and explain things according to his imagination – ‘manodharma’.

⊗ **KATHAKALI – CLASSICAL DANCE OF KERALA:** (*Images – 29 To 31*)

- Kathakali is one of the oldest theatre forms in the world. It originated in the area of southwestern India now known as the state of Kerala. Kathakali is a group presentation, in which dancers take various roles in performances traditionally based on themes from Hindu mythology, especially the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.¹³

⇒ **ATTAKATHA AND ACTING / ABHINAYA:**

- Kathakali is a blend of dance, music and acting and dramatizes stories, which are mostly adapted from the Indian epics. It is a stylised art form, the four aspects of abhinaya - angika, aharya, vachika, satvika and the nritya, nritya and natya aspects are combined perfectly. The dancer expresses himself through codified hastamudras and facial expressions, closely following the verses(padams) that are sung. Kathakali derives its textual sanction from Balarama Bharatam and Hastalakshana Deepika.
- The attakkathas or stories are selected from the epics and myths and are written in a highly Sanskritised verse form in Malayalam. Many Malayalam writers have also contributed to the vast repertoire of Kathakali literature.
- Kathakali is a visual art where aharya, costume and make-up are suited to the characters, as per the tenets laid down in the Natya Shastra. The characters are grouped under certain clearly defined types like the Pacha, Kathi, Thadi, Kari or Minukku. The face of the artist is painted over to appear as though a mask is worn. The lips, the eyelashes and the eyebrows are made to look prominent. A mixture of rice paste and lime is applied to make the chutti on the face which highlights the facial make-up.
- One of the most interesting aspects of Kathakali is its elaborate make-up code. Characters are categorized according to their nature. This determines the colours used in the make-up. The faces of noble male characters, such as virtuous kings, the divine hero Rama, etc., are predominantly green. Characters of high birth who have an evil streak, such as the demon king Ravana, are allotted a similar green make-up, slashed with red marks on the cheeks. Extremely angry or excessively evil characters wear predominantly red make-up and a flowing red beard. Forest dwellers such as hunters are represented with a predominantly black make-up base. Women and ascetics have lustrous, yellowish faces.
- The kathi type depict anti-heroes. Though they are of the rajasika category, they are sometimes great warriors and scholars such as Ravana, Kamsa and Sisupala to name a few. The moustache and the small knob called chuttippu fixed on "the tip of the nose and another in the centre of the forehead, is peculiar to the kathi character. The characters of the thadi (beard) category are the chuvanna thadi, (red beard), vellathadi (white beard) and the karutha thadi (black beard). Vellathadi or the white bearded character is generally

that of Hanuman, the dancer also wears the costume of a monkey. Kari are characters whose make-up have a black base, they wear black costume depicting a hunter or forest dweller. Apart from these, there are minor characters like minukku which are the women and sages. Kathakali costumes and make-up are elaborate and designed so as to give a super human effect. The make-up of Kathakali can be classified into the teppu, chuttikuthu and uduthukettu. The teppud done by the actor himself. Each character has a distinct teppu. The second stage is done by experts who specialise in make-up. The wearing of huge bellowing skirts is called uduthukettu.

- Kathakali dance is chiefly interpretative. The characters in a Kathakali performance are broadly divided into satvika, rajasika and tamasika types. Satvika characters are noble, heroic, generous and refined. In pacha, green colour dominates and kirita (headgear) is worn by all. Krishna and Rama wear special crowns decorated with peacock feathers. The noble characters like Indra, Arjun and the Devas are some of the pacha characters.
- The technique of Kathakali includes a highly developed language of gesture, through which the artist can convey whole sentences and stories. The body movements and footwork are very rigourous. To attain the high degree of flexibility and muscle control required for this art, a Kathakali dancer undergoes a strenuous course of training, and special periods of body massage.
- The dancers wear large head dresses, and the contours of the face are extended with moulded lime. The extraordinary costumes and make-up serve to raise the participants above the level of mere mortals, so that they may transport the audience to a world of wonders.
- In no other dance style is the entire body used so completely as in Kathakali. The technical details cover every part of the body from facial muscles to fingers, eyes, hands and wrists. The facial muscles play an important part. The movement of the eyebrows, the eye-balls and the lower eye-lids as described in the Natya Shastra are not used to such an extent in any other dance style. The weight of the body is on the outer edges of the feet which are slightly bent and curved.
- The orchestra of a Kathakali performance includes two drums known as the chenda and the maddalam, along with cymbals and another percussion instrument, the ela taalam. Normally, two singers provide the vocal accompaniment. The style of singing particular

to Kathakali is called Sopaanam. The orchestra of a Kathakali troupe is unique and provides not only the background to the dancing, but also serves as a highly expressive special effects team. In the traditional village ambiance, the percussionists also provide publicity for the event by playing outside the venue for some hours before the start of the show.

⇒ **PERFORMANCE PATTERN:**

- A traditional Kathakali performance begins in the evening and continues throughout the night, culminating at the auspicious hour of dawn, when Good finally conquers Evil. A simple stage is used. A large oil-fed lamp is placed in front of the stage and two people hold a curtain called Tirasseela on the stage, the main dancers stand behind it before the performance. Kalasams are pure dance sequences where the actor is at great liberty to express himself and display his skills. The leaps, quick turns, jumps and the rhythmic co-ordination make kalasams, a joy to watch.
- A Kathakali performance begins with the kelikottu, calling the audience to attention followed by the todayam. It is a devotional number performed where one or two characters invoke the blessings of the gods. Kelikottu is the formal announcement of the performance done in the evening when drums and cymbals are played for a while in the courtyard. A pure nritta piece known as the purappadu comes as a sequel to this. Then the musicians and drummers hold the stage entertaining the audience with an exhibition of their skills in melappada. Tiranokku is the debut on the stage of all characters other than the pacha or minukku. Thereafter, the play or the particular scene of the chosen play begins.
- Ilakiattam is that part of the performance when the characters get an opportunity to demonstrate their excellence in abhinaya. For the most part of the performance the dancers engage themselves in chodiattam which means acting in strict conformity to the words in the padams sung by the accompanying musicians.
- Today, however, it has been modified for the proscenium stage, and urban audiences can participate in this ritualistic theatre experience in the comfort of a plush auditorium, within the span of a couple of hours.

⊗ **TEYYAM - THE RITUAL TRADITION OF KERALA:** (*Images – 32 To 34*)

⇒ **INTRODUCTION:**

- Teyyam - unique “Ritual Tradition” of worshipping gods, goddesses, dead ancestors, deceased heroes, victimized personalities, terrific animals and serpents, devils etc is based on a rather simple concept, that after suitable propitiatory rituals a god or goddess belonging to a pantheon of hundreds of deities becomes temporally manifest in the body of an empowered man, thereby elevating him to a divine status.
- Teyyam can be described as a “form of worship consisting of a special combination of symbols, rituals and art-forms, particularly dance, through which the ghosts, good and evil spirits, in the manifestation of sub human, animate beings, ancestor spirits of legendary figures of great valour, extraordinary powers, and endowments and gods and goddesses. Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu are appeased and honoured.
- Teyyam is believed to be corrupt form of a Sankrit word Daivam, which means God/goddess. Worship of Teyyam can be considered one of the earliest forms of worshipping village gods in Malabar. The northern part of Kerala, in the present Kasargod district is the region where the age-old culture of Teyyam still prevails. In southern parts of Kannur district also Teyyam is known as Tira, even now appears as annual ritualistic festival.

⇒ **PERFORMANCE SPACE:**

- The divine dance Teyyam is performed normally at regular intervals. It may either be performed every year, or once in two, three or five years. Such regular performance is called kaliyattam. Such kaliyattams are conducted in houses, Tarawads (ancestral houses), Kavu, Mundy shrines and other places, in exceptional cases more than one festival are conducted in a year. The regular Teyyam festivals conducted in shrines and Kavus are also called Padittaram. Sometimes it will be performed once in several years and conducts in a large scale such festivals are called perumkaliyattam.

⇒ PERFORMANCE STRUCTURE:

- In the performance of all Teyyam / Teyyattam the structure is sequential. Gestures, movements, and paraphernalia are displayed in a prescribed order, the proper sequence often being more important to the festival aesthetic and to its power than how the sequences are technically carried out. Although variations in performance structure exist, teyyam are organized around a basic seven-part sequence¹¹:

1. **Commencement of the rituals of teyyattam.**
2. **Invocation of the deity.**
3. **Recitation of the deity's story.**
4. **Possession of the performer by the deity who then dances.**
5. **Recitation of additional stories.**
6. **Giving blessings.**
7. **Removal of the crown culminating the ritual performance.**

⇒ TRADITIONAL PERFORMER:

- Malayan, Vannan, Velan, Koppalan, Mavilan, Pulayan, Paravan, Pampathan, Chinkathan are the main communities who perform Teyyam.

⇒ AHARYA:**→ COSTUME:**

- Male deities especially the hero character's costumes are almost similar. But differences in the costumes between Viran (hereoes) are the Karanavan Teyyam is conspicuous. All the forms of Camundi Teyyam, female deities wear arch shaped Pora tatttu which is made of wood with elaborate decoration using peacock feathers and well-crafted tender tassels on the outer edges. The inner side is visually more prominent with the red doth spread over the wooden frame or painted on the wood carrying highly decorative designs of moon and flower made of metal or other materials.
- Molar is a wooden frame which makes the breast and abdomen suggesting the Teyyam is Camundi, a female deity. The costumes consist of several attachments made of starched

and plaited cloth. Vilumban forms the bottom; adukku made on a wooden frame with decorations is worn around the hip. A metal ring (odiyanam) also forms part of the costume which is fitted around the waist just above adukku. Cekki flowers or woolen thread is strung around the waist. The Teyyams wearing the above mentioned costumes (Aracamayam) will be fixed with two tails on the two sides on the back. A few Teyyams (especially Virans) do wear Koitam on their back, which is a special piece of wood covered with woolen cloth and decorative papers such as aluminum foil.

→ **MAKE-UP:**

- The process of making up the face of Teyyam is called Mukhathezhuthu. Generally colours like orange, red, yellow and black are used for face painting. Green colour is also used rarely for a few deities. The face painting starts with smearing Manayola (Orange) as a light shade on the face; different designs and patterns, sometimes lines, are drawn on the border using Red and Black colours on the orange. Red is called Cayillium and the black Mashi.

⊗ **KALARIPAYATTU – MARTIAL ART FORM OF KERALA:** (*Images – 35 To 37*)

- Kalaripayattu (pronounced as Kalarippayatt) is a martial art, which originated as a style in Kerala, southern India (North Malabar). The word kalari first appears in the Tamil Sangam literature (c. 300 BCE to 300 CE) to describe both a battlefield and combat arena. The word kalari tatt denoted a martial feat, while kalari kozhai meant a coward in war. It was originally practiced in northern and central parts of Kerala and southern parts of Tamil Nadu. The practice of Kalaripayattu is said to originate from the Dhanur Vedic texts encompassing all fighting arts and described by the Vishnu Purana as one of the eighteen traditional branches of knowledge. Kalaris are the schools where training in this martial art form is imparted by Gurukals or masters.

⇒ **STYLE:**

- This martial art form is indigenous to the Southern Indian state of Kerala which, legend has it, was created by the warrior saint Parasurama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, by

throwing his axe into the sea which receded till the point where it fell. Parasurama then established forty-two Kalaris and taught twenty-one masters of these Kalaris to protect the land he created.

- Kalaripayattu has three variants, which are distinguished by their attacking and defensive patterns. Chekavar warrior section within Thiyya community are forefathers of kalari. They are¹⁴ ---

1. Arappa kayy

2. Pilla Thangi

3. Vatta thiripp

⇒ **MARMASHASTRAM:**

- It is claimed that learned warriors can disable or kill their opponents by merely touching the correct marmam (vital point). This is taught only to the most promising and level-headed persons, to discourage misuse of the technique. Marmashastram stresses on the knowledge of marmam and is also used for marma treatment (marmachikitsa). This system of marma treatment comes under siddha vaidhyam, attributed to the sage Agastya and his disciples. Critics of kalaripayattu have pointed out that the application of marmam techniques against neutral outsiders has not always produced verifiable results.
- The earliest mention of marmam is found in the Rig Veda, where Indra is said to have defeated Vritra by attacking his marman with a vajra. References to marman also found in the Atharva Veda. With numerous other scattered references to vital points in Vedic and epic sources, it is certain that India's early martial artists knew about and practiced attacking or defending vital points. Sushruta (c. 6th century BC) identified and defined 107 vital points of the human body in his Sushruta Samhita. Of these 107 points, 64 were classified as being lethal if properly struck with a fist or stick. Sushruta's work formed the basis of the medical discipline ayurveda, which was taught alongside various Indian martial arts that had an emphasis on vital points, such as varma kalai and marma adi.
- As a result of learning about the human body, Indian martial artists became knowledgeable in the field of traditional medicine and massage. Kalaripayattu teachers often provide massages (uzhichil) with medicinal oils to their students in order to

increase their physical flexibility or to treat muscle injuries encountered during practice. Such massages are generally termed thirumal and the unique massage given to increase flexibility is known as katcha thirumal. It is said to be as sophisticated as the uzichil treatment of ayurveda. Kalaripayattu has borrowed extensively from Ayurveda and equally lends to it.

⇒ **TECHNIQUES:**

- Kalaripayattu techniques are a combination of steps (Chuvatu) and postures (Vadivu). Chuvatu literally means 'steps', the basic steps of the martial arts. Vadivu literally means 'postures' or stances are the basic characteristics of Kalaripayattu training. Named after animals, they are usually eight in number. Styles differ considerably from one tradition to another. Not only do the names of poses differ, the masters also differ about application and interpretation. Each stance has its own style, power combination, function and effectiveness. These techniques vary from one style to another.
- Kalaripayattu is a traditional psycho-physiological discipline emanating from Kerala's unique mytho-historical heritage as well as a scientific system of physical culture training. The historical antecedents of this martial art form combines indigenous Dravidian systems of martial practice such as 'varma ati' or 'marma adi' with an influence of Aryan Brahman culture which migrated southwards down the west coast of India into Kerala. There are two distinct traditions in Kalaripayattu-the Northern and the Southern schools.
- In the Northern tradition the emphasis is laid on progressing from body exercises to combat with weapons and last of all unarmed combat. In the Southern tradition the patron saint of Kalaripayattu is the sage Agastya whose strength and powers of meditation are legendary. It is said that when the Lord Shiva married the Goddess Parvati at Kailasa in the North, all gods and goddesses went to attend the wedding and with this shift in weight the world tilted, so much so, that Agastya was sent to the South to restore the balance.
- Lord Rama, legend has it, was mentored by Agastya to acquire the weapons, which defeated the demon king Ravana. In the southern tradition the emphasis is primarily on footwork, movement and the ability to strike at vital points or 'marmas' in the opponents body of which 108 points are considered lethally vulnerable.

“THOURYATHRIKAM”¹²**THEATRICAL LANGUAGE OF PANIKKAR’S THEATRE**

- Shri Panikkar's creations, though experimental and non-conformist feature using non-realistic tools, have themes in close proximity to real life, its anxieties, struggles and confusion. This gives a durable nature and makes them suitable for Lokdharmi / Natyadharmi treatment. Another salient feature of his plays is the absence of exhaustive use of language as a medium of communication. Instead, the "Bhava" or expression is utilized as a powerful vehicle to provide ample space for improvisation as well as interpretation. All the plays are part of the author's experiments to develop the structural patterns and explore its possibilities in the Indian context.

☆ LOKA-DHARMI AND NATYA-DHARMI:

- According to established conventions of Indian theatre, “Loka-Dharmi” and “Natyadharmi” are the two distinct techniques of acting as figured in “Natyasastra” and its practices followed in “Traditional Theatre”.
- According to Panikkar –

⊗ LOKA-DHARMI:

- “Loka-Dharmi” has its direct bearing on “Laukik - Worldly Life”. ‘Loka-Dharmi’ is different from ‘Laukik’ as real is different from realism; the “Ism” makes a lot of difference, yet it cannot express the full meaning of “Dharma”. That which is the ‘Dharma’ of ‘Laukik’ means ‘Loka-Dharmi’.
- “Loka-Dharmi” is the representation of the real and natural behaviour. It is not simply to be called “Anukarana” of a thing or just “Imitating” the outward reality of a thing; the dharma of that thing which is the “Avastha” is thus initiated upon “Natyadharmi” is taken to be conventional.

⊗ **NATYA-DHARMI:**

- This means something that is not a routine. But this alone does not make it “Natya-Dharmi”. For instance, ‘Mahout’ is ‘Kamsavadha - Killing of Kamsa’ in spite of being a ‘Loka-Dharmi’ character, uses charis, music, rhythm and dance. This indicates that using dance or music alone does not make it “Natya-Dharmi”.
- “Natya-Dharmi” is determined by the degree of application of the devices of “Natya”. Another aspect to be noted in ‘Kutiyattam’, the conventions is that the ‘Nayak’ speaks Sanskrit, the ‘Vidushaka’ in the vernacular Malayalam and the ‘Female Characters’ Prakrit. So, in effect, it is a “Trilingual Theatre”. Sutradhara represents the “Natya-Dharmi” conventions of ‘Abhinaya – acting’ and Vidushaka belong to “Loka-Dharmi”.

❖ **LANGUAGE OF THE BODY IN THEATRE - ABHINAYA:**

- According to Panikkar, “The relationship between “Prakrti” and “Purusha” is the same as above. This philosophical thought can be viewed in the lights of the “Sthayi – Sanchari” concept in the art of acting. It applies to every sphere of artistic experience that “Sphoat – Spanda – Vibration” in the mind is expressed through “Angika and Vachika” which may be called ‘Abhinaya’. The familiar meaning of the word ‘Abhinaya’ is acting, but it bespeaks, ‘Leading Properly’. This leading can be in different ways; but technically speaking the idea or thought sets forth from the mind and expresses through the body.”
- The alphabets of a language have to be distinguished from its grammar. In developing the language of the body in theater, what is basically required is the alphabets for the use of body. These alphabets constitute the simple “Satvikabhinaya: Bhava, Vachikabhinaya: Dhvani and Angikabhinaya: Sharira Bhava”.
- In totality, “Angika”, “Vachika”, “Aharya” and “Satvika” are all meant to clarify the meaning of the words and then only team “Arthakriya” becomes relevant.

✧ **SATVIKABHINAYA:**

- All the messages from the mind get encoded into “Visual or Auditory” medium which is the basis of human communication. The process of human expression in everyday life provides the dynamic of communication for the creative mind. The term ‘Bhava’ used in ‘Natyashastra’ is differently called as “Cittavrtti Vishesha” by some post Bharat aestheticians.
- An individual artist transforms his secretly imagined ‘Bhava’ born in the very private world within him into ‘Angika and Vachika Codes” meant for all and then it assumes social significance. Here the creative idea which is subjective turns out to be objective and in theatre it gains a shared identify. This happens along with the act of communication and the prescription laid down in ‘Natyashastra’ in different context and becomes more relevant and apt.

त्रैलोक्यस्यास्यसर्वस्यनाटयंभावानुकीर्तनम्।

⊗ **CREATION OF ARTISTIC CODES:**

→ Codes work as symbols to the original. ‘Bhava’ gets codified with the application of two modes of expression:

⇒ **Auditory – Verbal – Shravya: “Vachika”.**

⇒ **Visual - Non Verbal – Drshya: “Angika”.**

→ These are imageries of the “Body and Mind”.

✧ **AUDITORY – VERBAL – SHRAVYA → VACHIKABHINAYA:**

- When the ‘Pathya’ evokes ‘Vocalized Acting’, it becomes “Vachika”. The dramatic use of the Vaak (Word) demands a process of articulation doing justice to the derivation of the word ‘Vaak’. ‘Vaak’ is made up of “Akshara” and ‘Akshara again is “Na Akshara”,

that which is imperishable. Words are spelt through the nonlinguistic device of vocalization which includes human as well as instrumental sound.

- Even in daily life situations when we pray to God with a mind engrossed in a poignant and devotional state, we are tempted to apostrophize Him with an extremely emotive thrust which easily can be identified as out of ordinary. This measure of application will not suffice to create an incessant flow of 'Bhava' in the 'Natya Dharmi' style of acting. The demand which the text poses in enacting the meaning of the words, the sense or sentiments contained therein, necessitates the involvement of "Angika" and "Satvika" 'Abhinaya' also.
- If we consider that "Vachika" contains the seed of action, its position as "Karana Sharira" is amply justified. The main point to be noticed here is that in the case of stylized rendering the "Vachika" has to interlink with "Angika - with gesture, and with or without locomotion — both coinciding and complimentary to each other. Panikkar would like to call it punctuation acting as the music and movement create a rhythmic phrase. Hence, the text becomes live an expressive within a "Time – Space" frame and the creation involved therein composes an audio-visual unity. Against the linear treatment, the narrative quality makes a curvature process with decorative designs. An idea is thus celebrated with a lot of stage pictures of symbolic significance, frozen moments, variation in speed all in aesthetic balance by maintaining proper synthesis and proportion to the auditory expression.

⊗ **VEDIC RENDERING:**

- 'Shlokas' from 'Rig-Veda' are practiced with "Udattam, Anudattam, Swaritam, and Prachaya" 'Svaras'. From the "Traditional Chanting" of the "Veda Mantras" we combined the "Angika". By and large it is felt that the whole concept of vocalization in theatre can be based on "Udatta - The note with the face held up", "Anudatta - The note with the face lowered" and "Swarita - The note with the face in a diagonal movement towards the right". There is a fourth 'Svara' about which scholars differ in their views. The "Vedic Rendering" believes in "Oonnal - Stress" on 'Svara' and "Ilakkam – Extension at the end with vibration". This extension will be done with two vibration in the case of "Hrswa" and three vibrations in the case of "Dirgha". This forms the general

idea about the fundamental aspect of “Vedic Rendering”. ‘Chakyars’ of ‘Kutiyattam’ had utilized this rendering as the basis of their “Dramatic Vocalization” in “Sanskrit Theatre”.

❖ **VISUAL – NON VERBAL – DRSHYA → ANGIKABHINAYA:**

❖ **SHARIRA BHAVA - EXPRESSION OF THE BODY:**

- The term “Sharira Bhava” is used as a cardinal principle in the “Martial Training – Kalaripayattu”. It clearly lays down the twin function involved in the used of body. “Sharira” and “Bhava” – “Body” and “Emotion / Expression” are two distinct aspects. In a more figurative way it can be expressed that the “Sharira – Body” of the actor with the legs firmly set, is rooted in the ground as a tree and “Bhava – Emotion / Expression” sprouts as leaves, flowers and fruits.

⊗ **SHARIRA - BODY:**

→ Body is concrete, material and down to earth.

⊗ **BHAVA – EMOTION:**

→ “Bhava” blossoms from the inner recesses of the bodily existence. It is the subtle expression or delineation of the mind.

- By evolving a scientific basis, for the movements of the actor’s body, what is envisaged is the creation of a “Body Language - A flowing and lyrical expression of the body”. It is the instrument of expression for him. No amount of neither verbose nor textual material can supersede the function of the actor’s body. The expressiveness of the human body also means suggestiveness. More than that the melodic nature of the body is to be maintained with its icon - like poses and fluidity in locomotion.
- In an art form like ‘Kathakali or Kutiyattam’ it is not enough if the actor merely learns simple body exercises. He should learn the grammar of the concerned art which consists of the set patterns that could create the language.

❖ **INTERRELATIONSHIP OF SPACE AND TIME:**

- “Shravya” comprises music also which is a temporal art, while “Drshya” as the “Nritya: Art of Dance – Movement” engages itself in the “Space”. It has the visual quality as its characteristic. When we attend to “Sangeet: Music” we travel with “Time”.
- In art, especially theatre, by ‘Time’ we mean “Virtual Time” as we have the “Virtual Space” in the “Angika”. The ongoing great time is condensed into a precise and prescribed unit. Here unlike in the case of the fleeting “Time” as in the case of “Space” it is possible for one to come back to the point from where one starts. This felt through the process of “Rhythm Cycle with Laya and Svara” factors added to it. This negates the linear operation of time and creates circular movements which help to return to the starting point.
- Time and space are the two components of “Angika” with which the dramatic text is articulated as a language of feeling, and it serves as a vehicle of ideas in theatre. These ideas as structural speech elements sprout into “Kriya - Action” which is the natural corollary of a creative endeavour. “Kala or Time” is not different from ‘Kriya’.
- Movement logically relates to space as it occupies space and makes its extension through space. There is also the creation of musical space as it suggests the illusion of space through which we can make a travel. We get a sense of distance through the auditory modulation. Music being the art of time having its rhythmic and melodic ambience can also create the semblance of space.

❖ **INTERRELATIONSHIP OF DRSHYA AND SHRAVYA:**

❖ **KRIYA AND DHWANI (VAAK - SANGEET):**

- Music associated with the mental states of the characters, their emotions, their movement patterns, the mood of the situation, the compatibility of all the components of acting and many other minor as well as major aspects and their blending to produce the resultant effect that is “Rasa”.

- The interrelationship of “Music and Movement”; the autonomy of one being restricted by the autonomy of the other or one works in support of the other. In other words music per se and movement / dance are not done for the sake of movement / dance. The functions of both are complementary to each other.
- In music the motion of the forms that is not visible can be felt. On the basic level it can only be the semblance of motion. But the image of time as represented in the art of music transcends this illusion and the measurable order of time as it manifests in calendar or watch is transfigured with an aesthetic device of counting the different frequencies, vibrations and durations of visual and auditory combinations.

❖ **LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION:**

❖ **MIND – A MECHANISM: MIND → MAN’S ACTION:**

- In life as well as in theatre mind is the point from which “Abhinaya” starts. Mind leads man’s actions. When the mind transmits by encoding into physical level the actor embarks on the wonderful realms of communication.

DECODING → ENCODING → DECODING → ENCODING

- This mechanism works from the “Textual Creation” to “Performance Level” and how the poet’s creative urge bursts within him as “Sphota” and how his mental transmitting tower manifests his feelings into a continuum of communications. This has to take place in a highly imaginative and aesthetically created space and time, which may be bettered as virtual.

❖ **TEXTUAL PERFORMANCE LEVEL:**

- The scope for the functional channeling of the code lies in the text itself. In the realm of playwriting the master poets of ‘Indian Theatre’, like ‘Bhasa and Kalidasa’ could combine in their monumental works.
- According to Panikkar, “The “Word” and the “Deed”, with the latter lying hidden in the former, as latent energy as the fire in the firewood. The basic text occupied the auditory

component with all its literary indological life related textual apparatus which in its turn safe – guarded the visual potential. This is the unique feature of the “Rasa” based representation that is Indian in all its ramified possibilities.”

⊗ **BHASA’S MADHYAMA VYAYOGAM:**

→ Bhima describes the figure of Ghatotkacha and then Ghatotkacha describes the figure of Bhima. Here in order to show the difference in auditory and visual encoding, the “Vachika” encoding is done by Bhima and the “Angika and Satvika” decoding by Ghatotkacha and then the “Vachika” encoding is done by Ghatotkacha and the “Angika and Satvika” decoding by Bhima.

* **GHATOTKACHA’S GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF BHIMA:**

→ Ghatotkacha’s graphic description of Bhima. There follows a graphic description by him about Ghatotkacha’s figure without realizing that he was his own son.

→ The physical features and gait of a character vividly depicts his nature, which often stand in for ideas and emotions. In this context, Bhasa has enhanced the ‘Natya Dharmi’ aspect through an extremely poetic description and Panikkar has enhanced this thing through “Angika, Vachika and Satvika – Abhinya”, the part in which Bhimasena describes Ghatotkacha.

“सिंहास्यः सिंहदंष्ट्रो मधुनिभनयनः.....विपुलबलयुतो लोकवीरस्य पुत्रः ॥”

→ “Face and teeth as those of a lion, but eyes brimming as though with honey, it is implied that the face has the demonic quality of the mother and the eyes are compassionate like the father’s, well-arched and beautiful brows, eagle nose, an elephant’s chin, long locks of hair, broad and robust chest, narrow waist, a tusker’s gait, long limbs. He is undoubtedly born of a world hero to a demonic woman.”

→ In the above passage, Bhimasena, not recognizing Ghatotkacha as his own son, describes his external and internal qualities in the most exquisite manner. The shloka in which

Ghatotkacha, similarly not identifying his father, describes the physical and mental attributes of Bhima can be read with the below - quoted shloka.

❖ **NON TEXTUAL PERFORMANCE LEVEL:**

- The transformation of the ‘Dramatic Text’ into ‘Performance Text’ is essentially indicative of the ushering in of a new creative venture. The ‘Non – Textual’ or ‘Sub – Textual’ material is not meant to render a mere ‘Restatement’ of the original. It is a ‘Reconstruction’ as well as ‘Reinterpretation’ of the ‘Dramatic Text’. The non-sound areas of the text provided the input for such ‘Recreation’ where “Dhvani” plays an important role.
- This involves a ‘Restructuring’ of a situation where sometimes it may require the introduction of ‘Non – Textual’ text also which should essentially suit the “Contextual Mood” of the text. The replacement of a textual image may augment the emotional thrust, in creating an effective Sub – Textual’ application.

⊗ **BHASA’S KARNABHARAM:**

⊗ **ENTRY OF KUNTI:**

⇒ **RE-COLLECTION AND RE-ENACTMENT EPISODE OF KUNTI AND KARNA:**

⇒ **NON TEXTUAL PART FROM:**

⇒ **MAHABHARATA → UDYOGAPARVA → BHAGAVAT YANA PARVA → CHAPTER NO: 145 → MEETING BETWEEN KUNTI AND KARNA → SHLOKA NO: 2 AND 3.**

→ In Mahakavi Bhasa’s Karnabharam, ‘Kunti’ is not there in the ‘Dramatis Personae’. Nevertheless, Panikkar felt that her presence stands out as most inevitable to the context as there is a passage where a reference to her made by ‘Karna’. This ‘Non – Textual’ text served its function to encode the auditory and the visual components of the production.

- Karna is trying his arrow but Karna feels that he fails in his archery in the battlefield. His failure begins when he thinks. 'Why has this 'Astra' (weapon) failed? Is it because of my mother's words?' and reminisces his meeting with his mother Kunti.
- Kunti enters in Karna's imagination and he is tormented by these thoughts. Kunti requests Karna to eschew his enmity towards Pandavas who are his brothers, Karna refuses.
- But Karna promises to Kunti that he shall not kill such of her sons as are capable of being withstood and killed by him in the battle, her five sons will not decrease; either she will be with Karna and not Arjuna or if Karna is slain, she will be with Arjuna. Kunti vails, but there is an element of selfishness in her new fondness towards the eldest son.
- Finally he is able to dismiss her from his thought and he tries his arrow again.

❖ **NON TEXTUAL - CODES OF SHUSHKAKSHARAS AND AKSHARA:**

⊗ **CODES OF SHUSHKAKSHARAS – MEANINGLESS SYLLABLES:**

⊗ **BHASA'S URUBHANGAM:**

⊗ **THE SCENES ON THE BATTLEFIELD:**

- Here warriors in varying combinations mime battle scenes with real swords, shields, and spears, warriors on horseback, elephants on the battlefield, a fight unto death between two soldiers, and vultures devouring the dead.
- Because the rules of 'Sanskrit Drama proscribe' violence on stage, Panikkar evokes the brutal aftermath of war and the visceral immediacy of hand-to-hand combat entirely through the resources of vividly descriptive, 'Metaphorical Theatrical Language'. "Dead horses and elephants, soldiers and chieftains," for instance, are "sharply etched by the harsh glare of sunlight" as jackals and vultures devour them.
- All these scenes of combat employ modified and "improved" versions of 'Kalaripayattu' with some recitations, which is simply vocalize rhythmic consonant clusters that have no linguistic meaning, which called "**MEANINGLESS SYLLABLES - CODES OF SHUSHKAKSHARAS**" but that constitute the oral accompaniment to 'Kalaripayattu Movements'.

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 तीरु कुटु तीरु कुटु डर डर डाम ।

- ⊗ CODES OF AKSHARA – MEANINGFULL SYLLABLES:
- ⊗ SHAKTIBHADRA’S ASCHARYA CHOODAMANI – MAYA:
- ⊗ ENTRY OF RAVANA:

→ Here use of “Literary Metrical Structure” is made the basis and a new “Rhythm Structure” from the meter is created.

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 ललाट पट्ट पावके
 धगत धगत धगत धगेति
 किशोर चन्द्र शेखरे
 धगत धगत धगत धगत
 धगेति पंच चामरं
 धगेति ताण्डवोदकं

✧ **CHITRA YAVANIKA – THE CURTAIN:**

- The creative use of the curtain in “Indian Theatre Tradition” is an important device with which many a “Dramatic Situation” could be embellished. Such situations are available in Panikkar’s Theatre, where the curtain is used positively for enhancing the “Dramatic and Aesthetic” expression.

- “Chitra Yavanika” can effectively work as a –

⇒ Dividing line between two “Visuals” or “Locals” or the “Department of Characters” in different “Space-Time” settings.

⇒ Canopy to show the pomp and splendor of a character.

⊗ **BHASA’S DUTA VAKYAM:**

⊗ **CHITRA YAVANIKA AS CHITRAPATA:**

→ In the production of Bhasa’s Duta Vakyam, “Chitra Yavanika” helped to create the “Chitrapata or Painting”, which depicts the theme of “Draupadi Vastrapaharanam”.

→ When the episode is described by Duryodhana, each character emerges from the curtain and becomes a moving painting with the curtain as the frame at the back.

✧ **AVASTHANUKIRTANAM:**

- ‘Anukriti’ has to be qualified with its full connotations or developed from into ‘Anukirtanam’. How ‘Anukriti’ develops into ‘Anukirtanam’? How the poet’s and director’s imaginations can be converted into enactment?

⊗ **KALIDASA'S MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM:**

- Mahakavi Kalidasa's "Malavikagnimitram" is widely acknowledged and accepted as a romantic play having 'Shringara' as its main Rasa. However, this production is reinterpreted as combination of "Shringara, Karuna, Veer and Hasya Rasas", which are woven around the "Ashoka Vriksha – Tree". How the "Tapaniya-Ashoka" becomes "Kusumita-Ashoka"?
- Hence the portrayal of an "Ashoka Tree" as the central character in the production was the result of enlarging the scope hidden in a textual reference into a code with verbo-visual implication of functional relevance.
- "Ashoka" is not only a reference tree to establish the chastity of "Malavika", but also a symbol of the aspirations of the country. "Ashoka" becomes "Shoka" when it does not blossom within the natural cycle and hence becomes the main cause of the sorrow – "Shoka" for the whole society. All incidents and characters of the play are supportive of "Ashoka". That is why the 'Ashoka' plays a significant role in this production and is depicted as a living character, instead of being just a tree.
- A group of actors was choreographed into a tree providing the base to justify the myth that the tree could sprout when 'Malavika' touched it with her foot. When the country was suffering due to internal unrest and external war, the reflection of this was evident in the withering of leaves of the "Ashoka Tree".
- The change of assuming new colours for the tree is made possible not by invoking any filmic illusion but only evoking the aesthetic device of "Natya Dharmi" enactment.

➤ **CONCLUSION:**

- Panikkar's theatre decolonizes the theatrical practices of India. It opens various ways of relating to the Margi and Deshi traditions of India, not only for itself, but also for other directors. Our tradition believes and practices the continuity between Nritya, Nritya and Natya. Perhaps Panikkar's theatre is the only contemporary urban theatre where such continuity is most beautifully realized. And this makes it possible for him to create many textures of time for his viewers to take immense pleasure in.

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MODERN ATTEMPTS OF SANSKRIT PLAYS: (1 To 10)



1. "Mitti Ki Gadi – Mrichhakatikam" directed by Habib Tanvir.



2. "Loka Shakuntala" directed by K.V. Subanna.



3. "Karnabharam" directed by Ratan Thiyam.



4. "Swapnavasavdattam" directed by Sanakhy Ebotombi.



5. "Swapna Katha" directed by Panikkar.



6. "Karnabharam" directed by Chandradasan.



7. “Venisamharam” directed by Bansi Kaul.



8. “Malavikagnimitram” directed by K. S. Rajendran.



9. “Venisamharam” directed by Bhumikeshwar Singh.



10. “Mudrarakshasa” directed by B.V. Karanth.

KARNABHARAM: (11 to 15)



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15

ABHIJNANA SHAKUNTALAM: (16 To 20)



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19

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THEYYA THEYYAM: (21 To 25)

21



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KUTIYATTAM (26 To 28)



26

27



KATHAKALI (29 To 31)



29



30



31

THEYYAM (32 To 34)

32



33



34

**KALARIPAYATTU (35 To 37)**

35



36



37

