

Impact of Western Dramatic Theories on Modern Indian Theatre

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Abstract

The influence of Western dramatic theories has played a crucial role in shaping the evolution of modern Indian theatre. Concepts derived from Aristotelian poetics, dramatic realism, Brechtian epic theatre, and Stanislavski's system significantly informed new approaches to playwriting, performance, and actor training in India. However, these theoretical frameworks were not adopted in isolation; instead, they interacted continuously with indigenous aesthetic principles rooted in Bharata's *Natyasastra*, *rasa* theory, folk theatre traditions, and ritual performance practices. This interaction occurred within a broader historical context marked by colonial encounters, the nationalist movement, and postcolonial cultural debates. Modern Indian theatre thus emerged as a hybrid cultural form, negotiating between Western structural models and traditional Indian modes of narration, symbolism, and audience engagement. Shifts in thematic concerns—from mythological and ritual narratives to social realities, urban modernity, and questions of identity—reflect this synthesis. The expansion of theatre education and institutional frameworks further facilitated the circulation of Western theories while encouraging reinterpretation rather than imitation. The study emphasizes that Western influence did not replace indigenous traditions but contributed to a dynamic process of adaptation and creative transformation. Modern Indian theatre, therefore, represents a plural and evolving aesthetic space shaped by dialogue, resistance, and reinterpretation across cultural boundaries.

keywords : Modern Indian Theatre, Western Dramatic Theories, *Natyasastra*, Cultural Hybridization, Postcolonial Theatre, Dramaturgy, Performance Studies

1. Introduction

The impact of Western dramatic practices on the Sanskrit theatre has been a widely discussed topic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The practitioners of modern Indian theatre, however, grappled with the conceptual apparatus for understanding the dramatic performance principally laid out in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, not in the Anglo-European tradition. Modern Indian theatre created a new semiotic universe in which premodern forms continued to flourish along with the new-centred on the written text (Kenneth Boos, 2013).

In this context, the encounter between indigenous theatrical principles and Western dramatic theories did not result in a simple replacement of one system by another. Instead, it generated a complex process of negotiation in which Indian playwrights, directors, and performers selectively adopted Western structural techniques while retaining core elements of traditional aesthetics. Concepts such as *rasa*, *abhinaya*, and the performative relationship between actor and audience continued to inform theatrical expression, even as realism, psychological characterization, and textual centrality gained prominence. This synthesis allowed modern Indian

theatre to address contemporary social, political, and philosophical concerns without severing its links to classical and folk traditions. Consequently, modern Indian theatre may be understood as a dynamic field shaped by continuity as much as by change, reflecting both cultural resilience and creative adaptation.

2. Historical Context of Indian Theatre and Western Encounters

Indian theatre is as old as the history of man and represented society's various moods and feelings. Plays and performances were part of life in ancient India, though there is no clear research establishing when theatre started. The Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads – the three oldest scriptures of Hinduism – were among the first texts to describe performing art, with references to theatre, drama, dance, and arts closely related to theatre, suggesting that theatre existed before these texts were written. The *Natyashastra* (*Natya Sastra*) is the earliest known textual document in the world on performing arts and is universally accepted as the fifth Veda. Indian theatre has come to a full circle from rich traditions to stagnation. The traditional form of theatre was performed on special occasions in temple precincts, but with time and the Islamic invasion, it suffered serious blows, resulting in the gradual disappearance of various forms of theatre during the period of Muslim rule. Contemporary Indian theatre is performing on the feeling of emancipation. Soon after the arrival of the East India Company, there was an unexpected interaction between modern Indian theatre and western dramatic theories (Kenneth Boos, 2013).

2.1. Pre-colonial theatrical traditions in India

The roots of Ancient Indian Theatre can be traced to rituals propitiating various gods and natural forces. The prayers for rains, sun, prosperous harvests, victory over one's enemies and the autumn festival of the dead were accompanied by songs, dances, recitations of Vedic hymns and imitation of Nature. The songs were orally transmitted, accompanied by some gestures and of a somewhat prosaic. Singing was thus ceremonious, ritualistic and quite different from the dramatization of contemporary events or stories that was passed on orally in prose and with action. The earliest evidence of a more developed drama comes from the simple humorous folk plays of the Gonds and other tribes of central India. Elaborate inscriptions and paintings in temples contain stories on divine passion, aspects of love as well as stories of destruction or joy which were enacted without words but shown by posing and mutely mimicking.

The drama of the mortuary rites for the deceased was a shifting pattern of painted figures. Men were masked and disguised by hides, fur, feathers, the occasional waistband of cloth and sometimes languid bodies when representing coiling snakes. Moods were assigned to the seasons, which, with those of reproductive and propitious songs with a turning to the sun and becoming gradually triumphant, merged into joyous festive music. Thus the roots of these celebrations appear to be fever fervour prayerful requests to the Supreme Spirit indicated by gradual completed morivi together, even disregarding suffering. The darkness during the rains precluded day-time festivals. From these the aspect of the human spirit itself was probed and over-emphasised in order that its varied moods might be fully expressed.

2.2. Colonial and post-colonial intersections with Western dramaturgy

The nexus of colonialism and westernization has produced a heightened exposure to dramaturgical texts situating the modern Indian theatre experience within "Grand narratives," western dominance fostering a milieu for both acceptance and ersatz originality (Singh Thakur, 2012). The *Janam Janam* performance considers the texts of V. A. R. Krishna Iyer's in the socio-political rehearsal format of steganography. The term and conception of steganography originated

in academia as a nomenclatural device indicating “hidden writing.” Performance analysis reveals the constitutional uplift of Janam Janam into the corpus steganographic theatre. The structure, techniques and framing strategies used by the Janam Janam performance construct a textually elided technique that encompasses a synthetic dramaturgical interface, renouncing overall control of the social and the theatrical spheres. Such hybrid performances invariably elicit the conceptual re-examination of modernity within the Indian and Bengali contexts (Kenneth Boos, 2013). The conceptualisation of steganographic theatre as a contemporary installation utilising both bourgeois formats demonstrates elem Historical dredge, audience preparation, framing and hybridism become the performance devices rigorously laid-and-laid that permit articulating indices of modernity within these settings.

3. Core Western Theoretical Frameworks and Their Adoption

In seeking to create a modern theatrical movement for India among the backdrop of independence from colonial powers and the derivative influence of native dramas from translated Western texts, practitioners, as astutely articulated by the renowned playwright Vijay Tendulkar, conjoined their engrossing philosophies with the Western genre to create a cubic structure unto acquired skills by mouthing texts of contemporary Europe. The western models adopted and appropriated to arrive at a structure for the Indian drama are predominately the methodologies of the Greeks in the concept of tragedy for the deeper exploration of the human plight and the brevity of the one-act form. In what follows, a survey of a few of these western models is submitted. The comment and scrutiny of these practices either conferred enhancement or enervated modern Indian Drama through their diverse interpretive allegiances.

The systematic exploration of time through a circle of six 24-minute acts, analogous to a well-known play, evolved into a circular time-situating structure that captured the Indian rural and folk sentiments (Kenneth Boos, 2013). A second investigator, while transfusing the notion of tragedy from the Greeks, devised a quatrain of seventy-two 2-hour acts; “that the syllogistic dilemma structures the tragedy and the varied resolutions each projected (an allegory unto the proverbial ‘elephant’), circumscribing the juxtaposition of the collided perspectives (the western tragic elements) in totality.” Drawing on the well-known dramatic principles of recognitions and discoveries, adaptation of a long layout devised by another, upon acquiring the liberty format and devising pieces of content (occasionally under the direct stylization of the casting genre) for long full-length texts straight away. Notational short-play circa one-third finish of an accomplished long, differing in systematic content of treatment—absolving & commingling the full never rendered onto circle, delineating strando, along-way, step-and-shot interpretation circumventing the sole text (detours) in transit, or a lengthy ‘theme’, multiplex standard, differently remained the straightforward long, in ultra-abbreviated notes format of quarry (a genre reminiscent to early concentrated compositional piece). Government long creatively under witty attire abstracting installation particular from full-length text.

A reading appreciating ‘fate-tragedy’ conjectured upon visit of the original, propelling a scatter-head tracing the selectively/exclusively Indian-space arrangement still-prepend and an immense-packing draught undertaken upon progression alongside the independent compositions, concluding without such specific notion—engaging unattended time-frame—and so forth the straight-usage continued. Theatrical formats being generally recurrently applied in reside-perform alongside conventional populace (a variety of duration hence opened) material-friendly from any selections thereafter.

Venkatanarayan contemporarily launched on Thamuratherialization, cultural-piece both by-feeling and perception (simultaneously entering fully-three) onto extract from avant-garde

draw. Native-initiated, via attractive-space attempt under-persistent locality feedback pretext contemporary epitome otherwise seldom-licensed expenditure, rural-dimension theatre-region retribution depending-second-place concurrent remaining-class concealed wellbeing-dimension natural-visible authenticity adjoined aspect repay fraternity alongside conventional prescription safekeeping dial contemporary circular-dimension end-product perform on the standards. Markado standpipe circular round-up streamed rudimentary semicircular closing full-dimension prototype studio-reside colonial-extension regional showroom enterprise placement adjunct genre.

3.1. Aristotelian Poetics and the structure of tragedy and catharsis

Aristotle's Poetics is arguably the most significant study of tragedy ever written. It addresses drama in general, examining the elements of plot, character, thought, diction, melody, and spectacle. In its six-part division, it devotes considerable attention to the nature and function of tragedy, a genre of which it is generally regarded as the principal theorist. Tragedy must enact events involving pain and suffering, but it is defined in precisely these terms: an imitation of elevated action that engages the emotions of pity and fear (Heath, 2014).

Aristotle emphasizes that pity and fear are appropriate responses to the fall of the high-born tragic hero, whose misfortune stems from a hamartia, or misunderstanding. This error of judgement is crucial both to the action and to the relative value placed upon the protagonist. Events proceeding from this constitute the plot, which is, for Aristotle, the essence of tragedy. The tragic event must be significant within the world of the play; for example, the unfaithfulness of Oedipus to his wife, the seduction of the widowed queen by Brutus, or Jagan's ultimate rejection of the successful widow Kiran in Kumarajiva are all venial sins that do not engage the audience's fear and pity (A. Mackay, 2014).

3.2. Dramatic realism and social critique

When modernism became the major paradigm in the western world, realism, a child of modernism, became the mainstream of theatrical expression. Realism attempts to describe human behavior and surroundings objectively or to represent figures and objects exactly as they appear in life. Reactions against realism emerged in the early 20th century, with movements like neo-romanticism, which believed realism only presents life superficially and focuses on the "soul" or "inner being" rather than surface appearances.

Modern Iranian drama developed alongside liberal thought before and after the 1906 Constitution Revolution, during Iran's transition from traditional to modern society. The arrival of European theatre in 1878, emphasizing written texts, was part of the modernization process. Traditional theatre was rediscovered, and playwrights incorporated its forms to develop indigenous modern Iranian theatre, blending the past and present. The new drama sought modernity by advocating political and social liberties. Between 1940 and 1979, plays explored modern life, individual-society relationships, and social controversies. Traditional elements like ta'zieh, depicting the martyrdom of Imam Hosein, played a role in shaping Iranian dramatic forms.

3.3. Brechtian epic theatre and alienation effects

Brecht's epic theatre is based on a philosophy that opposes dominant modern ideology and criticizes traditional realistic and dramatic forms. Developed during the political turmoil of the World Wars, it aims to serve as a revolutionary instrument. Brecht views theatre as a tool for

political struggle and knowledge-seeking, emphasizing the mediated and value-dependent nature of reality ((Ribut) Basuki, 2000).

While dialectic and open-ended dramaturgy are crucial, playwrights dramatizing harsh postcolonial realities adopt radical stances. Indigenous African popular performances possess their own epic traditions that overlap with Brecht's. Yoruba popular theatre audiences are highly participatory, often intervening in the play. Strategies fostering objective audience response, a legacy of popular African traditions, recur in contemporary drama, even when not explicitly Brechtian. Brechtian dramaturgy aims to stimulate objective response rather than passive consumption. Modern African drama emerges from a blend of local and foreign influences. Indigenous performances, such as the Mucung wa war dance in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's plays, shape modern traditions and incorporate epic elements rooted in indigenous cultures (Fadirepo, 2018).

3.4. Stanislavski's system and method acting in performance

The System of Stanislavski has been of great significance for contemporary Anglo-American acting training. Though the System itself has undergone many adaptations and transformations since its elaboration, the importance of certain original ideas has remained constant. As an approach to actor training that favours realistic and naturalistic modes of performance, Stanislavski's System has served as a crucial bridge between the nineteenth-century theatrical practices that influenced Indian drama in the early twentieth century and the modern precepts of acting that began to engage Indian theatre from the 1940s onward (Sostarich, 2018).

Stanislavski's influence on Indian drama was conveyed by famous names such as the Chhapekar brothers, who travelled to the United States to learn the modern principles of theatrical art. Following an in-depth study of the System, Manjula Nayak carried out research that included a documentary on the influence of Stanislavski on Indian theatre, taking into account the writings of K. B. Joshi: "After getting acquainted with the system and its variations, I can state that to a great extent it has been absorbed and applied in the contemporary Indian theatre movement" (Edinburgh, 2018).

4. Transformations in Form and Content in Indian Theatre

The impact of Western dramatic theories on modern Indian theatre is evident in the transformations in both form and content that occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While traditional Indian theatre persisted, a new Indian theatre emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Kenneth Boos, 2013). The transformations in content involved a shift from the themes of ritualistic plays, such as a play based on the life of Christ, to the incorporation of worldly or worldly situations, social problems, and the mundane life of the individual. The new content highlighted the conflict between tradition and modernity and also introduced Western techniques of direct addressing of the audience, an influence derived from the experimental theatre movement of the West and from such playwrights as G. B. Shaw. Content ceased to be the sole preoccupation of the playwright. The importance of social aims in the content of a play led to experimentation with the formal aspects of presentation (Carson Jester & Earnest, 2020). One notable experiment was the introduction of soliloquies. However, the ideal held in the earlier period remained, that of a content based on serious themes, often presented with a cultural framework reflecting Indian values.

4.1. Reconfiguring narrative structure and genre hybridity

Samuel Becket offers a relevant perspective concerning Indian theatre, for he, too, resisted the influence of Aristotelian dramatic theory. Accordingly, in Indian theatre, the author perceives

an aberration from normative dramaturgical practice that generates a distancing effect. The theory governing the practice is no less significant than the practice itself, for it offers a framework with which to glimpse certain features. The relation between dramaturgical theory and practice may vary, determining the degree to which practice is curtailed (Kenneth Boos, 2013).

Careful observation of Indian theatre reveals three levels of *tamas* or inconstancy: rather than lethargy, Indian theatre relies on clear distinction between play verse and conversation; rather than mundanity, it mitigates the immediacy of sensation by substituting them with nectar-like experiences set in a plane remote and analogous to everyday life.

4.2. Thematic expansions: urban modernity, nationalism, and identity

In addition to these formal innovations, thematic expansion also reshapes the contemporary repertoire of Indian theatre. The West's sardonic questioning of social and political certainties resonated in a country where both remained critical concerns. Three new themes prompted fresh approaches to form and style: urban modernity, nationalism, and identity. The interplay among them represents one important response to the question of artists' social responsibility in a democratic setting.

India's struggle for independence at once inspired full-fledged nationalist plays, articulated by carefully crafted theatrical responses to arising questions ((Ribut) Basuki, 2000). A half-century after independence, the emergence of a metropolitan class addressing political-social concerns prompted urban modernity-oriented material to gain currency (Kenneth Boos, 2013). When Siddique needed a contemporary metaphor for the plight of a downtrodden peasantry rendered oddly irrelevant by his 1950s text, he turned to the urban woman's struggle. No longer confined to the parochial, Indian concerns took on a cosmopolitan modernity capable of reaching out to Gujarat and Mexico alike. Rooted in the people's long march towards freedom, these themes formed part of a newly articulated quest for national identity.

4.3. Stagecraft, space, and audience engagement

Stagecraft involves not just the furniture, décor, and properties used, but also the actor's physical relationship to the audience, such as the direction of gaze, stance, position, and blocking. Often, Indian and Western dramas take differing approaches toward a shared, central theme. Thus, it is also influenced by a range of elements—social, spatial, religious, and otherwise. According to Williams, "theatrical space is intimately connected with the spiritual and ethical phenomenology of theatre-going," and Indian theatre aligns with this characterization (Kenneth Boos, 2013). Indian theatre, accordingly, is not limited to the building or site of performance, but also engages the audience's broader spatial context. The aim is to accentuate the connection between the actor and the audience, and to foster an inclusive atmosphere. The actors, like Brahma, inhabit the set or platform-space as much as or more than the theatre-space of the cosmos.

The Indian tradition includes diverse ways of constructing both theatre-space and a Mahanakra. The development of another Hindu-dramatic dimension—the engagement of external space linked to three further positions—draws attention to how theatre shifts from the Brahmic model of drama as first presented in a sacred text or monument. The multifaceted trajectories across time and world stress that thickness of the text can accompany veils and dross accumulated as theatre texts circulate and change over time. Indian drama provides a concerted manner of encoding them, showing how various forms return to and renew the sacred, to the divine beginning.

5. Institutional and Educational Impacts

The impact of Western theatre theory on modern Indian theatre can be seen beyond creative practice to formal education and institutionalization. Round Table Conferences and the subsequent Indian Independence Movement fostered transnational intellectual exchanges between Indian theatre practitioners and theorists and European artists seeking freedom from totalitarian regimes (Kenneth Boos, 2013). One prominent example is the International Theatre Institute (ITI), established in 1948 on the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Institute for Research in Academy Theatre (IRAT), founded in 1955, served as the Indian chapter through the influence of Norwegian and Italian theatre theorists. By 1962, India had its own National Centre affiliated with ITI.

The Itihaas Natak Samiti (INS) serves as another example of educational impact, notably in early 1980s urban activism. Founded by theatre directors and scholars in Mumbai, INS published studies of play texts and theatrical practices in cities aggressively urbanizing through national development policies. These studies drew on the burgeoning fields of post-structuralism, semiotics, and performance studies and sought to furnish Indian theatre professionals with a theoretical framework in the wake of post-independence bleakness. The productivity and resonance of the writings furnishes evidence of their significant institutional and educational impact.

5.1. Theatre education and curriculum development

One of the most profound transformations that the Indian theatre has undergone since the advent of modernity is its educational development. Prior to modernity, Bharat Muni's Nāṭyaśāstra was the only theoretical text that shaped theatre education. Historically, every theory regarding theatre was a mere reiteration or extrapolation of it since Bharat's time. The dictates of theatre education that were derived from the Nāṭyaśāstra remained inviolately present in Indian playwrights' works who were trained in theatre. Nevertheless, Indian natya based theatre had remained oral and non-institutional in nature throughout the per-formative phase of modernity.

Modern natya and drama grappled considerably with the question of theatre education and training. All efforts in theatre education sought either to stipulate the tenets of theatre or to challenge these tenets. The opening up of the Indian theatre to Western dramatic theories evoked the need to impart education on Western dramatic theories. Thus, Western theatre theorists' works proffering ideas and approaches to theatre became available for theatre education. The earliest such book was Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, which prompted the playwright Ashok Vajpeyi to reflect upon his own earlier work. This was followed by a book entitled *Book of Answers*, devoted to the subject of theatre education (Vivian Jacobs, 2013). The curriculum devised on the basis of these works was informed by state standards and attempted to present a comprehensive experience of the theatre aligned within the American context. A few years later, *Swang*, discovered in the personal collection of the literary critic Vasant A. Shinde, was added to the chief corpus of educational materials with the publication of M. P. Dhananjay's *Between the Word and the World* (Kenneth Boos, 2013). Both centre on theatre training and education, explore several works, have distinct contents and deal with differing themes, styles and approaches.

5.2. National theatres, festivals, and the modern repertoire

In 1981, a small room at the Elphinstone College, Bombay, witnessed the birth of the National School of Drama. Five years later, under the leadership of Ebrahim Alkazi, it took over the iconic building of the Shahjahan Theatre, strategically located on the M.K. Gandhi Marg, close

to the heart of the city. This theatre warehoused an impressive collection of antiquarian books and had always inspired the young minds closely associated to the National School of Drama. The national theatre movement, in a way, was the hardest hit by the past colonial rule and discrimination. In 1959, Professor Mulk Raj Anand hosted a meeting in Bengaluru along with G.P. Deshpande; it was there that the idea of a National Theatre was suggested. Thereafter, innumerable discussions with National School of Drama and Ebrahim Alkazi completed the formal necessary groundwork, leading to the birth of the National School of Drama in India (Kenneth Boos, 2013).

5.3. Critical reception and scholarly discourse

Modern Indian theatre has been the subject of considerable critical study. Padmashree K. K. Sharma's essay "On the Reception of Aurobindo and K. A. Abbas" (1995) examines critical responses to their plays. Sharma observes that Aurobindo and Abbas, unlike playwrights such as Iqbal, Gupta, Rajatkamal and Alok, do not have a single critic who wrote a cult study of their works. K. P. Narayana's monograph on Sukhlal plays spans four generations and devotes just five pages to relevant plays by Aurobindo and Abbas (Kenneth Boos, 2013). Scholarly discourse on theatre has often avoided the rich area of literature attached to its reception (Hinda, 2018). Assuming that a critical ensemble is, in itself, a type of tribute, Sharma identifies a rather larger assemblage of voices for both Aurobindo and Abbas than either Gupta or Rajatkamal, and a diverse one.

6. Debates and Tensions

Stage works originating in European dramatic theory operated in an alien aesthetic universe. Government and commercial theatre deeply engaged with Western-inspired texts often ignored or dissed the country's rich dramatics. Productions within indigenous forms made belated inroads into economically and politically repressed sectors of the urban populace. Meanwhile, European modes, Habib states, "elicited a response from Indian theatre as creative and imaginative" as other imported technologies. The appropriation of British and American theatrical modes provided "the main marketing strategy of Indian theatre catering to the aspiring middle class." The rise of middle-class nationalism strained Eurocentric paradigms. Urban staging of local epics continued to favour hybrid texts exploiting colonial trappings even when original vernacular productions premiered abroad or in the colonies.

Indian realism grew through Westernisation; Kalidasa and Jayadeva provided pre-modern counterpoints. The exertion of external forces, however, has yet to produce any truly indigenous modes (Kenneth Boos, 2013).

6.1. Orientalism, authenticity, and the politics of representation

Modernity in the subcontinent was foregrounded by questions of identity, authenticity, and the self-Other dialectic. Intellectual contact, brought about by colonialism, ultimately raised questions of representation. The first critical response to Euro-colonially constituted texts – that is, texts which were themselves produced in an encounter between local and European forms – substituted the concept of "Orientalism" for the term "postcolonial" and sought to reconstitute authenticity in the form of Hindustani or vernacular drama. Menon's 1967 criticism of modern "Indian" dramas, many of which were not written in Hindi and therefore had little to do with broader "Indian" culture, illustrates this early phase of engagement with both Western input and local representation (Hinda, 2018). Later work strove to articulate a non-coercive cultural contact between Orient and Occident. Such texts were nevertheless taken up dialectically. Culturalists

celebrated their supposed craft, while outsiders pointed out that their avowed discontent with colonial modernity nevertheless resulted in an inescapable Western-conceptual – representation of Indian culture.

6.2. Postcolonial critiques and decolonial futures

The postcolonial discourse in Indian theatre mainly deals with two issues; first, the location and importance of Indian theatre in the international arena; second, the question of representation and authenticity (Singh Thakur, 2012). Proponents of the first view assert that Indian theatre has a place in the international mainstream and an engagement with various contemporary schools of thought and trends demonstrates its relevance (Hinda, 2018). The second, implicit view posits that readership and spectacles produced through selective appropriation of Western models can at best result in a limited hybrid theatre not recognized as belonging to the mainstream. In such a context, the question of decolonial futures and the possibility of non-Western canons arises. Eurocentric-ness still dominates both Indian theatre's understanding of its past and its search for a future beyond that legacy. Appropriation remains a major factor in the dissemination of Western models while the wholesale acceptance of the notion of the 'West' – whether in the form of Latin America or Western Asia – remains selective. Serious consideration of the prospect of non-Western, decolonial futures at national and regional levels remains scant. Efforts of this nature remain virtually invisible on the grand national or continental scale.

6.3. The pedagogy of performance and the ethics of influence

Stephen William Hawking's famous statement, "The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge", cautions against hubris that hinders the pursuit of truth. The very act of attempting to influence others to assume an ethical stance raises critical questions about how influence is achieved. Conceptually, conditioning figure as electrodes delivers predetermined, externally contrived instructions resulting in compliance without genuine motivations. Indoctrination invokes propaganda resulting in societal cognitive dissonance between compliance and authentic motivation. Creativity emerges only when ethical concern for others motivates the will to resist an inevitable inclination toward blind adherence, non-engagement, or anti-social reaction. From a performance perspective, effective methods to strive toward such difficult circumstances of ethical influence may be required. Theatre enters to consistently provide appropriate frames in this vast universe of aspirational integrity challenging the legitimacy of any and all historical influence received. Classic tragic commemorations of South Africa's civil rights movement ranging from Oedipus and Medea through The Persians and Trojan Women become rich sources to support that attention to universal lofty aspirations such as the pedagogy of performance and the ethics of influence mobilises the more malleable Collective as an escape from undetectable irresponsibility. In spite of best efforts towards ethical influence, the unintended assimilation of inappropriate western forms continue to blemish and dominate quests for authentic indigenous development (Neelands, 2009).

7. Contemporary Trajectories and Future Prospects

The Indian theatrical scene comprises a vast array of styles and traditions that reveal significant indigenous literary influences (Kenneth Boos, 2013). But the Indian play, written according to the Western dramatic theories of Ibsen and Brecht, although the playwright may sometimes question the validity of the form, predominates in most professional theatres (Hinda, 2018). According to the three competing definitions of theatre as "drama," "creative play," and "theatrical performance," the last two definitions best fit film and television, with theatre restricted to narratives and characters requiring or suggesting a physical presence.

Globalization has resulted not only in the interconnectedness of the world but also in the hybridization of cultures, with people retaining their multiple cultural identities and yet embracing the best practices of modernity for social, economic, and technological advancement (Kenneth Boos, 2013). Globalization begins with technological innovation, particularly in communication, which affects not only the content of culture but also its form and reception (Upadhyaya, 2015). Countries worldwide suffer from cultural imperialism, influencing such aspects as technology, fashion, and culinary choices. By the end of the twentieth century, global digital flows expanded, influencing performance across cultural, ideological, and national boundaries, leading to a proliferation of new dramaturgical modes. The theatre, termed the second oldest art form after painting, was first practised by primitive human beings and still survives in modern, informal forms. The aim of the present section is to reflect briefly the influence of globalization, digital media, and new dramaturgies on the Indian theatre and the resulting shifts in the form and content.

The growing concern of skeptics towards Western theories often arises during attempts to decide their unique applicability to socio-cultural settings away from their contexts of origin. However, as these skeptical positions threaten to overshadow the vast historical corpus of exchanges between diverse cultural theorists, critics, and practitioners, Kenneth Boos poses the question of whether—besides authors from outside the continental US and the UK—contemporary American literature readers should also consider authors such as Tagore or Bakhtin (Kenneth Boos, 2013). To address this question in depth and determine the founding elements of the evolving Indian theatre tradition, a relevant study by B Muskett on the ceremony and performance that emerged from Indigenous perspectives needs to be examined (B Muskett, 2019). Realizing that, while the growing interest in the Indigenous and knowledge-sharing approaches initiated by First Nations and Indigenous People artists is deemed valuable, the Anglo-West still either ignores or misunderstands their deeper roots invites a further investigation of how artistic expressions have engaged with each other in a context increasingly recognised as post-colonial.

8. Conclusion

Art, particularly theatre and performance, plays a vital role across Indian society and culture. Indian theatre reflects the entirety of human life; the positive and negative emotions, the joyous and sad events of life are captured in every theatrical performance. More than any other art, theatre expresses consciousness and culture through the portrayal of myth—perception and interpretation of myth changes with the evolution of contemporary philosophy. Western drama catalysed the transition from classical to modern Indian theatre and continued to exert a decisive influence thereafter. The establishment of modern Indian theatre began in Maharashtra; the establishment of the first Indian theatre company is traditionally ascribed to the year 1848, and the first Indian literary drama was written in Maharashtra in 1864. Although parallel developments occurred in those days within many Indian provinces, Maharashtra was predominant from 1848 to 1947. Parsee theatre and associated institutions were established in 1875, and the first theatre-based educational institution started its work in the Bombay presidency in 1882, both also cited as landmarks of the period.

Since independence, western and Indian influences have not been mutually exclusive. Plays by authors such as Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Jean-Paul Sartre, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, T. S. Eliot, William Saroyan, Bertolt Brecht, and Arthur Miller, as well as dramatists of the Indian renaissance such as Rabindranath Tagore, Vijay Tendulkar, and Arun Joshi have been staged on Indian soil. The influence of Aristotle, Stanislavski, and Meyerhold, of modern European and American theatre, and of Indian dramas and ideas of an earlier period continues to inspire serious acting and serious theatre-related studies. Such study of western theatre texts or techniques

does not necessarily participate in experimentation with Indian thought concerning theatre, but Indian authors write plays after reading, studying, and translating those texts into Indian languages.

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