

**PEOPLE'S THEATRE IN KERALA AND POSSIBILITIES OF
THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED**

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Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre Arts

By

PRADEEPAN M.

Under the guidance of

Dr. SHIBU S. KOTTARAM

Asst. Professor

School of Drama & Fine Arts

**RESEARCH CENTRE
SCHOOL OF DRAMA & FINE ARTS,
DR. JOHN MATHAI CENTRE,
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT, THRISSUR.
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Thesis titled **PEOPLE'S THEATRE IN KERALA AND POSSIBILITIES OF THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED** is a bonafide record of original research work carried out by me, under the valuable guidance of **Dr. SHIBU S. KOTTARAM**, Assistant Professor, School of Drama and Fine Arts, Aranattukara, Thrissur. I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted by me earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or any other similar title.

Thrissur

29/09/2020

PRADEEPAN M

Research Scholar

School of Drama & Fine Arts

Dr. John Matthai Centre

University of Calicut

Aranattukara, Thrissur

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1

Introduction

Theatre is one of the oldest forms of art human race possessed right from the tribal/clan life itself. It always grew keeping pace with the ups and downs of human race towards civilization. It unfailingly reflected the changes that were taking roots in the society and faithfully echoed the sensibility of the age. India has a long and glorious tradition as far as drama is concerned. We are proud of our genius playwrights Kalidasa, Bhasa and Shudraka who contributed immensely to world theatre. The tradition still goes on, though it takes turns and twists through ages. In the modern age, theatre plays a very vital role in myriad ways not only by assimilating changes from the growing sensibility but from science and technology.

Kerala, a small state in India, is socially and culturally advanced. Theatre was instrumental in shaping the course of history here. From the period of the freedom struggle itself, dramas began to play a crucial role in the social transformation of Kerala. As social movements against caste oppression, for land reforms, political freedom, workers' rights and women's emancipation developed, dramas were used by these movements to criticize social evils, mobilize people and give a push to social reforms. So, for a period, theatre merged with social movements. The scripts of these theatre presentations became texts of social criticism and were published and read for its literary merits also.

Hypothesis

In the background of this glorious past of Peoples' Theatre in Kerala, today the theatre scene presents a dismal picture. No doubt, many bold experiments in theatre performances are being made. But

notably, such productions are not published. Why, in comparison to short story, novel, poetry and screenplay, contemporary Malayalam dramatic literature output is small in number? We had plays like Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku (V.T.Bhattathirippad), Pattabakki(K.Damodaran), Koottukrishi (Edassery), IthuBhoomiyaanu (K.T.Muhammed), Nammalonnu (Cherukad), Ningalenne Communistakki (ThoppilBhasi), Nadugaddika (K.J.Baby) etc. which became milestones both in dramatic literature and social change. The socio-political context in which these plays were created should be examined. All the above dramas are products of socio-political and cultural collective struggles and efforts. But do the present Malayalam theatre and dramatic literature maintain its past glory? V.T.Bhattathirippad wanted to write a novel with the aim of transformation of the Brahmin community. But it happened to be a drama that was born out of his pen. He realized that to take the message of Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha directly to the community, drama was a stronger medium than novel. This made him a playwright. Peoples' Theatre in Kerala and popular plays are proof that the theatre field identified itself with socio-political and renaissance movements of the period.

The pioneers of people's theatre could produce creative works which marked their time because they could understand the social undercurrents and contradictions of their time.

Research Problem

Several questions come up regarding the present state of theatre in Kerala. To what extent the past meaningful relation between the theatre

and society remains today? Why is there a distance between theatre and the audience? Thus the contemporary theatre approaches social political problems with the necessary depth of understanding?

How plays and performances can be created upon a categorical realization of social evils and an understanding of social trends and tendencies in a correct historical perspective? How the artist can know the problems, oppressions and contradictions faced by contemporary society?

Research Objective

How the people's content and vibrancy of Malayalam theatre can be regained?

Scope of the study

Augusto Boal (1931-2009) was the Latin American theatre practitioner who gave many models for people's theatre that has made theatre a weapon to prepare the people of Latin America in their liberation struggles.

Boal was a writer, theorist, director, proponent of innovative theatrical conventions and was the author of *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, *The Rainbow of Desire*, *Legislative Theatre*, *Hamlet and the Baker's Son: My Life in Theatre and Politics*. Boal's most famous theatrical and theoretical work is the *Theatre of the Oppressed* originally published in Spanish and Portuguese in 1974 and translated into English in 1977. *The Theatre of the Oppressed* claims that the theatre was originally a practice shared by

all. Theatre of the Oppressed seeks to present both an analysis of historical process of domination and a manifesto for an emergent theatre for the future. As a playwright, Boal has expressed his admiration most frequently for William Shakespeare. As for theatre practitioner Boal's most evident debt is to Bertholt Brecht and also Konstantine Stanislavsky.

The Theatre of the Oppressed can be said to be a blend of Brecht's Epic Theatre, Happenings of America, the Depression Era Living Newspaper and Psycho Drama of Jacob Moreno.

Boal's arsenal of the Theatre of the Oppressed consists of several forms and techniques to break down the fourth wall in conventional theatre ranging from Invisible Theatre, Image Theatre, Legislative Theatre, Simultaneous Dramaturgy, Rainbow of Desire, Newspaper Theatre and the most popular Forum Theatre.

The Theatre of the Oppressed is at work in all the continents. Janasanskritik of Kolkata, Headline of Vancouver, Tolab of New York, Format of Rotterdam, Ashthar of Ramallah etc. have applied directly or indirectly the conventions of the Theatre of the Oppressed. This type of theatre and its innovative conventions open up the windows to a wider perspective of the people's theatre.

Methodology

This thesis has adopted an application oriented methodology. Augusto Boal is a representative of theatre praxis who blends theory and practice. Beyond the pure theoretical approach it is significant to make a study of theory and practice. With an in depth study of People's Theatre

of Kerala and the Theatre of the Oppressed, this investigator has conducted theatre workshops and there from reached at certain conclusions which paved the way for the formation of this thesis.

Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is a theatrical as well as theoretical text which utilizes the theatre for the social movement. It is found that theatrical elements in the Theatre of the Oppressed which stressed the social functions of theatre will be useful in revitalizing the people's theatre of Kerala. Based on the analysis in the Theatre of the Oppressed which discusses the origin of world theatre as well its history, political significance etc. and examination of the origin, history and political relevance of people's theatre in Kerala was done. For this purpose the plays which mark the milestones of Kerala Theatre were studied. After identifying similar contemporary problems of people's life in Kerala, those issues were addressed through the medium of theatre. The applicability of Augusto Boal's theatrical conventions became clear.

Theatre workshops were conducted in which the techniques and conventions in Boal's texts Games for Actors and Non-Actors and Rainbow of Desire along with the Theatre of the Oppressed were applied. The themes of the workshops were selected in the context of problems faced by marginalized people, atrocities on women and children, man-made calamity in the field of agriculture due to misuse of insecticide Endosulfan in Northern Kerala etc. Through this process people's aspirations were revealed and were expressed in the content of drama.

Scheme of Chapters

Besides the introduction, this thesis comprises in five chapters: Chapter Two - The Peoples Theatre of Kerala, Chapter Three - Theatre of the Oppressed, Chapter Four - Theatre Workshops based on the Theatre of the Oppressed , Chapter Five - An Analysis of People's Theatre in Kerala based on Theatre of the Oppressed and Chapter six - Conclusion

Chapter Two entitled The People's Theatre of Kerala starts by taking a look at the performance history of Kerala before the emergence of people's theatre. The formation and development of theatre in Kerala as well as the birth of people's theatre in Kerala are discussed in detail in this section.

Art and literature flourished in the wake of renaissance and national movement. Many attempts made by the members of various communities to reform their own communities by the means of theatre have been discussed here. The salient features of the people's theatre have been included at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Three is entitled 'The Theatre of the Oppressed'. It describes the socio-political context of Latin America featured by the natural resources, geographical peculiarities, cultural traditions and the interference of colonialism and imperialism, economic anarchy and social movements. This part also describes how Augusto Boal became the symbol of people's resistance theatre and a study of the history of the formation of the Theatre of the Oppressed is also made.

Like any other progressive theatre practitioner, Boal, through the Arena Theatre of Sao Paulo presented the plays which had the content of social change. He had presented the texts of the pioneers such as Maxim Gorky, Gogol, Steinbeck, Moliere, Bertholt Brecht etc. He also presented the plays which upheld the Brazilian aesthetics, but the change in the political climate of Latin America had altered the theatrical conventions of Boal. Arena Theatre of Sao Paulo and Opinioao of Rio de Janeiro emerged as opposition to the severe political oppression in Brazil. The military power which had taken the control of Brazilian government in 1964 tried to control Arena Theatre with censorship and threats. Augusto Boal, who opposed the dictatorship of the military government, was imprisoned and brutally tortured. Though he was released after three months and was forced to leave the country. The conventions of the Theatre of the Oppressed were strengthened and consolidated during the exile which lasted for fifteen years. His meeting with John Gasner, the theatrical critic, historian and artistic producer helped Boal to acquire practical knowledge in theatre techniques.

The relationship with Paulo Freire, a prominent intellectual of Brazil, inspired Boal to transform theatre as a weapon of the oppressed.

When Paulo Freire the author of *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, played a major role in mass literacy movements of Latin America, Boal made use of theatre for this movement. He strongly advocated that the responsibility of a theatre artist is not to be an observer of the plays written and presented by the experts, but to involve in search of their own theatre conventions to fight the oppression.

A theatrical action plan aimed at the transformation of the viewers into the position of the creators of the theatre. Though Augusto Boal faced crucial financial crisis to continue his theatre activities after the exile, he made use of the election scenario in 1992 and continued his political and theatre life.

When he got a chance to contest in the election, he tried to combine the theatre with his political activities. Thus he formed the Legislative Theatre for which he was accused of discarding his revolutionary content of theatre.

The Origin and Evolution of the Theatre, Social Function of the Theatre, Feudalism and Theatre, Theatre in the Renaissance Period, Epic Theatre and Empathy, Hegel and Brecht are also included as the subtopics of this chapter.

In the section on the Poetics of the Oppressed we can see spect-actors directly interfering with the actions on the stage though partly ascending to the position of protagonists as we see in Forum Theatre.

Image Theatre is a form of play in which the participants of the theatre group produce a theme through stills making use of their own body and transform it to dynamics.

The actors who practice a socially relevant theme perform in its natural space. Thus the viewers or spectators do not recognise it as a performance or the participants as actors, because it happens just naturally. Therefore the spectators also become a part of it. Invisible Theatre erases the boundaries between the actors and audience.

Legislative Theatre tries to make democracy more truthful and making theatre a part of legislature.

The actors who practice the theme or plot put forward by the spectators are the feature of Simultaneous Dramaturgy which converts spectators into playwrights.

The Cop in the Head which make people aware that the restrictive forces inhibiting freedom of action can sometimes be inside in one's own mind rather than deriving from external oppressors.

The Newspaper Theatre which finds paradoxes in the news and its exaggerations forms appearing in the media and convert them to performances are well discussed in this thesis.

Games for Actors and Non-Actors and Rainbow of Desire written by Augusto Boal are the expansions of the Theatre of the Oppressed discussed in this thesis.

Boal in his book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* explains that the obstacles before one person in his personal and theatre lives express in perfection are social masks and muscular masks, the ways to overcome are games and exercises. He interprets exercises as monologues and the games as dialogues. Thus they apply the possibilities on the stage. The traditional as well as newly created, over two hundred games and exercises are well presented in Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. This thesis deals with the most relevant exercises and games mentioned in Boal's book.

The Rainbow of Desire was framed in such a way to strengthen the aesthetic space - the stage. In this book he obviously declares that there

is nothing personal which are not represented by the social values. This fact is clear in the last part of this segment.

Chapter Four which deals with the practical applications is named 'Theatre Workshops based on the Theatre of the Oppressed'. This chapter comprises this investigator's experiences of theatre workshops based on the Theatre of the Oppressed throughout Kerala since 2011.

A. Following the Endosulfan calamity which crippled hundreds and shocked humanity, a movement started in Northern Kerala. As part of the campaign against Endosulfan, a theatre workshop was conducted at MES College, Nedumkandam, Idukki district based on Theatre of the Oppressed, and a street play was produced.

B. Jayamohan, the noted Malayalam-Tamil novelist in his work *The Hundred Thrones* discusses the right on land and the marginalised and nomadic life of the aboriginal people. It has been adapted to a play for various groups. To realise it the conventions of theatre of the oppressed were used.

C. In the background of atrocities on women and children and cruel rape killing of Nirbhaya in Delhi, a women theatre collective of Cochin created and presented the play *Beware of Rabid Dogs*. It was an experience on women theatre.

D. A theatre workshop was conducted for the students of Calicut University and Government Arts & Science College, Nadapuram, Calicut. All of them were based on the theatre conventions of Augusto Boal's Games for Actors and Non-Actors.

E. In the aftermath of brutal killing of a tribal youth named Madhu at Attappadi, Palakkad a theatre workshop of ten days was organised at Moozhikkulam, Ernakulam. The theme was *The Man and the Soil*. From there a play came out *The Children of Soil*.

F. Finally several conventions of the Theatre of the Oppressed were applied systematically and comprehensively in an experimental theatre workshop conducted as part of the 400th weekly performance of Rengachethana, Thrissur.

This workshop progressed with the adoption of theatrical conventions, games and exercises of the Theatre of the Oppressed in a comprehensive manner.

These theatre workshops validate the applicability of the Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal.

Chapter Five is 'an analysis of People's Theatre of Kerala based on Theatre of the Oppressed'. This chapter examines the height of political-philosophical views underpinning People's Theatre of Kerala. It discusses the origin and history of People's Theatre of Kerala in the background of the aesthetic views of Theatre of the Oppressed. It looks for parallels between People's Theatre of Kerala and Theatre of the Oppressed.

Chapter Six which is the conclusion looks at the result of the study. The theatre conventions and concepts which were studied in course of this research are summarised. The special features of the period when the People's Theatre of Kerala became an active movement are enlisted here. How far and to what extent the Theatre of the Oppressed and its

conventions will help the People's Theatre of Kerala to face the challenges of the present and forge ahead is evaluated on the basis of the experiences of theatre workshops.

In the annexure of this thesis includes script of the play Children of Soil which evolved through the theatre workshop of Moozhikkulam, Ernakulam. The photos, news and features on various theatre workshops and performances based on the Theatre of the Oppressed are also included.

2

People's Theatre in Kerala

Every epoch in the history of Kerala has come up with social institutions that have taken up issues of contemporary nature. Along with these, socio-cultural-political movements have evolved a theatre that is organic and dynamic in nature. It expressed contemporary social realities through the organic synergy between society and theatre. These plays portrayed particular moments and lives that marked the milieu. Here the title *People's Theatre in Kerala* indicates the origin and performance of plays that portray the journey of the Kerala society confronting the many hurdles.

Plays like *Mariyamma Natakam*(1878/1905) that contextualised the life of Christian community, *Balakaesam*(1913) that showed the aspirations of the subaltern communities, *Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku*(1929), *Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam*(1931) and *Rithumathi*(1940) that exposed the decadent life of Nambuthiri community, *Thozhil Kendrathilekku*(1948) that pointed out the possibility of an alternate life for women, *Pattabakki* (1937) that discussed the tenant and serf of feudal era, *Koottukrishi* that sang songs of unity through labour beyond the boundaries of caste (1949), *Ningalenne Communistakki* (1952) that revolted against the vestiges of feudalism, *Ithu Bhoomiyanu*(1953) that uplifted man from the misery of religious bigotry to secularism, *Nadugaddika* (1979), the paean of marginalised and uprooted lives were only a few of the productions born out of the organic nexus between the society and theatre. Contemporary theatre can move ahead only through a study of the history and formative process of people's theatre.

The performance history of Kerala is rich and diverse with indigenous folk arts associated with religious rituals as well as ancient communal rites and classical art forms that flourished with its regional variations of Natyasastra. The traditional-classical art forms with their rigid structure and traditional values survived. But the indigenous art forms staged on larger platforms and with more flexible structure failed in holding a faithful mirror to the human lives of the changing environment. Even Thullal, albeit a product of revolt against traditional art forms replete with feudal values, could not break new grounds of rhetoric that the times demanded.

The Portuguese who invaded the land with mercantile capital left the art form *Chavittu Nadakam*. It has an amalgam of the costumes; visual art traditions of European opera and the techniques of Indian dance forms though it presented in a western plot and structure. Had the pioneers of this art form who embarked on this experimental venture that was quite agreeable to the social milieu of the times taken this up properly and made a comprehensive art form with a harmonious blending of its components, it would have become a path-breaking venture for Malayalam theatre scenario. But the art form did not enjoy such an evolutionary continuum. Thus *Chavittu Nadakam* practiced by the Christian community of Kochi could not burgeon into a pan Kerala art form.

Kathakali, now renowned as Kerala's own performing art form evolved in the 17th Century from the performing art form Ramanattam. Kathakali is a synthesis of many an indigenous art and ritual form like

Sasthrakkali, Chakyarkoothu, Krishnanattam, Ashtapadiyattam, Dasiyattam, Therukkoothu, Theyyam, Thira and Padayani.

The King of Kottarakkara had composed Ramanattam the story of Raman in seven poetic sections to be performed in seven days. And this in due course became Kathakali. The emergence of KathakaliYogas (Groups), the establishment of Kerala Kalamandalam and Kathakali clubs etc. helped Kathakali to flourish.

Apart from employing stories from popular mythology, there were many attempts to compose new *Attakkathas* (play texts) from themes ranging from Indian to foreign. Thus mythologies and literary works from other languages and countries were adapted for Kathakali along with themes contemporary, social and political. Attempts were also being made to make Kathakali which was once confined to the elite circles more popular under the leadership of Vallathol and others. But Kathakali that followed the canons of Natyasastra in its Geeta- Nritya- Vadya (Music – dance – percussion) components were mostly appreciated by an audience who were adept in Sanskrit and *Manipravalam* (an admixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit) and the Kathakali Mudras - the gesture system specific to Kathakali. But Kathakali also met with the same bleak fate as Koodiyattam albeit attempts to portray contemporary social issues in it. Since these traditional elite art forms were not equipped to address the social inequalities prevalent, society went seeking a more potent medium of expression. And thus began a new genre of plays to be written in Malayalam, breaking free from feudal shackles, equipped to contain

ideologies of individual liberty. They were original and novel in their character.

Chavara Kuryakkose Ealiyas one of the harbingers of the renaissance in Kerala and as a native priest had written ten shepherd plays (Ecologues) in Malayalam during 1855-56 and performed it from 1856 onwards (Kuryakkose Elias 11). The English and Hindi plays produced by the Parsi Theatre, Mumbai in the 1850s paved way for the production of modern plays in other regional languages in India. Musical Drama was performed by Tamil theatre groups all over Kerala and those from Karnataka performed in North Kerala. The success of these productions inspired the Keralites to try out similar theatre styles here. In 1882, *Abhijnana Sakuntalam*, translation by Kerala VarmaValiyakoy Thamburan was adapted to theatre by the renowned actor Thiruvattar Narayana Pillai and his group Manomohanam. In Malayalam the plays were written after the style of the musicals. K.C.K.Pillai's *Sadarama* and T.C.AchyuthaMenon's *SangeetaNaishadh a* (1892), replete with songs of different ragas were a few of the notable works that belonged to this genre. Thus indigenous Malayalam plays were slowly taking form from these imitations.

Leaving the sacred and the austere to Theyyam performers, the youth of Northern Kerala sought the cucumber fields to present their plays. Though these plays, Cucumber plays as they were called, originated as a mode of entertainment for the peasants who watched over these fields, writers like Mahakavi Kuttamath and Vidwan P. Kelu Nair added substance to this theatre form with meaningful content. Kelu Nair, a zealous Gandhian, structured these musical plays to suit his

social activism. A musician, artist, poet and theatre person, Kelu Nair exploited the medium effortlessly. In his play *Paduka Pattabhishekam*, he exhorted the audience to love mother country, to eschew caste honour, to keep unity and also to wear khadi. He infused patriotic songs even into mythological themes. In *Pakkanar Charitam* he critiques the caste system vehemently. Nair departs from the traditional path of musical drama and contextualizes contemporary social life. In his play *Vivekodayam* he strongly critiques the miserable life of women confined to kitchen.

Pandit Karuppan, a scholar, poet, teacher and social reformer was a downtrodden with modern education. He played a big role in emancipating his community. In the play-writing contest conducted as part of the sixtieth birthday celebrations of the King of Kochi, he performed the play *Balakalesam* standing within the time constraints. *Balakalesam* revealed the socio-economic and political inequalities and discriminations in the contemporary society. It was a symbolic work with the King as the hero and Kochi the sovereign state as his heroine. The play categorically states that a country can progress only when it eradicates all the impediments to progress such as superstition, falsehood, ignorance, famine etc. *Balakalesam* showcases individual liberty, equality and modern social interventions. Karuppan raises crucial questions as to whether religious conversion will bring an end to the abominable practice of untouchability. The dramatised symbols of the play are shown progressing into icons of optimism later in the play. “Realising the potential of theatre in influencing the common psyche, social reformers took up theatre as a tool for social reformation. The first social play in Malayalam was *Mariyamma Natakam* that critiques

the detestable social sickness among the Christian community of Kerala – the fight between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law...” (Thomas 18)

Mariyamma Natakam was written by Kocheeppan Tharakan in 1878, retained the Malayali ethos in characterization and dialogues. Kocheeppan Tharakan was Malayala Manorama,s office writer. The debut performance of the play was organised by Manorama in Kottayam under the aegis of its editor, Kandathil Varghese Mappila. Later N.N. Pillai and his troupe performed *Mariyamma Natakamat Purogamana Sahithya Sammelan* presided by Yashpal.

Mariyamma Natakam was written even before Ibsen got translated into Malayalam. *Mariamamma Natakam* and *Doll’s House* appeared almost the same time, in the latter half of the 19th Century. The playwright found his plot from the social context of Kerala itself without making a complete imitation of European plays. *Mariamamma Natakam*, written in colloquial Malayalam of the contemporary Christian community was a critique on the social evils prevalent in the Christian community of those days. The play, albeit revolving around the daily trifles of mother- in - law and daughter-in law, raises many social issues of those times. It scorns the regressive attitude of the feudal society and compares it to epidemics like small pox. *Mariamamma Natakam* is a beautiful documentation of the new body consciousness and dress codes that evolved around the latter half of 19th century. It portrays the changes in working conditions, human relations and novel concepts of individual freedom.

While Sreenarayana Guru, Ayyankali and Sahodaran Ayyappan led the movement of downtrodden communities, the Nambudiris still

indulged in regressive customs like Smarthavicharam. Sree Narayana Guru's words such as "this is an abode of virtue where people live sans any religious bifurcation or caste hatred" and "whatever the caste be, it suffice that the human being is good" gave a new vigor to the society. It kindled the youth with revolutionary fire.

In the historical treatise *Kerala of 19th Century*, P Bhaskaranunni elaborates on the period when VT Bhattathiripad, MRB and Premji were engaged in their creative endeavors. Only the eldest male member of the Nambudiri family, the Moos had the right to marry from within the community. And he was allowed to marry four times. Middle-aged or even quite old, Moos usually had wives aged thirteen or eleven. While the younger male members of the Nambudiri family led a life of promiscuity with Sudra women, the womenfolk of their own community remained confined within the house. They lived and died spinsters. It is against this social backdrop that the story writer V.T.Bhattathiripad, poet and travelogue writer MRB and poet Premji turned their attention to theatre.

National freedom movement and the Renaissance movement caused some dichotomies in the Brahmanic system of Dharma. The victims within the Brahmanic community were the women who were fated to spend their whole life confined to the four walls of their houses and the *Apphans* (the younger brothers of the Moos) who had only occasional access to them verandas or pool rooms of the house. When these two groups joined hands, it led to the reformation of the whole community. Thus women's liberation was regarded as the prime focus of Nambudiri reformation.

I was a member of the Yuvajana Sangham (Youth Association) and I abhorred the idea of communal discrimination. I strongly feel that Community-based organizations like Nambudiri Yogakshema Sabha, Nair Samajam, Theeya Sabha instead of being the agents of reformation, cause communal strife. Reformation should not be limited to Nambudiris alone. Fundamental rights like right to property, individual liberty and citizen's rights should be made available to every single person from the most backwards castes to the elite. My life in Thrissur was led along these ideologies. The family background of friends was never a matter of concern. Anyone who shared the same wavelength with me was a friend, whichever caste he belonged to. Yogakshema Sabha did not approve this. (Bhattathiripad 70)

Thus VT's worldview went beyond the narrow confined bigotry of Nambudiri community and the Yogakshema Sabha. He formed the theatre group with the intention of free expression and dissemination of revolutionary ideas. *Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku* was an offshoot of this group.

Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku, a play with a purpose was born out of the brainstorming sessions of a small group of young men who assembled at a place called Yogakshema Lodge. VT himself led and documented those discussions and took initiative to get the result on stage. The play was first performed in 1929 on the twenty second annual day celebrations of Yogakshema Sabha in Edakkunni. It exposed the decadent value system within the community. It exhorted "to make a human being of the Nambudiri". Contrary to the musical drama as well

as the western theatre practices prevalent in those days, VT adopted an extremely realistic mode of expression. The play makes a critique of the evil customs within the Nambudiri community softly in some places and quite harshly in others.

In *Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku*, VT, one of the torch-bearers of Renaissance in Kerala does not stop himself by discussing merely Nambudiri reformation. The play raises harsh criticism on racial discrimination. See how the character Othikkan (preceptor) berates ‘Cherumi’:

Othikkan. Move away, you wretch, she won’t budge! How far have you reached, tell me...

Cherumi. Ain’t come near you, Oh, Lord...

Othikkan. Shoo...wretch. I am on my way to the temple all purified and you dare to contaminate my path..?

Cherumi. To where do me move, Lord..? There are more wayfarers coming after me. They are loaded.

Othikkan. Oh really? Times are so bad that you think I’ll make way for you? (364 - 365)

Modern Kerala emerged when the marginalized sections of the society arose for their liberation. *Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku* carries ripples of that movement. K. Kelappan’s words in the preface reflect the impact the play had on the social life of Kerala.

As a result the youth revolted against the erroneous Vedic pedagogy, younger brothers got married before their older siblings,

Nambudiri women discarded the veiling umbrellas that they carried while going out; women joined men in seeking modern education; widow marriages were conducted. Thus the Nambudiris armed themselves to move ahead in pace with the other communities. It was V. T. who spearheaded this movement. And the sharpest weapon he used for this was the play *Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku*. (Kelappan 10)

Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam that exposed the cankers was the theatrical adaptation of the story written by MRB in the newspaper *UnniNambudiri*. The need to liberate the womenfolk of the community into which he belonged prompted MRB to write this play. *Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam* showed the bleak picture of the victims of primitive polygyny. The play has the story of a hapless girl who commits suicide due to the constant torture she was subjected to by her husband and sister-wives. Nambudiri women had no right to express their likes or dislikes.

In the Kochi Legislative Assembly a bill on the marriage and right to property issue in the Nambudiri community came up for consideration. Madras Legislative Assembly had already passed a similar bill. Kochi and Trivandrum demanded such a bill to be passed here as well. The Feudal Nambudiris engaged in Sambandham were against it. Thus on the eve of Assembly's convening, *Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam* was performed before the assembly members. The intense portrayal of the travails of Nambudiri women suffering under the practice of polygyny set the stage for the bill. The act of the King of Kochi in nominating Parvathi Nenmini Mangalam who was actively

involved in bringing about reformations in her community into the Legislative Assembly led to the passing of Nambudiri Regulation Bill. Here theatre was performing a historical role by bringing about a new legislation in the society. The direct organic relationship between theatre and society is reflected here. Kerala was witnessing a direct intervention of theatre in social reformation.

The radical shifts these playwrights adopted in the content of theatre were not applied to its form. What urged them forward was neither the rejection of the existing form of theatre nor a desire to find new idioms for newer contexts. They were driven by the immediate need of sharply communicating their message to the audience through the existing mode of theatre without breaking its format... VT and MRB have talked about this openly on many occasions. Among these plays the one drama that stands apart in its perfect form as well is *Rithumathi*. (Sankara Pillai 79)

Premji wrote *Rithumathi* to be performed by the students of Nambudiri Vidyalayam on the school anniversary. Premji was hit hard when three of his sisters were married off as third wives to older men. He was deeply hurt when the patriarch of the family decided that only one of the girls should study. *Rithumathi* was born out of the extreme agony of such intense moments.

In this play he challenges the social evil of denying a girl the opportunity to grow and evolve because of traditional superstitious beliefs regarding the natural processes of her body such as menstruation. A girl was not allowed to go to school or even to wear blouses once she started menstruating. She had to spend the rest of her

life subjected to oppression and strict restraint. Her life invariably ended up as one of the many wives of an old Nambudiri. Devaki, the heroine of the play *Rithumathi* is refused education as well as her right to wear proper clothes in the name of such customs and traditions. This angers Devaki.

Devaki: Peel off my blouse indeed! I'll peel off my skin if needs be.
But not my blouse (Premji 66)

Here Devaki is making a bold statement of freedom. It comes out of her realisation as an individual. The essential trait of the Yogakshema Plays was that they aimed at women's liberation. It reflected the trait of that period as well.

Two plays overlooked by the historians of Malayalam theatre were *Savithri* aka *Widow Marriage* (1935) by Lalithambika Antharjanam and *Thozhil Kendrathilekk* (1948) written by a group of Nambudiri women.

Thozhil Kendrathilekk originated as a natural progression of *Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku*. While V. T. aimed at supporting the activities of the Yogakshema Sabha, the play *Thozhil Kendrathilekk* was written as propaganda for the Vocational Training Centre that was founded in 1947 at Lakkidi.

Thozhil Kendrathilekk was first performed in Cherpu, Thrissur on June 12th 1948 at the 37th Convention of the Yogakshema Sabha. It was published in the same year. It is said to be the first Malayalam play to be written and directed exclusively by women. It exhorts that hapless girl should be sold to old Nambudiri anymore in future. Instead of

languishing it out in the kitchen, a woman can work outside, earn a living and hold her head high.

Women were getting expelled from their houses for covering their torso, refusing to marry old men, for getting educated and for joining the *Samajam*. Thozhil Kendram, the Work Centre was formed to provide a space where they can make a living and live in self-respect. The plot of the play that was written as propaganda for this Centre was based on true events.

Kavumkara Bhargavi, a thirteen year old is about to be sold in the pretext of getting married off. The Antharjana Samajam saves her from this trap and brings her to the safety of the Thozhil Kendram. This real incident was adapted into a theatre format. Kavumkara Bhargavi herself had done the role of Devasena, the character moulded on her own personal experiences. The play has purposeful, politically charged conversations in it. The character Vakkeel (Advocate) represents conventional politics. According to him Yogakshema Sabha is a space where the Communists assemble for their unholy speech. He believes that RSS is the only politics appropriate for decent people who follow the *Arsha Bharata* culture.

The conversation the Vakkeel has with his wife is similar to the one that Nora and Helmer in Ibsen's *Doll's House*.

The theme for political drama could be anything from the conflict between two factions in the political life of a people or the struggle between opposing political ideologies within a person's inner self.

Whatever the theme is, it should be true to the core. Here by “Truth” the scientific truth of political thought process is indicated. An each political strife will contain conflicts between good and evil...In that sense it can be seen that political theatre is a perfect blend of truth and beauty. (Thomas 43 - 44)

K.Damodaran wrote *Pattabakki* in 1937 the first Malayalam political drama. It was written to be performed in the Peasant’s meeting of Ponnani Taluk that took place in Vylathur near Guruvayur. Through it the playwright says that an individual is molded by the social system. *Pattabakki* says that for a quality life, the obsolete social system has to undergo a thorough change. *Pattabakki* was born out of the peasant’s movement of Malabar. The characters were performed on the stage by famous personalities like the playwright K. Damodaran himself, A.K. Gopalan, and Sardar Chandroth. While in *Thozhil kendrathilekk* the protagonist was the victim Bhargavi, *Pattabakkihad* the leaders of the peasant’s movement as the main characters.

Those were the times when hunger was the predominant emotion in people’s life. *Pattabakki* portrays individuals who refused to succumb in the face of adversities. Social realities were presented in the play with an eye on scientific truth in a simple storyline. Each performance was a new one, taking in all the criticisms put forward by scholars like C.J.Thomas, S.Gupthan Nair, P.KrishnaPilla, M.P.Bhattathiripad, Pariyanampatta, KuthulliNambudiri and M.S.Nambudiri. The playwright has later recorded that as the play moved from stage to stage it evolved into a different work.

Malabar Kendrakala Samithi was formed to encourage amateur theatre. There were theatre performances across the land as part of National Movement and peasant movement. Taluk based art societies and Malabar Kendra Kala Samithi were formed to organise and find performance spaces for these plays. The performances were led by the Kozhikode-centred art society. Kalathil Varghese, K.Madhavan, S.K.Pottekkatt, Manchery Kamalam and K.P.Raman Nair were the founder members of this society. In 1954 this evolved into Akhila Malabar Kendra Kala Samithi (All Malabar Centre for Arts) under the initiative of cultural leaders N.V.KrishnaWarrier, P.C.Kuttikrishnan, Pavanan, Kadavanad Kuttikrishnan, V .Abdulla, and M. Abdu Rahman. The need for such an All-Malabar Cultural Centre was felt after the Theatre Festival of 1953 in which the whole of Malabar participated. The festival staged *Karavattapasu* by Thikkodiyan, *Swathanthra* by Cherukad and *Jeevitham* by Thikkodiyan. This turned out to be a powerful platform for theatre movement.

Theatre of 1940's reflected the socio-political upheavals of those times. The thoughts and emotions of a struggling people were becoming performance texts. The slogan of the times were "land to the peasant; power to the people". *Nammalonnu* of Cherukadu was a play that echoed these slogans. Cherukad wrote his plays for Mohan Arts, a dynamic theatre group in Pulamanthole, Malabar. The play was prepared for the fund-raising programme of the newspaper Desabhimani.

Nammalonnu that discussed the downfall of feudalism and the growth of the peasant movement was a product of the efforts of a

fraternity. The role of an actor is quite significant in the perfection of a play. The playwright reworked on his text as he listened to the actor reading the manuscript aloud. Thus *Nammolunnu* was evolving into a community product. It was becoming enriched with a myriad range of characters from Malabar.

Premji later did a stage performance of *Nammalonnu* for Kerala Kalavedi, Thrissur. Premji's stage interpretation made it more popular. In a letter written to Premji, Cherukad suggested that he could not lay any claims on the ownership of the play *Nammalonnu* since only the skeleton of the play was his. As the long array of people's theatre reaches *Nammalonnu*, we can see the dividing line between the play and the spectator fading at times during performances. *Nammalonnu* ends on a note of conflict between feudal lord and serf. In a scene where the character Pangan Nair is accosted by the local landlord's henchman, the spectators got carried away and came rushing to the stage. Here theatre was becoming one with the revolt of a people struggling for their land; the distance between the stage and the spectator was fading. We can see indications of the audience turning into performers.

Idassery's *Koottukrishi* was first presented at the annual day function of Krishna Panicker Library, Ponnani in 1949. All the characters of this play are from Ponnani and its neighborhood. Idassery wrote *Koottukrishi* against the social backdrop of post - Khilafat Mutiny in Kerala. The milieu was characterised by the mutual distrust between Hindus and Muslims and a society detrimental to progressive ideas. It was the urgent need of the hour to hold human ideals high. Plays did not openly discuss political ideologies. Russian realities of a social system

devoid of poverty and exploitation must have influenced the playwright. Instilled with Gandhian principles, the playwright can be seen to be yearning for equality and fraternity.

The play inquire into how the feudal supremacy over the land can be brought to an end and how agriculture then running in loss due to fragmentation of land can be successfully brought back by collective farming as a co-operative endeavor. This is heavily influenced by the very successful co-operative and collective farming of Soviet Russia. The main aim of the play is to find a way of living that is beyond all religious and communal boundaries. The playwright puts forward the concepts of group labour and inter-caste marriage as a solution for communal disharmony.

K.T.Muhammed, the theatre genius was a product of Malabar Kala Sangham. He synthesised the amateur and professional streams of theatre effectively. In 1949 Brothers Music Club Kozhikode presented the play *Velicham Vilakk Anweshikkunnu* as *Oorum Perum*. K.T.Muhammed shot into fame when his short-story *Kannukal (Eyes)* won an international recognition. Following this came his master piece *Ithu Bhoomiyanu* in 1955, a milestone in the history of Malayalam theatre.

KT's plays aimed at liberating the Muslim community from the shackles of religious orthodoxy just as VT and MRB cleansed the Nambudiri community of its evil customs by ridiculing them through creative expressions.

I don't claim to possess a mature sense of religion. Let those who possess it hold a torch to truth so that I could be persuaded to realise that the darkness was within me. My sole demand is that the darkness be dispelled. Needless to say that the ultimate aim of a good religion should be a good human being. Like everyone else, what I mean by a "good human being" is one who evolves constantly. For this is Earth. (Muhammed preface)

Those were the times when freedom struggle and its philosophical musings were discussed against the vast canvas of Indian reality. It was thought that a free individual was as important as a free nation. The need was to reconnect with one's tradition and renaissance aspirations. The formation of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) in the first lap of 40's created an atmosphere conducive to this feeling. It aimed at creating a progressive and humane nationalistic aspect to theatre and other art forms as well as in the formation of a comprehensive personality development. K P A C that took shape from this crucible has contributed much to our performance tradition. (Vasudevan Pillai 71)

Youth Cultural Institute was founded in Calcutta under the aegis of progressive geniuses in the fields of arts and literature. In 1943, K.A. Abbas, Manmatha Roy, Rithwik Ghatak, Dinanath Gandhi, Prithwiraj Kapur, M.S.Sathyu and Kaifi Azmi met in Bombay to form Indian People's Theatre Association. That conference decided to mobilise an active cultural reawakening all over India supporting freedom struggle. Thus began K. P.A.C in 1950 in response to IPTA's call. The organisers of K.P.A.C were Punalur Rajagopalan Nair, G.JanardhanaKurup,

Adv.K.S.Rajamani, Sree Narayana Pillai, Kambissery Karunakaran, and O N V Kurup who were the the student political activists of Law College and University College, Thiruvananthapuram. The first play by K. P. A.C was *Ente Makananu Sari* written by these men.

Around the time K. P .A .C was formed, Sooranad, a small village in Kollam became the venue for a fiery war against feudalism. Sooranad had a public pond. It was the main source of sustenance for the poor on days of famine. On Dec 30th 1949, the feudal lords of Sooranad got the police to assault the peasants at their homes for committing the crime of catching fish from the pond. In the riot that ensued, one Inspector and four other Police officers were killed. Sooranad became the stage for heinous police atrocities. Police unleashed gruesome violence on the common people of Sooranad and its neighbourhood. All the accused people went into hiding. But soon Thandassery Raghavan, Kalakkattuthara Parameswaran Nair, Madathil Bhaskaran Nair, Purushothama Kurup and Payikkat Gopala Pillai were caught by the Police and killed. Thoppil Bhasi and a few others went underground and led a life of immense sufferings. It was during this period of underground life that he wrote the short play *Munnettam*. What was to be a pathbreaker play in Malayalam, *Ningalenne Communistaakki* (You made me a Communist) was developed from the thread of *Munnettam*. Subsequently Thoppil Bhasi was arrested. It was then that K.P.A.C. decided to stage *Ningalenne Communistakki*. But a closer study of the text revealed that it demanded some serious alterations for an effective stage presentation. But the playwright was under police custody and he could not do much to help them. Thus G.Janardhana Kurup and

Rajamanikyam, the henchmen of K.P.A.C took it upon themselves to do the much-needed editing.

The character Kesavan Nair the feudal lord was subjected to considerable change for the performance. Kesavan Nair's daughter Sumam, who had no role on the stage in the manuscript, was brought out as a modern character. Apart from the five major scenes, all the others were added later.

Thoppil Bhasi writes in the second edition of the book. "When it was first performed scenes that were not in the original manuscript were added; many scenes were trimmed away; a character I had kept behind the stage was brought out brilliantly. In that sense the play *Ningalenne Communistakki* that you see today is a product of hard work of a group of people who filled in the structure provided by me".(9) "Bhasi depicts the story of the people's movement exploiting the essence of the musical drama tradition that existed here. His source was the harsh realities around him. He subjected the taboos detrimental to the social development to harsh scrutiny." (Vasudevan Pillai 73-76)

Ningalenne Communistakki that told the real life stories of the struggle was a big success on stage. The debut performance was in Sudarsana Theatre, a thatched structure, on December 6th 1952 nine in the evening at Thattasseri, Kollam. Drama till then was one of exaggeration. But this play changed the concepts of theatre hitherto witnessed. People's theatre like this had played a great role in bringing the Land Reforms Act in Kerala.

P.J. Antony saw the theatre as a form of political activity. Political plays such as *Socialism*, *Mannu*, *Inquilabinte Makkal* etc were written by P.J.Antony. These plays, creating a deep impact on the society have marked the history of a specific period. *Inquilabinte Makkal* was first performed in 1954. This is written against the backdrop of workers movement that took momentum after independence. P.J.Antony chose familiar surroundings as his settings. A rebel union is made with the financial help of capitalist employers to sabotage the workers' movements to get the factory opened and for better wages. Institutionalised establishments like religion, temples and mosques join hands with the capitalist. *Inquilabinte Makkal* portrays this situation with a touch of humour.

K .J. Baby, sensitive and alert to social issues, has always been a keen observer of his times. With *Nadugaddika* he brought performance space in the midst of people.

Baby was forced to shift his residence from Kannur to Wayanad due to financial constraints. His participation in a three-month long course organised by Jesuit priests in Bangalore gave him new insights into society and theatre. There was a fifteen day-long theatre workshop as part of this course. The workshop was led by Sr. Clare who had received training under the famous Bengali theatre person Badal Sircar. It was at this camp that K .J .Baby first got acquainted with the book *Theatre of the Oppressed* by Augusto Boal. Baby's concepts of theatre became wider with his encounter with Augusto Boal's theatre experiences including Invisible Theatre. Baby was fascinated by the life of the Adivasis of Wayanad. He used to visit the abode of Matha

Peruman, the chieftain of the Adiyor tribe. He got closely acquainted with their music, songs, language and percussion.

Gaddika is a custom of the Adivasi used as a treatment for diseases. If one person in the family is stricken by some disease, then the tribal chief would come, sing and dance the disease away. Nadu Gaddika or Naduzhichil is the custom of visiting every house in Wayanad once in a year with song and dance to ward off diseases. While travelling with the Gaddika people, it was Krishnan, a young man from the Kurichya tribe that suggested the theatrical potential of Gaddika to Baby. The play *Nadugaddika* narrates the history of two decades in one and a half hours. It begins from the ending of Baby's first play *Apurna* (The Incomplete). The Gaddika artist, drawing inspiration from the heroic legend Varghese, invites the characters on to the stage, one by one. He is the spokesperson of each era as well. The actors wore the shroud provided by Fr. Pottakkuzhichalil, a priest in Wayanad. In the beginning the play was staged under the tag of Zero Arts Club. An intense critique on the suppressive measures on the Adivasis of Wayanad turned into a realistic picturisation of the suppression itself. This ended up in Baby being branded as an extremist by the State. It was during the days of the performance of the play that Baby got in touch with members of the Naxalite movement. From then onwards *Nadugaddika* started performing under the tag of Wayanad Samskarika Vedi.

Later it was staged as the Gaddika of poor landless peasants of Wayanad. On May 22nd 1980, the group of eighteen people who had come to perform *Nadugaddika* at Muthalakkulam Maidan, Kozhikode was arrested by the police. The State, realizing the potential of theatre as

a source of dissenting power, was suppressing that realistic expression of art by the people.

People's Theatre of Kerala evolved with the socio-political-renaissance movements. Each era of repression had come up with many a movement that raised its voice against the social evils and suppressions. The plays of the people's theatre were written and performed as propaganda of, or they upheld the ideologies of these movements that were born as a natural reaction to the times.

Meaningful fraternities like this which aimed at finding solutions by realistic analysis of social issues paved the way to people's theatre. Discourses of movements that worked on socialist ideologies influenced the playwrights. They became aware of the stark political realities of the times in which they lived. This led to the creations of works that had social realities ingrained in them.

The members of each community made a political tool of theatre for reforms within their lot.

People's theatre is a product of collective efforts; not of a single playwright. The basic format conceived by the playwright was filled and perfected by the larger collective. Organisers, actors and spectators with a political acumen enrich the text across many stages. These plays had a format that underwent constant evolution. The possibility of the original manuscript undergoing a sea change through social intervention was a peculiarity of such plays. By presenting contemporary themes and characters on the stage, the dividing line between the stage and the

spectator was very thin. Most plays of people's theatre were realistic in nature. They were performed with people's participation.

The performances were crowd-funded. A large number of audience participation made the performance dynamic in nature. Composing of the play, training, direction, music and props were all generated with public intervention.

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3

Theatre of the Oppressed

The Dramatic Context of Augusto Boal

South America, popular by the name Latin America, is a diplomatic geographical area that comprises the Panama Canal, the Amazon river, Andes mountains, Atacama deserts, Caracas mountains, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, etc. This region is prosperous with various species of plants and animals and metals and minerals: Brazil rich with iron ore, Venezuela a rich reserve of petroleum, The Guyanas the plateaus of diversity, Chile which smells saltpetre, many countries which had gold and silver hills. Brazilian mines are glittered by rare metals like manganese, emerald, agate, topaz, and diamond. The rain forests provided Brazilwood churned the structure of musical instruments and coloured the costumes of Europe. The wide landscapes between Amazon and Orinoco rivers and the floating islands are greatly attracted by the tourists.

The European colonial powers invaded these boundless rich and beautiful lands. They robbed immeasurable natural resources of Latin America. They were often competitions and quarrels on sharing unlimited natural resources. Portugal and Spain were the leading invaders. The invaders also intervened with their ethnic cultures like Olmec and Aztec, Inca, Mayan etc., and their languages were substituted with the languages of invaders. Spanish and Portuguese became their major languages. The influence of these foreign languages gave South America a new name - Latin America.

The invaders enslaved the inhabitants named Amerindians and strong intelligent African Negroes. Portuguese and Spanish people had sexual contacts with local women and emerged a new hybrid

community named Maltose. Latin America also had a tragic history that mothers killed their children in order not to send them to work in the miserable conditions in the coalfields. The invasion in South America was different from that of North America. In North America, Red Indians were massacred which led to the extinction of their race. On the contrary, the invaders exploited the South Americans' maximum. The priests who reached there for their religious missions had sympathy towards the inhabitants who were harshly exploited. The Jesuit fathers had undertaken charity as a mission. The environment created by different climates, geographic variety of resources is visible in their art and culture. It was in the Galapagos, a Latin American island where Charles Darwin wandered in pursuit of the evidence for the Origin of Species, a treasure of evidence of the evolution of living and non-living. It was in the Latin American matrix, legendary characters like Robinson Crusoe of Daniel Defoe and Papillon of Henry Charier took birth.

Neruda who showed us:

This was the dwelling, this is the place:

Here the broad grains of maize rose up

And fell again like red hail.

Here gold thread came off the vicuna

To clothe lovers, tombs, and mothers,

King and prayers and warriors.(84)

In the novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez who blended myth with the life of ancestors, Octaviapaz and Huvan Rulfo had lived in this land.

Mayans imprinted in the areas of astronomy, medicine, mathematics, architecture, agriculture, and sculpture. In the beginning, they lived at the Mexican valleys. Mayans are considered the beginners of agriculture. When they started agriculture, it became a necessity for them to know space and time and beginning and end. For this purpose, they formed a calendar. The calendar which was named after Mayan was related to the movements of Sun, Moon, and Venus. Chitchen Itza space observatory in Mexico accurately calculated signs of the zodiac. They formed language through ideogram inscription on stones. They made an object similar to paper from the fibers of plants.

A pyramid temple in Chitchen Itza inscription of the goddess and Cholula Great Pyramid, a rain god named Chakmool in Mexico etc. are the evidence for their skills in art and science. They were greatly interested in sports and games. It was the ancient American tribe who used rubber for the first time in history. They loved music and samba dance. Carnivals made their life colourful.

When diverse Latin American plants became ripe in different parts of the world, the colonial powers imposed commercial crops like sugarcane, lemon, and orange upon them. Thus Latin American nations became banana Republics of the United Fruits. Modern capitalism imposed robbery, anarchy, civil war, military rules, the annihilation of democracy etc. upon Latin American prosperity. The elected governments were overthrown. Alcohol, drugs, and obscenity spread as

part of exploitation. Democratic movements and attempts of left revolutions were directly and indirectly suppressed. They also imposed obstructions and restrictions upon the countries which survived the suppression. The revolutionaries like Tupac Amaru, Simón Bolívar, Che Guevara of Bolivia, and Allende of Chile lost their lives fighting against the invaders. Overcoming all the challenges under the leadership of Fidel Castro, Latin America entered into the era of socialism through Cuba. Once Spain and Portugal invaded Latin America, but now they are under the threat of imperialist power from their own continent that is the USA. Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and Lula De Silva of Brazil lost their power due to the intervention of imperialist powers. The life of Hugo Chavez was a fight against imperialism. Every democratic movement in Latin America was sunk in the blood of innocent people. At present, it has become a place of political experiments of the World Bank. It was in this situation the art and literature of Latin America formed and the Latin American theatre has the same background. Augusto Boal was born in this backdrop and brought up in Brazil. Boal studied and applied drama when these changes took place in the world. His parents were Portuguese in origin. Finally, due to the strong disagreement towards the foreign policies on Latin America, they left their native country. Boal was born in 1931.

Twentieth-century Brazil has a picture of economic instability and political aberrations. The gulf between the haves and have not been big and keeps on increasing. This was apparent in the distribution of the land too. A large area of the land was embroiled in speculative trade and the rest were kept fallow. This economic disparity was also a source of civil strife. Brazil also spent much of the twentieth century under

military dictatorships. As a norm, purported measures at resolving economic problems introduced by a government would be usually abandoned by the succeeding governments. At the time of economic instability between 1950 and 1960, huge foreign loans were availed of to save coffee, the main crop, which was facing price fall. The resultant inflation pushed the students and youths of the country into riots and protests. The activities of Boal and his contemporaries should be evaluated in light of such a socio-political background. During Boal's time, the Arena Theatre in Sao Paulo was a centre of creative innovations and politically progressive ideas in the sphere of drama. In addition to the presentation of the works of renowned personalities like Maxim Gorky, Moliere, Gogol, Steinbeck, Berthold Brecht, and others, the Arena Theatre also presented works of those playwrights who decidedly upheld the concepts of Brazilian aesthetics.

The elections and democratic process in Brazil of those days were marred by rampant corruption. The opposition parties were either sidelined or banned from participating in the election process. The powers of the military were enhanced while civilian rights were curtailed. All kinds of socio-cultural and artistic activities were strictly censored. In this period, the theatre groups like Arena of Sao Paulo and Opinião of Rio de Janeiro rose into prominence and opposed the authoritarian regime. The military regime following its ascent to power in 1964 attempted to curb the activities of the Arena Theatre by means of censorships and threats. Augusto Boal who was a fervent critic of the regime was imprisoned and tortured. Even though he was released after three months the continuing regime of terror forced him to leave Brazil. It was only after fifteen years of exile that Boal was finally able to

return to his homeland in 1986. During this period of exile that he developed and strengthened techniques of the iconic 'Theatre of the Oppressed'.

Augusto Boal after his graduation in 1952 pursued further studies at Columbia University in the USA. Along with chemistry he also took an interest in learning about theatre. His meeting with John Gasner, a theatre critic, historian, and artistic producer in New York helped Boal learn much about theatre and drama. As a dramatist, Boal drew his greatest inspiration from William Shakespeare. As regards theatre practitioners and the use of the stage, it was Berthold Brecht who made a visible influence on Boal. Many of Brecht's characteristics including his political stands, anti-illusionism, and a critical style of presentations helped Boal to achieve a new space and to shape his own style into theatre applications or praxis.

Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938), an eminent Russian actor and director, exerted considerable influence on Boal's idea of the theatre. Stanislavsky's disciplined and detailed rehearsal based on his conventions attracted Boal. It was at the Actor's Studio in New York that Boal encountered Stanislavsky's Method Acting. The manner in which the action lived like the characters during the practice at Actors Studio astounded Boal. When Augusto Boal finally returned to Brazil, it was with an advanced understanding of the techniques of theatre the ideas which were based on detailed and disciplined theories on theatre, emphasized the creativity of the actor.

The oppressive rule convinced Boal that it was his bounden duty to wield theatre as a weapon that would energize and consolidate the

Latin American people who were waging a relentless struggle against imperialism and autocracy. His association with Brazilian thinker and educationist Paulo Freire encouraged him to use theatre as a medium of instruction of the oppressed. Through the activities of the Arena Theatre, Boal kept growing and transforming the powerless into an organized massive audience (forum). He had already initiated an attempt to take the theatre to the masses via the National student's Union as early as the 1960s. In 1973 the Government of Peru had initiated a literacy programme. It was known as the ALFIN's programme (ALFIN's- Operation Alphabetization Integral). The primary aim of this programme was the alleviation of illiteracy in Peru. There existed around forty-five languages in Peru. This diversity in languages hampered the literacy programme. Boal overcame this problem utilized the varied possibilities of art. The pedagogical ideas that had attained its concrete form through the ALFIN's project came to exert a great influence on Boal's theatrical practices.

The ALFIN's method was born of the theories of Paulo Freire. Freire's work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was the understanding of the existing realities of the working class of Brazil and his opposition to the education systems of the privileged. Freire omitted the much-professed principles of 'top to bottom' from his mass literacy programme. He exposed the power structure of the pedagogical approach which assumed that the learners are akin to empty vessels that await pervasion of the teacher's knowledge. Freire referred to this form of education as 'banking education. His evaluation was that such a system only allowed learners the freedom to receive and file knowledge as well as to safeguard investment. Boal aimed at making all the participants of the

literacy programme use their varied, vivid, and rich experiences to produce their plays and not just be passive viewers of dramas produced and presented by professionals and experts. As a result, the participants immersed themselves in developing a theatrical language that was capable of expressing their realities. Augusto Boal developed his model with the aim of transforming people who were mere viewers into proactive artists (spect-actors).

Before his exile, Augusto Boal was a front-ranking dramatist and director in Arena theatre. After his return, he with the assistance of some friends made efforts to establish a Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio. At a juncture, it was felt that the project would have to be abandoned because of the paucity of funds. But the formation of a Centre of the Theatre of the Oppressed (CTO) became possible during the elections of 1992. The CTO undertook the task of 'dramatizing' the election campaign programme of Lula's Workers Party which was gaining in popularity. Boal was selected as a candidate of the Workers Party to the members of the council. His Legislative Theatre contributed greatly to his unexpected electoral success. The CTO exposed how the existing social evil continued to be perpetuated with the aid of the law.

The waves of this movement paved way for the entry of Boal into the legislative chamber. Using his influence as the representative of the people, he did his utmost is to transform the longstanding wishes of the people into laws. Boal argued that thus, the Legislative Theatre transforms citizens into representatives in the Legislature, while the Theatre of the Oppressed not only upheld the concerns and their

aspirations but also, prepare them to be hardworking, the Legislative Theatre takes its further by fulfilling these aspirations in the form of laws. He claimed that the Legislative Theatre which was based on the communication between the citizen and the representative was a transitive action (transitive verb) but Frances Babbage faculty at the theatre department of Leeds University, in her study of Augusto Boal is of the opinion that the Legislative Theatre doesn't represent the radical change that had been envisaged by the Theatre of the Oppressed.

Twenty years earlier Boal criticized Brecht's theatre because although the spectator does not delegate power to the characters to think in his place... he continues to delegate power to -them to act in his place (Boal, 1975-155). Arguably, Legislative theatre proposes something similar. The Rio citizens are engaged in a thinking process albeit on their feet-but ultimately 'the power to act' has been delegated elsewhere (Babbage 28)

In the year 1992-96 Boal had organized Legislative Theatre in different places of the city by putting together nineteen groups. In this way, thirteen laws were legislated. During the period of 1992-96, Boal conducted legislative theatre activities in different areas of the city, organizing nineteen groups. As a result, thirteen laws were passed. Today many legislative theatres are conducted having no connections with legislation. Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed has exerted significant influence all over the world. Boal's book the *Theatre of the Oppressed* was translated into twenty-five languages. Today in every continent there are forums and groups of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Forums such as Jana Sankritik of Calcutta, Headline of Vancouver,

Tolab of New York, Format of Rotterdam, Ashtar of Ramallah are directly or indirectly apply the techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed.

Though the Theatre of the Oppressed is said to have originated in Latin America, it reflects various conventions and techniques from different parts of the world. Along with Brecht's Epic Theatre, it also reflects the conventions and techniques of the theatre forms like Happenings of America, The Depression Era Living Newspaper, and Psychodrama of Jacob Moreno.

Boal's views on the Origin and Evolution of the Theatre

Theatre of the Oppressed is the well-known theoretical work of Augusto Boal. In this book, Boal analyses the role played by the theatre in different stages of its development in society, with special emphasis on the politics of theatre. By the term Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal means theatre activities in which everybody can participate. The origin and evolution of theatre which is discussed in detail in the book is summarized.

Theatre was the people singing freely in the open air; the theatrical performance was created by and for the people. It was a celebration in which all could participate freely. Then came the aristocracy and established divisions; some persons will go to the stage and only they will be able to act; the rest will remain seated, receptive, passive - these will be the spectators, the masses, the people. And in order that spectacle may efficiently reflect the dominant ideology, the aristocracy established another division;

some actors will be protagonists (aristocrats) and the rest will be the chorus - symbolizing in one way or another, the masses. Aristotle's coercive system of tragedy shows us the working of this type of theatre. (Boal 11)

Boal observes in this study that theatre has become a medium for instructing the audience on what is suitable and conforming to the social need. In the middle ages, theatre aimed at the perpetuation of feudal oppression. The control of theatre passed to the aristocracy and priests. Even when the form of the drama changed drastically, the aim remained unchanged. It was the transmission of values that induced conformity to the existing social order. During the renaissance, the Greek tragedies and the drama of the middle ages were studied, analyzed, and re-enacted with a new perspective and value concept. For renaissance theatre, the central concern became the human individual. And a novel and intense individualism became its philosophy. Boal considers individualism as a cultural definition of the newly rising bourgeoisie. The promise of the renaissance theatre was freedom of the individual. But in reality, it is not available to all. The social system continued its oppression. People were controlled by a minority.

Social Function of the Theatre

Boal starts his analysis of the social function of theatre with the study of Aristotle. Through a critical study of Poetics which is the major work of Aristotle dealing with the arts and literature, he makes some observations about the Greek social structure, ethics, and values. The importance which Aristotle treats Greek tragedy and the objective which he assigns to the tragic plays of that period in Poetics is notable. Boal

says Aristotle wanted the theatre to be instructive, to educate people on what is good for the society. In Boal's opinion, it is to strengthen the belief in the existing social order. According to Aristotle structure of tragedy should be such that in the beginning, spectators are free to identify with the tragic hero of the play. In the course of the play the faults of the character, contradicting the existing social order are brought out. Finally, in the fall of the hero and his repentance, the spectators are induced to give up the same anti-social trend which they may have within themselves. Spectators are cleansed in the process of catharsis(Fig. 3.1).

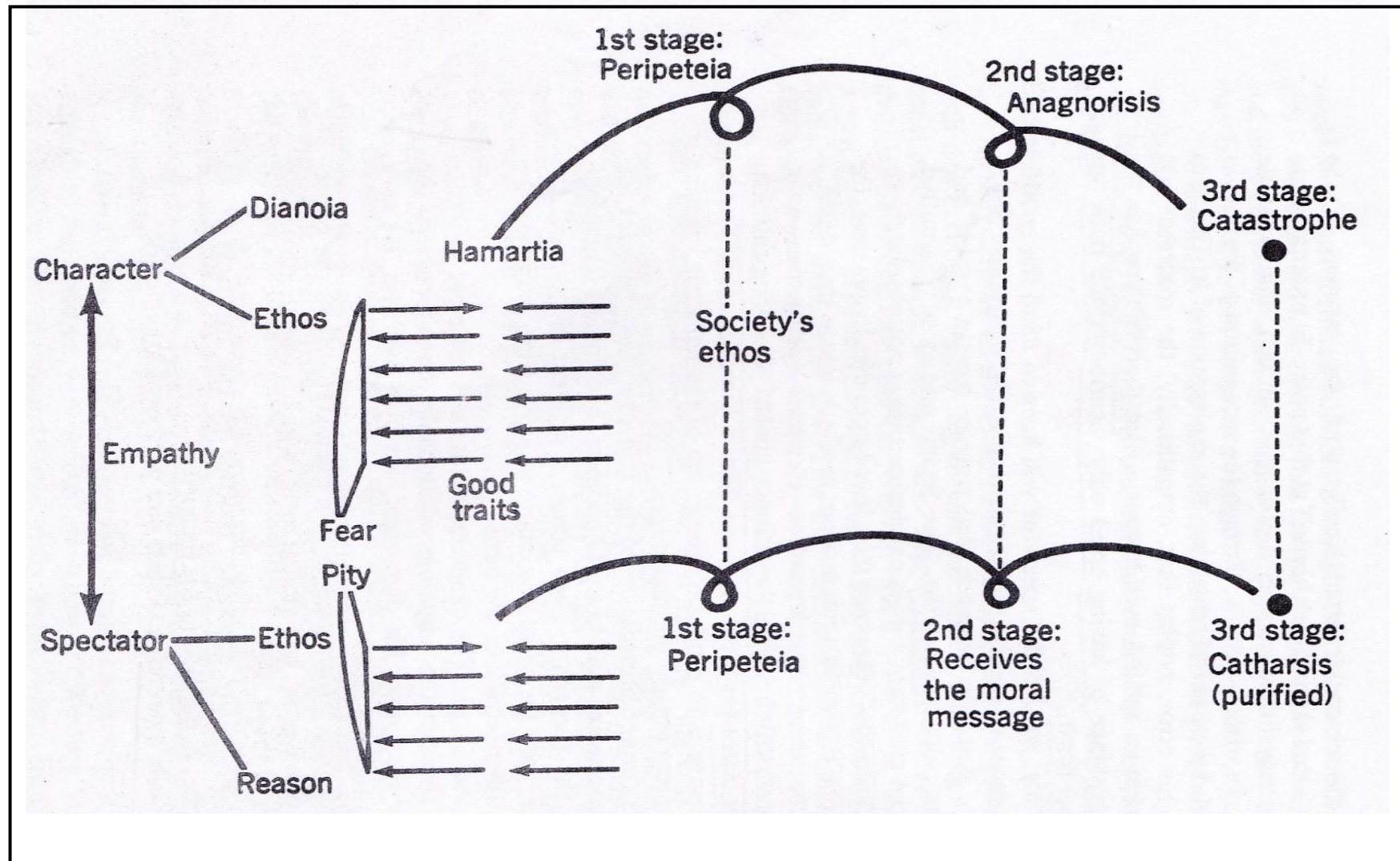


Fig.3.1A graphical representation of Aristotle's coercive system (Boal 37)

Boal says Aristotle made an

Extremely powerful poetic-political system for intimidation of the spectator, for the elimination of the bad or illegal tendencies of the audience. This system is, to this day, fully utilized not only in conventional theatre, but in the TV soap operas and in Western films as well: movies, theatre, and television united, through a common basis in Aristotelian poetics, for repression of the people.
(Introduction)

Feudalism and the Theatre

In the next chapter of *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Machiavelli and poetics of virtue begins with a study of the drama of the middle ages. This was the period of feudalism. Common people toiled in the land and were tied to the land. The noble classes owned the land. Obedience to the nobility was the characteristic feature of the culture of that period. In addition, the church added a dominating influence on all aspects of life. In the feudal society freedom of the individual was unthinkable, common people were ignorant and had blind faith in the ideas, dogmas, and commandments of the church. Boal says the rigidity of the stratified social estates, and the almost total absence of commerce produce art which placed no value on what is new but attempted to preserve the old.

Boal sees the theatre of this period as essentially Aristotelian. "The aims of feudal art were the same as those of the clergy and nobility to immobilize society by perpetuating the existing system. Its principal characteristics were depersonalization, deindividualization, and

abstraction”. But the medieval theatre changed its form and technique. “The typically feudal characters were not human beings, but rather abstractions of moral, religious values. They did not exist in the real concrete world. The most typical was called Lust, Sin, Virtue, Angel, Devil etc” (Boal 55). And the plays were of a directly moralizing and exemplary in nature, the good were rewarded and the bad were punished.

Theatre in the Renaissance period

The immobility of the medieval period was overturned by the renaissance, which started in the 15th century. It was marked by the growth of trade and commerce, coming of a middle class who made a profit and prospered through hard work. Their rise in society was not due to their birth in any privileged social class. Their progress was due to the merit of the individual and enterprise and activity.

This transformation of the society floated new values of individualism, the virtue of the individual, importance of freedom, and praxis or free activity of the people. To that extent, it reduced the domination of the church, and its control over society, the art of this period both reflected and re-inforced these changes. “On stage and, in paintings and sculptures, it needed to create live men, of flesh and blood, especially the virtuous man” (Boal 62). Boal traces the changes in theatre through the works of Nicolo Machiavelli and William Shakespeare. He identifies *Mandragola*, a play by Machiavelli, as marking the transition from feudal to the bourgeois theatre.

Mandragola is a play typical of the transition between the feudal and the bourgeois theatre, and its characters contain, in equal measure, abstraction as well as concretion. They are not yet human beings completely individualized and multi-dimensional, but they are no longer mere symbols and signs. They synthesize individual characteristics and abstract ideas, in a perfect balance (Boal 66).

In Shakespeare's plays, human individuality takes a clearer form. Boal says "the entire body of Shakespeare's dramatic works serves as documentary evidence of the coming of the individualized man in the theatre. His central characters are always analyzed multi-dimensionally"(63). He revealed a man in his totality.

Epic Theatre and Empathy

Boal in his studies on Theatre of the Oppressed gives a special focus on Bertolt Brecht who sought an alternative to the western theatre which dominated about a thousand years. Western theatre was based on empathy and catharsis. Brecht understood that the conventional theatre of the twentieth century was totally futile. Brecht strongly believed that the theatre ought to aim at public education along with aesthetic experience. Brecht tried to establish a revolutionary theatre through alienation blending aesthetics and enlightenment. According to Brecht, a spectator must be able to recognize an incident or thing and also to experience it generally. Therefore, the spectators will be able to understand their own situation and transform them. This concept which is against the identification theory of Aristotle is known as alienation. On the contrary to the dramatist like Max Reinhardt who leads the spectators to dramatic experiences by creating illusions, Brecht tried to

change these spectators reasonable and transforming. Brecht called the Aristotelian theatre, Dramatic Theatre Boal included Brecht's a brief note on Epic Theatre and Dramatic Theatre.

It may be confusing that the old term epic was given to the new theatre concept of Brecht because of it similarly with the Aristotelian concept. But Aristotle did not mention anything about Epic Theatre in his Poetics. On the contrary, he mentions about epic poetry. But Epic Theatre is related to modern trends. "Erwin Piscator, a contemporary of Brecht, has in turn a completely different concept of the meaning of epic, makes a type of theatre completely different from what Aristotle understands by epic poetry and yet to that type of theatre he applies the same name" (Boal 64). Brecht uses the expression epic theatre mainly in contraposition to Hegel's definition of epic poetry. In reality, Brecht's whole poetics is basically an answer and a counter-proposal to the idealist poetics of Hegel.

In the renewed edition of Brecht's *Dramaturgy: A Short Organum of the Theatre* in 1953 a short description Theatre in the Science Era also was included. In *Dialectics of Theatre* written by Brecht in the last days of his life a revised form of Short Organum of the theatre was included as an annexure. Brecht declared that the expression Epic Theatre had to fulfill its function as it focused upon the style of narration and now it has become a theatre form anyone can practice. Therefore he wished his theatre to be called Dialectical Theatre.

Augusto Boal in his *Theatre of the Oppressed* elaborately discusses the identification and its application. Understanding the

feeling of the other person as it can be called identification. The Augusto Boal shares the same views of Brecht's on identification.

As we have seen in 'Aristotle's coercive system to tragedy' empathy is the emotional relationship which is established between the character and spectator and which provokes fundamentally a delegation of power on the part of the spectator, who becomes an object in relation to the character: whatever happens to the latter happens vicariously to the spectator.

In the case of Aristotle, the empathy he recommends consists of the emotional tie which involves two basic emotions: pity and fear..."(Boal 102)

When a spectator realizes it is due to a mistake that a virtuous man undergoes strange miseries he/she feels pity and fear. But Boal argues that not only pity and fear but all other emotions can create identification. Its basic requirement is the indifference of the spectator, Boal argues. Sex and sadism can also create identification. It is obvious from the feelings which deal with such an issue. Identification happens as a result of moral consciousness, values, and beliefs. Here Boal deeply examines Brecht's approaches to identification. Brecht analyses that idealist specifies on the emotions useful to interpret the world. Apart from the interpretation of the world, materialist poetics aims at the transformation of society. The real aesthetic experience never supports the arousal of emotions. It is also not the leakage of the emotions undermined by society. It is an ultimate and enlightened understanding. Brecht gave more importance to thought and enlightenment than emotion. As Boal observes Brecht opposes the orgy of emotions, but he

never opposes emotions. Opposing the emotion is against the temper of modern science. Brecht supported the emotions derived from knowledge. But he denied the emotions generated from ignorance. Brecht was very particular that the creation of emotion in a spectator should not be just like a child afraid by a scream from a dark room. Pointing out Albert Einstein's invention of $E=MC^2$, Boal analyses that learning and research as an emotional experience. Therefore there is no need of avoiding the emotions. But we have to oppose the emotions generated from ignorance. Brecht's masterpiece *Mother Courage and Her Children* is an example of this. The scene in *Mother Courage* loses her children one by one in war is heartbreaking. Naturally, spectators become sad but wailing that fatal is out of ignorance. But to Brecht permissible to have an indignant cry against the business of war.

Here it is not fate but profit motivated war by which the mother lost her children. Brecht is of the opinion that the spectator should not be just like the bourgeois who ignores the intellectual factor in viewing a drama.

Boal observes in *Theatre of the Oppressed* in the part 'Catharsis and Repose or Knowledge and Action', the trumpet of human emotion and action, after making the dramatic performance more effective reaches the state of repose. Aristotle's *Poetics* represents the existing social and moral values and believes. The tragic hero struggles against the existing system due to 'hidden mistakes' in him. This struggle leads him to a tragedy. At the end of the drama, he gets rid of the mistake. Thus the world reaches in its equilibrium according to Hegel and Aristotle.

Here Boal makes a deep study of Brecht. To Brecht, as a follower of Marxian philosophy, the drama never ends in tranquility. To Brecht, the end of the drama is to find how society thinks, how it loses its equilibrium and how it can be rapidly transformed.

The real pictures of social life point towards the proletarians, the real victims of the existing system. The plays which aim at the transformation of society fail to re-establish the equilibrium. The bourgeois police try to maintain the equilibrium of society. At the same time, the Marxian artist inspires the movement for national liberation and the emancipation of the working class, oppressed by capitalist powers. Boal argues that Hegel and Aristotle considered drama as a means to eliminate the emotions against the existing social order. But Brecht explicates the ideas, reveals the truth, exposes the contradictions, and argues for transformation. Aristotle and Hegel consider the end of the drama as a state of rest whereas Boal considered the climax of drama as a preparation for the action. Boal observes that a person's ability for action is being eliminated through catharsis. The Aristotelian plays eliminate a person's emotions such as dignity and courage which are necessary for social change. The mistake is not with the person who reveals the real social situation but with the social system itself. So it is the society to be changed, Boal undoubtedly declares. The methodology of Brechtian poetics stressed the scientific curiosity to know what the end of the drama is. The real responsibility of an artist is not just to show the actual facts but to expose how it became the reality. To reveal how things became so.

Brecht critically analyzed the empathy connecting it to the theatrical illusionism. The spectators are more familiar with the identification process. Incidents and characters created on the stage seem to be real to the spectator. So this theatre reflects the ideology that the world exists as it is without any change. Therefore Boal observes the significance of the politicization of theatre. It will not happen casually. So Brecht consciously blends anti-illusionistic theatricals with epic theatre. In strong disagreement with the naturalist representation of the bourgeois, the theatre puts forward discontinuation of Aristotelian poetics. There is no space for fantasy in Brechtian theatre. That is an observation centre. A critical consciousness can be possible without destroying empathy completely but preventing its free flow and keeping a distance from it. Though Boal's observations are reasonable and similar to that of Brecht, he reaches a different conclusion. Boal invests his spect-actor physically and mentally to the dramatic action. So Boal describes forum theatre as the space in which analysis and debates dramatically take place in the limits of performance. We may feel that Boal's forum theatre depends more upon empathy than the epic theatre of Brecht. But on closed observation, we can see Boal's disagreement with the Aristotelian or dramatic theatre. Boal invites spectators to the stage to become heroes. Though temporary and partial, at least some of them come forward as to be in their life. The spectator of forum theatre does not identify with the protagonist on the stage. On the other hand, he intervenes for an effective transformation or change.

The spectators are invited to take this world as real, and in doing so is not required to consider how its characters and events have been constructed and hence how they might have been otherwise. This aesthetic of seamlessness, Brecht claims, reflects an ideological belief in the world itself as fixed and unalterable; thus the relationship between form and content itself is politically charged, not coincidental. It is for this reason that Brecht's Epic Theatre drew upon a variety of deliberately anti-illusionist theatrical devices, such as slide projections, music, subtitle, and clear bright lighting, and employed acting techniques designed to maintain the distance between actor and character as much as that between spectator and dramatic action. The emphasis upon self-conscious theatricality seeks to draw attention to the artifice underpinning characters and narratives. It is in stark contrast to the naturalized representations of bourgeois drama that this poetics of discontinuity is offered.

In Brecht's model, the theatre is no longer a place of fantasy, but rather a testing ground, or - to use one of his own comparisons - a sporting arena in which spectators are both caught up in the action and simultaneously able to analyze it. Empathy is not eroded altogether but its free flow is inhibited to permit a more detached position from which critical speculation is possible.

Boal pursues the same line of reasoning as Brecht but arrives at different conclusions in practice. His spect-actor invests in the dramatic action physically as well as mentally. Forum Theatre is so-called because the space for dissection and debate occurs theatrically, within the frame of the performance itself. As each new intervention takes

place, forcing the other actors to improvise and re-align themselves in relation to the changing action, the narrative is unmade and remade before our eyes. In this theatre, as in Brecht's, empathic identification and distance observation exist alongside each other. Yet of the two, Boal's Forum Theatre is in a sense more reliant upon empathy than Brecht's Epic Theatre and arguably more so, even, than the dramatic of 'Aristotelian' theatre that both opposes. For Boal is inviting spectators to become the protagonist albeit briefly and partially - and for many, the willingness to do this is dependent upon having themselves 'felt like that' at some time in their own lives.

On Hegel and Brecht

Boal's analysis of Hegel is not an isolated one. It is a part of his study of the history of the theatre. It is a broad overview from Aristotle through the middle ages to Machiavelli; from Machiavelli through Hegel and Brecht to modern times. Precisely it concentrates on the aesthetic movements of the last three centuries and becomes a search for progress. Here he points towards the idealist philosopher none other than Hegel. Boal opposes the very essence of Hegelian idealism. Here Berthold Brecht becomes a forerunner to reveal the truths about Hegel.

Once Marx as a young Hegelian approached his master's idealist dialectics on history and reversed it, established dialectics of materialism and it became an epoch-making incident in history.

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely

relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness (Marx 11).

In a similar way Boal sails towards Hegel. Here he dissects the idealist poetics of Hegel. He sees his forerunner Berthold Brecht who identified the limitations of the Hegelian Poetics which overtly and covertly influences largely modern theatre practices. Here meticulous study conducted by Boal. Boal seeks to expose Hegel because he imposed limits on the acquired freedom of the characters rather than ensured dogmatic and preconceived truth upon them. According to Boal, Hegel's ideas of values were filtering through contemporary consciousness without our direct knowledge. Boal goes through Hegel's analysis of theatre in *The Philosophy of Fine Arts* (1835). He briefs Hegel's perceptions: (a) Types of Poetry in Hegel, (b) Characteristics of dramatic poetry, still according to Hegel, and (c) Freedom of the character – subject.

The title *The Types of Poetry in Hegel* Boal describes Epic poetry, Lyric Poetry, and Dramatic poetry— Boal says for him (Hegel) “all that happens arise from spiritual powers – sometimes divine,

sometimes human - and from exterior obstacles which react retard in their movements. That is the spirit of a good of a man initiates an action which encounters difficulties in the exterior world” (86).

Lyric Poetry is exactly opposite to Epic Poetry... it is not the concrete fact of a battle, but the resources of the poet are sensibility which is moved by the sound of the swords. Lyric Poetry is completely subjective and personal.

In Dramatic Poetry subjectivity and objectivity co-exist; but it is important to note that, for Hegel, the former precedes the latter: the soul is the subject that determines all external action. Likewise, Aristotle held that the passions transformed into habits were the motive forces of action. In these two philosophers, the drama shows the external collision of forces originating internally - the objective conflicts of subjective forces. For Brecht, as we shall see everything is reversed (Boal 87).

For idealist poetics social thought conditions social being. For Marxist poetics, social being conditions social thought. In Hegel’s view, the spirit creates the dramatic action, for Brecht the character’s social relations create the dramatic action. Brecht is squarely, totally, globally opposed to Hegel. Therefore it is a mistake to use for designating his poetics a term which means a genre in the poetics of Hegel. Brechtian poetics is not simply epic. It is Marxist and being Marxist, can be lyrical, dramatic, or epic (Boal 93).

Differences between the so-called “dramatic” and “epic” forms of theater, according to Brecht.
(Outline based on the notes to *Mahagonny*, together with other writings.)⁹

*The “Dramatic Form” according to Brecht.
(Idealist Poetics).*

1. Thought determines being.
(Character-subject).
2. Man is something given, fixed, inalterable, immanent, considered as known.
3. The conflict of free wills impels the dramatic action; the structure of the work is a scheme of wills in conflict.
4. It creates empathy, which consists in an emotional compromise of the spectator, depriving him of the possibility of acting.
5. At the end, catharsis “purifies” the spectator.
6. Emotion.
7. At the end, the conflict is resolved, and a new scheme of wills is created.
8. Hamartia prevents the character’s adaptation to society, and this is the fundamental cause of the dramatic action.
9. Anagnorisis justifies the society.
10. It is action in the present.
11. Experience.
12. It arouses feelings.

*The “Epic Form” according to Brecht.
(Marxist Poetics).*

1. Social being determines thought.
(Character-object).
2. Man is alterable, object of the inquiry, and is “in process.”
3. Contradictions of economic, social, or political forces impel the dramatic action; the work is based on a structure of these contradictions.
4. It “historicizes” the dramatic action, transforming the spectator into observer, arousing his critical consciousness and capacity for action.
5. Through knowledge, it drives the spectator to action.
6. Reason.
7. The conflict is left unresolved, and the fundamental contradiction emerges with greater clarity.
8. The personal faults that the character may have are never the direct, fundamental cause of the dramatic action.
9. The knowledge acquired reveals the faults of the society.
10. It is narration.
11. Vision of the world.
12. It demands decisions.

Fig. 3.2 Difference between the so called “dramatic” and “epic” forms of theatre, according to Brecht.(Outline based on the notes to Mahagonny,together with other writings.(Brecht 37)

According to Hegel those who embody the dramatic conflict must themselves be free. Boal says Hegel insists on a fundamental point which will mark a radical difference between his view and that of the Marxist poetics of Brecht: “the event (writes Hegel) does not appear to proceed from external conditions, but rather from personal volition and character...” (88).

As in the case of freedom of the character-subject Boal goes through Hegel deeply.

Hegel gives some explanation on the theme of the freedom of the character subject... are those who least feel the pressure of material needs... freely externalize their spiritual impulses... all those many people who create for the prince the best condition for his becoming a dramatic character do not themselves qualify for that role they are not good material for drama (89).

Noble and privileged persons would be the base for the making up of work of art. Here Hegel shares and adds richness to the concept of Aristotle and Bharathamuni. In search of an alternative to this conventional poetics, Brecht and Augusto Boal make deep-going analysis and created theatre practices with far-reaching implications. Here lies the relevance of them.

Boal’s Poetics of the Oppressed

Augusto Boal summarizes his concept of Poetics of the oppressed:

In the beginning, the theatre was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later, the ruling

classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separated actors from spectators: people who act, and people who watch the party is over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonists from the mass. The coercive indoctrination began! Now the oppressed people are liberated themselves and once more are making the theatre their own. The walls must be torn down. First, the spectator starts acting again: invisible theatre, forum theatre, image theatre, etc. Secondly, it is necessary to eliminate the private property of the characters by the individual actors: the Joker system (119).

Augusto Boal developed his poetics through his vast and zealous interaction with the people and society and thereby applying theatre as a tool of social change.

Boal sought the possibilities of developing the theatre by taking part in the literacy programme in 1973, an undertaking of the Government of Peru. The country boasted of more than 45 dialects. “By learning a new language, a person acquires a new way of knowing reality and of passing that knowledge on to others. Each language is absolutely irreplaceable. All languages complement each other in achieving the widest, most complete knowledge of what is real” (Boal 121). Augusto Boal tried to show in practice how the theatre could be placed at the service of the oppressed so that they could express themselves and by using this new language, they could also discover new concepts.

“In order to understand this poetics of the oppressed one must keep in mind its main objective, to change the people -spectators,

passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon- into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action” (Boal 122). He believed that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilize them. The theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it.

Augusto Boal’s theatrical concept begins from the human body itself. He considered the human body as the first word of the theatrical vocabulary, the main source of sound and movement. Therefore, to control the means of theatrical production, we must, first of all, control our own body; know his/her own body in order to be capable of making it more expressive. Thus he introduced a set of games and exercises as vital part of theatre conventions.

Boal suggested four stages for the transformation of a spectator into an actor. In the first stage, he says that knowing the body through a series of exercises by which one can know one’s body, its limitations, and possibilities, its social distortions, and possibilities of rehabilitation.

“The exercises of the first stage are designed to undo the muscular structure of the participants. It can help a person to interpret characters different from himself” (Boal 128). Boal offers exercises such as slow-motion race, cross-legged race, monster race, wheel race, Columbian hypnosis, boxing match, out west, etc. These exercises included in his book two hundred exercises and games for the actor and for the non-actor who wants to say something through theatre.

In the second stage, the intention is to develop the expressive ability of the body. Normally we are expressing everything through words leaving the enormous capabilities of the body to utilize maximum expressive abilities. Boal suggests a series of games that can help the participants to use their bodily resources for self-expression.

The third stage: the theatre as a language, one begins to practice theatre as language, that is living and present, not as a finished product, displacing image from the past. Here this stage is divided into three different degrees of direct participation of the spectator in the performance.

Simultaneous Dramaturgy, Image Theatre, Forum theatre are the three different degrees of the third stage.

The fourth stage is the theatre as discourse. Newspaper Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Photo Romance, Breaking of Repression, Myth Theatre, Analytical Theatre, Rituals, and Masks are part of it.

Boal wanted to transform the spectator into a human being. "Spectator is a bad word. The spectator is less than a man it is necessary to humanize him, to restore to him, his capacity of action all its fullness..." (155) the traditional theatre has imposed on the spectator the finished visions of the world and all its values. On the contrary, the Poetics of the Oppressed enables the spectator to free himself/herself by throwing light upon real action. Here the spectacle is a preparation for action. The spectator thinks and acts for himself. Thus Boal makes the Poetics of the Oppressed essentially the poetics of liberation.

For Boal Theatre is action. At the same time, he makes clear that theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is a rehearsal of revolution.

Apart from the conventional concept of the stage, Augusto Boal preferred the circular stage which is suitable for all kinds of theatre presentations. According to Boal the circular stage always reveals the theatrical character of any performance. In its audience facing audience, with the actors in between, and all the theatrical mechanisms barred, without disguise- reflectors, entries and exits, rudimentary decorations. The circular stage provides be a better form for the realistic theatre. It allows close-up techniques. All spectators are close to all actors, the audience can smell the coffee being served on the stage. As an image, the circular stage was no more than poor scenery, as it becomes aware of its autonomous form and demands absolute simplicity. Here some pieces of straw on the floor symbolize a haystack, a brick is a wall, and the spectacle is concentrated on the actors' performance.

Joker is the system proposed by Boal as a permanent form of theater-dramaturgy and staging. It brings together all the experiments and discoveries previously made in the Arena Theatre. It is the sum of all that happened before. And in bringing them together, it also coordinates them.

The joker system was not a capricious creation; it was determined by the time and space the performance takes place. Its objectives are aesthetic and economic in nature. Joker is a contemporary and neighbour of the spectator. For this it is necessary to restrict

his explanations; it is necessary to move him away from the other characters, to bring him close to the spectators.

Boal proposes Joker:

A permanent system of theater-the structure of text and cast which will contain all the instruments of all styles or genres. Each scene must be conceived aesthetically, according to the problems it presents. Every unity of style entails an inevitable impoverishment of the procedures that can be utilized. Usually, instruments of a single style are selected, the one that appears to be ideal for the main scenes of the play; then the same instruments are utilized in dealing with all the other scenes, even though they prove to be inadequate. Therefore, we decided to resolve the problems of each independently. Thus realism, surrealism, the pastoral, the tragicomedy, and any other genre or style are available to the director or author, without his being obliged for this reason to utilize them during the whole of the work or performance (175).

The Joker is a magical reality; he creates it. If necessary, he invents magic walls, combats, soldiers, armies. All the other characters accept the magic reality created and described by the joker... The outlook of the Joker must be that of the author or adapter which is assumed to be above and beyond that of the other characters in time and space... In this way, all the theatrical possibilities are conferred upon the Joker function: he is magical, omniscient, polymorphous, and ubiquitous... (182).

Boal gave the Joker a permanent structure of performance which is divided into seven main parts: dedication, explanation, episode, scene, commentary, interview, and exhortation.

Boal's books *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* and *Rainbow of Desire* comprise the possibilities of theatre applications of *Poetics of the Oppressed*.

Games for Actors and Non-Actors is a systematization of exercises and games and the techniques of image theatre, designed to be used both by actors and non-actors. Boal interprets exercises as physical monologues and games as physical dialogues. Here, the term actor denotes those who make acting their profession, and non-actors denote everyone except professionals.

This book is concerned with developing in everyone, professional actor and non – actor alike, what everyone already has: theatre within. We all are theatre, even if we don't make theatre. All exercises, games, and techniques in this book can be practiced by everyone-skilled professional actors should use the work to go deeper into their possibilities, because theatre is their profession; non-actors should go as far as they choose or feel able to go because theatre is their vocation. (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors* 17)

The evolution of complete man from semi-human beings was the result of labour. Herds of men gradually became human clans, and at some point along the way, the first rays of culture began to shine. It was at this juncture that plays as an entertainment started. Possibly in times

of inclement weather, when a man was confined to his cave-dwelling, he presented his past experiences in front of others with the help of imitations. This was how the primitive form of play started. When this was repeated in groups and members of the group admired the presentations, the play became a medium of group entertainment.

When agriculture became an occupation in society, men took over hunting and women began to manage agriculture. To make the children proficient in the occupations of the parents, it became necessary to teach them imitative forms of farming, hunting, and housekeeping through plays and recreational games. The forms of games required for shaping future life were either taught by parents or were created by children through imitation. One, who passed through different stages of a game, is taught some lessons, indirectly. In this way, one acquired the culture of the society through games. Group activity leads to group thinking. Games and plays act as catalysts for collective thinking, collective action, and development of socially committed personalities. Folk games are the stimulants conceived by society from ancient times to arouse lazy minds and pacify troubled minds. Games help to reduce mental tension and give balance to the mind.

Games enable a creative process of constant renewal. The roots of modern man's aspiration to discard the old and embrace the new can be found in its primitive form in children's games. After making a form of the game and getting the satisfaction out of it, children discard it. They recreate it again with novelties of content. As folk games have no written laws, it is subject to change. It is the freedom to change laws of the game according to circumstances that are the strength and beauty of

folk games. Through this, the children are trained to tune their lives according to changing circumstances.

While play and art are words with different meanings, in many contexts, especially in relation to performing arts they have a similarity of meaning and more so, the similarity of function. Here the word play has acquired the meaning of art through usage. Saivathanthra tells about sixty-four arts. Arts originated through plays and games. Modern dances and performing arts, each with their own structure and order, all evolved from the dance games of primitive man over a long time. The games, performance, and life activities of adults may inspire children to imitate them. They recreate or re-enact it. Here the function of crafting a vision of future life is achieved through imitation. To act as if one is a different person is equally enjoyed by children and adults.

The activities occurring in the struggle of life, when accidentally or otherwise repeated in leisure time is game or entertainment...It can be explained with an example... Two enemies meet. A life and death fight occurs. When these are enacted by two friends in front of the public, it becomes an entertainment called wrestling. That is when action and reaction are repeated without cause, it becomes to play. Here the beating, punching, and kicking in the performance of wrestling is structured. So that it should not hurt seriously. But if it causes serious hurt the game ends and real-life takes over. But acting which is an imitation of context never hurts seriously. The tendency of imitation, with roots in animal behaviour, has become extremely developed in man... (N NPillai 15-16).

Recreational games in its broad sense are multifarious and they include physical games, mental games, artistic recreation, and language games. Folk games can be grouped into two, indoor games and outdoor games. They may be classified into verbal, action-oriented, and mathematical. Action-oriented folk games of Kerala like Anamail Ottakam kali, Hide and Seek, Blindfolded game, Kabadi kali, Police and Thief game, Kalithattu kali, Cow and Leopard game, Dog and Tiger game can be utilized for preparing students for performance.

Creative dramatics aim to kindle the abilities inherent in children. Many actions that we fear to attempt in real life are effortlessly done on stage. Folk games play an important role in making children's theatre an enjoyable work. Folk games and dramatic games qualitatively change different aspects of a person's life. It helps to develop qualities like creativity, concentration, self-confidence, the habit of observation, self-respect, the spirit of tolerance, communication, etc.

Boal suggests an action-plan in which everyone can become an actor. For Boal, the theatrical language is the most essential human language. Everything that actors do on stage, we do throughout our lives. The only difference is that the actors are conscious that they are using the language of theatre. Many of the games, exercises, and techniques in this book were originally invented by Augusto Boal through his theatre practice. Others were adapted from well-known games for the theatre practices.

In this book, Boal makes a deeper and scientific analysis of theatre and acting.

Theatre is a conflict between or among the characters confronting one another, always in the here and now. So memory is important, but only when it is transported to the present... in the theatre, to remember is to live again, with the same or even greater intensity, with the same or an even broader and deeper knowledge of what has happened, how and why.

Our aim is not to exhibit static emotions but to create rivers in flux, to create dynamic. Theatre is conflict, struggle, movement, transformation, not simply the exhibition of states of mind. It is a verb - not an adjective. To act is to produce an action, and every action produces a reaction – conflict. Thus we began to attribute greater importance to conflict as a source of theatricality, to the dialectical emotion. And we became aware that dialectical emotion is the vehicle for transmitting in what could be called the undercurrent (Boal 38-39).

Boal presents the science of acting:

The fundamental concept for the actor is not the being of the character, but the will. One should not ask who this is, but rather what does he want? The will is not the idea; it is the concretion of the idea... From which we can derive the following formula: Idea = concrete will... The will is the essence of the motivation... 'Character' is a static notion; 'characterization', combined with a will, is dynamic... The internal conflict of will and counter will create the dynamic, the theatricality of the performance and, with this dynamic, the actor will never be the same from one moment to the next, because he or she will always be in a continual

state of flux, in this case, a constant alternation of coming and going... This interior conflict will draw from the actor a being always alive and dynamic on stage, internally in perpetual movement; without counter will the actor will stay the same: static, untheatrical... From the interior conflict between will and counter will there always emerges, on the exterior, a dominant will, which is the manifestation of the will in conflict with the other characters (40-45)

In this book, Boal uses the word exercise to designate all physical, muscular movement (respiratory, motor, vocal) which helps doer to a better knowledge of his or her body. Each exercise is a physical reflection of oneself. The games, on the other hand, deal with the expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages. In fact, the games and exercises Boal offers are mostly gamesercises - there is a fair proportion of exercise in the games and a fair proportion of games in the exercises.

Boal says that in the body's battle with the world, the senses suffer; we start to feel very little of what we touch, to listen to very little of what we hear, and to see very little of what we look at... It is with this end in mind that he has chosen exercises and games which focus on de-specialization. For this purpose, he suggests the exercises of five categories. In the first category, the aim is to bridge the gap between feeling and touching. In the second stage: between listening and hearing. In the third stage: to try to develop several senses at once. In the fourth stage: category to try to see what we look at. Finally, the senses also have a memory. In the fifth category, we try to awaken it.

When Boal had been working in Europe as a theatre practitioner, there he found some new phenomenon different from third world countries, such as loneliness, the impossibility of communicating with others, fear of emptiness, etc. The Rainbow of Desire, the name Boal gave to a collection of theatrical techniques and exercises designed to harness, the power of the aesthetic space to examine individual, internalized oppressions and to place them within a larger context. Boal involved in the democratization of the theatre before the invention of The Rainbow of Desire. With the project of Rainbow of Desire, he began to work on democratizing the therapy. Boal decided to systematize the techniques which later became the part of the book Rainbow of Desire, when he was invited to the 10th world congress of the International Association of Group psychotherapists conducted, on the centenary of the birth of Jacob L. Moreno, the founder of the association and the inventor of psychodrama, in 1989.

In a session the Theatre of the Oppressed, there are no spectators, only active observers or spect-actors. Boal formulated two fundamental principles on this: (a) to help the spect-actor transform himself/herself into the protagonist of the dramatic action and rehearse alternatives for his/her situation. (b) To extrapolate into his real-life the action he has rehearsed in the practice of theatre. In order to achieve this, Boal proposed three fundamental hypotheses:

The first hypothesis is Osmosis: the propagation of the idea of values and of tastes. Osmosis takes place in an intransitive way from stage to audience. Apart from the traditional play which forgets about the external reality- the audience, the theatre of the oppressed reminds

the audience what is going around them. Here, the theatre ritual of immobilism is replaced by the dynamism of the events of the social world.

The second hypothesis is metaxis which is different from Aristotle's catharsis based on empathy. Boal defines metaxis as a state belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: the image of reality and the reality of the image. Here, the oppressed artist is able to create an autonomous world of images of his own reality, and to enact his liberation in the reality of these images, he will then extrapolate into his own life. In the scene, the stage becomes the rehearsal space for real life.

The third hypothesis is Analogical Induction, which functions to allow a distanced analysis, to offer several perspectives, to multiply the possible points of view from which one can consider each situation. "We do not interpret, we explain nothing, we only offer multiple points of reference" (Boal, *Rainbow of Desire* 45). The analogical induction puts forward the broader possibility of searching the truth through the theatre.

The validity of these three hypotheses rests on the fundamental hypotheses underlying the totality of the Theatre of the Oppressed: If the oppressed himself perform an action, the performance of that action in theatrical fiction will enable him to activate himself to perform it in his real life. This hypothesis expressly contradicts the theory of catharsis, according to which "the vicarious attitudes of the spectator produces in him avoiding of the emotions which he has experienced during the show" (Boal 46).

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4

Theatre Workshops based on Theatre of the Oppressed

Theatre workshops were conducted in different places of Kerala in the context of its social realities on the basis of methods of Theatre of the Oppressed where the creative expressions were made through collective efforts. The theatre workshops which involved women, the tribal children, orphans, elders, the school and college students, teachers, government employees, labourers, etc. proved that Theatre of the Oppressed is very much applicable in the context of Kerala. The workshops were conducted enabling its participants to analyze the society properly to find out the basic problems and to translate them into theatre performances. It proved that the play is not the monopoly of the professionals. Even those people who do not have previous experience could be made active in the theatre as well as life. Augusto Boal developed his models with the aim of transforming people into proactive artists (spect-actors). The fruitfulness of conventions of Theatre of the Oppressed has widely experimented through these theatre workshops.

2011

The gloomy stories of the loss of human lives coming from the Endosulfan victims of Kasaragod had caused much grief in many genuine activists across the country. The poisonous rain of Endosulfan sprayed on the cashew plantations from the Plantation Corporation of Kerala helicopters fell not only on the trees and grass but the lives of the people there. The stillborn babies, the crippled human beings living like the dead showed to the world the devastating effects of the unscientific and uncontrolled use of a highly hazardous pesticide. The Stockholm Convention and campaigns growing against Endosulfan around the

world had stirred the consciousness of the students on college campuses across the country.

In the context of the use of Endosulfan and other pesticides in the cardamom plantations of Idukki, the NSS unit of MES College in Nedumkandam decided to do a campaign against it. It was a great experience for this researcher to be a part of the campaign by directing a street play on the subject. It was the time when opinions both in favour and against Endosulfan and other pesticides were being raised in the society. And that is why it was important to bring out the truth in front of society. The play was designed to suit this outcome. Enmakaje, the famous novel by Ambikasuthan Mangad, and many other articles and studies were adopted for this purpose.

There was no script when the rehearsal started but a script and a presentation soon began to emerge as the rehearsal progressed. Here many techniques and exercises from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed were adopted to bring better results. This was evident in the demonstration of various actors. Along with this, the news and features from various publications, anti-Endosulfan struggles, and science gatherings also added much richness to the play. Slowly an inquisitive approach grew in the collective consciousness of the actors. They began to identify themselves as belonging to the victims. Thus the drama VishaMazha was born through various stages of development. This play was enacted in and around various places in the Idukki district. Mullapperiyar Struggle Committee gave a hearty welcome to drama and saluted it, giving the title Agent Orange.

This play was also enacted by the students of St. Johns School in Alappuzha for the science festival and brought laurels to the entire drama team.

2014

It is in the context of the struggles of the Adivasis and the minorities against the alienation of their lands that the idea of enacting a play based on the novel *Nooru Simhasanangal* by Tamil/ Malayalam writer Jayamohan emerged as a part of the study. The casteist mindset of the people and the communal polarization of India that has been mentioned in the novel were shocking. During that time the researcher also got an opportunity to direct a play for the excise officers at Thrissur. Although the script was ready for the drama, finding the right actors proved to be a difficult task. It is because the chosen actors had no familiarity with the life of the oppressed. Moreover, most of them also had no previous experience in the field of acting. But the hectic schedule at the office left them with little time to rehearse. The biggest stumbling block to mould them as actors suited to their respective roles was their obscurity about the harsh life of the deprived and once this was overcome it was easy to bring them into the mood with theatre exercises and games suggested by Augusto Boal. Boal's Slow Motion Race and Columbian Hypnosis were adopted in the beginning.

Slow Motion Race:

The participants are invited to run a race with the aim of losing: the last one is the winner. Moving in slow motion, the body will find its centre of gravity dislocated at each successive moment and so

must find again a new muscular posture which will maintain its balance. The participants must never interrupt the motion or stand still; also they must take the longest step they can and their feet must rise above the knee level. In this exercise a ten metre run can be more tiring than a conventional five hundred metre run, for the effort needed to keep one's balance in each new position is intense (Boal 128).

Columbian Hypnosis:

The pairs face each other, one puts his hand a few centimetres from the nose of his partner, who must keep this distance: the first one starts to move his hand in all directions, up and down, from left to right, slowly or faster, while the other moves his body in order to maintain the same distance between his nose and his partner's hand. During these movements he is forced to assume bodily positions that he never takes in his daily life, thus reforming permanently his muscular structures (129).

Nooru Simhasanangal was also played for Ernakulam based experimental theatre group Phoenix World Theatre(Fig. 4.1). The novel is about the real-life story of an IAS officer who had to face many hurdles in his personal and professional life because he belonged to a caste that is considered backward by society. The heart-breaking tale proves that untouchability is in the mind and cannot be removed by acquiring money or a high-profile job. Sadly most of the actors could not comprehend the depth of their roles and failed miserably in many moments. They also could not overcome the barriers created by their own castes and hence could not extend their feelings as far as needed, so

that their characterization failed. The task of overcoming the barriers was a challenging one and it was taken up by training them in various games, exercises, and conventions from Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed.



Fig. 4.1 Rehearsal of *Nooru Simhasanangal* for Phoenix World Theatre, Cochin

Nayadis are Kuruvas who lead a nomadic life. Until recently the Nayadis were not even allowed to walk on the same street as Brahmins. Socially oppressed under the Chaturvarnya division, they are always greeted with stone-pelting and screaming by the upper caste people. They usually eat anything they can get their hands on... worms, rats, dead animals... they roast them and eat... generally they are dark-skinned, short and stocky and have long white teeth and large white eyes. They speak the old Tamil

language. Once skilled hunters and trappers, modern Nayadis have become scavengers and beggars. Since they don't have any dwelling place they keep roaming in groups and thus can't be spotted at any particular place. Their exact population in Travancore still remains unknown. They hardly generate any revenue for the government (Jayamohan 13).

Such are the words of the hero Dharmapalan of the famous novel *Nooru Simhasanangal* (Hundred Thrones) by Tamil/Malayalam writer Jayamohan. The novel touches upon the history of Nayadis and narrates how their touch, shadows, and even voices were believed to pollute the upper-caste Hindus. The novel also reflects upon their present situation which still remains oppressed.

The Nayadis were also considered polluted by the deities at the temples.

This fact has been well registered in the Cochin census report of 1901 which says that the caste Kammalan had to stay twenty-four feet away from the deity at the temple. This was 36 feet for Ezhavas, Valan, Arayan, Mukkuvan, Marakkaan, Kaniyan, Vilkuruppu, Paanan, Velan, Palluvan, Parayan, and forty-eight feet for Kanakkan and Kudakan. While the Pulayan, Vettuvan and Paraya caste people maintained a distance of sixty-four feet from the temple deity, the tribes including Ulladan, Nayadi, Malayan, Kadar remained the most oppressed at the same distance (Bhaskaranunni 182).

This untouchability and social inequality on its peak prompted Swami Vivekananda to call Kerala a lunatic asylum. The socio-cultural

movements that began towards the end of the nineteenth century saw many prominent leaders of Kerala desiring for the uplift and progress of the lower caste. These movements were of the utmost significance, because Kerala had, for centuries, tolerated the caste system in its most oppressive form. “Today, ten decades thence, Kerala still remains a madhouse. All sorts of religious organizations thrive in our state. SNDP, NSS, Yogakshema sabha, Muslim league, Christian federation were introduced into the Kerala soil and still continue to flourish here.”(Bhattathirippad 463) So, naturally, when a man from a Nayadi caste becomes a District Collector after passing his IAS, we would expect unprecedented crises to permeate his life from all corners of the society, sadly reminding us that untouchability is in the mind and cannot be removed by acquiring money or high profile job. Turning this anguish into good theatre has been a challenging task considering how illogical and insane the modern world has become!

The work *Nooru Simhasanangal* unfolds the story of Dharmapalan born into the Nayadi caste that is considered a lower caste by society. He is reared in his monastery by Prajanandan, one of the worthy disciples of Sree Narayana Guru, given education and brought up to occupy a high position. This is the story of *Nooru Simhasanangal*. The Nayadi boy who goes to the monastery to save himself from starvation is initially given food till his hunger is satiated. Then he is made to understand that to get food, he should come after taking shower. This sense of hygiene leads him gradually to the world of knowledge. The renaissance activity of Sree Narayana Guru is described here with an example brimming with life. After his school education, he is given a scholarship for higher education also by the monastery.

He then goes through a terrible ordeal while facing his IAS interview. Sadly, caste affinity seems to decide the conduct of the majority of government officials while in service. During the interview, he was asked a question:

Suppose you have to settle some case in your office. On the one side are justice and the other side, a Nayadi. Which side would you choose?

Sir... What is justice? Is it merely the obeying of some laws and regulations? Righteousness is the backbone of any law and it includes equality too... If a Nayadi and another man are asked to stand facing each other, according to the righteousness of equality the Nayadi has become a victim of injustice then and there simply by the virtue of his caste... regardless of what he has done, he is innocent... what if he has been a murderer Mr. Dharmapalan? Sir even if it has been a murder, the Nayadi is still innocent. The injustice has been done on him only (Jayamohan 13).

One of the members of the interview board suggests him to select any other job knowing that he is a Nayadi. This shows how the situation, even after decades of reformation is no different at the cutting-edge positions of decision-making. Even on the first day of his collector job he faces discrimination. Since he was an untouchable the posh chair in his office is replaced with an ordinary chair by his upper-caste subordinates. Throughout the novel, Dharmapalan cannot exercise and enjoy the rights and power he is supposed to enjoy. There would be somebody who keeps the tracks of all under him and manage to do things as their own wish and will and for their own conveniences.

According to him wherever he has appointed there would be a person of his lower rank who belongs to the caste of majority in that region. Every time he leads the scene by disguising as an obeying officer concealing his own real motive. He is also deeply pained by the fact that his mother still lives the life of a Nayadi. He tries to find her but she wishes to lead the same life even though society has changed.

Being caught by the police, his mother was brought home. The instance when she goes to the bush in order to hide as a law familiar to a Nayadi evokes thought in Dharmapalan. As Dharmapalan wears a shirt, his mother says it was a crime to wear a shirt by his caste and tells him to put off the dress. When he sits on a chair her Mother makes deafening cries. As far as she is concerned the shirt and chair are not for them but for the high castes. They should not violate the rules, if it is violated the high castes would kill his son. She advises him to put off all his clothing and go back with her to their old lifestyle.

Dharmapalan's wife Sudha hails from a high caste. The fair skin of Sudha is strikingly referred to in the novel. Sudha always advises Dharmapalan to erase the inferiority complex that is inherent in him and to be more authoritarian in his job and life. Dharmapalan's mother has cared for his son at his younger ages by asking alms and giving food from scrap heaps and so on. But when he is qualified with a job he marries Sudha. She is a modern woman according to him. The Mother of Dharmapalan has not changed yet. She remains the same and acts as she was earlier she asks for alms, she takes rotten food; she travels around the place at nights, and so on. But Sudha cannot accept and tolerate the Mother. As an effect of this, Sudha does not allow their

son to know about his grandmother. These instances portray his own identity as a Nayadi and as an employed husband of Sudha; a high caste. The caste compels him to stay oppressed and exploited and his caste offers him his perennial subjugation. When he gets a well-reputed job he should have been able to withstand and survive all the situations but the caste makes him remain below all but doing his everyday jobs in his profession. Though he wants to act he cannot. According to him, he became a caged animal in the city zoo. He was not able to respond, if he responds he is said to be an autocrat and if he does not respond it is considered the incapability of his particular caste to respond. Later in the story, Dharmapalan also sees his Mother with a lot of health problems treated like animals in the sub-centre of the hospital. According to the doctors of the sub-centre his Mother was brought there by scavengers while they were doing their job. Jayamohan, through the portrayal of this condition of the hospital, attempts to bring out the scavengers, the Nayadi, and other castes who are ignored by the authorities by not providing proper sanitation, medicines, and so on. It shows the complete denial of the existence of the low castes. Though the doctors there witness a multitude of weird things, they are helpless. The doctor's view is that he has got his job as a doctor because he is a Scheduled Caste but he laments that he has been treated like a mere insect and as a senior, till that day he has not got even an opportunity to sit on a chair and examine the patients. At last, the penultimate section of the story reveals that the doctor loses his job and the suspension closed the door for a promotion for him. It happens as a result of Dharmapalan's report against the sub-centre of the hospital. It is for the first time he exercises his power in his profession but it creates a loss for

another low caste. The story of his mother also tends towards the end of the novel as she dies in the hospital.

The novel shows the heartfelt despair and exhaustion he faces in life, society, and profession. As a Civil servant, he reveals that the untouchability that exists in oneself cannot be erased or annihilated with wealth and job. From the interview of his job itself, he has been encountering questions about his origin and caste. Jayamohan has succeeded in bringing out a lot of aspects and incidents that marginalize the so-called outcasts.

“Sir... The government has prevented my promotion for seven years. They tortured me without genuine reasons. I approached the tribunal itself. I received the order last week... I am a senior, Sir. On the basis of your report, I am suspended now.... Nothing will happen until my retirement... May I leave, Sir?”(Jayamohan49).

Here the doctor faces problems similar to that of Dharmapalan. The social evils at the roots of society have been portrayed here.

The *Nooru Simhasanangal* was dramatized during the time of agitations by tribal communities and oppressed people who were driven out of the land. In Velur near Thrissur city, there is a colony where Nayadis. From the forest has been rehabilitated. Their children studying in the nearby Government school, the Nayadi students of this school are still subjected to the caste and creed discriminations.

An excise employee brought this case of discrimination of Nayadi children from their teachers and colleagues. A man named Joy aware of the problems of Nayadi children bought copies of *Nooru Simhasanangal*

and distributed it among the students and teachers of the same school. The novel tells the story of a Nayadi boy who reaches the heights of social life with help of a man who acquired the values of renaissance movements. Joy was greatly influenced by its story. This novel and the life of the Nayadi community of Velur witness that a Nayadi undergoes discriminations even if he reaches the highest position in the society.

Here the novel and present-day life are not different. In this context, the excise employees decided to make a drama based on the novel *Nooru Simhasanangal*. It addressed the various cultural sections. To connect the real-life situations in the *Hundred Thrones* into the theatre was a cultural process that involved a direct discourse with real experiences. A novel written on the basis of the interview with a person who has better experiences in life can reflect the original life in its intensity. The theatre becomes a lab where contemporary caste discriminations are to be analyzed. The theatre including the actors reflects the miniature society imprisoned by the caste system and its impacts. The degradation of the values of the renaissance movement adversely affected the mental condition of the artist/actors. The outcaste people including Nayadi have been suffering from the existing caste-based social system. The peculiar rehearsal based on this theme along with the historical and contemporary aspects of theatre. In the beginning, a group including the actors visited the Nayadi colony in Velur trying to perceive their real-life situation. The rehearsal progressed adapting their pleasures and sorrows and cultural inheritance.

Dramatization of *Nooru Simhasanangal* for the experimental group, Phoenix World Theatre centered at Kochi where the actors lead a rush city life was a unique experience. The actors who belong to the upper class did not have any commitment to the realities of life which they represented on the stage. They were interested only in getting fame and payment. Therefore they could not do justice to the characters they enacted. The prejudices of the actors were often a hindrance to the improvisation of the performance. The preparation for the dramatization of the novel *Hundred Thrones* which include the characters Dharmapalan, the symbol of the oppressed people, his mother who were leading a Nayadi life, Dr. Manickyam who was ill-treated as a scavenger Doctor (Thotti Doctor) by the upper caste people progressed in an encounter with class caste discrimination.

The civilized society may not be able to adapt the Nayadi mother who leads an animal-like, ugly life. The prejudiced actors could not adapt the characters Dharmapalan and Dr. Manickyam who had inferiority feelings. Here the will of characters and actors enter into a conflict. The perfect characterization becomes impossible in the absence of a proper understanding of the real-life situation of the characters. Two theatre performances of *Hundred Thrones* were of proving the fact. In a performance prepared for the phoenix world Theatre, the upper caste attitude of the actress became an obstacle to the realistic expression of the character, the mother who leads Nayadi life.

The actress presented the character of the mother in a silly way. She could not express the character in fullness by the use of improvisation. Though the actor who presented Dharmapalan did not

have much experience in acting he could present the character free from prejudices. But later he fell in an idle state due to the influence of other actors. Because of the actor consciousness of the upper class, imitation of starring actors, anarchism etc. the actor could not give justice to his character. Actually the characterization and the character performance could go much forward with the help of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, overcoming the caste prejudices and laziness of the actors. Augusto Boal's Image Making Exercises was most helpful for this. When dialogue becomes truth less rhetoric, Image Theatre which makes even the human body as a medium for communication, used the stage realistically for seeking the truth. It helped a lot in trains the actors to absorb social, political, and cultural aesthetics put forward by the novel. The act of pouring molten lead in the ear of lower caste people for their crime of listening to the Vedas (knowledge), giving drinking water to a saint (Bhikshu) forgetting his caste, the denial of freedom of travel, the great travel of Ayyankaali – riding the bullock cart through royal road were presented as still and moving images using the various possibilities of image theatre to overcome the prejudices of actors.

Lastly, Boal's Image Theatre was applied, which is a key convention to find out the truth in theatre.

Image Theatre:

Here the spectator has to participate more directly. He is asked to express his views on certain themes of common interest that the participants wish to discuss. The theme can be far-reaching, abstract - as, for example, imperialism - or it can be a local problem such as the lack of water, a common occurrence in almost all the

barrios. The participant is asked to express his opinion, but without speaking, using only the bodies of the other participants and sculpting with them a group of statues, in such a way that his opinions and feelings become evident. The participant is to use the bodies of the others as if he were a sculptor and the others were made of clay: he must determine the position of each body down to the minutest details of their facial expressions. He is not allowed to speak under any circumstances. The most that is permitted to him is to show with his facial expressions what he wants the statue-spectator to do. After organizing this group of statues he is allowed to enter into a discussion with the other participants in order to determine if all agree with his sculpted opinion. Modifications can be rehearsed: this spectator has the right to modify the statues in their totality or in some detail when finally an image arrives at that is the most acceptable to all, then this spectator-sculptor is asked to show the way he would like the given theme to be; that is, in the first grouping, the Actual Image is shown, in the second the Ideal Image. Finally, he is asked to show a Transitional Image, to show how it would be possible to pass from one reality to another.(135)

The team members were able to present many sensitive scenes from the past that talked loudly of caste oppression like molten lead being poured into the ears of Shudras who dared to listen to the Vedic chantings, the proclamation of untouchability in ChandalaBhikshuki for giving water to a thirsty upper-caste saint, Ayyankali, who used white cloth and turban while driving a decorated bullock cart and defied higher caste Hindu lords inviting their fury.

2016 February

In the second street play festival Theruvarangu organized in memory of the great theatre artist P.J.Antony, this researcher was invited to participate. It was organized under the banner of the P.J.Antony Memorial Foundation. There, this researcher got the opportunity to direct a street play titled 'Peppattikale Sookshikkuka' which was enacted to portray the steadily increasing violence against women and children in our country. The world was shocked to see the Nirbhaya rapist in Delhi getting freed after just three years of committing a horrific crime. In Kerala, a minor girl who was assaulted by forty men failed to get justice even after reaching adulthood. These men who have indubitably contributed to the regression of Kerala politics still continue to occupy higher positions while the victim still leads a pathetic life. A women theatre group Nirbhaya based in Kothad, the interior part of Cochin, was formed comprising of housewives and college students. They performed this street play to portray discrimination and violence against women and children(Fig.4.2).Very recently when the youth of the area came under the grip of substance abuse the mothers and sisters and daughters took to the street and fought against it. This street play was the culmination of their struggle against drug addiction among men.



Fig. 4.2.
of

Rehearsal

Peppattikale Sookshikkuka, for women Theatre Group Nirbhaya, Cochin.

It was a tough task to engage women who had no previous experience in acting. So, the ideas in Augusto Boal's Image Making Exercises were adopted to loosen them up and get them involved.

2017

The Folklore Department of Calicut University decided to arrange a theatre presentation of N. Prabhakaran's drama *Pulijenmam*. It was organized as part of a national seminar on theatre. This researcher who presented a paper for the seminar was requested by the organizers to introduce some of the practical applications of Augusto Boal's theatre techniques. Most of those who attended the seminar were lecturers of English and Malayalam literature. And hence they mainly approached and appreciated theatre through the medium of literature. The main aim of the organizers was to provide them some glimpses into the presentation aspect of theatre. As per the request, they were shown and made to do some introductory lessons- of exercises and games. Everyone was amazed to see the improvement in their acting skills over such a short period of time. This experience led the director of the drama *Pulijenmam* to cast this researcher as an acting trainer of a play being prepared by the Department of Folklore Studies. The students of the university were the actors of the drama and the presentation was in the final stage. It was disappointing to see them lacking in professionalism and it was challenging to lead them back to the stage. Augusto Boal's Columbian Hypnosis was found to be of great help in invoking the five senses of the body and get the body muscles loosened and increase the flexibility. The students were thus able to concentrate fully on the drama after going through such exercises.

2018 February

The Government Arts and Science College in Nadapuram, Kozhikode conducted a National Seminar on various subjects during the month of February 2018. The seminar which spanned over a period of three days from February 6 to 8 was arranged on a wide range of topics and the last day was set aside for theatre. The study of the theatre was divided into two sessions comprising of seminar and practice. The majority of the participants were orthodox Muslim students whose stereotypic and preconceived notions restricted their social mingling drastically. They were reluctant to answer questions and said that although they had watched a lot of movies and loved many actors and actresses when it came to the theatre they could not make their minds. Their confidence was won by telling them that with a wave of the magic wand, they would all be turned into brilliant actors and actresses without even acting. Then Augusto Boal's theatre techniques were unraveled one by one, in front of them. Firstly, they were led to a slow-motion race which in turn made their previously useless and inactive muscles more flexible (Fig.4.3). They became more active. Later on, they were introduced Boal's The Bear of Poitiers technique.



Fig.4.3. Students in Slow Motion Race. *Govt. Arts and Science College, Nadapuram.*

The Bear of Poitiers:

One participant is designated the Bear of Poitiers (A French town where the game is played) She turns her back on the others, who are the foresters. The latter busy themselves with their forestry tasks - wood cutting, planting, tree felling, taking a break, whatever. After an interval, the bear must give vent to an enormous growl, whereupon all the woodcutters must fall to the ground play dead, not making the slightest movements, absolutely motionless as if their life depended on it. The bear goes up to each one of them, growling at will, and touches tickle prods try any trick she can think of to make them laugh to make them move, in short, her goal is to force them to reveal that they are alive. When the bear succeeds the forester who has given himself away becomes a

second bear, and the two bears set off to do the same thing to the other foresters, who still try not to move. Eventually, there are three bears. Then four, and so on... Fear nothing provokes exactly the opposite reaction, and all the senses become extraordinarily highly developed - you sense much more, hear much better, etc. Fear hyper-sensitizes us!(Games for Actors and Non Actors 78)

What would you do if you are lost in a forest and a bear comes charging at you? Many said they would stand motionless. Then one of the actors was sent to pose as a bear and those who could not stand still for long were to do the role of a bear themselves. This soon turned into a fun game and the students seemed to enjoy it immensely. While those who posed as the bear tried to move the others and those who were posing as humans tried their best not to move.

They were divided into three groups and asked to show still images of women suffering from violence in homes, public, and workplaces. And they demonstrated very seriously the scenes of violence that were perpetrated against women in buses, offices, and homes. These still images slowly turned into moving images. In the beginning, the groups started out as mime actors but very soon started to make sounds. This gave a boost to their self-confidence. Later on, each group was given a chance to present separately. Within a few hours, three mini-plays on the violence against women were presented by the groups. Some of them were invited audience from the college. Both the students and the teachers were amazed to see the performances.

2018 April

This researcher had the opportunity to work as the director and trainer of a theatre camp at the invitation of T.R. Premkumar, Director of Moozhikkulam Sala. His suggestion was to direct a play for children based on human interaction with the land. During the ten-day workshop for children, starting from April 2, a drama took shape connecting the children to their land. Titled *Manninte Makkal*, the drama was conceptualized with extensive studies from the works of Badal Sircar (especially *Hattamala Naadinappuram*), the great Bengali theatre activist, K.J. Baby's *Nadugaddika*, and the news and reports of the horrific killing of Madhu, an Adivasi youth from Attapady. The children from Aluva SOS village and other schools acted in the play. Badal Sircar's *Beyond the Land of Hattamala (Hattamala Naadinappuram)* has been directed by this researcher in various forms of presentation during the past several years. At Government Fine Arts College, Thrissur was directed without making any amendments to the script (Fig.4.4) while during the currency demonetization, it was adapted as a street play, 'Panamilla Naad'. In the light of these experiences, a new presentation was prepared following the mob lynching of Madhu, an Adivasi youth from Attapady



Fig.4.4. A scene from *HattamalaNaadinumappuram* performed by students of College of Fine Arts, Thrissur

Strangely we live among the middle-class society that says there is no poverty in Kerala. Madhu's death showed how this was just a lie perpetuated by our inflated egos and vainglorious society. This incident revealed the oppression faced by the people belonging to the backward communities of Kerala. It emboldened to question the authority as to how the Adivasis have come to occupy the lowest strata of our society. Nadugaddika by K.J. Baby tells the story of resistance by tribal groups in Wayanad against the dominance of colonial masters and feudal lords. In itself, it is the ritual of cleansing a village of evil spirits; in its dramatic form, it demonstrates the need for tribal social/cultural lives to be purified of evil spirits/influence of the colonial masters and lords. The play *Manninte Makkal* narrates how the oppression, eviction, and alienation of tribal still continue to happen in most parts of the country(Fig.4.5).



Fig.4.5. A scene from *Manninte Makkal*, Camp Members of Moozhikulam
Sala

In India, instead of recognizing tribal peoples' rights to their land, the government has created more parks and wildlife sanctuaries, carried out more evictions and endeavors to bring in more tourists. They are denied their right to manage and protect their forests. Promises of compensation amount to very little: families are dispersed, housed under plastic sheets, stripped of their self-sufficiency and pride, becoming dependent on hand-outs or menial labour

How to overcome the oppressive past and present is the main theme behind Badal Sircar's *Beyond the Land of Hattamala*. The story, heavily political and economic, told of two village thieves, who get chased out of one village and end up in another where money and possessions have little meaning. In this new land, everyone works together to produce what the entire community needs and wants and money does not exist. But in the current presentation, it is not merely the reinvention of the fairyland in Hattamala that takes place. Instead, the focus is on the reality (real image) of the presentation and the various misappropriations of the present times. Velli and Chothi, the two tribal youths who are tired after running for so long reach an oasis (Fig.4.6). They quench their thirst in that fair world. They are amazed by that world where everyone is happily working and living a great life. They are not able to comprehend the fact that there is no place for money in that land. Everyone gets carried away and indulge in life and makes the most of it.



Fig.4.6 A scene from *Manninte Makkal Camp Members of Moozhikulam Sala*

After having dreams about a fairyland that has no police, army, court, fights, or intolerance they wake up to the present, real-world of terrorism. Even though they have only stolen some rice out of hunger from a supermarket, they are portrayed as terrorists and questioned in front of the public and punished through the death sentence (Fig.4.7). Through this drama, everyone is directed towards the disagreement in public lynching and how it is dealt with by society. The drama also clearly shows how economic reforms cause devastating impacts on social life. The camp members were eleven students of SOS village in Aluva and six other students from various places of Thrissur and Ernakulam districts. Among them, one was a graduate college student and the others were students of 10, 11, and 12 standards. AiswaryaLaibi, K. Aswathy, K. Athulya, M.S.Vaishnavi, Reshma Ravi, S. Arya,

JeevJohny, GouriNandan, S. Gouri, Gopika Ravi, Eldo, Anamika, Saritha, Karthi, Sharukh Khan, Kripamol were participated in the camp.



Fig.4.7. A scene from *Manninte Makkal Camp Members of Moozhikulam Sala*

The students from the SOS village were orphans and had come to enjoy their holidays at the drama camp. Since they were in a holiday mood they couldn't get involved in a rehearsal camp that was meant as an inquiry into the current social crisis. But as the rehearsal progressed and they went through various theatre games and techniques, all were so smoothly drawn into the play. It completely changed their perspective on life (Fig. 4.8).

The below-given notes they wrote at the end of the camp is a testimony to that:

Aishwarya Laibi: I am extremely lucky that I got a chance to participate in the ten-day camp. I had a doubt when I first heard that a play is going to be directed with the theme connecting man and the land. I wasn't sure about the way in which it was going to be directed. But as soon as I heard that it was going to be connected with the death of Madhu, the Adivasi young man from Attapady, I became curious. The camp was very informative at the same time fun-filled. I got a chance to learn and experience so many new things. The camp started with a morning walk. It was deeply mesmerizing to walk through the paddy fields and getting reconnected with nature. The rehearsal was all play in the beginning so I didn't realize when it underwent a transformation into a full-fledged theatre rehearsal. Sometimes I felt that the atmosphere inside the camp was a little bit free so it got in the way of our training. But it also improved the condition of many students. People said many good things about us.

Gopika: I was not at all interested in participating in the camp at MoozhikkulamSala because I've never been interested in drama or Kathakali. I thought my days of camp at Moozhikkulam would be extremely boring. But things were different at the camp. We started the rehearsal with some games and how smoothly that led us to the drama we didn't even realize. We were also given some group works. It was regarding Madhu's death. Through completing our group work I learned a lot about Madhu and his pathetic life.

JeevJohny: Through this workshop, we learned a lot about theatre. We also learned about theatre conventions and acting too. The how

and why behind Madhu's killing was also unraveled through this workshop. I didn't realize how fast days passed during the ten-day-long camp.

Reshma: It was good to have a laugh with everyone in the camp; how fast time flies you don't even realize. Sir introduced us to the drama even without our knowing. Days passed and we were on the final day of our workshop. On that day something unfortunate happened. On the performance day a drunkard disturbed a camp member. But we overcame all that and played the drama very well. After the drama was presented people came and appreciated our efforts.

Karthi: I was acting in a drama for the first time and so happy. The reason for that is our Pradeepan sir. He was the one who told us about the drama and how to act. It was a serious drama and each scene was very tough to act.

Gauri Nandan: The camp gave a new meaning to my life. I thought it would be hard to carry on with the camp for ten days but somehow it ended very smoothly. We played, laughed, and worked very hard all throughout.

Eldho: I've had some very unique experiences through this camp. Theatre became such an important part of my life; it didn't leave me even when I was doing the daily tasks in my day to day life. I was getting deeply involved in the process of acting. Our first venue was Moozhikkulam junction and even though there was a

little misunderstanding among the audience we were able to finish the play smoothly.

Sl.No	Name of Camp Members	Before the Theatre workshop	Experience after the Theatre workshop
1	AishwaryaLaibi	I had a doubt when I first heard that a play is going to be directed with the theme connecting man and the land. I wasn't sure about the way in which it was going to be directed.	The camp was very informative at the same time fun-filled. The rehearsal was all play in the beginning so I didn't realize when it underwent a transformation into a full-fledged theatre rehearsal. Sometimes I feel that the atmosphere inside the camp was a little bit free so it got in the way of our training. But it also improved the condition of many students. People said many good things about us.
2	Gopika	I was not at all interested in participating in the camp at MoozhikkulamSala because I've never been interested in drama or Kathakali. I thought my days of camp at Moozhikkulam would be extremely boring.	Things were different at the camp. We started the rehearsal with some games and how smoothly that led us to the drama we didn't even realize. We were also given some group works. It was regarding Madhu's death. Through completing our group work I learned a lot about Madhu and his pathetic life.
3	JeevJohny		Through this workshop, we learned a lot about theatre. We also learned about theatre conventions and acting too. The how and why behind Madhu's killing was also unraveled through this workshop. I didn't realize how fast days passed during the ten-day-long camp.
4	Reshma		It was good to have a laugh with everyone in the camp; how fast

			time flies you don't even realize. Sir,introduced us to the drama even without our knowing. Days passed and we were on the final day of our workshop. On that day something unfortunate happened. On the performance day a drunkard disturbed a camp member. But we overcame all that and played the drama very well. After the drama was presented people came and appreciated our efforts.
5	Karthi	First time I was acting in a drama.	I was so happy .The reason for that is our sir. He was the one who told us about the drama and how to act. It was a serious drama and each scene was very tough to act.
6	GauriNandan	I thought it would be hard to carry on with the camp for ten days	The camp gave a new meaning to my life. It ended very smoothly. We played, laughed, and worked very hard all throughout.
7	Eldho		I've had some very unique experiences with this camp. Theatre became such an important part of my life. It didn't leave me even when I was doing the daily tasks in my day to day life. I was getting deeply involved in the process of acting. Our first venue was Moozhikkulam junction and even though there was a little misunderstanding among the audience we were able to finish the play smoothly.

Fig. 4.8 A Feedback chart of Growth to the Spect-Actors of the Camp Members at MoozhikulamSala

There were many others besides the students who helped in giving shape to the drama's script and presentation. Artist, sculptor, and theatre activist C.Honey was also there as a co-director to help the direction throughout the camp. GeethaVazhachal, the tribal leader of the Kadar tribe in Athirappilly shared her experiences. The ethnic songs by KarinthalaKoottam, an ethnic music performing group added good music to the play. B. Bhadran and his daughter Parvathy Bhadran penned and sung a song for the drama. Some of the audience from Moozhikkulam junction who were mainly the local residents also gave their valuable suggestions for the play. This helped to improve and strengthen the play further. Vinitha Cholayar was also there to help us during the ten-day camp.

Instead of camp members introducing themselves, one person introduced the other. That's how the camp started. Later they went through Boal's theatre games and techniques. The Bear of Poitiers, Columbian Hypnosis, Imaginary Chair, and tug of war (Fig.4.9) were applied. Afterward the following games and exercises were also applied for camp members.



Fig.4.9. Tug of War, Camp Members of MoozhikulamSala

Apple Dance: “Two partners dance with an apple clasped between their foreheads (no hands). The apple must not be dropped.”(Games for Actors and Non Actors 81) It is adapted as a game in the camp.

Sticky Paper:

One person in the centre the others touch her or one another; with each point of contact, a sheet of paper is placed between the touching parts of the bodies the person in the centre begins to move and the whole group must move with her, but the bits of the paper must stay where they are, without dropping. Any part of the body can be used as the point of contact, not just hands - head, shoulder, neck, buttocks, anything (81).

Irish Duels: Irish duels are simple. One of the Irish duels is applied in the camp.

Duel two: maybe best done with bare feet or shoes of similar robustness! The partners face each other, dancing from foot to foot keeping only one foot on the ground at a time, and each partner tries to touch his foot on top of his adversary's foot, preferably without stamping violently on him. One point for each touch, first to three wins (82).

Other variants of it also exercised in the camp. All the camp members were able to freely mingle with each other after passing through these exercises and games.

The Handkerchief Game:

Two lines of people standing side by side face each other, a couple of metres apart. Both lines are numbered in different directions; thus with twelve people there would be two lines numbered from one to six and one would stand opposite six, two opposite five, three opposite four, and so on. The workshop leader calls out a number and two people who answer that number must try to run and grab a Handkerchief (hat or another object) placed somewhere on the middle line separating both groups. The person who had grabbed the handkerchief must endeavour to get the handkerchief back to her line without being touched by the other player (84).

This helped the participants to loosen their rigid muscles and to stimulate dormant muscles. Through these exercises and games, the

camp achieved a lively atmosphere and improved the theatrical abilities of the participants.

As a prerequisite to Augusto Boal's Image-Making Exercise, we also indulged in combined exercises. In this, the activities which are familiar to the camp members are generally carried out. How non-artificially they are indulging in the day to day activities of their lives. Here speech or movement has no role. Things have to be conveyed through still images. House making, fishing, cooking for a feast, etc. all are done through coming together and working as a team. Then the image is carried forward to the theatre.

Newspaper Theatre also provide some opportunity and hence was utilized in the rehearsal process. It was initially developed by the nucleus group of Arena Theatre, Sao Paulo of which Augusto Boal was the artistic director. "It consists of several simple techniques for transforming daily news items, or any other non-dramatic material - into theatrical performances" (Theatre of the Oppressed 143). The camp members also collected information from the various newspaper cuttings and made a collage regarding the death of Madhu (Fig.4.10). It became an integral part of the activities of the camp. For this, the camp members were divided into four small groups. Each group studied in detail all the information regarding the death of Madhu. The leaders of each team then presented their findings in the camp. Thereafter an intense discussion was started on this topic. The main point behind the debate was to decide how this horrific incident was to be approached. How to reach a solution to this problem was also discussed. Will mere monetary compensation be sufficient for the loss to Madhu's family?

Will it solve all the underlying problems? Since it was hunger that led Madhu to steal food, will it be alright if all the Adivasis are given free ration? Through the making of collage, the camp tried to address all these questions. The discussion went on for a long time and included topics regarding the glorious past of the Adivasis and the further steps to be taken to ensure them a better future.



Fig.4.10. Collage made by The Camp Members of MoozhikulamSala.

So, we started our image-making exercises at the end of this long discussion. It was started by dividing camp members into two teams. One team was given the topic of hunger while the other was given greed. While the first team presented the various faces of hunger the other team exposed the fast-food culture which wastes food and the glitzy life in the five-star hotels. The team enacted how a lot of food is ordered and much of it is wasted after eating and how the rich insult the

waiter in their arrogance was also shown. All the still images later proceeded to move live images. All the camp members learned a lot from these exercises; it helped them not only to stretch the body but also to expand the mind. Rather than merely repeating the dialogues like a puppet, they gained fluency in dialogue presentation. They invented various images through this image-making exercise. All these were based on the theme of the drama, man, and his connection to the land

Badal Sircar, in his play *Beyond the Land of Hattamala*, has utilized the theme of two persons seeing the same dream. But the current presentation overcomes this artificiality. Here two Adivasi young men see two different dreams. One person sees a very creepy dream of how they were oppressed for such a long time. An image from K.J. Baby's *Nadugaddiga* is taken for this. The other young man is much more optimistic. He dreams of a much better, happier, free future. For this Hattamala was expressed in an entirely new way.

2016 December

During every Christmas vacation since 2016, drama workshops are being conducted in the Chempukadav Government School at Thamarassery in Kozhikode District. A major reason for choosing this venue is the higher percentage of tribal children studying in this school. Certain elements of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed were applied hereafter adapting it for children. Initially, the tribal children who were part of the camp never opened up to anyone. They were shy and immersed in fear. They were never ready to voice their emotions or thoughts. This reflected their social as well as economic backwardness.

In the beginning of every workshop, certain games described in Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and Games for Actors and Non Actors were conducted. Along with the games like the Slow Motion Game and Bear Game mentioned in Boal's work, Kerala's folk games for children like Kottakali (Fig.4.11), Naranga palu Ilakal Pacha Pookkal Manha, Kozhiyum Kurukkanum (the Hen and the Fox) were arranged for the children of the camp to take part in. These kinds of games helped the tribal children to a considerable extent in coming out of their cocoons of inhibitions and mingling with each other expressing themselves, although in a limited manner.



Fig.4.11. 'Kottakali', Students from Govt. School, Odappallam, Wayanad.

These drama workshops were held with the prime motive of bringing these children to the forefront from the outcast social status to they belonged, and also to set them freed from the social shackles they are entangled in. At these camps, Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed was not as such executed. The core element of the Image-Making Exercise was transfigured to suit the understanding of the tribal children. It was not mere training on a previously written drama lesson. Though some stories suitable for children were used during the sessions, the story was not read out and played in a textual manner. A method was used where the moral of the story was conveyed to the children and their imagination and improvisation on it was brought about.

Balloon Man was one of the stories used for introducing stage presentations. A balloon man is a child's major attraction point during any village festivals and he is omnipresent in any village market. At a time of severe poverty in the village, nobody came to buy balloons from the balloon man. To make up sales the man filled hydrogen in his varied coloured balloons and flew them out into the sky where it was noticed by the children of rich households living in far away villages and they came to buy it. When the man was returning after his sales he was approached by a poor child wearing torn and ragged clothes. He asked a question, whether only such beautifully coloured balloons would fly high up in the sky. The child's question which captures the wretchedness and disgrace of the tribal was answered by the balloon man. His answer revealed the greatness of education. He exclaimed that any balloon irrespective of being beautifully coloured or not could float high in the sky and what really matters is the gas-filled inside it.

Through this story the perspective that any child is capable of reaching high levels of achievements, if they receive the right education was instilled into the minds of the children. The possibilities of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, uses the body and body language as a medium to convey the vast possibilities of theatre presentation. This could create hope in the tribal that they would also be able to raise in life in spite of their current positioning of social backwardness.

2017 December

On another occasion, Vaikom Mohammed Basheer's famous story *Bhoomiyude Avakaashikal* was introduced to the children. Instead of the age-old method of narrating the story, a demonstration of the most important literary images from the story was done. As in the previous year's workshops, here too Boal's Image Making Exercise was reconstructed to make it. Some of the images of the story were introduced as an answer to the question who is the heirs of the earth? Certain literary images derived from Basheer's story were converted to iconic visual images using the body language of the children. Do Cobras (one among the crores of species in nature) have the right to live in this world?" This question raised by Basheer in the story was being investigated by the children on stage. In the story, a snake crawls into the farm owned by the author. The author's wife demands to know what right does a snake has to come into a farm where children play. The children on stage groups together to the formation of a snake and then encounters this question and throws a reply on 'how are they supposed to travel freely in a world that is separated by walls on every nook and corner?' Through such movements on stage, the

students could thoroughly and comprehensively understand the vastness and importance of nature.

In a later instance in the story, the author's wife decides to kill the bats that feed on every tender coconut on their farm. She takes the help of her brother who is an ex-military man owning a gun to shoot down the bats which have taken refuge in the banyan trees located on the grounds. Here the children form still images of a bat on a stage utilizing various aspects of indulging their body postures to evoke the feeling of witnessing a real bat. Bats are symbolic here as the imagery is carried out on considering the bats as same as farmers because bats are the prime seed distributors in nature which is required for the sustainability of the world.

2018 December

By the 2018 Christmas vacation camp, the tribal children started expressing their interest in different art forms, and initiatives were taken to nourish these interests. Their interests were prominent in painting and music. Initially, only the children of the lower primary and upper primary school were a part of the theatre but later as the practice advanced, elder children and parents too started becoming a part of the workshop. The varied possibilities of techniques in Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed helped in this inclusion of the people of different age groups.

A transitioning through various activities and exercises as a part of the workshop made the children energetic. Participation in the camps became more open too. When the folk game of Kozhiyum Kurukkanum

(Hen and the Fox) commenced, even the parents became a part of it. It was through this setting formulated in the stage that poverty and the breaking out of it by the tribal were given serious thoughts and also portrayed through the stage. For bringing this on stage, two incidents were collated. One is the poverty setting in Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* and the other is the recent incident where a poor tribal youth named Madhu was subjected to a brutally beaten to death. Firstly iconic visuals regarding poverty were presented and later a solution to it was sought. It was a search through the language of theatre about the path to freedom from the grinding socio-economic insecurity which sometimes even pushed one to steal for temporary relief.

2019 January

This researcher was invited to lead a theatre workshop organized by Rangachethana (a theatre study group based in Thrissur) based on Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed held at the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Vylloppilli Hall. The major aim of the workshop was to use the unique and special techniques of Augusto Boal in different settings. The theatre workshop was also an experiment on how it could incorporate the theoretical and theatrical lessons from the techniques of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed into the People's Theatre of Kerala. One full day of the theatre workshop was dedicated to the discussions and presentations of different games and certain iconic visual techniques like Image Theatre, Simultaneous Dramaturgy, etc. used in Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. This one day workshop proved that theatre operations, scriptwriting, and presentation could be

made possible through these Boal's different stage techniques and games.

Rengachethana organized a training programme where people engaged in alternative professions would be facilitated to learn theatre within one-year duration. The theatre workshop was carried out for the recently formed batch. As it was the 400th day of the weekly stage presentation a few alumni as well as spectators became part of the presentation. The workshop was structured in such a way as to include the sharing of experiences of the camp members, the implementation of various games and exercises derived by Boal and also the assessment of his various techniques like Image Theatre, Forum Theatre and Simultaneous Dramaturgy.

Session 1

A short presentation of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed was done as a preface which was followed by the sharing of acting experiences by members and also by enacting certain characters on stage. It wasn't expected from a person who is a fresher and who had no previous experience or background in acting to take up this challenge. But surprisingly most of the members were ready to do so. While some of them enacted characters that they had already performed, others tried to portray characters that they had observed in day to day life.

Here they were given the opportunity to self-evaluate and also evaluate each other. Some of the participants were not able to do full justice to the characters, some just ranted the dialogues that they made by hearted in a mechanical manner. Very few could portray the

character in a natural manner. Some of the newcomers to the field of theatre and acting were not able to do anything. It was noticeable that they were not relaxed enough. Their expressions were also not ample and apt. Some others had the fear of their shortcomings being revealed. A limited number of participants were able to portray the character backed by voice modulation in dialogue delivery and movements but in a very melodramatic manner. Here the members were given a chance to understand the limitations and probabilities of their skills and also a motivation to raise above all the limitations.

Session 2

A basic idea was given of muscular masking and social masking which Boal considered as the major obstacles that an actor would face. Further, Practical activities were assigned which were derived to overcome these obstacles. For this purpose the games and exercises mentioned in Boal's work titled *Games for Actors and Non Actors* along with similar kinds of such games prevalent in Kerala were carried out in a collaborative manner. To liberate the body and mind the following activities were given viz. Slow Motion Exercise, Handkerchief Game, Kottakali, Irish Duels, Activating the Senses, Tug of War, Columbian Hypnosis and Balloon as an Extension of the Body and The Circle of Knots. (Fig.4.12)

Slow Motion Exercise: Slow Motion Exercise was the first game to be given in the workshop as it was required to give flexibility to the body muscles that had become weak and useless due to daily routines. This was necessary as the Slow Motion Exercise aided in increasing the performance capacity of an artist. This exercise helped in giving self-

awareness about all their body parts. The participants were divided into two groups for this activity where they gave commentaries, encouraged, and applauded each other while keeping a close eye on all the elements of the exercise.



Fig.4.12.Camp Members in 'The Circle of Knots', Rangachethana, Thrissur.

The game starts in a simple manner but follows and ends with a strenuous effort. This ultimately helps to loosen up all the solid packed muscles which subsequently helps in the opening up of the participants and also elevates their interests in lending helping hands to each other. Ultimately this acted as an ice-breaker and all the camp members became more relaxed. Each and every one of their hearts and bodies was ready to be open and receptive.

Handkerchief: For this activity, the members were divided into two groups and made to stand face to face. An object was kept between them

and both of these groups were given numbers which they held on to their backs and nobody could see it. When a random number was called up the team members from another group who shared the same number was destined to run in and take the item kept in the middle before the other person touches it. The game demands one to be equally vigorous, flexible, and careful. This game not only strengthened the physical and mental unity between the participants but also created a brother hood bonding among them.

Kottakali: It is a folk game prevalent in Kerala which is similar to Boal's games mentioned in his work titled Games for Actors and Non-Actors. This game consists of a ring that is symbolic of a fort (which is known as Kotta in regional language). Persons deployed in and out of the ring. Participants who stood inside the circle should touch a person inside the circle without getting in. The participant inside the circle does his best to move within the limitations of the circle so as not to get touched by the person outside the circle.

The game advances based on the participant's ability to stay together in a group but at the same time making self-defense to save himself and both of these where to be done within the circle too. The game was structured to provide unity and flexibility among the women participants too. The game not only aimed at making you stand united and be defensive against a common enemy but also teaches you to face a group of enemies alone. The group was able to acquire the talents of shrinking and expanding themselves which would later help them during stage compositions and movements.

Irish Duels: Irish Duels is another game mentioned in Augusto Boal's Games for Actors and Non-Actors. In this game, two people stand face to face, and their hands are tied on to their backs and one person tries to step on the feet of the other. It is a bit difficult to get into the flow of this game initially, but later it becomes a rhythmic kind of dance. Another variant of Irish duels was also used here. One participant tries to touch their head on to the other person head and they have to snuggle out and vice versa. For this purpose the participants jumped up and somersaulted along with sudden withdrawal and advancing movements. Both these games equipped the participants to knock down their laziness, improve their flow and flexibility along with dissipating their mental stress.

Activating the Senses: Boal used Blind Series exercises for the activating the senses. The activity titled Point of Focus was chosen for this exercise. When the game begins the participants are shown a target (an object) located in one corner of the room. Subsequently, they were asked to close their eyes and then some obstacles (using chairs) were created separating the participants from the targets. Each of them was instructed to rotate and move to the targets when the clap cue was given. Even though most of them lost their ways and collided with each other, a large number of participants were able to reach the target spot. Some of the members did open their eyes for a fraction of second due to the fear of stumbling upon each other and also due to the eagerness to reaching first. Here the participants utilized all their senses except their eyes to reach the target point. Eyes, the most used sense organs, have the capacity to reduce the importance and cancel the effects of other sense organs. Here while the usability of other senses improved, stage responses of a participant could be more specific. This was exclusively

visible in the participants of the theatre workshop as their senses of smell, touch, sound, and memory showed a marked enhancement.

Tug of war: The participants actively took part in tug of war as it is a game very familiar to the people in Kerala though it is only given a meager reference in Boal's works (Fig.4.13). A one to one competition was held first and later the participants were divided into two groups. The ambiance of the tug of war game was similar to that of a festival. The viewers showed their excitement through loud supporting applause while the participants fell on to the floor, got back up, pushed, and pulled on to an imaginary rope. With no stage properties used, the originality of the sequence was brought about by the expression of the participants, their team effort, and healthy competitive mind along with the immense amount of applause from the audience which made the scene look real. When the drama workshop reached this point, the participants came out of their inhibitions to a great extent and one could witness their capability of putting up a wider spectrum of performance.



Fig.4.13 Camp Members in 'Tug of War', Rangachethana, Thrissur

Columbian Hypnosis:

This exercise is similar to a magician's act of hypnotizing. The only change is that in hypnosis you make a person move to their subconscious levels but in this exercise, they are brought to their consciousness. The participant's performance during this exercise is worth mentioning. A team of three was formed where one person became the magician and the others were followers. The magician's hands maintained a particular distance from the followers and he encouraged them to mirror his movements at a slow pace as he does. (Fig.4.14)



Fig.4.14. Columbian Hypnosis, Camp Members of RangaChethna, Thrissur.

This exercise helped in stimulating the muscles and ligaments and the whole body itself to an exceptional level. The connection between the body and the mind was established by keeping up carefulness,

alertness, and also body consciousness. Though initially there was some difficulty to keep up with the exercise, all of it was surpassed by the speed constraint, rhythmic, nonstop, and considerable easy steps. This made the participants enjoy the activity really well and they were able to extend their body movements limitlessly without difficulty. They unknowingly gained the capabilities to crawl, flexibly rotate, bent forward, and liftback by following these exercises.

Session 3

The mind and body of the participants were refurbished after the games and exercises conducted in session 2. Now they were ready for the next step that is; writing and stage performance which was introduced to them using Augusto Boal's Image Theatre. Augusto Boal's Image Theatre was the final destination on the probe into finding a language that could outsmart the loss of meanings and obscurity in ideas due to the usage of varied dialects. Boal proposes that even when words are argued to be a carrier of ideas they have no self-existence. Words changed their meanings based on the context it is used by the speaker. Thus according to Boal, the theatre breaks out from these learnings through words and instead utilizes images on a higher level for expression. For example, the mother means mother everywhere. But maayi, ammachi, ummachi, eyyamma are also terms used for mothers in different places and varied communities.

In the initial step of beginning the Image Theatre, the participants were asked to form some still images like the construction of a house and preparing a traditional repast for a wedding. Each participant took up the responsibility to continue the performance from the point where

the previous participant paused. Later participants were given chest numbers but they were called upon in a random manner on to the stage. They were asked to present a still shot that concerns the present society. The only condition was given that one person should supplement the movements abiding the other. They were not given any instructions on what to do. Here each and every one of them received the freedom to travel on a path to discover the truth. This leads them to a temple, a deity, and a belief.

The understanding of the surroundings by activating and stimulating the five sense organs was achieved here in a natural manner. The body and mind free from prejudices were also ready to imbibe this understanding. This showcased the importance of Image-Making Exercise in portraying social realities on stage. Here no script was prepared in advance or relevant discussions were not carried out during the activity. Image Theatre is a visual language that is well above an orator using his persuasive language or the mechanical expressions brought about by a trained classical artist.

Session 4

Forum Theatre:

Two compact presentations were needed to be prepared for the Forum Theatre.

The participants are asked to tell a story containing a political or social problem of difficult solution. Then a ten or fifteen-minute skit portraying that problem and the solution intended for discussion is improvised or rehearsed and subsequently presented.

When the skit is over, the participants are asked if they agree with the solution presented. At least some will say no at this point. It is explained that the scene will be performed once more, exactly as it was the first time. But now any participant in the audience has the right to replace any actor and lead the action in the direction that seems to him most appropriate... Anyone may propose any solution, but must be done on the stage, working, acting, doing things, and not from the comfort of his seat (Theatre of the Oppressed 139).

For this purpose, the camp members were divided into two groups and asked to find out themes of social relevance. Hunger and gender equality were the two topics that they chose. Subsequently, the rehearsals of the presentation were conducted till the spectators arrived. They were introduced to the model of Forum Theatre. To incorporate the participation of the audience in the stage performance their prejudices, impotence, contraction, and diminutions had to be rooted out. To achieve this purpose, Boal's colourful and resplendent exercise titled Balloon as an Extension of the Body was given to them (Fig. 4.15). Innumerable balloons were left out to fly towards the sky. These balloons were to be kept in the air by kicking and touching it with any part of your body except your hands. This was a frolicking and colourful play. Both camp members and audiences belonging to various age groups and gender actively immersed themselves in this game. It was then that Sanal Shashindra (music teacher at School of Drama) entered the stage playing his dholak and a tune of humming. With the addition of the rhythmic music, the game became ever so energetic. This game helped everyone to relax after strenuous efforts. As a result, a creative

harmony was moulded which helped in shaping a willingness among the participants in the upcoming stage acts where there would be no differentiation between the actor and the audience. Next to simple presentations on hunger and gender equality prepared by the camp members were presented on stage to showcase the intervention of Forum Theatre in them.



Fig.4.15. Balloon as an extension of the Body, Camp Members and spectators, Ranga Chethana, Thrissur.

Hunger: Hunger was the first short presentation to be staged. When the play advanced it became focused on the character of the beggar. A hungry and worn out beggar reached a tea shop. The owner of the tea shop beats him up and sends him away. Some customers in the tea shop also join to do this heinous act. A few other onlookers stand quietly with expressions of sympathy. When the beggar refused to leave, they brutally thrashed him and later he falls dead. The camp members were enquired upon how to improve the presentation that could have

normally ended here. But nobody came forward with suggestions due to their lack of proper understanding of the Forum Theatre. The director of the workshop asked the camp members to keep in mind the possibilities of the Forum Theatre and imagine what could have happened if the tea shop owner was a benevolent person. The new member who performed the role of the tea shop owner behaved in a merciful manner to the beggar and asked his whereabouts, gave him food, and told whether he could stay at the shop as a helper. This way the whole storyline changed dramatically.

Gender Equality: The next presentation on stage was based on gender equality. It was staged by overcoming the shortcomings experienced during the presentation of Hunger. The performance became very interesting and enjoyable. The setting was that of a night bus. A woman enters the bus where most of the passengers were males including the driver and the conductor. Nobody was ready to give her a seat. As she noticed men sitting even in the seats reserved only for women she asked them to move out. But no men were ready to do so and they started showering her questions on where she was traveling to this late-night and to meet whom. Not even the conductor or other co-passengers came to her rescue. From this point, the audience starts interacting with the presentation. One person from the audience comes on stage and removes the current driver and takes his place. In the next instant, another member of the audience comes to replace the conductor who did not make a righteous intervention. A woman from the audience replaces a man occupying the seat reserved for women. When the scene advances bold women from the audience takes up the role of the women passenger (Fig.4.16).



Fig.4.16. Forum Theatre performance on Gender Equality. Ranga Chethana, Thrissur.

They were accepting positions on a par with gender equality. The bold woman also takes the wheels from the driver who was driving carelessly. Thus both life and drama happily went ahead hand in hand. Here through the intervention of Forum Theatre the usual concepts of gender equality were questioned reiterating the fact that women can face any situations and work on any job and meet the targets that she is required to do. The Forum Theatre opens a variety of routes and possibilities in handling the subject of gender equality. Here no idea was forcefully suggested upon anyone and no moralizing was done. As the audience and the actors were learning equally through the process it can be called pedagogical. This actually gives liberation to the actor and audience alike. The audience slowly gets transfigured to actors.

Session 5

Simultaneous Dramaturgy

The theatre workshop started by ten in the morning and by seven in the evening Simultaneous Dramaturgy was introduced to them (Fig.4.17).

This is the first invitation made to the spectator to intervene without necessitating his physical presence on the stage. Here it is a question of performing a short scene, often to twenty minutes, proposed by a local resident one who lives in the barrio... Having begun the scene, the actors develop it to the point at which the main problem reaches a crisis and needs a solution. Then the actors stop the performance and ask the audience to offer solutions. They improvise immediately all the suggested solutions, and the audience has the right to intervene, to correct the actions or words of the actors, ... Thus, while the audience writes the work the actors perform it simultaneously. The spectator's thoughts are discussed theatrically on stage with the help of the actors. All the solutions, suggestions, and opinions are revealed in theatrical form the discussion itself need not simply take the form of words, but rather should be effected through all the other elements of theatrical expression as well (Boal 132).



Fig.4.17. Simultaneous Dramaturgy, camp Members and spectators, Ranga Chethana, Thrissur.

One person commented that the entry of women devotees in Sabarimala temple which is a fixture of many discussions in the current scenario should be taken for a theme. Soon after, two women get ready to visit Sabarimala. Some others barricaded them from doing it. Arguments rose between believers, non-believers, and rationalists. A group of people sprinted in anger towards the women who were ready to mount the Sabarimala. At the peak of arguments, the scene gets agitated. Then a person from the audience stood up and proclaimed how would the scene be if the people who opposed the women going to Sabarimala consisted of her son too? Thus later the scene focuses on the arguments between the mother and the son:

Son: Can't you go to Sabarimala after some years? (When the scene is acted out this way the mother inquires)

Mother: Why should I go after some time?(A person from the audience asks the son to give the following reply to his mother)

Son: You could go after your menopause right? (But due to his emotionally traumatic state of mind and unrelenting motherly affection he wasn't able to ask that question. Suddenly another actor comes in place of the son and shoots the particular question. The son was petrified by the Mother's response)

Mother: You were born due to that!

Next, a person among the audience asks to enact the next scene where the son unintentionally slaps the mother and she drops to the floor. With this, the scene had a complete shifting of focus. The story revolves around religion, the belief, and Sabarimala to the importance of love and affection between father, mother, children, and family relationships along with life values. Here life travels on a path from God to humanity. The session of Simultaneous Dramaturgy was concluded by showcasing the knowledge imbibed on a heart touching the subject and then clearing all the doubts regarding it.

The performance created by simultaneous scripts could be applied effectively without any obstruction owing to the natural application of Boal's Joker System. The camp director, integrating and interpreting the live scriptwriting and performance based on different conventions of the Theatre of the Oppressed, assumes the role of joker for the effective presentation of the performance.

Session 6

A review of the experiences at the theatre workshop

The camp members and the audience were equally happy about recognizing the influence that Augusto Boal had in the scenario of Kerala's Theatre and social life and environment and also the relevance of his works on theoretical and practical levels. Through the theatre workshop, the camp members and audience along with the spectators who were involved in the creative atmosphere surpassed all their limitations and brought their life, with its conflicts and contradictions on stage. This was a manifestation of the greatness of Augusto Boal's theatre practices. The universality of a great theatre artist was visualized here.

Fight for land and the people's theatre interventions which developed in support of it led to the land reforms, but the legitimate distribution of land remains a dream even today. The socially oppressed sections still raise their voice for the right on the land.

Once the theatre rose into action along with social movements problematizing the life of peasants; but today we see no theatre which is capable of addressing issues such as farmers' suicide.

Kerala had witnessed renaissance movements, against religious exploitations, social inequality, and the denial of education. But today we see fanatic attempts for the revival of religion and caste.

Once the dignity and self-respect of women were raised as part of renaissance movements in Kerala; but now violence and assaults against women and children are on the increase.

Our country witnessed strong movements for a world without poverty, but today we see painful incidents that question this past glory. Kerala has debased itself into a land of educated barbarians who mob lynched a starving man accusing him of stealing food.

In a period when social-political-renaissance and people's theatre were active, people were vigilant against the spread of social evils and moral deterioration. The issues which were once addressed, but still remain unsolved should be taken up by the people's theatre of the present. Each theatre workshop convinced its members of this task ahead. These issues were brought on stage and became the beginning of new scripts.

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5

An Analysis of People's Theatre in Kerala based on Theatre of the Oppressed

The discovery of Augusto Boal that the theatre is essentially political becomes relevant here. He has categorically proved the strength of political theatre in Latin America and other developed countries. Theatre of the Oppressed has drawn its energy from the world theatre and is capable to bring a transformation in the people's theatre in Kerala; also has the capacity to subjugate its weaknesses. Just the way Augusto Boal analyzed the origin and developments of world theatre, the People's Theatre of Kerala can be analyzed from the perspective of Theatre of the Oppressed.

The early theatre of Kerala had been rich with people sharing their pain and pleasure dancing in revelry, and at the same time the tradition of folklore having a loose structure merged on a unique dais. But later under the tutelage of the dominant class, it assumed a codified shape with a rigid form and content. Thereby it assumed the name of classical art forms making the presentation and enjoyment of it the privilege of trained elite. But a rebellion against it started with *Thullal* movement. This rebellion pursued a path that deviated from the conventional and unique modes of performance. Thus plays that based on the personal essence and the plays that can adequately express sense of freedom were born in Kerala/Malayalam.

People's Theatre in Kerala addressed economic-social-political and moral problems and its solutions in Kerala and also its milieu, flora and fauna and human lives. It begins with *Mariyamma Natakam*, the play that dealt with Christian lives, *BalaKalesam*, *Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekk*, *Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam*, *Rithumathi*,

Thozhilkendrathilekk, Pattabakki, Koottukrishi, Ningalenne Communistakki, Ith Bhoomiyanu and extends upto *Nadugaddika* - a long journey that marked the evolutionary history of people's theatre in Kerala. Today people's theatre can make further progress only by understanding this historical context.

The performing arts that were confined to the temple premises, palace and its minor recesses were brought to the public spaces of agriculture by people's theatre; even it began to take its shape. When *Theyyam* was performed in temple yards, the youth were helping small plays to grow in cucumber fields at night. It was Vidwan P.Kelunair who for the first time realized the potential of theatre and used it for social renaissance. The waves of national independent struggle made him a man of people's theatre. The field plays made use of epics and other ancient works for subject matter; still they reflected the aspirations of the age. Though the movement against foreign rule was gaining momentum at the national level, it failed to take its root among the people. A major chunk of the people was still in the confines of the national aristocracy. The downtrodden were subjected to the evil practices of untouchability and unapproachability. Pandit Karuppan was a noble teacher and a social reformer who rose up from the downtrodden class. His play *Balakaesam* was born out of the desire of his community to fight against the evil social practices. This play vehemently opposed differences on the basis of caste and put forward new ideas of freedom and equality.

The educated and those who were familiar with the western ways were formed in the Christian community when the Kerala community

was still in gloom and backwardness. KochheppanTharakan wrote the play *Mariyamma Natakam* to shake away the bad practices among Christians and converted Christians. It put forward new ideas about inheritance, dress and manners, personal freedom and the role of women in the society.

The new awakening ushered by national movement and renaissance on the one hand and the missionary activities and the modern values brought in by British rule on the other hand elevated Kerala to a higher plane. The Brahmin community in Kerala was forced to abandon the age old values and customs owing to this.

The Yogakshema plays made the reactionary customs and its tragic results as the theme of the plays. They were never bent upon acquiring fame by making impeccable/well-made plays. Through these plays they showed the plight of their women who are confined to the four walls of Brahmin households, ever denied of good dreams, an alternative path of life. It was V.T.Bhattathirippad who spearheaded the desire of progressive minded Brahmin youth. The play *Adukkalayilninn Arangathekku* is the very concrete expression of that desire. This work of renaissance literature originated in the meeting of likeminded young men at Yoga Kshema lodge. The man who harmoniously strung together these discussions and made it food for the nourishment of scripts and presentations was V.T. himself.

The play *Adukkalayilninn Arangathekku* unveiled the decadent practices of the Brahmin community. This newly literate man not only raised the problem of humanizing Brahmins, but was vociferous against

caste discrimination. Again, he makes a call to be sensitive to the changes at the grass root level.

The works of people's theatre were not creative meditations alone by writers staying away from society. They did it collectively with the desire to make creative expression of social problems. This method of collectivism did not gain much recognition. But V.T. had revealed this fact later.

The agitation that started with *Adukkalayilninn Arangathekku* later gave impetus to *Marakkudakkillile Mahanarakam* and *Rithumathi*. The play *Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam* even influenced law makers. The bill relating to question of Brahmin's marriage and inheritance were passed in the Cochin legislative assembly owing to the influence of these plays. The play *Widawa Wiwaham* by Lalithambika Antharjanam and *Thozhil Kendrathilekk* by a group of Brahmin women were a sequel to the aforesaid plays. The Yogakshema plays always used images relating to the real problems and ideals in their plays, whereas the society for Brahmin ladies employed transitional images.

The brahmin ladies stood against the marriage of young ladies to old men and confined life in the kitchen. Thus they rose themselves to the dignity of work, and prepared for a collective life. Those Brahmin women who were ready to smash the fetters of decadent feudal life started a work experience centre at Lakkidi. This collective experiences transformed itself into theatre experiences. They were not simply portraying this dismal picture. They were practically putting forward this centre for work experience as a solution for their problematic life.

The real image, the ideal image and transitional image of oppression were all rolled into one in Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. The play *Thozhi lKendrathilekk* shows salient features of the Image Theatre which was part of Theatre of the Oppressed.

Kavumkara Bhargavi who was a victim was elevated to the stature of a heroine through Devasena. Drawing energy from collective life, shaking away all the woes of bitter experiences, Kavumkara Bhargavi transformed herself into the strength and pride of womanhood. Many characters thus enter into the plays of work experience. A good example is Devaki who negates her husband representing the established Hindu traditional politics. Devaki reminds us of Nora in Ibsen's Doll's House. Nora had no definite place to go; but Devaki had a centre of work and collective life. The entry into the place of work experience is the celebration of womanhood shaking away feudal value concepts and ushering into individual freedom and women's equality.

Paattabakki, Nammalonn, Koottukrishi, Ningalenne Communistakki, Ithu Bhoomiyaan and Inquilabinte Makkal were progressive people's works that held aloft scientific truth in political thinking. They imbibed in them the theoretical and practical lessons of women's equality and communist ideology.

Pattabakki which was written by K.Damodaran for a farmers' conference declared that an individual is shaped by the social system and that for a dignified life, a radical change was essential in society. The thing special about *Pattabakki* was that it was woven with the warp and weft of scientific outlook, and constituted a simple plot. The fact

that so many political intellectual figures including the author himself gave life to the characters on the stage asserts the social importance of it. Each performance of the play received brickbats from intellectuals and common people. The text of the play transcended the original after various performances.

The age of *Pattabakki* and other people's plays was the time of ushering new concepts about national-international views. The search for a new era was everywhere. The youth inspired by social renaissance was in search of creative expressions. The leaders in those times were endowed with intellectual prowess which helped them to recognize the power of art and literature. They involved themselves in artistic activities according to social necessity. *Pattabakki* was perceptibly beautiful as a whole community was involved in the composition and performance of it. The actors in the play were the real leaders of the actual struggles going on in the society.

There are real historical incidents where the people interfered in the plays grew up with social movements. An example is the play *Nammalonnu* by Cherukad. In this play there is a scene in which the tenant Pangan Nair is assaulted by the manager of the feudal landlord. It made people really angry. The difference between the real struggle and the theatre is reduced to a thin line here. They are examples of Augusto Boal's spect-actor concept coming into actual practice.

I.P.T.A. was formed at national level in India during the last phase of independent struggle by a group of genius people in art and literature. K.P.A.C in Kerala was formed keeping pace with it. *Ningalenne*

Communistakki is a remarkable play by K.P.A.C by the process of formation of its scenario and stage presentation. K.P.A.C decided to stage the play at a time when the absconding Thoppil Bhasi was arrested and put behind the bars by the police. It was impossible to stage the play without making alterations to the written script. The script was changed into a presentable shape by the spearheads of K.P.A.C. They really made major changes for the sake of presentation in the stage. Only five scenes in the play were retained, and all other scenes were newly added. The length of most of the scenes was reduced. The character Sumam was not actually to be on the stage. But she was made to appear on the stage, after giving her a progressive halo. The framework made by the playwright was enriched by the contribution of many. Thus the play *Ningalenne Communistakki* was really born. Though the author himself reveals the accidental nature of the collective effort, till today the authorship is conferred upon Thoppil Bhasi himself. But the specialty of the democratic nature of Augusto Boal's creativity lies in bringing to the forefront the factors of collectivism. The theatrical techniques of spect-actors making on the spot dialogues (Simultaneous Dramaturgy), another technique of spect-actors interfering in the theatrical movements (Forum Theatre) are all examples of this collectivism where the body and mind of spectators are fully engaged.

When the waves of independent struggle abated, the selfless people's theatre was led astray and diverted to commercial endeavours and mere experiments. It lost its very core of its democratic essence and relied on foreign aid. But some alternative attempts still persisted by rooting itself on the Kerala cultural context, and depending on the

resources only from the people. Such works were really unique as far as scenario and presentation were concerned. *Kudukka* by P.M.Taj and *Nadugaddika* by K.J.Baby belong to this category.

K.J.Baby was initially not part of any political movement. But his vigilant mind about the social issues and his awareness of the hardships of tribal people in Wayanad made him a dramatist of people's resistance. He was able to understand the rhythm and language of the tribal people by constant contact with the leader Adiyor named Mathapperuman. Gaddika is a custom of Adiyor to cure diseases. Krishnan, a young Kurichya man, shared its dramatic possibilities to K.J.Baby. The dramatist made use of this theme that paved the way for democratic interferences in adopting themes. There is a distant relationship between this method and the Forum Theatre and Simultaneous Dramaturgy in which the spectators suggest the theme.

The close analysis of the oppression the tribal people in Wayanad suggested the imagery in *Nadugaddika*. The extreme left movements and perspectives in India in 1960s and the resistances against the abuse of power directly or indirectly shaped K.J.Baby, the dramatist. He drew inspiration from Varghese, the hero of Wayanad at that time.

The play clearly depicts the endeavour of the Gaddika man who tries to keep at bay the social maladies. The play unravels the beastly strength as well as the weaknesses of the exploitative system. It reminds us of the joker system of Augusto Boal. *Nadugaddika* originated and developed in the real land of its righteous inheritors. The real representatives came on to the stage to enliven characters. It was a

realistic representation of the real experiences in life. The state banned the play as it was a direct presentation of oppression. The activists were put behind bars as they suggested cure for the social maladies.

Meaningful endeavours based on realistic social analysis and collectivism gave birth to people's theatre. Socialist ideas and scientific truth caused these artistic works which influenced society considerably. Movements against caste hierarchy and inequality developed basing themselves on the ideals of liberty, democracy, secularism and equality. Myriad movements against child marriages, for widow marriage, for the education of girls, for the improvement of life, for the rights of farmers, workers and others transformed themselves into theatrical performances here. It helped so many arts clubs to mushroom. Those arts clubs that formed for enacting plays later helped the growth of many other art forms also.

6

Conclusion

The Theatre of the Oppressed is not merely centered on play writing, acting, directing, performance etc. On the contrary it provides a comprehensive approach to theatre. Here the theatre is considered as a miniature form of social life. Here theatre and life become complementary. The Theatre of the Oppressed converts theatre into a powerful space which problematizes issues of contemporary life.

Augusto Boal critically analyses the poetics of Aristotle and Hegel and extends the scope of Brechtian aesthetic views. Brecht analyses that idealist poetics emphasizes on the emotions useful to interpret the world. Unlike other interpretations of the world, materialist poetics aims at the transformation of the society. Aristotle and Hegel consider the end of drama as a state of rest whereas Boal considered the climax of drama as a preparation to the action. According to Boal, the Aristotelian plays eliminate a person's emotions such as dignity and courage which are necessary for social change.

Brecht critically analysed empathy connecting it to the theatrical illusionism. In bourgeois theatre incidents and characters created on the stage seem to be real to the spectator. So this theatre reflects the ideology that the world exists as it is without any change. Therefore Boal aims to bring to the forefront observe about the significance of politicisation of theatre and is in strong disagreement with naturalist representation of bourgeois theatre. He puts forward a discontinuation of Aristotelian poetics.

Boal invests his spect-actor physically and mentally to the dramatic action. When each actor becomes a part of improvisation in the changing action, each narration formed in front of us is being vanishing and getting recreated continually. Here Boal blends empathy and detached observation. But a close observation reveals Boal's disagreement with Aristotelian or dramatic theatre. Boal is inviting spectators to become the protagonists albeit briefly and partially - and for many, the willingness to do this is dependent upon having themselves felt like that at some time in their own lives. According to Boal, Hegel's ideas of values were filtering through contemporary consciousness without our direct knowledge. According to Hegel and Aristotle the drama shows the external collision of forces originating internally - the objective conflicts of subjective forces. For Brecht we see everything is reversed. According to idealistic poetics, social thought conditions social being. According to Marxist poetics social being conditions social thought. In Hegel's view the spirit creates the dramatic action, for Brecht the characters social relations create the dramatic action.

In order to understand the Poetics of the Oppressed, one must keep in mind its main objective, to change passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon, the spectators, into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action. Boal believed that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people, the means of production of the theatre, so that the people themselves may utilise them.

Augusto Boal's theatrical concepts begin from human body itself. He considered the human body as the first word of the theatrical

vocabulary - the main source of sound and movement. Boal introduced a set of games and exercises as the vital part of the theatre conventions. The exercises of the first stage are designed to undo the muscular structure of the participants. It can help a person to interpret characters different from him/her. In the second stage, the intention is to develop the expressive ability of the body. Boal suggests a series of games. In the third stage, the theatre as a language, one begins to practice theatre as language that is living and present not as a finished product, displacing image from the past. Simultaneous Dramaturgy, Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, Invisible Theatre are the three different degrees of the third stage.

Boal wanted to transform the spectator into a human being. He says spectator is a bad word. The spectator is less than a man. It is necessary to humanise him/her, to restore him. His capacity of action is all its fullness. Here the spectacle is a preparation for action. The spectator thinks and acts for himself. Thus Boal makes the Poetics of the Oppressed essentially the poetics of liberation.

Apart from conventional concepts of stage, Augusto Boal preferred the circular stage which is suitable for all kinds of theatre presentations. All spectators are close to all actors, the audience can smell the coffee being served on the stage.

Joker is the system proposed by Boal as a permanent form of theatre - dramaturgy and stage. The Joker is a magical reality; he creates it. If necessary, he invents magic walls, combats, soldiers, armies etc. The outlook of the Joker must be that of the author or adapter which is

assumed to be above and beyond that of the other characters in time and space. Boal gave the Joker a permanent structure of performance which is divided into seven main parts: dedication, explanation, episode, scene, commentary, interview and exhortation.

Boal presents the science of acting. The fundamental concepts for the actor are not the being of the character but the will. The will is the essence of the motivation. Character is a static notion; characterisation combined with will, is dynamic. The internal conflict of will and counter will create the dynamics, the theatricality of the performance and, with this dynamics, the actor will never be the same from one moment to the next, because he or she will always be in a continual state of flux, in this case a constant alternation of coming and going. Without counter will the actor will stay the same: static, untheatrical. From the interior conflict between will and counter will there always emerges, on the exterior, a dominant will.

When Boal had been working in Europe as a theatre practitioner, there he found some new phenomenon different from third world countries, such as loneliness, the impossibility of communicating with others, fear of emptiness etc. *The Rainbow of Desire* the name Boal gave to a collection of theatrical techniques and exercises designed to harness the power of the aesthetic space to examine individual internalised oppression and to place them within larger contexts.

In a Theatre of the Oppressed session, there are no spectators - only active observers or spect-actors. Boal formulated two fundamental principles of this: to help the spect-actor transform himself into a

protagonist of the dramatic action and rehearse alternatives for his situations. Secondly, to extrapolate into his real life the action he has rehearsed in the practice of theatre.

Augusto Boal entered into the theatre life, performing the text of famous writers. What distinguished him from other dramatists was his political awareness that one should portray the intensive reality of life. Even today there strongly exists the style of searching the texts of the past themes for similar to the contemporary realities. But the oppressive rule convinced Boal that it was his bounden duty to wield theatre as a weapon that would energise and consolidate the Latin American people who were waging a relentless struggle against imperialism and autocracy.

The analysis based on theatre of the oppressed helps to attain a critical consciousness over the political dimensions of the ruling class hidden behind the enigmatic expressions of contemporary theatre performance. In the contemporary traditional theatre, the spectator wonders at the magnificent visual effects/spectacle, but he is not able to understand the content of the performance. For many centuries theatre performances were based on Aristotelian aesthetic theories. Aristotelian aesthetic theory based itself on identification and helps to continue the existing oppressive system. The bourgeois world has already emerged and continues to exist. Therefore the bourgeois theatre is able to represent the bourgeois world in its perfection. It takes even the naturalistic form. But the world of the oppressed has not yet materialised. It is yet to take a shape. Therefore it is not necessary that Theatre of the Oppressed should provide a perfect spectacle. They may

be in the preparatory stage of an emerging world. Boal's view of theatre as a rehearsal of revolution is relevant also in Kerala in the backdrop of future social movements. It also portrays contemporary life situations and absorbs future life. Some similar aspects were visible once in the People's Theatre of Kerala. Assimilating all these conventions of the Theatre of the Oppressed, theatre practices were made in different parts of Kerala.

The workshops were conducted enabling its participants to analyse the society properly and to find out the basic problems and convert them into theatre performances. It proved that the play is not the monopoly of the professionals. Even the people who do not have previous experience could be made active in theatre as well as life. Augusto Boal developed his models with the aim of transforming people into pro-active artists - spect-actors. The fruitfulness of conventions of Theatre of the Oppressed was widely experimented through these theatre workshops.

In a period when social-political-renaissance and people's theatre were active, people were vigilant against the spread of social evils and moral deterioration. The issues which were once addressed, but still remain unsolved should be taken up by the people's theatre of the present. Each theatre workshops convinced its members of this task ahead. These issues were brought on stage and became the beginning of new scripts.

The theatre workshop experiences require a special mention here. Overcoming the obstacles created by muscular masking and social masking through the exercises and games designed by Boal, the

members of the theatre workshops underwent thorough transformation in theatre and life. All the performances were very live in the theatre workshops. During the progress of the theatre workshop at Rengachethana a woman from the spectators entered the stage and intervened in the performance. She totally transformed the victimised woman into a bold one. Thus she wholly transformed the performance and portrayed the courage of woman by questioning male dominant views, uplifting herself into the leading role, even taking over the control of the bus by driving it herself.

Simultaneous Dramaturgy which took place in the end of the workshop on the issues of women's Sabarimala entry erases the boundaries between actors and spectators. The spectators were writing the script while it was being performed on the stage by the actors. In the place of playwright writing the script in seclusion here in accordance with the dramatic action the spectators suggested developments of plots and dialogues. As distinct from Forum Theatre, Simultaneous Dramaturgy not only raises the spectators into the position of protagonists. But they are transformed to be playwrights and the creators of the drama. Thereby there took place the rare experience of merging the stage with the audience and vice versa.

The approach of Boal regarding how the important dramatic components like a characterisation, dialogues, conflicts etc are evolved where put into practice here. Contrary to the spiritual poetics which the objective conflicts of subjective forces, Boal presented internal conflicts of objective/social forces - the materialist poetics. For instance the cause of conflicts of characters, the performance in connection with

Sabarimala women entry is the pressure from state, religious institutions and political organisations. The cause of internal conflicts of characters is the moral value system of the existing social institutions. The conflicts between will and counter-will lead to characterisation. A person's thought or perspective is formed on the basis of social contradictions - how he/she lives in the society. This is the way Boal relates or connects the dramatic action of characters.

In place of sole occupation of a character by single actor in traditional theatre, the social intervention was very visible in Forum Theatre. Forum Theatre and Simultaneous Dramaturgy prove that the atmosphere of the theatre in the early stage of having no distinction between actors and spectators dancing and singing together is also possible even in the era of postmodernism in which the individuals are in isolated islands. Different from the traditional proscenium, a wide place of Kerala SahityaAkademi auditorium was transformed into a stage where people would sing and dance and have artistic experience and consciousness without any discrimination between actors and spectators divided by different walls; negating the proscenium characterised by three walls and a curtain (which is also known as the fourth wall), an intimate circular stage and a stage similar to environmental stage in which the dramatic action was possible without fixing separate spaces for actors and spectators were formed at the time of performance.

People's Theatre in Kerala got its shape from the continuity and ideological base of social, political and renaissance movements. Social movements and theatre movements played a mutually supplementary

role in recognising and solving major social problems. The natural weakness and withdrawals of social movements got reflected in people's theatre also. Later theatre could not completely comprehend and present social conflicts and its undercurrents.

People's Theatre of Kerala was a product of extensive collective efforts. People's Theatre had the flexible structure to be carved out of the draft made by the playwright with the socially conscious and politically streamlined organisers, actors and spectators giving it changes according to their needs at various stages. This meddling even went to the extents of completely changing the original. In People's Theatre the line separating the spectator and the stage was reduced into a thin line owing to the presentation of human lives in their real life situations. Almost all People's Theatre plays and performances were realistic. They were presented with big popular support. Even spectators from distant places came to see the plays. There was enough collective effort in composing lyrics, musical scoring and singing. All the people carried the songs in their hearts. Scriptwriting, rehearsal, direction, music, curtain, fund, scenic design, stage properties, platform (stage) etc. were all done with much popular support - a special characteristic of People's Theatre. People's Theatre marks the return of those good old days.

Individualism, the key concept in bourgeois movement in its initial stage emancipated people from feudalism - bondage to land. During the period of post-modernism the same concept of individualism, fragmented the individual into his/her own worlds. The individualistic approach today has become an obstacle for the collective activities and

creative expressions. Theatre has become a collective art form, because of the blending of various arts and collective efforts of many artists. So it is a crucial issue how theatre as a collective art form can go forward when each individual is trapped in his or her own world of isolation. A long lasting collective theatre has become a rare spectacle today. Augusto Boal's theatre practices and experiences which overcome such issues with an ideological insight are very relevant in Kerala. Boal proved that, even when democratic rights and creative expressions are restricted; theatre performance is possible for a socially committed artist. Invisible Theatre is an apt example for this. In Invisible Theatre there was no distinction between the actor and spectator. This is possible even during the period of oppressive modern capitalism, as Boal proves it theoretically and practically. But, it happens only when the artist identifies himself with the society. It also helps creative expression possible through the forums, breaking the alienation of each individual posited by post-modernism. An individual has to take part in theatre performance without revealing his/her identity as an artist. The Invisible Theatre demands great social and political commitment from an artist. It is in a period of absence of freedom of expression that an actor cannot be separated from the spectator.

On the contrary, in a society which is full of complexities with obscure ideas, it is very difficult to have convergence of ideas on any issue. Even in such situations Boal's theatre conventions like Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, Simultaneous Dramaturgy, Newspaper Theatre, Rainbow of Desire, Games and Exercises etc. to help us approach such issues through theatre. These workshops based on Theatre of the

Oppressed became a search for truth through theatre in Kerala context. By correcting our own theatre practices and freeing one from prejudices. Theatre of the Oppressed gives us a horse-sense that the People's Theatre of Kerala which formed under the shade of social movements, receiving ideas from it, should go forward today politicising itself during this difficult juncture of social progress.

Annexure

Annexure-1

Children of the Soil (Performance Script)



Scene 1

(A group of middle aged fat men and ladies, lean people etc. enters jogging in a rhythmic way in accordance with the music that flows from their head sets. When they listen to the songs of the jogging center they change their movements into a single rhythm. Western music from the FM radio is now in high volume. The group runs around the park many times. Their luxurious way of life and vanity is visible in their movement. Luxurious cars, trendy films, food habits and fashion shows etc are their topics of discussion. They exercise, sweats and wipe. The music of FM radio fades out the voice of RJ becomes louder.)

Aswathy : Good morning everybody... It's our World FM... I am RJ Aswathy...

Gowrinandan : I am RJ Gowrinandan...
(The RJ Aswathy and Nandan slips (tells) into their experiences of the last night party.)

Nandan : It was great... late in the night... Oh, Aswathy... Your capacity is...

Aswathy : Menu was heavy... Oh... KFC and chilled bear... When I reached the flat... when I slept... don't know...

Nandan : Oh! You were flat, Achoo...

Aswathy : You too man...

Nandan : Oh...! Achoo... What's this..? It's on air... Good morning, Gentlemen... We are sorry...

Aswathy & Nandan : We are really sorry...

Aswathy : I am RJ Aswathy...

Nandan : I am RJ Gowri Nandan... This is your World FM... With your favorite menu...

Aswathy : Today is world food day... Everyday is a day for celebration... Every day is special for us... Teacher's day... Mother's day... Father's day... Women's day... May day... Environmental day... Water day... Children's day... Valentine's Day... And also a day for death... We all will die too... Human beings are mortal... We are haunted by a painful

death... Hunger is the most important issue of all time... Isn't it..?
 Today is the food day... All these observations give us some
 message... Nandan, please tell me something to make this occasion
 blessed and graceful... Tell me Nandan...

Nandan : Arms of thieves must be cut... If one steals by hunger, the hands of
 ruler must be chopped off...
(Aswathy and Nandan together repeats the message.)

Aswathy : Yea... Yea... These words were uttered by Khalifa Ummer... 1,500
 years back... Let's dedicate this day for beggars and poor... Let's meet
 for another day with a cute observation... Have a nice day...Bye, bye...
*(Background music continues. a retired colonel enters jogging with
 his dog. He pants. Seeing a jogging team.)*

Colonel : Hello ladies... Why are you late..?

A Fat lady : *(Panting)* How can I reach with this heavy body on time..?

Colonel : *(Colonel in a nostalgic mood)* There was a time... I was not feeling
 tiredness when I was in army... I could climb snowy mountains...
(Two fatty men run towards him.)

Fat man : Hello, Colonel sab... *(Colonel laughs loudly seeing their gasping
 walk.)* Please don't laugh at... We can also do the same...
(Women laughs loudly.)

Ladies : Yes, yes... Definitely...!

Lady 2 : *(Watching the smart phone)*Do you know..? A new belt has arrived...

Fatman 2 : Belt..?

Lady 3 : Of course... If we wear it we don't need to run every morning, we can
 eat anything and everything...

Lady 1 : Oh...! Is it in shape...?

Lady 3 : Yeah...! I also liked it... Solar belt...

Colonel : Oh...! I have seen it Naptolin...

Slim beauty : Oh...! Why should we waste money..? Just reduce your food... You
 become slim...

Colonel : Be practical... The chicken and mutton kept in the fridge...! Can we
 throw them in the river..? *(Boastfully)* Even my Julie can't finish it...

Lady 1 : Are we Aborigines to die of hunger..?

Fatman 2 : We aren't turtles to live hundreds of years... Life is too short...

Fatman 3 : Be practical madam... *(At once another fat lady comes panting. Enthusiastically)*Hai, guys...

Lady 1 : Wah...! Here she is...! Indian Railway has come...! She is on time...

Colonel : But late only one day... *(All laugh at the lady who came late. A policeman enters. All stops laughing.)*

Police : Did you see two persons running here..? *(Pointing towards the joggers)* Did you see..?

Joggers : *(Scared)* No, Sir...
(The policeman sees a person hidden afraid.)

Police : Why do you hide there..? anything wrong with you..? Are you an aborigine..?

Fat man 1 : Me..? An Aborigine..?

Police : What's your name..?

Fat man 1 : *(Nervously)*Va...Vasu...
(Colonel prevents police.)

Police : Who are you..?

Colonel : Do you know I am a retired colonel..?

Police : Stay away... I am questioning... Can't you see..? *(To a woman)* Have you seen them..?

Lady : Me... What..?

Police : *(To the traffic Police)*Have you seen two thieves roaming around here..? One is tall and the other one is short... Both have a suspicious appearance... If you see them immediately inform me...

Traffic police : Yes, Sir...
(A few house wives and students arrive from the corner of the street, awaiting buses, afraid of the police. The joggers hurry up. Two young aborigines are running towards from the corner of the street. They hit the students. The books are scattered around. Children cries and collect the books.)

Students' mothers : Who are you..? What have you done..? What have you done to the children..?

Joggers : (*Joggers scared, pointing towards aborigines Velly and Choithi*)
Thief... Thief...
(*The team of joggers surround them.*)

Chothy : Those masters with cap come to kill us.. Please save us... Please save...

Crowd : Thief... Thief... Come fast...

Chothy & Velly : We are not thieves...

Crowd : Who are you..? Tell the truth...

Velly : Promoter of our settlement colony told us that we will get rice in the town free of cost... We came to get it...

Chothy : They asked a card... Then I showed the card which I kept with me... It's name something like Adhaar or Koodhaar...

Lady : (*From the crowd*) Don't say stupidity... They are professional thieves... Send them to police immediately...

Crowd : Lazy people...! Go and get some job instead of stealing... Stupid fellows... Beggars...

Chothy : We are starving...

Velly : The outsiders captured our land... What shall we do..? Please understand us... We have no means of life... Save us... We are not thieves...

Choithi : Rivers become polluted... All fishes have dead... We are starving...

Crowd : They simply lie...

Chothy : It is true that we have taken some rice from that big shop...

Colonel : Is it little..? They might have taken three or four sacks of rice... They are thieves...

Crowd : They seems to be so... Tell the truth...

Velly : We are not thieves...

Crowd : You dressed like thieves...

Velly&Chothy : We are not thieves... We are not thieves...

Crowd : Aren't you aborigines..?

Velly : We care children of the forest..?

Chothy : We are children of the soil...
(*Crowd call police.*)

Crowd : Thief, thief... Sir, they are here...
(They are surrounded by the people. Security runs towards them. By the time police also reach there.)

Security : Sir... These two men have stolen from our supermarket... I have seen that...

Police : Where is your supermarket..?

Security : Don't you know..? It is the most popular supermarket here, it is Komala...



Manninte Makkal, Camp Members, Moozhikulam Sala

Scene 2



Manninte Makkal, Camp Members, Moozhikulam Sala

(Some slaves sleep aside the stage. Snoring is heard. Land Lord enters accompanied by his steward.)

- Land lord : Hi, stupid... Who is sleeping there..? Buffaloes, get up...
- Steward : It is very comfortable to sleep hugging each other, isn't it..? Get up you buffaloes... *(Slaps the slaves)* Start working... Pull it... Pull it...
- Slaves : Aylassa... Aylassa...
- Steward : Pull down the hill...
- Slaves : Aylassa... Aylassa...
- Land lord : Make it as a paddy field...
- Slaves : Aylassa... Aylassa...
- Land lord : Wow... I have a dream... A golden palace... Immense wealth... Flames of fame...
- Steward : Just like that... His Highness...
- Land lord : Cavalry... Infantry... Elephantry...
- Steward : Well...

Land lord : Maids in the palace...

Steward : Fantastic...!
(Slaves continues the work landlords and steward fall asleep.)

Slaves : Aylassa... Aylassa...
(Slaves get up tried. They stop the work. One slave fearfully looks at the land lord. He has upset at his snoring. They make sure that the land lord sleeps and they are going for the rest. A distant view of nature makes them happy. They sing and dance. The landlord gets up and he becomes furious.)

Landlord : Scoundrels... *(To the steward)* Who is taking a rest there..?

Steward : *(To the slaves)* Who is taking a rest there..?

Landlord : Last night the Goddess appeared and asked me... Whether you work or not...? I replied, yes... Then she asked me whether you do hard work or not... I replied, no... Then she asked why did entrusted them to you..? I was shocked... She was very furious... *(He shivers.)*
(Goddess enters in steward. He dances like an oracle.)

Steward : Oh, Goddess... *(Slaves scared and bows down.)* Pull it hard...

Slaves : Oh, Goddess...

Steward : Our soil...

Slaves : Oh, Goddess...

Steward : Mother Goddess...

Slaves : Oh, Goddess...

Steward : Let the hills be down...

Slaves : Oh, Goddess...

Steward : Pull it hard...

Slaves : Oh, Goddess...
(During hard work the slaves come near each other. This makes the landlord furious.)

Landlord : Are you grouping there..? People of different dresses, languages, and castes... If you utter a word each other... If you touch each other... Goddess will punish you...
(Steward dances scarily in fast steps.)

Steward : Goddess will punish you...

Slaves : *(Scared)* Oh, Goddess...

Steward : Pull hard...!

Slaves : Oh, Goddess...

Steward : Let the hill be down...

Slaves : Oh, Goddess...

(Landlord shows gesture to stop. Slaves desirously, pointing far.)

Landlord : Clear the forest... Clear the whole forest...

(The land lord goes away in a cheerful mood accompanied by steward. Slaves continue the work. Steward's order is heard in the background. The tired slaves fall down.)

* * *

Scene 3

(White soldiers enters from one side of the stage.)

- Whiteman : *(To the assistant)* Our ships will voyage one by one... Pepper, cardamom, spices... We have everything with us... It's our task... Our mission... *(Sound of military marchpast is heard. Slaves fearfully awake. To the Aborigines,)* Our queen is suffering from severe cold... She needs cardamom, pepper, Elavarngam... Perfumes to apply in her body after a royal bath... For this you have to go to deep forest and cut the trees... You have to cut everything...
- Assistant : Why are you starring at..? Don't you understand..? All of you go to deep forest... *(Aborigines hesitate)* Nobody should be seen here... Nobody should stay back here...
- Aborigine : How can we go to the jungle where lion and leopard live..? How we will live there, Sir..?
- Assistant : I am telling you to go... *(Aborigines protests)* No one should stay back here... Nobody should be there in Harrison estate...
(The Whiteman shots down a bird seeing this a young lady aborigine faints. People run around.)

Scene 4

(An aboriginal settlement. Two women peel the paddy. Some make baskets. Some the bamboos. Other side of the stage a politician being wished and praised by the masses.)

Leader : Look...! How beautiful...! This is an excellent place to make a water theme park... Tourists will like this place...

Follower : We will get good business...

Leader : *(Pointing to another place)* You see, that hill and valley is apt for an international school, engineering college and medical college...

Follower : *(Laughs loudly)*. We will get easily what we have...

Leader : Here, there is endless possibilities to build apartments and villas...

Follower : Oh, Dear... You are an intelligent boy...

Leader : We have to earn something for permanently... How long we will live with the small amount we get as commission in land-dealing..? When this forest is converted into civil land we should get at least fifty acres..?

Followers : Fifty acres..? What are you going to do with this..? I think you are going to entrust all these things to him who has come back as an unemployed from Gulf...

Leader : It is an A class resort... A health resort with all comforts including massage...

Follower : Oh, good... Foreigners will flow here...

Leader : Atom experiment... Germ experiment... Everything will take place here... In this European climate... We will make this Western Ghats a heaven... Ha ha ha ha...A heaven...

Follower : What about our aborigines and their settlements..?

Leader : We will manage them with the tobaccos and liquor kept in the car... You supply it for them... *(They supply liquor and tobaccos to the aborigines. They receive him with garlands.)* You are tired after running all these days... Let us take a rest right now...
(Aborigines submit their complaints.)

Aborigines : The invaders clear out the forest and lashed us from there... We are starving... We don't get any vegetable... We are really hungry, Sir...
(Two lady aborigines runs forward crying.)

Lady 1 : My Chirutha left us...

Lady 2 : My Chindan too left us...

All ladies : All passed away, Sir...
(Leader acts as if he is sad.)

Lady 1 : Our children are ill, Sir... Doctor advised us to have nutritious food... That we don't have... *(Cries)* What shall we do, Sir..?

Leader : I will solve all your problems... Don't worry... Take a rest... I will provide you three cents of land each... Strong land with sufficient rocks under it for the foundation...

Ladies : Rock..?

Leader : You can build the house of your own choice...

Ladies : Can we cultivate there, Sir..? What we will eat..? Will we have any vegetables there..?

Leader : I will give you everything... Now onwards you don't need to work in the forest... The new machines will do such works... We will make huge buildings here... We are going to develop this area completely... You all will get a very good job...

Lady 3 : Sir, this is our home... Our motherland...
(All ladies come forward and repeat the same.)

Follower : What are you playing with, Sir..?
(They dash against the people.)

Leader : All should leave from here... Tonight... Tonight itself...

Ladies : No, we don't leave...

Leader : Attack them... Lash them from here...
(They beat the ladies. The ladies scatter around.)

* * *

Scene 5



Manninte Makkal, Aiswarya Laibi as an Adivasi Youth

(Velly and Chothy sleeps on a river bank. The noise of aborigine ladies being driven is heard. A sound of shot. Hearing all the Chothei and Velli writhe and wriggle as if they are being beaten and hit).

Velly : *(In dream)* Ah, don't beat me... Don't kill me... Lord... Get off... A hit man...

(She trembles with fear. Hearing her loud cry Chothei gets up.)

Chothei : What are you doing..? Have you gone mad..?

(Shockingly wakes up from dream, fearfully.)

Velly : I saw a nightmare... A nightmare about how all came to this worst stage...

- Chothy : I was having a tender coconut juice. Your nightmare made me awake...
- Velly : (*Frightened*) The dream started from the age when landlord made our ancestors slaves... Then started our miseries... There is no change even now... We worked like animals for the landlords... We also have dreams... Shan't we have a freedom from this slavery..?
- Chothy : Do you know what I dreamed..? We were swimming in a river... Finally, we reached on the other side... Then we walked and reached... In a desert we could not proceed further... Too hot... Feet were burning... We ran, ran... Wo, we saw an oasis... We passionately ran there... There was a crowd... I asked for water... They gave me tender coconut... It's cool juice... (*Pushing Velly*) Your nightmare disturbed while I was drinking it... (*Both laughs*) Again we proceeded... Some people eat delicious food... They call us... Come let us go... (*They sit on raised platform.*) White rice looks like Jasmine buds... (*An atmosphere of a dinner in background.*) Wow...! Mixed vegetables... Ginger, tamarind, mangoes... We would collect from jungle... The tasty dish with mango fruit... (*Chothy serves to Velly. Velly eats greedily.*) At the end we had the most delicious jackfruit pudding...
- Velly : Jack fruit pudding...!
- Chothy : Yes, with pappad... We have had it full up... We continued our journey... We reached in lower garden... We saw many people share their joy... (*Music in the background.*) They share their joy holding shoulder to shoulder... Don't you see..? (*Both look at them.*) We stepped into another direction... We reached a palace...! No, no... It was not a palace but a huge library... Books were kept in order, people ardently read it, the books are kept in glass shelves... There, in a corner, a lot of gold is simply piled... Simply piled liked hill... (*Velly tries to take them and wear.*) You were rolling in the gold... What are you doing..? It is not our land... To be greedy after gold... The people who live here don't use these things...
- Velly : Don't they want..?
- Chothy : They want the flower we saw earlier... Those beautiful flowers only...

Velly : Flowers..? I think they are fools...

Chothy : They don't want these things... *(A music flow from the background. He points towards the direction.)* Do you know what is going on there..? The Village Forum... *(They joyfully dances. They enter and dance around. Velly and Chothy also join them happily.)* You see that human beings love human being... The world without deception and untruthfulness...

Velly : Is there such a world..?

Chothy : A world without murder and robbery... The world without violence where people respect each other... A world without police, military and prison...
(Police jumps upon Chothy and Velly.)

Police : Stop, don't move... Tell the truth... You robbed the supermarket in the city... Didn't you..? Aren't you the thieves..?

Velly & Chothy : We aren't thieves...

Police : Aren't you the terrorists who came to destroy the nation..? Tell the truth... Terrorist..?

Chothy & Velly : What..? What..? What's it..?

Police : Are you aborigines..?

Velly & Chothy : We are the children of forest...

Police : Then... Surely you are thieves...

Chothy : We aren't thieves...

Velly : We are truthful...

Police : What are the conspiracies you have hatched here..? Tell the truth.. A world without police and military... Are you challenging police and military..? *(To the other police man)* Catch him...
(They drag Velly and Chothy to the street. Then people gather around them. They throw them stones.)

Crowd : Catch them...
(People surround them.)

Lady one : *(To the police)* Sir... *(Points towards one person)* Sir, he is a retired judge...

Police : *(To the judge)* Oh, you are a judge so you can decide the rest...

Judge : *(To the police)* Now you don't need to take them to the police station and court... We can settle it here itself...

Police : As you please, Sir...

Judge : *(To the crowd)* Shall we put them to trial here itself..? Do you agree..?

Crowd : Of course...

Judge : This is our new custom... Shall we start..?
(People makes noises madly and howls.)

Crowd : Hurry up...

Police : *(To the judge)* Sir, they are not only thieves but terrorists... I myself witnessed their conspiracy... This is against the development of nation... They also have seen a horrible antinational dream...

Judge : Have you seen Advocate Sosamma..? *(Loudly)* Advocate Sosamma...
(Sosamma comes forward from the crowd.)

Sosamma : Oh, yes, Sir... Yes, your honour...
(Sosamma offers her overcoat to judge.)

Judge : *(To Sosamma)* Since you are a caseless lawyer you can undertake this... *(Sosamma looks at the aborigine in disgust.)* They are horrible terrorist... Don't leave them...
(People repeats the same. Two intellectuals come forward.)

Intellectual 1 : Sir... Sir, I have an anxiety... As a scientist, I know the theory of angle... Some property of this dream... These dreams are spreading over continents... It's very dangerous and horrible...
(An another intellectual comes forward with a huge book.)

Intellectual 2 : Yes, I agree, Madam... As a social scientist, I know that very recently I have read a book on national security... I was shocked when I read it... When I came to know about... *(Pointing towards Velly and Chothy)* Dangerous mystical dreams of such people who wants to destroy our nation... The scientist of western countries worked hard for half a century to find a solution for this problem... But they couldn't success... This dream is such a kind of dangerous disease... It spreads from brain to brain...

Intellectual 1 : This is that caused by ultrasonic rays...

Intellectual 2 : It will happen a big bang... A social big bang...

- Intellectual 1 : Yes... Big big earthquake and be careful...
- Intellectual 2 : When we use science and technologies develop rockets, missiles, satellites and destructive weapons... Such horrible dreams will be a shame among world nations... It is too shameful, Sir...
(*Violent mob.*)
- Crowd : Sir, they are dangerous terrorists... Please leave them to us... We will handle them...
(*All repeat the same.*)
- Sosamma : According to our penal code... We have given them maximum punishment to their culprits, to protect the wealth of the citizens... We should protect our private property...
- Crowd : People become aware of their private property...
(*A wealthy youngster comes forward, crying loudly.*)
- Youngman : Sir, my Lamborghini... I am the only person who own Lamborghini other than Prithyuraj... If it gets a scar on it, I will die... Sir, my Lamborghini... My Lamborghini...
(*An another women comes forward.*)
- Woman 1 : Sir, my ear rings... My bangles... My gold chain... Where shall I hide all these things...
(*She cries.*)
- Youngman 2 : Oh, Sir... My iPhone... if I keep it down they will take away... If I keep it upside it will fall down and break...
- Woman 2 : (*A lady holding a tab to her chest and crying.*) Oh, my Macu... Macu...
- Lady 3 : Sir, my diamond...
- Police : Oh, Sir... My bike Ducati which I bought just this week only...
(*All cry over their private properties.*)
- Sosamma : Sir, we are obliged to protect our citizen's belongings like gold, diamond, Lamborghini, Ducati, MacBook, Redmi etc... We have to drive these aborigines who are a threat to life and wealth of our citizens...
- Judge : Their crime has been undoubtedly proved...
(*Crowd cheer up.*)

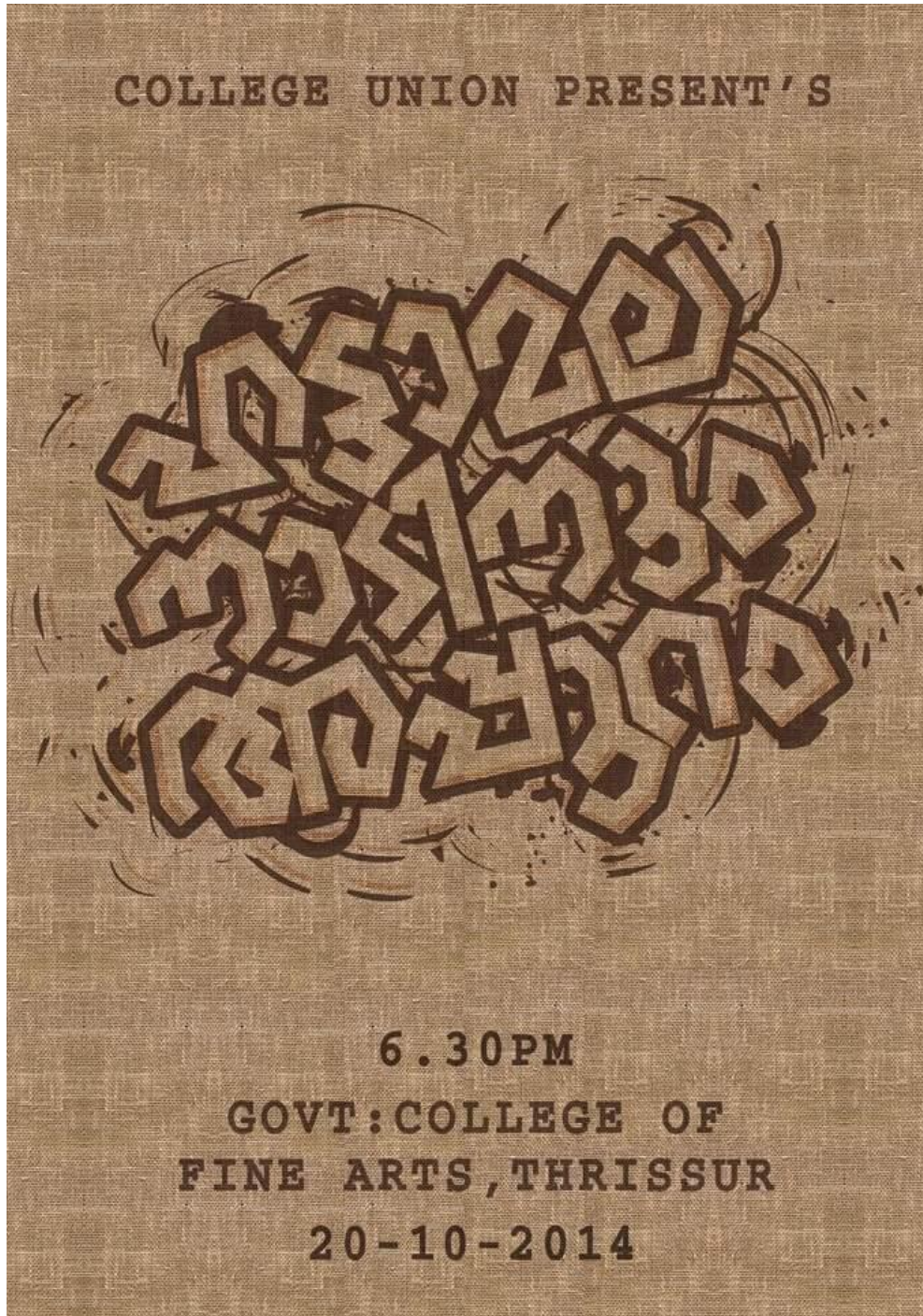
- Velly : We came to know that we would get rice without money, in the city that's why we came here... It's true that we took some rice...
- Chothy : We did it... Because we were hungry... We are hungry, Sir...
- Judge : *(To the crowd)* So you can decide what to do with horrible terrorist...
- Crowd : Hang them... Kill them part by part... Stone them to death...
(The mad crowd come forward to kill the young aborigines.)
- Judge : Chothy and Velly the aborigines of Attappady... Finally... Do you have anything to say..?
- Velly : We ardently desire our big nightmare to leave us...
- Chothy : The oasis which I have seen... The world without murder, robbery and violence... The world where all people happily live... A world which is owned by the people who work in the soil... *(Optimistically)* A world which doesn't attack man and soil... Unfortunately I desired for such a world...
- Judge : These arrogant men being still antinational... The enemies of development...
- Crowd : Kill them...
- Velly & Chothy : We are innocent... Please free us... Sir, please don't kill us... *(The crowd attacks them. Velly and Chothy courageously struggling with great expectation.)* You may kill us... But you can not kill our dreams... Our dreams live forever... Live forever...



Manninte Makkal, performance at Moozhikulam Junction

Annexure-2

Brochures of Theatre Workshops and Performances





മുഴിക്കുളംശാല

ഫോൺ : 9495981246

പ്രിയസുഹൃത്തേ,

മണ്ണും മനുഷ്യനും പ്രമേയമാക്കി മുഴിക്കുളംശാല സംഘടിപ്പിച്ച കുട്ടികളുടെ ദശദിന സഹവാസ നാടകകളരിയിൽ രൂപംകൊണ്ട 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ' നാടകം ഏപ്രിൽ 14 ശനിയാഴ്ച വൈകീട്ട് 5ന് മുഴിക്കുളം കവലയിൽ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

ബംഗാളി നാടകകാരൻ ബാദൽ സർക്കാരിന്റെ 'ഹട്ടാമല നാടിനപ്പുറം', കെ.ജെ.ബേബിയുടെ 'നാടുഗളിക' തുടങ്ങിയ നാടകങ്ങളെ ഉപജീവിച്ചാണ് 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ' ഒരുക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. ആലുവ എസ്.ഒ.എസ്.ലേയും മറ്റു വിവിധ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലേയും വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളാണ് നാടകം അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. സ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിലെ ഗവേഷകൻ എം.പ്രദീപൻ സംവിധാനവും ചിത്രകാരനും ശില്പിയും നാടകപ്രവർത്തകനുമായ സി.ഹണി സഹസംവിധാനവും നിർവ്വഹിക്കുന്നു. ഏകോപനം - വിനിത ചോലയാർ, സംഗീതം - കരിന്തലക്കുട്ടം, വടമ.

ഏവർക്കും സാഗതം



News and Features of Theatre Workshops And Performances



രംഗചേതനയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നടന്ന നാടക പരിശീലനം

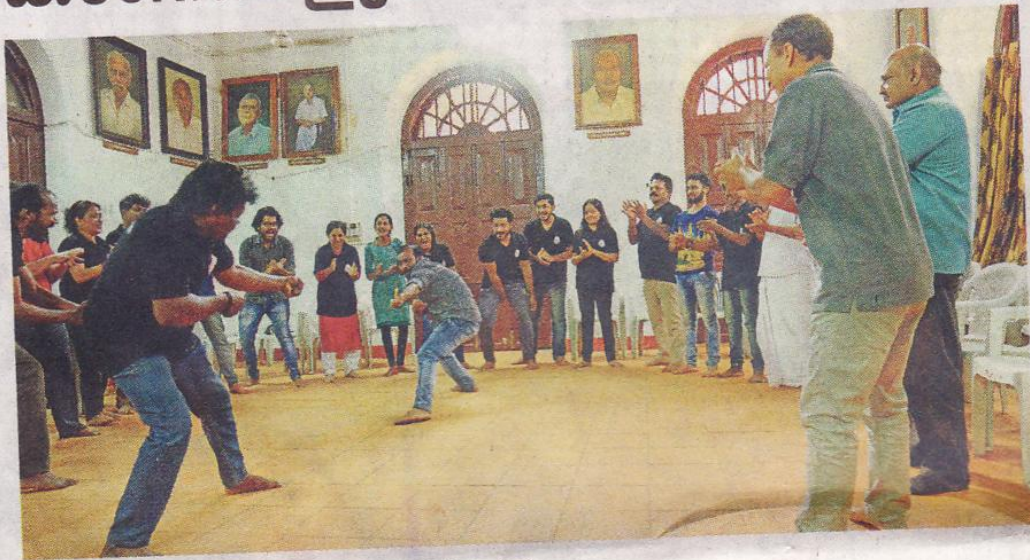
കാണികളുടെ പങ്കാളിത്തത്തോടെ നാടകാവതരണം

തൃശൂർ: രംഗചേതനയുടെ 400ാമത് പ്രതിവാര നാടകാവതരണം കാണികൾ കൈയടക്കിയ അരങ്ങായി. സാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി വൈലോപ്പിള്ളി ഹാളിൽ നാടകക്കളരിയുടെ സമാപനത്തിൽ പ്രേക്ഷക പങ്കാളിത്തത്തോടെ നാടകം അരങ്ങേറി. ലാറ്റിൻ അമേരിക്കൻ നാടകക്കാരൻ അഗസ്റ്റോ ബോളിന്റെ 'മർദ്ദിതരുടെ നാടകവേദി' യെ അവലംബിച്ച് നൂതന നാടകസങ്കേതം നാടകക്കളരിയിൽ

പ്രയോഗിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. സ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിൽ മർദ്ദിതരുടെ നാടകവേദിയിൽ ഗവേഷണം നടത്തുന്ന എം. പ്രദീപൻ നാടകക്കളരിക്കും രംഗാവതരണത്തിനും നേതൃത്വം നൽകി. കാലിക പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള മൂന്നു ചെറു അവതരണം പ്രേക്ഷക പങ്കാളിത്തത്തോടെ അരങ്ങേറി. നാനൂറാം പ്രതിവാര രംഗാവതരണത്തോടൊപ്പം നടന്ന നാടകസൗഹൃദ സംഗമം രംഗചേതന പ്രസിഡൻ്റ് ഇ.ടി. വർഗീസ് ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു. സി.എസ്. പ്രേംകുമാർ, മുരളി കോലഴി, സ്നേഹലിജി, ടി.ആർ. ശശികല, എം.എൻ. ശശികുമാർ, രാജേന്ദ്രപ്രസാദ്, എം.ആർ. ബാലഗോപാൽ, തുടങ്ങിയവരും 30ൽപരം നാടകവിദ്യാർഥികളും രംഗചേതനയുടെ പൂർവവിദ്യാർഥികളും അഗസ്റ്റോ ബോളിന്റെ റിഹേഴ്സൽ തിയറ്ററിൽ പങ്കാളികളായി.

Theatre Workshop for Rangachethana, Madhyamam Daily, Jan 16th 2019

നാടകത്തിൽ അഭിനയിക്കാൻ കാണികളും



രംഗചേതന നടത്തിയ നാടകങ്ങളിൽനിന്ന്

ഒരു നാടകക്കളരി. അതിന്റെ സമാപനത്തിൽ നാടകാവതരണം. നാടകത്തിന്റെ അവസാനം കാണികളും അഭിനേതാക്കളായി. തൃശ്ശൂർ കേന്ദ്രമാക്കിയുള്ള രംഗചേതനയുടെ നാനൂറാമത് പ്രതിവാര നാടകാവതരണമാണ് കാണികൾക്കെടുക്കിയത്.

സാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി വൈലോപ്പിള്ളി ഹാളായിരുന്നു വേദി. രാവിലെ ആരംഭിച്ച നാടകക്കളരിയുടെ സമാപനത്തിലാണ് പ്രേക്ഷക പങ്കാളിത്തത്തോടു കൂടി നാടകങ്ങൾ അരങ്ങേറിയത്. ലാറ്റിൻ അമേരിക്കൻ നാടക പ്രവർത്തകൻ അഗസ്റ്റോ ബോളിന്റെ 'മർദ്ദിതരുടെ നാടകവേദി' യെ അവലംബിച്ചുള്ള നൂതനമായ നാടക സങ്കേതങ്ങൾ ഏകദിന നാടകക്കളരിയിൽ പ്രയോഗിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. സ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിൽ നിന്ന് ബിരുദവും എം.ജി. യൂണിവേഴ്സി

റ്റിയിൽനിന്ന് നാടക കലയിൽ എം.ഫിൽ. പഠനവും പൂർത്തിയാക്കിയ എം. പ്രദീപൻ നാടകക്കളരിക്കും രംഗാവതരണത്തിനും നേതൃത്വം നൽകി.

അഗസ്റ്റോ ബോളിന്റെ ഫോറം തിയേറ്റർ, ഇമേജ് തിയേറ്റർ, തത്സമയ നാടകവിഷ്കാരം തുടങ്ങിയ സങ്കേതങ്ങളുടെ സ്വാഭാവിക പ്രയോഗങ്ങളായി നാടകക്കളരി മാറി. കാലിക പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള മൂന്നു ചെറു അവതരണങ്ങൾ പ്രേക്ഷക പങ്കാളിത്തത്തോടു കൂടി അരങ്ങേറുകയായിരുന്നു. നാടക സൗഹൃദ സംഗമം രംഗചേതന പ്രസിഡൻ്റ് ഇ.ടി. വർഗീസ് ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു. പ്രൊ.കുമാർ സി.എസ്., മുരളി കോലഴി, സന്ദേഹലിജി, ശശികല ടി.ആർ., ശശികുമാർ എം. എൻ., രാജേന്ദ്രപ്രസാദ്, ബാലഗോപാൽ എം.ആർ. തുടങ്ങിയവരും മുപ്പതിൽപ്പരം നാടകവിദ്യാർഥികളും പങ്കാളികളായി.

തളർന്ന ജീവിതങ്ങൾക്ക് ഹൃദയപൂർവ്വം...

● കെ.എസ്. പ്രമോദ്

‘കിളിക്കളങ്ങളിൽ കരങ്ങി നടക്കേണ്ട നിങ്ങളുടെ കുട്ടികളുടെ ബാല്യം കട്ടിലിന്റെ താങ്ങിൽ തളർക്കപ്പെടുന്നു. പക്ഷേനിയോളം പണിയെടുത്തിട്ടും തോട്ടങ്ങളിൽനിന്ന് കിട്ടിയത് ആയുസിന്റെ തല്ലോടൊപ്പം കാർന്നുതിന്നുന്ന രോഗത്തിന്റെ കാര്യബുദ്ധിമുട്ടിനെപ്പറ്റി അറിയാതെ അരിയു.’

കോളത്തിൽ എങ്ങും മുഴങ്ങുന്ന തരത്തിൽ ഈ വിലാപം അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിൽ നിറയുമ്പോഴും നിസ്കന്ധതയുടെ ആൾരൂപങ്ങൾ പ്രതികരിക്കാൻ കഴിയാതെ കശുമാവിൽ തോട്ടങ്ങളിലും ഏലക്കാടുകളിലും കഴിയുന്നു. നിസ്കന്ധതയുടെ മുഖമുദ്രയിൽ എല്ലാം മാർക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന അധികാര രൂപങ്ങൾ കേൾക്കാൻ മാത്രം അവരുടെ വിലാപങ്ങൾക്ക് ശബ്ദമില്ലെന്നു കണ്ടാണ് അവർ പ്രതിരോധത്തിന്റെ കലാരൂപവുമായി തെരുവിലേക്കിറങ്ങിയത്.

നേടുകണ്ട: എ.ഇ.എസ്. കോളത്തിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളും അധ്യാപകരുമാണ് പുതിയ ദൗത്യവുമായി ഏലത്തോട്ടങ്ങളിലേക്കിറങ്ങുന്നത്. എൻഡോസൾഫാൻ എന്ന വിഷ കീടനാശിനി കൈതിരേ നടക്കും എന്ന കലയിലൂടെ നിരബന്ധമായ കലാപരച്ചുവീടുകയാണ് ഇവർ.

ഇടുക്കിയിലെ ഏലക്കാടുകളിൽ പെട്ടെന്നു

വിഷമഴ ജീവിതങ്ങളിൽ കഠിനീശ്വര വിഴ്ത്തുമ്പോൾ അതിനേക്കുറിച്ച് ഇപ്പോഴും വേണ്ടത്ര ബോധ്യം വരാത്ത ഒരു സമൂഹം ഉണ്ട്. അവർക്ക് എൻഡോസൾഫാൻ എന്ന മാർകീടനാശിനിയെക്കുറിച്ച് അറിവ് നൽകുക എന്ന ശ്രമകരമായ ദൗത്യത്തിനു തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത മാർഗമാണ് നാടകാവതരണം. തെരുവുകളിൽനിന്ന് തെരുവുകളിലേക്ക് നീളുന്ന നാടകാവതരണം.

അധികാരികളുടെ കണ്ണുകൾക്ക് ഇനിയും തെളിയാത്ത എൻഡോസൾഫാൻ വിതച്ചു മുരി തത്തിന്റെ ചിത്രം മനസ്സുകളിൽ നിറയ്ക്കുകയാണ് ഈ സഹൃദയം.

എജൻ്റ് ഓറഞ്ച് (വിഷമഴ)

എജൻ്റ് ഓറഞ്ച് (വിഷമഴ) എന്നാണ് ഈ നാടകത്തിന്റെ പേര്. എജൻ്റ് ഓറഞ്ച് എന്നത് അമേരിക്ക 1969ൽ വിതർനമായി പ്രയോഗിച്ച വിഷവാതകമാണ്. ഇടുക്കിയിലും കാസർഗോട്ടും കശുമാവിൽ തോട്ടങ്ങളിലും ഏലക്കാടുകളിലും തളിക്കുന്ന എൻഡോ സൾഫാൻ ഇതിനു സമാനമായ സാദാസാധാരണസാധനങ്ങളുള്ള കീടനാശിനിയാണ്. സപ്തനങ്ങൾ നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട് രോഗശയ്യയിൽ കിടക്കുന്ന കുട്ടികളുടേയും കീടനാശിനി തളിച്ചതിലൂടെ രോഗം മാത്രം സമ്പാദിച്ച തൊഴിലാളികളുടേയും കഥ പറഞ്ഞു മുന്നേറുന്ന നാടകാവതരണം ഇടുക്കിയിൽ പുതിയ അനുഭവമാവുകയാണ്.

എ. പ്രദീപനാണ് നാടകത്തിന്റെ സംവിധായകൻ.

നവ്യം ചേരുന്നതും. അഗസ്റ്റോ ബോളിന്റെ നാടക സങ്കല്പങ്ങളുപയോഗിച്ചാണ് നാടകത്തിന്റെ സൃഷ്ടി. നാടകത്തിന്റെ അണിയറപ്രവർത്തകരിൽ പലരും നാടകവുമായി അടുത്തിടപഴകുന്നത് ഇത് ആദ്യം. എന്നാൽ ഒരു ചരിത്ര ദൗത്യത്തിന്റെ ആവേശത്തിൽ നാടകം യഥാർത്ഥ്യമാവുകയായിരുന്നു.

നാടകത്തിന്റെ സംവിധായകനായ പ്രദീപൻ പ്രത്യേക തയ്യാറെടുപ്പുകളോടെയാണ് ഈ വിദ്യാർത്ഥി സംഘത്തെ നാടകത്തിനായി പരിശീലിപ്പിച്ചത്. ഇതിനായി നാടകങ്ങളെ സംഘടിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു. എൻഡോസൾഫാൻ വിതച്ച ഭീകര ദുരന്തത്തിന്റെ ആഴം ഇവരെ ബോധ്യപ്പെടുത്തുകയാണ് ആദ്യം ചെയ്തത്. ഇതിനായി എൻഡോ സൾഫാൻ ദുരന്തത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുവന്ന ഫിച്വറുകൾ കൂട്ടുകൾക്കു വായിക്കാനായി നൽകി. തങ്ങളുടെ തൊട്ടടുക്കിത് സംഭവിക്കുന്നതാണെങ്കിലും എൻഡോസൾഫാൻ ദുരന്തം ഇതേ ഭീകരമാണെന്നറിയില്ലെന്നിട്ടെല്ലാ അഭിനേതാക്കളും അറിയാതെ പാഠ്യം. കൂടുതൽ അറിയാം. തോട്ടം നാടകം. ഒരു കല എന്നതിനപ്പുറം മനസ്സിൽ സ്ഥാനം പിടിക്കുകയായിരുന്നെന്നു നാടകത്തിൽ ഓരോ ഭാഗവും ഭംഗിയായി വിദ്യാർ



● സംവിധായകൻ പ്രദീപൻ

ഥികൾ പറയുന്നു. സംവിധായകനേക്കുറിച്ച് സ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിൽ നിന്ന് ബിരുദാനന്തര ബിരുദം നേടിയിട്ടുള്ള സംവിധായകൻ പ്രദീപൻ വർഷങ്ങളായി നടകൾക്കു തയ്യാറെടുത്തുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. കാഴ്ചക്കാരുമായി നേരിട്ട സംഭവിക്കുന്നതെങ്ങനെയായിരുന്നു നാടകത്തിന്റെ അവതരണം. മർദ്ദിതരുടെ നാടകവേദി എന്ന തിയറ്റർ സങ്കല്പത്തിൽനിന്നുകൊണ്ടാണ് നാടകത്തിന്റെ സംവിധാനം നിർവഹിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. നിത്യതയായ സ്കീപ്റ്റ് കൂടാതെ ഓരോവേദിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള നാടകത്തിന്റെ ഡയലോഗുകൾക്കു മാറ്റം

സംഭവിച്ചു. അങ്ങനെ ഒരു സഹായ വേദിയായി മാറ്റുകയാണ് ഈ സംവിധായകൻ. തുറന്നു വെച്ചിട്ടുള്ള അവതരണം സാധാരണക്കാർക്ക് കാര്യങ്ങൾ ബോധ്യമാകാൻ സഹായകരമാകുമെന്ന് പ്രദീപൻ പറയുന്നു. പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽ പ്രഫ. എ.എ. റഹീദ്, എൻ.എസ്.എസ്. പ്രോഗ്രാം കോർഡിനേറ്റർമാരായ ഡോ. എ.എസ്. സുബ്ബു, പ്രഫ. ജെ.പി. തമ്പി, അധ്യാപകനായ എസ്. ജോർജ്ജ് എന്നിവരാണ് നാടകത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ആശയം പ്രവർത്തികമാക്കുന്നതിന് സഹായിച്ചത്.



● നേടുകണ്ട: എ. ഇ. എസ്. കോളത്തിന്റെ ആലിപ്രകൃതിയിൽ എൻഡോ സൾഫാൻ എന്ന മാർകീടനാശിനിയെക്കുറിച്ച് അറിവ് നൽകുക എന്ന ദൗത്യത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി നടത്തിയ തെരുവു നാടകത്തിൽനിന്ന്



കൊച്ചിയിൽ തൊഴിലാളികുമാറിൽ ബിഎസ്എൻഎൽ എംപ്ലോയീസ് യൂണിയൻ അവതരിപ്പിച്ച 'മലയാളിയുടെ ചായക്കട' നാടകം/ഫോട്ടോ > എം. എ. ശിവപ്രസാദ്

പ്രതിഷേധയാത്രി

കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാരിന്റെ തൊഴിലാളിവിരുദ്ധ, ജനവിരുദ്ധ നയങ്ങൾ തിരുത്തണമെന്ന് ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ട് പത്ത് ട്രേഡ് യൂണിയനുകൾ സംയുക്തമായി നടത്തിയ പണിമുടക്കിൽ രാജ്യം സ്തംഭിച്ചു. ട്രെയിൻ അടക്കമുള്ള ഗതാഗതമേഖലയും നിശ്ചലമായി. പതിവു ഭിഷണികൾ തള്ളിക്കളഞ്ഞ് ജീവനക്കാരും തൊഴിലാളികളും ഒറ്റക്കെട്ടായി പണിമുടക്കിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തപ്പോൾ അത് മറ്റൊരു ചരിത്രമായി. പണിമുടക്കിയ വിവിധ മേഖലകളിലെ തൊഴിലാളികളും ജീവനക്കാരും രാജ്യമെങ്ങും പ്രകടനങ്ങളും ധർണയും നടത്തി. പൊലീസിനെയും പട്ടാളത്തെയും ഉപയോഗിച്ച് വിരട്ടാനുള്ള ശ്രമങ്ങളെ അതിജീവിക്കാൻ രാജ്യം ഐതിഹാസിക പണിമുടക്കിന് ഐക്യദാർഢ്യം പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചതും നടപ്പാക്കിയതും പണിമുടക്ക് കാഴ്ചകളിലൂടെ...

BSNL Employees Performing a Street Play Evolved through the Theatre workshop based on Theatre of the Oppressed, Desabhimani Daily, Sep. 3, 2015

സിംഹാസനങ്ങൾ പണിയുന്നവർ

■ കെ.എസ്. പ്രബോദ്

തലസ്ഥാനത്ത് ആദിവാസികൾ നിൽപ്പു സമരം ആരംഭിച്ചതിന് അടുത്ത ദിവസങ്ങളിലൊന്നിലായിരുന്നു നാടക സംവിധായകൻ എ. പ്രദീപന്റെ തൃശ്ശൂരിലെ എക്സൈസ് പ്രിവന്റിവ് ഓഫീസറായ എ.ജെ. ജോയിയും കണ്ടു മുട്ടിയത്. സാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമിയുടെ ബുക്ക് സ്റ്റാളിൽ വച്ചായിരുന്നു കൂടിക്കാഴ്ച. എക്സൈസിലെ തന്നെ പ്രദീപന്റെ സുഹൃത്തായ ഗിരിശങ്കരും ജോയിക്കൊപ്പമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. തമിഴ് മലയാളം നോവലിസ്റ്റ് ജയമോഹന്റെ പ്രശസ്ത നോവലായ 'നൂറു സിംഹാസനങ്ങളുടെ പതിനഞ്ചോളം കോപ്പികൾ അപ്പോൾ ജോയിയുടെ കൈയിലുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.



■ എ.ജെ. ജോയി

■ എ. പ്രദീപൻ

ഇത് ഫ്ലാഷ് ബാക്കാണ്. ജോയി ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നപ്പോൾ നടന്നത്. ഒരു നാടകത്തിന്റെ രൂപപ്പെടലും അതുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട സംഭവപരമ്പരകളുടെ യാദൃച്ഛികതയും അതിന്റെ പരിസരപതിയും നാടക സംവിധായകനായ പ്രദീപന് ഒരു നാടകകഥ പോലെ ആശ്ചര്യകരമാണ്. ഒപ്പം തികച്ചും വ്യത്യസ്തമായ ഒരു ജീവിതം നയിച്ച ജോയിയെ അടുത്തിയത് കഴിയുമ്പോഴുണ്ടായ അവരൂപ്പും സ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിലെ ഗവേഷകൻ കൂടിയായ പ്രദീപൻ പങ്കുവെക്കുന്നു. ആദിവാസി സമൂഹം നേരിടുന്ന പ്രതിസന്ധികളുമായി എങ്ങനെയാണെന്നോ ഈ നാടകത്തിനു ബന്ധമുണ്ടാകുന്നു എന്നതും ഒരു യാദൃച്ഛികത തന്നെ. അന്ന് ജോയിക്കൊപ്പമുണ്ടായിരുന്ന എക്സൈസിലെ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥനായ ഗിരിശങ്കരൻ പ്രദീപനെ ജോയിക്കു പരിചയപ്പെടുത്തിയത്. നൂറു സിംഹാസനങ്ങളുടെ കോപ്പികളുമായി നിന്ന ജോയിയെ പരിചയപ്പെട്ടപ്പോൾ പ്രദീപൻ നൂറു സിംഹാസനങ്ങൾ നാടകമാക്കാനുള്ള ശ്രമത്തിലായിരുന്നു. 'നൂറു സിംഹാസനങ്ങൾ' എന്ന നോവൽ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടാൻ ജോയിക്ക് ഒരു പാടു കാരണങ്ങളുണ്ടായിരുന്നെന്ന് പ്രദീപൻ മനസിലാക്കുന്നതു പിന്നീടാണ്.

പൊതു സമൂഹം പോലും അവരിൽനിന്ന് അകലം പാലിച്ചു. തപ്രവാകൾ എന്നു ബഹുമാനത്തോടും പേടിയാടുകൂടി നായാടികൾ നാട്ടുകാരെ വിളിച്ചു. ഇതു നായാടികളുടെ പൊതു സ്വഭാവമാണ്.

ഏല്പുരിലെ കോളനിലെ കുട്ടികൾ തൊട്ടടുത്തുള്ള സർക്കാർ സ്കൂളിലാണ് പഠിക്കുന്നത്. ഈ സ്കൂളിലെ സ്ഥിതിയും മറിച്ചായിരുന്നു. നായാടികളുടെ കുളോട് അധ്യാപകരും സഹപാഠികളും നായാടികളോടു കാണിക്കുന്ന വെറുപ്പും അവഗണനയും കണ്ടറിഞ്ഞ ജോയി സ്കൂളിലെത്തി അധ്യാപകരോടു സംസാരിച്ചു. നായാടികളും മനുഷ്യരാണ് എന്ന് അവരെ ബോധ്യപ്പെടുത്താൻ ജോയിക്ക് ഏറെ കഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടുണ്ടിവന്നു. ജോയിയെ അതിനു പ്രേരിപ്പിച്ച ഘടകം നൂറു സിംഹാസനങ്ങൾ എന്ന നോവലായിരുന്നു. നായാടികളുടെ ജീവിതം വരച്ചിട്ടു നോവൽ. നായാടിയായി പിറന്ന ഒരാളുടെ സഹായംകൊണ്ട് അധികാരത്തിന്റെ ഉന്നത കേന്ദ്രങ്ങൾ കീഴടക്കുന്ന യുവാവിന്റെ കഥപറയുന്ന ഈ നോവൽ ഒരു സൂചകമാണ് ജോയിക്കുണ്ട്.

ഇങ്ങനെ സ്കൂളിൽ നൽകാനായി പൂർത്തകം വാങ്ങുമ്പോഴായിരുന്നു പ്രദീപനും ജോയിയും പരിചയപ്പെടുന്നത്. പ്രദീപൻ നോവൽ നാടകമാക്കുന്നതിന് അത് അവതരിപ്പിക്കാൻ സൗകര്യമൊരുക്കാമെന്നു ജോയി വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്തു. എക്സൈസ് വകുപ്പിന്റെ വാർഷിക സമ്മേളനത്തോടനുബന്ധിച്ച് അവതരിപ്പിക്കാൻ നാടകമൊരുക്കാമെന്ന നിർദ്ദേശവും ജോയിയുടേതായിരുന്നു. ഇതനുസരിച്ച് നാടകത്തിന്റെ റിഹേഴ്സൽ ക്യാമ്പും ആരംഭിച്ചു. ജോയി നാടകത്തിലെ മുഖ്യ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളിലൊരാളായ സാമിയുടെ വേഷത്തിലായിരുന്നു അഭിനയിച്ചിരുന്നത്. ജോയിക്ക് നാടകം ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി മാറിയിരുന്നതാൽ നാടകത്തിലെ ജീവിക്കുന്ന കഥാപാത്രമായിരുന്നു ജോയി എന്ന് സഹപ്രവർത്തകർ പറയുന്നു.

ജോയിയുടെ മരണം ഇതിനിടെ ഈ നാടകത്തിനു മറ്റൊരു നാടകീയത മാന്തൽകി. നാടകം അറങ്ങുന്നതുവരെ വിധി ജോയിയെ കാത്തുവെച്ചില്ല. നാടകം

വതരണത്തിന് ഒരാഴ്ചയ്ക്ക് പുലർച്ചെ കാലിക വൃായമത്തിനിടെ കൃഴഞ്ഞു വീണെന്നു ജോയി മരിച്ചത്. ജോയിയുടെ സഹപാഠി അവിടെ ഉപേക്ഷിക്കാൻ സഹപ്രവർത്തകർ തയ്യാറായിരുന്നു. മറ്റൊരു സഹപ്രവർത്തകർ ജോയിയുടെ വേഷം ഏറ്റെടുത്തു. നാടകം അറങ്ങുകയും ചെയ്തു. നായാടികളുടെ പാവിക്കുന്ന സ്കൂളിൽ ഈ നാടകം അവതരിപ്പിക്കണമെന്ന് ജോയിക്ക് ആഗ്രഹമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ആ ആഗ്രഹം സഫലമാക്കാനുള്ള തയ്യാറെടുപ്പിലാണ് ഇപ്പോൾ പ്രദീപനും സംഘവും. ചെങ്ങമം നാടകം നൂറു സിംഹാസനങ്ങളുടെ സ്മരണയ്ക്കായി പൂർത്തമാർന്ന നാടക സങ്കേതങ്ങളിലൂടെയുൾക്കൊള്ളിച്ച ഈ നാടകം അവതരിപ്പിക്കാൻ പ്രദീപനു പദ്ധതിയുണ്ട്.

പിതാവ് മരിച്ച ഒഴിവിൽ പത്താംക്ലാസ് പോലും പാസാക്കാതെ എക്സൈസിൽ ജോയിക്കു കയറിയായിരുന്നു ജോയി. താരതമ്യേന നിശബ്ദനായ ജോയി എല്ലാകാര്യത്തിലും മുൻപന്തിയിലുണ്ടാകുമായിരുന്നു സഹപ്രവർത്തകർ ഒരാർക്കുന്നു. ഏല്പുരിൽ അർബോസ് പാതിരിയുടെ പേരിലുള്ള പള്ളിയുടെ പഴയ കെട്ടിടം പൊളിക്കാനുള്ള നിക്ഷേപത്തിനോ ജോയി നാട്ടുകാരെ സംഘടിപ്പിച്ചു സമരം നയിച്ചതിൽ ഇതിൽ ഒന്നു മാത്രമായിരുന്നു. ആദിവാസികൾ ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള താഴേക്കിടയിലുള്ളവർക്കു വേണ്ടി പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് ഒരു രാഷ്ട്രീയത്തിന്റെയും ചട്ടക്കൂടില്ലാതെ പ്രവർത്തിച്ച ജോയി ഒരു മാതൃകയാണ്. പ്രശസ്തി ആവശ്യമില്ലെന്നു കരുതിയിരുന്ന ജോയിയെ പൂർണ്ണമായി അറിയാനുള്ള ഒരു ശ്രമവും ആവശ്യമില്ല. കണ്ടറിഞ്ഞു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുകയും സന്തം നേടുന്നതിനായി പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ ഉപയോഗിക്കാതിരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത പച്ച മനുഷ്യന്റെ കഥ ഈ നാടകത്തോടൊപ്പം ചേർത്തു വായിക്കാം.

നാടകവും നാടകം രൂപപ്പെട്ട സമയവും ആദിവാസികളുടെ അവകാശങ്ങൾ ഏറ്റവും അധികം വെല്ലുവിളി നേരിടുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിലാണെന്നതു മറ്റൊരു യാദൃച്ഛികതയാണ്. കാടിങ്ങി തലസ്ഥാനത്തു നിൽക്കുന്ന ആദിവാസികൾ എന്തിനായി നിൽക്കുന്നു എന്ന് ജോയിയെപ്പോലുള്ളവർ മുൻപേ മനസിലാക്കുന്നു. എന്തിനാണവരെ അവിടെ അങ്ങനെ നിൽത്തിരിക്കേണ്ടത് കഥാപാത്രം. ഈ നാടകത്തിലൂടെ പ്രദീപനും സംഘവും ചോദിക്കുമ്പോൾ ജോയിയെപ്പോലുള്ളവരുടെ പോലെ ഈ ചോദ്യങ്ങൾക്കു പിന്നിൽ ഉണ്ടെന്നതാണ് വലിയ കാര്യം.

On Nooru Simhasanangal, Sunday Mangalam, Nov. 16, 2014



Balloon as an Extension of the Body, Camp Members, Govt. School, Odappallam.
Wayanad

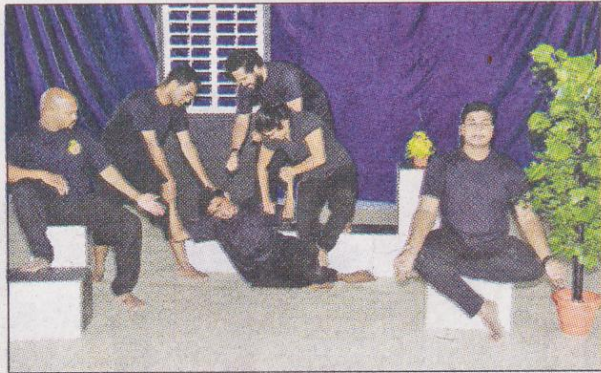
Nooru Simhasanangal to be staged

Portrayal of casteism that plagues our society never gets old, be it on screen, in a book or on stage. Prominent contemporary writer Jeyamohan has captured perfectly the ills brought upon by the deep-rooted caste system in his novel *Nooru Simhasanangal*. Now the Phoenix World Theatre group from Kochi has decided to adapt the novel into a play.

This is the second production of the theatre group which is only a year and a half old. Speaking about their new production, Charu Narayanan, artistic director of the group, says, "The novel is set in a Kerala of few decades back. It sheds

light on the harsh caste differences, some of which is applicable even now."

The story is about a young man from 'nayadi' sect, who goes on to become a Collector. "As the character achieves a good position in his professional life, he undergoes tremendous psychological clashes when it comes to bringing his mother into his lifestyle as she continues to live like a nayadi woman. As the story proceeds the protagonist is forced to take harsh decisions. He is also left red-faced as he is mocked over his caste, despite being in a posi-



tion of power," says Pravin Pillai, who will be portraying the protagonist.

The Phoenix World Theatre had earlier staged Girish Karnad's *Naga Mandala* at JT Pac in the city, directed by Terry Converse from Los Angeles. The group has already planned for their third production,

The Harvest by Manjula Padmanabhan.

The drama adaptation of *Nooru Simhasanangal* is directed by Pradeepan with music by Bijibal and make-up by Pattanam Rasheed. It will be staged at Edappally Changampuzha Park, Kochi at 7 pm on Wednesday.



EXCORIATING CASTEISM

100 *Simhasanangal*, the novel by Tamil-Malayalam writer Jayamohan, is being adapted into a play by Phoenix World Theatre



by Meera Suresh

It is a system embedded deep in our history. The rotten practice of casteism, which even today is prevalent, is one blot that refuses to fade away. It is in this context that Malayalam-Tamil writer Jayamohan's novel '100 Simhasanangal' assumes significance.

Giving the popular novel a theatrical

adaptation is Phoenix World Theatre led by Charu Narayanan. The drama titled '101 Simhasanangal' will be staged on December 2 at Changampuzha Park at 7 pm.

'101 Simhasanangal' narrates the tale of a Nayadi (Adivasi) youth who defies odds and rises to the echelons of power. Born at a time when casteism was a lifestyle, the protagonist, as a child, stumbles on a disciple of Narayana Guru

who adopts him and provides him an opportunity to educate himself.

Good at education, the Nayadi youth ends up as the District Collector but he is unable to shrug off the remnants of his past life. Internal conflicts and the way the society treats him makes his life harrowing.

The novel, an autobiographical account, stands apart for the way how it

mapped the history and cultural virtues of the yore. Through the work, the writer while focusing on the caste system, which once barred a Nayadi or low caste individual from going anywhere in the vicinity of the uppercaste, analyses the present political fabric of the country.

'100 Simhasanangal' is one work that has been noted for his strong and relevant content. It is one reason why we decided to give it a theatrical adapta-



The drama titled *101 Simhasanangal* will be staged on December 2 at Changampuzha Park at 7 pm

tion. As much as the play tries to trace the life of a sidelined society, we also reflect the real value of the teachings of Sree Narayana Guru," says Charu Narayanan, who has been associated with theatre movement for over a decade. According to her, the drama that was initially planned as a short play was extended considering its political and societal relevance.

The play '100 Simhasanangal' has been scripted and directed by M Pradeepan, an alumni of School of Drama, Thrissur.

The music has been done by famous composer Bijibal and Pattanam Rasheed handles the make up department.

The crew include Charu Narayanan, Praveen Pillai, Suhas Balan, Rincy, Anandu KV, Sudheesh Nayarambalam and Vishnu Pradeep. Assistant director is Praveen Pillai, while Dhruv K Nair is the technical director.

'100 Simhasanangal' is the second production of Phoenix World Theatre. The first was Girish Karnad's 'Nagamandala'.

ചുഷണങ്ങൾക്കെതിരെ സ്വരമുയർത്തി 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ'

നെടുമ്പാശേരി • ആദിവാസികൾക്കു നേരെ നടക്കുന്ന ചുഷണത്തിന്റെയും വംശഹത്യയുടെയും കഥ പറഞ്ഞ 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ' എന്ന തെരുവുനാടകം ശ്രദ്ധേയമായി.

മുഴിക്കുളം ശാലയിൽ നടന്ന ദശദിന സഹവാസ നാടക ക്യാമ്പിന്റെ സമാപനത്തോടനുബന്ധിച്ചാണ് നാടകം അവതരിപ്പിച്ചത്. ക്യാമ്പിൽ പങ്കെടുത്ത 17 കുട്ടികളായിരുന്നു അഭിനേതാക്കൾ.

അട്ടപ്പാടിയിൽ ആൾക്കൂട്ടം തല്ലിക്കൊന്ന മധു കേരള സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഉയർത്തിയ രാഷ്ട്രീയ ചലനങ്ങളുടെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിലായിരുന്നു നാടകം.

41 മിനിറ്റ് ദൈർഘ്യമുള്ള നാടകം സംവിധാനം ചെയ്തതുസ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിലെ ഗവേഷകൻ എം. പ്രദീപൻ ആയിരുന്നു. ചിത്രകാരൻ സി. ഹണി സഹസംവിധാനം നിർവഹിച്ചു.

പ്രമേയത്തിന്റെ സ്വഭാവമനുസരിച്ചു മുളസംഗീതം കൊണ്ടു കരിന്തലക്കൂട്ടം നാടകത്തെ തീക്ഷ്ണമാക്കി.

ആലുവ എസ്ഒഎസിലെയും സമീപപ്രദേശങ്ങളിലെയും വിദ്യാർഥികളാണ് ക്യാമ്പിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തത്. 12 പെൺകുട്ടികളും അഞ്ച് ആൺകുട്ടികളും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

സി.ആർ. പ്രേംകുമാർ, വിനീത ചോലയാർ, ശ്രീകുമാർ, കാലടി എസ്. മുരളീധരൻ, എം.ആർ. സുരേന്ദ്രൻ, ഐശ്വര്യ, ലൈബി ഐശ്വര്യ, നന്ദനൻ തുടങ്ങിയവർ ക്യാമ്പിനു നേതൃത്വം നൽകി.

കുട്ടികളുടെ നാടകക്കളരി: 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ' 14-ന്



മുഴിക്കുളം 'ശാല'യിലെ കുട്ടികളുടെ നാടകക്കളരി

മുഴിക്കുളം ▶ മുഴിക്കുളം 'ശാല'യിൽ കുട്ടികളുടെ ദേശീയ സഹവാസ നാടകക്കളരിയിൽ ഒരുക്കിയ 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ' നാടകം 14-ന് വൈകിട്ട് അഞ്ചിന് മുഴിക്കുളം കവലയിൽ അവതരിപ്പിക്കും.

ആലുവ എസ്.ഒ.എസ്. വിവിധ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ കുട്ടികളും ചേർന്നാണ് നാടകം അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. സ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിലെ എം. പ്രദീപനും ചിത്രകാരനും ശില്പിയുമായ സി. ഹണിയും ചേർന്നാണ് നാടകം സംവിധാനം ചെയ്തത്.

കരിന്തലക്കൂട്ടം സംഗീതം നൽകും. 13-ന് വൈകിട്ട് അഞ്ചിന് കുട്ടികളുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നാടകവിളംബരം നടക്കും. നാടകക്കളരി 14-ന് സമാപിക്കും.

ആദിവാസി ജീവിത ചുഷണത്തിന്റെ നേർക്കാഴ്ചയായി കുട്ടികളുടെ നാടകം



വഴച്ചലിൽ നാടകക്കളരിയിലെ കുട്ടികൾ അവതരിപ്പിച്ച തെരുവു നാടകത്തിൽനിന്ന്

അതിരപ്പിള്ളി ▶ ആദിവാസി ജീവിത ചുഷണത്തിന്റെയും വംശഹത്യയുടെയും നേർക്കാഴ്ചയായി കുട്ടികളുടെ തെരുവു നാടകം. അട്ടപ്പാടിയിൽ ആരംഭിച്ചു കൊണ്ടു കേരള സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഉയർത്തിയ ചലനങ്ങളുടെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിലാണ് മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ നാടകം രൂപം കൊണ്ടത്. മുഴിക്കുളം ശാലയിൽ നടന്ന

കുട്ടികളുടെ സഹവാസ നാടകക്കളരിയിൽ പങ്കെടുത്ത കുട്ടികളാണ് നാടകം അവതരിപ്പിച്ചത്. ആലുവ എസ്.ഒ.എസിലേയും സമീപ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലേയും വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളാണ് നാടകക്കളരിയിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തത്. വാഴച്ചാൽ ഉൾ മൂപ്പത്തി ഗീത നാടകം ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു. സ്കൂൾ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിലെ

ഗവേഷകനായ എം. പ്രദീപനാണ് സംവിധായകൻ. സി. ഹണി, ടി.ആർ. പ്രേംകുമാർ, വിനിത ചോലയാർ, അമേച്വർ നാടക പ്രവർത്തകൻ പാർഥസാരഥി, റേഡിയോ കലാകാരി തെന്നൽ, എസ്.ഒ.എസ്. ഡയറക്ടർ ശ്രീകുമാർ, ജില്ലാ ലൈബ്രറി കൗൺസിൽ സെക്രട്ടറി എം.ആർ. സുരേന്ദ്രൻ തുടങ്ങിയവർ പ്രസംഗിച്ചു.

മുഴിക്കുളം കവലയിൽ 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ'

മുഴിക്കുളം ▶ മുഴിക്കുളം ഗാലയിൽ നടന്ന കുട്ടികളുടെ ദേശീയ സഹവാസ നാടക കളരിയിൽ ചിട്ടപ്പെടുത്തിയ 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ' തെരുവു നാടകം മുഴിക്കുളം കവലയിൽ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചു.

ഐശ്വര്യ, അശ്വതി, ഗൗരി, വൈഷ്ണവി, എൽദോ, ആരോമലുണ്ണി, ഷാരൂഖ് ഖാൻ, ഗൗരി നന്ദന, കാർത്തി എന്നിവരുടെ 17 കുട്ടികൾ ചേർന്നാണ് നാടകം അവതരിപ്പിച്ചത്.

സ്റ്റൂഡിയോ ഓഫ് ഡ്രാമയിലെ എം. പ്രദീപനും, സി. ഹണിയുമാണ് സംവിധാനം ചെയ്തത്. കരിന്തലകുട്ടം നാടകത്തിന് മുളസംഗീതം നൽകി.

നാടക കളരിക്ക് വിനിത ചോലയാർ, പ്രൊ.കുമാർ. ടി.ആർ. പാർ



മുഴിക്കുളം കവലയിൽ കുട്ടികൾ അവതരിപ്പിച്ച 'മണ്ണിന്റെ മക്കൾ' തെരുവു നാടകം.

ത്മസാരമി, തെന്നൽ, ഗീത വാഴ ശൻ എന്നിവർ നാടക കളരിക്ക് ചാൽ, ടി.എം. അബ്രഹാം രമേ നേതൃത്വം നൽകി.

Manninte Makkal, Performance at Moozhikulam Junction, Ernakulam

Appendix

A Life Sketch on AUGUSTO BOAL

Brazilian Dr. Augusto Boal was raised in Rio de Janeiro. He was formally trained in chemical engineering and attended Columbia University in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Although his interest and participation in theatre began at an early age, it was just after he finished his degree at Columbia that he was asked to return to Brazil to work with the Arena Theatre in São Paulo. His work at the Arena Theatre led to his experimentation with new forms of theatre that would have an extraordinary impact on traditional practice.

Birth of the Spect-Actor

Prior to his experimentation, and following tradition, audiences were invited to discuss a play at the end of the performance. In so doing, according to Boal, they remained viewers and “reactors” to the action before them. In the 1960's Boal developed a process whereby audience members could stop a performance and suggest different actions for the character experiencing oppression, and the actor playing that character would then carry out the audience suggestions. But in a now legendary development, a woman in the audience once was so outraged the actor could not understand her suggestion that she came onto the stage and showed what she meant. For Boal this was the birth of the spect-actor (not spectator) and his theatre was transformed. He began inviting audience members with suggestions for change onto the stage to demonstrate their ideas. In so doing, he discovered that through this participation the audience members became empowered not only to imagine change but to actually practice that change, reflect collectively on the suggestion, and thereby become empowered to generate social action. Theatre became a practical vehicle for grass-roots activism.

Boal as a Threat

Because of Boal's work, he drew attention as a cultural activist. But the military coups in Brazil during the 1960's looked upon all such activity as a threat. Walking home from an Arena performance of Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* Boal directed in 1971, Boal was kidnapped off the street, arrested, tortured, and eventually exiled to Argentina, then self-exiled to Europe. In Argentina in 1973 he published his first major theatre text, *The Theatre of the Oppressed* (Routledge Press). While in Paris, Boal continued for a dozen years to teach his revolutionary approach to theatre, establishing

several Centers for the Theatre of the Oppressed. In 1981 he organized the first International Festival of the Theatre of the Oppressed in Paris.

Return to Rio

Following the removal of the military junta in Brazil, Boal returned to Rio de Janeiro in 1986. He has established a major Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed there (CTO – Rio) and has formed over a dozen companies which develop community-based performances. The vehicles for these presentations are primarily Forum Theatre and Image Theatre. Forum Theatre relies upon presentation of short scenes that represent problems of a given community such as gender for a conference on women or racial stereotyping for a class on racism. Audience members interact by replacing characters in scenes and by improvising new solutions to the problems being presented. Image theatre uses individuals to sculpt events and relationships sometimes to the accompaniment of a narrative.

Boal at ATHE

In 1992, Boal was invited to be the keynote speaker for the National Conference of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) in Atlanta, Georgia. This is the national association for teachers of theatre in higher education in the United States, with international connections to Canada, Europe, South America, Australia, increasingly Asia, and recently Africa. His address, together with three 5-hour long workshops during the conference, infused the participants with both a workable understanding of how to take the approaches to their schools and communities and a desire to actually use the techniques. Few other names now appear as often as Boal's in the annual conference program.

Second Book Published

In 1992, Boal also published his second major work, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (Routledge Press). This is a splendid basic introduction to the entire range of TO theory and practice, and is useful to people experienced and inexperienced in theatre making.

Boal as Politician; Festival of TO

In the fall of 1992, Boal ran as an at-large candidate for the position of Vereador of Rio, a position similar to a City Council seat in the United States. Over one thousand candidates ran for forty-five seats; Boal was one of those elected. Because of the increased visibility brought about by his winning a seat, he was able to obtain funding to hold an international festival for the first time in Brazil in July, 1993. The Seventh International Festival of the Theatre of the Oppressed attracted one hundred, fifty Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners from around the world in an extraordinary confluence of languages, theatre styles, and social issues. The Eighth such Festival was called the Ripple Effect sponsored by Mixed Company Theatre in Toronto, Canada, and was held from May 29 to June 8, 1997. Three hundred practitioners again from around the world attended. One of the featured performances was by the company Boal directs in his hometown, the CTO – Rio. This performance and the magnanimity of the CTO-Rio group was one of the true highlights of this extraordinary gathering.

Boal in Omaha: Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed Conference

1994 saw Boal's first arrival in Omaha, Nebraska, as he presented an "introductory" workshop to students, faculty, and regional social service personnel. In 1995 Boal keynoted the Pedagogy of the Oppressed Conference sponsored by the University of Nebraska at Omaha and presented numerous community and educational workshops demonstrating his theatrical approaches. At this same time, Boal's third major book, *The Rainbow of Desire* (Routledge Press), was published, which elaborates a psycho-therapeutic application of the Boal techniques, especially Image Theatre.

Boal & Freire

Over many years, Boal continued to strengthen his relationship with liberatory educator, Paulo Freire, author of the acclaimed *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. At the Second Annual Pedagogy of the Oppressed Conference in Omaha in March 1996, both men appeared together on a public platform to reflect on liberatory education and to answer questions from an audience of around one thousand people. Because of their several necessary flights for personal and family safety during the 1960's – 1980's, this co-appearance was the first time Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire shared a common public

stage. Sadly, Paulo Freire passed away in early May, 1997. Said Boal: “I am very sad. I have lost my last father. Now all I have are brothers and sisters.” The Third Annual Conference of Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed was held in mid-May, 1997, where Boal led workshops in Forum Theatre. Several of the pieces developed kicked off the Conference with much interaction, reflection, action, and discussion from the conference attendees. Boal also concluded the Conference with an image exercise which amounted to a fascinating visual “critique” of the Conference itself.

Legislative Theatre

Though he lost his bid for re-election in the fall of 1996, while in office, Vereador Boal developed a Forum type of theatre — which he called Legislative Theatre — to work at the neighborhood level to identify the key problems in the city. Using the Forum concept, he employed the dynamics of theatre to discuss what kinds of legislation needed to be enacted to address community problems. The resulting discussions and demonstrations became the basis for actual legislation put forward by Boal in the Chamber of Vereadores. Not surprisingly, Boal has summarized these discoveries and processes in *Legislative Theatre*, published by Routledge in 1998.

Boal in England

The summer of 1997 found Boal in England where he worked with the world-renowned Royal Shakespeare Company. The RSC asked Boal to employ his Rainbow of Desire techniques in working with them on a production of *Hamlet*. Typical of Boal, he is not interested in the central story but in the characters who are usually cut from the play, and thus imagined a text of the marginal characters, the ones without much power. He says it might be similar to the national dish of Brazil which is based on a stew made by slaves of the leavings from the masters table.

ATHE Award

In August, 1997, Boal was awarded the Career Achievement Award by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education during their national conference in Chicago. At the Conference, Boal conducted yet another of his five-hour workshops for conference attendees as well as received the coveted Career Achievement honor.

Boal's International and US Travels

Traveling extensively between Rio, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia, and North America, Boal labors tirelessly to make his processes available to as many people as he can reach. December 1998 found him in England offering his remarkable Legislative Theatre not only as a model of public performance, but as a communication network on the Internet. For this reason, the entire performance day was on-line on the World Wide Web so that people around the world could respond.

Boal went on a first major tour of the US in February and March, 1999, traveling to the following universities and colleges: New College in Sarasota, FL; Vassar; Dartmouth; Colby College; University of Georgia; Florida State; and Kansas State. New College, Dartmouth, and Kansas State, and perhaps others of these, now have student TO companies working regularly on Boal techniques.

Since then he has toured to the US every spring, anchoring his tours on the annual Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference and then giving workshops and presentations in many US and Canadian cities – Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, Omaha, Minneapolis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Toledo, Toronto, New York City, Boston, Peoria IL, Worcester MA, and Bowling Green OH.

The objective is always to leave behind at least a core of people who can offer Boal-style workshops, analysis, and ideas. Hopefully there are hundreds and even thousands of people carrying out this liberatory approach to community animation.

In 2007 Boal scaled back his tours so that he attended the PTO Conference in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, on June 28 – 31, and was in residence at TOPLab in New York City from June 2 – 7. The PTO workshops included a 3-day Forum-Joker workshop and Forum performance.

Final Tour

Augusto Boal's final visit to North America occurred in May 2008 in Omaha, NE. He offered a three-day Legislative Theatre workshop (May 19 – 21) on the campus of UNO in preparation for a Legislative Theatre session. This remarkable event was held on the night of Thursday, May 22, in the Omaha City Council Chambers through the good

offices of Council Member Franklin Thompson. It was a very large, overflow audience in the 250-seat auditorium with a rich mixture of city, university, and PTO Conference people in attendance. Elected officials from Omaha comprised the “dais” group that watched the Forum scenes and, in a wonderful image, gathered and sorted the laws that came from the spect-actor/audience. Julian Boal co-joked the session with Augusto, and the event sparkled with vigorous discussion and debate.

For the first time in many years, Augusto Boal was invited to spend the next two days at the Conference itself, attending and participating in sessions, talking with participants, and gathering in the hotel bar until late into the night. On Sunday May 25, the Boals joked a stimulating 3-day workshop in one of Augusto’s favorite areas of inquiry – Rainbow into Forum. The use of images to represent ideologies presented a fascinating look into his continued evolution of forms of Theatre of the Oppressed.

One of the many highlights of this last Conference was the Flower Ceremony. PTO officers organized a tribute to Augusto Boal during which around 25 participants, in a long line Augusto traversed, handed him a carnation and read a statement about one of his many contributions to world theatre, culture, and political struggle. It was not so much ironic as sentimentally appropriate that this ceremony marked Augusto Boal’s final PTO appearance.

It is serendipitous and fortunate that during this 14th Annual PTO Conference arrangements were made for extensive professional video taping of the Legislative Theatre workshop, the Legislative Session, conference events featuring Boal, and some of the Rainbow into Forum post-conference workshop. This large amount of tape has been collected in a disc, available through PTO and on this website, showing significant elements of each Conference event.

From Omaha, Augusto Boal and his son Julian flew to New York City to give two three-day workshops at TOPLab at the Brecht Forum in New York City.

Final Days

In the fall of 2008, PTO went ahead with plans to invite both Augusto and Julian to the 15th Annual Conference scheduled for May 18 – 21, 2009. In March Augusto was

in France, as he often was, working and writing. One of his central projects, in addition to completing his book *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*, was organizing a Gathering of Jokers in Rio for the summer of 2009. However, he suddenly became quite tired and it was feared perhaps his leukemia, in control for the past four years, was becoming more virulent. He returned to Rio de Janeiro in early April and by mid-April Julian confirmed that his father would not be coming to the Conference. On Saturday, May 2nd, at 1:36 AM/CST, Julian Boal sent an e.mail to PTO Board Emeritus Doug Paterson with the following brief message: “my father is gone – he went away sleeping.”

The shock was of course staggering. Still the 2009 Conference was held in Minneapolis/St. Paul on the campus of Augsburg College. A grieving and honoring ritual was organized by Hector Aristizabal for late in the evening on Wednesday, May 20. One hundred, fifty people attended what became a deep grieving and truly celebrational honoring of the life of Augusto Boal, and PTO remains grateful to Hector for his leadership during this important event and time.

PTO released the following statement shortly after Augusto Boal’s passing:

Augusto Boal 1931-2009

PTO shares in the grief of people around the world who learned of the passing of Augusto Boal on May 1st, 2009, notably also the International Worker’s Holiday. We send our sympathies to his wife, Cecelia, his son, Julian, with whom so many of us have worked, his son Fabian, the rest of his family, the members of CTO-Rio, and his world of friends and co-workers.

Augusto Boal was a giant in so many ways: theatre director, scholar, teacher; pedagogy colleague of Paulo Freire; political representative and statesman in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil; international speaker and teacher; Nobel Peace Prize nominee; and the visionary who conceived and patiently developed one of the most revolutionary cultural and artistic practices of the last millennia, the Theatre of the Oppressed.

As the featured guest for the first PTO Conference in Omaha in 1995, Augusto attended, led workshops, and spoke at all but three of our conferences through last year’s gathering in 2008, again in Omaha. Through Augusto’s good offices, Paulo Freire came

to PTO in 1996, making this the only time in their celebrated careers that these two friends presented together in public.

Julian Boal appreciates the many expressions of sympathy sent to his family, and also has indicated his intention to come to Minneapolis for the annual PTO Workshops and Conference Opening May 18 – 21. At that time, PTO will arrange a time for honoring our founding inspiration, Dr. Augusto Boal.

Website : <https://ptoweb.org/aboutpto/a-brief-biography-of-augusto-boal/>