

INDIAN ENGLISH DRAMA

Dr. Rupal Patel

Origin and Development

- ▣ Begins with
Sanskrit drama
of ancient India

Origin and Development

- ▣ Divided into three phases
- ▣ The first – Vedic Period
- ▣ Originated as early in the 3rd century BC
- ▣ Influenced by Hindu religion, the caste system and Sanskrit Literature.

Origin and Development

- ▣ Rigveda
- ▣ In it, the Samhita –
15 hymns written
in a dialogue form

Origin and Development

■ Bharatamuni –
Natyashastra

■ 500 BC

Origin and Development

- ▣ Prevalent Condition:
- ▣ Moral fiber of society – weakened
- ▣ Irrational passions among people
- ▣ Baser instincts

Origin and Development

- ▣ Knowledge of Vedas – restricted to the upper strata of the society
- ▣ A medium for entertainment is required

Origin and Development

- ▣ Indra and other gods appealed Brahma to provide such an instrument.

Origin and Development

- Brahma – the Father of the Universe
- Took the text – Rigveda
- The Art of performance – Yajurveda
- Song – Samveda
- Rasa – Atharvaveda

Origin and Development

- ▣ Created the fifth Veda – Natyaveda
- ▣ (Brahma created the fifth Veda)
- ▣ Indra realized – inability of the gods to deal with the new Veda, passed it on a human preceptor - Bharata

Origin and Development

- ▣ Bharata – with the help of his hundred sons and some nymphs staged the first play

Origin and Development

- ▣ First performance in The Banner Festival – held to celebrate Indra's victory over the demons
- ▣ This is the beginning of the genre of drama in India.

- ▣ Bharata's
Natyashastra –
encyclopedia of
dramatology
- ▣ Natyashastra –
considered the fifth

Why It is Fifth Veda?

- ▣ It includes all fundamental principles of drama and theatre
- ▣ Information about performing arts like music, dance, costume, make up, poetry etc.
- ▣ Guidelines for writing one act play to full length play

Origin and Development

- ▣ Leading Sanskrit dramatists :
- ▣ Asvaghosa, Bhasa, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Sudrak
- ▣ Dramas in Sanskrit – performed in temples and

- But there is a decline in Sanskrit dramas
- Reasons:
- Social and political instability by foreign invasions
- Internal conflicts
- Loss of creative energy in the Sanskrit language
- Loss of appeal for common spectators

- ▣ Tribes - performed religious or social rites, ritualistic dances and festivals
- ▣ Rituals related to birth, death, puberty, marriage, food gathering, hunting, battles and propitiation of their gods & goddesses.

Second Phase

- ▣ Regional Dramas
- ▣ Indian theatre is called the folk theatre as it has flourished in the countryside.
- ▣ Growth of vernacular languages
- ▣ Initially – the themes were based on religion – Ramayana & Mahabharata

Second Phase

- ▣ Bengal – Jatra & Nautanki
- ▣ Tamil Nadu – Terukuttu
- ▣ Andhra Pradesh – Veethinatakam

Second Phase

- ▣ Karnataka –
Yakshagana, Bayalata,
Attadata, Dodddata and
Sonnata
- ▣ Kashmir – Bhand Jashn
- ▣ Mathura – Rasadhari

Second Phase

- ▣ Maharashtra – Dashavatar & Tamasha
- ▣ Kerala – Kutiyattam, Mohiniattam & Kathakali dance dramas
- ▣ Northern India – Ramalila

Second Phase

- ▣ Indian writers used these forms in their works.
- ▣ Girish Karnad – Yakshagana in Hayavadana
- ▣ Vijay Tendulkar – Dashavatar and Khele techniques in Ghashiram Kotwal

Second Phase

- ▣ Habib Tanvir – Nautanki in The Little Clay Cart
- ▣ Dina Gandhi & Bakul Tripathi – Bhavai in Mena Gurjari and Leela
- ▣ Utpal Dutt & Badal Sircar – Jatra in Jokumareswara and From Indrajit

- Hindrance in the development of Indian drama – absence of national language
- Today – 16 major languages and hundreds of dialects are in use in India
- But unable to reach at the international level

15th & 17th Century

- ▣ Bhakti Movement
- ▣ Dramas like Rukminivijaya in Ankianat or Bhaona
- ▣ Jagannathvallabha in Jatra

15th & 17th Century

- ▣ Bhamakalapam in Kuchipudi
- ▣ Radhamadhav,
Gajendramoksha,
Janakiparinaya,
Parashuramavijaya in
Bhavayata-mela

End of 17th Century

- ▣ Vaishnava Bhakti Movement
- ▣ Shiva and Shakti influence appeared
- ▣ Plays - Chandimangal, Mahishasuramardini, Haraparvati
- ▣ Incarnation of Rama and Krishna

End of 17th Century

- ▣ Social and political modes are also found in dramas
- ▣ Tamasha, Bhavai, Mach, Khyal, Sang, Swang, Nautanki, Nautuk, Phand, Karmelo

18th Century

- ▣ Tamasha – traditional form of Marathi theatre
- ▣ Born out of Kirtinia (Kirtan)
- ▣ Janak Ram Joshi – well versed with Kirtans as a dramatic form

18th Century

- ▣ Moropant, Baji Rao, Vishnudas Bhave, Mama Varekar etc. leading writers
- ▣ Tamasha applied by P.L. Deshpande, Vasant Bapat and Vijay Tendulkar

19th & 20th Century

- ▣ Parasi style
- ▣ Failed to become significant as dramatic literature

Third Phase

- ▣ Started during 19th century
- ▣ India's encounter with the West
- ▣ Western influence
- ▣ Change in drama's form, place, direction and pace
- ▣ New theatre emerged

Third Phase

- ▣ Imitation of the Western Culture
- ▣ Some English plays took entry
- ▣ Staging the plays started in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta

Third Phase

- ▣ Visit of foreign troops arranged
- ▣ In Delhi Yatrik group – staged several plays
- ▣ Gurucharan Das's – Mira
- ▣ Pratap Sharma – A Touch of Brightness
- ▣ Asif Curimbhoy – The Dumb Dancer

Third Phase

- ▣ Indian drama in Indian Languages and drama in English translations – remarkable growth
- ▣ Regional dramas turn into English translations
- ▣ Creates a link between East and West

Third Phase

- ▣ Hindi, Bengali, Kannada – prominent languages from where – English translations
- ▣ Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad
- ▣ The made innovations, experiments and new directions

- The Bengali theatre became most prominent.
- Many talented actors, directors, playwrights, managers emerged.
- Girish Chandra Ghosh, Ardhendu Mustafi, Amritlal Mitra, Surendra Nath Ghosh, Shishir Bhaduri – brought Bengali theatre name and fame.

Bengali Theatre

- ▣ Attract women performers
- ▣ Plays were more written than other genres of literature

Bengali Theatre

- ▣ Michael Madhusudhan Dutt, Deenbandhu Mitra, Girish Chandra Ghosh, D.L. Roy, Kshirod Prashad Vidyavinod, Rabindranath Tagore, Manmath Ray, Sachin Sengupta etc. wrote plays for the stage.

Bengali Theatre

- ▣ The stories – Indian Mythological episodes, folk tales, historical events, contemporary social institutions

Marathi Theatre

- ▣ Lot contribution in the field of drama.
- ▣ Music and dance – important
- ▣ First Marathi play – Seeta Swayamvara by Vishnudas Bhave

Marathi Theatre

- ▣ Then comes Vasant Panduranga – wrote Shakuntala and Saubhadra

Marathi Theatre

- ▣ Krishnaji Prabhakar known as Kaka Saheb Khadilkar – wrote Keechakavadha, Bhaubandake & Manapamana based on Shakespearean

Marathi Theatre

- ▣ Ram Ganesh Gadakari, Mama Warerkar are leading playwrights



English Plays

- ▣ Many Indian Writers tried to write English plays
- ▣ Krishn Mohan Banerji – first English play – The Persecuted or Dramatic Scenes of the Present State of Hindu Society in Calcutta in 1831

English Plays

- ▣ C.Z. Nazir – wrote The First Parsi Baronet in 1966
- ▣ Michal Madhusudhan Dutt – translated his play Ratnavali and Sermistha originally written in Bengali and translated into English entitled Is This Called

English Plays

- ▣ Ramkinoo Dutt – wrote Manupura Tragedy in 1883

The Pre -

Independence Era

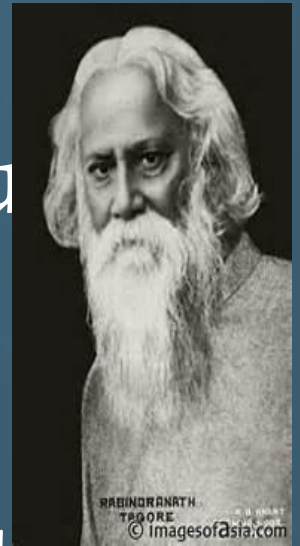
- ▣ Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T.P. Kailasam, A.S. Ayyar, Lobo Prabhu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Bharati Sarabhai – contributed in the evaluation and development of Indian English Drama

“Big Three”

- ▣ Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and H.N. Chattopadhyaya
- ▣ Among them, Tagore made a prominent place

Rabindranath Tagore

- ▣ Tagore – Chitra, The Post Office, Sacrifice, Red Oleanders, Chandalika, Mu – Dhara
- ▣ Wrote more than 40 plays
- ▣ His plays – idea plays and lack stage ability



Sri Aurobindo

- ▣ 1872 – 1950
- ▣ 11 verse dramas
- ▣ The Viziers or Bassara
Perseus and Deliverer,
Radogune Eric, Vasavadatta
- ▣ His plays are not staged



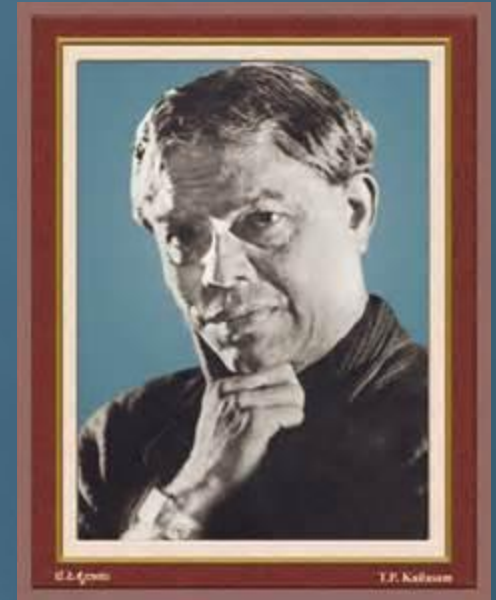
Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

▣ Wrote The Five Plays
in 19



T.P. Kailasam

- The Burden (1933)
- Fulfillment (1933)
- The Purpose (1944)
- Karna : The Brahmin's Curse (1946)
- Keechaka (1949)



Pre – independence dramatists

- ▣ Other Indian English
pre - independence
dramatists – Bharati
Sarabhai, G.V. Desani,
Asit Currimbhoy,
Gurucharan Das,
B. V. Ch...

Post – independence Indian English Drama

- ▣ Several dramatic organizations were launched - the Indian National Theatre, Ebrahim Alkhazi's Theatre, Bharatiya

National Council

Regional Theatres

- ▣ Sambhu Mitra's Bahuroopi in Bengal,
- ▣ The Hindi Natya Parishad,
- ▣ The Kalakendra, Rangbhoomi and Natyamandal in Gujarat
- ▣ The Prithvi Theatre and the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangha in Bombay
- ▣ The Telugu Little Theatre
- ▣ The Andhra Theatre Foundation
- ▣ The Seva Sangha in Madras
- ▣ Dishantar in Delhi

Post – independence Indian English Drama

- ▣ **The National School of Drama was established under the dictatorship of Alkhazi**
- ▣ **Drama Departments started in various universities**

Post – independence Indian English Drama

▣ **The Annual Drama
Festival started in
New Delhi by
Sangeet Natak
Akademi in 1954**

Post – independence Indian English Drama

- ▣ Authentic works began to be staged
- ▣ Shakespeare, Marlowe, Sophocles, Euripides, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Tolstoy, Gorky, Camus, Sartre, Bertolt Brecht etc made available

- ❑ Changed awareness
- ❑ Badal Sircar – Evam Indrajit, Baki Itihas, Pagla Ghora in Bengali
- ❑ Vijay Tendulkar – Shantata Court Chalu Aahe, Ashi Pakhare Yeti in Marathi
- ❑ Adya Rangachary – Kelu Janamejaya
- ❑ Girish Karnad – Tughlaq in Kannada
- ❑ Dharmavir Bharati – Andha Yug
- ❑ Mohan Rakesh – Ashadh Ka Ek Din, Adhe Adhure, Laheron Ke Raj Hans, Shayad, Hunh! in Hindi
- ❑ All these gave status of creative writing

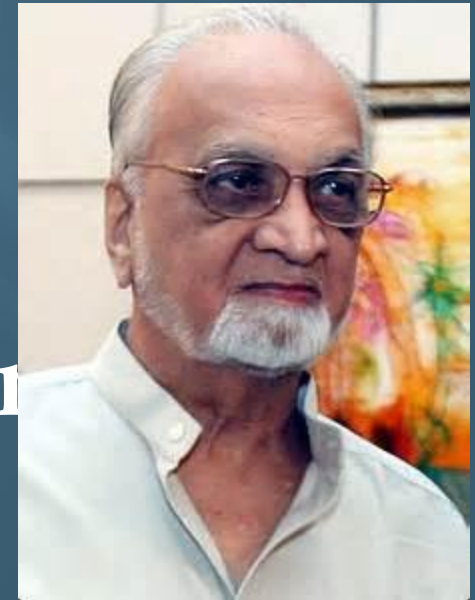
Girish Karnad

- ▣ M.K. Naik called him “a most significant catalyst”
- ▣ Naga – Mandala
- ▣ Fire and the Rain
- ▣ Hayavadana
- ▣ Yayati



Vijay Tendulkar

- ▣ 1928 – 2008
- ▣ Ghashiram Kotwal
- ▣ Silence! The Court is in Session
- ▣ Kanyadan
- ▣ The Vultures
- ▣ Encounter in Embulgar
- ▣ Kamala



Mahesh Dattani

▣ Tara

