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Overview of the Volume. Part II

Drawing on selected Sanskrit and Old Javanese textual sources ranging from the 4th to 15th centuries, complemented by contemporary ethnographic data from Java and Bali, **Andrea Acri** discusses the interrelations between performative arts and ascetic traditions of the South and Southeast Asian Śaiva Atimārga and its offshoots. His findings point to the fact that in both areas Śaiva practitioners were engaged in similar rituals and observances involving acting, dancing or singing, usually perceived as antinomian behaviours of lower castes. Although most of these groups do not exist anymore, Acri shows that certain contemporary professional performers from Java and Bali might historically continue traditions that sprung from Atimārga practices. Among ritual performances that bring to mind the transgressive Tantric features described in the textual sources are, for instance, those connected to the Balinese mask figure of the Sidha Karya, a dancer and comic-performer, whose task is "to make the ritual accomplished", as he appears at the end of the *topeng pajegan* dancing drama.

Gautam Chakrabarti's paper deals with performative crossing of the boundaries, basically in the context of French experimental post-WW2 theatre and its associations with Indian cultural heritage. Chakrabarti juxtaposes the ideas on theatre presented by the French avant-garde theatre director Ariane Mnouchkine (1939–), founder of the Parisian Théâtre du Soleil (1964), with certain theories postulated

in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Within the frame of comparative cultural history, the author seeks to trace possible links and convergences between those two modes of dramaturgy, chiefly referring to the *L'Indiade ou l'Inde de leurs rêves* (1987–1988), the play written by Hélène Cixous in cooperation with Mnouchkine. It seems, as Chakrabarti suggests, that Mnouchkine's inclinations for the ritualistic tools and techniques of expression, e.g. the use of bodily and non-verbal practices on the stage, could reflect her personal encounter with existing forms of Indian theatre which, like Kathakaḷi, are to some extent still informed by *Nāṭyaśastra* precepts.

In her paper on poetry and alterity, **Silvia D'Intino** looks for the first traces of Indian theatrical art in the Vedic dialogue hymns. Her investigation about the peculiar use of first person singular pronouns, in the restricted group of Ṛgvedic hymns addressed to Varuṇa, reveals the resemblance between the art of the actor and that of the poet. As D'Intino shows, the shifts between the speaking 'I' and the lyrical 'I'—for instance when the poet avoids speaking in his own name and instead assumes the role of someone else, gods among others—result in a distancing effect and the creation of the poet's "poetic persona". From such a perspective, all the strategies and devices aimed at imbuing the poetic dialogue with many voices should be seen as contributing to the process of creating the character, thus affecting the invention of Indian theatre.

Dominic Goodall's aim is to draw the attention to the so far ignored pre-modern Sanskrit texts that treat the topic of the temple-dancers' status. Putting into question Hélène Brunner's dismissal of the evidence about courtesans found in the *Kāmikāgama*, due to the alleged forgery of its edition printed in 1916-1918, Goodall reopens the question by examining a rich corpus of early sources. These include textual and epigraphical materials in Sanskrit and Tamil from India and Cambodia, which concern the figures of Rudraganikās, the "courtesans of Rudra". Whereas his thorough inquiry of pre-10th century passages from across the Sanskritic world proves the long history of a complex phenomenon including "1) temple-slavery, 2) dancing-acting and 3) prostitution",

the specific study of South Indian Temple Āgamas from the 12th century onwards implies the shifting statuses for courtesans who lived in the big temple-cities of the Tamil region. The author frames his research within the context of the poor transmission and lack of critical editions of the South Indian texts analyzed, thus raising important questions on their history and modes of composition, and their impact on scholarly views on such debated topics as the institution of temple-dance.

The paper of **Thomas Kintaert** provides us with the second part of the series on ritual performances in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśastra* launched in the previous volume of *Cracow Indological Studies*. It gathers the relevant and detailed data on food offerings treated in the text and discusses their usage in various ritual contexts: the construction of the theatre building, the consecration of *mṛdaṅga* drums, the consecration of the playhouse and the stage, the offerings to human agents during the construction of the theatre building. In addition, it offers some glimpses on prescriptions recommending miscellaneous ritual items like, for instance, gems. The collected material constitutes an excellent basis for further investigations concerning the link between ritual and theatre as expounded in the treatise.

Using the data gathered during fieldwork in Assam, **Irene Majo Garigliano** discusses the shifting categories of ritual, possession and theatre in relation to the festival of the Deodhāni-nāc, performed every August in the Kāmākhya temple in Guwahati. She focuses on the creative process by which each performer—the *deodhā*, chosen Assamese male who becomes possessed by the goddess Kāmākhyā or other related deities and dances to the beat of drum for three days—builds a unique style of dance, recognizable over the years. Although the Deodhāni-nāc cannot be treated as a dramatic performance—*deodhā*s, priests and devotees view it rather as a divine play (*līlā*)—Majo Garigliano posits the hypothesis that nonetheless the performers display some parallels with actors. They do not simply recreate a shared visual imagery based on the deities' iconography, but also give it more subjective and personal features, thus establishing a peculiar way of dance within the limits of the festival's formal and conventional structure.

S. A. S Sarma's paper concerns the worship of Vēṭṭaykkorumakan, a minor deity venerated in Kerala. Having discussed the well-known *Mahābhārata* episode on Arjuna encountering Śiva in a garb of a tribal hunter (*kirāta*) and its influence on other literary works, Sarma focuses on the vernacular Kerala versions of this story basically enriched by the addition of the episode concerning Vēṭṭaykkorumakan's birth as the son of Śiva and Pārvatī, when they assumed the form of a hunter and huntress. The link between ritual and theatre is analysed in relation to two particular "ritual performances", known regionally for the veneration of Vēṭṭaykkorumakan: the Kaḷameḻuttuṃ Pāṭṭuṃ in the south of Kerala, and the Teyyam in the north. Besides their aim to please the deity, both display theatrical elements, including singing, dancing, or playing music among others. Along with the performer's artistic skills these, as Sarma concludes, help a devotee to experience the embodied presence of the deity.

Aleksandra Wenta examines the issue of boundary-crossing between the cognitive/inner ritual, and theatrical performance, according to a ritualistic model devised in non-dual Śaivism and expounded in Maheśvarānanda's *Mahārthamañjarī* and other related texts. The crucial problem under discussion is Maheśvarānanda's view on the possibility for a man to assume the role of Śiva-the Dancer, by means of performing the Five Acts (*pañcakṛtya*) commonly attributed to the god. Wenta contextualizes Maheśvarānanda's concern with the dancing Śiva both within the framework of the socio-religious history and politics of Cōḻa Chidambaram, whose rulers adopted Naṭarāja as family deity, and as part of the struggle, among various Śaiva movements therein, to obtain royal patronage. She provides a detailed analysis of Maheśvarānanda's philosophical assumption that Naṭarāja is the symbol of recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) or reflective awareness (*vimarśa*), and that the individual self (*puruṣa*) is identical with Śiva since they both share the nature of the Dancer (*nartaka*), consisting of free agency.

Ewa Dębicka-Borek
(Jagiellonian University, Krakow)
debicka.debicka@uj.edu.pl