



e-ISSN: 2822-3950 ★ Volume 2.2 ★ December 2022

e-ISSN: 2822-3950 ★ Sayı 2.2 ★ Aralık 2022

ETKİ:
*Journal of
Literature,
Theatre and
Culture Studies*

ETKİ:
*Edebiyat,
Tiyatro ve
Kültür
İncelemeleri
Dergisi*



e-ISSN: 2822-3950 ★ Volume 2.2 ★ December 2022

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Bingöl Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi 12200 Bingöl, Türkiye



e-ISSN: 2822-3950 ★ Volume 2.2 ★ December 2022

e-ISSN: 2822-3950 ★ Sayı 2.2 ★ Aralık 2021

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Editor's Preface

On behalf of our authors, reviewers, editorial board, and editorial team – I warmly welcome you to third issue of *ETKI: Journal of Literature, Theatre and Culture Studies*.

I am proud to present the second issue of *ETKI: Journal of Literature, Theatre and Culture Studies*. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the editorial board and the refereeing committee, especially the issue writers, for their help in delivering the second issue of this journal. I am equally grateful for the many authors who offered candidate contributions to this second issue – and for the many more colleagues around the globe who consistently provided critical but supportive reviews. Many of these reviewers were drawn from our Editorial Board, whose broader support has likewise been essential.

ETKI, like many scientific and academic journals that have pioneered literature and drama studies, aims to host self sacrificing and qualified works that have not had the chance to be published but must be delivered to readers and literature/drama experts. Each work that is filtered from the theoretical and practical knowledge of the authors and passed through the filter of field expert referees and editors will be included in the scope of this journal, which aims to close a gap in the world of literature, theatre and cultural studies. I wish *ETKI* to be beneficial to the academic world, and I wish it to guide our dear readers, field experts, professionals, undergraduate and graduate students in literature, cultural studies and the arts of stage, performance, theatre and drama.

Önder Çakırtaş
Editor-in-Chief

Editör'ün Önsözü

Yazarlarımız, hakemlerimiz, yayın kurulu ve yayın ekibimiz adına – *ETKİ: Edebiyat, Tiyatro ve Kültür İncelemeleri Dergisi*'nin üçüncü sayısına hoş geldiniz.

ETKİ: Edebiyat, Tiyatro ve Kültür İncelemeleri Dergisi'nin ikinci sayısını sunmaktan gurur duyuyorum. Bu derginin ikinci sayısının yayımlanmasında emeği geçen başta sayı yazarları olmak üzere, yayın kuruluna ve hakem heyetine en içten teşekkürlerimi sunarım. Bu ikinci sayıya çeşitli katkılarda bulunan birçok yazara ve sürekli olarak eleştirel ve destekleyici incelemeler sunan dünya çapındaki birçok meslektaşına aynı derecede minnettarım. Bu hakemlerin çoğu, her zaman desteğini esirgemeyen yayın kurulumuzdan seçilmiştir.

ETKİ, edebiyat, tiyatro ve kültürel çalışmalara öncülük etmiş birçok bilimsel ve akademik dergi gibi, yayımlanma şansı bulamamış, okuyuculara ve edebiyat, tiyatro, kültür incelemeleri ve drama uzmanlarına ulaştırılması gereken özverili ve nitelikli eserlere ev sahipliği yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Edebiyat, tiyatro ve kültür dünyasındaki bir boşluğu kapatmayı hedefleyen bu dergide yazarların teorik ve pratik bilgilerinden süzülerek alanında uzman hakem ve editörlerin süzgecinden geçirilen her esere yer verilecektir. *ETKİ*'nin akademik dünyaya faydalı olmasını diliyor, siz değerli okuyucularımıza, alan uzmanlarına, profesyonellere, lisans ve lisansüstü öğrencilerimize edebiyat, kültürel çalışmalar ile sahne, performans, tiyatro ve drama sanatlarında yol göstermesini temenni ediyorum.

Önder Çakırtaş
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ETKI: <i>Journal of Literature, Theatre and Culture Studies</i>	ETKİ: <i>Edebiyat, Tiyatro ve Kültür İncelemeleri Dergisi</i>
e-ISSN: 2822-3950 Volume 2.2 ★ December 2022	e-ISSN: 2822-3950 Sayı 2.2 ★ Aralık 2022

Rural Crime and Police Reforms: A Study of Christie's Murder Mysteries

Chetan Saini | Asst. Prof. | Delhi University
chetansaini@gmail.com

Abstract

Keywords:

urban crime,
rural crime,
police reforms,
criminal records,
police detectives.

Article History:

Received: 20.08.2022

Accepted: 17.09.2022

Citation Guide:

Saini, Chetan. "Rural Crime and Police Reforms: A Study of Christie's Murder Mysteries." *ETKI: Journal of Literature, Theatre and Culture Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2022, pp. 1-16.

Agatha Christie breaks conceptual ideologies that country houses witness a fewer number of crimes compared to towns. With rapid industrialization and an economic boom in the nineteenth century, Britain witnessed a social transition that widened the income disparity between classes. The country recorded a substantial increase in illegal activities in the post-industrial era. To curb criminal activities, the British authorities took measures, including expanding the network of security agencies and reforms in the police system. Besides, Britain introduced the policy of criminal records maintenance for the territorial understanding of criminal offences. Christie has not explicitly described these policies and reforms in her novels, but the plot structure, the location of a crime, and the proactive approach of police detectives indicate the blending of reality with fiction.

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Kırsal Suçlar ve Polis Reformları: Christie'nin Cinayet Esrarları Üzerine Bir İnceleme

Chetan Saini | Yrd. Doç. | Delhi Üniversitesi
chetansaini@gmail.com

Özet

Agatha Christie, taşra evlerinin kasabalara kıyasla daha az sayıda suça tanıklık ettiği yönündeki kavramsal ideolojileri yıkıyor. On dokuzuncu yüzyılda hızlı sanayileşme ve ekonomik patlamayla birlikte İngiltere, sınıflar arasındaki gelir eşitsizliğini derinleştiren bir toplumsal dönüşüme tanıklık etti. Ülke, sanayi sonrası dönemde yasadışı faaliyetlerde önemli bir artış kaydetmiştir. Suç faaliyetlerini engellemek için İngiliz yetkililer, güvenlik teşkilatları ağını genişletmek ve polis sisteminde reformlar yapmak gibi önlemler aldı. Ayrıca İngiltere, cezai suçların bölgesel olarak anlaşılması için adli sicil kayıtlarının tutulması politikasını uygulamaya koymuştur. Christie romanlarında bu politikaları ve reformları açıkça anlatmamıştır, ancak olay örgüsü yapısı, suçun işlendiği yer ve polis dedektiflerinin proaktif yaklaşımı gerçeğin kurguyla harmanlandığını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

kentsel suçlar,
kırsal suçlar,
polis reformları,
adli sicil kaydı,
polis edektifleri.

Makale Bilgileri:

Geliş : 20.08.2022

Kabul : 17.09.2022

Kaynak Gösterme Rehberi:

Saini, Chetan. "Rural Crime and Police Reforms: A Study of Christie's Murder Mysteries." *ETKİ: Journal of Literature, Theatre and Culture Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2022, pp. 1-16.

Introduction

With rapid industrialization and urbanization in the nineteenth century, the perception of British people and the approach of legal institutions towards crime witnessed unprecedented change. Metropolitan cities and towns earned the reputation of overly crowded zones infested with criminal activities. This perceptual change could be attributed to factors like massive migration of people, mushrooming of slums, poverty, hunger and the government's apathy towards the poor. Nineteenth and twentieth century novelists conjoined this perceptual transition by intertwining urban crime and its multiple forms with their writings to show how dark and dingy spaces of slums hide criminals with minuscule possibilities of being nabbed by law enforcement agencies.

This article attempts to investigate how Agatha Christie deconstructs traditional conceptual ideologies relating to the location of the crime and the gradual extension of functional areas of investigation agencies in the exterior of towns. The article analyses two novels – *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* and *The Murder at the Vicarage* – to study questions like: how Christie switches the discourses from erstwhile detective stories of localizing crime in metropolitan cities to villages? What motivates Christie to set her crime stories in rural settings? To find answers to these questions, the article has tried to do an interdisciplinary study of crime fiction. It corroborates the analysis with statistics of different types of crimes committed in the nineteenth century. It also gives insight into reforms instituted in the police system to expand the network of security agencies for tackling criminal activities in rural regions.

Theorizing the Representation of Crime

As literature has its roots in social and cultural spheres, writers institutionalize them to validate public perception. The article uses the theoretical framework of how historical, cultural and social facts made their way into crime fiction. The literary verisimilitude of crime culture gained traction in the nineteenth century to bridge the gap between crime fiction and real-world criminal incidences. The literary representation of the socio-cultural milieu invites readers to contemplate policies and institutional reforms that transform the social order. Marxists have elaborated this representation of social milieu as the transactions between socio-economic and socio-political domains. Engels relates the cross-connection of increased criminal activities with hostility between proletariats and the middle class.

Authors borrow ideas from surroundings, but most often from history¹, to illustrate how policies, reforms and perceptions are produced, reproduced and disseminated for the sustenance of social order. Clifford Geertz writes that social, economic and political developments affect human

¹ History is not the compilation of ideas and chronicles but it is an account of incidences and developments in the socio-cultural and politico-economic domains.

activities and, therefore, authors' attempt to embed realism in their writings reflects an exchange between culture and literature:

There is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture which does not mean complexes of concrete behaviour patterns-customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters but rather a set of control mechanisms, plans, recipes, rules, instructions for the governing of behaviour (Greetz 51).

Geertz propounds that culture and humans interplay by exchanging ideas, while Stuart Hall reconfigures the concept of representation as the tool of reconstruction. Hall illustrates that the representation is an act of ideological recreation embodying intended meanings different from literal meanings: "Representation is the production of meaning through language. In representation, we use signs to symbolize, stand for reference or reference of objects, people and events in the so-called real world" (28).

He further exemplifies in the above quotation that representation has gained a prominent place in cultural studies because it is not just the imitation of ideas but a complex process in which discourses produce intentional meanings. These discourses are dynamic, evolving with time and passing from one generation to another.

Criminal Offences: Social and Literary Trends

Sociologists and legal experts have defined urban crimes in relation to their potency and how they affect an individual's personal and public life. Against the backdrop of urbanization and the massive migration of people to cities in the nineteenth century, criminals exploited opportunities to deceive people of their wealth and belongings. Explicating the rising number of criminals and unlawful activities in cities, Stephen Knight argues that the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century reinforced social hierarchy in the countryside whereas industrial hubs and urban centres allow criminals to homogenize with people:

You would not know who your neighbours were, what they did or might do; people would travel long distances for work or pleasure; there would be whole sub-classes, the agents of both violent and white-collar crime, who did no productive work but preyed on the activities of those earning incomes; there would be no-go areas in the city where the violent criminals would lurk, and there would be dangerous encounters at the interfaces between criminal areas and those of the respectable earning folk; equally there would be mysterious establishments of law and finance where crimes of exploitation and extortion were silently committed. The city itself would

be growing beyond comprehension or control: within its bounds, systems of public order, moral order, health, sanitation and even sanity were all at serious risk, and needing massive new systems of regulation and supervision (Knight 5-6).

This quotation exclusively concentrates on how urbanity and crime are tangled with each other but, at the same time, corresponds to the low crime rate in rural areas. Nonetheless, what Knight has attempted to illustrate does not corroborate with Clive Emsley's findings of criminal activities in urban and rural areas. Elucidating the difference between urban and rural crime, Emsley writes:

Rural society is more primitive, had a higher incidence of inter-personal crime than urban areas. In the latter, the dis-organisation created by urban growth, or simply the greater opportunity for theft provided by the urban environment, led to a greater incidence of property crime (Emsley 120).

Emsley characterizes urban crime with topographical and demographic dispersion while rural crime is defined in terms of commonly reported incidences like animal thefts, poaching and property-related conflicts. In rural areas, homicide was, however, the most unreported offence since the rate reached "1 to 100,000 by the end of the 1880s against 1.5 to 100,000 in 1865" (42). Owing to new recruitments and patrolling of police in villages, the reported cases of homicide declined to "350 per year in the 1890s against more than 400 per year between 1857 and 1890" (42).

The representation of crime in major cities remained a prominent feature of detective stories in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Amidst the overwhelming city locales, rural crime sporadically sprinted in the crime fiction of this period. While Arthur Conan Doyle solved the cases of missing people, deception, theft, burglary, murder, conspiracy and ransom, these stories were set in metro cities, urban centres and industrial towns. Dissecting the monotony and calmness of rurality, the famous detective Sherlock Holmes, however, in a conversation with his friend Watson exposes dark and outrageous deeds committed in valleys and country-side:

You look at these scattered houses, and you are impressed by their beauty. I look at them, and the only thought which comes to me is a feeling of their isolation, and of the impunity with which crime may be committed there.

"Good heavens!" I cried. "Who would associate crime with these dear old homesteads?" They always fill me with a certain horror. It is my belief, Watson, founded upon my experience, that the lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the

smiling and beautiful countryside. The pressure of public opinion can do in the town what the law cannot accomplish. There is no lane so vile that the scream of a tortured child, or the thud of a drunkard's blow, does not beget sympathy and indignation among the neighbours, and then the whole machinery of justice is ever so close that a word of complaint can set it going, and there is but a step between the crime and the dock. But look at these lonely houses, each in its own fields, filled for the most part with poor ignorant folk who know little of the law. Think of the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places, and none the wiser (Doyle 300).

These lines show that the country houses do not represent a peaceful environment but witness some of the most insidious crimes. Christie seems to have captured devious and appalling crimes to unveil escalating rate of criminal activities, especially homicide, in pastoral Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Analyzing detective stories within this theoretical and social framework, we find that Christie uses fiction as a trope to represent British society. She familiarizes her readers with the dark side of rural areas of twentieth-century Britain. Since Christie spent her life before marriage at Ashfield on the northern edge of Torquay, she was accustomed to heinous crimes committed in this region. Her attempt to divert attention from industrial towns to villages is to show that criminal discourses in rural areas run parallel with their counterparts in cities. External factors also played vital roles in deconstructing the myth that the countryside witnesses low levels of crime. Among these factors, the establishment of new institutions for research on crimes unmasked the uglier truth of rural districts that remained obscured from the public gaze until the early decades of the twentieth century.

Christie seems to have restrained from openly grappling with reforms in the British police system but created police detectives to reflect on the police reforms implemented throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The presentation of police detectives in her early stories replicates the institutionalization of the security system in response to emerging threats from criminals. The institutionalization of the police system has its manifestation in the trend of maintaining criminal records initiated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this line, several European countries established Central Statistics Offices for crimes in the first half of the nineteenth century. Britain also constituted the *Royal Statistical Society* and launched the *Journal of the Statistical Society* published in 1837.

Another reason for assessing Christie's murder mysteries in the backdrop of police reforms is the impact of policy changes on crime literature that enables readers to sketch parallels between real and fiction. Detective stories borrowed facts from real-life incidents. Emphasizing the integration of factual details in crime fiction, Haycraft argues:

Real crimes and detection have sometimes been used as an inspiration for detective stories, but further noted that characters, style, dialogue, and setting have been transformed so as to fit the fictional format. That is, even though the sense of reality appears to be one that is essential to the detective novel, certain adjustments to how the real event was like, or might have been like, need be made since the detective genre has a certain format it needs to fit into (Haycraft 228-9).

Crime fiction, as Haycraft comprehends, is an exercise in which authors put together multiple forces that persuade them to consciously create fiction out of reality. These forces might not present themselves as the main determinants but allude to their sources. Christie's two novels analyzed in this paper mirror the impact of the police reforms on crime culture in rural Britain.

***The Mysterious Affair at Styles* – Nature of Crimes, Location and Police Indulgence**

The Mysterious Affair at Styles is a murder story in which Emily Inglethorp is found dead in her room. Strychnine, a deadly poison, was added to her medicine by Alfred Inglethorp (her second husband) and Emily Howard. In the beginning, John Cavendish and Lawrence Cavendish (her stepsons from the first marriage) are the prime suspects. On the day of her death, Emily argued with someone in her room after which she probably made a new will. When Inspector Japp of Scotland Yard investigates the case, his suspicion falls on Alfred, but Poirot intervenes and explains that the evidence would not prove him guilty. In the end, Poirot restores order in society by revealing the identities of murderers.

Christie's endeavour to concentrate on rural crime conjoined with her personal life, including the motivation from her mother and visit to Dartmoor. The descriptions of places in *The Mysterious Affair at Style* indicate the continuously increasing criminal activities in rural areas. It is not only the story of the murder of a middle-class woman but also exposes the farcical nature of peace embedded in rusticity. In addition, Christie embroils rurality deeply in the text so that even characters establish unique relationships with the village. Arthur Hastings visits the nearby village of St. Mary to seek the aid of his friend Hercule Poirot who escapes from the crowded town to spend his remaining life in rural tranquillity. St. Mary is a fictional village situated far from the only

main railway station and outwardly serene:

The village of Styles St Mary was situated about two miles from the little station, and Styles Court lay a mile the other side of it. It was a still, warm day in early July. As one looked out over the flat Essex country, lying so green and peaceful under the afternoon sun, it seemed almost impossible to believe that, not so very far away, a great war was running its appointed course (Christie 13).

Christie seems to have satirized the location by contrasting it with the places where the First World War was fought, causing psychological anxieties and pushing people into an existential crisis. She has tried to interlace the ending of the First World War with the rising number of criminal activities. As the War destroyed industries that employed people in cities, the rural regions were burdened with unemployed youths returning to their homelands. Although there is no explicit correlation between crime and the War, Christie conjoins the War with its psychological repercussion on people, especially soldiers, returning from the battleground where they had witnessed bloodshed that deeply affected their psychological state. Besides, the War placed law-abiding people against law offenders. The War forced people to search for peace in remote locations. For instance: Arthur Hasting preferred to live in solitude as the bucolic tranquillity heals the psychological wounds of the War. He reciprocates affirmatively to John Cavendish:

I'm afraid you'll find it quiet down here, Hastings.'

'My dear fellow, that's just what I want' (Christie 13).

This embodiment of quietness in Styles is a parody of the public perception that remoteness proportionally reduces crime. People flock to these places for mental peace and to escape public recognition. Issues related to privacy, security and psychological solace that pushed people out of cities to remote locations continued even after their displacement in the post-war era.

In the 1890s, Britain observed a transition in its tackling of offenders from "the anthropological approach towards psychiatry and medico-legal approach" (Kreseda & Byrne, 74) that pressurized the British judicial system to eliminate discrimination in legal rights. Furthermore, university departments initiated data analysis on rural crimes and published reports which were printed in newspapers and magazines² for the consumption of the masses. These newspapers enabled people to access criminal records that shed light on the types and volumes of crimes committed in the past. One such record was compiled by Rawson W. Rawson, a statistician,

² There was no official launch of journals of criminology in the early decades but in the later decades, several journals started including *The British Journal of Delinquency* in 1950. For the study of crime and its various facets, the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency (ISTD) was founded in 1932. In 1941, the Department of Criminal Science at Cambridge University instituted on the behest of the UK Home office.

disclosing various types of offences committed in metro cities and villages. Not much difference was observed in the statistics of rural and metropolitan crimes:

Table 1

Rawson's compilation

S. No	Description of Offenses	Agricultural	Manufacturing	Metropolitan Cities
1	Sexual	0.79	1.07	1.00
2	Malicious Against the Property	1.58	0.85	1.08
3	Malicious Against the Person	0.80	0.91	1.21
4	Larceny	0.95	1.15	1.23
5	Fraud	0.84	1.11	1.08

Source – An Inquiry into the Statistics of Crime in England and Wales (1839)

*Read each crime as a unit

Although the tabulated data exhibits that rural districts recorded a high number of property crimes compared to metros in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the same trend was observed in other types of crimes like larceny, fraud, and sexual offences. Heather Worthington in *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction* describes that the number of criminal incidences spiralled rapidly towards the end of the nineteenth century owing to mitigating economic disparities between rural and urban areas. There was an upsurge, Worthington says, in rural crime between the two wars because soldiers returning from the battlefields were under financial burdens and the conventional sources of income were either almost finished or taken over by the opposite gender:

While the city remains the preferred location for much crime fiction, especially in America, in Britain, from the 1920s and 30s on, there has been a tendency to locate crime in small communities, either rural or within yet separated from the city (Worthington 35).

Contextualizing Christie's murder mysteries with Rawson's statistical figures and Worthington's inference, the depiction of rural crimes in her writings was an intentional endeavour emulating the transition across the social spectrum. Another point of critical appreciation in Christie's detective stories is the involvement of the police and its investigation mechanisms. Whereas the private detective retains his public image as a person with peculiar qualities, Christie has given credit to

police officers for their contributions to solving mysteries. Unlike the nineteenth-century literary trend of showing an amateur detective in competition with the state police, Christie has moderated their enmity. In the story, they cooperate and exchange information at critical junctures. Christie reshapes the relationship between police and detective as if it were based on mutual trust and collective efforts depicted in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in which Poirot and Inspector Japp worked together in the past:

I fear you do not remember me, Inspector Japp.

'Why, if it isn't Mr. Poirot!' cried the Inspector. He turned to the other man. 'You've heard me speak of Mr. Poirot? It was in 1904, he and I worked together – the Abercrombie forgery case – you remember, he was run down in Brussels. Ah, those were great days, Moosier. Then, do you remember "Baron" Altara? There was a pretty rogue for you! He eluded the clutches of half the police in Europe. But we nailed him in Antwerp – thanks to Mr Poirot here' (Christie 147).

These reminiscences concretize the assumption that Christie embraces the police for its fleet of investigators who are capable of solving cases and known for employing modern investigation techniques. The competence of the police is authenticated by the fact that detective Poirot was a part of this system. After a long career, Poirot retired from the police and practiced as a private investigator: "I was sorry to see, now limped badly, had been in his time one of the most celebrated members of the Belgian police. As a detective, his flair had been extraordinary, and he had achieved triumphs by unravelling some of the most baffling cases of the day" (Christie 35).

Although Christie captures disagreement between the police and private detective, this incongruity results in contestation and competition to prove their superiority. There are instances when Poirot takes a stand completely different from Inspector Japp, but they are the points of intervention to explain that a wrong conclusion would lead to injustice. This contestation between inspector Japp and Poirot is aptly captured as:

'It can be done,' he said at last. 'I admit I do not wish it. It forces my hand. I would have preferred to work in the dark just for the present, but what you say is very just – the word of a Belgian policeman, whose day is past, is not enough! And Alfred Inglethorp must not be arrested. That I have sworn, as my friend Hastings here knows. See, then, my good Japp, you go at once to Styles?' (Christie 150).

In this conversation, Poirot warns inspector Japp not to arrest Mr. Ingelthorp because the evidence

and witnesses would not prove him guilty. Despite a warning from Poirot, Inspector Japp takes Mr. Ingelthorp into custody on the conviction that he has motives and reasons to kill his wife. This act confirms that inspector Japp is an over-confident and haughty policeman.

Christie seems to have deliberately presented Inspector Japp as an arrogant and proud policeman to highlight the police reforms³ implemented in the early decades of the twentieth century. These reforms prescribed educational qualifications, physical and aptitude tests that stress on investigation techniques in the recruitment process. Inspector Japp believes in his investigation methods and propounds that his team should get the credit for solving the mystery.

Although Inspector Japp jumps to conclusions without combining facts and evidence, there have been occasions when he considers Poirot's suggestions carefully. This partnership helps in solving the mystery and at one instant, Poirot requests Inspector Japp to use his power and ask everyone in the house to be present for interrogation:

Poirot had conferred with Japp in a low tone on the way up, and it was the latter functionary who requested that the household, with the exception of the servants, should be assembled together in the drawing room. I realized the significance of this. It was Poirot to make his boast good (Christie 160).

Christie has taken the partnership of Poirot and Inspector Japp to a level that both of them give preference to their duties which indicates how the police and security agencies strengthen for the containment of crime and criminals.

The Murder at the Vicarage: Crime Location, Police Reforms and Their Impact

Christie has set the story of *The Murder at the Vicarage* in St. Mary Mead- a countryside where Colonel Lucius Protheroe was found dead in a church. Although Colonel Protheroe discharged the duties of churchwarden and local magistrate in the village, he was neither liked by his second wife nor by his daughter from the first marriage. Everyone had a reason to kill him. When the news of his death spread throughout the village, his acquaintances became pretentious. In the village, untoward incidences instantaneously turn into sensational news “to have someone like Colonel Protheroe murdered actually in the Vicarage study is such a feast of sensation as rarely falls to the lot of a village population” (Christie 154). Inspector Slack interrogated the villagers who shared their assumptions and scepticism concerning the murder. Driven by her curiosity, Miss Marple initiated the private investigation of the case without intervening in the police procedure. When Rev. Clement discussed the murder with Miss Marple, she revealed seven possible suspects –

³C. Emsley writes in *The English Police: A Political and Social History* about reforms implemented during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Emsley explains specific attention to the training and recruitment process.

Archer, Mary, Lettice Protheroe, Dennis, Griselda, Clement and Hawes – but all proved innocent. In the end, Lawrence Redding and Anne Protheroe confessed to committing the murder.

Analyzing the description of locality, it has been found that Christie has scratched off the mask of peace and tranquillity from the rural region by capturing the reaction of the villagers who have not seen crimes in their vicinity; “we are not used to mysteries in St. Mary Mead” (Christie 24) While the narrative structure credits less number of crimes in the village to low population and people’s familiarity with each other, “in St. Mary Mead, everyone knows each other,” (Christie 24) Christie asserts that even “in this quiet one-horse village” (80) murders are not rare. However, whenever any mischief or crime occurs, the news spreads rapidly which is evident in Griselda’s comment on Miss Marple:

“She's the worst cat in the village,” said Griselda.

“And she always knows every single thing that happens and draws the worst inferences from it.” (Christie 9)

This remark reveals inquisitive tendencies in Miss Marple. She is a woman who has earned a notorious reputation among the villagers for transgressing the threshold of womanhood and venturing into a profession considered unsuitable for her gender. With increasing modernization and materialization, the village was closely connected to towns and observed incidences not akin to its past. This transition in the village’s sociability is referred to in Mrs. Price Ridley’s conversation with colonel Melchett: “Very strange things have been happening in this village lately....strange things indeed. Colonel Protheroe was going to look into them, and what happened to him, poor man? Perhaps I shall be the next?” (Christie 112).

Moreover, Christie seems to have encapsulated the well-managed police system in rural districts with people expressing their faith in the law enforcement agencies like Scotland Yard. With the extension of power and new recruitments of officers, Scotland Yard not only enhanced its network but was also successful in changing the perception of people to look at it as an institution constituted for ensuring peace and stability in the society. Scotland Yard built confidence among people through its robust investigation mechanism to rein perpetrators in both urban and rural areas. The empowerment of Scotland Yard and police networks in Britain was the outcome of the laws passed by the British Parliament in the nineteenth century. These laws ensured financial stability, improved management and expanded the police force in rural districts.

Although the history of police and law enforcement agencies in Britain goes back to the last decades of the eighteenth century, the Glasgow Police Act 1800 and the Metropolitan Police Act 1829 initiated new chapters in the arena of civilian security and crime control. Initially, the two acts

were implemented in the cities and the rural regions were excluded under the pretext of low crime rate. The British Parliament passed the Rural Police Act of 1839 to cover the countryside. In 1859, an amendment was made to the Act to establish police forces in rural districts compulsorily. As the number of crimes escalated in the country with the increasing population and industrialization, metropolitan police opened the department of detection in 1842 to investigate grave crimes.

These Acts were reformed considerably throughout the nineteenth century to tackle crimes and enforce public order. The reason for amendments in the Acts could be attributed to overseas colonial annexation and burgeoning trade that gave an unprecedented impetus to the country's economy. With changing demographics of the country on the back of rapid industrialization and migration, Britain's socio-economic and politico-cultural domains were immensely affected apparently by the sporadic emergence of slums.

The British authorities framed policies and regulations throughout the nineteenth century to curtail criminal offences, but the situation of law and order deteriorated during the First World War when soldiers returned home from the frontiers. In the second decade of the twentieth century, the British Parliament passed the Special Constables Act 1914 to overcome the paucity of constables in the police force. When the Act was implemented in 1914, some temporary provisions were inducted which were incorporated into the Act in 1923 through an amendment.

Christie has not explicitly referred to the reforms in the British police, but narrative structures, plots, dialogues and contests between private detectives and state police reflect how her stories are borrowed and intensely influenced by the developments in the external world. Advanced investigation mechanisms, highly trained officers, hierarchy, the training of constables and special departments are some of the tropes employed to show the impact of reforms on security agencies. These elements, on the one hand, have emphasized the modernization and expansion of the police force in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, on the other hand, replicate the rapidly transforming conceptualization of crime in fiction.

Analysing the representation of the police in *The Murder at the Vicarage*, it has been found that law enforcement agencies reach into the interior parts of the country. Institutional hierarchy in the police is reflected in the statements of Constable Hurst who receives the news of a murder in St Mary Mead and informs about his limitations owing to institutional procedure "the inspector will be here any minute. In the meantime, I'll follow out his instructions" (Christie 42). Since the hierarchical system functions as the scaffolding of the police and adds credibility to the mechanism, people show faith in modern investigation techniques and are confident of the system's capabilities to punish perpetrators. Under the rubric of the reformed police system, the investigation

techniques become popular among people who imitate them in their daily routines. Dennis, the cousin of Rev. Clement, searches the place of the murder and finds footprints which, he believes, are key to identifying the murderer: “Dennis came in and was full of excitement over a footprint he had found in one of the flower beds. He was sure that the police had overlooked it and that it would turn out to be turning point of the mystery” (Christie 50).

Dennis's inquisitive behaviour and his responses to the murder are endorsed by Griselda, approving the fact that he “fancies himself as an amateur detective. He is very excited about a footprint he found in one of the flowerbeds and I fancy has gone off to tell the police about it.” (Christie 51).

This kind of excitement exhibits the cordial relationship between the police and people, who are willing to cooperate in the investigation but have certain expectations from the system, apparent from the conversation between Mrs. Price Ridley and the chief constable Melchett. Mrs Ridley raises her concerns and says “glad some notice is being taken of the occurrence (murder). Disgraceful, I call it; simply disgraceful” (Christie 109). At the same time, Mrs. Ridley holds the police responsible for the investigation and categorically remarks, “that's your business. It's the business of the police. What do we pay rates and taxes for, I should like to know?” (Christie 109).

Christie has praised the expanding network of the state police and its professionalism. Unlike the late nineteenth-century detective stories that ridicule the police system, Christie has highlighted the professional etiquettes of the investigating officer and the chief constable as trained detectives:

Inspector Slack arrived, having come by car from Much Benham, two miles away. All that I can say of inspector Slack is that never did a man more determinedly strive to contradict his name. He was a dark man, restless and energetic in manner, with black eyes that snapped ceaselessly. His manner was rude and overbearing in the extreme.....the inspector busied himself for some time peering at the things on the table and examining the pool of blood (Christie 43).

The professional capabilities of Inspector Slack and chief constable Melchett are reflected in their approach toward work. Inspector Slack examines the location of the murder closely and collects details minutely to draw the sequence of events. His capabilities are further exemplified in the interrogation of suspects. Owing to his professional training, Inspector Slack embodies the traits of an ardent detective who believes in conviction and evidence to incriminate culprits. His empirical approach does not allow the investigation to be affected by personal instincts or ideological biases:

“It has struck me as curious all along that inspector Slack never seems to have any personal views of his own on the murder. The easiness or difficulty of getting conviction is the only points that seem to appeal to him” (Christie 216).

While constructing the character of Inspector, Christie impinges arrogance and vanity in Slack. Although these characteristics portray him as an overconfident and ignoble officer, the kind of perseverance to fulfill his duties sets him apart from the police officers. Mr. Clement appreciates the commitment and enthusiasm of Inspector Slack to arrest the murderer:

The next thing is to find out what everyone was doing that evening between six and seven. Everyone at Old Hall, I mean, and pretty well everyone in the village as well.”

I gave a sigh.

“What wonderful energy you have, Inspector Slack.”

“I believe in hard work” (Christie 113).

While arranging the events chronologically, Inspector Slack inquires about all the suspects so that his theory of murder remains unchallenged and errorless. His investigation techniques, though exhibit professional ethics, become intolerable and agonizing “Inspector Slack is going up to the Old Hall this afternoon, and will probably make the life of everybody there quite unbearable to them in his efforts to get at the truth” (Christie 121). His manners are rude, “civility to my mind, is an art which Inspector Slack has never learnt, but I presume that according to his own lights, civil he had been” (Christie 134). Inspector Slack does not reconsider his manners, and people think of him as someone who “seemed to be a little ashamed of himself for his brusqueness” (Christie 135). Despite these deleterious attributes of Inspector Slack, the mystery of Colonel Protheroe’s murder is solved in which his contribution could not be neglected:

The trial of Lawrence Redding and Anne Protheroe is a matter of public knowledge. I do not propose to go into it. I will only mention that great credit was reflected upon Inspector Slack, whose zeal and intelligence had resulted in the criminal being brought to justice (Christie 268).

Christie ends the story with the appreciation of Inspector Slack for his zeal to book the criminals for the murder and to ensure justice for the victim. It is the victory of the police that receives the support of the people contributing to the investigation and showing faith in the system.

Conclusion

Christie demonstrates in the two stories that crime discards cultural, demographical, social,

economic and geographical disparities. It can happen in the remotest region and in the most unexpected conditions. Murder, theft, ransom and burglary, which were uncommon in the countryside of Britain, began to be reported at a much higher rate in the nineteenth century. As criminal incidences escalated in Britain in the post-industrial era, the need for a police system intensified. With the fast expansion of the police network, people felt more secure and safe. Police contributed tremendously to rein criminals and to provide a secure environment even in remote locations. On the back of new recruitments, professional training and consistent reforms, the police system of Britain not only strengthen but also built confidence among people for better social and economic life. People trusted the police and judicial institutions to establish order and peace.

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E T K İ	
ETKI: <i>Journal of Literature, Theatre and Culture Studies</i>	ETKİ: <i>Edebiyat, Tiyatro ve Kültür İncelemeleri Dergisi</i>
e-ISSN: 2822-3950 Volume 2.2 ★ December 2022	e-ISSN: 2822-3950 Sayı 2.2 ★ Aralık 2022

Theatre Anthropology: A Dialogue with Eugenio Barba*

Manosh Chowdhury | Prof. | Jahangirnagar University
manosh@juniv.edu

Abstract

This paper is a modest attempt of debating with some fundamental premises of Eugenio Barba that he placed in his much applauded publication around the globe, jointly written with Nicola Savarese. Published in 1991, the book had created a cult-like influence across the disciplines, mostly among the practitioners and experts of performing art. Though the Italian authors have urged their readers not to confuse this work and their activities as a branch of anthropology, the premises contained significant elements of serious academic concerns – culture, history, bodies, performances and a few more. Considering the huge readership this book achieved, with a number of translations in different languages, this article concerned with its conceptualization of a few fundamental issues and placed them in the complex plane of colonialism and transformative forces in cultural forms and expressions. This paper does not, by any means, engage with the ISTA activities, instead it explores possibilities of a dialogue with some propositions that otherwise could have read as static, ahistorical, apolitical and inclined with more dogmatic sense of what is called ‘aesthetics’.

Keywords:

theatre,
anthropology,
body-techniques,
colonialism,
discourse.

Article History:

Received: 26.08.2022

Accepted: 28.09.2022

Citation Guide:

Chowdhury, Manosh.
“Theatre Anthropology: A
Dialogue with Eugenio
Barba.” *ETKI: Journal of
Literature, Theatre and Culture
Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2022,
pp. 17-27.

* This essay was originally published in Bengali, in 2000, in Nribijanana Patrika, issue 5, Dhaka. Initially, it meant engaging with the theatre and performance studies people in Bangladesh as Barba’s work just got familiar there. This essay was considered as a major entry in the field of performance by social scientists. In the following years, it was translated by my friends Bashabi Barua and Nasima Selim. Since then, the piece of translation was somewhat lost with a computer crash and then was forgotten in later years. I found it again in early 2021 during the lockdown of Covid-19. It felt an interesting connection with my own biography of academic practices, and its distinction from a number of social scientists of our time in Bangladesh. It reads relevant too in the contemporary time in regards to the conceptualization of performative bodies. I thank the anonymous reviewers who worked on behalf of ETKI journal and provided me with some valuable suggestions. This piece needed to be elaborated as well to meet the requirements for this journal.

ETKi: <i>Journal of Literature, Theatre and Culture Studies</i>	ETKi: <i>Edebiyat, Tiyatro ve Kültür İncelemeleri Dergisi</i>
e-ISSN: 2822-3950 Volume 2.2 ★ December 2022	e-ISSN: 2822-3950 Sayı 2.2 ★ Aralık 2022

Tiyatro Antropolojisi: Eugenio Barba ile Bir Diyalog*

Manosh Chowdhury | Prof. | Jahangirnagar University
manosh@juniv.edu

Özet

Bu makale, Eugenio Barba'nın Nicola Savarese ile birlikte kaleme aldığı ve dünya çapında büyük beğeni toplayan yayınında yer verdiği bazı temel önermeleri tartışmaya açmaya yönelik mütevazı bir girişimdir. 1991 yılında yayınlanan kitap, disiplinler arasında, özellikle de sahne sanatları uygulayıcıları ve uzmanları arasında kült benzeri bir etki yaratmıştır. Her ne kadar İtalyan yazarlar okuyucularını bu çalışmayı ve faaliyetlerini antropolojinin bir dalı olarak görmemeye yönlendirdilerse de, kitapta kültür, tarih, topluluklar, performanslar gibi ciddi akademik kaygıların önemli unsurları yer alıyordu. Bu kitabın farklı dillere yapılan çok sayıda çevirisiyle ulaştığı geniş okuyucu kitlesi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu makale kitabın birkaç temel meseleyi kavramsallaştırmasıyla ilgilenmekte ve bunları sömürgecilik ile kültürel form ve ifadelerdeki dönüştürücü güçlerin karmaşık düzlemine yerleştirmektedir. Bu makale, hiçbir şekilde ISTA'nın faaliyetlerine katılmamakta, bunun yerine, aksi takdirde statik, tarih dışı, apolitik ve "estetik" denen şeyin daha dogmatik bir anlayışına meyilli olarak okunabilecek bazı önermelerle diyalog olasılıklarını araştırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

tiyatro,
antropoloji,
beden teknikleri,
sömürgecilik,
söylem.

Makale Bilgileri:

Geliş : 26.08.2022

Kabul : 28.09.2022

Kaynak Gösterme Rehberi:

Chowdhury, Manosh.
"Theatre Anthropology: A
Dialogue with Eugenio
Barba." *ETKi: Journal of
Literature, Theatre and Culture
Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2022,
pp. 17-27.

* Bu makale ilk olarak 2000 yılında Bengalce olarak Nribijanana Patrika'nın 5. sayısında Dhaka'da yayımlanmıştır. Başlangıçta, Barba'nın çalışmaları Bangladeş'te yeni yeni tanınmaya başladığı için, Bangladeş'teki tiyatro ve performans çalışmalarını ilgilendiren kişilerle ilişki kurmak anlamına geliyordu. Bu makale sosyal bilimciler tarafından performans alanına önemli bir giriş olarak kabul edildi. Sonraki yıllarda arkadaşlarım Bashabi Barua ve Nasima Selim tarafından çevrildi. O zamandan beri, çevirinin yapılmış kısmı bilgisayar çökmesi sonucu kayboldu ve daha sonraki yıllarda unutuldu. Çeviriyi 2021'in başlarında Covid-19 karantinası sırasında tekrar buldum. Kendi akademik biyografimdeki çalışmalarımı olan bağlantısı ile Bangladeş'teki bir dizi sosyal bilimciden ayrıldığı noktaları ilginç bir şekilde hissettim. Günümüzde de performatif kavramsallaştırılmasıyla ilgili olarak da okunabilir. ETKi dergisi adına çalışan ve bana bazı değerli önerilerde bulunan anonim hakemlere teşekkür ederim. Bu yazının derginin gerekliliklerini karşılayabilmesi için daha da detaylandırılması gerekiyordu.

Prelude

If one wishes to discuss theatre anthropology, Eugenio Barba is a name that comes up instantly. Though Barba himself has always been careful enough to make the term clear in the preface of his well-known book with Nicola Savarese¹; so that nobody confuses it as one of the branches of anthropology which deals with theatre. And he speaks very clearly about what he deems as theatre anthropology, and that it is also the basis of his activities within I.S.T.A (International School for Theatre Anthropology) in Denmark. In his attempt to explain the term Barba says, “theatre anthropology is the study of the behavior of the human being when it uses its physical and mental presence in an organized performance situation and according to principles which are different from those used in daily life. This extra-daily use of the body is what is called technique” (Barba 1991, p. 3). He emphatically says that his work is not related with cultural anthropology and it would not be possible to understand his work either, if one wishes to correlate it with cultural anthropology (Barba & Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer*). So to study Barba as a social/cultural anthropologist, especially if one is prepared to evaluate his works or to question the validity of his thoughts, careful consideration is required. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that we need to study Barba’s works as thoroughly as possible. And it must be done with a clear inquisitive realization of the concept of culture. The reason behind this certainly lies in Barba’s unique way of thinking. He has clearly made a distinction between his study and cultural anthropology but the fact that ‘cultural determinism’ remains the basis of his thinking, becomes evident when he explains the specific physical presence and body techniques as ‘culture-specific’ (Barba & Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer* 3). And the concepts of culture have been formulated the way conventional anthropology has always conceived other ideas. It must be emphasized that the significance of studying Barba is not confined to the ‘culture-conception’ only, it has its expanses.

It would be a grave mistake if from the beginning we do not understand the great role played by Barba and his associates of I.S.T.A in theatre practice. This role is much more significant for the western world. The actor’s (or performer’s) psychosomatic preparation and achievement of necessary skills, termed as ‘technique’ by I.S.T.A, is the focus of their activities and we must proceed keeping in mind their achievements in this arena. This article is not a discussion of Barba’s works. I am just trying to analyze the few pre-suppositions which served as guides throughout his journey. At the one hand, there has always been a series of provocations among Western performers or performance experts to blend things with what they found as ‘Eastern’ or ‘Oriental’. Not surprisingly India is a very potent addition to that list. On the other hand, we must notice the

¹ Since its publication, the book has been considered one of the pioneering ones in the field of performing art. More so for the Westerners. My attempt of positing the work has come from the broader epistemological fields, and not to undermine the work.

overall apathy about, or indifference to, understanding the nuances of performative styles and philosophies of ‘orient’, if we, for the sake of theorization, can be sure of a homogenous orient at all. [Re]-reading Barba was, and still is, important.

Background: how Barba impacted Bangladeshi performance studies’ scenario

This is an irony that the book by Barba – and Savarese – caused relatively more academic anxiety than what the authors had suggested in line with body techniques, hence performances. When the book was first published in 1991, only one academic institution was providing undergraduate degree in theatre studies at Jahangirnagar University, the university I started working as a lecturer in the coming years. The department was then named ‘drama and dramatics’. There was another theatre course at Chittagong University named ‘Dramatics’ where no degree was provided but acted as a minor in the broader liberal arts program. By 1995, this book received some attention in the academic community in performance studies, precisely in ‘dramatics’. Besides a very few people in dramatics, two or three to be exact, I incidentally was among the first few readers of this book. After all, this book has been a global triumph lately and we could access a few additional books in our department of anthropology with an external financial grant. Till then, ‘international’ studies in theatre and/or performance were not serious concerns in Bangladesh except for the activities by ITI (International Theatre Institute, an active organization had then a working branch in Bangladesh). No matter how little it was, Barba was the sole figure beyond European playwrights and cult-like directors who made a footing into the psyche of theatre-studies people. The irony was in the fact about how Barba himself was an advocate for enhancing physical techniques and did not claim to become an academic.

It would be worth highlighting the trend of adopting European theater in Bangladesh in general, and in the Dhaka stage, and in the independent Bangladeshi theater stage in particular. It may be a disruption of the main focus of this essay, and it requires detailed investigation too. Instead, I discuss some general trends in European theatre performances. Historically, Bangladesh never was a great space for foreign plays, although the modern theatre is a direct outcome of colonialism, and of European forms. The number of European and American plays on stage is little. From the neighboring nations, only Indian plays could make the cut, yet mostly by the Indian groups and in inter-nation festivals. About Northern plays, three distinct trends can be found in the forming period of theatre practices in independent Bangladesh. One is staging direct translation of the English classics, largely dominated by the English playwright William Shakespeare. The second can be mentioned as a few comedy translations, largely dominated by the French playwright Molière. The third tendency, as I have figured out, is about transliterating some plays where adoptions are customized in various ways to reveal 'local' elements and connotations within the act

of play. This localization often risks of missing out a series of nuances the original plays had implied within and bringing in completely different cultural-political meanings into the scenario. While I do not have any defensible reason to condemn the acts transliteration, I am for the opinion that most literary products are to be reproduced as they are, more so the plays for their specific portrayal of societal relationship at a juncture and within the premises of social structure. But again, here is an area where Barba's 'similar principles, different performances' (Barba & Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer* 8) can be seriously challenged. Principles shift in an enormous way when 'localized' meanings are crafted into a 'foreign' play. There are some fascinating examples in Bangladesh where the plays were titled with exclusive local connotations, but with the body of work kept in the original setting. Further, there are some more examples where the titles were more in line with the original ones, but the body of the work transformed seriously.

Three levels of organizing a performer's activities

From the viewpoint of transcultural analysis, Barba maintains that "the performer's work is the result of the fusion of three aspects which reflect three different levels of organization:

1. The performers' personalities, their sensibilities, artistic intelligence, their social personae: and the characteristics which make them unique and once-only;
2. The particularities of traditions and socio-historical contexts through which the once-only personality of the performer is manifest;
3. The use of physiology according to the extra-daily techniques. (Barba & Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer*)

In modern times, the personality of a theatre performer can be seen as an important phenomenon. It is possible due to the uniqueness of a character. In European classical dramas, the characters, in some cases, have been accentuated to that extent that it is now totally impossible to create emotion among the spectators without achieving such heights of character. It's the same for every play, from *Macbeth* to *Oedipus*, or from Eliot's *Murder in Cathedral* to Thomas Beckett's plays. This process of building up a personality is the core characteristic of modern narrative methods. The process of making a person should be observed through the antagonistic relationship between man and society. If we keep in mind that the concept of personality in western society has been formulated pre-supposing the antagonism between one and many, then we can understand that a personality results from the efforts to survive and his survival techniques against the pressure of society. Thus their 'social persona' must unquestionably be translated as 'their presence in society'. But the antagonistic relationship between man and society is completely a modern invention. And

modernity is never the distinction of a non-western society. With the proclamation of building up such a society but with the undeclared agenda of western invasion, this modernity is essentially a western phenomenon, a consciously devised project. If modernity is considered to be indispensable to all societies then ‘personality’ can be regarded as a constitutional factor in acting. Here we need to be conscious of the fact that: During the present times (the time span of this study) modernity with all its complexities have become their ‘own’³ agenda for the non-western people (Asad 1993). Even in the theatre world, becoming ‘modern’ is akin to excellence, an expected goal. That is why a ‘critical study’ of Eugenio Barba may promptly give rise to a feeling of competition. It may seem that this piece of writing only tends to reject his and imply that to criticize ‘modernity’ is not to recognize achievements and is itself an attempt to deviate (others).

But while questioning modernity as an inevitable outcome for all societies and the process of modernization, we must also question modernity in theatre too. It should not be left out or be excluded in any way.

We were talking about the ‘personality’ and the possibility of the uniqueness of personality/personae as a constitutional factor in acting. It is here where the western orientation of Barba’s thinking is most evident. There are many examples in the non-western societies where the ‘core’ characteristic of performing arts is the complete immersion/dissolution/disintegration of self. The meaning of art there is the integration of the artist into the wider cosmic world—to the extreme, a total identification with God, and never an individualized separate entity. But we observe that the vital expanse of non-European art has become a limited and confined entity in Barba’s propositions. That is what this article has tried to expose. But it must be mentioned with caution that the pre-colonial practice of performing arts of a non-western society, e.g., of Bangladesh has not been recognized as ‘acting’ or in a broader sense as ‘theatre’ in European thought; and, Barba does not seem to be a thinker of such *gharana* (school of thought). It is evident because he has provided a large space to Indian Dance in his theatre practice.

***Lokadharmi* and *Natyadharmi*: The two-dimensional study of the non-occidental performing arts**

Sanjukta Panigrahi has been working with Barba on Theatre for a long time.³ He was also one of the co-initiators of I.S.T.A. During his discussion with Panigrahi, Barba raised an issue. Panigrahi says that in an Indian society, there are two words to describe human behavior. One of them is *loka* – the ‘common’ or the everyday things; and the other is *natya* – the ‘dramatic’ or

²Inverted comma is from me. Asad discussed this to distinguish between agency and consciousness. One should be aware of his ideas on translation in this regard.

³Julia Varley has written extensively on Sanjukta Panigrahi’s life and work (Varley). Her involvement with ISTA is also discussed there. Varley herself is also a regular member of the organization.

performative. The first is used to imply everyday activities and the latter is to convey the traits of the art of dance (drama). In the discussion of Panigrahi, it appears that she upheld orthodox classification to differentiate normal/mundane behavior from the aesthetic/artistic expressions. Barba tried to understand Indian society with those terms and his heavy reliance on such terms limited his views of all the diverse performances, principally the non-western forms of art of/ or acting. But whether the traditional Indian classification of the fine arts is still the core characteristic of this society is a vital question. Whatever the answers may be, the many types of onslaughts that Indian art in general – and oriental art according to Barba – had to bear and the way it changed its shape thereafter, and the impact of such incidents are important and relevant issues. Since Barba's main objective is to find out the fundamental and general laws of both oriental and occidental performing arts, therefore, the question of drawing a distinctive line between the east and the west in present times is also very relevant.

Barba sees the 'oriental' as a unified whole, and the 'occidental' too in the same light. But that's not a big problem if we consider his objectives. If his main aim is to distinguish the eastern and western theatrical art on the basis of some characteristics, then it may not be necessary to discuss the manifold existing diversities within oriental art with primary importance. Besides, at this point Barba's close and conscious acquaintance with different types of theatre art must be considered. He also makes himself clear by saying that this sort of thinking on his part or program, does not aim, in any way, at making similar performances, rather this effort is made to understand the similar principles. In his own words, 'similar principles, different performances'. Here it is important to take note of the historical background of the relationship between the non-West and the west and Barba is not always not very conscious of that fact.

I have stated earlier that the artistic techniques of the non-western countries are being pushed to the corner under the hegemony of western culture. That process has been going on for a long period and has been the internal subject of the western political and economic project. Now it is very clear that without analyzing the colonial relationship, the non-western artistic techniques cannot be appreciated separately, even if one has whole-hearted regard for the non-western style⁴. The concept of culture often becomes synonymous with tradition, especially in classical anthropology. Again, tradition can be defined as such form and style which have not changed with the modernization or the narratives which are still in continuum. But the project of modernization

⁴Barba emphasized enormously on 'oriental' style. The major problem with this emphasis is that it never reveals the ways these 'styles' have repeatedly been displaced and evacuated. Also, it remains unaddressed how performing arts across the globe, acting in particular, are becoming homogenous. I am not saying that the similar forms are being reproduced, instead I opine that the desires, attitudes, modalities of viewership, above all the 'actable' issues are gradually having global forms and that should be perceived as a colonial tendency. 'We do still have oriental culture' – is not a position I can label as a 'lie', but can fight against as apolitical. Culture is not something to keep 'alive' unless that is lived in lived reality among living people. If arts and culture are reduced into forms or styles, they become ahistorical.

has made sure of bringing about all sorts of inner structural changes. In the world of European thoughts, this is a crucial point: the displacement of non-western society and at the same time making efforts to keep the non-western culture alive. As a result, culture comes down to a construct of formal rituals. It is necessary to analyze culture on the basis of popular taste and Gramsci has made its importance quite clear. This popular taste should be seen as the strength of culture. Here it is necessary to state that popular taste must not be analyzed outside the sphere of social meaning and strength of all pre-colonial styles.

We can trace out this problematic with Barba when he draws a distinction line between the performing art of the east and that of the west. He distinguishes them by saying that oriental styles and art forms have definite and organized rules, there are specific, organized advices for the new performers. In his own words, ‘...rules of art which codify a closed performing style to which all the performers of a particular genre must conform.’ He observes the absence of such rules in western art but He also expresses his anxiety over the closed confines of the ‘*gharana*’ system. The enthusiasm for union between the eastern and the western methods is evident in Barba’s words but such concerns had been expressed long before, by the colonial rulers. There is no reason to think that this comment is exaggerated. Rather it is very much necessary to understand the tradition-based fine arts in a non-western society, especially in an Indian society. The idea to think of this tradition/heritage as a closed system arises/takes its origin from the modern idea of liberalism/liberty/freedom. Even in the context of the extension of Europe, when the European art forms are in the process of being isolated from people and ‘traditional/ classical’ – which also means ‘old’ and ‘not in vogue’ –, the issue of ‘closed confines’ is to some extent, meaningless, too. We should clearly understand that even pathologically, it is not possible to understand the Indian society by dividing it into the traditional and the dramatic, and it is not possible to realize how the importance of the dramatic has changed in the Indian society.

Daily techniques: determinant role of culture?

Barba considers theatre and its art as principally the signified bearer of illustrative body techniques. During performances, people use their bodies quite differently than they do in daily activities. This observation has served as the basis of Barba’s working methodology. He separates ‘daily techniques’ from ‘extra-daily techniques’. He thinks that the performers make use of the later (Barba & Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer*). The specialty of ‘Oriental theatre’, in broader sense of the ‘performing arts’ is that these two techniques are quite different there but according to Barba, it is often not the case in ‘Occidental theatre’. Culture determines the different styles of body techniques and the many issues of body: “[...] different cultures determine different body techniques according to whether people walk with or without shoes, whether they carry things on

their heads or with their hands, whether they kiss with the lips or with the nose [...]” (Barba & Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer* 9). But it would not be proper to try to understand such a complex issue with just one of such examples above. The different uses of body that have been mentioned here are all purposeful.

On the contrary, people in modern societies make use of their bodies often without purpose, the meaning of which is again exchangeable within a specific time span and within certain groups, i.e, confusion does not arise over the meaning of such purposeless body movements (e.g, ‘shrugging’). In that respect, at least in modern times, it is necessary to understand the use of body in a discursive environment⁵.

Even if one wishes to see all these different use of body techniques as culturally determined, then the first question that comes to mind is which culture has such great ability to do so. At least our colonial experience makes us wonder and we know that there is no way it could be a part of the Eastern culture. To think it as ‘culturally determined’ the central problem lies in the fact that it then becomes impossible to understand the ever-changing characteristics of the body language and its changing forces. So it is the idea itself becomes ‘closed’, not the ‘*gharana*’ system of the East.

Here come the most important points. If continuing change is the destiny of the weak then what theatre-agenda would it have? And it is a big mistake to see this change as a change of shape or form or style. Its inner life is also changing. A global ‘modern’ soul is being born, even if this itself plays an active part in the process. And through this change its goal might be to build a defense. Barba has brought in a great deal of confusion in the theatre-agenda of the oppressed by placing body-techniques in the center of theatre-thoughts. That has been made possible only because of his limited view of the non-western art techniques, by confining it within the boundaries of its form and styles. From a non-historical point of view, the collection of a number of different styles may seem astounding if we consider their archival importance. This may even be precious for western performers. But if the construction of a modern entity/identity is an agenda/project⁶, then it may even be possible to put up a fight. This rivalry can be made possible if it is centered around

⁵ Stuart Hall’s analysis is utmost important here. Bodies should be seen as representable and represented. For modern selves, this is active exercise (Hall). My argument is that the homogenous aspect of human bodies’ performances is directly related of a few tendencies – starting from colonialism, they range up to the contemporary advertisements by the multinational manufacturers. And then far from being eternal, discursive fields are acutely historical (Foucault). So we are to explore a complex set of issues here.

⁶ I would like to remind that the modern selves are conditional to a number of tangible/material things. Those are simultaneously the product of material relationship as well the reproducer. An example from Barba would be helpful. Body-techniques, according to him, are getting maximum result with minimum energy spent, definitely while it comes to communication. He again went on to say that two body-techniques in the West – ordinary and extra-ordinary – either do not differ much or are not taken seriously. While this is a fascinating observation for anyone interested in the broader field of acting, one may think of it more critically. The abundance of the Western societies in general, technologically and economically to mention the least, may have resulted in the bodily-attained techniques. My proposition is just to posit effortless human bodies as a social phenomenon.

the principal trait of modern personae —verbalization. If one wishes to make use of the discursive technique, then the necessary theatrical style would have to be much more verbal. Dialogue is the life force of such theatrical work. Since the expressions of mental activities of a modern personality are acutely verbal, it would also be possible to defy a mighty opponent through such verbalizations. It does not undermine the importance of the necessary physical preparations of the performers and it is definitely not my intention to say that it does. I just wish to mention that there is a problem if one calls theatre as solely the realization of body techniques.

No gender and no ‘everyday’?

Barba himself was very clear about what his (their) book was about – first, it was a clearly mentioned dictionary, albeit with encyclopedic nature; secondly, it is a book meant for the performers to enhance their performance techniques; thirdly, this book in many ways was a promotional step for IATA. It is perhaps an unanticipated consequence that the book became a global success, but the authors cannot be blamed for its huge impact on a number of academic disciples including anthropology. The problem lies elsewhere. While the authors were cautious about not claiming it as an academic venture, they somewhat have put enough reasons to make this book appear in that manner. Taking examples from the title itself, there are two crucial terms that should claim its academic authority – ‘dictionary’ and ‘anthropology’. Barba, in the introductory chapter, maintains his understanding of cultural anthropology quite evidently, and in a deterministic fashion, as I discussed in the previous section. Adding to that, in the preface, a document that should otherwise be read as a pamphlet, he starts with ‘researchers’ classificatory skill – of distinguishing homonyms from homologies. He further seems to be interested in research throughout the book. His was a clear mission of distancing from cultural anthropology too (Barba & Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer* 7). In the hindsight, his emphasis did not matter much as he went on depending on the very orthodox premises of cultural anthropology, as I have discussed previously. More often than not, these premises are under serious scrutiny in the contemporary era, the time when Barba was executing this book project. In the end, regardless of his attempts, not only this book falls into the academic terrain, but also becomes an issue for further inquiry. I would like to conclude this essay by mentioning two crucial drawbacks of his project – not engaging with Goffman and by assuming gender roles in body techniques as insignificant.

Barba has invoked expectations among his readers about examining everyday activities in some meaningful ways by distinguishing concepts ‘*lokadharmi*’ and ‘*natyadharmi*’, and then in a separate section subtitled ‘Dramaturgy – actions at work’ (Barba 68). He briefly engages with Schechner, for obvious reasons, but never really gets into the understanding of Erving Goffman, who was very clinical about exploring vast, yet subtle, human activities in social settings. Here I do

not intend to imply that dramaturgical vision has largely been developed by Goffman, but it would be argued by some scholars for sure, I mean to suggest that for Barba, performance has always been an on-stage activity. That fact alone surely questions his usage of anthropology as a concept, more so as he does this in some defining manner. Understandably, for a renowned director and theatre-maker like him, performances are of distinctive nature and can be placed only where the necessary rituals are performed. Everyday activities, on the other hand, lack in organizing the performing rituals. Gender is another area that remains absent in Barba's project on theatre scholarship. There are certain global gendered outlets in body activities – both on-stage and in everyday lives. As I maintained in the early part of this essay, there is no obvious non-Western body left in the contemporary globe, especially if we are to examine performances, I would like to contend that gendered bodies are also a global phenomenon that needs to be carefully addressed, or consciously transgressed, by a performer in a given situation and at a specific – social or theatrical – location. Barba either assumed gender as a *de facto* binary, or did not find adequate reasons to discuss it, let alone any act of dismantling. My attempt is thus not an accusation against a performer for upholding performative distinction, but an attempt to re-reading his premises or the backdrops he himself provided us with.

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