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**Contemporary Marathi Theatre in the *Golba*/World**  
by Ashutosh Potdar

While sharing my observations on the contemporary Marathi theatre of last 15 years, I would like to begin with the world where I live, write and perform. The Indian economy has been changing its course since fifteen years. The IT ebb that followed swept the big cities like Pune, Mumbai and Bangalore and transformed them into hi-tech global spaces. The neighbouring smaller cities located at one night journey from hi-tech cities were not exceptions to the IT epidemic. The government tried to computerize these cities too. The IT parks were soon established at many places to create new possibilities of employment and promises were given to rank them among the cities of the global world. Eventually, these cities saw the same IT parks being deserted within a few years. However, the people in such towns were attracted towards the global cities like Pune and the attraction continues till date. As a result, we can find the advertisements and big hoardings of real estate agents from global IT cities like Pune being displayed in the city- squares. The milieu in these cities is still not global; yet, the people here nourish an ardent desire to go global. Let's call these cities, *golbal* cities. Comparatively, the *golbal* cities have not witnessed the rise of new companies or industries; but they have seen many educational institutes established rapidly. They are based on global models and provide training essential for new professions and industries. Today, the newly trained 'generation-next' of the *golbal* world with sophisticated skills is migrating to the global cities for financial opportunities. The increased population in the *golbal* cities is mainly due to the immigrants from nearby villages or from the older parts of the same cities. The *golbal* cities are not mobile like those in the global world. Yet the number of mobile users has immensely increased in the hope of being global. These cities are growing slowly and everything is within reach even then the *golbal* generation likes to engage itself in the game of exchanging SMS and giving missed calls on mobiles.

At the same time, the *golbal* world hasn't completely lost its contact with agriculture. The landowners possess farmlands but are least attached to it. They are reluctant to sell the land though it produces nothing. It is because of the rumours that the land would get considerable value once new industry would be established in nearby industrial zone of MIDC. They feel that the same land would help them in future to meet the expenses of sending their children for higher education to the cities like Pune. Surprisingly, the *golbal* world has not totally turned its back to their traditions and customs related to agriculture. The heterogeneity of the *golbal* world has given rise to a new class that moves within different spaces at the same time. For example, in this world, one can enjoy the remix songs of TV artist Abhijit Sawant or Bela Shende simultaneously with folk songs of *devdasi jogta* like Tanaji Patil and other *bhajan* groups. Obviously, these are two different groups, yet, both have mobiles, have fascination for computers and both wear trendy clothes; but with different brands. In several parts of *golbal* world, 30% or more people don't enjoy the facility of private toilets. They use public toilets; as they can not afford building one for themselves or don't want to spend 'unnecessarily' in building toilets for their families. However, the same people can enjoy picture messages on cell phone or forward the Bush- jokes. Such dichotomy and flexibility to move within is a peculiar feature of the *golbal* world.

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newspaper column as a play depicting the perplexities resulted by the globalization. The young generation here is trying to preserve its creativity by placing one foot in the global world and the other in the *golbal*. They are torn between the enticements and plentiful resources of the global world and the 'roots' and traditions of the *golbal* world. The theatre in the *golbal* world doesn't have any access to the theatre in Mumbai. They can bear with the space in Pune but cannot afford that in Mumbai. The budget to access Mumbai is never sufficient for them. An access to Mumbai is via Pune. The same is true with other smaller towns neighbouring *golbal* world. The performers at Shrirampur, Ichalkranji or Pandharpur have an access to the global world via *golbal*. Ultimately, the whole process blurs the idea of theatre itself.

didn't reach the *golbal* world though it was full of experiments. The theatre of Shafaat Khan, Rajiv Naik, Atul Pethe, Makarand Sathe, Waman Kendre is less appreciated here. The generation has seen the glory of 70s and is also experiencing the critical time of perplexities of rebellion and compromises. Experimentation is a peculiarity of the parallel theatre and it could be specially attributed to the middle generation. However, as I said earlier, that couldn't reach to the *golbal* theatre. One reason could be- after the full-fledged development of theatre in the 70s, the Marathi parallel theatre got exhausted. Another reason would be the middle generation became a victim of the overall socio-cultural- economical transformations in their later stage.

Shyam Manohar, Alekar fail to catch the vein of contemporary perplexities. Comparatively, later plays of Shafaat Khan, Rajiv Naik, Makarand Sathe performed by directors like Atul Pethe, Chetan Datar, Sandesh Kulkarni can compete the contemporary reality. Their older generation itself must have realized by now that they have lost the sense of contemporary space and time after the arrival of the middle generation.

is facing. He is not yet that much global to say, 'Hey, it happens, its life!' The *golbal* world is dangling between public toilets and international movies screened in multiplexes. There is not enough courage in the *golbal* citizen to 'take it lightly' when one receives naughty picture messages or Sardaraji jokes from a girl friend on his cell. When adaptation of Jean Genet's *The Maids* as *Kamwalya Baya* was performed in Kolhapur, the public responded saying, 'These things are accepted only in Pune or Mumbai!' Of course, even after that the play won applause! The Bhandarkar Institute was ransacked in Pune but the people hired for that were from the *golbal* world. Also, this world faces tensions of caste-politics because the orthodox structure of traditional *balutedar* society still exists in the global world. In this world, everything is laid bare on cell phones in their palms; but, Elkunchwarian modernist structures are followed here for theatrical representation only! Everything that queerly mixed up here creates tensions within creative forms.

transitional period of the *golbal* world? Sometimes, *Mahanirwan* appears to be contemporary; sometimes, *Satheche Kaay Karayache?* and sometimes *Ananadowari* too is desirable. Then, an idea scuttles: what if a little of all these is hybridized together? May be, that would be true theatre presenting heterogeneous global world. However, it is certain that language, form, content and life of the *golbal* world should be placed on the broader canvas. There are few in the global world who would understand the 'language' of the *golbal* world. Beyond the limits of space and time; facing each other attentively, we might find a truly fantastic theatre.

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*Kankavali* co-organized by Lalit Kala Kendra, Pune and Vasant Rao Acharekar Pratishthan, Kankavali.