



## Autumn Edition 2023

Editor of the Issue  
**Dr. Samipendra Banerjee**  
Associate Professor & HOD  
Department of English  
University of Gour Banga, Malda, WB, India

## Call for Papers

### CONTEMPORARY THEATRES OF THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT: PERSPECTIVES AND PROSPECTS

In the introduction to her edited anthology, *Modern Indian Theatre* (2009), Nandi Bhatia pointed to the increasing number of critical works devoted to the history and development of modern Indian theatre. Such works, Bhatia argued, were crucial in reconstructing an Indian theatrical past and in dispelling oriental myths about modern Indian theatre. According to Bhatia, “. . . it indicates a growing interest in Indian theatre history and points towards the need for more work that subjects this highly pluralistic diverse field to critical scrutiny” (xii). The first decade of the twenty-first century saw the publication of crucial critical works on the historiography of Indian theatre which included Nandi Bhatia’s *Acts of Authority/ Acts of Resistance* (2004), Aparna Dharwadker’s monumental *Theatres of Independence* (2005), Vasudha Dalmia’s *Poetics Plays and Performances: The Politics of Modern Indian Theatre* (2006) and Erin B Mee’s *Theatre of Roots: Redirecting the Modern Indian Stage* (2008). Around the same time appeared Syed Jamil Ahmed’s *Achinpaksi Infinity* (2000), a major work in studying the indigenous theatre traditions of Bangladesh. These signposts have inspired theatre scholarship in diverse fields in the next decade leading to works that have addressed the plurality of theatre in the Indian sub-continent. The richness of theatrical and performative forms in the Indian sub-continent have expanded considerably in the



contemporary times, manifesting a plural and vibrant theatrical culture that awaits further interpretation.

While contemporary theatres and performances in the Indian sub-continent have been exploring the proscenium space in diverse ways, they have also moved out of the proscenium into alternative spaces, into the experimental realms of installation art and performance. These have resulted in greater engagement with immersive, intimate and interactive theatre practices where the 'fourth wall' has come down and the audience have been immersed into the play itself. What have been the ways in which audience reception has transformed in new experimental performance forms? How have contemporary theatres explored the proscenium space? How has alternative theatre spaces emerged? Did the widespread pandemic of Covid-19 foster the search for new spaces of performance? What emergent social and political issues are being addressed by the contemporary theatres? How 'political' is today's theatre? How far do marginalised groups represent themselves and/or are being represented in contemporary theatre? How have the legacies of traditional and classical theatre been carried on in contemporary theatres? How far can the theatre discourse centring around *Natyasastra* be applied as a critical/theoretical context in today's theatre? What are our theatrical 'futures' and 'prospects'?

Premised on the above thoughts and questions, the proposed title invites scholarly articles on various issues related to contemporary theatre and performance in the Indian sub-continent. While we consider the phenomenon of performance as an inclusive concept ranging from daily life's performance observations through indigenous tradition and classical to avant-garde initiatives, there are innumerable areas to be explored in the realm of the sub-continental performance tradition with the support of diverse theoretical tools from *Natyasastra* to recent theories. Once we see theatre and performance as a product of social process and its craft as a product of extensive enquiries to discover new expressive idioms, immense potential for further research and enquiry emerges. The frequent crossover of Indian theatre with various international criticism and streams of writing from the second half of the twentieth century onwards has also considerably impacted the contemporary scenario, which is a subject of intensive study. The call for papers and articles thus aims to address the



plurality of Indian Sub-Continental theatre and drama, and its multiple streams that have variously contributed to the rich repository of Indian Sub-Continental performance practices.

Papers are invited (but not limited to) the following sub themes/ topics:

- Current trends in research on Indian Sub-Continental theatre, performance and drama
- Historiography and Post-Independence Indian theatre and drama
- Women in the theatre, performance and drama of the Indian sub-continent
- Queer identities in the theatre and drama of the Indian sub-continent
- Gender inclusivity in the theatre and drama of the Indian sub-continent
- Theatres of Protest
- Theatre In Education
- Political theatre
- Theatres of Alternative spaces: Immersive, interactive and intimate theatre experiences
- Relevance of Indigenous performance practices in Contemporary Theatre
- Beliefs and motifs of Tribal theatrical traditions and its relevance in contemporary practices
- Urban-Folk theatre
- Theatres of Ritual/Ritual Theatre
- Covid-19 and the theatre and drama of the Indian sub-continent
- Theatre of Roots
- Environmental theatre
- Theatre from the Margins
- Contemporary Indian theatre and Drama
- Post-Independence Indian theatre and Pedagogy
- Regional theatre and criticism
- Playwrights and Theatre Directors of the Indian sub-continent.
- Wide practices of Amateur Theatre/Mobile Theatre in the Sub-Continent



Full articles within 5000 words (approx.) conforming to the latest MLA style guidelines should be sent along with a short bio-note (within 250 words) to [thespian.articles@gmail.com](mailto:thespian.articles@gmail.com).

## Last Date of Submission

**20 December 2023**

For details, please strictly follow the guidelines provided on the website.  
<http://www.thespianmagazine.com/guidelines>

### Work Cited

Bhatia, Nandi, editor. *Modern Indian Theatre: A Reader*. Oxford UP, 2009.