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This interview is an extract of a day long talk between Bivash Bishnu Chowdhury and Pralayan Shanmugasundaram Chandrasekaran, Playwright, Actor and Director of 'Chennai Kalai Kuzhu' and the active member of the 'Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers Artistes Association'.

Contradiction between the Tradition and Modern Tamil Theatre in Tamil Nadu: Interviewed Pralayan

Edited by: Bivash Bishnu Chowdhury

“...[F]estival happens everywhere now; NSD, SNA, META, ITFOK like that. What happens now...? Some groups have started a new trend since the last ten years. ...Six months they are working for the productions; experimenting with forms, contents, designs, scenography; everything is done very strongly. After that they are going to the national and international festivals. ...See, this theatre activity got the attention of international community, and we are developing the language for international audience.



At the same time, the same performance does not have any dialogue
for their community.”

- Pralayan



QUES 1. What is your opinion about Indian Theatre as well as Tamil Theatre in Present Indian Context?

Pralayan Yeah. We are living at a very critical juncture. Theatrical performances take place in several states. But it seems very challenging if you want to do something creative for the theatre for your own community. It is really hard to find out where to keep/place your feet.

QUES 2. How did you start theatre at first?

Pralayan I came to Chennai from my village for further study on computer programming.

[At that time the Chennai district unit of the ‘Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers’ Association’ was very active. And there were different kinds of theatre activities all over the state under the aegis of this Progressive Writers’ Association - some modern approach to theatre was also there at that time] (Seagull Theatre Quarterly, issue no. 16, page no. 74).

I had some connection with this organization. In 1984, they were planning to do the state level Theatre festival. At that time they asked me to present a play in that festival. They knew that I had some kind of interest in Theatre. They had given me a scope to organize a group and make a play and perform it. Gradually our group was formed. Most of the artists were very close to me. We performed together and made a play called *Nangal Varugirrom*, which means ‘Here We Come’. It was written by me. From 1984 we used to work in Theatre on a regular basis. Before that when I was in college in my native



town Tiruvannamalai, I used to do theatre. At that time, I also attempted a theatre and participated in a State level theatre festival which was happened in a historically renowned town, Thanjavur.

Actually I belong to the Political Theatre. I came to Theatre because of my Politics. ... Theatre taught me to understand the relevance of my Politics. And I became politically mature because of my Theatre. Actually I have started work only from my passion. I don't know any other way to express myself. That's why I think it's very near and friendly to me. So, I came to Theatre. I didn't have any previous qualification in Theatre studies from any institution or somewhere else. Just because of my passion I had entered into Theatre and started to learn. And still I am learning.

QUES 3. You said that you came to theatre because of your 'Politics'. You have also said that you started work only from 'passion'. Could you explain what do you really mean by "my Politics"? Don't you think that coming to theatre because of 'politics' and starting work out of 'passion' is contradictory with each other? Does passion really merge with politics?

Pralayan Before coming to theatre I used to write poems. I was a regular reader of the little literary magazines of that time. There were several magazines. It was almost a movement then. Due to the exposure with the regional, national, international art and literary trends of that time, it primarily helped and shaped my perceptions of art and literature. I've started to believe that expressing one self in art and literature is a political act. I want to reach the people not only to



those who are illiterates also those who don't have the habit of reading the magazines. So I've started to recite my poems in the public. Act of reading and reciting the poems in public gradually leads me to theatre.

QUES 4. When did you organize a theatre festival in your village?

Pralayan I did not organize that festival. It was organized by Tamilnadu Progressive writer's association. It was in late 70's, 1979 to 80 at Thanjavur. It is a temple town. It's Temple tower which was built in Chola period, is known for its historical importance. The theatre festival went on for three days. Most of them were armature groups. They were working in very small way. Simply they came and gathered there and performed their play.

QUES 5. Can you please tell us something about the play you had directed in the festival of 'Tamil Nadu Progressive Writer's Association in 1984?

Pralayan Yeah. It was good. You will get the details of the production in the journal of Seagull publications named "Seagull Theatre Quarterly", Issue no: 16; in 1997-98. The interview had been taken by Mr. Biren Das Sharma during the 'Theatre for Consciousness' workshop organized by 'Natya Chetana' in Bhubaneswar in February 1996; and then Ms. Anjum Katyal took the interview in Chennai in September 1997. You may go through it...

[The details of the production is -

Actually, this is not a street play. It is a proscenium play. A play within a play style. It is one hour long. A street group was performing. There is a folk tradition in the neighbouring district of Madras, Tiruvanamalai, my



native district. Telling stories through song and mime and other things. Three people stand and sing, narrate, through a narrative tune, and they tell a story. Sometimes they use expressions and words also, when necessary. So the group was telling the story. The group members belonged to the subaltern strata of society—one person was a rickshaw puller, another an auto driver, a construction worker, a tea-shop vendor. So, they are telling their stories—by dancing and acting. The police interrupts. ‘You have to vacate this place because you are blocking traffic,’ etc. The audience comes to the performers’ rescue—they defend the performers and turn on the police. The police withdraws. Then, the audience compels the performers to continue the play. The performers get irritated and start portraying police atrocities. A play within a play style. First through the songs, then they make it a scene. At that time a notorious thing had happened in Tamil Nadu. In Salem district, in police custody, a girl was sexually molested and killed by the police. It was an issue taken up by all the women’s and youth movements of the time. So we took that narrative and made a play. And at the end of the play, they ask the people to rise against the excesses of the police. The police and some goondas attack all the performers and beat them. The actors fall down on the ground. The props and instruments are destroyed. The police go away. Then one actor tries to stand up and reach for the horn—there was a horn on the ground. He takes the horn and blows. The curtain falls.



Actually it's a one-hour long play without any curtain. The play within a play, the changing of the space, everything happens before the audience. We weren't using any lights. Just flat lights. But mime and realistic acting, dance movements, everything was enacted. Also, the music group that played a part of the background music was sitting behind the performers, in the centre of the stage. Like in Terukoothu. Harmonium, tabla, flute, dhol—five members are sitting and playing. The performance is taking place in front of the music group.

...

Actually we share a common ideology with the Progressive Writers' Association. Basically, most of the group members are from the Progressive Writers' Association, though we do not insist on this. But in the process, we have begun thinking in similar ways] (Seagull Theatre Quarterly; issue no. 16, page no.74).

Actually in Tamil Nadu there are several streams of Theatre. One is Traditional Theatre which is very very strong in Tamil Nadu. I say this as this has been strongly supported by the community. In the Northern part of Tamil Nadu it is called "Kuthu". The performance happens from the evening to the early morning. The Western part of Tamil Nadu has the same kind of Traditional form. In the Southern part of Tamil Nadu they have Musical theatre called "Sangeet Nataka". They used to sing and perform.



There are several registered groups in the southern part of Tamil Nadu. They used to perform from the month of February to September. That is the season for their performances actually. All the rural festivals are happening in between this time. Actually there is no agricultural work on that time. So, all the rural festivals or performances happen only during this time. In 2006, there was one institution called “Indian Theatre Forum” and for the last few years I was associated with that. On behalf of the ‘India Theatre Forum’ we have invited so many rural theatre groups for a three day meeting in 2006 at Chennai. After having the discussion with the different rural theatre groups and hearing their survival stories, we came to know that economically they are very strong and independent. There are several hundred registered groups are there. All these registered groups are performing 100 to 150 performances each year. There is ‘Raja’ part and ‘Stri’ part; main male and female lead. They are taking at least 5000 rupees per show. Some are very popular actors. They are taking 8000 to 10000 rupees per show. And you know, who got the least payment in the group, is the person who play cymbals in the music pit will get 500 rupees per show. All these things are supported by the community only. These statistics are given in the year 2006... There is no ‘Sangeet Natak Academi’ (S.N.A.) or ‘Department of Culture’ support. Actually in Tamil Nadu still they are signifying the connection between the society and community. And all the performances are very mythological. Though these artistic repertoires are very strong and very talented, they are embedded with the conservative and regressive value of the time and space.



On the other hand, the commercial theatre of Tamil Nadu is urban bound or city bound and they are struggling. After the emergence of satellite channels and everything, the commercial theatre has been losing the entertainment value of the theatre. Here theatre gets marginalized due to the cheap availability of various other forms of entertainment. They are sinking. This is another stream.

The third stream is called “Navina Nataka”. “Navina Nataka” means modern theatre. This is the parallel theatre activity. Actually I belong to this third stream of theatre activity. The Political theatre, Street Theatre, Open air theatre, theatre happening in the campuses, Drama schools, theatre done by the Theatre lovers, enthusiasts -all these come under this third category. This stream is very strong, divergent, dynamic but not that much popular in Tamil Nadu like Kerala and Karnataka. As in Kerala and Karnataka, here, this theatre activity does not get much support from the community and government etc. Everything happens because of some particular theatre persons, theatre practitioners, and for their love and passion.

QUES 6. So, So, why this third Stream is not getting support from the community like the first one?

Pralayan They can collect money because the traditional patterns are there; and people are giving money for that. There is a lot of local tradition associated with the temple rituals and everything. They have a belief system. If there is no rain in the villages, they arrange some koothu performances. They believe that it will



rain if they do the performances. So, it is connected with that. You can't just dismiss that as only rituals and beliefs alone. There are so many things involved with the connection of the community and everything. And it is the part of our culture and the performances, their life and everything. So, connections are there.

The modern theatres do not have that much connection. Modern theatre needs to inculcate and nurture this culture in the community. This activity is very different. See, some groups are working professionally like Koothu-P-Pattarai and others are getting fund for their work, festivals and others. They are very little in numbers in Tamil Nadu. Most of the groups are doing Theatre for their own passion.

The question remains that why we don't have much support from the community for the modern theatre activities. Here our group "Chennai Kalai Kuzhu" had a different experience. Whenever we performed our plays in any place in Tamilnadu, we got the community support. It never failed to have a dialogue with community. Most of the places the audience members will be 400 to 500 in numbers, in some places 1000 were also gathered. Sometimes we managed to perform in front of 1000 and more audience members, but actually our open-air plays are designed and devised for the audience of maximum 500 to 600.

Some people say that most of our performances are happened in open-air spaces, so that it happen and be possible. Yes it is. But it needs a host to have a performance in one place. Most of our performances are cost effective.



There are not many expenses to stage a performance in one place. You have to pay the group for the travel expenses and a humble remuneration. We also staged proscenium plays. It needs an auditorium, lights, sound system and other technical needs. If you want to have the performance you have to spend for this. In last ten years our play “upakathai” and later production “Paari Padukalam” which I have done with the dept of. Performing arts, Pondicherry and the recent play “Vanchiyar kaandam” we have taken these plays all over Tamilnadu and neighboring states of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra. Where ever we performed a strong audience gathering was there. If you take a play to the people and thoroughly advertised it and disseminate the news of happening of the performance, certainly audience will gather. We have experienced it. Then what we mean by ‘community support’? It means the support system among the community to hold or host a theatre performance. For that we need a theatre community.

Theatre community is comprised with not just the theatre group, playwright, director and actors alone. There will be hosts, patrons, theatre enthusiasts or theatre lovers and critics. All these people together will constitute the theatre community.

See, last month we had a festival in



Thanjavur. Actually I was the festival coordinator. That was organized by ‘Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers Artistes Association’. It’s like as ‘Gana



Natya Sangha' and the same kind of association in and around India. They organized and supported the festival and 29 groups were invited including from southern states like Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra and Pondicherry. Except Koothu-P-Pattarai and the Department of Performing Arts, Pondicherry University, most of the groups were amateur. Some 2/3 people who lead the group are professional. They have some academic background like the 'Department of Performing Arts', Pondicherry University, 'National School of Drama', Delhi and others but the maximum numbers of the actors are amateurs. And they are giving very small honorium for the profession. And they are giving a little a bit support for other enthusiastic performers, mainly for learners. That was 4day's festivals (from 10a.m. to 10p.m.) and happened from Wednesday to Saturday. Even though it was week day, we were surprised to see that from morning 10 to evening 4 there were 400 to 500 people in the audience. That was our observation and you can say, we have learned from the festival that if you prepare/bring your theatre properly, people are ready to support. We have got huge support from the community only.

After this festival so many groups who have participated in the festival got so many contacts to perform in various parts of the state. Actually this festival helps



Festival Picture



to build a theatre community. We felt the importance of our festival in this context.

Most of the theatre practitioners in Tamil Nadu... Actually you know, it is very difficult for Tamil Nadu that relies on State government or Central Government. See, what happens in the rest of India... But the people from Tamil Nadu whether in art field or other; all kind of streams whether artists, painters, sculptors, theatre persons - never bother about all India facilities. There is a long history behind this. I don't want to go in detail. The common trend of Tamilnadu won't rely on any central institutions. And they don't rely on state institutions also. They are doing all things on their own. That is still going on. Whether that is good or bad may be discussed or debated in different ways. But this is how it is going on now.

QUES 7. Didn't you inform any Department/Ministry or S.N.A. for this festival?

Pralayan We approached the South Zone Cultural Centre. ...Actually they have a space there, for performances and accommodation also ...Primarily we were thinking in that way ...But their performance space is situated at the outskirts of the city. Later, we had changed the place. Initially they assured us to support 7/8 groups for their performance, travel and everything. But later they have given their support for two groups only. One group is from Andhra and another from Kerala. We approached the Department of Culture, Government of Tamil Nadu. They assured us to help. But still we haven't got any money. Actually the entire program or agenda had been fixed/decided by the festival



committee only. There was no intervention by the supporters, sponsors, collaborators and others. And we have approached to some of our well-wishers; they have approached to some public sectors like BSNL and others and then there were some donations and we arranged the festival. The entire festival were free, there was no ticket for the audiences.

QUES 8. What about the groups that performed in the festival?

Pralayan Yeah. They were afforded by themselves. We informed them that we cannot give big money except their actual travel expenses and very small remuneration. May be 30000 is the highest payment for the group including their travel expenses (Tamil Nadu). This is the first time in Tamil Nadu, a festival happened in such big way. So, the practitioners were also ready to participate willingly. And we did it very successfully. Actually you know, there was no such big festival in Tamil Nadu for the last 20 years. Festivals happened here and there but those were for a very short span like 2/3 days. And only 5/6 groups performed only in the evening time. Like that. But it didn't happen in this way.

You know, theatre practitioners of Tamilnadu are very divergent but they don't have that much of brotherhood approach between themselves. It is a great problem that one theatre-practitioner doesn't want to understand other's theatre activity. They didn't have any concern about others. How the others are doing? They all are belonging to their own domains, own islands. And they have some kind of understanding; and for that it's very difficult for them



to mingle with others. But this festival breaks that mind set and makes them perform and interact with one another. One thing we missed -that is- it's very difficult for us and for the groups also to stay for all the 4 days in the festival. In one way, they can't do it because all of them are not full timers in Theatre. There are students, officials and others; for them it was not possible to stay there for 4 days. And for us also it was a problem to accommodate all for 4 days. But we are thinking to make it in future. We want to accommodate each and every performer of every group, and to have interaction between the groups for the entire time of the festival. This time there were 150 invited audiences from all over Tamil Nadu including theatre enthusiasts and from the theatre groups. They were the regular audience for the entire festivals. Apart from that there were 1 or 2 representatives from each group in the festival.

QUES 9. How would you differentiate this theatre festival from those held in other parts of India?

Pralayan

It's very difficult to say. I don't want to be judgmental or differentiate it from others. It should be understood vis-à-vis our own context, own need. We want to interact, we want to know. We are surviving; we want to say there is a theatre. We want to say on behalf our Tamil society that we do exist. We are here. You see, there were not many festivals in Tamil Nadu but our neighboring state Kerala and Karnataka have huge number of big festivals which are sponsored by the State government and Central Government.



You know, two-three years ago, a discussion was going on in the ‘International Theatre Festival of Kerala’ (ITFOK) named “Festival Culture”. Seriously they had discussed it. See, festival happens everywhere now. NSD, SNA, META, ITFOK like that. What happens now...? Some groups have started a new trend since the last ten years. They are making the productions for the festivals only. They invested much more effort for that. Six months they are working for the productions; experimenting with forms, contents, designs, scenography; everything is done very strongly. After that they are going to the national and international festivals. In the last few years I have seen some groups traveling throughout the year. For six months they are making productions and during the remaining six months they are traveling for the festivals in regional, national, and international level.

See, our theatre activity got the attention of international community, and we are developing the language for international audience. At the same time, the same performance does not have any dialogue with their own community. It fails in having a dialogue with their own people and their own community. But it was invited for all the festivals and everything. This problem has been discussed in that seminar of ITFOK. We have to think about this problem seriously. I don’t want to dismiss these productions or I don’t want to be judgmental about these productions and their process of working but I have found some problems there. ...

Many groups in South India are doing theatre for the festivals only; they never do any performance for their community.



See, this is the time we have to understand most of the milestone productions that happened in India like *Nabanna* in Bengali stage, *Ghashiram Katowal* in Marathi Stage, *Charan Das Chor* in Chhattisgarh... How did this happen? See, they were professionally sound. People came together in the theatre for their creation. They came for the social meaning of their art, potential of their art form and they were close to their community. This should be understood and I think this true even when we think of Badal Sircar and Utpal Dutt. These trends have to be remembered; we are supposed to learn from these achievements.

QUES 10. But the thing is... sorry I am interrupting. My question is, how can we, who have entered in theatre world after finishing our study in theatre studies, make a living out of the Theatre? If we always do it in amateur way, how can we live?

Pralayan I'm not against the professionalism in theatre or theatre professionals. See, amateur production means you can't have money and you can't live on it. It's my humble suggestion, if you want to make your group in your own way; you should have your freedom in work and everything. You should go for a job, take a position on a department as a teacher, and do your work.

QUES 11. Yes, maybe I can. But what about others?

Pralayan Yeah, that is there. See, how the painters live, how the musicians live. You can also live in that way. Theatre is not an individual activity. You need actors, you need musicians, and you need to make all these things with professionals.



See, in traditional theatre also, they have professionals for their work, but what they are doing after six months? When the season for agriculture starts, they start to do that. It's a crisis of this modern/contemporary period. In tradition, there is no professional artist and amateur artist. But there is the artist. They don't have that problem. There is carpenter, blacksmith, farmer; all are professionals in their own profession. In off season only, they come to the performances. And also it's true that most of the traditional performances were patronized by the Lordship and the Kingship. Other than that they were patronized by the society and community only. So, the concept of the 'Professional' and 'Amateur' is very modern/contemporary. And the crisis is also modern/contemporary. Really, I'll feel very happy if a group runs successfully in a professional way. But at the same time I have another question - can we survive by theatre profession?

Always the learners are coming to a group for four to five years. After that they are going. So, in that way you can't make the whole group professional. One or two members may be professional but others cannot. See, the truth is, I am not doing any work but still I am surviving in my own way. I am doing workshops in colleges, schools, departments, Theatre groups and writing and apart from that I have one Theatre group but I am not getting that much money from the group. I do not demand huge money from each and every group for the workshops and all. But I have to pay some professionals like musicians, light designer and some artists specially those who were alumni of Theatre



schools, departments. We can't bring them free of cost; we have to pay them.

But it should be fixed, and should be very practical in both ways.

QUES 12. So, one question that is, NSD is the mother institution in all over India as well in South Asia. It produced a number of Theatre Directors in India and abroad and still they are the leading theatre personalities in India and the South Asian context. So what about the Tamil Nadu NSD alumni?

Pralayan

This is a very important question Bivash. The entry from Tamil Nadu was very low- mainly in 70's, 80's and 90's. Only three persons; actually four persons came out from NSD; Professor Ramanujam, Prof. Raju, and Professor Rajendran (later he was part of NSD; now retired) and one person name Gobali who came from NSD and did one English production and that's all. He is no more in Tamil Theatre. So, these three persons were from Tamil Nadu from 70's to 80's. Then up to 2000 there was no entry from Tamil Nadu. Since 2001 only there are several entries . So, from that time till date there were 7 to 8 persons who passed out from NSD. In the last few years the scenario has changed. Those who are coming from NSD and other departments are now actively working in Tamil Theatre. They are giving some kind of energy for the new generation. Two girls from our group are from NSD, Delhi, one of them finished her course in 2013 and another is studying second year in Delhi now.



QUES 13. We may finish the session to know about your theatre. I had some experience to work with you before. For that production you took the text from mythology and tried to make it relevant for contemporary time.

Pralayan See, actually I am not a specialist in handling the mythological text in modern context. It happens for the context of time. I used to work with our mythologies in 2001 like Mahabharata, Ramayana, Vishnu Purana, and relocated it in contemporary play of that time. Still it is relevant. We have started to work on a play called ‘Upakathai’ means sub stories. The play was written and directed by me. The intention of that play is to actually portray the victors as the narrators. Even the victims’ story is narrated by the victors. If victims start to narrate their own story, how would that story be? That is a question. So I took the story of ‘Ekalavya’ from Mahabharata. He starts his own story as a victim. His thumb has been chopped by the Dronacharya. In original or official version he has donated his thumb to Dronacharya as a gurudakshina. When he starts his story, he says that he didn’t give it as gurudakshina. He declared that Drona is not his guru. Why will he learn from Drona? He comes from the forest. He is born with bow and arrow. I have learned this from my forefathers.



Upakathai

It happens like that. Actually the conflict of the story is who tells the story. And why does he tell the story? One act of this play has been translated and published in the “Little Magazine” which is run by Antara Dev sen.



After that in 2008, I did a play with the students of the School of Performing Arts, Pondicherry University named 'Paari Padukalam' means the story of Paari. At that time Sri Lankan war happened. I was trying to talk about the Tamil identity. That time I wanted to tell what the Tamil identity means. Tamil is a single identity. I was taking available material from ancient Tamil literature and that material says in the name of Tamil the 'Chera', 'Chora' and 'Pandiya'



Paari Padukalam

three Tamil Kings didn't come together. These three are the ancient Tamil kingdoms. There is not any single historical evidence that they came into an alliance or united under an umbrella. They always fought with each other. The only literary evidence by the poet Kabilar says that to kill the chieftain Paari they came together and formed an alliance. I took this for my play. Actually this play develops a critique towards the construction of the Tamil identity and tries to trace out the social history of that time.

And after that I took the story of Tamil Epic called "Cilappatikaram" [The Tale of an Anklet] which was written in between 2 CE to 5 CE where the main character is Kannagi whose husband was killed by mistake as a thief. And she promised to take revenge. She was questioning the king about this murder. See, this was a big thing at that time that as a citizen as well as a woman she was asking question to the King. At that time the king could not be questioned. Most of the myths and epics are based on this concept of



legitimizing the authority of the Kingship. But this epic is questioning the authority of an unjust King. But in later days the interpretation of Kannagi has changed. She became a symbol of Chastity. In modern days everyone wants their wives and daughters to be Kannagi. They forgot the real context of Kannagi. They believe that Kannagi got the power to question the King because of her Chastity; that is their belief. Kannagi becomes a role model now. Actually Kannagi become a cultural cross bearing burden on the shoulders of Tamil womanhood. But, in our play, Kannagi herself says not to make her as a role model. Now at the present time in Sri Lanka, she is worshipped as a deity and in some parts of Kerala also. But in Tamil Nadu she becomes a role model of Tamil woman like 'Sita'. How does she become a role model of an Indian womanhood? Kannagi always told not to be like her. She suggested that there were a lot of learned women who can be a role model. She never questioned her husband. She is that type of woman. So she claims that she should not be taken as a role model.

The name of the play is "Vanjiar (Woman) Kandam". It is made with very strong musical composition, choreography and others. 30 performances happened in all over Tamil Nadu and some shows in Kerala also.

QUES 14. Say something for the generation...

Pralayan Actually we are living in a critical juncture. Here I want to quote something from the paper which I've presented in a UGC seminar which was held at Periyar University last year.



Theatre, an institution at the heart of world cultures for millennia and the prime entertainment in the previous centuries, now confronts unprecedented challenges in a rapidly evolving society. Electronic and digital technologies have spawned an array of media, from 3-D movies to crowd-sourced video like YouTube to smart phones that compete with the stage for the audience's finite attention. A youthful generation raised amid a digital culture may prove harder to lure the live theatrical performance.

Now the whole notion of entertainment is confused and diffused. It's not just all these technologies and the ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder] phenomenon of jumping around—the video-game mindset; we're not sure what is entertainment anymore.

But this raises the central question: What is the value of theatre in this juncture? Why should we support and encourage it in this digital age? To be relevant today, that is the dilemma.

Here I would like to quote from, Dr Damon Young who is a philosopher and writer and author of *Distraction: a Philosopher's Guide to Being Free* [Melbourne University Publishing, December 1, 2008)

In his article “To be relevant today, that is the dilemma” he says,

First, theatre offers what might be called living physicality.

Like sculpture, it offers the audience something palpable. But



with a profound difference: real, tangible, breathing human beings give theatre a unique intimacy and presence that cannot be replicated on paper.

Unlike cinema, television or recorded music, theatre is very much a mayfly — it arrives, does its thing, and then ends. And every night can be subtly different. This allows for an awareness of the precariousness of things, the importance of seizing what's before us.

To enjoy it, we have to be there: it can't be beamed into our lounge rooms or our iPods. And it requires focus: it can't be paused, or simply used as a backdrop for chit-chat. But in an age of constant distraction, this attention can be in short supply.

We can summarize that in this way:

Theatre is a temporal art; it is bound with the time and the space. Theatre will happen in a particular space and at a particular time. To view or to experience that theatre, one should be there in that particular space at that particular time. This live truth makes the theatre to survive. I hope our younger generation will ponder on this truth.

Thank you so much.