

Performing Arts as the Heart of Culture: Analyzing Pashtun Theatre from the perspective of provoking Ethnic Values among The Pashtuns

Dr. Saman Salah*
 Nazir Ahmed kasi*
 Dr. Saba Zaidi*

Abstract:

The social fabric of a society is reflected with all its splendor and form through theatre. Theatre being a source of entertainment as well as a source of conserving culture and ethnic values, plays a vital role in protecting the cultural legacy of any culture. Twelve million in Afghanistan expected thirty million or more in Pakistan and may be a million or more in a worldwide diaspora, Pashtuns include a complex ethno-etymological populace with a rich social convention and writing, assorted national and Islamic identities, fluctuated financial and political settings. Besides, though Pashtuns have a strong history yet much still unresearched. This paper seeks to investigate “Pashtun theatre” from the perspective of promoting Pashtun culture and its cultural legacy. Besides, the paper traces the trajectory of Pashtun theatre and concludes how this theatre provoked ethnic values among the “Pashtuns”.

Keywords: Performing arts, Theatre, Pashtuns, Ethnic Values

Introduction:

Theater is a communitarian type of artistic work that utilizes live entertainers to exhibit the experience of a genuine or envisioned occasion before a live crowd in a particular place.

“The entertainers may impart this experience to the gathering of people through blends of signal, discourse, melody, music, and move. Components of plan and stagecraft are utilized to improve the physicality, nearness and instantaneousness of the experience”. (1)

The explicit place of the execution is likewise named by "theater" as got from the Ancient Greek "theatron", a position of review. Present day Western venue gets in huge measure from old Greek dramatization, from which it acquires specialized wording, grouping into types, and a significant number of its topics, stock characters, and plot components. Theater researcher Patrice Pavis characterizes

“drama, showy dialect, organize composing, and the particularity of theater as synonymous articulations that separate venue from the other performing expressions, writing, and human expressions as a rule” (1).

Theater today incorporates exhibitions of plays and musicals as well.

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, SBKWU, Quetta

♦ Assistant Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, University of Balochistan, Quetta

▲ Assistant Professor, Department of English, SBKWU, Quetta

A Brief Description on the Historical Trajectory of Different Theatres

Melodic Theater: Since antiquated occasions, music and theater have a strong relationship. Songs, spoken dialogue, acting, and dance are the elements of musical theatre.

“In spite of the fact that music has been a piece of sensational introductions since antiquated occasions, current Western melodic auditorium rose amid the nineteenth century, with numerous basic components built up by crafted by Gilbert and Sullivan in Britain and those of Harrigan and Hart in America. These were trailed by the various Edwardian melodic comedies and the melodic performance center works of American makers like George M. Cohan” (1, 2).

Musicals are played out all around the globe. They might be displayed in expansive scenes, for example, huge spending West End and Broad way theatre creations in London and New York, or in littler periphery theater, Off-Broadway or territorial theater preparations, on visit, or by novice bunches in schools, theaters and other execution spaces. Notwithstanding Britain and North America, there are energetic melodic theater scenes in numerous nations in Europe, Latin America, Australasia and Asia.

Another type of theatre which reflects method of fiction spoken in execution is known as **Drama**. The term holds its origin from a Greek word “Drama” signifying “activity”. The establishment of show in theater, performed by on-screen characters on a phase before a group of people, pre-assumes cooperative methods of generation and an aggregate type of gathering. The structure of sensational writings, in contrast to different types of writing, is straightforwardly affected by this synergistic generation and aggregate gathering.

“The tragedy Hamlet (1601) by Shakespeare and the traditional Athenian tragedy Oedipus the King (c. 429 BCE) by Sophocles are among the magnum opuses of the specialty of show. A cutting-edge precedent is Long Day's Journey into Night by Eugene O'Neill (1956)”. (2)

Drama is frequently joined with music and move: the dramatization in musical drama is by and large sung all through; musicals for the most part incorporate both spoken discourse and tunes; and a few types of show have accidental music or melodic backup underscoring the exchange. (3) In the antiquated Roman and present-day Romantic history, a few dramatizations have been frequently read rather than to be performed. The drama does not pre-exist the snapshot of execution; entertainers devise a sensational content suddenly before a group of people. (4) Present day emulate incorporates melodies, droll parody and dances, utilizes gender-crossing performing artists, and consolidates topical idiocy with a story approximately dependent on a notable fantasy. (5) It is a participatory type of theater, in which the crowd is relied upon to chime in with specific parts of the music and yell out expressions to the entertainers.

“In theater, the purpose of Comedy was to divert or entertain by inciting humor, particularly in TV, film and stand-up parody. Besides the term Comedy, the

“scholastic comic theater” which began in Ancient Greece holds a special position. This is because the general sentiment of voters in the Athenian majority rules system, was affected by the political parody which was performed at the theaters by the comic writers” (6).

Ascent of Pashto Theater: Lag Phase and Exponential Phase

Arts and Theater frame a necessary piece of urban Pashtun Society. Pashtun Society is amazingly social rich society with each clan having its particular move which gives an exceptional character to that specific clan. Since time immemorial, Theater existed in Afghanistan and parts of KPK in simple structures. Essential among it was Street execution with the end goal of diversion. Theater took its unique frame when Pashtuns ascended alongside whole Indian Subcontinent to make India just as Pashtun lands free from the grip of Imperialist Britain. Pashtun theater, since its beginning was indispensable in advancing the soul of patriotism, solidarity, general fellowship, harmony and removals of occupiers from their territories. Current Pashto theater had its start in 1924 with the world celebrated "Khudai Khidmatgar" or "Hirelings of God" development. It was a one of a kind peaceful opportunity battle against the British Empire by the Pashtuns (otherwise called Pathans, Pakhtuns or Afghans) of the North-West Frontier Province of India. First Pashto dramatization was performed in front of an audience in 1924 at town Uthmanzai of Charsadda District of North West Frontier Province of British India. (Presently in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan). The show was created and arranged by Abdul Akbar Khan who was an observed Pashtun Nationalist of his time. The dramatization was designated "Dwa Yateeman" signifying "two vagrants". This show featured the social states of Pashtun society, misuse of Pashtuns under the standard of British just as the social disadvantages of Pashtun Society. Abdul Akbar Khan was the principal individual who created first travelog in Pashto. Pashto theater achieved its peak in the time of 1940-50s. Khudai Khidmatgar development was imperative in advancing Pashto theater. Around then, Pashto theater fills in as an essential stage for arousing the majority against outrages submitted by Englishmen in Indian subcontinent. Pashto theater was essentially used to implant a sentiment of opportunity and patriotism among Pashtuns. It likewise made the majority mindful about the ladies rights and rouses Pashtuns to concentrate on Women training, which is as yet the need of great importance. In late 1940s50s, Afghanistan which had dependably been a sovereign country (however being normally focused by remote occupiers on account of its key geological area) began disparaging Pashto theater. Theater shapes an indispensable instrument in motivating Afghan people group to get present day instruction and bring unparalleled advancement. Theater assumes a critical job in fortifying the economic wellbeing of Afghan ladies. The 50s saw Afghan ladies getting to be specialists, architects, researchers and local officials. Afghan ladies proficiency rate shoot new breaking points and there number reaches nearly to half in colleges, schools and other scholastic organizations. In Asia, urbanized Afghan ladies were on the best figures (after Japanese ladies) to the extent proficiency and other scholarly norms are considered. Theater and other performing expressions get

ordinary support from different government and non-government institutions. 1970s saw a quick ascent in the venue in Afghanistan. 1979 saw the unlawful control of Afghanistan by past USSR troops and the main Pashtun arrive goes into a time of forced wars. Amid this time, Pashtun theater stay confined to scholastic organizations like Edward College (Peshawar) and Islamia College (Peshawar). The understudies theater craftsmen utilized auditorium to raise their voice against the unlawful control of Afghanistan and Pashtun sufferings. In spite of the fact that the importance of theater ends up diminished, yet the voice raised by it resounded on both the sides of Durand Lines for a very long time. As of now to advance theater and other Pashtun performing expressions, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa prompted the development of Nishtar Hall in 1985. It was set up to advance and speak to the Pashtun culture and music. It is one of the biggest amusement settings in Peshawar with a limit of 600 individuals. It was named after a Pashtun opportunity contender Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar. In the beginning, it was overseen by the "Abaseen Arts Council" and later by "Cultural Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa". Since the re-opening of Nishtar Hall following eight years of close somewhere near conservative government officials, Pashto theater is endeavoring to recover its lost magnificence. It has organized brilliant auditorium appears on the existence history of remarkable Afghan government officials, rulers, artists just as giver. In front of an audience dramatization on the life of Rehman Baba (real Pashto artist) was gotten heartily by the basic Pashtun populace. In February 2013, remarkable Pashtun writer and poet Khushal Khan Khattak's life was conveyed to arrange in a play sorted out by the "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Directorate of Culture". Pashtun ladies likewise contributed effectively alongside their male partners. The two-hour-long show has 23 scenes with 23 distinctive set plans. (7) It centers around Khattak's life in the seventeenth century when he joined the Pashtuns and battled against the oppression of Mughals. The play likewise comprises of move and music, henceforth demonstrating the lavishness of Pashtun culture. Plays on Khushal Khan Khattak, Rehman Baba, Pir Rokhan and other noticeable Pashtuns pass on a solid message of harmony, coordination of social standards and solidarity among the worldwide masses by and large and Pashtun specifically. Additionally, the theater exhibitions in Pashto sorted out at Nishtar Hall were generally welcomed by European Union and Afghan authorities who communicated the interests in organizing the specific same plays in Brussels and Kabul individually (8). Hence, 21st century Pashtun Theater is assuming a significant job in spreading the message of harmony, solidarity, thriving and social amicability not exclusively to the Pashtun populace yet in addition on alternate corners of the globe.

Pashtun Dance or Afghan Dance is designated "Attan". Attan is not just a move however it symbolizes and conveys fortitude, gallantry, solidarity and trustworthiness which are the critical vignettes of a Pashtun Society. Each progression in Attan symbolizes an inclination, each signal symbolizes a feeling. Attan is a customary Afghan move. This dance has become very popular throughout Afghanistan and is performed in all festive occasions throughout the year. Each valley has its own

unique style in Afghanistan (9) There are different forms of Khattak dance. These include “Shahdola, Balballah, Bangra, Qamar, chatrali, braghda’ona, Balbala, charri dana, tamseeli dana and individual performance. Bangra is taken from the word Bhangrai or Bangrai (Bangle). Here each member whirls while holding a sword. Few performers while beginning Bhangra, sing love songs turn by turn atleast 5-7 by each performer. These songs are called “Takkay” which hold great popularity in sheep herders. The same group performs Balbala immediately to sweat up the body with fast rhythm. Qamar balbala is performed with swords to balance and get control the body at the top of hill. An extraordinary move routine utilizing rifles performed by the Mehsud clan of Pashtuns. Initially it was a move at the season of war, however later on turned into a social move. The artists moved with next to nothing and require just expansive drums. Waziri attan is performed in Waziristan which is a substantial region and has special Pashtun culture. Two drummers and a woodwind player play a specific tune. Every one of the artists remain around them. Two people leave the circle; go moving towards the drummers, and return moving in a similar way. Besides, Tappa, Charbeta , Neemakai and Badala are some other performing arts of Pashtun culture. A form of Pashto ghazal is “Rubayi”. The famous Pashto poet “Rehman Baba” is quite popular for his tremendous Rubayis. These rubayis are well known among the majority and are sung before the beginning of Badala. Likewise, with the Ghazals, a ting of Arabic, Persian and Turkish verse can be observed in the Rubayis. Loba-Lobas is exceptionally mainstream among the majority and are included inside Tappas every so often. This is a type of society music in which a story is told. It requires at least two people who answer to one another in an idyllic shape. The opposite sides are generally the beloved and the lover the adored (9).

Pashtun theater, since its beginning was fundamental in advancing the soul of patriotism, solidarity, general fraternity, harmony and removal of occupiers from their territories. Advanced Pashtun theater took its unique shape when Pashtuns ascended alongside whole Indian Subcontinent to make India just as Pashtun lands free from the grasp of Imperialist Britain. “Khudai Khidmatgar movement” belittled Pashtun theater and made it popular among the majority. Afghanistan government disparaged theater in the time of 1950s60s. Important undertaking was to teach the majority to endeavor training, ladies’ social change and country building endeavors. PDPA drove government in Afghanistan enable ladies to wind up a basic piece of theater. Indeed, even the idea of Women Theater emerged around then which was new to subcontinent. The women's activist belief system reflects from the auditoriums of these occasions. Pashtun Dances or ideally called Attan, other than diversion demonstrates an amalgum of rich societies. Done in gatherings and for the most part in circles, the move implies solidarity, coherence of life and advancement. Pashtun Dances displays valor and fortitude just as a uniform order. Each progression of the move is highly determined however appears to be truly normal. The attan performed by Pashtuns means solidarity of human with the characteristic components and spread solid message of fraternity. To the extent Pashto music is concerned, Pashto music mostly conveys the engravings of Sufism in it alongside other nearby

melodic topics. Pashto music is light and hypnotizes the audience with its splendor and tone. This music has the ability to captivate the audience and communicate to God. Pashto music is brimming with sentimentalism. In addition, contemporary Pashto music likewise mirrors the possibility of freedom and autonomy just as Pashtun Nationalism (10). Based on the discussion above, it can be said that art performs a vital role in protecting the cultural legacy of any nation. Pashtuns since centuries hold a strong culture in which performing art holds a unique position. This performing art not only serves as entertainment but provokes “Pashtun Ethnic Values” among Pashtuns.

REFERENCES

- 1) M. Carlson, *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, [1], 2011
 - 2) Burt, Daniel S, “The Drama 100: A Ranking of the Greatest Plays of All Time (2008)”, Facts on File. ISBN 978-0-8160-6073-3
 - 3) See the entries for “opera”, “musical theatre, American”, “melodrama” and “Nō” in Banham (1998).
 - 4) Some forms of improvisation, notably the Commedia dell’arte, improvise on the basis of ‘lazzi’ or rough outlines of scenic action (see Gordon (1983) and Duchartre (1929). All forms of improvisation take their cue from their immediate response to one another, their characters’ situations (which are sometimes established in advance), and, often, their interaction with the audience. The classic formulations of improvisation in the theatre originated with Joan Littlewood and Keith Johnstone in the UK and Viola Spolin in the USA; see Johnston (1981) and Spolin (1963).
 - 5) Reid-Walsh, Jacqueline. “Pantomime”, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature*, Jack Zipes (ed.), Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN 9780195146561
 - 6) Henderson, J. “Comic Hero vs. Political Elite” pp.307-19 in Sommers, A.H.; S. Halliwell, J. Henderson, B. Zimmerman, ed.(1993). *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis*. Bari: Levante Editori.
 - 7) Special Correspondent, “Theatre: Khushal Khan Khattak brought to life”, *The Express Tribune*, Pakistan, 2013. Retrieved from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/503174/theatre-khushal-khan-khattak-brought-to-life/>
http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/pakistanarticles/caii/features/pakistan/entertainment/2012/01/18/feature-02
 - 8) “Attan - The traditional and national dance of Afghanistan”, *Virtual Afghans*, Afghanistan, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.virtualafghans.com/attan/index.asp>
 - 9) “Mathematics and Music”, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.math.niu.edu/~rusin/uses-math/music/>
 - 10) Graham, Mark. *Afghanistan in the Cinema*. University of Illinois Press, 2010.
-