

**USAGE OF DIGITAL IMAGES IN THE PLAYS BARRISTER PARVATEESHAM  
AND STRANGE LINES:**

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**Abstract**

The use of video and digital images in theatre is increased due to the development of technology and its availability. This technology is not only user friendly, but also less expensive when compare to the cost of set materials. The digital media is not only changed the way of practicing theatre, but it also opened the doors for new forms and new thoughts. The incorporation of Digital images and video in to Theatre has enhanced the visual grandeur of scenography. The usage of video images and digital images in Theatre is probably a recent phenomenon in Indian theatre. The economic liberalization has brought new changes in India. From 1990 onwards computers and internet communications are accessible in the public domain. The technologies in the computer science have drastically developed within a lap of few years. There is an ambiguity about the incorporation of video images and its use in Theatre performances. In the initial days, the video images were projected on the cyclorama to represent the interior or exterior of a fictional space, and also to communicate the conceptual ideas of a director. The Theatre festivals in India have given an opportunity to witness the contemporary practice of international theatre directors. Indian theatre practitioners are adopted new methods, technologies, approaches and methodologies of western theatre. This led to include the mediated images in Theatre performances. This paper analyses such a mediated images usage in two productions. “Barrister Parvateesham” and “Strange lines”

**Barrister Parvateesham Synopsis**

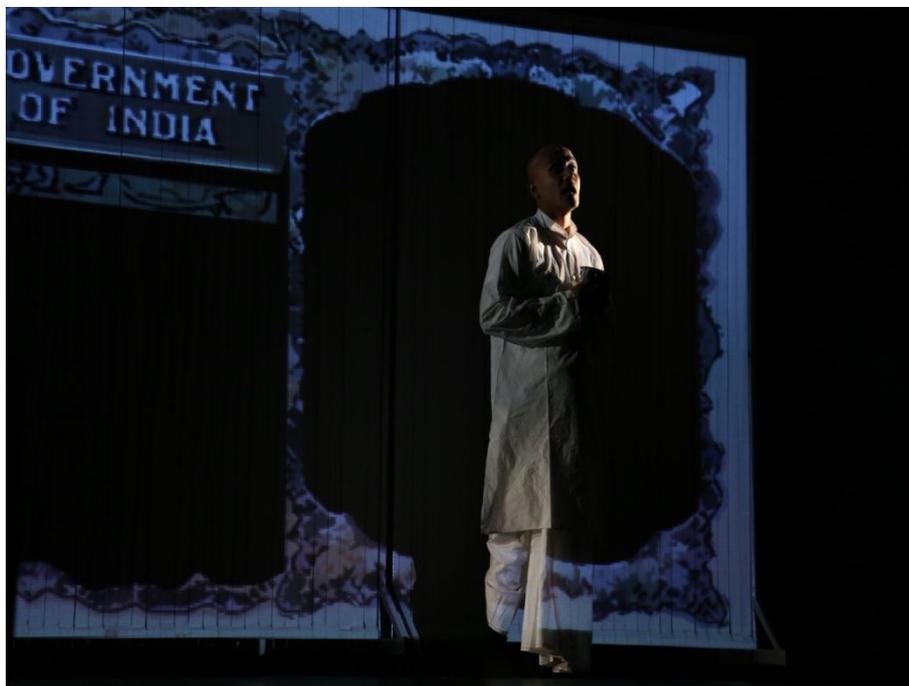
Barrister Parvateesham is a Telugu novel written by Mokkalapati Narasimha Sastry in 1924. The novel is one of the popular published novel in Telugu literature. The novel is written with comic incidents around Paravateesam, the lead of the fictional story. The character is also represented as “Indian innocent abroad”. The funniest part of Parvateesam’s life in England is communicated with a kindness. The narrative feature of the novel communicates to readers to laugh at their own “absurdities” and “incongruities”. Along with this, the novel offers to a reader to visualize social, cultural and traditional life of English people in 1920.

This novel is published in three major parts, and these parts are divided based on the geographical and emotional journey of Parvateesham. In first part, novelist, Narasimha Sastry, describes life of Parvateesham, and how he goes to England from his village Mogalthuru. The second part depicts his life in England portrays the various incidents of Parvateesham at England. The second part ends when Parvateesham returns to India as a Barrister. The third part

begins when Parvateesham reaches India and participates in the freedom movement and goes to prison for several times. The novel ends when India gets freedom, and when Parvateesham returns to his home town Mogalthuru.

### **Digital Usage**

The digital images in the play *Barrister Parvateesham* are used primarily to communicate fictional spaces. The mediated images play a vital role in the performance and it transforms the characters' experience to spectators. The set design and costume designs are evolved in keeping view of the video design. The basic purpose of the set design is to provide a space for projections, and to allow the actors move freely on the stage. The purpose of the frames on the stage is used to project the mediated images and they are interconnected with each other. The play starts with Upanayanam scene, in which a group of Purohits chants the sacred Gayatri mantra. In this scene, the lead character, Parvateesham, is also introduced during tempo of chanting is increased. The actor who plays Parvateesham character stands at upstage left, and he mimics the actions of chanting performed by Purohits. Here, the mediated image, Diya (traditional lamp), is projected on Parvateesham's body. The mediated image on the body of the character is consciously to show the complexity of the rituals in Brahman community. The next mediated image is projected on the screen in the first monologue performed by Parvateesham. The aim of the monologue is to describe the journey of Parvateesham which he takes from his home to England. During the monologue, a series of images are projected on the screen. The projected image disappears when Parvateesham completes his monologue.



*Digital Usage in Barrister Parvateesham, directed by Siva Prasad Tumu*

In the scene "Paregion Hair Cutting saloon", Parvateesham wants to make his hair short in a barber shop. The scene is presented with rhythmic and choreographed actions of haircut performed by the character, barber. The formations of

mediated images are combined with moving images of scissors and water spray. The purposes of the video images are used to communicate the fictional space barber shop.

Digital text is also used in mediated images, and the text on the screen is also part of the visual engagement to the spectators. Before he reaches marcel, he gets a ship from “Tuticorin” to Colombo. After he reaches Colombo, his tickets are conformed. Then, he writes a letter to his parents to inform that he travels to England to study Barrister. In this letter he requests permission of his parents to allow him for the studies, and also seeks blessings of their parents. The writing of the letter is captured and projected on the screen during the scene. Here, the act of writing is projected along with text of letter. Usually, the writing letter is presented in the form of reading the text loudly in most of Indian theatre performances. But, in this scene, the process of projecting the text also engages the spectators’ imagination. Thus projection of the text is also created mediated images in the play. After writing the letter, the scene moves to the location Marcel.



*Digital Usage in Barrister Parvateesham: Letter Scene. The letter is projected on the projection screens, directed by Siva Prasad Tumu.*

In the play Barrister Parvateesham, the virtual, physical and fictional spaces are visible. The virtual space is created by the computer generated graphics to represent the fictional spaces of the play. The fictional spaces are not only provides a place for the scenes, but also enhances actors’ existence in the scenes. The virtual spaces which are created with mediated images offer fictional spaces. The virtual space in this physical space is generated by the help of two different projection materials which are used in the play. The projection materials are fixed to a movable frames. The mobility has provided the facility to use the whole physical space of stage and also breaks the visual monotonous of the play. The fictional spaces are created at different places on stage which constantly engages the audience attention. Thus, the digital images are used in the Barrister Parvateesham to create fictional space, to transform the scenes, to create mood of the scene, and to give extra information of the scene.

### Synopsis of “Strange Lines”

The story of “Strange Lines” is a conversation between two young journalists, one from India and other from Switzerland. They write letters to each other about their experiences occurred in their respective countries. These experiences include the lives of people, cities, and the changing scenario of socio, economic and political conditions. The play starts with two characters that are standing at two different corners of the stage and rendering the random words. Actor’s real names are used for the characters in the play and this play is directed by Amitesh Grover.

### Digital Usage in Strange Lines

When it is compared to Barrister Parvateesham, digital images in the performance of “Strange Lines” are not recorded. These digital images are the projections of the live actors. These digital images in the performance have created a graphic quality for the performance text. They create a landscape for the performance and trigger the audience to understand and experience more about the performance. The combination of two cameras use in the performance enhanced the possibilities of incorporation of mediated images that created a language for the performance. One camera is placed in the performance space where the actors can shoot themselves and shoot the objects in the performance. The output of the camera is projected on the big white screen. The output of these images are manipulated and magnified for the purpose of conceptual demands of the director. The second camera is placed to create the landscapes of the scenery with the paintings and objects at the backdrop.



*Digital Usage in “Strange Lines”: A scene from the performance “Strange Lines”, directed by Amitesh Grover.*

The Artist, Dhirendra Dwivedi who is responsible to create these paintings while actors are performing on the stage. The second camera is placed in a unique way and it is used to capture the “live” drawing and sketching which is taking place at the performance space. A special glass table is made to fix the camera position. The two layers of glass sheets are arranged with the gap of nearly one feet or less in between them. The camera is placed under the last glass sheet. Whatever drawn on the glass sheet is captured by the camera. The output of the same camera is again projected on big white screens. The intention behind to create the visual language of the performance is somehow to represent a

graphic novel. The use of live footage which takes place in front of the audience is emphasized, magnified and manipulated through the mediatized images according to the needs of the performance language and the interpretation of the text.

For the visibility of the live drawing and sketching on the glass table, an arrangement is done with special electric lights. The glass table is made for the purpose of assembling and disassembling. To manipulate the visual images on projection screens special software called “Isadora” and “V-Mode remote” is used. Three projectors of the same company are hired with the equal luminous. With the help of both the cameras video design and all visual imagery are created while performance happening. Digital images are projected on the whole screens in selective stories. White screens are arranged in a particular distance from the projectors to get the equal proportion of image on each white screen. All three screens are joined together and fixed it. The floor is covered with a black venal to avoid the reflection of light. Utmost care has been taken to not reflect the light on screens which may bring down the brightness of the image projected on screens.

**Conclusion:** The uses of digital images in the both plays are very different and unique. These two plays stand as an example of how to use the digital images in the play and also open the new ways. The purposes of the digital images in these two theatre performances are explored and experimented.

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