

emerges theatrically: the flapping of the ears, endlessly shaking bottom and the majestic walk. One almost feels the mischievous twinkle of the tiny eyes of an elephant. Head, in this theatrical exploration becomes combination of senses. Appropriately. If innovative combination of senses enhances the aesthetic experience it also reveals how senses constitute the mind and contests the supremacy of mind over other senses. And so the performance identifies desire as the shared platform for self and other. By avoiding Aristotelian catharsis of musical ecstasy and by structuring the play to have cycles from different perspectives Veenapani Chawla keeps the affective dimension of the play within the conscious realm. In this process, the locus of creativity is rightfully in the collectivity. A collectivity that includes reflective participation of the audience. If it is so, one has to confront the performance's prominent question that bubbles with sarcasm, who owns the intellectual property right.

is an important constituent in the construction of the logic of Indian culture and civilisation. It becomes an imposition and exercise in power both for and by the state and for the popular consciousness when the notion of collective creativity or anonymous authorship is surreptitiously linked with notions of *authenticity*, *purity* and *the sacred heritage* of folk forms. Historical evidences are abounding in Indian legends and temple myths how exercises of such stately power lead to the cutting of tongues, thumbs and heads of innumerable artisans who created monumental expressions in sculpture, architecture and poetry among other arts. The twin cultural strategy of inculcating self-denial in the individual psychology of folk artists and then appropriating their works for the state in the name of purity of civilisation is a sinful blockade for understanding the real cultural processes at work. That is why intellectual property rights based on well defined notions of individual and collective authorships are important not only economically but also culturally. By the same token it is important to claim or accord authorship for specific moments, events and texts while ascertaining that not purity but creolization³ is fundamental to creativity.

Were the cut off tongues, thumbs and heads of Indian artisans to narrate their story they would retell and perform Veenapani Chawla's *Ganapati*.

Notes

1. Blake, William: *Poems and Prophecies*, David Campbell publishers Ltd, London, 1991.
2. *Fluid Signs* is the title of a major anthropological study by Valentine Daniel. He uses Peircean semiotics effectively to theorise concept of a person in Tamil way. I borrow the title to establish a playful reference.
3. Creolization is a concept used in socio-linguistics. It refers to the social creation of mixed languages in the border areas where two or more languages co-exist.

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Ganapati: Veenapani Chawla and Adishakti (Pondicherry)

Undoubtedly Veenapani Chawla's *Ganapati* is a radical breakthrough in the history of modern Indian theatre. I continue to refer to *Ganapati* as Veenapani Chawla's *Ganapati* because she has the modesty to admit that her play is a process of collective creativity. This is exactly the modesty and truth every Indian folklorist encounters whenever she meets with a folk artist. Undeniably Veenapani Chawla is true to the philosophy of her performance. But what disturbs me and prompts me to write about it in *Indian Folklife* is the genealogical rootedness of her refusal to claim authorship. As a consequence my askance for Veenapani Chawla's authorship for *Ganapati* stems from the field of folklore.

If the performance of *Ganapati* epitomizes the archetypal situation of folklore creativity embedded in community life, Veenapani chawla's refusal parallels the self-effacement of folk artists. The ascetic value of self-denial



Vinay Kumar in another Adishakti production, Brhnala