



Stages of Life Indian Theatre Autobiographies *Kathryn Hansen*

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Asia (i.e. India, Nepal, Pakistan,
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Description

Four autobiographies of early twentieth-century actors and playwrights are presented in English translation, with substantive chapters on the Parsi theatre and strategies for reading autobiography in the Indian context.

'These four autobiographies of artists and writers who shaped the Parsi theatre at its peak are as riveting as the fare that the theatre itself provided, and Kathryn Hansen's lifelong and perceptive involvement with their rumbustious enterprise infuses every word of her translation of these texts.' —*Girish Karnad, award-winning playwright, screenwriter, actor and director*

'[...] A unique book, providing vivid insiders' portraits and incisive commentary on a colorful and lively period in India's urban culture. Hansen's ground-breaking research and sharp interpretations will be of interest to scholars and students of Indian culture and notions of modernity in general.' —*Peter Manuel, John Jay College and the Graduate Centre, CUNY*

Replete with anecdote and humor, the autobiographies of this volume unveil the hidden lives of a quartet of early Indian actors and poet-playwrights – Jayshankar Sundari, Fida Husain Narsi, Narayan Prasad Betab and Radheshyam Kathavachak. Translated into English for the first time, these memoirs offer an unparalleled window into the vanished world of India's late-colonial vernacular culture. They present an insider view of India's early twentieth-century theatre and cinema, as well as provide a fresh perspective on the dynamics of the country's nationalist era. The narratives of this volume are supported by four substantive chapters treating topics such as the history of the Parsi theatre and the nature of autobiography in the Indian context, and are accompanied by notes on personages, performances, texts, and cultural institutions.

Readership: This book will engage students and scholars interested in theatre history, oral performance, colonialism, nationalism, and early cinema in South Asia. It will also appeal to scholars of autobiography, biography, and gender studies.

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About the Author

Kathryn Hansen is a leading scholar of South Asian theatre history, especially the Hindi and Urdu vernacular traditions of North India. She has authored *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India*, translated *The Parsi Theatre: Its Origins and Development*, and co-edited *A Wilderness of Possibilities: Urdu Studies in Transnational Perspective*. She holds the position of Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

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