THE INFLUENCE OF JAPANESE NOH,
BALINESE DANCE-Drama AND THE KATHAKALI
ON FOUR TWENTIETH CENTURY
WESTERN PLAYWRIGHTS

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Oriental drama has influenced twentieth century western drama in many ways. I have chosen to look at four ways that prove valuable in appreciating plays and productions of four western playwrights. Yeats’s oriental influence took the form of conscious assimilation of elements of the Japanese Noh drama. Artaud was greatly influenced by Balinese dance-drama in the formation of his theory of theatre. His production of _Les Cenci_ in 1935 was an attempt to make this theory work. Grotowski acknowledges an eastern influence but it is inalienable from the unity of his work. Brecht sensed the intellectual cohesion of the Noh in a partial translation, and finally achieved this in an ironic deviation from his incomplete source. The method of investigation is therefore different in each case. In looking at Yeats’s _Plays for Dancers_ assimilated elements are listed and discussed, while in the case of Brecht the four stages in his development towards a cohesion analogous to that of the original Buddhistic source are examined. The Balinese dance-drama crystallised some ideas and catalysed the formation of others for Artaud; his theoretical writings and his recorded technique of direction in _Les Cenci_ permit assessment of the extent of this influence. Finally the technique of training and performance of the Indian Kathakali is canvassed so that parallels and contrasts can be drawn with the work of the Polish Theatre Laboratory.

According to Frazer, the last great influx of Oriental modes of thought, which almost resulted in December 25 being a celebration of the nativity of Mithra rather than of Christ,
struck at the very foundations of Greek and Roman society:

• Oriental religions • inculcated the communion of the soul with God and its eternal salvation as the only objects worth living for, objects in comparison with which the prosperity and even the existence of the state sank into insignificance.¹

What he calls a "Selfish and immoral doctrine" created an "obsession" that "lasted for a thousand years":

The revival of Roman law, of the Aristotelian philosophy, of ancient art and literature at the close of the Middle Ages, marked the return of Europe to native ideals of life and conduct, to saner, manlier views of the world. The long halt in the march of civilisation was over. The tide of Oriental invasion had turned at last.²

Even as he wrote this the flow had begun afresh due to such people as Madame Blavatsky and Ernest Fenollosa. In fact one heretic had hoped for such a return, a century earlier.

In 1800 Friedrich Schlegel wrote of his hope for a new mythology which would synthesise the mythologies of the East and West, while incorporating past art and the "dynamic paradoxes" of modern science.³ He provided an answer to the pessimism and despair of Schiller's poem The Gods of Greece (1788) which "saw a world drained of divinity",⁴ and looked back with longing to the Greek golden age of faith. Schlegel hoped for a rebirth of the original spirit of Greece. Some eighty years later Friedrich Nietzsche realised that myth lay at the core of the live theatre performance - the spirit of Greece, he saw, was also the spirit of mankind, reaching out to all as well as being universally accessible. The four playwrights considered here also realised this and although they
all looked east for stimulus, they went about realising it in vastly different ways.

Notes
2. ibid. pp. 470-471.
4. ibid. p. 5.
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INTRODUCTION

Japanese Noh Drama

The Japanese Noh is essentially the depiction of emotional states rather than the unfolding of a plot. It arose from the merging of performed sketches, songs and dance into one performance during the fourteenth century. Between the tenth and thirteenth centuries dengaku, literally field music, and sarugaku, monkey music, separated these three elements. But Kanami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384) combined them into what became known as Noh drama. His son Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1444) was brought to the palace at Kyoto by the Shogun who was captivated by the boy's beauty and grace. Zeami raised the Noh from its almost rustic origins to the level of a court drama that became one of the most significant artistic expressions of the Muromachi period:

Zeami felt that one man - a director, actor, dancer, poet - must weld literary, musical and dance elements into a whole. Flashes of Zen Buddhist intuition would have to guide this man . . . Zeami describes how the entering actor must instantly analyse the mood of the audience and vary his singing and dancing to fit this mood. The actor, Zeami felt, must dedicate his life to the Nō with the devotion of a religious fanatic.

His treatises on the problems of creating and performing plays see the dramatist's problem as a theatrical one, not a literary one. His theories of the theatre place him in a tradition that stretches to Artaud and beyond this century.

The Noh programme of five plays was considered an artistic entity. It comprised 1) a god play, characterised by joy
and happiness, a congratulatory piece praising the gods;
2) a warrior play, characterised by refinement and elegance, in which usually a slain warrior returns as a ghost and relives his sufferings; 3) a woman play, characterised by love and attachment, rich in an elegant beauty radiating from the female protagonist; 4) a play drawn from miscellaneous varieties including so-called genzai-mono or living person pieces, and kyojo-mono or lunatic pieces which are characterised by sadness and lament - grief or unrequited love withers away the victim, jealousy gains demonic externalisation and threatens the protagonist's (usually a woman) piece of mind, or, more simply, beauty fades and dies; 5) an "auspicious" play, characterised by the supernatural or sublime, in which elves and goblins may be represented and often an important event is celebrated. The programme "clearly suggests a conception of universal order, a golden chain by which the human condition is reconciled with spiritual values."

The audience is estranged from the action. The poetic style is lyrical rather than dramatic, and much effect comes from nuance rather than direct statement. Scraps of older Japanese poems and quotations from Buddhist scriptures permeate the text. Serious punning often occurs, stimulating the intellect. The action often occurs as a memory or as a reenactment by a spirit. There is no suspense as the outcome is known, although the dance itself, depending on the ability of the dancer can break through the overall technique of alienation:

The dancing of the fierce spirit as it is controlled and finally calmed by the invocations of the holy
man, is frankly spectacular and greatly over-shadows the poetry of the finale.  

But in general a highly formalised, anti-realistic acting technique utilises a pre-ordained vocabulary of gestures and dance steps to indicate levels of emotional intensity. Intensity is also diminished by the conscious working out of an attitude involving negation of will which is attendant on the Buddhistic view of reality. It is a typical feature of Noh plots to conclude with acceptance of feudal allegiance, subservience and unalterable metaphysical laws. The costumes are exceptionally elaborate and refined, and their masks are considered great works of art.

At the conclusion of *Noh or Accomplishment* Fenollosa states:

> The beauty and power of the Noh lie in the concentration. All elements ... unite to produce a single clarified impression. ... emotion is always fixed upon idea, not upon personality.  

According to the editor of this book, Ezra Pound, this is achieved through the image: "unity lies in the image - they are built up about it as the Greek plays are built up about a single moral conviction." Richard Taylor, writing of Fenollosa sixty years later, fuses the notions of idea and image:

> ... he perceived a basic and all-pervading aesthetic principle in the synthesising and harmonious design or structuring of individual sense images which constitutes an archetypal image or symbol of reality ... 

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Balinese Dance-drama

Balinese dance drama utilises the hypnotic effect of
4.
rhythmic dancing and employs a vocabulary of gesture and movement which is understood by the initiated audience. The dance, as an expression of guided, but genuinely perceived or intuited truth may well be, as Antonin Artaud believed an organic expression of non-intellectual knowledge accessible to all.

The Balinese stage exists wherever there is space to dance, to mount a play. The stage is not sacred:

Frogs hop on the very feet of the dancers, children at intervals race across it or are carried to safety if a dangerous magic character comes too near; a little pig will perhaps emerge when we are waiting for a king.7

The drama which Artaud saw at the Colonial Exposition in 1931 would not have had these touches of ethnic authenticity, another of which would have been the mass of villagers watching the floreasted ceremonial behaviour, understanding every nuance in the apparently spontaneous free movements of the dancers.

The native spectator does not need a clearly defined plot:

... every type on the stage is equally familiar, for there is no individualisation, and no-one could possibly have his own thoughts or his own manner of producing himself, unless, ... he is a clown. Every feature is traditional, and every character can be recognized, or rather every type of character, by dress, manner of movement, order of appearance. The presence of all the right types seems to be the most important thing quite irrespective of what they do; in fact the working out of a plot seems to interest no-one ... 8

There are at least sixteen kinds of accents, many kinds of obeisance, countless movements of the feet, of cheeks and mouth, "many, many glances of the eyes", furthermore
there are manners of eyeing the ceremonial umbrellas, which change their natures according to who eyes them, for the eye creates the function; symbols of state or palace gate to the courtier, they are transformed by the intent and agitated scrutiny of the 'Baris' hero or the mythological 'Barong' into some mysterious symbol of the unknown.

The seemingly inexhaustible list goes on, and as it does one comes to agree with Grotowski when he said that Artaud was mistaken in believing that this alphabet of gestures, movements and speech sounds of the Balinese was universal. However, the author of the work just quoted concludes his chapter on dance style in a curious manner:

There is no doubt a very great difference between the capacity of one dancer and another to become possessed by his part, even in Bali, but it must, I think, in some degree happen to all. Is not the assuming of an 'attitude', without which both in ritual and in dance we may suppose the action to be incomplete, a substitute for real possession by a demon or a state of being, whichever we choose to call it? The Japanese have an expression kokoro-no-oni, 'demon at the heart', and sometimes one really feels that it is not the dancer who has assumed the attitude but the demon who has assumed the dancer, and that one is in direct contact with a state of being which in us is either entirely submerged or only rises to the surface in the fantasy of a madman.\(^9\)

*Kathakali*

The Sanskrit theatre of India flourished during the period 300 B.C. to A.D. 700, during which Kalidasa, Bhasa, and Shudraka penned the finest plays. Court patronage ended with Islamic Rulers, and when Sanskrit ceased to be a living language the living dramatic tradition died also. By the twelfth century plays were probably no longer performed;
traditions of theatre music and dance however lived on. The aim of the drama was the portrayal of emotional states (bhava) so that aesthetic delight (rasa) might be aroused in the cultivated spectator. Spiritual serenity is the ultimate goal of Sanskrit drama, it is not achieved by empathy:

Empathy, it would seem is too emotional, too gross, too uncontrolled to be compatible with the rasa aesthetic, which is based upon reflection and educated appreciation.\textsuperscript{10}

According to the Natyasastra, a long work compiled by several unknown authors by A.D. 200 and which gives detailed exposition of every aspect of theatre art, the arts of mime dance music and delivery and visual spectacle were as important as the words of the playscripts:

Movements of the head, eyebrows, nose, cheek, chin, neck, breast, eyes, and feet are catalogued. And for hands, the sign language of the mudra... specified emotion states, actions, the object or subject of an action, animals, inanimate objects, and even grammatical parts.\textsuperscript{11}

The fullest development of these codified gestures and movements is found in Indian dance, of which the Kathakali is a living example. In the case of other theatre forms, a clear demarcation can be made between dance styles and dance-drama forms, but this is not possible with the Kathakali. Kapila Vatsyayan describes it at first in terms of what it is not:

\textsf{[Kathakali]} is the culmination of a long process of evolution and assimilation of different theatrical forms existent in South India. It is not a solo dance as the contemporary Bharatanatyam. Neither is it a court dance like Kathak, nor lyrical like Manipuri. Instead, the most striking element in kathakali is its overwhelming dramatic quality; gods
and heroes, demons and spirits appear from another world in costumes and headgears which are awe-inspiring and belong exclusively to a world of myth and legend. In none of the other Indian dance styles is the entire body, both the skeleton and the muscular body, used so completely as in Kathakali.12

The structure of Indian classical drama is largely determined by the conventions of stage presentation:

Three broad principles govern the structure of Indian drama and stage presentation. The first is the principle of the modes of presentation, namely, the modes (dharmas), stage way (natyas) and realistic or the the way of the world (loka). The second consists of the different types of styles (vrittis), namely the graceful (Kaisekis), the grand (Sathavatis), the energetic (arbhati) and the verbal (bharati). The third is full play of the four types of acting (abhinayas), namely the gestures (angikas), vocal (vachikas), costume, make-up, stage props, etc. (aharyas) and involuntary, of the temperament and emotional, etc. (sattvikas).

Related to these are other principles, such as, the concept of external or irregular (bahyas) and inner or regular (abhyantras) enacting, of the local usage (pravrittis) of basic representation (samanyabhinyas) and special representation (chitrabhinyas).13

As we shall see in Chapter Four, and indeed as is indicated by the preceding concepts, this art, as typified by the Kathakali, is not limited to artificial composition. Inner technique is as important as outward expression of signs. Spirituality and formal discipline are both important to this tradition. Although Arabs, Dutch and Portuguese have left their mark on Kathakali, its fundamental spirit continues to be Hindu in character, the dance-drama has not departed from
the ancient aesthetic canons in its basic objective of evoking a state of being.

Notes


3. ibid., p. 73 (of the dance in Aoi no uge).


5. Fenollosa, p. 63.

6. Taylor, p. 35.


8. ibid., p. 18. The following two quotations are from the same source, pp. 21 and 25.


10. ibid., p. 10


12. Vatsyayan, p. 27.

13. ibid., p. 6.
Take anything you will - theatre or speech or a man's body - and develop its emotional expressiveness, and you at once increase its powers of suggestion and take away from its power of mimicry or of stating facts. The body begins to take poses or even move in a dance .... Speech becomes rhythmical, full of suggestion, and as this change takes place we begin to posess, instead of the real world of the mimics, solitudes and wildernesses peopled by divinities and daimons, vast sentiments, the desires of the heart cast forth into forms, mythological beings, a frenzied parturition.

The interest is not in the human form, but in the rhythm to which it moves, and the triumph of their art is to express the rhythm in its intensity. ¹

After Ernest Fenollosa's sudden death in 1908, Ezra Pound was eventually made literary executor. Pound edited Fenollosa's manuscripts between 1913 and 1916. He introduced Yeats to the Noh content of these manuscripts during the winter of 1913-14. Fenollosa understood Noh as ritual rather than as conventional drama: not as an imitation of life, but as life itself metamorphosed through the operation of human imagination. In his essay 'Notes on the Japanese Lyric Drama', published in 1901, he describes the Noh as a highly complex form of operatic art, whose aim is never sensational or realistic, but to lift the beholder through a refined appeal to several of his faculties, into a single state of intense and imaginative emotional impression. ²
Fenollosa required an interpreter even after sixteen years in Japan. His appreciation of the Noh did not come from reading texts, but from sharing the experience of the live performance. He tried to convey this experience through his writing.

While there is no actual evidence that Yeats read all of Fenollosa's published works, nor even all the manuscript material, Richard Taylor suggests that there is ample evidence that the principles which Pound extracted did exert a strong influence on Yeats's dance plays. These principles are:

1. That Noh is concerned with an intense emotion fixed on idea and not personality: a service of life, not the analysis of a set problem.
2. That unity of image through repetition and variation brings focus and intensification to the emotion expressed.
3. That Noh is a complete art in which poetry is assisted by music, dance and mime in expressing intense emotion.

According to Taylor, "Through his intellectual commitment to these principles, Yeats was influenced by the Noh, in which he discovered the capacity of dramatic conception and traditional structure to organise the raw material of his own art." The proof of this assertion can be found by comparing Yeats's early experimentation in Four Plays for Dancers with features of the Noh and of probable sources.

At The Hawk's Well

Taylor suggests a possible source for At The Hawk's Well in Seami Motokiyo's god-play Yoro. Pound omitted the text of this play from Noh or Accomplishment, and as a result Yeats's first dance-drama was, until quite recently, considered an original creation. As Taylor points out, "the very plot
outline of the Japanese play could not help but attract Yeats through the perenniality of its central myth.  

Taylor is referring to the motif of the quest for immortality. In Yoro the quest is subordinated to attainment. An imperial messenger comes to a place called Mino where a father and his son speak and sing of the waterfall called Yoro which perpetually consoles the old one's age with continuing life. They tell the messenger how the waters were discovered. The messenger determines to return and tell his master of the marvellous waters. In a typical piece of Noh externalisation which Yeats did not develop in any of his plays, the messenger cries

The imperial messenger fell in tears. How wonderful that I met such a thing! As he did not finish this saying -- strange! A light gleaming from heaven, the thunder of falls became quiet, music was heard, and flowers rained. It was not thought a common thing.  

At this point the god of Mt Temple appears. He is Buddha incarnate. His and the chorus's lines interweave until the chorus concludes the piece in a celebration of Buddha as the ship that reigns peacefully on the calm waters of immortality. The metaphor also relates the mundane to the scarcely imaginable by using a political, feudal vocabulary to describe the non-spatiotemporal 'reign' of Buddha.

In the first printing of the play, Yeats's attraction to the myth is evident in the title:

At the Hawk's Well  
or 'Waters of Immortality'  
by William Butler Yeats.

However it is not through the waters themselves that Cuchulain
achieves immortality. It is through his quest for those waters. The subtitle focuses on the miraculous waters of regeneration which are central to *Yoro* but instrumental in *At The Hawk's Well*. The next printing was titled:

*At the Hawk's Well: A Play.*

thereby directing attention towards the activity that happens at the well and away from the actual waters. This is the first indication of deviation from the source, which was necessitated by Yeats's transference of the central myth into the framework of the Cuchulain story. Further deviation is evident to the extent that the original myth is virtually inverted throughout.

The well is dry, the tree stripped bare, and the young man's heroic aspirations are thwarted, in direct contrast with the source. The language of the dialogue is discursive rather than discontinuous and imagistic. The presence of the supernatural is signified by war cries and the beating of swords on shields as opposed to described light, music and flowers. On the way to the well Cuchulain traverses a desolate mountain landscape whereas the Imperial messenger in *Yoro* passes through a peaceful and prosperous land. Yeats uses an active and dramatic verse form to create a situation of conflict where completed movements are realistic though movement itself is ritualistic. Zeami, and Noh playwrights in general, "recreate the emotional quality of an incident or experience through the ritualised induction of the spectator's imagination," without recourse to realistic stage action or Renaissance conventions of character conflict.

As regards faithfulness to the source, assimilation is
evident in the areas of construction, movement, mythopoeia, characterisation, production conditions, and the use of music and masks.

The general outline of dramatic construction is very similar to that of Zeami's play. Song and ceremonial dialogue build the Japanese play to its most intense point, and after the appearance of the ceremonial god of Mount Temple, the chorus penetrates the action immediately. In the same way, musicians and characters build the modern play to its climax, at which point the musicians immediately penetrate the action. It is however, a notable difference that intensity in Yeats relies on tension - the stage is taut with impulse and dilemma - whereas in Yoro the stage is calm, the movement graceful. Similarly, the principle characters return to effect a conventional western dénouement in Yeats's play, whereas they simply and effectively fade from the scene in Yoro.

Yeats's unwillingness to completely relinquish western conventions resulted in a completely different kind of dramatic effect being generated in *At the Hawk's Well*. He vacated the stage area at a crucial moment in the action, a moment to which it appeared he had been leading throughout the discursive dialogue. In other words he combined the western tradition of a quasi-dialectical development of plot, characterisation and dramatic lyricism with the eastern convention of removing the protagonist from the stage after a past event has been related or re-enacted. However the Japanese convention demands a comic interlude between the second and third sections, after which the protagonist returns, this time in his true colours as a god or a demon, and his culminating dance encapsulates the non-verbal pedagogy of Zen Buddhism which the spectator
in turn intuits. Yeats would have none of this. He gave the culminating dance to the Hawk which draws Cuchulain away from the well in a trance. With both the dance over and the protagonist gone the audience is required to fill the void thus created with the realisation that in pursuing his heroic impulse Cuchulain has missed his plane to immortality. With the dramatic void filled with this realisation, the rhythmic lyricism of the musicians' song maintains the momentum of the piece. This comes at a crucial stage, and we cannot disregard Yeats's written statement on the purpose of rhythm:

To prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols. 14

The main thing hindering complete realisation of this idea is the fact that the Cuchulain myth is not one with which most people can identify. The symbols used in the lyric passage reiterate the central concerns of the narrative aspect of the play:

He has lost what may not be found
Till men heap his burial mound
And all the history ends.
He might have lived at his ease
An old dog's head on his knees,
Among his children and friends. 15

The death-reference, the hypothetical nature of the traditional Irish hearth-images remind us that Cuchulain has lost his peace of mind. He must now strive for immortality which he will gain but can never enjoy because it will always be achieved as a function of his striving. There is a paradox
in this, a paradox that affirms the necessity of heroism in the quest for immortality. It is not a universal paradox. Life is full of paradoxes but not all paradoxes are universally accessible. So not only are the symbols of the rhythmic lyrical passage following the high point not archetypal, the myth itself is culture specific in the sense that only members of a specific culture accept its truthfulness.

Both Yoro and At the Hawk's Well rely on the authority of ancient legend and literature: and both depend on established associations of legendary actions with specific locales. The former is responsible for much of the inaccessibility of classical Noh drama to modern scholars. Faubion Bowers, who was censor of the theatre in 1947 and 1948 for the occupation government in Tokyo, describes the problem:

The sentences of exaggeratedly polite syntax are complicated by obscure Buddhist references, derivations from the Chinese, and phrases from now-forgotten poems and songs. Yeats relies on Lady Gregory's Cuchulain of Muirthemne (1902) as a source book for much older legends. The difference is that the tenets of Zen Buddhism and the quotations which are obscure to modern scholars were in all probability familiar to the contemporary Noh audience, whereas Yeats was trying to resuscitate a lost mythology. His audiences for the dance plays were sophisticated culture-snobs. The people of Ireland rejected his plays in favour of the growing politicism of the Abbey Theatre.

The source for Yoro is the legend surrounding the waterfall at Mino. The source for At the Hawk's Well is the legend surrounding Cuchulain's youthful affair with Aoife in Scotland. Cuchulain says "I have an ancient house beyond the
sea" (Variorum, p. 403), and since Cuchulain's overseas experience was limited to Scotland the action is slotted into a recognizable locale and narrative context for the spectator who is aware of the furnishing source.

Despite this localisation, the characters themselves are not totally particularised. Curtis Bradford suggests that the depersonalised descriptions, Old Man and Young Man, tend to universalise the action by directing attention to its allegorical possibilities. His suggestion is further strengthened by the way Cuchulain's name is shouted at the moment of greatest futility. The usually powerful naming ritual is therefore undermined. But the characters are not types, they lose significance if they are removed from their mythological context. In this case the particular is stronger than the typical.

Noh plays were performed in full daylight, even outdoors, their bare stages lacked any trace of illusionism. Yeats prescribes normal lighting, and directs that "The stage [be] any bare space before a wall" (Variorum, p. 398). He also remarks in his stage directions that "The most effective lighting is the lighting we are accustomed to in our rooms. These masked players seem stranger when there is no mechanical means of separating them from us." (Variorum, pp. 398-399). Yeats wanted the characters to intrude into the realities of the spectators. Up to this time, western audiences had been subjected to myriad varieties of effects and devices aimed at gulling them into a state where disbelief is suspended for a while. Yeats, in wanting the masked players to seem stranger, clearly wanted to impinge on reality, not help the audience to forget it. Fenollosa's production notes and marginalia would
have provided Yeats with several more effective means of achieving estrangement or alienation; but it seems likely that just as Poind omitted these notes — notes that raise the plays above the level of mere written texts — from the final publication of the translations, he also omitted to show them to Yeats.

Music plays an important role in Noh and Yeats plays. In Noh, the chorus sings in unison, confined to an interval of a fifth which is filled with various melismata. The instruments played are the hand tabor, which is held over the shoulder and struck with the palm of the hand, a hand drum balanced on the knee and played with two drum sticks, and a high sharp flute. Yeats prefers a drum, a gong and a zither. The same instruments are used in The Only Jealousy of Emer, in which the characters and musicians are made up as in At the Hawk’s Well. The stage "as before can be against the wall of any room, and the same black cloth can be used. . . ."18

The Only Jealousy of Emer

Richard Taylor again argues convincingly in favour of a Japanese model. The Noh play on which, he postulates, Yeats based his play was the lunatic piece Aoi No Ue. This play is about jealousy. It opens with the death bed of Lady Aoi. According to Mrs. Fenollosa, "Awoi, her struggles, sickness, and death are represented by a red, flowered kimono, folded length-wise, and laid at the front edge of the stage."19 The demon of jealousy appears in the shape of one of Lady Aoi’s husband’s lovers, the Princess Rokujo. She throws herself on the death bed, striking it repeatedly. An exorcist is summoned. He drives out the manifestation. The demon then returns in her
true shape, "Clothed in a scarlet hakama, white upper dress, and "The terrible mask with golden eyes." The dance climax of the play follows. The exorcist continues his incantations, aided by the chorus. The demon cannot stand the "terrible names of the spirits" and is overcome. She leaves, and will never be able to return.

Taylor believes that Yeats adapted elements of this lunatic-piece to create a work that gave dramatic expression to his own ideas:

Using the plot structure and character relationships of Aoi no ue, Yeats was able to rework the basic action of the old Irish romance; and to include the belief system he had forged in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and Desolate Places.' (1914, and Per Amica Silentia Lunae (1918)).

Taylor justifies this assertion by first citing the adaptation from the Noh. Eithne Inguba and Fand are seen respectively as the beautiful and demented externalisations of Emer's passion, in the same way as the Princess and the demon are for Lady Aoi. The dance of Fand corresponds with the purging demon's dance in Aoi no ue. Emer rejects jealousy for a pure and beautiful form of love. Extending the analogy a little, Bricriu and the Ghost of Cuchulain can be seen as manifestations of Cuchulain. Taylor locates a relevant account of such a scheme of relationships in Yeats's A Vision:

When my instructors see woman as man's goal and limit, rather than as mother, they symbolise her as a Mask and Body of Fate, object of desire and object of thought, the one a perpetual rediscovery of what the other destroys ... and they set this double opposite in perpetual opposition to Will and Creative Mind.
Cuchulain is attracted imaginatively to Fand and physically to Eithne Inguba. In opposition, Bricriu is a manifestation of 'affirmation of will' while the Ghost of Cuchulain is a figure of spontaneous heroism, creative quest of the ideal. This is supported by such textual features as the instruction that Fand should be made up to seem "more an idol than a human being" (Variorum, p. 551).

While Yeats succeeded in including his complicated system in this play, he had to sacrifice certain qualities which had given At the Hawk's Well added power. The structure of The Only Jealousy of Emer is less firm. In Aoi no ue, the dance is the climax; the dance of the fierce spirit as it is controlled and finally calmed by the invocations of the exorcist is spectacular and greatly overshadows the poetry of the finale. Yeats complicates the simple ritual of the lunatic piece into a conceptually tightly woven fabric that subordinates the dance to a significant action in the unfolding drama. Fand's dance is alluring, inviting Cuchulain to worship her, to desire her imaginatively. The dance is significant only in the more important series of interactions that culminate in Emer's sacrifice. The concept of dispossession loses significance within the framework of Yeats's 'system'. Furthermore, the imagistic and anti-illusionistic method of the Noh is replaced by a surface realism that, to a greater extent than in At the Hawk's Well, draws attention towards the plot development and away from possible apprehension of the archetypal or universal. This is further encouraged by the sick-bed, which was represented symbolically in the Japanese play by a piece of cloth, and is 'represented' in Yeats's
play, by a bed. This naturalistic device intrudes on the Noh-like symbolism.

The Noh method of movement is a controlled and carefully executed discipline. It requires specific physical attitudes such as legs bent at the knees, hands usually on the front of the thighs, head raised. The actor takes short steps. When he moves he can give the appearance of flight with all its suddenness and grace. This method is taken to the extremes of expression in the culminating dance which bears a direct relationship to the preceding and consequent action. The dance of Fand does not occur at the moment of highest intensity. It therefore stresses the Ghost of Cuchulain-Fand relationship with all the force of a climax. It upsets the equilibrium of the conceptual framework by increasing the bewitching quality of Fand's attraction for Cuchulain.

Yeats counters this emphasis through the conventional western device of suspense. Bricriu entices Emer's renunciation out of her by describing the movement of Ghost of Cuchulain towards Fand's chariot:

Emer: No, I never will give that cry.
Figure of Cuchulain: Fool, fool!
I am Fand's enemy come to thwart her will,
And you stand gaping there, There is still time.
Hear how the horses trample on the shore,
Hear how they trample! She has mounted up.
Cuchulain's not beside her in the chariot.
There is still a moment left: cry out, cry out!
Renounce him, and her power is at an end.
Cuchulain's foot is on the chariot-step.
Cry -
Emer: I renounce Cuchulain's love for ever.

(Variorum pp. 559-561)
Suspense increases the dramatic moment, and raises Emer's sacrifice to heroic proportions.

In his notes to the play Yeats returns to the subject of heroism:

Here in Ireland we have come to think of self-sacrifice, when worthy of public honour, as the act of some man at the moment when he is least himself, most completely the crowd. The heroic act, as it descends through tradition, is an act done because a man is himself, because, being himself, he can ask nothing of other men but room amid remembered tragedies: a sacrifice of himself to himself, almost, so little may he bargain, of the moment to the moment.

Emer's sacrifice, then, is heroic to the extent that she is most completely herself at the moment of renouncement. Her jealousy is defeated by her loving nature. Her act is heroic in the traditional sense.

The Only Jealousy of Emer is a complex achievement. Yeats uses the plot structure and character relationships of Aoi no ue, reworks the old Irish romance, and includes his personal belief system, but he also uses the dance as a device to upset the equilibrium of this system. The necessary response to this violation is Emer's heroic act.

The Dreaming of the Bones

It is generally accepted that the basic structure of the third of Yeats's dance plays derives from the Noh play Nishikiqiqi. Fenollosa states:

Among the most weird and delicately poetic pieces is Nishikiqiqi, in which the hero and heroine are the ghosts of two lovers who died unmarried a
hundred years before. Their spirits are in the course of the play united near a hillside grave where their bodies had long lain together. This spiritual union is brought about by the piety of the priest. Action, words, and music are vague and ghostly shadows. The lover, as a young man, had waited before the girl's door every night for months, but she, from ignorance or coquetry, had refused to notice him. Then he died of despair. She repented of her cruelty and died also.  

Nishikigi is based on the belief that the dead dream back for a certain time after their death through some of the thoughts and deeds of life; this is a kind of first premise which we accept imaginatively. The play opens with a priest talking of his wish to "go as far as the earth goes." His discourse appears mundane in the extreme when contrasted with the lyrical beauty of the lovers' first lines, which they recite or sing in unison. The priest comments on the strangeness of the pair, who tell the story behind the nishikigi, wands used as a love charm by the male suitor which the girl must acknowledge to effect a union. Should she fail to do so the lover is unrequited, and may even die as a result. The priest asks the couple to show him the way to the cave where one such unrequited lover is buried. Amid autumn and night images the lovers exit. In the second part of Pound's text - he took no notice of the three part structure of the Noh - the priest's sleep at the mouth of the cave is disturbed. The lovers re-enact their story, seeking liberation. This is granted at the peak of a climactic dance and the couple enter eternity united. The chorus concludes by referring to the play as a dream during the priest's sleep:
We ask you do not awake,
We all will wither away.
The wands and this cloth of a dream.
Now you will come out of sleep,
You tread the border and nothing
Awaits you. 31

In Yeats's play, as in the Japanese source, a stock figure (Young Man) meets a man and a woman. They journey together and talk of past motives and actions. They pass a burial ground. The two bound souls dance, but whereas in the Noh play their movements reflect their joy at eventual release, Yeats's characters express their continuing anguish, for they are not released from their suffering.

The active part of Yeats's play is framed by the song and spoken lyrics of the chorus. This differs from the original. Indeed all four of the modern plays reveal a typical Noh-Yeatsian construction that owes much to the Japanese but represents a unique blend of eastern and western elements. It consists of a lyrical prologue, introduction, characters approaching the typical, conflict, symbolic arrangements of images, a dance which is significant in the overall action, and lyrical epilogue.

Apart from this formal assimilation, The Dreaming of the Bones employs similar dramatic method to the Noh. The way the characters speak of themselves in an externally inert manner that belies the passionate subject matter is closely akin to the Noh method as transposed in the Pound-Fenollosa texts. The stylisation necessary to convey the impression of a journey is Noh-like.

But while Yeats follows the practice of the Noh more closely than in any of the other plays, it is the deviations
from his particular source Nishikiqi that stand out and give the play its character. Consider the action which occurs prior to the opening of each play. The girl's failure to acknowledge the nishikiqi of her suitor is remedied through the re-enactment. This is encouraged by the purposeful and dynamic physique of the play. The journey is a physical representation of a development from premise to conclusion. The liberation of the lovers comes as the natural end to a progression that is apparent in the verbalisation, the structure, and the stage directions. Yeats, however, does not release his lovers. Their defiance of ritual is more serious than that of the lovers in Nishikiqi. As the Young Girl puts it, "that most miserable, most accursed pair / Who sold their country into slavery" can never be forgiven. There is no indication in the Pound-Fenollosa text that the characters should move in a circle round the stage. I believe we are justified in treating this stage direction of Yeats's as a deviation from his source. In fact, according to F.A.C. Wilson (Yeats's Iconography p. 217) circling the stage is a Noh convention meaning "going on a journey." But the convention in Japan means travelling linearly. Yeats's use of it exaggerates the geometry because the stage direction is unconventional in the West. It is a most effective one, for the characters describe a figure that ends where it begins. In the same manner the suffering of the characters is not ameliorated. Yeats transfers the integrity of the Japanese play to his play.

In The Dreaming of the Bones, the dance brings the play to its climax. It reflects the essential nature of Diarmuid's
and Dervorgilla's suffering, and reveals to the Young Man that the other two characters are supernatural:

   Why do you dance?
   Why do you gaze, and with so passionate eyes,
   One on the other; and then turn away,
   Covering your eyes, and weave it in a dance?
   Who are you? What are you? you are not natural.

   (Variorum p. 774)

As such the dance has become more than what Peter Ure, writing of the dances in *Dreaming of the Bones* and *Calvary*, has called "a bit of subordinate styling." \(^{32}\) After the Stranger and Young Girl go out the Young Man cries "I had almost yielded and forgiven it all", which although the lovers would be freed from their pain, he could never do.

This deviation from the text is justified in another way. The Young Man is not a priest wandering the world and wishing to explore it to the full. He is a revolutionary on the run from the police and English troopers. The actions of the lovers seven hundred years earlier are directly related to the present trouble. He speaks for the youth of Ireland in continuing the condemnation of Diarmuid and Dervorgilla. Their action was the result of private passion, an attempt to gain temporal satisfaction. Had they acted heroically, instead of enlisting help from the Normans, liberation would have been possible.

This harboured resentment of the long Irish memory is alien to most of us. Within the play it provides the rational justification for the refusal. However the play itself tends to draw attention to itself rather than expanding into our lives. Yeats was afraid the subject matter may have been too volatile for the times, and it was not produced
until 1931. The presentation of some myths on the stage have the effect of fusing with our own concerns, of diffusing into our lives. This play, and to a large extent the other two plays for dancers discussed so far, are, in this sense, convergent - they require an effort of concentration.

This is partly caused by Yeats's preoccupation with the heroic ideal. If he was aiming to achieve universality in his plays Yeats failed to take account of the fact that people's attitudes to heroic actions are determined by experience. Joseph L. Henderson, in an essay on Jung, states:

... the essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual's ego-consciousness - his awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses - in a manner that will equip him for the arduous tasks with which life confronts him. Once the individual has passed his initial test and can enter the mature phase of life, the hero myth loses its relevance.\(^33\)

For the mature spectator, therefore, the heroic ideal is largely irrelevant. It is not enough to departicularise the characters into Young Man and Stranger, the myth itself must be archetypal.

**Calvary**

Perhaps this is why Yeats turned to the Christian mythos for the last of his early dance plays, *Calvary* (1920). A woman-piece Kakitsubata appears to have been used as a model. In this Japanese Noh play a Flower Spirit manifests itself first as a local maiden, and in the second part of the Pound-Fenollosa text as the Spirit of the Flowers. Interior psychic states and subjective emotion are expressed through language, dance and costume.
A travelling priest stops by the iris of Kakitsubata. While admiring the flowers in their prime a woman speaks to him of the flowers' fame. She asserts that a certain prince (Narihira) had loved this spot best of all. The chorus completes the spirit's poem and hints at a deeper significance: a man bound by love returns many times in his thoughts to his beloved. The spirit then leaves the stage to change the clothes of a simple young girl for those of "the great lady beloved of old Narihira. She wears a black hoshiben crest or hat, an overdress of gauze, purple with golden flowers, an underdress of glaring orange with green and gold pattern." The lover of Narihira reveals herself as Kakitsubata, the spirit of the iris. Narihira, passing the iris centuries before had thought of his lover who became manifest in them through the operation of his emotional, unconscious memory. The spirit then dances as she danced when she stole Narihira's heart. The chorus's lines interweave with Kakitsubata's and it eventually obscures the bright dancer. The stage direction reads, "The spirit is going away, leaving its apparition, which fades as it returns to the aether", and the Spirit cries "It is only the cracked husk of the locust."35

Richard Taylor suggests the relationship between Calvary and Kakitsubata:

... the Flower Spirit is replaced by the figure of Christ, who relives his passion in imagination and projects in his mind the troubling, antithetical figures that plague his thought and bind his spirit to its purgatorial recreations. The apparitions in Kakitsubata are transposed in Calvary as Lazarus, Judas and the Roman Soldiers who cumulatively occasion Christ's cry of intellectual despair: 'My Father, why hast thou forsaken me?'36
If we look at the play from this angle, none of the characters except Christ is real, they are manifestations of Christ's imagination, externalisations of interior beings within his mind. The play therefore lacks action in the conventional sense. It is an unavoidable confrontation between Christ and his failures. Helen Vendler comments:

The types of "intellectual despair" and of "objectivity" which the play sets in opposition to Christ are not, then, simply contrasts to Him: they have been made what they are by Christ. The play is concerned with the interaction of objective and subjective life, the double interlocking gyres. 37

This interaction gains a stability at the close of the play. The idea of the interlocking gyres is suggested by the rotation of the soldiers as they dance around the figure of Christ, his arms stretched out on a cross which is held up by Judas. Were it not for the absence of Lazarus from this icon-in-motion, the climactic "dance" would totally encapsulate the preceding confrontations. As it is, the moving structure captures the reality of the inescapable suffering involved in Christ's sacrifice. It traps Christ in the web of interactions he has created. His presence alone balances the negative and indifferent forces of Judas and the soldiers. If he lapsed for a moment the structure would collapse. Christ is forced to realise that his sacrifice is not for those who lie as Yeats puts it "beyond His sympathy." 38

Yeats, then, draws significantly on Kakitsubata in presenting Judas, the soldiers, and Lazarus as externalisations of Christ's thought, and combines this with a living structure that dominates the conclusion. The play presents a dynamic symbol of a particular scheme of existence. Unlike Yeats's
system which is propounded in The Only Jealousy of Emer, and unlike the heroic ideal which, while being cross-cultural, appeals to a society in times of crisis, Calvary presents us with a play which neither excludes because of an elitist ideal nor limits accessibility on account of its being more complicated than life itself.

Jung defines archetype as "a tendency to form ... representations of a motif ... that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern." If, as Jung suggests, archetypes "are, indeed, an instinctive trend, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies," then Calvary is an embodiment of this tendency. Yeats's archetype manifests itself in the form of organic mandalas to which, in turn, we can react. Our response is unhindered.

This kind of theatre, in which the play is a dream of the playwright that reveals a basic identifiable pattern, has forefathers in Strindberg's expressionism or many of the plays referred to in Lionel Abel's Metatheatre. The achievement of Calvary is that the drama is not enclosed within esoteric boundaries; it has open borders; it invites the spectator. Yeats no longer relies on the terpsichorean expertise of an actor-dancer, for he has choreographed his play with directions that enable almost any actor with minimal training to carry them out.

Since Yeats never formulated a technique of actor training to coincide with his idea of the theatre, this method of making plays is entirely valid as it does not require special training on the part of the actor. Artaud, later in
the century, recognized the importance not of the author of a
play but of the playwright who makes plays, who is involved in
the process of putting them on the stage. Brecht also guided
the actors through his instructions in the text and through
personal contact with the people who acted in his plays. He
took this further, however, and devised a theory and technique
of acting which would more effectively contribute to a whole-
ness in the live performance. Grotowski also recognized the
need for a theory and technique of training and performance.

In Calvary Yeats adapted his Japanese model and created
a new work from it. This new work is analogous to the works
of the Balinese as Artaud describes them, with their strong
emphasis on the 'mise-en-scène'. His other plays in Four
Plays for Dancers tend to be exclusive because of the conver-
gent nature of the heroic ideal. This one presents us with
certain scenes, in which certain ideas are presented such as
Judas's "if a man betrays a God / he is the stronger of the
two." But the play does not encourage elitism, because the
central concerns are bluntly stated, and appreciation does
not depend on sympathy with the author or his ideas. Although
Yeats's play is a symbolist drama and does not appear to have
anything in common with Brecht's didactic plays, it was
towards this objective cohesion that Brecht was aiming in his
adaptations of the Noh play Taniko.

Notes
1. Ernest Fenollosa: it was regrettably impossible to locate
the source of this quotation.
2. Journal of the American Oriental Society 22 (1901),
pp. 129-137.
3. Quoted in Taylor, p. 64.

4. ibid. p. 64.


7. Yeats and the Theatre, p. 150.

8. As Hiro Ishibashi notes in Yeats and the Noh: Types of Japanese Beauty and their Reflection in Yeats's Plays (Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1966) being No. 6 of the Dolmen Press Yeats Centenary Papers, p. 141, "The highest experience the Noh aims to mirror is in that realm which is entirely beyond the present dimension."


10. ibid. p. 399.

11. Although the dance style of Michio Itow is expressive and lyrical, Yeats gives all units of movement a realistic intention which increases their causal, narrative function. See Appendix for a description of his style.

12. Taylor, p. 129.

13. Faubion Bowers, Japanese Theatre (Charles E. Tuttle company, Ryeland, Vermont & Tokyo, 1974) p. 18:
   Jo - the opening section starts with the entrance of the side character or foil (waki). He introduces himself by name, rank, and states his purpose for
appearing. There ensues a "travel song" (shidai, or more commonly called, michiyuki, "road going", especially in Kabuki where it is also a familiar convention). During the "travel-song" which is sung by the chorus, the side character moves, and it is understood that he has reached his destination. The protagonist (shite), who may also be accompanied by followers (tsure), then enters; he is frequently a character in disguise. The protagonist and the side character converse (mondo, literally, "questions and answers"). Through their conversation the plot is laid, and the audience is informed of all events and tensions necessary to the theme of the play.

Ha - during the middle section the protagonist dances what is technically called kuse (derived from a folk dance of the period, kuse-no-mai, now no longer practised). The dance usually represents in stylized action a physical re-enactment of a prior event. He returns from the centre of the stage. A comic interlude (ai-kyogen), but performed by extraneous characters who speak in informal, colloquial language, then follows.

Kyu - the final and most dramatic section is when the protagonist reappears; this time in his true colours; often as a ghost or demon. He dances a climactic dance, resolving the plot, and the play ends. Performers, chorus, and musicians silently leave the stage.

14. William Butler Yeats, Essays and Introductions (Macmillan
33.


20. ibid., p. 120.

21. ibid., p. 121.

22. Taylor, p. 143. The "old Irish romance" is Serglige Cuchulain (The Sick-bed of Cuchulain).


25. ibid., p. 73.

26. Yeats and the Theatre, pp. 138-139.

27. Variorum, pp. 569-570.


29. Pound and Fenollosa, p. 73.

30. ibid., p. 76.

31. ibid., p. 88.


34. Pound and Fenollosa p. 125.
35. ibid., p. 130.
38. Variorum, P. 790.
39. 'Approaching the Unconscious', *Man and his Symbols*, p. 58.
40. ibid.
CHAPTER 2

BRECHT: THE JASAGER MOTIF

The impact of Oriental drama manifests itself in several ways in the theatre of Bertolt Brecht. Andrzej Wirth's division of this impact into the areas of ideology and aesthetics, of dramaturgy and language, of acting and staging, and of settings and music provides a useful framework for study. For the purposes of this study, however, we shall restrict ourselves to the problem of intellectual cohesion.

Noh drama is based on the Amidist strain of Buddhism. This informs the plays with a constant ideological core. The worship of Boddhisattvas who alleviate man's sufferings and the emphasis on satori or enlightenment provide a viable model which survives not only on the imagistic plane which Yeats exploited, but also on a level that engages the intellect in a compelling enquiry. Brecht responded to this intellectual vitality, relinquishing dance, emotional description, and imaginative and overall symbolic design, in favour of the provocative concept.

In the Noh play Taniko a leader of the Yamabushi religious sect is about to set off on a pilgrimage with some followers. The journey up the mountain is "an especially arduous act of austerity", yet the young boy he visits before departing insists on going with the leader so that he may pray for his sick mother's recovery. On the journey the boy falls ill. An ancient rule demands that anyone who falls ill upon this pilgrimage must be put to death. The Leader is reluctant to carry out the Valley Rite, but he and pilgrims sadly carry it
out after the boy willingly accedes to the tradition. The Leader then succumbs to remorse and demands that he should also be put to death as "grief and sickness are the same thing". At this point all the pilgrims pray to their founder and to their Guardian King asking them to bring the boy back to life. The Founder appears and the boy is restored to life.

The original Taniko confirms the belief in a chain of existence. The boy, then, was correct in accepting his fate because he saw it as part of a larger pattern. The pilgrims' reluctance and the Leader's subsequent remorse is therefore seen as a weakness.

Arthur Waley's 1921 translation of Taniko is incomplete. He omits several scenes, completely neglecting the conclusion where the boy is brought back to life, and introduces new implications through these omissions and through his translation. According to Waley, the play is about "the ruthless exactions of religion", and he prejudices the reader even more by quoting in a preliminary note, a description from the Genji Monogatari, which recalls "a crowd of evil-looking Yamabushi, desperate, stick-at-nothing fellows". These pilgrims throw the boy into the Valley, "heaving blindly, / None guiltier than his neighbour". Their reluctance evaporates into resignation, "sighing for the sad ways of the world / And the bitter ordinances of it." Their sacrifice is made to seem brutal, unnecessary. The boy's sacrifice is also made to appear unjustified by the omission of the conclusion. Elizabeth Hauptmann faithfully translated this partial translation into German in 1929, and it was this which Brecht used
as his source for four of his didactic plays.

The lack of intellectual cohesion in Waley's translation must be reckoned as a major cause for the four variations on the motif of self-sacrifice which Brecht wrote in 1929-30. If Waley's 'translation' plucks the events out of their true religious context, Brecht's first version of He Who Says Yes is an even more radical secularisation. In it the ritual of mountain climbing becomes a research expedition. But the group never mentions doctors beyond the mountains. The boy's motivation differs from the group's as he joins the expedition in order to bring back medicine as well as instruction for his mother. When the boy falls ill, his agreement to his murder takes the shape of acquiescence to inevitability. The necessity for the sacrifice is not clear. After their staging of the play, students of the Karl Marx School pointed this out. Brecht evidently accepted their criticism that the killing lacked a rational basis, for he then wrote He Who Says No which reverses the conclusion, and a second version of He Who Says Yes which preserves the sacrifice but alters the motivation. It is now accepted that these two new plays together constitute a new version of the first He Who Says Yes.7

In He Who Says Yes / He Who Says No the research journey becomes a rescue mission. The group hopes to bring back medicine and instruction which will save its city from an epidemic. The boy joins the expedition for a private and a social motive. His mother is ill, but his townspeople are also dying. The second He Who Says Yes however belies its title, for the sick boy does not agree to the necessity of
self-sacrifice. He realises the necessity of being left behind and then requests that the rest of the group throw him into the valley. The sacrifice is inherent in the passivity of being left behind, but in my opinion it is quite another matter to then request that his companions kill him. At this point compassion enters the argument for the boy is sure to die in the mountains. The polemic has shifted from its rational basis. In *He Who Says No* the 'Great Custom' of Taniko is resuscitated, only to be rejected. The boy refuses to submit to the tradition that demands his death. He personifies a rational revolutionary attitude which refuses to conform to conventional ideas of heroism, and the group decides to return. The play achieves a unity through this cohesion but fails to resolve the problem of how to justify self-sacrifice whilst removing it from the misleading religious context and placing it in a revolutionary one. Esslin wrote: "Brecht, always open to change his mind, turned *He Who Says Yes* into *He Who Says No*. But this did not correspond to his yearning for discipline. And so he returned to the subject in his first real masterpiece, *The Measures Taken.*"

In *The Measures Taken* a group of four agitators, three men and one woman, cross over from the Soviet Union into British controlled China. Their aim is to combat exploitation and ignorance by spreading the teachings of the revolutionary classicists. They extinguish their individuality by putting on masks. The British have cannons ready to fire on innocent citizens if Soviet agitators are found to be at work among the people. They must not be discovered. A Young Comrade who
wants to do the right thing, persistently does the wrong thing. In one scene he falls prey to pity, in another he cannot sustain his act of double dealing with the authorities. Finally the Young Comrade refuses to believe that the new leader of the unemployed is an agent of the merchants. He cannot convince the Agitators otherwise and nor can they convince him of the truth of their information. He tears off his mask, rips up the teachings of the classics, and in what the Agitators see as a desire for heroism of the hour threatens the anonymity of the agitators by screaming, "We have come to help you, we have come from Moscow" and makes to join a march which the leader of the unemployed is leading into an ambush. The Agitators strike him down and carry him off. In the eighth scene, 'The Measures Taken', the Agitators agree that they must kill the Young Comrade. They put this to him and the Comrade agrees that he has acted falsely, that he is a hindrance, that it were "better if I had not been here." He cannot kill himself however, and he asks for help from the Agitators who shoot him and throw him into a lime-pit. They then return to the city to take advantage of the unrest there.

Brecht carefully builds up the indiscretions of the Young Comrade. In eight scenes, each as long as any of the playlets discussed above, he makes us think dialectically. We do not think of rejecting the basic premise that if anyone endangers the movement he must be eliminated. The questioning of this would deprive the play of its effect, so Brecht introduces it to us in a form we cannot reject. The Agitators agree that if one of them gets wounded he must not be found. The measures
taken in the last scene embody a natural dialectic development from the first scene. The spectator is drawn in to this process. He is encouraged towards the same conclusions as the characters reach. He gains the ability to think dialectically. The action of the agitators has a rational basis. The motif of self-sacrifice has been successfully lifted out of its religious context and placed in a new secular one. In this way *The Measures Taken* coheres as the playlets do not. It has the same intellectual cohesion as the original *Taniko* which praises the actions of the pilgrims after they have acted in sacrificing the willing boy. The agitators' reluctance to kill is not directly stated as it is in the original, but is evident from their tolerance of the youth's indiscretions. The boy comes to see his death as the conclusion of an integrated, intra-related process. He comes to see the necessity of his death in terms very similar to the Buddhistic belief of a chain of existence. Furthermore, this play is very much a play for the spectator. The earlier versions were primarily intended to stimulate the actors themselves to think about and come to terms with the problem of surrendering self to the collective. This play was produced at the Baden-Baden Music Festival in 1929. In 1936 Brecht wrote: "Several workers' choruses joined in performing it. The chorus consisted of 400 singers, while several prominent actors played the solo parts. The music was by Hans Eisler". He evidently felt happy with this final container of the 'Yes-Sayer' theme. It blends typical behaviour with particular actions arising out of personal situations. The typical and the particular are also blended on an intellectual level in
that we also personally agree with the play.

These plays represent a progression of didacticism from opinionated polemic to universal truth. This development was independent of its immediate source, although ironically it returns to the unseen source in abstract.

Notes
2. Professor Donald Keene's translation in Twenty Plays of the Nō Theatre (Columbia University Press, New York, 1970) pp. 315-331 is taken to be a faithful translation of the original. The quotation is from page 320.
4. According to Professor Keene, Genji Monogatari or 'The Tales of Genji' "is a novel of a society, the extremely civilized, perhaps even decadent court of tenth century Japan. We should not, however, be misled into imagining that the author has given us a realistic portrayal of contemporary conditions. Rather, her novel is the evocation of a world which never quite existed." Donald Keene, Japanese Literature (Grove Press, Inc., New York, 1955) p. 73.
7. This is largely as a result of Peter Szondi's 1966 publication of comparative materials relating to all
texts and editions involved.


9. Quotations are from Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke 2* (Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1967) pp. 613-663. This quotation is from page 658.


CHAPTER 3
ARTAUD’S THEORY OF THE THEATRE AND ‘LES CENCI

Writing in 1948 of his working relationship with Antonin Artaud in 1921 and 1922, Charles Dullin mentions Artaud’s interest in the orient:

... I was attracted to the techniques of the oriental theatre, he went even much further in that direction than I, and from the practical viewpoint this sometimes became dangerous, as when, for example, in Pirandello’s The Pleasures of Honesty, in which he played a businessman, he arrived on stage with make-up inspired by the small masks used as models by Chinese actors: a symbolic make-up which was slightly out of place in a modern comedy.¹

In July 1922, at the Colonial Exhibition in Marseilles, he saw a troupe of Cambodian dancers; Jean Hort’s recollection of his acting style in 1923 when he was working for Georges Pitoeff reveals the self-expressive, non-realistic style of Cambodian² and Balinese dancers:

Whenever Artaud had to move, he stretched his muscles, he arched his body, and his pale physiognomy gave place to a hard face with fiery eyes; in this manner he would advance, manipulating his arms, hands and legs; and he would zig-zag, stretching out his arms and legs and tracing crazy arabesques in the air.³

Of course Artaud had not yet seen the Balinese dancers in action.

He had yet to join and be expelled from the surrealist movement, and to found the Theatre Alfred Jarry with Roger Bitrac and Robert Aron. The third issue of the surrealist movement’s review, La Révolution surréaliste, was under his...
direction, and he wrote most of the articles himself. 4

Leonard C. Pronko comments:

The "Letters to the Schools of the Buddha" and the "Address to the Dalai Lama" stress both the negative and positive aspects that the surrealists were to find in the East: on the one hand a savage, destructive force which repudiated the positivism, logic, and materialism they considered typical of the Occidental way of life, and on the other an invitation to spirituality, to unity, to an inner life, and to an art that would reflect that inner life. 5

In Le Théâtre Alfred Jarry et l'Hostilité Publique we are told that the Theatre has too many partial influences to list, but that it acknowledges "les examples indiscutables" of the Chinese, American Negro, and Soviet theatres. 6 Jean Hort claims that "The techniques and masks of Chinese and Balinese theatres obsessed him very early. Having read a great deal about them, and remembering not a little, he spoke of them constantly." 7 Pronko describes Artaud's readiness for the Balinese experience:

The man of thirty-five who, in the summer of 1931, sat in the Pendopo (Theatre) of the Dutch Pavilion at the Colonial Exposition was no neophyte in the arts and manners of the East. Years of perhaps scattered reading, a propensity for the mystical and the magical, a commitment to the inner life as supreme, a fanatical conviction that the West was a "bleached tomb" a place where "dogs" and "rotting reason" were rapidly strangling the spirit - all this, coupled with the fact that Antonin Artaud was a frustrated actor and a frustrated director, prepared him for the experience that was to be the focal point of his important role as the greatest "metaphysician of
the theater in the twentieth century.

The brief description of Balinese dance-drama given in the Introduction concluded with Beryl de Zoete's reference to a quasi-spiritual source of inspiration which causes a state of possession. De Zoete and Walter Spies planned their book in December 1934 while on a six month journey of study in the countries which still retained a background of Hindu culture. Their observations then are especially valuable in that they were made at about the same time as Artaud witnessed the Balinese dancers at Vincennes. Nor are they alone in observing this phenomenon. Carl Jung, writing in 1964 but drawing on a lifetime's experience and observation, comments:

In cases of extreme mass hysteria (which was in the past called "possession"), the conscious mind and ordinary sense perception seem eclipsed. The frenzy of a Balinese sword dance causes the dancers to fall into trances and, sometimes, to turn their weapons against themselves.

Information about the type of dance which Artaud witnessed is unavailable, and it is unlikely that anything with a wisp of the perverted (in Western eyes) would have been performed. However, the trance state permeates Balinese dance-drama, and its frequent use of weapons makes the infliction of wounds highly possible. De Zoek mentions a curious fact associated with such mutilation in the following description:

... they shudder and make strange sounds as they become possessed, and are evidently unconscious of their surroundings, though not in such a way as to prevent them orientating themselves in space, which they do with perfect ease. Some appear exhausted afterwards, but quickly recover. We have never seen this exhaustion in the case of
the little Sanghyang dancers. The 'kris-dancers' often seem to possess abnormal strength, and it sometimes takes five or six men to wrest the weapon from their grasp. On the other hand there are certain people (notably one pemangkoe who is himself a powerful medium) who have the power to loosen immediately the iron grasp of a man in a trance, so that he unresistingly gives up his weapon.

They sometimes seem to possess second sight. They can apparently inflict incisions without bleeding, or rather, the kris seldom seems to pierce the skin, though leant on with the utmost pressure.

From this it is clear that the Balinese dancers crash through the threshold not only of consciousness, but of reality as we perceive it in the west. De Zoete speaks of the "very reality of their belief in the invisible forces which move behind the visible world of men and nature." Not only their belief is real, but their theatre provides proof of the reality of the object of their belief in rapid healing and extraordinary strength.

Artaud corrected the proofs for Le Théâtre et son double in 1937 after his return from Mexico and before launching on his Irish adventure and madness. His chapter on the Balinese theatre is the fourth, which suggests that we need a little background on his thinking so that we can realise how the oriental theatre form objectified already-germinating ideas.

The work begins with a preface on the theatre and culture. Artaud sees the cause of modern confusion as "une rupture entre les choses, et les paroles, les idées, les signes qui en sont la représentation." He stresses the inseparability of life from culture, and calls for a wresting
apart of art as we understand it in the west from true culture:

... toute vraie culture s'appuie sur les moyens barbares et primitifs du totemisme, dont je veux adorer la vie sauvage, c'est-à-dire entièrement spontanée.¹³

It is the exaltation and force of true culture, that Artaud wishes to liberate in the theatre. Through this, because of the inseparability of life and culture, life itself will be liberated:

Il faut croire à un sens de la vie renouvelé par le théâtre, et où l'homme impavidement se rend le maître de ce qui n'est pas encore, et le fait naître.¹⁴

The first step is to make the theatre a place where social, political, ethical, "aesthetical" norms are destroyed. One of the situations in everyday life where this occurs is in a situation of fear, and fear results from danger. Artaud regards this element of fear as one of the essential elements of the theatre when it is restored to its proper level.¹⁵

It is present in a city stricken by the plague, and Artaud sees the theatre as draining massive abscesses from life as the plague acts as an avenging scourge on the social body.¹⁶

The healing properties of the true theatre can make us aware of the metaphysical. In this sense the theatre is a double of another reality with which it puts us in touch. In his third essay, 'Le théâtre alchimique', Artaud writes:

Là où l'alchimie, par ses symboles, est comme le Double spirituel d'une opération qui n'a d'efficacité que sur le plan de la matière réelle, le théâtre aussi doit être considéré comme le Double non pas de cette réalité quotidienne et directe dont il
s'est peu à peu réduit à n'êtrer que l'inerte copie, aussi vaine qu'éducible, mais d'une autre réalité dangereuse et typique, où les Principes, comme les dauphins, quand ils ont montré leur tête s'empressent de rentrer dans l'obscurité des eaux. 17

In practice, this can be achieved at any given moment through the arousal of a true image:

... ce qui me paraît devoir le mieux réaliser à la scène cette idée de danger est l'imprévu objectif, l'imprévu non dans les situations mais dans les choses, le passage intempestif, brusque, d'une image pensée à une image vraie ... 18

And the means of achieving this, as he points out in the same essay, is by creating a poetry in space which is comprised of many aspects. The main aspects are all the means of expression available for use on the stage, such as music, dance, plastic art, pantomime, mimicry, gesticulation, intonation, architecture, lighting and scenery. Artaud emphasises that these aspects must not be used arbitrarily, but only so that living and intimidating forms can replace fixed forms of art, by which "le sens de la vieille magie cérémonielle peut retrouver sur le plan du théâtre une nouvelle réalité." 19 In this way we can create what he calls essential drama. In 'Le Théâtre Alchimique' he again refers to the transcendent qualities of these aspects when they are controlled and used meaningfully:

... ce n'est que poétiquement et en arrachant ce qu'ils peuvent avoir de communicatif et de magnétique aux principes de tous les arts, que l'on peut par formes, par sons, musiques et volumes, évoquer, en passant à travers toutes les similitudes, naturelles des images et des ressemblances, non pas des directions primordiales de l'esprit, que notre intellectualisme logique et abusif réduirait à
Artaud's link, then, between theory and practice lies in the field of the \textit{mise-en-scène}. His essay 'On the Balinese Theatre' dwells on this. The \textit{metteur-en-scène} is responsible for creating a new physical language "à base de signes et non plus de mots." Describing the actors as \textit{animated hieroglyphs} he praises this theatre of conventions. Interestingly, Artaud does not comment on the approximated possession-state which is central to this form in its native land. Perhaps because the drama had been removed from its cultural context, this element which Spies, De Zoete and Jung observed failed to emerge. Had it emerged during the Colonial Exposition performance one feels sure that Artaud, his senses finely tuned, would have perceived it, and he would not have written such statements as:

\begin{quote}
Ces roulements mécaniques d'yeux, ces moues des lèvres, ce dosage des crispations musculaires, aux effets méthodiquement calculés et qui enlèvent tout recours à improvisation spontanée...
\end{quote}

From all accounts the Balinese theatre does contain spontaneous improvisation. Perhaps because of the intimidation attendant on the process of being on display, the dancers failed to exhibit this aspect of their theatre. It appears, then, that the drama which Artaud saw was a western influenced art-form. It drew attention away from the crucial factor inherent in Balinese dance-drama: the state of possession is sub-consciously controlled by the accumulated conditioning of years of training. In other words the actors behave spontaneously, though from all appearances their actions are
determined by conscious adherence to conventions. This, in turn, may have been responsible for the failure of Artaud to realise the importance of a carefully conducted technique of actor training. He speaks of the need to tap all available resources, but did not see that the actor must be subliminally injected with the potential for such expression.

Instead he locked onto the idea of cruelty. The physical representation of cruelty in the Balinese theatre is a correlative of a deeply personal operation of the actor's individual psyche. It depends on more than the mise-en-scène. Artaud took it for granted that the director could achieve the effects of Balinese dance-drama without the years of training undertaken by Balinese actors with an almost religious dedication. But the language based upon signs and not dependent upon words, the exploitation of the full range of sounds, cries, and gestures, the "dépersonnalisation systématique", the use of purely muscular facial expressions that act as masks, all these elements require the synthesis of artificial composition and creativity.

The essays that follow 'Sur le théâtre balinais' reinforce his vision of the theatre as an arena for metaphysical conversation that can be created by the metteur-en-scène. His production of Les Cenci in 1935 was the first practical application of these ideas.

Les Cenci

Les Cenci represents Artaud's attempt to approximate the spirit of Balinese dance-drama. In 1931 he wrote "Les Balinais ... nous défontrent l'efficacité et la valeur supérieurement agissante d'un certain nombre de conventions bien apprises et
In his 1935 production of *Les Cenci* his use of western conventions of costuming, lighting, and set symbolism testifies to his continuing belief that conventions transcend their exclusivity when they are made to be externalisations of a deeper suggestion. Photographs of the production show the lavish costumes which embellish the core of the work; in 2.1 Beatrice trembles in a corner, a physical and conventional representation of her psychological predicament; impending, blinding self-realisation causes Lucretia to recoil from a "terrible" light in 4.2, which is followed by a symbolic forest of human-held torches which approaches to effect her nemesis; the indeterminate place of 2.2—heath, passageway, flight of steps or any other setting—uses not specific locality but shadows to reflect Giacomo's clouded state of mind—an expressionistic convention; also the prison scene combines the circular motion of the wheel with excruciating screams, groaning beams, grinding winches; Elizabethan conventions are used in the bird cries and thunder that occur at significant moments.

The Balinese dance-drama is also a drama of convention. Non-linear experience of drama is an integral part of the villagers lives. They do not think of questioning its validity because it is immediately culturally and personally valid and relevant. Unfortunately the "villagers" that viewed *Les Cenci* were less sympathetic to Artaud's attempted transference of these elements of Balinese drama to Western drama. Artaud is described as "shouting his text as though he were proclaiming it in a public gallery, cutting up his delivery with a monotonic choppiness" and as "an execrable actor."
played Beatrice, was considered to be a stunning woman with a terrible speech delivery. Theatre critic François Porche thought she could have had a brilliant career in the silent movies. The response of the audience to a stylisation which they were not used to suggests that Artaud was wrong to employ outmoded conventions of past dramatic eras, and also that his innovative techniques smacked of esoterica and excluded the audience. We cannot avoid these conclusions. Artaud failed to realise his theories fully in practice, for regardless of his intentions, the seventeen-day run of _Les Cenci_ was indifferently received.

We can begin to appreciate better the nature of this 'failure' by looking at Artaud's stage directions that weave through his text, as instructions towards the exteriorisation of a personal dream. Perhaps Act 3 scene 2 is a good place to begin as this scene is a completely new invention by Artaud. It is only referred to by Shelley in the following lines:

> Orsino: I am come
> To say he has escaped.
> Giacomo: Escaped!
> Orsino: And safe
> Within Petrella. He passed by the spot
> Appointed for the deed, an hour too soon.

_Shelley The Cenci 3.2_

When a playwright deviates to this extent from his source, it is usually for good reason.

The scene contains all the major characters except Camillo, who is absent in order to enter later and bring the plot to its conclusion. It also presents all the types of the central intrigue on the stage at one time. The extraordinarily slow-moving living tableau is bracketed by Giacomo and Orsino who
suggest the purpose of the scene. They lift it out of time and place by first uniting the characters with the tempest, ("We ourselves are the hurricane"). By struggling against the wind, they affirm the power of the storm as well as their opposition to it, so giving it natural significance as a force which cannot be defeated. Voices mingle with the wind, occasionally meeting and resonating their incantation "CENCI", which assumes a significance over and above the character Cenci, its monotonous regularity reflecting an inexorable futility.

The movements themselves are clearly designed to resonate visually with other movements in the play. In 2.2, as Giacomo is being instructed in the corruption of the church by Camillo, "Their feet move as though they were still walking, but in fact the distance they travel in one direction or another is far less than would normally be the case." Giacomo is torn between a desire for justice flavoured with a pinch of revenge and the means he may have to employ to achieve this. The storm is brewing even at this point.

In a similar way the sound of footsteps, which in 3.2 is in the form of "jerky tramping of feet", creates a dream-like motif for the entire play. Again the footsteps are linked not only to Cenci's character but to a correlative of the unsilenceable voice of fate. The opening scene presents Cenci pacing up and down the gallery. The strength of his movements reflects his compelling motivation as well as his potential as a motivating force. Beatrice's steps of 4.3, accompanied by screams, follow the direction of the revolving wheel.

The iconic use of the wheel takes over after the murder from the storm as the central image. The soldiers first form a semi-circle around Lucretia and Beatrice and finally a
complete ring as they take the woman away. Bernardo's innocence and ignorance as well as his inclusion in the vast design is conveyed by his circling of Beatrice as she is dragged by her hair in a circle. The image itself is contained in the storm scene. The assassins spin like tops in the storm. Furthermore, Artaud employed a circular stage around which Beatrice runs in anger and desperation in 1.3.

Language, also, reverberates throughout the play and within speeches. Shelley's line "The third of my possessions" nags the Count at the beginning and ending of the first scene. Bernardo's cry of 4.2 incants in a rhythm which is lost in translation:

\[
\text{C'est mon âme qui est sacrifiée. C'est mon âme qui est sacrifiée... C'est mon âme qui est sacrifiée... (Et il hurle désespérément ces paroles pendant que le rideau tombe).}
\]

This conveys in a ritualistic manner his despair - that perhaps only ritual can cure - which reminds us that human beings are not insulated from each other's suffering. But perhaps the most effective use of incantation is in the passage referred to above: "CENCI, CENCI, CENCI . . ."(3.2).

Finally, in this consideration of textual elements which help us determine Artaud's intentions in staging this production, we must not forget the dream. Cenci's dreams tell him he is a force of nature (1), and he is appropriately killed in his sleep, as Beatrice describes him, "an old man mouthing a discourse with his conscience in his dreams." Beatrice's childhood dream provides a victim for Cenci's dreams which tell him he is "destiny personified." She tries to escape her fate but cannot and the beast falls upon her. She voices
the suggestion of the play as a living nightmare:

If only I could believe what I have dreamed, that
my childhood dream has overtaken me, and that a
doors on which a knock will soon be heard will open
and will tell me once again that it is time for me
to wake from sleep. (3.1)

This is significant because the aspects of production mentioned
up to this point all contribute to the overall impression of a
dream-state. Language, movement, images are linked non-causally;
the sets express the states of mind of the characters while the
characters, by their own admission, are the effects which crowd
the play; not to mention the fact that the play is the living
embodiment of Beatrice's nightmare. Just prior to the produc-
tion, Artaud wrote of giving speech "not just to men but to
beings, beings each of whom is the incarnation of great forces
... As though in a dream, we witness these beings roaring,
spinning round, flaunting their instincts or their vices,
passing like great storms in which a sort of majestic fate
vibrates."28

If we accept that the play is the embodiment of a dream,
we must next ask to what extent Artaud was valid in using
such devices to give practical realisation to his theories.

Two aspects of the Balinese drama should be repeated here.
In the first place plot is subordinated to momentary apprehen-
sion of the whole, and in the second place, this is achieved
largely by the presence on the stage of all the characters
that are essential to the story at certain significant moments.
The villagers know the types so well that a particular combi-
nation can only mean one thing. They intuit the drama as a
result of their developed ethnicity which understands
conventions. So, in Balinese drama, the dream, if we may call it that, which is presented on the stage, assumes the proportions of myth because it is understood by its audience. It is possible that some of their signs, symbols and conventions transcend their regional, topical and historical definitions and doubtless these are what Artaud responded to. But to stage this type of drama for a western audience would be to relegate the drama from its ethnic status as myth to the level of a personal dream.

J. Campbell states the basic relationship between myth and dream as follows:

It has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbolic thrust that carries the human spirit forward. ... In the absence of an effective general mythology, each of us has a private, unrecognized and yet secretly potent pantheon of dreams ... There is something in these initiatory messages so necessary for the psyche that if they are not supplied from without through myth and ritual, they have to be announced again through dreams ... 29

H.S.Sullivan adds:

Both the myth and the dream represent a relatively valid parat taxic operation for the relief of insoluble problems of living. ... In the myth the problems concern many people, and it is this fact which keeps the myth going and refines and polishes it. 30

Perhaps if we really wanted a rationale for Artaud's inspired failure, we would find it in the suggestion that Les Cenci is a complete work on the level of subconscious realism. Artaud tried to communicate with his audience by presenting them with a personal dream expressed in the shape of myth and ritual,
but it does not make any contact with levels in the spectator that are beyond his understanding of psychology and fate. Beatrice's realisation that in opposing Cenci she became more like him could perhaps also be applied to Artaud's battle against the barriers that centuries of Western theatre have created.

Time and place do not exist; on an insignificant basis of reality the imagination spins, weaving new patterns; a mixture of memories, experiences, free fancies, incongruities and improvisations. The characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, disperse, assemble. But one consciousness rules over them all, that of the dreamer.31

Notes
3. Quoted by Sellin, p. 137.
4. The articles were, however signed by other members of the group.
7. Quoted by Pronko, p. 9.
9. Man and His Symbols, edited by Carl Jung, (Pan Books,

11. ibid. p. 70.


13. ibid. p. 15.


15. See Œuvres Complètes IV (1964) p. 53: "le sens de cette peur mystérieuse . . . est un des éléments les plus agissants (et d'ailleurs essentiel) du théâtre . . . ."

16. ibid. p. 38.

17. ibid. p. 58.

18. ibid. p. 53.

19. ibid. p. 47 N.

20. ibid. p. 61.

21. Œuvres Complètes IV p. 65.

22. Œuvres Complètes IV p. 66.

23. All quotations from Les Cenci are from Œuvres Complètes IV, pp. 183-271.

24. For example Helene Weigel's interpretation of Mother Courage, and various interpretations of Azdak in Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis.


26. ibid. p. 149.


29. Quoted by John Curtis Gowan in Trance, Art and Creativity
59.

(Privately printed, California, 1975) p. 185.

30. ibid.

GROTOWSKI: THEORY AND TECHNIQUE OF TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE

Eugenio Baba, founder of the Odin Theatre Laboratory and who worked with Grotowski for four years distinguishes between two forms of training in Oriental theatre. Both forms are based on the idea of a transcendent reality. The first form is that of the Balinese Borang: "the actor goes through real trances and experiences astounding psychosomatic reactions." The second is the type of psychic training found in the Japanese Noh, which aims at the perfect achievement of every task, detail and step. The Indian Kathakali represents a fusion of these two different approaches to training.

The Kathakali was certainly not the only Oriental theatre form to which Grotowski was exposed during his travels of 1956 and 1957, and Oriental drama was far from the single major factor influencing the formulation of his ideas. Nevertheless some striking analogies can be drawn between the Kathakali and Grotowski's theatre. Besides suggesting an active response to this theatre form by the Polish director, they also provide an initial vantage point from which to view his early development.

The Indian actor is trained to express himself with a conventional vocabulary:

There are nine motions of the head, eleven ways of casting a glance, six motions of the eyebrows, four positions of the neck. The sixty four motions of the limbs cover the movements of the feet, toes, heels, ankles, waist, hips . . . . The gestures of the hands and fingers have a narrative function and they are organised in a system of fixed figures called "mudras" (signs in Sanskrit. Those mudras are the alphabet of the acting language . . . .
The face expresses the emotions of the characters. Further to this, there are four types of mudras: gestures improvised from religious ritual, mimetic gestures, gestures borrowed from everyday life but highly stylised, and invented gestures. The last variety express what cannot be concretely described — for example the love of a husband for his wife.

There are twenty four fundamental mudras which, when combined with one another and with other movements and facial expressions can express approximately 3,000 words.

Disciplined conformity to convention does not preclude limited creativity:

In some cases the actor gives free rein to his fantasy. Let us assume that he wants to describe a woman. After composing the mudra that corresponds to the word "woman", he will elaborate on the description by improvising attributes such as "as beautiful as a lotus" or "tender as a rose petal" or "with eyebrows that look like waves."

Improvisation still occurs within the limits of stylisation.

But there is another level to this drama altogether. It exists on a spiritual as well as a physically expressive level. As Barba puts it,
As Ivan Bharata points out, almost complete dehumanisation of the actor is aimed at:

The actor is compared to a yogi, somebody who follows the way of yoga (union) or mental concentration in which the subject and the object, the believer and his god, the actor and his character become one. Some of the actors' exercises, such as the Chavitti Uzhicchil (massage with foot) are very painful, but they are seen as necessary to enable the actor to gain complete control over every muscle in his body.

There is, however, always the danger that the "move away from what is human" will become complete. In the Prahlada Charitam, the demon king Hiranyakashipu is killed by Narasimha, Vishnu's incarnation as a man-lion. Some years ago the actor who played Narasimha was allowed to roam over the playing area unchecked. He fell upon the actor playing Hiranyakashipu and strangled him to death.

In general, though, Kathakali is a fusion of such ecstasy or inspiration with controlled discipline arising from subconscious conditioning. Put another way it represents a mingling of a codified sign language with spontaneous symbolism.

The Kathakali can be seen as surviving not merely on the religious level of myth, nor only on the magical level of ritual, but also in terms of the creative aspect of art involving both actor and spectator. Jung understood this potential:

Thus a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider "unconscious" aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor
can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason.  

Art can put us in touch with an impersonal, ineffable, numinous plane, while still allowing us to keep our feet firmly planted in the quotidian. According to Jung, "One of the most common mental derangements that occur among primitive people is what they call lost of soul, which means, as the name indicates, a noticeable disruption (or more technically a disassociation) of consciousness." Myth may embody this contact with an incomprehensible level, and ritual may actively rationalise it, but art can cure the inner anarchy caused by lack of readiness or understanding while at the same time transcending such a quasi-therapeutical function. E. Cassirer summarises the process thus:

The mythical world is concrete . . . because in it the two factors, thing and signification are undifferentiated . . . The concrescence of name and thing in the linguistic consciousness of primitives and children might well be illustrated: striking examples: name tabus. But as language develops . . . distinct from merely physical existence . . . the word emerges in its own specificity, in its purely significatory function. And art leads us to still another stage of detachment . . . Here for the first time the image world acquires a purely imminent validity and truth . . . Thus for the first time the world of the image becomes a self-contained cosmos . . . In severing its bonds with immediate reality, with material existence and efficacy, which constitute the world of magic and myth, it embodies a new step towards the truth.

The Kathakali method of training enables the actor to embody such a step without becoming "lost of soul". An austere
lifestyle provides the framework for the disciplined accretion of a vocabulary of signs, as well as spiritual preparation for what Nietzsche calls a metamorphosis in which an actor may behold "a vision outside of himself" during performance.

Grotowski's early theories of actor training reflect similar concerns. The "ripening" of the actor is the important thing for him, which is expressed by a tension towards the extreme, by a complete stripping down, by the laying bare of one's own intimacy - all this without the least trace of egotism or self-enjoyment. With a similar theoretical basis as that of expressionist acting, Grotowski speaks of "a technique of the 'trance' and of the integration of all the actor's psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct, springing forth in a sort of 'translumination'. His technique of training separates the Theatre Laboratory from the earlier school of Expressionism. For although the aim of training is to "attempt to eliminate [the actor's] organism's resistance to [translumination]" so that the result is "freedom from the time-lapse between inner and outer reaction in such a way that the impulse is already an outer reaction," the method employed tries to avoid the shapelessness of expressionist acting.

In the first place, the process is not an exercise of the will, although it is "to some extent dependent upon concentration, confidence, exposure, and almost disappearance into the acting craft." For the primary state of mind is what Grotowski calls "a passive readiness to realize an active role, a state in which one does not want to do that but rather resigns from not doing it." In their daily work the actors,
then, do not concentrate on the spiritual technique but on "the composition of the role, on the construction of form, on the expression of signs - i.e., on artifice." It is one of the Theatre Laboratory's most significant discoveries, and one which is immediately analogous to the training techniques of Kathakali, that "artificial composition not only does not limit the spiritual but actually leads to it." Production itself leads to awareness rather than being a product of awareness. So the text is not regarded as containing the creative part of the theatre, though great literary works can have an effect on creativity. The essence of this drama is performance.

In the following passage, Grotowski points out that traditional Western theatre forms feed a hunger for dubious pleasure in the spectator. By implication, the Grotowskian actor must help the spectator to grow out of this childishness:

Even if he does feel pity for poor Antigone and aversion for cruel Creon, he does not share the sacrifice and fate of the heroine, but he nevertheless feels himself to be her equal morally. For him it is a question of being able to feel "noble". The didactic qualities of this kind of emotion are dubious. The audience - all Creons - may well side with Antigone throughout the performance, but this does not prevent each of them from behaving like Creon once out of the theatre. It is worth noticing the success of plays which depict an unhappy childhood. To see the sufferings of an innocent child on the stage makes it even easier for the spectator to sympathise with the unfortunate victim. Thus he is assured of his own high standard of moral values.
In order to break down such debauchery, the actor must be trained in such a way as to eradicate any tendency to satiate this appetite in the audience. As Grotowski puts it, "Even though we cannot educate the audience—not systematically, at least—we can educate the actor." The technique which training moulds is therefore an inductive one of elimination. The actor must not add technical elements, but eliminate obstacles he comes up against that resist complete self-penetration. Grotowski suggests that there is a common universe beneath the veil of everyday life. Through the technique of psychic penetration, the actor can study "what is hidden behind our everyday mask—the innermost core of our personality—in order to sacrifice it, expose it."20

The similarity with Kathakali ends here, but the analogy remains. In the Indian dance-drama, the actor's performance raises himself and the spectators to a level of truthfulness aided by the use of established mythology and religion. In spite of the influx of Eastern religious modes this century, the Western spectator is certainly not typically Hindu nor Indian. In performance, the use of specifically Southern Indian myths would obviously be anomalous and exclusive. The wide variegation of background and belief in the average Western audience composed even of people from a single nationality means that myths must either be relinquished or, as Grotowski suggests, attacked:

In order that the spectator may be stimulated into self-analysis when confronted with the actor, there must be some common ground already existing in both of them, something they can either dismiss in one gesture or jointly worship. Therefore the theatre must attack what might be called the collective
complexes of society, the core of the collective subconscious or perhaps superconscious (it does not matter what we call it), the myths which are not an invention of the mind but are, so to speak, inherited through one's blood, religion, culture and climate. I am thinking of things that are so elementary and so intimately associated that it would be difficult for us to submit them to a rational analysis. For instance, religious myths: the myth of Christ and Mary; biological myths: birth and death, love symbolism or, in a broader sense, Eros and Thanatos; national myths which it would be difficult to break down into formulas.  

So in *Doctor Faustus*, the archetype of the saint is attacked. Eugenio Barba describes this transgression as creating a dialectic between mockery and apotheosis: "Faustus is a saint and his saintliness shows itself as an absolute desire for pure truth. If the saint is to become one with his sainthood, he must rebel against God, Creator of the world, because the laws of the world are traps contradicting morality and truth." He elaborates:

> The dialectic of mockery and apotheosis consists then of a conflict between lay sainthood and religious sainthood, deriding our usual ideas of a saint. But at the same time this struggle appeals to our contemporary "spiritual" commitment, and in this we have the apotheosis.

This however is only one level of attack against myth. This is basically a rationale of the production. But if this analysis were the only level of interpretation, we would be forced to question such a treatment of archetype on the grounds of exclusivity. For although this challenges an accepted myth, Barba's notes virtually create a new myth, perhaps one such as
Artaud dreamed of producing in the theatre. And as Grotowski himself has noted: "... in our age, when all languages intermingle, the community of the theatre cannot possibly identify itself with myth, because there is no single faith. Only a confrontation is possible." If the production is to survive even momentarily in the heart and mind of the universal spectator, this confrontation must occur at the simplest, most accessible level.

In explaining the aims of his institute in 1967, Grotowski spoke of an action that must engage the whole personality of the actor:

It is a question of the very essence of the actor's calling, of a reaction on his part allowing him to reveal one after the other the different layers of his personality, from the biological-instinctive source via the channel of consciousness and thought, to that summit which is so difficult to define and in which all becomes unity. This act of the total unveiling of one's being becomes a gift of the self which borders on the transgression of barriers and love. I call this a total act. I am talking of the method, I am speaking of the surpassing of limits, of a confrontation ... 25

That is, besides challenging accepted myth through a particular treatment of the saint archetype, the actual performance of Doctor Faustus must also contain a transgression of myth as it is embodied in undeniable physical fact of the actor. Grotowski stresses this final aspect of his theatre in the title essay of Towards a Poor Theatre:

Only myth - incarnate in the fact of the actor, in his living organism - can function as a taboo. The violation of the living organism, the exposure carried to outrageous excess, returns us to a
concrete mythical situation, an experience of common human truth.26

Carl Jung believed present world-wide disorientation and dissociation is caused by the disintegration of modern man's moral and spiritual tradition. What is worse, man does not even know what he has lost:

Modern man does not understand how much his "rationalism" (which has destroyed his capacity to respond to numinous symbols and ideas) has put him at the mercy of the psychic "underworld." He has freed himself from "superstition" (or so he believes), but in the process he has lost his spiritual values to a positively dangerous degree.27

The road to regeneration, according to Jung, lies in learning to recognize "the special feeling tone of the archetype".28 As he puts it,

All the corpses in the world are chemically identical, but living individuals are not. Archetypes come to life only when one patiently tries to discover why and in what fashion they are meaningful to a living individual.29

By impelling the individual to confront himself, to respond to the presentation and consequent transgression of the simplest perceivable unit of human existence, the Grotowskian actor helps the willing spectator towards regeneration.

Although Grotowski insists that his formulations are not derived from humanistic disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology, these disciplines provide a perspective and give us a terminology for investigating his ideas. The process described above can be studied in terms of Emile Durkheim's idea of the group imagination, although this may
lead us to some rather extravagant claims for the Poor Theatre's ability to subsume and improve on the function of religion. Edward A. Tiryakian summarises Durkheim's concern with society, religion, and morality as a concern for the moral crisis of society:

Religion is the womb of moral life. But the transformations in the structure of modern society have rendered the traditional moral system unstable and untenable; the traditional established religion has lost its supremacy in society as a moral authority. What is at stake is nothing less than the cohesion of society, for it is by the normative regulation of the behaviour of individuals that social solidarity is maintained. If traditional religious beliefs are rejected, what will provide the source of sanctions for the moral behaviour of individuals? The ultimate preoccupation of Durkheim can be stated as follows: if religion is indispensible to society, which religion is appropriate for the present age?

This resumé makes it quite clear that this religion must be all-embracing as well as areligious. It must lack that specificity that excludes fellow members of the universal club of mankind. It must be no religion while being the religion.

Monique Borie in her article 'D'un théâtre de la régénération à une régénération sans théâtre' questions the extent to which every spectator can genuinely participate in the actor's act of creation. The basis of her questioning is the therapeutical element of self-revelation demanded of the actor during training:

To stimulate a process of self-revelation, going back as far as the subconscious, yet canalising this stimulus in order to obtain the required
reaction,\textsuperscript{31} and performance:

\begin{quote}
\textit{[the actor must]} reveal one after the other the different layers of his personality, from the biological instinctive source via the channel of consciousness and thought, to that summit which is so difficult to define and in which all becomes unity.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

She argues that mediation between the actor and the spectator is hindered by elements of expression which are specific to the actor in relation to his own personality:

\begin{quote}
Il faut donc se demander dans quelle mesure, et dans quelles limites, la valeur régénéatrice de l'acte de l'acteur peut avoir une dimension collective.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

It is true that the actor must dive into his own personality. Grotowski urges the actor to use his "own real, specific and intimate experiences", to "Make your actions concrete, relating them to a memory."\textsuperscript{34} But he urges this so that the actor will reflect "real truth and not the popular conception of truth."\textsuperscript{35} But reality is all around us, and even the common conception of truth is often too painful for us to accommodate. The very fact that the truth today is often ugly where it was once believed to be beauty itself means that many of us prefer not to wade into the ghastly realities of our quotidian existence. If this is so, how much harder is it for the spectator, who shies away from superficial truth, to apprehend this "real" truth as expressed in the undeniable physical fact of the actor.

Borie's point is, I think, valid. The poor theatre is more of a personal religion for its actors than a universal religion for mankind. The suggestion that it may have been the latter
has been discussed in all seriousness, because of the enormous potential it contains for the regeneration of the spectator. But although this potential is there, as we found with reference to Jung, there is no guarantee that the spectator will go with the actor along the path of de-individualisation. In fact there is at least one indication that this potentially psycho-social equivalent of the ancient ritual, this new form of theatre in which a new momentary mythology is created in its mythic time-space, this theatre where the actor is a mediator of archetypes who revives the mythical age as the time of origin and the point of creation, is not only uncomfortable, but fails to convince the spectator of the beauty of "real" truth:

The audience, squeezed together on backless wooden benches, perches along the oblong periphery as though to watch a cockfight. There is nothing of particular visual beauty except Stanislaw Scierski's belly.36

We are led to the conclusion that there is more to reactions such as this than an inability on the part of the spectator to extend the bounds of his consciousness via the actor. As Jung puts it, "The more the critical reason dominates, the more impoverished life becomes; but the more of the unconscious, and the more of myths we are capable of making conscious, the more of life we integrate."37 The poor theatre can only really be a theatre in which regeneration occurs in the actor and in those converted who allow themselves to integrate life. The natural step for Grotowski and his associates was to leave the theatre behind. Only participants remained, having abandoned also the text myth and the act performed by the actor.
The participants leave for the unity of realising that one is his own brother and that he can find his brother by asking where his birth is, of his brother. At which point this investigation into Poor Theatre ceases.

Notes

2. ibid. p. 38.
3. In a looser sense of mudra, Faubion Bowers cites the existence of about 500 mudras in Theatre in the East, p. 44.
5. ibid. pp. 49 and 50.
6. ibid. p. 50.
8. ibid. p. 176.
9. ibid. p. 177.
12. ibid.
13. ibid.
14. ibid. p. 17.
15. ibid.
16. ibid.
17. ibid.
18. ibid. p. 29.
19. ibid. p. 33.
22. ibid. p. 79.
23. ibid. p. 80.
24. ibid. p. 121.
25. ibid. p. 131.
27. Man and His Symbols, p. 84.
28. ibid. p. 87.
29. ibid. p. 88.
30. Edward A. Tiryakian, Sociologism and Existentialism
32. ibid. p. 131.
33. Monique Boris, 'D'un théâtre de la régénération à une
35. ibid. p. 237.
37. Quoted by James Roose-Evans in Experimental Theatre
CONCLUSION

The influence of the Japanese Noh, Balinese dance-drama and the Kathakali on four twentieth century western playwrights is detectable in the following operations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Playwright</th>
<th>Source of influence</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yeats</td>
<td>Noh</td>
<td>Assimilation of elements</td>
<td>Imagistic cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brecht</td>
<td>Noh</td>
<td>Attempted assimilation leading to independent development</td>
<td>Ideological cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artaud</td>
<td>Balinese dance-drama</td>
<td>Attempted approximation of spirit of Balinese dance-drama</td>
<td>Emphasis on mise-en-scène</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grotowski</td>
<td>Kathakali</td>
<td>Purported independent development</td>
<td>Culture despecifica-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of oriental training and performance technique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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