THE INFLUENCE OF ORIENTAL THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES
ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF WESTERN DRAMA

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of London

by

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ABSTRACT

The impact of Oriental theatrical techniques on Western theatre through three forms - the No, Balinese and Chinese theatres - has been powerful and interesting in many different ways. Some of the most significant Western directors - Brecht, Artaud and Copeau - have based their influential theories on Eastern theatres: Brecht's Chinese-inspired "Verfremdungseffekt"; Artaud's Balinese-derived "Theatre-of-Cruelty" and Copeau's No-inspired Theory of Dramatic Economy. The No has also inspired Yeats's plays. Among other Western playwrights who have been so influenced are Bond and Beckett. I received support for this view from a celebrated Japanese No actor who had taken part in Waiting for Godot: my interview with him forms part of the thesis. And the current work of Peter Brook offers a new Western theatrical style inspired by Eastern techniques.

However East-West theatrical contacts have also produced some ironies stemming from misunderstandings of original forms: Brecht associated his V-effect with Chinese theatre, which is really closer to the "dramatic" form he rebelled against; in spite of Artaud's own preoccupation
with technique rather than meaning, his theatre of spectacle and action works best together with, rather than against, meaning and text. *Takahime* - an inferior Japanese version of one of Yeats's originally No-inspired plays - reflects the adverse effects of Western influence on an Eastern model.

Nevertheless, in spite of misunderstandings, not only have revolutionary theories, techniques, and dramatic forms, arisen from East-West theatrical contacts, but a whole new Western theatrical outlook has been established.

I have included in the thesis some visual-aids and a sound-tape, essential in examining the physical elements of Oriental theatre.

Much of my argument depends on understanding Zeami's 15th C treatise on No acting - *Kakyō* - which has not been available in English. I include in the thesis a partial translation of it which I prepared in collaboration with Patrick O'Neill and Chifumi Shimazaki.

* * *
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I would like to thank Dr. Katharine J. Worth of Royal Holloway College for her supervision of this thesis; Dr. David Pollard and Professor P.G. O'Neill of The School of Oriental and African Studies for their unstinting help and advice on its oriental aspects; Chifumi Shimazaki for sharing with me her knowledge of the No theatre and introducing me to it when I was in Japan in 1973; my husband, Piers Plowright, for his continual encouragement and support; and lastly Ursula Clements, my typist.
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* I'm indebted to John Haynes - the Royal Court Theatre's photographer - for these three photos.
It was no coincidence that I had identified the new
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western theatrical productions with basic Chinese
theatrical techniques. The identification was in fact a
product of recent years where there has been increasing evidence of
the influence of Oriental theatrical techniques on Western
productions. This was first brought home to me in 1969 in
two London productions - The Prospect Theatre Company’s
Richard II and The National Theatre’s The White Devil. In
Richard II, I was struck by Ian McKellen’s use of hand move-
ments in the title role, the unusual splendour and ornate-
ness of the costumes and a stylization of movement and
vocalization which pointed to a new trend in the Western
theatrical outlook. Similarly Isabella’s death scene in
The White Devil in which the actress, Jane Wenham, mimed her
death agonies with the movements of a pinned and dying
butterfly, conveyed the poignancy of her end in a new way.
The naivety of a melodramatic death convention was turned
into a moving piece of sophisticated theatre through this
stylized portrayal. And this in effect describes the
essential rationale underlying Oriental theatrical techniques –
a rationale both naive and sophisticated. These two produc-
tions reminded me in particular of techniques used in Chinese
theatre which I’ve been familiar with since childhood, long
before I was interested in Western theatre.
It was no coincidence that I had identified the new trend in Western theatrical productions with basic Chinese theatrical techniques. The identification was, in fact, a product of a far deeper link between Western and Eastern theatre than I had imagined. Bertolt Brecht - a major influence in Western theatre - had based his Alienation-effect theory on Chinese acting: a debt he acknowledges in his essay "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting". One of his plays - The Good Person of Setzuan - set in China with characters bearing Chinese names - was directly influenced by Chinese theatre. Two other Oriental influences, the Japanese Nō and Balinese theatres, seem also to have affected the modern Western concept of theatre.

We have Yeats's own acknowledgement that the Nō plays of Japan inspired his dramatic efforts (See Chapter II); Jacques Copeau, recently referred to in the May 1975 issue of The Listener as "the innovator of the defined and poetic production style" and the "precursor of Peter Brook and Peter Hall", was not only an admirer of the Nō but came completely under its influence as will be seen in my account of his experiment with the Nō play, Kantan, in Chapter III; and there have been direct borrowings from the Nō such as
Benjamin Britten's 1956 opera *Curlew River*, based on the Nō - Sumidagawa, or the more recent Jorge Lavelli French production of Mozart's opera - Idomeneo - described by Richard Roud in the Arts Guardian, Friday, April 11, 1975, as a work in the "Noh way", or George Devine's 1955 Stratford-upon-Avon production of King Lear, designed by Isamu Noguchi, in which Lear himself resembled a character from a Nō play. But it's important at this point to make a distinction between surface Oriental borrowings which have brought a novel Eastern flavour into Western productions and what I would call meaningful Oriental influences which have in some way altered the Western concept of theatre. It is the latter which I'm primarily concerned with and I've tried in the selection of material for the following chapters to bear this distinction in mind. However, Peter Brook's inclusion of a Nō actor in his International Centre of Theatrical Research in Paris deserves serious consideration because it is indicative of Brook's respect for the Nō.

* I've enlarged my definition of Western theatre to include "opera" for the purposes of this comparative study of East-West theatres because the Nō theatre, which consists mainly of different varieties of intoned singing, is best understood as an operatic genre, and similarly, Chinese theatre, which features a great deal of stylized singing, is called in Chinese - "ching ch'u", or Peking Opera.
acting tradition and what it can contribute to a group primarily concerned with exploring new ways of creating effective theatre.

Lastly, I've included an examination of the Balinese theatre because its impact on Antonin Artaud, perhaps the most important influence on the new generation of dramatists and theatrical directors in Western theatre, led to the formulation of his theatrical theories. But my concentration on three specific areas of Oriental influence is by no means exclusive. There are of course other Eastern theatres, like the Japanese Bunraku, the Kabuki, and the Indian Kathakali, which have influenced Western theatre. But the subject is so rich that I've had to select rather carefully three areas of Oriental influence, which, because of my own Eastern upbringing, are more accessible to me, and which have also made an enormous impact on Western theatre through important Western theatrical directors, playwrights and theorists. Among these theorists, who were so influenced, I've chosen to concentrate on key figures like Brecht, whose V-effect was inspired by the Chinese theatre, Artaud, whose theatrical manifestos were sparked off by the Balinese theatre and Copeau, whose dramatic theories were shaped by the No. The choice of these three theatrical theorists was made regardless of their nationality but on the strength of
their widely influential Eastern-inspired theories. But in my selection of Western playwrights who have been influenced by the East - among whom Yeats ranks first - I've chosen generally to concentrate on those writing in English rather than other languages. For example, in my discussion of Chinese influence on Western playwrights, I've concentrated on the work of David Hare and Peter Shaffer rather than Jean Genet. (My one exception is Brecht to whose Eastern-inspired plays I have devoted a special section.) Similarly in my discussion of No Influence, I've turned my attention to the plays of Samuel Beckett and Edward Bond rather than Paul Claudel. As I'm chiefly concerned with the Oriental influence on plays written in English, in my discussion of equally important current Artaudian exponents among Western directors, I've deliberately chosen to concentrate on the work of the English theatre director - Peter Brook - rather than the Polish director - Jerzy Grotowski. I've also tried in dealing with a subject which is open to change to bring it up to date as much as possible, as the following example shows:

At the beginning of my research in 1973, T'ai Chi Ch'uan - a form of Chinese callisthenics of ancient origin - was an important part of the daily training programme of the actors in Peter Brook's International Centre of Theatrical Research. This fact was widely publicized in newspaper articles like the one in The Guardian. In the review of November 1972, in which the reviewer reported that at the close of each day all the actors looked forward to the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan like a kid. Colin Blakely in an interview with The Drama Review, Spring 1969, spoke enthusiastically about the relevance of T'ai Chi Ch'uan exercises for actors. (My one exception is Brecht to whose Eastern-inspired plays I have devoted a special section.)

* I've also examined a production of Bernard Sobel - the Brechtian-trained director.
newspaper articles like the one in the *Guardian*, (26th November 1972), in which the reviewer reported that at the close of each day all the actors looked forward to the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'üan like "a fix". Colin Blakely in an interview with *The Drama Review*, Spring 1969, spoke enthusiastically about the relevance of T'ai Chi Ch'üan exercises during the rehearsals for Brook's production of *Oedipus* in 1968. A.C.H. Smith in his book, *Orghast at Persepolis*, mentions the importance of this form of exercise in the preparation for the *Orghast* performances. And indeed, the publicity, which Brook has given to this ancient Taoist exercise, has certainly helped to establish it as a popular avant garde method of training the body among Western actors. (It's interesting in this context that the T'ai Chi Ch'üan class I've been attending since 1973 contains a large number of Western actors and dancers). In order to check on the current importance of T'ai Chi Ch'üan within the daily training programme of Brook's International Research Group, I wrote to him and received the following in reply, dated Paris, May 7th 1975:

"We are not doing T'ai Chi Ch'üan at the moment although at a certain time it was an important part of our work. The value of T'ai Chi is in no way directly applicable to any side of the actors training. Its value is the same it has anywhere in relation to everyday life. Somebody who is in the real tradition is certainly helped towards a greater sensibility and greater awareness. For
this reason it was part of the general work of our actors at a certain moment. However, I am very sorry to see that now T'ai Chi is being used in many diluted or unscrupulously distorted ways by unqualified people all over the world and such T'ai Chi is naturally valueless.

Although Brook has now abandoned the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'üan as a relevant means of training his actors, this letter confirms that it was an important part of his work. So in spite of his current attitude towards it, his former support has irreversibly contributed to its growing popularity in the West, particularly among actors and dancers who find it (if not directly relevant) of some help in their work. For this reason I have included a postscript on T'ai Chi Ch'üan, tracing in particular, the relationship between this ancient Taoist form of gymnastics and Artaud's concept of "an affective athleticism".

Since my thesis is concerned more with examining all the implications of Oriental influence on Western theatre and vice versa than with merely establishing evidence of such cross-cultural contacts, I decided as far as possible to begin by looking at the original theatrical forms in situ. This approach would serve as a useful corrective to, and illumination of, current Western impressions. In November - December 1973, I went to Japan for a month to make an intensive study of Nō plays which I was able to see in Nō
theatres in Tokyo and Kyoto in the company of regular Japanese audiences. The two Nō troupes which had visited London as part of Peter Daubeny's World Theatre Festival in 1967 and 1973 had been forced to present truncated versions of Nō plays in a slightly quickened tempo as a concession to English audiences. Nō programmes, performed in Japan today, which take place mostly during weekends, can last as long as five to six hours; and the sometimes extreme slowness of the movements seemed to me a necessary factor in coming to terms with an art which has become highly ritualistic.

In Japan I was struck by the general over-reverence for Yeats's opinions in Nō circles and an exaggeration of his indebtedness to the Nō. This is still a favourite topic for research among Japanese University students and the esteem given to Shataro Oshima's book on this subject - W.B. Yeats and Japan - seemed to me symptomatic of an absurd situation in which the reputation of a well-known Western poet and playwright had to be exploited to ensure the survival of an Eastern art. As I'll be showing in Chapter II - the travesty of Takahime (See Appendix B: This programme was presented to me with pride by the Director of the Theatre Museum in Waseda University.) which is in effect an inferior Japanese version of Yeats's At the Hawk's Well, originally
based on the No, clearly sums up the extent to which the No world needs reassurance from the West.

More positive aspects of my research into the No in Japan lay in a fortunate opportunity to see two No plays: Hajitomi, which impressed Jean Louis Barrault in 1960 and gave me a chance to compare my own reaction to his, and Kantan - the No play which had greatly influenced Jacques Copeau. I was also able to do a follow up on the career of Kanze Hisao - the shite (i.e. main actor) in Hajitomi at the 1960 performance for Barrault and who happened to be playing the same role while I was there. Kanze Hisao had just taken part in a Japanese production of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot which gave me the idea of obtaining an interview with him. I was therefore able to approach the whole question of any affinity between the No and Beckett's work from the point of view of a practising No actor.

While I was in Kyoto, with the help of Professor Yasuo Suga of Kyoto University, I visited a No class in training mainly attended by amateur pupils. For a fee, I was shown some basic No steps and movements by a No actor who was forced, for reasons I'll be outlining in Chapter II, to spend most of his time teaching in order to live. This corroborated my own uneasy impressions of the true state of the No theatre, which, judging by the desperate need of its
promoters to commercialize, is rapidly declining as an art.

In February 1974 I went to Bali to study the same theatrical forms which Artaud saw at the Colonial Exposition in Paris in 1931. I wondered to what extent the Balinese theatrical forms were dependent on Balinese society and its religion and how an awareness or unawareness of this dependence affected one's response to their theatre. At the time of the Exposition, there were very few books written on Bali and it is unlikely Artaud had much knowledge of the background of the Balinese theatrical forms he saw. This leads us to a very pertinent question: to what extent has the accuracy or inaccuracy of first impressions taken out of the cultural context in which the theatrical form belongs affected the shaping of Artaud's theatrical manifestos? And secondly, can we, in fact, trace a connection between the answer to this question and the successful or unsuccessful application of Artaudian techniques to the Western theatre? I have suggested answers to the first question in Chapter IV, and to the second in Chapter V.

And finally - the impact of the Chinese theatre on the Western theatre. By "Chinese theatre" I mean the Chinese classical theatre or opera as it existed in China before the Communist revolution in 1949 and as it still exists in Taiwan and in many overseas Chinese communities. The Chinese
Communist government is making some effort to preserve the classical Chinese theatre though mainly under strict censorship which necessarily excludes many old classical plays with feudalistic overtones. For the writing of Chapter VI, which I've called "The Paradox of Chinese Theatrical Techniques and the Verfremdungseffekte", I've drawn mainly on my own personal knowledge of the Chinese theatre. As it was Brecht's impression of Chinese acting which led to the formulation of his V-effect, I was interested in assessing the accuracy of this impression, using not only historical accounts of Chinese audience-reaction to their theatre and an analysis of a Chinese opera as a counter-check, but also my own experiences of Chinese theatre with completely Chinese audiences. It is today generally recognized that there is a discrepancy between Brecht's theory and practice of V-effect. I was particularly concerned in my examination of Chinese impact on this theory to see if the discrepancy could in any way be linked to, or explained by, whatever error there might have been in Brecht's understanding of the Chinese theatre. Like Yeats and Artaud, he never saw Oriental theatre in situ, but gleaned his impression of it from watching the acting of the famous Chinese actor, Mei Lan Fang, in Moscow in 1935. So in fact the V-effect is based on certain premises derived
from Brecht's impressions of Chinese acting just as Artaud's theatrical manifestos were based on his impressions of Balinese acting. If these premises were in any way wrong, this should be reflected, if not in the statement of the theories, at least in their practice. However these misunderstandings have not prevented the emergence of the most significant Western theatrical theories and dramatic forms as a direct result of East-West theatrical contacts. It is along these lines that I have approached the examination of Western theatrical theories and dramatic forms inspired by Oriental theatre.

As a complementary study of the V-effect, I have found a roughly parallel theatrical treatise: Kakyō, written in 1424 by Zeami - one of the founders of Nō. This forms the material for Chapter I.

I've tried wherever possible to regularize the romanization of foreign terms. Occasionally irregularities have occurred mainly because I've had to follow the preferences of translators. A case in point is one of Zeami's treatises, translated as "Kwadensho" by one set of translators and "Kadensho" by another. I've also had to devise my own collages to illustrate several points I wanted to make in Chapter IV and I've included quite a few photographs, line drawings and a sound-tape, inevitable in a thesis in which
I've had to examine highly visual and aural Oriental theatrical techniques and the way they've influenced Western theatrical theories, plays, and productions. And it would indeed have been ironic, if, in discussing the work of Antonin Artaud, that high priest of the spectacular and the physical, I had stuck to words alone. "Total Alive," which he called Der Jasager, "He Who Said Yes". This shows that he was sufficiently impressed by the No to use it as a model. He liked, in particular, the Japanese conception of heightened prose and verse. There are in fact three versions of Der Jasager: the original version, a revised version with the same title and a new version with a different ending - Der Neinsager, "He Who Said No". Brecht tantalizingly stipulated that the revised Der Jasager should be played together with Der Neinsager.

1 Komaru-Zenchiku (1409 - 1468) son-in-law and literary apostle of Zeami, one of the founders of No.

2 The only English translation of this is by Gerhard Nollhaus. See Accent, Urbana, VII, 2, Autumn 1948, pp. 14-24. There is a complete recording of Der Jasager with music by Kurt Weill on 833 15279.

He who said Yes / He who said No. After the Japanese play Taniko, in the English version by Arthur Malby. (School operas ... intended for schools. The two little plays should, if possible, always be performed together.)
In 1929-30 Brecht made his first adaptation of Zenchiku's ¹ No play Tanikō, "Burial Alive", which he called Der Jasager, "He Who Said Yes". ² This shows that he was sufficiently impressed by the No to use it as a model. He liked, in particular, the Japanese conception of heightened prose and verse. There are in fact three versions of Der Jasager: the original version, a revised version with the same title and a new version with a different ending - Der Neinsager, "He Who Said No". Brecht tantalizingly stipulated that the revised Der Jasager should be played together with Der Neinsager. ³

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¹ Komparu Zenchiku (1405 - 1468) son-in-law and literary apostle of Zeami, one of the founders of No.

² The only English translation of this is by Gerhard Nellhaus. See Accent, Urbana, VII, 2, Autumn 1946, pp. 14-24. There is a complete recording of Der Jasager with music by Kurt Weill on MGM E3270.

³ See John Willett, The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, London, 1959, p. 36: He who said Yes / He who said No. After the Japanese play Tanikō, in the English version by Arthur Waley. (School operas ... intended for schools. The two little plays should, if possible, always be performed together.)
It is tempting to see in his stipulation a reflection of his affinity with the Oriental dual perspective approach to a problem. The original Tanikō certainly presents a double vision of tragedy. This is consistent with Zenchiku’s philosophy of the innate dualistic order of nature which he expresses clearly in an essay called "Rikurin ichiro" (Six Wheels One - drop). His dualistic vision in Tanikō merely reflects his philosophy. But as Brecht could not read Japanese he worked from Elizabeth Hauptmann’s German rendering of Arthur Waley’s English translation of Tanikō published in 1921. As I will show, Waley (and therefore Hauptmann) deliberately avoids the double aspect of the Nō vision.

In the introduction to his book of Nō translations, Waley has included a few extracts from Zeami’s treatises for his sick mother. During the journey the boy falls ill.

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1 See Andrzej Wirth’s "Brecht and the Asiatic Model: The Secularization of Magical Rites" in Literature: East and West, Japan Issue, Austin, Texas, Dec. ’71 - June ’72, p.515. He sees Brecht’s recommendation as a possible inspiration from the original Nō.

2 See Myung Whan Kim’s "Zenchiku’s Philosophy of Wheels and the Yeatsian Parallel" in Literature: East and West, pp. 647 – 660.

3 Elizabeth Hauptmann’s original translation from Waley appeared in Der Scheinwerfer, Essen, during 1929-30.

on theatre which, on close reading, indicate the duality of the underlying principle of No. This, however, has not helped him to see the double view of the tragedy in Tanikō, and Brecht might or might not have been aware of these excerpts through Elizabeth Hauptmann. As for Der Jasager and Der Neinsager, though based on Tanikō, they have been re-shaped and diverge from the original. This divergence significantly reflects the fundamental distinction between Brecht's theatre and the No. Brecht's objective is to destroy any illusion of magic. Zeami's theatre induces the audience to participate in a world of magical rites.

The original Tanikō tells the story of a child acolyte, Matsuwaka, who joins a band of priests on a training journey to the top of a mountain in order to pray for his sick mother. During the journey the boy falls ill. Under the law of the Yamabushi priests, anyone who falls ill at such a time must be pushed into a valley and buried alive. The leader of the priests, who is the boy's teacher,


2 The part is played by a 'ko-kata' (i.e. a young boy actor).
is particularly distressed by the situation. But the law cannot be broken. So the boy is hurled into the valley, but the play ends with the descent of the god, En-no-gyoja, who summons the devil god, Gigaku Kijin, to restore the boy to life. This event is the highlight of the second act in the No and the part of the devil god is played by the nochi-shite (the shite of the second act). And the fact that the devil god has been given the task of restoring life shows the dualistic concept of good and evil that underlies the play.

In his free translation of Taniko, Waley deliberately omits the boy's resurrection from his main text and merely mentions it in a footnote. His death and resurrection constitute the double vision of the No. The omission of his resurrection shows a fundamental misunderstanding of the crux of the play. It is the resurrection which removes the sting from the tragedy. Waley was probably bearing in mind his Western readers for whom the tragic impact would be diminished by a happily resolved conclusion.

The original Taniko was conceived within a Buddhist framework: the boy's illness is an impurity which has to be treated. op. cit., p. 235.

The concept of impurity as desecration is also seen in the complete ban on women from participating in a No, because they menstruate and therefore are considered unclean. Since the Second World War this rule has been slightly relaxed.
In Arnaud's words, "a dance of frenetic rigidities" as shown in these three line drawings of a Baris Dancer.

Above: A Baris Dancer striking an angular pose in traditional warrior costume.

Below: A Kebayor Dancer whose movements blend so perfectly with the music that he seems to be a visual extension of the gamelan orchestra.

FIG. 32 COLLAGE SHOWING BARIS AND KEBYAR DANCE MOVEMENTS: "A DANCE OF FRENETIC RIGIDITIES."
complete shift from a spiritual to a political theme. The
differences in Brecht's three versions of Der Jasager are
discussed fully by Wirth. The title of his article,
"Brecht and the Asiatic Model: The Secularization of
Magical Rites", clearly pinpoints the basic difference
between Brecht's "secular" and Zeami's "magical" theatre.

However, a large part of Wirth's article deals with
the similarities which he establishes between Brecht's
theatre and the Nō. He lists as common techniques: the
Alienation effect, stage narration, the actor's self-
introduction, the objective third person, the song of
travel, mime and music. But, in fact, Brecht specifically
associates these same techniques with the Chinese rather
than with the Nō theatre. Indeed most of the techniques,

\[\text{1 See Literature: East and West, pp.610-614. Andrzej}
\begin{align*}
Wirth & \text{puts forward a new view about the three different} \\
& \text{versions of Der Jasager. He says that Der Neinsager is} \\
& \text{essentially the same as the first Der Jasager. The real} \\
& \text{changes are made in the revised Der Jasager.}
\end{align*}

\[\text{2 Ibid., pp.603-609.}

\[\text{3 See Brecht's essay entitled "Alienation Effects in} \\
\text{Chinese Acting" included in Brecht on Theatre, translated} \\
\text{by John Willett, London 1964, pp.91-99.}
\]
listed above, which have been attributed to the No, can also be found in the Chinese theatre. In other words, Brecht's theatre and the No seem to have a common ancestry in the Chinese theatre — a factor which deserves examination at this point in order to assess more accurately his debt to the No.

Brecht first formulated his now famous "Alienation Theory" - Verfremdungseffekte - after watching Mei Lan Fang, the great Chinese actor. Briefly the term "Verfremdungseffekte", translated as "Alienation Effect", refers to a style of acting which requires the actor to observe his acting from outside in order to keep the audience separate from the action. The audience is meant to sit back and reflect on what is presented in the same way that audiences used to listen to the songs of bards in noble Greek or Saxon houses. Hence the close association of "epic" theatre with "Verfremdungseffekte". Martin Esslin has in fact defined the V-effect as simply "the opposite of identification" - "the maintenance of a separate existence by being kept apart".  

1 See Chapter VI, p. 424.
2 Martin Esslin. Brecht: The Man and His Work, New York, 1961, p.134. Esslin suggests that "Verfremdungseffekte" is more clearly translated by the French term "distantiation" than by English terms like "alienation" or "estra
gement".
Brecht's own name for a technique of acting which he had "prised loose from the Chinese theatre". The term was first used, as John Willett tells us, in Brecht's essay, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting". Willett quotes from a pencilled note on the typescript of this essay (Brecht Archive 332/81): his theory of "Alienation" is shaped by his observation of the Chinese artist: This essay arose out of a performance by Mei Lan-fang's company in Moscow in spring in 1935, the Chinese artist never acts as if there were a fourth wall.... He expresses his awareness of being watched.... The actors so it is established that the cool, yet controlled detachment, which Brecht noticed in Mei Lan-fang's performance, triggered off in his mind the A-effect. He was also, no doubt, reacting against the extravagant rhetoric and emotionalism which characterized German classical acting at that time. What Brecht wanted was a return to an ancient technique of acting, defined by him as the A-effect, and which he found in traditional Chinese acting. Briefly, Brecht's

1 John Willett, Brecht on Theatre, op.cit., p.95.
2 ibid., p.99.
3 ibid
4 See chapter VI in which I'll be examining the incongruity of regarding Chinese theatrical effects as "alienating" in the Brechtian sense of "Verfremdungseffekte".
By applying the "Alienation" technique Brecht wants the performer through "self observation, an artful and the artistic act of self-alienation" to stop the spectator "from losing himself in the character completely". It is his method to counteract empathy. I quote further from his essay to show how his theory of "Alienation" is shaped by his observation of the Chinese artist:

Above all, the Chinese artist never acts as if there were a fourth wall.... He expresses his awareness of being watched.... The actors openly choose those positions which will best show them off to the audience, just as if they were acrobats. A further means is that the artist observes himself. 

Brecht describes this kind of acting as "healthier", "less unworthy of a thinking being". He adds that "there is of course a creative process at work, but it is a higher one, because it is raised to the conscious level". And lastly Brecht stresses that "the audience identifies itself with the actor as being an observer." Briefly, Brecht's

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1 Brecht on Theatre, p.93.
2 ibid., pp.91-92.
3 ibid., p.95.
4 ibid., p.93. Which Seami had recommended to the Japanese acting.
A-effect requires the actor in a state of mental consciousness to step out of himself and observe his role from the viewpoint of the audience.

I have deliberately emphasized Brecht's association with the Chinese theatre rather than with the Japanese No for the crystallisation of this technique which is now wholly linked with his name. Apart from his three adaptations of Taniko there is little evidence to show that he knew very much about the No or the theories of Zeami. So it would certainly have surprised him if he had known that five centuries before him, in 1424, Zeami had outlined a theory of alienation which is remarkably similar to his "Verfremdungseffekte". Zeami called his theory "Riken", , literally translated as "The Detached Eye" which he juxtaposed with "Gaken", , "The Personal Subjective Eye". He has not simply presented the "objective view" of acting (Riken) as the direct opposite.

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1 John Willett in The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, op.cit., writes in a note (p.174) : About this time (i.e. after Waley's publication of The No Plays of Japan, 1921) Elizabeth Hauptmann wrote a radio play expounding and discussing Seami's ideas.

2 See The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, p.176. Willett suggests briefly that Brecht's technique of keeping "the spectator at arm's length" "may reflect some of the methods which Seami had recommended to the Japanese No actors".
of the "subjective view" (Gaken) but placed the "objective view" in relation to or within the context of the "subjective view". This theory of the "Detached View" (Riken) is defined by him in an important treatise, Kakyō, 花鏡, literally paraphrased as "The Mirror of the Flower".

The use of the word "mirror" in the title of the treatise is a significant common denominator. We learn from Kenneth Tynan that in order to encourage the players to look at themselves objectively, the Berliner Ensemble, during rehearsals, place a large mirror in the footlights. Before the No actor makes his entry he studies his reflection in the mirror in the Mirror Room. The concept of self-observation (or the reflected image) is central to No and to Brecht's theatre.

There is so far only a partial German 2 and a complete French 3 translation of Zeami's Kakyō. An English translation of Kakyō is still unavailable though fragmentary English paraphrases of the theory of "Riken"

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2 Hermann Bohner, Blumenspiegel, Tokyo 1953.
have appeared in a few articles. The difficulty in translating this theory is finding an adequate substitute in English for the Japanese word "kokoro" which recurs in it. Though "kokoro" is represented by the Chinese character "心" (heart) the term in Japanese contains the multiple meanings of heart, mind and soul. Perhaps the idea of total inner consciousness or awareness is closest to the Japanese "kokoro". So where I have substituted "consciousness" for "kokoro", I mean consciousness of the heart, mind and soul. My translation is practically a literal line by line rendering from the original Japanese text which I've made largely with the help of P.G. O'Neill.


2 Bohner's translation of "kokoro" as "herz" (heart), Sieffert's as "esprit" (spirit), and McKinnon's as "mind" do not adequately convey its full meaning.


4 Professor of Japanese in School of Oriental and African Studies and author of two books on No as well as several articles which I'll be referring to.

2 "Riken no kei" is literally translated as "the detached eye of the eye".
As there is so far no complete English translation of this theory, I believe a close literal translation, however clumsy, can bring out the original meaning more clearly:

It is also said of the dance: "Eyes in front, 'consciousness' (kokoro) behind", or in other words, "Fix your eyes in front of you, place your 'consciousness' (kokoro) behind you." This is what I pointed out above in connection with the "dance-awareness" style.

Your image as seen from the auditorium is the detached view of your form (riken). Thus, what you see with your own eyes is your own subjective view (gaken). It is not what you see from a detached view (riken no ken). What you see from a detached view of yourself is, then, the same in feeling as what is seen by the spectator.

It is then that you will be fully aware of your appearance. When you truly grasp this you will be fully aware of your appearance. However, even though you may see in front and to the left and right, would you not still be unaware of what you look like from behind?

And if you do not know what your image looks like from behind, you cannot tell when the effect is vulgar.

Therefore, by taking the same view of yourself as a spectator, through looking at yourself with a detached view, and by seeing (and being aware of) even those parts of you which your eyes cannot reach, one will achieve a noble image in which all parts of the body

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1 Author of The Noh, Vol.1, God Noh, Tokyo 1972. She is the first Japanese/English translator of No plays to present parallel English translations together with romanized transcriptions of the original Japanese texts. During my visit to Japan in November - December 1973, she introduced me to the Nō.

2 "Riken no ken" is literally translated as "the detached eye of the eye".
are in harmony. Is not this, in fact, placing your 'consciousness' (kokoro) behind you? You must indeed acquire well a detached view of your appearance and thus see yourself with a clear awareness from all sides. There is no doubt that you will then see before you proof that your dance can reach the "yugen" stage in which it is like a flower or jewel.

The Tanhankan says: "Deal with everything, even pure dance (mai) and active/action dance (hataraki) on the basis of left and right and front and back."

The central idea which emerges from this passage is detachment (riken). This is the objectivity Zeami wants but rather than being simply the opposite of the "subjective view", it transcends it. The "subjective view" is the springboard; the "objective view" proceeds from it. The formula is given in a clear order of progression: first, "Eyes in front", second, "consciousness behind". Zeami wants the actor to cultivate his consciousness to such a degree that he can reach this second level of vision - the "detached view" (riken). He can then step out of himself and observe his performance as it is observed by the spectator. In other words, physical sight (the subjective view, "gaken") comes first and then follows the second level of perception (the detached view, "riken") as willed by the consciousness. This is the meaning of "placing the consciousness behind" because the "back" position gives overall control. This idea of the detached reflected image is the core of Kakyō,
far more eloquent conception of hand "which has to do with this instrument's everyday functions than the piece of aesthetic decoration which we've seen on ten thousand canvases." ¹

In the Kwadensho, considered by many to be Zeami's most important treatise on No, he devotes a whole section to the use of shock and surprise as strategical devices in the art of "bewitching" the audience. In fact Zeami goes as far as identifying "hana", 花, "flower", ²

"Learn by this. The Flower is but the Flower of which is what he means by effective theatre, with the feeling of novelty:

Therefore according to Zeami, effective theatre is achieved... The Flower is nothing but novelty,... It is the inability of the spectators to identify the Flower which gives rise to the Flower in the actor..... So, the Flower is the means of exciting in people's mind a feeling of unexpectedness.

For instance, also in the methods of military arts victory is sometimes gained even over a powerful enemy by means of unexpected methods due to the contrivances and stratagems of a great general. Is not this in the eyes of the defeated a defeat through being bewitched by the principle of novelty? This is the principle by which contests are won in all things, in all accomplishments and arts. ³


² Cf. the use of "Flower" (hana), 花, in the sense of effective theatre in the title of the treatise - Kakyō: "The Flower of the Mirror", (花金壇).


See also Sakurai's translation of Kwadensho, op. cit., p.90.
Zeami explains in the beginning of this section why he has equated the flower with effective theatre. He has noticed that flowers are a delight to all precisely because of their "timeliness and novelty". Similarly, "in sarugaku, the novelty felt by people's hearts affords a feeling of interest". For this reason, "the Flower, novelty, interest, make up one feeling". 1 And again, more emphatically he says:

"Learn by this. The Flower is but the Flower of Novelty lying in the hearts of the audience." 2

Therefore according to Zeami, effective theatre is achieved precisely by creating a feeling of unexpectedness in the audience. So he advises the actor that when performing an angry part he must not forget to have a tender heart. "Having a tender heart in playing an angry part is the cause of novelty." 3 A whole section of the Kakyo delineates the art of creating a feeling of surprise: the actor is told that a powerful movement of the body must be accompanied by a moderate movement of the feet and vice versa. 4 Zeami advises the actor playing the part of an old man to act youthfully. This is carefully worked

1 Brecht on Theatre, p.204.
2 ibid., p.205
3 ibid., p.210
4 Nose Asaji, op.cit., p.285. See also Sakurai's translation of Kadensho, op.cit., p.91.
First, for instance, an old man desires in his heart to behave always like a young man.... It is inevitable that because of the loss of his strength, however youthfully he may behave, the actions of an old man fall behind the beat. It is reasonable that the youthful actions of an old man are novel to see....

Zeami and Brecht are both aware of this ancient principle of surprise in achieving an impact. As Brecht puts it in his essay:

This effort to make the incidents represented appear strange to the public can be seen in a primitive form in the theatrical and pictorial displays at the old popular fairs.2

In his last message to the Berliner Ensemble which he pinned on the notice board at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm on 5th August 1956, just before the Company left for London, he repeats this ancient formula: effective theatre is the feeling of unexpectedness. His message reads:

There is in England a long-standing fear that German art (literature, painting, music) must be terribly heavy, slow, laborious and pedestrian. So our playing needs to be quick, light, strong.*

1 Kwadensho, op.cit., pp.207-208. (Monumenta Nipponica, V/2).
2 Brecht on Theatre, p.91.
3 ibid., p.283.
In the Kwadensho, Zeami emphasizes in a similar way the need to surprise the audience: "incidents, songs and dances, acrobatics and tumbling, and finally, juggling, conjuring and prestidigitation".

For an actor is sometimes said by his audience to have played in a more interesting manner than usual if they are naturally expecting him to perform in his usual manner, ... and he instead does not stick so stagnantly to his custom but continues to perform more lightly than his former style of acting, ... that it appears even to himself that such enthusiasm can never be displayed again. Is not this due to the impression of novelty made on the audience? *

It is interesting that Zeami and Brecht, separated by five centuries, have defined a similar theory of creating effective theatre. But it is not surprising. Both of them have built their theories on a similar base: the Chinese theatre. I have emphasized Brecht's contact with the Chinese theatre in 1935 2 which provided the impetus for his "Verfremdungseffekte". As early as the 8th Century the Chinese theatre found its way into Japan in the form of "sarugaku". In Japan "sarugaku" became a general name for all kinds of popular entertainments. The most outstanding feature of the Chinese imported "sarugaku"

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1 op.cit., p.206. (Monumenta Nipponica, V/2).
2 By "presentational" I mean the unembodied way in which the actors present or display their skill.
3 See Chapter VI for a full discussion of the intricacy of Brecht's indebtedness to Chinese theatre.
was its essentially "presentational" character as illustrated by its three main elements: songs and dances, acrobatics and tumbling, and finally, juggling, conjuring and magic. The Nō, which evolved from "sarugaku", still bears this "presentational" quality. In other words there is no "fourth wall" and Zeami, unlike Brecht, never had to stress that theatre is theatre and not real life. The term "Nō" is represented by the Chinese character, 能, meaning literally "to be able" or "accomplishment". So the Nō, like its Chinese ancestor, "sarugaku", is essentially an art through which the actors present or display their skill.

What is significant in studying Zeami's theory of Alienation together with Brecht's is that in spite of similarities through a common denominator, there is a fundamental difference. The difference lies in their understanding of the Alienation technique; Zeami came to grips with it fully; Brecht only partially. And this difference is important because a close examination of it provides a socio-political real judgment which has been

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1 By "presentational" I mean the unabashed way in which the actor displays his art.

vides a clarification of the inconsistency which has been pointed out in Brecht's A-effect. To begin with the concept of "kokoro" (the total consciousness of heart, mind and soul) features significantly in Zeami's theory. He is well aware that the emotional factor between stage and auditorium cannot be eliminated. Brecht's accent is on mental consciousness and the failure of his efforts to reduce empathy makes one all the more aware of this force in the theatre.

Earlier I stressed that the difference between Brecht's and Zeami's theatre is shown in the way Brecht had reshaped Tanikō. A magical world had given way to one of social reform. This distinction between Zeami's and Brecht's theatre is reflected in their different conception of the "Alienation" technique.

So that his audience can assess social truths, Brecht ruthlessly seeks to eliminate empathy which he feels would mar judgement. Reacting against the excessive emotionalism of the classical theatre of his time, he sees clear judgement and emotion as mutually exclusive. Because his aim is socio-political, cool judgement must have priority. Kenneth Tynan calls this throwing the baby out with the bath water.¹ And indeed Brecht's reaction against the

¹ Tynan, p.242.
Stanislavskian identification with the role and the creation of the illusion of reality led him to misconstrue the full implications of the A-technique. This is seen in the peremptory way he lays down what he calls the first condition for the application of the A-effect:

The first condition for the A-effect's application... is that stage and auditorium must be purged of everything "magical" and no "hypnotic tensions" should be set up. 1

Yet if we disentangle the "Alienation" technique from Brecht's political motives and examine the formula for what it is, it is clear that the application of the A-effect cannot but create hypnotic tensions between stage and audience. And it is here that Zeami's wording of the same technique, freed from Brecht's political obsessions, is invaluable in helping us see the problem clearly. The A-effect does not rule out emotion in the light of this examination.

The rarified atmosphere of the No theatre today may give the false impression that No is not calculated to appeal to the emotions. However, Zeami in his Kwadensho specifically refers to a "tearful sarugaku" 2 which Nose and Ikenouchi have interpreted as one in which the audience

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1 Brecht on Theatre, p.136.
weep. Two other translators have interpreted it as one in which the hero weeps,\(^1\) but whichever interpretation we follow, the element of emotion is present. And at the same time the degree of detachment in the Nō is even more marked than in Brecht's theory. In many Nō plays, alienation is at two removes: the audience watches the waki (second actor) on stage observing the shite's (main actor's) performance. (This is achieved through the dream technique which I will discuss in Chapter III).

So the style of acting Zeami prescribes, which requires the actor to observe his role from the viewpoint of the spectator, sets up a triangular chain of tension between actor, role and audience. In fact it is a union between stage and audience of a very unique character: an empathy resulting from detachment and involvement.\(^2\) These two

\(^1\) \textit{ibid.}

\(^2\) Cf. Sakurai's introduction to Kadensho, \textit{op.cit.}, p.7, where he mentions that Zeami's theory of "Alienation" or "Riken" brings the audience closer to the artist: "It is a difficult thing to see one's entire figure objectively through the depth of one's contemplation, seeing in front of one with the eyes and in the back of one with the mind. This is made possible by establishing one's centre, and is the artistic basis of the three dimensional relationship between the artist and his audience. These principles ... produce a union between subject and object. Zeami, by intensifying the inner realization of the actor, attempted to bring about the unification of artist and audience."
conflicting processes are inherent in the "Alienation" technique. One can find reasons, as I will show later, why it was that Zeami realized the full implications of this technique. Brecht, who was bent on destroying empathy and hypnotic tensions, did not know that he had ironically selected a weapon specifically designed to induce them. These tensions which ambiguously combine empathy and detachment are essential in effective theatre. Their indefinability characterizes the moving appeal of a Nō performance. And these are the tensions which, in spite of Brecht, the theoretician, tug at the hearts and minds of his audience in his best plays. Hence the discrepancy between Brecht's theory and practice of "Verfremdungseffekte". Kenneth Tynan pinpoints this inconsistency in his review of The Good Woman of Setzuan at the Royal Court in 1956. He says:

> At every turn emotion floods through that celebrated dam, the "alienation-effect". More and more one sees Brecht as a man whose feelings were so violent that he needed a strong theory to curb them. Human sympathy, time and again, smashes his self-imposed style: when Shen Te meets her airman on a park-bench in the rain; when she learns (disguised as Shui Ta) that he means to abandon her; when, alone, on the stage, she shows her unborn son the glory of the world;...
Brecht, the dramatist, in fact, succeeds in spite of Brecht, the theorist, and in his best plays an ambiguous, poetic truth rather than a clear-cut social statement emerges. Kenneth Tynan describes how Helene Weigel by applying the A-effect and playing the role of Mother Courage in a casual yet "graphic" but utterly "unflamboyant" way was "piercingly and unforgettably moving". He also mentions how Lee Strasberg, the artistic director of the Actors' Studio, and "a passionate supporter of Stanislavsky's quest for emotional truth" was totally impressed by The Caucasian Chalk Circle performed in London. Strasberg, in fact, concluded that "what Brecht practised was by no means incompatible with what Stanislavsky preached". All these ironical reversions of Brecht's intentions show that when he defined his A-effect, he was unaware that it could detach the spectator from, and involve him with, the role. He was so obsessed with cultivating "detachment" that he even suggested the concept of the "smokers' theatre", where the audience would puff away at its cigars as if watching a boxing match, and would develop a more detached and critical outlook. Brecht never

1 ibid., p.257.
2 ibid., p.258.
3 Brecht on Theatre, p.8.
really went to a Chinese theatre "in situ" where he would have noticed that though water-melon seeds and other refreshments are eaten incessantly throughout a performance, the double process of detachment and involvement can still take place.

I can remember vividly as a child, with a mixture of embarrassment and amusement, asking my nanny not to weep over a stylized death scene from Chinese opera. The use of the A-effect produced in her an empathy which would have astonished Brecht. And I don't think it was a reaction which was peculiar to the Oriental temperament. The following description given by Brecht of the effect of Mei Lan Fang's performance of a death scene on a European audience illustrates this double process at work. Brecht, however, completely misinterpreted it:

... a spectator sitting next to me exclaimed with astonishment at one of his (the actor's) gestures. One or two people sitting in front of us turned round indignantly and shhh'd. They behaved as if they were present at the real death of a real girl. Possibly their attitude would have been all right for a European production, but for a Chinese it was unspeakably ridiculous. In this case the A-effect had misfired.

In spite of the "A-effect", the general informality and noise that accompany a performance in a real Chinese theatre, a

\[1\] ibid., p.95
large sector of the spectators behave as though what they are observing is real. In fact they behave exactly like the Europeans who sat in front of Brecht. And it is not a case of the misfiring of the A-effect, as Brecht suggested, but rather its paradoxical ability to move an audience through detachment and empathy.

The significance of Zeami’s theory of Alienation is not only that it precedes Brecht’s by five centuries in the definition of a basic principle of art, but that it takes into account the emotional element which Brecht’s omits. To be fair, Brecht did consider this possibility but only as an afterthought in his appendix to the Messingkauf Dialogues:

“This type of art (referring to the A-effect) also generates emotions,...”

The truth is that Brecht was fundamentally ambiguous in his attitude to the A-effect. We see the same ambiguity in Stanislavsky who is usually associated with the theory of complete inward identification with the character. He, too, ventured outside his boundary and came very close to accepting the view of detachment in acting. The point I want to make is that the theories of Brecht and Stanislavsky, which represent two different methods of acting, did at one
stage appear to intersect. Just as Brecht entertained the possibility of an emotional response, Stanislavsky in the following account, clearly upholds the "Alienation" technique through the imaginary actor Kostya. Stanislavsky (thinly disguised as Tortsov, the Director) had asked Kostya, who had given a superb performance of the role of a "Critic", to give a history of the evolution of his "Critic". Kostya:

First of all I believed fully and sincerely in the reality of what I was doing and feeling; out of this emerged a sense of confidence in myself and in the rightness of the image I had created, ... I even had the sensation that it was not I conversing with you but someone entirely different, and that you and I were both observing him.1

Kostya, playing the Critic, was able to step into his part and yet detach himself from the role and observe it together with the Director. Here we see in action the double process of empathy with, and detachment from, the role. It was precisely because of this duality that the performance was superb. Its affinity with the Japanese technique is not surprising particularly as Jacques Copeau records in his journal that Stanislavsky on his way through Paris had encouraged him in his rehearsals of the No play Kantan

in 1923. Though Stanislavsky's contact with the No was indirect, the fact that he encouraged Copeau in his Japanese experiment showed he understood its intentions. It is significant that he expressed this glimpse of a possible double approach after Copeau's attempt to present a No play. In his book My Life in Art, first published in 1924, he expresses a view of acting which is strikingly close to the Japanese ideal of "yugen". This is a Zen mood of art expressing the "mysterious" which Zeami incorporated into No. (I will later discuss "yugen" in conjunction with his theory of alienation). But the following quotation shows Stanislavsky's unconscious affinity with No which particularly excels in the truth of dreams:

> The principle of the new Studio, to express it in as few words as possible, was that realism and local color had lived their life and no longer interested the public. The time for the unreal on the stage had arrived. It was necessary to picture not life itself as it takes place in reality, but as we vaguely feel it in our dreams, our visions, our moments of spiritual uplift.

As Zeami's theory is still relatively unknown, and as it is convenient to define the unknown by the known, one

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1 Jacques Copeau, Souvenirs du Vieux - Colombier, Paris, Nouvelles editions Latines, 1931, p.100. (See Ch.III, p. 134.)


* I've underlined this to bring out its similarity to a type of No play known as "mugen" or dream No. See Chapter III, pp. 152-53.
can say that his theory of Alienation, which holds together the conflicting ideas of detachment and empathy, begins precisely in the area where Brecht and Stanislavsky overlap. It is this strategic location which makes his theory so valuable, particularly, as we can trace its influence on the French actor/director, Jean Louis Barrault. He is a great admirer of No and acquainted with Zeami's theories. This is shown in his discussion of the Japanese actor's awareness of a third eye watching the audience which can only refer to Zeami's theory of "Riken", (Detached Eye) or "Alienation". And he again mentioned Zeami at a press conference during his visit to Japan in 1960. It is therefore not a coincidence that his own view of acting parallels Zeami's in the way it combines Brecht's and Stanislavsky's method:

When I read the so opposed manifestos of Stanislavsky and Bertolt Brecht I tell myself that the first was primarily an actor and the second primarily an author. I identify with both points of view....

Barrault goes on to say that Brecht achieves his results...
of "Riken" (Detachment), where I have substituted "consciousness" for "kokoro", I mean consciousness of the heart, mind and soul.

By move your "consciousness" (kokoro) 10/10ths, move your body 7/10ths, I mean this: when you are learning how to extend your hand and move your feet you must move them according to the instructions of your teacher; but when these movements have been thoroughly learnt, then and only then, do not move your external hand quite as much as you had in mind to do but hold it back a little from this point. This is not necessarily limited to pure dance (mai) and action dance (hataraki). Even in other ordinary movements, if you are more sparing of the actions of your body than of the "consciousness" (kokoro) behind them, you make your actions the substance (tai) and your "consciousness" (kokoro) what gives them their effectiveness (yō) and an entertaining impression is produced.

This is one of the first Zen paradoxes in Zeami's method of moving an audience: the use of restraint - minimum physical movement to obtain maximum emotional impact. A significant linguistic point is that the Chinese character ( 感 ) used to represent the act of "moving" the audience, contains the radical "心" (heart or "kokoro"). This implies that the audience is to be moved in heart and in mind which significantly differs from the cool, mental reaction Brecht wanted to achieve by his A-effect.

Not only was Barrault aware of the importance of the complete control of the consciousness as prescribed by
At this point it is worth examining why Zeami was able to grasp better than Brecht the dual elements of detachment and empathy inherent in the Alienation technique. The first two reasons are related to the state of the No theatre in his time. It was his reaction to the "full blooded naturalistic No of his contemporaries"\(^1\) - the use of real armour and horses,\(^2\) the use of acrobats,\(^3\) which led him to incorporate into the art the concept of "yugen": the dark, mysterious quality. This mixture of obvious realism with subtlety gave No a double dimension which is reflected in his theory. The distractions of the open air performances,\(^4\) which must have been quite different from those of the modern indoor No theatre, not only freed him from Brecht's problem of the "illusory fourth wall", but must have driven him, initially, to devise effective means of holding the audience's attention. And indeed, in his treatises, he devotes whole sections to instructing the actor how to hold his audience's attention.\(^5\) It is

\(\text{\footnotesize 1 P.G. O'Neill, op.cit., p.148.}\
\(\text{\footnotesize 2 Ibid., p.144.}\
\(\text{\footnotesize 3 Ibid., p.145.}\
\(\text{\footnotesize 4 Ibid., p.147.}\
\(\text{\footnotesize 5 See also Shidehara and Whitehouse, op.cit., IV/2, p.227; and West, op.cit., p.443.}\
\)
important to see the formulation of his theory of alienation against this need to "bewitch his audience".\(^1\) Brecht had been so blinded by his obsessive need to destroy empathy that he could not see that the "Alienation" technique is an ancient principle precisely devised to induce empathy through detachment.

Another factor accounting for the wider perspective of Zeami's theory is that it is based on the same principle of duality which underlies Japanese and Chinese art. In Chinese terminology it is referred to as the principle of the "yin" and "yang" - the positive and negative force. The "yin" has been identified with the subjective approach and the "yang" with the objective\(^2\) and harmony is achieved through a combination of the subjective and objective. Earlier, in my explanation of Zeami's theory, following the translation, I emphasized that the objective (or detached) view must be seen not as the opposite of the subjective view but in complementary relation to it. It is harmony which is in a constant state of flux giving rise to the concept of mobility in immobility. This Chinese paradox lies at the heart of Nō, though the duality of Nō is also

\(^1\) I have borrowed this phrase from Nogami Toyoichiro. See Zeami and His Theories on Nō, Tokyo 1955, p.66.

\(^2\) See Literature East and West, op.cit., p.648.
directly traceable to the influence of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

The Zen sect of Buddhism firmly established itself in the Kamakura period and exerted its influence from the 13th century till the nineteenth. The central element of the Zen sect is its negative force which becomes its positive quality. So unlike the Buddhist sects of the previous era which established a hierarchy of priests, the Zen sect had no hierarchy. Instead of building themselves gorgeous temples, the Zen priests preached in the streets. Their literary activities were not associated with the aristocrats but with simple people. Zen had a particular appeal for warriors because of its simplicity and its indifference to life and death. Philosophically it tended towards intuition rather than the intellect because intuition seemed a more direct way of getting at the truth. "Yugen" the mysterious, intuitive quality, which is felt, but indefinable, became known as a mood of Zen art.

It is this Zen mood "yugen" which Kannami

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1 For a full account of Zen influence on No and other arts, see Andrew Tsubaki's "Zeami and the Transition of the Concept of Yugen : A Note on Japanese Aesthetics." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Vol.XXX/1), Fall, 1971, pp.56-57.

and Zeami introduced to Nō, not only bringing it to its zenith but giving it an extra dimension of duality.

"yūgen" was a term well established in the classic verse form (waka) and linked verse form (renga). Zeami made an attempt to define the indefinable by identifying "yūgen" with the beauty and gentleness of courtiers. But "yūgen" was not the only mode of art in the Middle Ages. The mood "sabi" which reflects even better than "yūgen" the dual element in Zen also exerted a very deep influence on Nō.

It has been pointed out that "sabi" was called "yūgen" in the process of its formation. "Sabi" is defined as "restrained taste, a sober pattern or the appearance of tarnished silver." Tsubaki describes it further:

It is beauty of a suggestive quality. Structurally the concept of sabi consists of two conflicting

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1 See Donald Keene's English translation of Zeami's essay "On Attaining the Stage of Yūgen" in the Kakyo which he includes in his Anthology of Japanese Literature, Tokyo 1974, p.260:

May we not say of the courtiers whose behaviour is distinguished and whose appearance far surpasses that of other men, that they are at the stage of yūgen? From this one may see that the essence of yugen is true beauty and gentleness.

2 See Tsubaki's article, op.cit., p.61. (To support this statement, Tsubaki refers to Minoru Nishio's Chūseiteki no Mono to sono Tenkai, Tokyo, 1961, p.22.)
factors, each of which opposes the other and yet the effect of this contrast heightens both and in its entirety produces the unified beauty, "sabi". 1

This double quality which characterizes "sabi" is a special influence of Zen. However, "sabi" is not such a well known term as "yūgen" in relation to Nō. The distinction between them is sometimes blurred. But the important point is that the duality of conflicting factors I've described above can be traced in Nō. This can be seen in the way Kannami and Zeami turned Nō, which was originally a people's theatre, into one acceptable both to aristocrats and commoners. They achieved this unification of taste by combining the opposed concept of obvious imitation (monomane) with the indefinable idea of the mysterious (yūgen). In the plays themselves they were able to counterbalance the beauty of abundance which is aristocratic with a quality of nothingness which is warrior-like, resulting in a double beauty. 2 The art is so permeated with Zen thought that it is hard to tell where Zen ends and Nō begins. As Waley puts it:

... Zen was the religion of the artists; it had inspired the painters and poets of the Sung dynasty in China; it was the religion of the great art patrons who ruled Japan in the fifteenth century.

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1 ibid., p.62

2 ibid., pp.63-64.
It was in the language of Zen that poetry and painting were discussed; and it was in a style tinged with Zen that Zeami wrote of his own art.

It is the special shading which Zen gives to Eastern art that makes something apparently contradictory harmonize. The particular way Zeami has formulated his theory of Riken (Alienation) is consistent with the Zen equation of conflicting yet complementary forces: the actor must negate himself and observe himself from the spectator's point of view in order to establish a positive relationship with the spectator. So with a fluidity which may bewilder a Westerner, Zeami shifts his emphasis from the positive to the negative, from the concept of total consciousness to non-consciousness as the supreme state of achievement:

There is a grade of miming in which the representation is unconscious. When you have mastered miming and truly enter into the object of your miming, you have no longer any thought of making a representation.

In other words the truly mastered No belongs to the realm of the unconscious. This state, which is beyond the normal bounds of consciousness, represents the goal of every No actor. Charles Dullin, who learned about the No from Copeau, was very impressed by this concept of transcendental reality and aware that it had been refined from the most meticulous realism:

1 op.cit., p.44
2 Shidehara and Whitehouse, op.cit., V/2, p.207.
The Japanese actor sets out from the most meticulous realism, his synthesis is achieved through his need for truth. For us the word "stylization" immediately evokes a kind of stultified aestheticism, a colourless docile rhythmical pattern; for him stylization is direct, eloquent and more expressive than reality. Dullin recognized that the final "stylized" product of No is the result of a conscious refining process - a meticulous paring away to reach the essence. And the essence is so fine, that it can only be suggested in a stylized way; it is restraint of the highest inner concentration; a stillness of great density. Consciousness negates itself and shifts to unconsciousness in the final process of refinement.

In an essay, which Donald Keene has translated as "The One Mind Linking All Powers", Zeami uses the analogy of marionettes, borrowed from a poem by an unknown Zen master, to illustrate this basic tenet of the No. He advises the actor to let his consciousness (kokoro) control his acting in the same way that marionettes on a stage are manipulated.

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1 Charles Dullin, Souvenirs et notes de travail d'un actor, 1946, p.60. I have used Dorothy Knowles' translation of this passage which she has included in her book: French Drama of the Inter-War Years 1918 - 39, London 1967, p.41.

2 Keene has translated "kokoro" as "mind". I feel "consciousness" of the heart, soul and mind is a more satisfactory equivalent.
by strings. He equates the "consciousness" with the strings and insists that for effectiveness, just like the strings, it must remain invisible to the audience. The entire essay is permeated with the negative force in No. It begins with what seems a contradiction:

Sometimes spectators of the No say that the moments of "no action" are the most enjoyable. This is one of the actor's secret arts ... when we examine why such moments without action are enjoyable, we find that it is due to the underlying spiritual strength of the actor.... He does not relax the tension when the dancing or singing comes to an end....

Zeami is stressing the 10/10ths control of the inner consciousness (kokoro) which can endow moments of stillness with eloquence. Having emphasized "consciousness" (kokoro) Zeami moves to the Zen state of "non consciousness". Keene has translated it as the "state of mindlessness":

The actions before and after an interval of "no actions" must be linked by entering the state of mindlessness in which the actor conceals even from himself his own intent.

Further on in the Kakyō, Zeami explicitly describes what he means by the "state of mindlessness". This state,

1 Donald Keene, Anthology of Japanese Literature, op.cit., p.258.
2 ibid., p.259.
characterized by the negative element, "mu", nothingness, seems more important than the state of abundance, "yū", (literally: to have). This section made an impression on Arthur Waley who included it in his introduction to *The No Plays of Japan*:

The third class is that which appeals to the mind. In the hands of a peerless master Sarugaku will move the heart when not only representation, but song, dance, mimic and rapid action are all eliminated, emotion as it were springing out of quiescence. This is called "frozen dance". ... and though it is called "No that speaks to the mind," yet it is also called "mindless No." 1

Here, Zeami introduces the concept of the negation of consciousness (kokoro), "mushin", as the highest level of achievement in No, and adds, "There are many who have long frequented the theatre, yet do not understand No; and many who understand, though they have little experience. For eye-knowledge comes not to all who see, but to him who sees well..."

The negative force as a means to achieve a positive end is seen in the following passage which Zeami quotes from *The Book of Criticism* in his *Kakyō*:

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1 *op. cit.*, p.44.
The Book of Criticism says, "Forget the theatre and look at the No. Forget the No and look at the actor. Forget the actor and look at the "idea" (kokoro)." 1 Forget the "idea" and you will understand the No.

This passage can be found in Waley's introduction and Paul Claudel also copied it in his journal. 2

The Zen negative process of elimination is a vital concept in the understanding of No as an art form and its techniques. The key word is economy (realized through negation). 3 Non essentials must be ruthlessly stripped away. Scattered through Zeami's Writings are injunctions to the actor to renounce all other ways in the pursuit of No. This quality of "nothingness" is followed consistently through, from the frugality of stage movements to the simplicity in daily living he prescribes for the No actor.

1 This is Waley's translation, op.cit., p. 44. Cf. this saying with a Chinese master's advice to young painters: Draw bamboos for ten years, become a bamboo, then forget all about bamboos when you are drawing. Peter Daubeney's World Theatre Souvenir Program, 1973, p. 86.

2 See Estelle Trepanier's "The Influence of the Noh on The Theatre of Paul Claudel" in Literature East and West, op.cit., p. 622.

3 Zeami once said to his son, Motomasa: ... The spirit not to do any unnecessary thing is the key to the No. (Zeami and His Theories on No, op.cit., p. 68).
Writing in a period under the dominance of Zen and about an art influenced by Zen and in a style tinged by Zen, it is not surprising that his theory of Riken (Alienation) is based on a double concept: empathy and detachment. The theory balances conflicting processes with no hint of any uneasiness. It is the simplicity with which Zeami defines a complex dual process which makes his theory more illuminating than Brecht's attempt to state the similar principle of alienation. And while there is a discrepancy between Brecht's theory and its application, Zeami's plays fully illustrate his theory. Although No plays will and always have a limited appeal, I feel that the underlying principle of the art, as outlined by Zeami in his treatises, has a universal appeal. Sieffert expresses this same view:

But the "Treatises" of Zeami are quite another matter and his aesthetic concepts could exercise a useful influence on western arts. And I mean the arts and not only the dramatic art because this Leonardo da Vinci of the theatre, at once poet, musician, director, singer, choreographer and actor, has known how to deduce from his own experience general principles which are applicable to painting or sculpture or architecture as much as to the dramatic art. It is there precisely that the study of No goes beyond this narrow Japanese art to take on exemplary value, a universal application. 1

So when Zeami wrote his treatises with No in mind, he was, in fact, articulating the basic principles of effective

1 op.cit., p.9. (See above, note 3, p. 34).
theatre which are still of universal relevance. These principles have sometimes been applied unconsciously, as in the case of Samuel Beckett. Beckett himself has denied any influence of the Orient in his work and his plays are certainly not imitations of Nō. But, as I will show later, one can trace in them the same use of effective theatrical techniques as practised in the Nō since its beginning.

Another good example of an unconscious application of Zeami's archetypal principle of effective acting can be found in Ronald Hayman's view of acting in his article, "The Actor and the Artist". This view is the accent placed on the importance of "thinking of the character as a performer". Hayman says he finds Brecht more useful than Stanislavsky but "it is not simply a matter of taking two vantage points, one inside and one outside the character's consciousness." He wants the character not only to be "conscious of himself but to be conscious of his own self-

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1 See L. C. Pronko's Theater East and West, California 1967, p.106. Pronko quotes Beckett's statement from a note dated June 2nd, 1964, Paris: I am not at all acquainted with Nō drama or Oriental theatre in general and have made no attempt to use such techniques in my plays.


3 ibid., p.56.
consciouness and the actor must observe himself observing the various layers of a consciousness not unlike his own." 1

Hayman is simply re-stating what Zeami said in the Kwadencho in 1400:

For instance, in the miming of an old man, the mental attitude of an expert who has mastered this is that of an old man who is simply an amateur performing in a gay costume at "furyu" 2 or "ennen" performances.3

Zeami realized the multi-layered levels of consciousness needed in effective acting. Actors today in Western theatres are "painfully aware", as Hayman puts it, "that they tend to give their best performances in the final run-through before the first dress rehearsal." 4 This is because they are still exercising their different levels of consciousness in coming to grips with their roles.

Zeami "the Leonardo da Vinci of the theatre" certainly observed this curious phenomenon in acting and therefore codified the need to move the consciousness at several

1 ibid., p.55

2 A ceremonial dramatic form presented as part of the programme called "ennen" for religious festivals.

3 Whitehouse and Shidehara, op.cit., V/2, p.207.

4 The new review, p.52.
levels\(^1\) in order to give a good performance. As the West becomes more familiar with his theories, it will realize that many of the so-called avant-garde ideas of acting, in effect, spring from him. His importance for the West therefore is more as a theoretician than as a composer of Nō.

As a coda to this chapter, I would like to mention George Bernard Shaw who cultivated the technique of shocking his audience in a way which delighted Brecht and was certainly in keeping with Zeami's concept of effective theatre (hana). In 1926, as a tribute for Shaw's seventieth birthday, Brecht wrote an essay called "Three Cheers for Shaw"\(^2\) in which he saluted Shaw, the "Terrorist". Brecht admired in particular Shaw's gift for "dislocating our stock associations". In 1924 Brecht had seen Max Reinhardt's production of St. Joan at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, and though he never met Shaw, one can understand his attraction to the playwright who could so admirably use the shock technique which was later to form the core of his "Verfremdungseffekte". I quote from Brecht's essay on Shaw:

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\(^1\) See page 56 for Zeami's rule of the \(10/10\)ths control of the consciousness (kokoro).

\(^2\) Brecht on Theatre, pp.10-13.

\(^3\) Toyokazu Negami, Noh Plays, How to see them, Board of Tourist Industry, Tokyo 1954.
Probably every single feature of all Shaw's characters can be attributed to his delight in dislocating our stock associations. He knows that we have a horrible way of taking all the characteristics of a particular type and lumping them under a single head. We picture a usurer as cowardly, furtive and brutal. Not for a moment do we think of allowing him to be in any way courageous. Or wistful or tender-hearted. Shaw does.

This is reminiscent of Zeami's injunction to the Nō actor that when playing an angry part he must not omit the element of tenderness. For effective theatre (hana) has essentially the ability to surprise. Shaw makes no reference to Zeami or any other kind of Oriental influence in his work. But in 1933, at the age of seventy-seven, he went to Japan and saw one of Zeami's plays, Tōnō (The Woman-Warrior). So in a literal sense, Shaw came closer to Nō than either Brecht or Yeats who never went to Japan. His visit to Japan in the spring of 1933 was an unexpected event. The president of the publishers (Kaizō-sha) was quite at a loss how to entertain his celebrated guest. This account of his visit is reported in detail by Professor Toyochiro Nogami in his preface to his book *Japanese Noh Plays* which had been commissioned by

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1 *ibid.*, p.11.


3 Nogami Toyochiro, *Japanese Noh Plays*, How to see them, Board of Tourist Industry, Tokyo 1934.
the Board of Tourist Industry. The president of the
publishers had asked Nogami for help in entertaining Shaw
and he had suggested a special performance of Tōmoe and a
kyōgen, Ka - zumō (The Wrestling with a Mosquito).

Nogami's book was published in 1934 and little did Shaw
realize, during his visit, that his name and photo would be
used to promote Nō. For in that book a picture of Shaw
wearing the Mask of "Okina" is given even more prominence
than the photo of "Tōmoe", the Woman warrior. I quote from
Nogami's account of the performance in Shaw's honour:

Trusting to the dramatist's appreciative power, and
not a whit discounting it, I chose Tōmoe, which is
the most characteristic Nō among all Nō plays....
This is an orthodox Nō in which the First Actor
(Shite) performs alone throughout almost the whole
play, and the Second Actor (Waki) withdraws himself
beside the pillar and watches the play just as the
audience does, after he has finished his small part.
The First Actor takes the role of a beautiful Amazon
who persuades her lord to commit suicide, and in the
meantime fights against swarming enemies. But on the
stage, there is none but the Second Actor, the
representative of the audience, who plays the role
of a Travelling Monk. And here is put in practice
the principle of extreme theatrical economy, which
I wanted Mr. Shaw to see.²

Nogami sat beside Shaw throughout the performance and Yone

1 ibid., p.11.
2 ibid., pp.10-11.
Noguchi explained the play to him. It was a cold snowy day and Shaw's response is reported in full for the benefit of tourists who may follow his example in taking an interest in Nō:

I have not been incommodated by the cold this afternoon. The delightful performance of this Noh drama has made me forget it. It has been a performance of great interest to me. Although I am seventy-seven years of age, I am still learning, and I have been given the opportunity of learning something new and interesting this afternoon. I wish to say that for the artist, however old he may be, there is always something to learn. Although I naturally did not understand a word of this performance this afternoon, I think I may venture to say that I understood its artistic intention and I followed it with very great interest.

Nogami concluded by saying that Shaw was more interested in the Nō than anything else he had seen in Japan, and like Claudel, he greatly admired its stage construction.

Shaw lived to the age of ninety-four and although his one contact with the Nō may have helped to promote it, the plays he wrote after his Japanese visit were in no way affected by it. There is no doubt that Zeami's Tomoe impressed him deeply. But Shaw was not acquainted with his

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1 A poet and one of Yeats's friends. He tried, but failed, to arrange a visit to Japan for Yeats.

treatises on theatre and would probably have been rather surprised had it been pointed out to him, that in spite of the gap of five centuries, he, Brecht, and Zeami, all believed in the use of shock as an effective theatrical technique.

The No has been linked with the plays of W.B. Yeats more than with those of any other Western dramatist. The core of this chapter will be devoted to explaining the precise nature of No's influence on Yeats as it emerges in his essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", and in his play, "At the Heart's Delight". Zeami played in Japan as the most irrefutable proof of the relevance of No to the West.

Brecht did not claim to have evolved the A-effect. He recognized it as an ancient technique. I have tried to show in this chapter that Zeami formulated the same technique bringing out its intricacies in a way which explains the discrepancies in the application of Brecht's "Verfremdungseffekte". And it is in this, if in nothing else, that Zeami, the theoretician, can claim a major contribution to current Western theatrical theories.
The No has been linked with the plays of W.B. Yeats more than with those of any other Western dramatist. The core of this chapter will be devoted to examining the precise nature of No's influence on Yeats as it emerges in his essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan," and in his play - At the Hawk's Well - often cited in Japan as the most irrefutable piece of evidence of the relevance of No to the West.

There is also a slightly dubious aspect of the connection between Yeats and the No which I'll be investigating. And this is an issue interwoven with his unqualified identification in 1916 of No as an aristocratic art - an understandable identification, no doubt, because of lack of information at that time.

The translation of No by Fenollosa and Pound was published in 1916. Pound showed the manuscript to Yeats in 1914. So it is not too much to say that fifteen plays Yeats wrote were all influenced by No. (Certain Noble Plays of Japan, containing four plays with Yeats's introduction; 'No' or 'Accomplishment' containing eleven plays).

At the Hawk's Well is one of the most well-known of Yeats's No-Inspired plays.
I should also add that from one angle, it is not wholly a misrepresentation, as Nō, which began as essentially a common people's art, eventually came under aristocratic patronage and indeed acquired some of the overtones of such an association. But there is a danger of missing the essential original character of Nō by defining it, as Yeats did, in terms of its later "aristocratic" modifications.

Unfortunately, Yeats's impression of the Nō remains that of most Westerners today. This has also provided present promoters of Nō in Japan, who are no doubt aware of its true origin, with a means of perpetuating a myth, and for expediency, continuing to sell Nō, both in and outside Japan, as an aristocratic cult art. Although absolute historical accuracy may not be important to a creative artist such as Yeats, who could select whatever he needed from his source of inspiration and pick up anywhere he wanted, it is particularly crucial for the art if the playwright associated with it turns out to be as influential as Yeats. There is a tendency for his view of Nō to be the definitive one. This sums up part of Nō's dilemma today.

However, Yeats's connection with Nō was not wholly negative. As drama lay outside the concern of traditional scholars of Japanese literature, it was really the Irish poet who inspired the interest of Japanese scholarship in
Nō by pointing out its remarkable unity of imagery. But on balance, one wonders whether, in spite of his importance in bringing Nō to the attention of the West, he was not unwittingly involved in its present deterioration. This latter point forms part of the overall implications of Eastern impact on Western theatre, particularly germane in a discussion of Nō influence on Yeats, as his original turning to the East for "help" has led to a return compliment based on At the Hawk's Well: Takahime - a work so inferior in quality that it must make us re-assess the whole connection between Yeats and the Nō. So towards the end of this chapter I'd like briefly to discuss Takahime because for me, it epitomizes the over-inflated Japanese claim of Yeats's indebtedness to the Nō, and indeed shows a gross misunderstanding of the origin and nature of Nō.

Before I deal with the inaccuracies in Yeats's essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" and the faults of Ezra Pound's 1916 edition of Nō plays from which Yeats worked, there are two factors which need examination because they have also been used to substantiate the myth of Nō's aristocratic origin. These are the debatable issue of Nō's literary value and the presence of extensive literary embroidery in many Nō texts.

The evidence seems to point rather to the fact that No had never been originally defined as a literary art but as a theatrical performance in which the elements of song and dance play a far more significant role. In other words, the spirit of No lies essentially in the overall musical effect rather than in the audience's ability to hear and understand every line. This is because its appeal rests in the combined effects of mimicry, song and dance and not only in the minute grasp of all its innumerable academic allusions.

As I will show later, what strikes us now as a complicated literary mosaic was, for historic reasons, not completely beyond the grasp of an illiterate commoner. And it is such a pity that, today, No is deliberately presented, for commercial reasons, as a cult art, fraught with a host of insurmountable academic refinements - the monopoly of the new "aristocratic" elite.

That this is a distortion of its original appeal can be substantiated by the following quotation from Zeami's *Writings*, where he suggested that the choice of a literary subject should be governed by its connection with music and dance:

I've checked this point with P.G. O'Neill, author of *Early No Drama*, and the incantatory quality of delivery must have made it difficult even for the first audiences to follow every line.

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1 I've checked this point with P.G. O'Neill, author of *Early No Drama*, and the incantatory quality of delivery must have made it difficult even for the first audiences to follow every line.
no means proves that its literary values are more important than song and dance but represents a concession to external pressure. I'm referring to the special patronage which Nō received from the aristocracy after 1374. It has been pointed out that there was a conscious effort to increase the amount of literary embroidery in order to please the members of the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's court who prided themselves in their wealth of classical knowledge. And one can imagine that for this cultured elite, a Nō performance must have taken the form of a game in which their vanity was, no doubt, flattered according to the number of literary allusions and poems they could recognize. But one must be careful of placing too much emphasis on the literary overlay of a Nō worked in to please its aristocratic patrons. It should not be confused with the essential spirit of the original performances where an overall appreciation of the songs and dances seemed far more important than a punctilious understanding of every poem and classical allusion.

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1 Twenty Nō Plays, op.cit., p.7.
2 See K.B.S. Bulletin, op.cit., p.9, where P.G. O'Neill mentions pieces in which the play on Chinese characters and other forms of word play were so intricate that they were clearly meant "for the appreciation of the initiated - other professional players or patrons - demonstrating to them the skill of the writer in taking the intricacies of the text a stage further than usual."
In other words it is convenient for those who can profit from the commercialization of No today to insist on its aristocratic origins.

There is a further element of corruption in this theory which is directly responsible for the decline of No. In the past, under aristocratic patronage, No enjoyed full financial security and high standards were maintained. Nowadays its rich patrons make no attempt to provide such security with the result that No actors have to spend more of their time teaching others than training themselves. Very little time is given to rehearsals before public performances. I quote P.G. O'Neill:

In most cases those taking part in a particular piece will come together in the dressing room just before the performance.... The dangers to the future of No inherent in such a situation are clear enough....

The main cause of this situation is the preservation of an old hierarchical system within new economic circumstances. Briefly, when the military shoguns were financing No, they set up a system of specialist schools of main actor, secondary actor, kyogen actor, flute player, drum player etc. each with its own head known as "iemoto". These heads were

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granted special privileges and powers over their subordinates. Unfortunately, this system still exists although the patrons of Nō have changed. For example, today, when the Nō actor is no longer a retainer of a daimyo, who would have provided him with full financial security, but depends for his living on fees from pupils, the old aristocratic rights and privileges of the "iemoto" remain unchallenged if not enlarged. He owns all the texts used in a particular school and alone receives the royalties from the publication of the texts. The gross unfairness of such a situation ensuring maximum benefit for the "iemoto" has forced the present day Nō actor to find alternative means to make ends meet, resulting in the decline of Nō.

While the privileges granted to the "iemoto" did not affect the quality of Nō during the period of aristocratic patronage, because the financial welfare of the Nō actor was similarly taken into account, the present altered economic situation makes their preservation harmful. What

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1 For a detailed account of the full powers and rights of the "iemoto" which date from the Tokugawa period (1603 - 1868), see ibid., pp.4-7.

2 ibid., p.5.

3 I was told by Professor Yasuo Suga of Kyoto University that many Nō actors in Kyoto supplement their earnings by working as bank clerks.
is even more detrimental to the art is that this aristocratic
privilege and what can only be now called the abuse of it,
has been and still is mistaken for being part of the ancient
Nō tradition. For this reason, it seems to me important
that one should try to distinguish between the original Nō
of the 14th century and the Nō in its second phase when it
came under aristocratic patronage. But one can see how
difficult it would have been for Yeats to make this distinct-
ion, because when he came under the influence of Nō plays
at the beginning of this century, the Nō theatre seemed to
have lost all traces of its "common" origin and acquired
"Accomplishment" the word Noh means, "Noh theatre
the ambience of aristocratic drama. The distinction however
remains valid, and it would at least help us to see that the
laws formulated by the aristocracy to preserve the Nō, which
perhaps from priests of a contemplative school of
they had acquired, had really nothing to do with the
original art itself. Unfortunately this fact has not been
realized and the mania for preserving tradition in Nō has
extended to including privileges for the few. And Nō, as the
cult of the aristocracy, carrying with it all the arbitrary
regulations imposed on it by its aristocratic masters, is
projected as the true image of Nō to its supporters in Japan and
to foreigners. Clearly, those most concerned with it are least
likely to want to alter the situation because the system
of feudal privileges is extremely lucrative for them.
And it is precisely because No is in such a precarious state that Yeats's labelling of it as an aristocratic art, without any qualification, should be rectified.

Yeats first drew the attention of the Western world to No by using it as his model in 1916. The impact of that connection was still to be felt by the West in July 1973 when the Umewaka No theatre group came to participate in the World Theatre Festival Season at the Aldwych. A glance at the programme will show that No was still presented to London in terms of Yeats's definition which read:

"Accomplishment" the word Noh means. "Noh theatre became popular at the close of the fourteenth century, gathering into itself dances performed at Shinto shrines in honour of spirits and gods, or by young nobles at Court, and much old lyric poetry, and receiving its philosophy and its final shape perhaps from priests of a contemplative school of Buddhism." W.B. Yeats.

This is correct but only partial information, and the omission of the fact that No was in any way connected with the common people but that it was performed at Shinto shrines and by "young nobles at Court", gives an unbalanced picture of what it really was. So it shows that up to today the West still holds Yeats's impression of the No at 1916. In a note on the first performance of At the Hawk's Well he said:

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1 See Peter Daubeny's 10th anniversary World Theatre Season 1973 Souvenir programme p.22.
I have found my first model - ... In the Noh stage of aristocratic Japan.

The Nô stage became associated with aristocratic Japan. It was understandable that Yeats should have received this impression of the Nô because all the information he had about the Nô at that time did not go far back enough to trace its roots in the common people. Zeami's writings were only discovered in the beginning of this century in Japan and up to now they have not been completely translated into English. And in any case, even if Yeats had been able to have access to them, he would have found a definition of Nô which tended towards the rarified aristocratic flavour it has today. This was because Zeami, until the closing years of his life, enjoyed full aristocratic patronage, and even though such activities as balancing, juggling and tumbling were present in early Sarugaku, he did his best to suppress what he considered to be vulgar elements in his presentation of Nô.²

But however intricate the connection between Nô and the aristocracy might have been, Yeats has failed to give an accurate picture of Nô by presenting it wholly within an aristocratic context. So even the title of his essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" is misleading, unless one fully grasps the history of Nô. The epithet "noble" is

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1 W.B. Yeats, Four Plays for Dancers, London 1921, p.86, (from Note on the First Performance of At the Hawk's Well.)

2 Early Nô Drama, p.86.
accurate in describing the subject-matter of the Nō plays which is often about certain well-known events connected with famous, noble men and women, and therefore reflecting the nostalgia for the Heian period of aristocratic rule. But it is fundamentally inaccurate if "noble" implies that Nō was an aristocratic form of theatre originally devised for "a few cultivated people". ¹

Unfortunately the essay read as a whole tends to support the latter impression. This should be corrected because the validity of Nō, not only to Japan, but to the West, is inextricably interwoven with the need to see this curious preservation of a fourteenth century masterpiece without its false trappings of nobility, but, in its true perspective. As I have indicated, Nō's present deterioration is directly related to relics of feudal aristocratic powers still strongly maintained within a new economic structure.

Nō in the 14th century seemed to have been an extension of the lives of the common people. Today, in spite of all the rigorous measures taken to preserve its "aristocratic" ambience, it is a dying art, because it is severed from its

¹ See p. 90 below for Yeats's definition of Nō.
vital link with the ordinary people. I am by no means advocating the sole validity of a common people's theatre. But the fact that the No is the oldest surviving theatre in the world today, and is deteriorating because of its relevance for the so-called distinguished few, surely can serve as a lesson to the West that for a theatre to survive fully, it needs to be completely valid for all the people. This is in fact Antonin Artaud's dictum which I'll be discussing in my chapter on the Balinese theatre.

And this is where Yeats, by blurring the true origin of Nō, has clouded the Western view of that art. By associating it with the aristocracy, he has omitted to present to the West its real umbilical link. It was indeed the mob from which Nō drew its strength and shape. And viewed against this, Yeats's association of the Nō with the aristocracy clearly showed that he had not gone far back enough into its origin. He came to know the art in its second phase when it became the property of the ruling shoguns. In his essay he says:

"Accomplishment" the word Noh means, and it is their accomplishment and that of a few cultivated people who understood the literary and mythological allusions and the ancient lyrics quoted in speech or Chorus....

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1 W.B. Yeats, Essays, London 1924, p.283.
This was true of the situation when No was uneasily grafted into the aristocracy and today, when it is completely alien to the common people. It is fair to add that because of the complicated history of No, not only Yeats, but many, both inside and outside the No world, have not been able to see it in its correct perspective, leaving the field open to exploiters. For this reason I feel it is important to elucidate the conditions which gave rise to No. An understanding of those circumstances would help us realize that No, which is now identified as an aristocratic and relatively inaccessible art, was then generally accessible and intelligible to everyone. Present conditions have altered so radically that the essential rapport with the No seems to have disappeared even among Japanese audiences in No theatres in Japan. Perhaps it is unlikely that No will ever be a close part of Japanese life again. Paradoxically, many of the staunchest supporters of No today, are foreign enthusiasts who have steeped themselves in the stories of No plays in order to appreciate the performances more fully. But as the following account shows, the prevailing conditions in 14th and 15th century Japan made it possible for, what now seems, an esoteric art, to be appreciated by all.

In the 14th - 15th century, many of the songs, poems and legends which appeared in No, also recurred in a wide
variety of popular entertainments. There were more than five hundred blind minstrels (biwa - hōshi) in 1462, in Kyoto alone, using their four-stringed instrument (biwa) to accompany recitations from military epics, particularly Heike Monogatari. They chanted their recitations in a similar way Buddhist priests intoned sutras and this quality of incantation is one of the most striking characteristics of a Nō. A strong aural tradition, rather than written texts, ensured a ready familiarity with legends from the past.

There was also a craze in the Heian period (c. 9 - 12th century) for the composition of linked verses (renge). This was an occupation indulged in by both the literate and illiterate commoners. In the latter case, a scribe would record the verses, composed in the following way. One person would compose the first three lines of the traditional five-line poem and another the last two. By the Kamakura period (1192 - 1336) the popularity of "renge" increased and there was a vogue for the more developed form, a kind of chain verse in which three more lines were added to the last

1 See Early Nō Drama, p.98. The Heike Monogatari is the story of the rise and fall of the Taira or Heike family, compiled in the middle of the 13th century.
part of one complete poem and following in their turn by
two more lines; the process was repeated until fifty or a
hundred parts had been strung together. This would give
us a rough idea of a very strong poetic tradition among the
commoners which would have made them responsive to the
poems in Nō.

So unlike the modern Nō theatre, where plays are
slavishly followed with the written texts, either brought
from home or purchased at the foyer before performances,
the audiences then could readily follow and enjoy the songs,
poems and allusions to earlier literature, because their
familiarity with them was a part of their daily lives.

However it ought to be borne in mind that Yeats was
not, on the surface, incorrect in calling Nō an "accomplish-
ment" for the "cultivated few" but was in fact, accurately
reflecting its inaccessibility during aristocratic patronage.
As far as he was concerned, it also suited his purposes to
see Nō in an aristocratic perspective; and it happened to
coincide with a particular stage of his own artistic develop-
ment to draw from this impression just what he needed for
the creation of his own dance-dramas, aimed at a distinguish-
ed elite. Nevertheless it remains ironic that the Nō, which

1 See Early Nō Drama, p.95.
had received its main energy from the common masses, was
taken over by the aristocracy, and was later to inspire a
Western "aristocratic" form of drama.
The following evidences of No's "common" origin will
help to reinforce this irony. As far back as the 6th and
7th centuries, when the Yamato court was patterning itself
on China, we can trace the beginnings of No as a common
people's art. While the "gigaku" and "bugaku" dances were
imported and absorbed by the Japanese court, "sangaku" (with
its wide range of acrobatic tricks: a monkey jumping through
a hoop, for example, mime and magic) was essentially a
source of popular amusement for the common people. As the
Japanese word for monkey is "saru", "sangaku" became known
as "sarugaku" (monkey dance) - the term conveying a whole
range of amusements for the common people. "Saragaku"
gradually absorbed "dengaku" - a rice harvest festival dance
performed for centuries in the farming society of Japan. No
is the product of this combination.
Through the "dengaku" dance we can see how closely
allied No was with the economic life of the common farmers.
The "dengaku" formed a necessary ritual in the lives of the
Japanese farmers who were utterly dependent on good harvests.
It was performed to placate the gods and the dances re-
created the chasing away of deer and boars which could harm
the crops. The aristocrats, who had hardly anything to do with the farming communities, found these rituals highly entertaining and came to observe them. By the end of the Heian period, the aristocrats had formed their own groups in the capital to indulge in the "dengaku" dances purely for entertainment. This foreshadowed the complete absorption of Nō into an aristocratic setting, severing it from its essential tie with the common people.

And lastly, the "kuse" section of a Nō serves as an excellent example illustrating how inextricably the art was tied up with the popular amusements of the common people. It is still considered the most important part of a Nō as it narrates its main theme and is regarded as Kannami's most valuable innovation in enriching the art. The "kuse" section is derived from "kusemai", which means unconventional dance - a popular dance form of low standing performed by women. Its rhythm was harsh, strong and vulgar and quite different from the more melodious "ko-uta" singing style which audiences were accustomed to hear in Nō. Kannami had studied it under a woman and it was akin to the quick tempo dance found in "shirabyoshi", another popular form of amusement. The "kusemai" consisted of a chanted narrative in which the beat of the vocal rhythmic pattern was stressed. The women usually stamped and turned
In time to the music in order to accentuate the rhythm which provided the main attraction in the performance. In today's "kuse" section the use of the fan and the importance of the drum are traceable to "kusemai". In Zeami's Treatise on Music and the Use of the Voice (Ongyoku Kowadashi Kuden) he acknowledges the indebtedness of Nō to this popular vulgar art form and the mutual benefits of their interconnection.

The nucleus of kusemai is rhythm.... Kusemai depends, for its total effect, on the poses and movements of the body combined with the singing of the voice. In the past, music for the kusemai and vocal music were considered absolutely separately, as there was generally no singing in the kusemai pieces. In more recent years, however, kusemai became less conservative, even to the extent of adding popular art songs called koutabushi. The resulting effect was very appealing, and kusemai became extremely popular. This is the main reason why my late father began to use kusemai in his sarugaku Nō and his use of it was also the main reason for its even more general popularity.

By incorporating "kusemai" into Nō in the form of the "kuse", in which the beat of the vocal pattern counted more than words, Kannami emphasized the overriding importance of rhythm in the art. And we can follow this principle as

1 Early Nō Drama, p.48.
2 Nakamura Yasuo, pp.64-65.
Kannami's overall guideline in our approach to Nō. This ties up with my initial comments on the essence of Nō, resting on rhythmic, musical - choreographic qualities rather than on the precise meaning of every line.

And the fact also that the "sarugaku style" was known as the "kouta-bushi", because it was based on popular songs known as "ko-uta", shows further how closely related Nō was with the amusements of the common people. In fact these popular songs had their beginnings in the vulgar songs called "soka" which were sung by the common people as they went about their daily tasks. It was from these low, vulgar sources that Nō drew its strength.

Yeats's failure to grasp this comes across even more forcibly in the following quotation:

In fact, with the help of Japanese plays "translated by Ernest Fenollosa and finished by Ezra Pound" I have invented a form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way - an aristocratic form.¹

This statement is worth careful study because it clearly shows that Yeats did not aim at writing imitation Nō plays. There has been a great deal of wasteful scholarship taking him to task for deviating from the structure of a Nō

¹ Essays, op.cit., p.274.
play. This is unwarranted, particularly as he himself declared that he merely wanted to "invent his own form of drama", "with the help" of Nō plays. But it is precisely in examining this area of "help" he thought he had received from the Nō in the list of attributes he wanted in his own plays: "distinguished", "indirect", "symbolic", "having no need of press or mob to pay its way", "an aristocratic form", that one can see how much he misunderstood the true nature of the Japanese art. It was however a significant misunderstanding which led to the creation of his powerful and influential new dramatic forms.

But it is ironic, particularly in view of the quotations from Yeats's essay above, that he should have drawn inspiration from the Nō which could not have evolved except with the help of the "mob". It is true that by mandate the aristocratic shoguns forbade the common people from attending performances and Nō became the privileged art of the nobles. But surely the historical evidence of such mandates is further proof that the link between Nō and the common people was so strong that it needed legal force to

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1 See as an example: Yasuko Stucki, "Yeats's Drama and the Noh", in Modern Drama, IX, May 1966.

2 An example of such a mandate was proclaimed as early as 1450. See Yasuo Nakamura, Noh, p.236.
sever it. Yeats was clearly unaware that Nō had been the living product of common popular amusements. At one point in his essay, he mentioned that he loved all the arts that could remind him of their origin among the common people.¹ But he did not realize that this remark was applicable to the Nō which he had bracketed with "aristocratic Japan".

I have dealt sufficiently with the fallacy of seeing Nō as a distinguished, indigenous aristocratic form. But the other two qualities: "indirect" and "symbolic" which Yeats felt about the Nō and wanted to transplant into his own drama, also need qualification. For though they broadly convey the feeling of a Nō, they do not accurately describe it, seen in its true context. Nō today, particularly of prevailing customs and religious beliefs, may seem strange and symbolic. But such plays would not have seemed at all strange to the audiences of that period. This fascination with the simultaneous existence of two identities - a principle identified as "nijūsei" or "nijūkōzō", can be seen as a general principle of certain aspects of the Structure of Nō, Tokyo 1973, pp.255-256.

¹ See W.B. Yeats, Essays, p.275.
of Japanese culture.¹ And as P.G. O'Neill and Honda Yasuji
point out, these so called Nō spirit plays can be directly
related to rites of possession which were very familiar
happenings to the Japanese. I quote the former:

> It was a common practice to communicate with those
who were dead or far away through the help of
mediums.... It is, indeed, possible that the
"spirit" type of Nō was a direct adaptation of
this practice to which was added, for dramatic
purposes, a second act showing the dead person as
he was in life.²

This shows that Nō, if properly understood within its true
context, can be seen to have a direct relation to the people
and current beliefs of the 14th and 15th century Japan.
Some of the plays were, in fact, simple direct illustrations
of prevailing customs and religious beliefs.³

In this respect they bore a resemblance to English miracle
plays. Now that Nō has been severed from its roots, it
is more important than ever, in order to avoid over
ingenious misconstructions of what seems strange today,

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² Early Nō Drama, p.107.

³ "Sarugaku" players had been taken into the service of temple priests who used their dramatic skills to explain Buddhist texts.
to bear in mind its original direct connection with the common people of 14th century Japan.

But there is a further paradoxical twist: if the aristocracy of Japan is to be blamed for cutting Nō off from its true origin, one must also realize that Nō would not have been preserved at all but for noble patronage. In fact P. C. O'Neill suggests that without aristocratic patronage, popular taste would probably have led Nō steadily on to a Kabuki style form of theatrical presentation which arose in the early 17th century with a resurgence of dramatic activity among the people.¹ Nō was inevitably affected by aristocratic patronage. For example we can trace a fawning quality in the dependency on the aristocracy in Zeami's treatise - Kakyō:

... in order to face in the right direction, you take as your guide line the places of honour,... Basically you go by the face of a person of quality whom you take as a guide line. Whether at a sarugaku in a covered place, or at a banquet, you direct your face towards a great person, all of you looking fixedly at his whole face. ²

Until the publication of P. C. O'Neill's Early Nō Drama in 1954 the West did not have any access to records showing noble traditions. You are hereby ordered to remember

¹ See Early Nō Drama, p.146.
² See René Sieffert, ed. + trans. Zeami: La Tradition secrète du no, Paris 1960, p.120.
the origin of Nō. It is not surprising that, quite genuinely, Nō has been and still is associated completely with the aristocracy. Throughout the long Tokugawa period of military aristocracy (1603–1868), when Nō was officially taken over and absorbed into the feudal hierarchy, it was ironical that the common people only had a chance to see, what was really their own theatre, at special performances called "machi-iri Nō". These were held on special occasions such as the accession of a new shogun, the birth of sons into influential families and the coming of age ceremonies for such families. Since the beginning of that period the common people had been forbidden to take lessons in Nō. And while laws were passed to keep Nō within the aristocratic class, the nobles did not refrain from reminding the Nō actors of their precarious position. In 1841 a mandate to Nō actors read:

To all those belonging to the various troupes: You all seem to have forgotten that your ancestors were beggars who performed in the river beds — people even lower than Dengaku actors. Recently, particularly the shite actors among you have become extremely haughty in the claims of high position and ancient noble traditions. You are hereby ordered to remember your origins, recognize your true position in society and take the appropriate humble attitude.

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1 Nakamura Yasuo, Noh, p.149.
2 ibid., pp.150-151.
This mandate illustrates clearly the incongruity of defining No as an aristocratic art. Its connection with the aristocracy, as can be seen, was tenuous and ambiguous. But broadly speaking, it can be observed that those who regard No as cult literature for the few invariably link it with its second phase of aristocratic patronage, but those who recognize its real nature as essentially a "musico-choreographic" performing art usually take it back to its 14th century origin as the living expression of people, who were phenomenally steeped in a tradition of songs, dances, poems and legends - the main constituents of No. This leads to my next point: because Yeats did not see a No play in situ, he was never really given the opportunity to appreciate its full, undiluted, musical and choreographic qualities. And perhaps the most crucial factor in determining his misunderstanding of the real nature of No was Ezra Pound's 1916 edition of Ernest Fenollosa's translations of No plays. It was Pound who in fact introduced Yeats to the No. And it has been pointed out recently that though the 1916 edition is still regarded as an excellent introduction of No to the West, it is also responsible for misinterpreting No as a genre of literature rather than as a performing art.

This has come to light through an examination of six
transcriptions of Fenollosa's manuscripts which were neither included in the 1916 volume nor revised by Ezra Pound. In March and April 1960 Dorothy Pound (Ezra Pound's wife) made copies of these original Fenollosa transcriptions which adequately represent their actual unedited state. Richard Taylor in an article, "The Note Books of Ernest Fenollosa" makes a significant comparison between the untouched originals and the state of the revised plays in the 1916 volume.  

He points out that Fenollosa's original transcriptions contain extensive production notes and marginalia taken down at actual performances. Ernest Fenollosa (1853 - 1908) was an ardent student of Nō as well as the Professor of Philosophy at Tokyo University. His personal training and experience as a Nō actor under Umewaka Minoru, a great and famous teacher, made him acutely aware of the essential musico-choreographic structure of Nō. This awareness is transmitted in his unedited note-books which are still unavailable to scholars except for the six transcriptions I have mentioned. In his original transcriptions, Fenollosa was particularly meticulous in retaining indications of changes in voice style, delivery, minute descriptions of

1 See Literature East and West, op.cit., pp.533-550.
stage movements and nuances of musical orchestration. He was also anxious to convey the peculiar texture of a No script and so he made a special point of noting references to classical allusions and explaining the nature of word play. (The Japanese language is full of homonyms which the No exploits effectively.) Pound made use of some of these production notes but his lack of knowledge of Japanese, and his indirect contact with No, must have led him to regard the bulk of Fenollosa's detailed marginalia as unnecessary. And unfortunately, by merely reproducing a fraction of these notes, he distorted the true character of No. What seemed to him philological details were, in fact, essential pointers in presenting No in its true character as a performing art. Their suppression has seriously distorted Fenollosa's translations as mere literature.

Here are some explicit details: Fenollosa was at great pains to show the basic structural units of a No composition by indicating shifts in voice style. He specifically refers to each different unit by name, distinguishing between the recitative ("kotoba") and the lyrical arias ("utai"). For example he felt it sufficiently important to list all the different kinds of arias: shidai, michiyuki, issei, sashi, uta, kuri, kuse and rongi. He points out a shift

1 See Glossary (pp. 511-13)
from a strong voice style which is rugged and dignified to a weak voice style which is melodious. Special modes of delivery such as the fixed and regular rhythms of "noru" styles are indicated and this would be of particular interest, as syllable and musical beat coalesce in such styles to create an impelling tension. All these deliberately inserted notes were just as conscientiously removed by Pound who felt they were unnecessary. And so we have the unfortunate misrepresentation of translations, which were acutely aware of the musico-choreographic characteristics of Nō, as mere literary texts. I have included a photocopy of one of Penollosa's rough drafts - Kanehira-in Appendix A to show how rich it is in literal translations and explanations of Japanese words and in indications of staging techniques and methods. It is also amply documented to denote shifts in voice and shows allusions to prior literature and cultural values. There are occasionally blanks where Dorothy Pound could not read Penollosa's handwriting. But the photocopy which forms Appendix A is an adequately accurate copy of the one made by Dorothy Pound with a few marks of punctuation inserted by Richard Taylor. The line-drawings have been added through the courtesy of Tsunetaro Hinoki of Hinoki Shoten, Tokyo, publishers for the Kanze School of Nō drama. Takuyo (referred to on p. 545
of the copy) is Umewaka Takuyo (Kokuro), one of Umewaka Minoru's sons. The "H" which also appears on the same page is more difficult to identify. Richard Taylor suggests he is possibly Hirata Hideki (Tokuboku), a young colleague and student of English literature who acted as interpreter for Fenollosa during the period of his intensive study of No (1897 - 1901). I have deliberately underlined in red ink technical terms like "shidai", "kotoba", "michiyuki", "issei" etc. because they are valuable indications of the different structural musical units which make up a No. To omit them is to lose the feel of the special quality of a No script which is not a literary text. These technical indications are as important as those of key and time signatures, slurs, pauses and the whole range of expression markings like forte, piano, legato, staccato, rubato etc. in a musical composition. Seen in this light one can begin to understand the seriousness of Pound's omission of Fenollosa's careful indications of the musical choreographic structure of No. As I've said earlier, No is best understood in performance. A script is a very poor substitute and Pound's edition which has removed what seemed unnecessary technical indications of what is, in effect, the essence of No, has certainly reduced it to a mere literary text. A quick comparison of Appendix A with any play in the 1916 edition will make this clear.
It is indeed unfortunate that Yeats was introduced to the No through this edition which seriously omitted to show the life-structure of No as existing in different units, each with its own configuration of rhythm, pitch and content. The following comments by John Cage, the avant garde music-theatre director and composer, on the importance of rhythmic structure are applicable to the musical divisions in No:

It may seem at first thought that rhythmic structure is not of primary importance. However, a dance, a poem, a piece of music (any of the time arts) occupies a length of time, and the manner in which this length of time is divided first into larger parts and then into phrases (or built up from phrases to form eventual larger parts) is the work's very life structure.¹

However the basic broad principles of the No form did not escape Yeats. He liked its economy, simplicity of stage decor, the use of musicians and a chorus, and the climatic moment of the dance. But the distorted view, which Pound and consequently, Yeats had of the basic life-structure of No, has had far reaching effects in the West. Up to this day there is still a lot of confusion as to the extent the No can be imitated. I think if the effort is made to grasp the essential structure of a No, it will be clear that No is in

fact inimitable. However, this does not mean that its underlying principle of simplicity - the sense of enormous concentration achieved through the strictest economy - the dominance of a very definite rhythmic pattern - are not transposable as elements of effective theatre. This distinction is of particular importance as the West regards the Nō as an example of an extinct but valuable theatrical form. Inspiration should also not be confused with imitation. Yeats, and for that matter Benjamin Britten, whose name is also closely associated with Nō, never attempted to write Western imitations of Nō but they were both clearly inspired by the form.

But the true nature of Nō still continues to perplex many. It was only in 1973 that Concerned Theatre Japan brought out an English version of Yokomichi Mario's analysis of the structure of Nō which, by highlighting the essential

1 Benjamin Britten was inspired by the Nō Sumidagawa, which he saw in Tokyo in 1956, to compose Curlew River. See Gilbert Blount's "Britten's Curlew River: A Cultural Composite" in Literature East and West, (Japan Issue), pp.632-646. William Plomer referring to Curlew River, The Burning Fiery Furnace, and The Prodigal Son said:

They are not imitations of Noh plays, but without the strong responses at different times of Britten and myself to the Noh theatre they wouldn't have come into being.
musicality of Nō as a performing art, pointedly shows up to English readers the fallacy of valuing Nō solely in terms of its literary content. Unfortunately some of the most outstanding translations of Nō, like Pound's in 1916, Arthur Waley's in 1921, and Donald Keene's in 1970, by leaving out indications of its musical structure, have tended to place an undue emphasis on its literary aspect. This has led Yokomichi Mario to complain at a public lecture at the Biennale of Venice in September 1972 that translators are not yet prepared to undertake their job in the spirit of Nō as a performance art. And because it is so important that the nature of Nō should be fully grasped, I am reproducing two diagrams from Yokomichi's analysis which show clearly the structure of Nō as essentially musico-choreographic.

In the first diagram (see p. 337) he has for convenience divided Nō into two broad categories: "mugen" or dream Nō and "genzai" or real-life Nō. The analysis is based on the former - dream Nō - which he separates into two parts in accordance with the main actor's (shite's) change of identity. He calls the first part, the "mae-ba", when the shite enters in a disguised form and the second

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1 The Life Structure of Nō, p.255.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dan</th>
<th>first order of division</th>
<th>second order of division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nō mae-ba</td>
<td>dan A</td>
<td>waki enters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan B</td>
<td>shite enters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan C</td>
<td>waki and shite talk together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan D</td>
<td>shite no shigoto (This literally means &quot;what the shite does.&quot; This is the high point of the mae-ba. Generally the shite here tells a story related to the place where he has met the waki.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan E</td>
<td>shite exits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AI [interval]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nochi-ba</th>
<th>dan A</th>
<th>waki waits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan B</td>
<td>shite reenters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan C</td>
<td>waki and shite talk together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan D</td>
<td>shite no shigoto (This is the high point of the nochi-ba. Generally the shite performs a dance.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dan E</td>
<td>conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 1**. **DIAGRAM SHOWING THE DIVISION OF A NŌ PLAY INTO 'DAN' OR UNITS**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>categories of shō-dan</th>
<th>A ‘dan’ is further subdivided into ‘shō-dan’ or musical divisions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uta category</td>
<td>shō-dan where the rhythm follows a beat and whose language mainly consists of seven- and five-syllable lines.</td>
<td>shidai-uto, sage-uto, rongi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuse category</td>
<td>shō-dan where the rhythm follows a beat and whose language mainly disregards the seven- and five-syllable line principle.</td>
<td>kuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei category</td>
<td>shō-dan where the rhythm does not follow a beat and which is recited like traditional Japanese poetry. [waka]</td>
<td>issei-jō-no-ei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sashi category</td>
<td>shō-dan with a rhythm not following a beat and spoken as ‘recitatives’.</td>
<td>sashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuri category</td>
<td>shō-dan midway between the ei and sashi categories</td>
<td>kuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kotoba category</td>
<td>shō-dan that is basically spoken in the kotoba rhythm (i.e. the rhythm does not follow the eight beat system and each line has a notation symbol that indicates its pattern of recitation.)</td>
<td>nanori, katori, mendo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td>cha-nori, ji-nori-ji</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 2 Diagram showing a selection of musical divisions or ‘shō-dan’ within a ‘dan’ unit.**
part, the "nochi-ba" when he enters in his real form. The short interlude between the two parts is called the "ai". The second order of division takes place within the first part (mae-ba) and the second part (noehi-ba). This sub-division called the "dan" is based on the function of the shite and the waki (second actor) and of both together. And an important point is that the "dan" is not only based on content but on musical elements as well.

The second diagram (see p. 112) shows that the "dan" can be further subdivided into "shōdan" which make up the different musical units in a No. There are altogether thirty different kinds of "shōdan" and this diagram, with a few of my own amendments, shows only a representative selection.

From this it can be seen that the "shō-dan" (musical unit) is the basis of the No structure. Any translation which omits this indication of structural units based on differences in content, pitch, rhythm and prosody, fails to communicate the spirit of No. And such a translation also misrepresents the art. Yokomichi's analysis and the terms used may seem difficult but they are intricately connected to the special nature of No as a performing art.

It is no longer a "living art" in the way it was an
extension of the lives of the common people in 14th century Japan. And indeed it would be a mistake to try and relate No to modern Japan. The pine (matsu) which forms the back drop of the No stage 1 is today unsentimentally felled to make way for the increasingly important industrial factories. In fact the deterioration of No can be seen in direct proportion to its dependency on its new industrial masters.

A full understanding of the origin of No and the distinctive structure it took through historical circumstances should stop all the modernization which is at the moment taking place in the No. For example, I feel that the admittance of women into the No world is a mistake because the quality of the female voice is out of harmony with the musical orchestration as a whole. On December 4th 1973, I saw the No play, Yamamba, at the Kanze Kalkan No theatre in Kyoto. Yamamba tells the story of a mountain hag who confronts a famous actress who has made her fame through playing that role. At that performance the part of the actress, Hyakuman, was played by a woman and I remember feeling irritated by the shrill quality of her singing voice which ruined the total musical effect. Today there seems to be some confusion as to the extent No can be modernized and yet retain its classical character. The present trend is to reinforce its relevance to the West.

1 The big pine painted on the back panel represents the Yōgō-no-matsu (Manifestation Pine) at the Kasuga shrine in Nara, where the Shrine God is said to have revealed himself.
And it is against this hysteria that the travesty of Takahime, 鷹女 , or "The Hawk Princess" - the Nô adaptation of Yeats's At the Hawk's Well should be examined.

Let me illustrate the absurdity of Takahime which, on its own, stands as a reasonably impressive dramatic venture as can be seen on pp. 521-29 in the theatre programme forming Appendix B. But Takahime is meant as the Japanese return "compliment" to At the Hawk's Well which they regard as Yeats's attempt at imitating Nô. So a very strange kind of literary transmutation process has taken place to produce Takahime, proudly regarded in Japan as the real Nô adaptation based on an imitation Nô play which is what At the Hawk's Well is considered to be. This may read like a nonsensical jumble but, in fact, exactly describes what I can only call the fiasco of Takahime. Briefly, in Yeats's play, his hero, Cuchulain, comes to the "Well", guarded by a "Hawk-Spirit", in the hope of drinking its water of immortality. He finds there an old man who has devoted his whole life in vain to that same quest. The play ends with the subsequent failure of Cuchulain as well. The Japanese version conveys the same spirit as Yeats's play though its
hero becomes "Kufurin" and further departures are carefully delineated in the following passage from the programme notes:

"Takahime" (The Hawk Princess) as it has been titled has all allusions to Irish mythology deleted as well as the final chorus about the absurd hero. The Japanese play becomes a melancholic ballad about the absurdity of human existence. Man wastes his life waiting for something which truly exists, but which he will never find. The Noh play departs from the traditional structure of Noh, because the chorus takes an active part in the story and the dances are performed by all three main players. The beauty of the Noh costumes and masks have no doubt surpassed anything which Yeats himself envisaged for he saw only some fragmentary performances of Noh and never visited Japan. 1

It baffles me that the real Nō composition (as Takahime claims to be) should feel the need at all to depart from fixed traditional Nō conventions. What we have, in effect, as seen from my underlined section of the quotation above, is a compromised Nō form, representing an attempt at tampering with the original 14th century rules of construction. This is surely self-defeating as one of the motives behind Takahime was to present the genuine Nō form as a complement to the Irish imitation. But this forms a minor aspect of my general quarrel with Takahime which I hope to bring out in the next few paragraphs.

1 See Appendix B. (pp. 516 - 17).
First of all, the adaptation was made in 1949 by Yokomichi Mario, whose brilliant analysis of the structure of No I've found invaluable as a help in understanding the art. It is disheartening that Yokomichi, who showed such a penetrating grasp of No in his analysis, should have been involved in the Takahime adaptation. It should surely have been evident to someone who is so closely aware of the life-structure of No, that it is impossible to write a new No play by merely applying the rules of construction. (In fact, as I've pointed out, he did not even apply them accurately). As I've tried to show, the No plays of the 14th and 15th century were the products of a unique inter-relationship between sociological circumstances and existing art forms which can no longer be re-produced. The mechanical application of the set formula of a classical No to new likely material would not infuse it with the special spirit of the original art form. And it is this distinctive quality which is the definitive mark of a classical No.

But obviously even those most concerned with the art (like Yokomichi Mario) are confused about all the various issues pertaining to its relevance. The fact that Yeats's production went especially to the Tokyo Cultural Research Institute. In 1963 he was awarded the Minister of Education Prize for his work on No.
attempt to model At the Hawk’s Well on Nō should be taken so seriously by the Nō world is highly ironical. At the Hawk’s Well is certainly not one of Yeats’s best plays and yet it has been performed in Japan more often than in any other part of the world. The motive behind these presentations is to show the indebtedness of a Western play to Nō. It would seem that with the gradual decline of the art in Japan, there is an increasing need to push its relevance through fresh outlets. And the fact that Yeats had modelled some plays on Nō went a long way in stoking up enthusiasm over enlarging the area of Nō’s validity. This may explain the adulation of Yeats in Nō circles: the Irish poet is regarded with reverence as a saviour of the Nō. And this is really quite paradoxical because, in actual fact, Yeats, by identifying Nō as an aristocratic art, without any qualifications as I’ve tried to show, has contributed in some way towards Nō’s present decline.

The details of the much publicized collaboration between Yeats and Michio Ito over the first production of At the Hawk’s Well also deserve mention as they show how much it has been exaggerated and yet provide moving evidence of what the production meant personally to Ito. On April 2nd, 1916, in Lady Cunard’s drawing room in Cavendish Square in London, before a small audience of invited guests, Michio Ito, a
Japanese dancer, danced the role of the "Hawk" in the first production of *At the Hawk's Well*. Until his association with Yeats and Pound, Ito had thought nothing of the Nō. In fact he had remembered the Nō plays seen with his uncle as utterly boring. In his own words:

I was taught to see Noh from an entirely new point of view by Professor Penollosa's treatise written in English.¹

There is no doubt that Ito attached the utmost significance to the part he had played in the first performance of Yeats's play and indeed devoted the rest of his life to fanatically promoting it. The first instance was in a large scale Hollywood production of *At the Hawk's Well* undertaken by Ito himself when he was in America in 1934.² The fact that Yeats had based his play on Nō and had used a Japanese dancer (Ito himself) was thoroughly capitalized in this production. This, in turn, delighted Nō promoters in Japan and on Ito's return to Japan in 1939 he was given every encouragement to stage *At the Hawk's Well* on the 3rd and 4th December of that year. It was performed again on

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¹ Oshima Shataro, *William Butler Yeats and Japan*, Tokyo 1965, p. 44.
December 17th 1958 at the Sogetsu Hall in Tokyo. In 1962 it was performed twice as memorial performances in honour of Michio Ito, on the 13th July at the Tokyo Culture Hall and on 9th December at the Hibiya Public Hall in Tokyo.

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There is a Japanese proverb which says that: Yuru and Matsukaze are like cooked rice. It is a sad statement about the organizers' sense of values that Takahime should be mentioned, let alone presented, with Matsukaze. And it further distresses me that this was done under the auspices of the society, which was trying to bring back a renaissance of No.
December 1973 in Tokyo at the Kanze Nō Theatre and it is unquestionably one of the most moving masterpieces of Zeami. There is a Japanese proverb which says that Yuya and Matsukaze are like cooked rice. It is a sad statement about the organizers' sense of values that Takahime should be mentioned, let alone presented, with Matsukaze. And it further distresses me that this was done under the auspices of the Society which was trying to bring back a renaissance of Nō.

The following is a further catalogue registering the number of times Takahime has been shown not only in Japan but taken on tour in Europe as an example of a Nō piece when there are genuine masterpieces by Kannami, Zeami, Zenchiku etc. in the current repertory. This surely reflects the extreme diffidence of the Nō world where the organizers don't seem to be able to distinguish between a genuine original and an imitation. In 1952, 1967, 1968, and twice in 1970 (June and December) Takahime was staged in Japan. It was taken to Europe in July 1971 and again in 1972. In 1972 it was shown in Kyoto, in September, and in Tokyo in December. At the Tokyo performance it was shown at the
Suidobashi Nō Theatre together with At the Hawk's Well under the joint auspices of the Asiatic Society of Japan and The British Council. In that performance, Takahime was translated and presented in English. The irony of an English translated Takahime, shown in conjunction with At the Hawk's Well, hardly needs any comment but it is particularly implicit in the inferiority of the former. The motive of the joint-performances was meant to show the supposedly mutual benefits of a cross-cultural inspiration. As Appendix B I have included an accurately typed copy of that December programme which contains Don Kenny’s English translation of Takahime. A look at this programme would show how Yeats’s association with Nō has been grossly exploited. And that Nō should have to depend at all on Yeats’s At the Hawk’s Well to reinforce its relevance to the West, is surely symptomatic of the extreme precarious existence of the art. The colossal amount of Japanese scholarship on the connection between Yeats and the Nō is illuminating up to a point but also suggests the irony of a rare, distinctive, theatrical form being dependent on a Western dramatist, who initially looked on it as a model.

Finally I'd like to bring the history of At the Hawk's Well up to date by examining the recent attempt to show its relationship to a specific Nō play: Zeami's Yōrō. Yeats's
Nō-inspired play is not only an example of a valuable new Western dramatic form but it has also provoked two interesting reactions from East and West as shown in the following diagram:

```
WEST

\[
\frac{\text{Yōrō}}{\text{by}} \leftrightarrow \frac{\text{At the Hawk's Well}}{(1917)} \leftrightarrow \frac{\text{Takahime}}{\text{by}}
\]

\[\text{Nō influence} \]

EAST

\[\text{ARoused Interest} \]

\[\text{INSPIRED} \]

\[\text{ZEAMI} \]
\[\text{(ASSUMED AS THE ORIGINAL SOURCE FOR YEATS'S PLAY)} \]

\[MARIO YOKOMICHI \]
\[\text{(1949)} \]
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Fig. 3 Diagram showing how At the Hawk's Well has provoked reactions from East & West.

The Eastern response is represented by Takahime and the Western, by its recent attempt to establish Yōrō as the original source of Yeats's play. According to Richard Taylor's article, 1 Yōrō is "obviously the model from which Yeats constructed At the Hawk's Well". The central feature

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in both plays is a wonderful spring or well with miraculous regenerative powers. Yôrô, "The Care of the Aged", is one of the six original Fenollosa transcriptions, which were not included in Pound's 1916 collection of Nô plays, but have recently been made accessible to scholars.

Although Yeats himself has made no reference to Yôrô in his writings or in the many reported conversations and published correspondences with Japanese admirers like Oshima Shataro, Noguchi Yone, Junzo Sato and Michio Ito, all of whom were interested in every minute detail of his indebtedness to the Nô, Taylor seems confident that Yôrô is the original source. A significant point in conjunction with the total absence of any reference to Yôrô is that Yeats was generally accustomed to acknowledging his sources, if there was one. For example, it is specifically recorded in Explorations that he recalled a French etching of an old, wingless, elongated angel, armed like a knight, as his source for the angels in the early final scene of The Countess Cathleen. ¹ And furthermore we have evidence from Michio Ito - the original dancer in At the Hawk's Well - that Yeats play was in fact "based on an Irish legend" in the


* I've underlined this to show that Connla's Well in the Celtic myth "overhung with the berries of nine rowan or hazel trees" seems more likely than the Japanese "waterfall" to have directly inspired the "well" in Yeats's play.
form of Noh, learning from Noh plays. So neither the fact that Yôrô happened to be part of the material in Pound's possession nor that Yeats had access to it, offers proof that he necessarily drew directly from it. It is in fact hypothetical that Yeats was familiar with Yôrô. There is so far no real evidence that he had used it as the specific source for his play.

It is of course tempting to establish a direct connection between an influential Western play and a specific Nô model. But a careful examination of Penollosa's translation of Yôrô, together with the only available complete English translation, by Chifumi Shimazaki, shows how, on a thematic level, it is essentially different from At the Hawk's Well. The following resume of Yôrô by P.G. O'Neill, gives a general idea of its content and character:

Hearing of a wonderful spring that has appeared in Shinano Province, an Imperial envoy goes there and meets an old woodcutter and his son at a waterfall called Yôrô, "The Care of the Aged". He learns from them that it was given that name because one day the young woodcutter, who worked long and hard every day to support his parents, drank the water and found that his tiredness disappeared: he therefore carried some of the water home to his parents who likewise benefitted from its wonderful properties. They then show the envoy where the water is to be found and give him some to take back.

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1 See Oshima Shataro, p.44. No, Tokyo 1954, p.217.

to the Emperor. When the envoy is about to start on his return journey, the heavens shine and a mountain god appears and dances in celebration of a glorious reign of peace.\footnote{See P.G. O'Neill, A Guide to Nô, Tokyo 1954, p.217.}

Chi-fumi Shimazaki,\footnote{In a letter to me dated 17.10.75, she said: Certainly there are similarities between the two plays: the mystic fountain; the old man, the young man. It is possible that Yôrô should inspire any poet to write about a mysterious fountain but the relation between At the Hawk's Well and the Noh Yôrô is very small.} in her Introduction to Yôrô stresses clearly that the miraculous waterfall and the dutiful son should be interpreted as symbols of a particularly righteous and blessed reign. In other words the waterfall represents the reward for a heaven-approved reign rather than the objective of a quest. It is to be noticed that Yôrô opens with the imperial envoy eulogizing on this miraculous fountain and finding it instantly without having any need to search for it. He is then given some of this water to take back to the Emperor. The whole Nô piece is a celebratory hymn to a glorious reign of contentment, characterized by the total absence of any conflict or tension. Yeats's "Well", on the contrary, is the source of struggle, quest, conflict and disillusionment. Taylor's argument that Yeats's play is a conscious inversion of the Nô myth does not strike me as convincing. Is it not more likely that the whole issue is far simpler? Cuchulain's quest for the elixir of life, represented by a well, seems a straightforward reflection of a very common subject. We know from
Yeats himself the precise nature of his indebtedness to the Nō: he wasn't trying to write imitation Nō plays but he had turned to the Nō for "help" in the composition of his own poetic dramas. He was completely at liberty to assimilate as much of, or deviate from, Nō techniques as he wanted. If he had consciously inverted the myth of Yōrô for the purposes of his own play, I feel sure it was a sufficiently deliberate process which he wouldn't have left unglossed. The absence of any reference is markedly significant and seems to suggest that he wasn't specially indebted to Yōrô and any overt similarity is more likely to be coincidental. Any structural, choreographic or musical similarities of *At the Hawk's Well* to Yōrô are of course due to the overall assimilation of Nō techniques in his work.

For these reasons I feel that to try and nail down a specific Nō model without absolute evidence is ultimately to damage the real indebtedness of Yeats to the Nō. For me, the completely different context of nuances within which the Japanese "waterfall" is placed should caution us against forcing a closer link between Yōrô and *At the Hawk's Well*. The whole question of Yeats's indebtedness to the Nō is certainly not dependent on specific details of similarity but on the general way the Nō theatre came at an appropriate moment in a creative artist's development and provided him
with the inspiration he needed for his own poetic dramas.

In the next chapter I hope to show that Nō is valid and influential as a masterpiece in its own right. Any attempt to modernize it would merely risk its validity. It is a pity that through Yeats, Nō, which he so much admired, should have been so thoroughly misrepresented and exploited because of his failure to understand fully its origin and nature. But despite ironies and misunderstandings, out of his contact with the Nō, grew his own dance-drama - one of the most significant and influential dramatic forms in Western theatre today.

Similarly, Charles Marowitz, in the Arts section of the Guardian on February 25th 1974, could have been referring to the material of Nō plays when he suggested that "cruising intermediate zone, populated by egos and idle, myths and fantasies, deities and devils" which he felt the theatre ought to be exploring in order to express universal spiritual

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2 ibid., p.389. Craig pencilled this statement in the margin of one of his books (now in the Harvard Theater Collection).
CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF NÔ ON WESTERN THEATRE

In this chapter I want to examine the brilliant way in which Nô has made use of dream, magic, legend, and the supernatural, as a means of creating a profound spiritual mood. Nô, which specializes in the world of dream, trance, magic and the subconscious, seems to fulfill the vision of many theatre directors of what theatre ought to be. Jean Louis Barrault once defined the poetic world as that of the waking dream which accurately describes the subject of many Nô plays. And so does Edward Gordon Craig's vision of a "new theatre with magic as its coat of arms". Similarlly, Charles Marowitz, in the Arts section of the Guardian on February 25th 1974, could have been referring to the material of Nô plays when he suggested that "cruising intermediate zone, populated by egos and ids, myths and fantasies, deities and devils" which he felt the theatre ought to be exploring in order to express universal spiritual

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2 Ibid., p.389. Craig pencilled this statement in the margin of one of his books (now in the Harvard Theater Collection).
truths. As Eugene Ionesco has put it:

Noh is avant-garde theater.... Modes of theatrical expression which are finely textured and filled with mystery but have a condensed stylization like those of Japan can be found only in the Orient. It is into this utterly quiet lake of ancient wisdom which is the Orient that we wish to dip.

Noh is, indeed, surprisingly avant garde for as far back as the 14th Century, long before Freud made his impact on the world with his revelations of the higher reality of dream, Noh firmly established itself in Japan as the theatre of dream, legend, and magic.

To illustrate this I have chosen three Noh plays, Kantan, Hajitomi, and Yokih, all of which I saw during my stay in Japan in 1973. The first two, Kantan and Hajitomi, are not only good examples of Noh as theatre of dream, legend and fantasy, but can also be considered theatrical landmarks: the former made a deep impression on Jacques Copeau (the full import of which has yet to be recognized in Japan and Europe), and the latter moved Barrault to say:

1 See Yasuo Nakamura's Noh, op.cit. p.232
2 See Fresko, pp.107-111.
I had never seen anything so beautiful, so internal, so magical. It seemed to me that I had lived physically inside a soul.  

Because Jacques Copeau and Jean Louis Barrault have both contributed significantly to Western theatre, I will be examining their reaction to Nō in order to determine the extent of its influence in the West. I've included Yokini as an example of the theatre of magic and fantasy and also because, on a personal level, it was the most moving Nō play I saw in Japan.

Towards the end of the chapter there's a reported interview with Kanze Hisao, one of Japan's greatest living Nō actors in which he talks about his reactions to Samuel Beckett's theatre. As there have been attempts to compare Beckett's techniques with those of the Nō, it seems significant to have the views of a Nō actor on this subject, particularly one who was recently engaged in a Japanese production of Waiting for Godot. And finally, I'm concluding the chapter with a brief survey of Nō influence on contemporary theatre productions in England.


2 See Pronko, pp.107-111.
KANTAN (甘阪、土ParticleSystem)

I'll begin by discussing Kantan, 甘阪、土ParticleSystem, written by Zeami and translated by Arthur Waley. Jacques Copeau, described by Barrault as the "master of us all" - the "father of modern theatre" - was so impressed by the mixture of restraint and freedom in Kantan that he planned to stage it publicly in France in March 1924. Because the performance did not take place, it has not been fully realized how much this Western champion of the anti-naturalistic theatrical movement had identified his ideals with those of the Nō. And bearing in mind the importance of his ideas for Western theatrical development, I find the rapport which he felt with the Nō of far greater consequence to Europe than the much publicized "attraction" between Yeats or Brecht and the art.

Yet there is not a single reference linking Copeau with the Nō in any guide to the art for tourists. It was quite by chance towards the end of my stay in Kyoto that a Japanese professor in Kyoto University mentioned an article he had read in a Japanese magazine, Playwriting (Gekisaku), forty years ago, about Copeau's abortive experiment with Kantan. Equally by chance the Kita Nō School in Tokyo included Kantan in one of their programmes and I went to see that performance.
What struck me in reading Copeau's ideas and thoughts on the theatre was that he was striving towards the principles of theatrical technique, embodied in the No, long before he attempted his experiment with Kantan. In his essay on "Dramatic Economy" he showed his leanings towards simplicity in decor and stylization - central features of Japanese aesthetics and, indeed, the basic elements of No. He seemed to share completely the principle of achieving maximum concentration by ruthlessly eliminating distracting details:

The modern trend in scenic design is in the direction of artistic simplification, in pictorial effect as well as in the choice of elements that constitute décor. Our designers prefer an intelligently interpreted portrait to a photographic image; they aim at impressions rather than descriptions. They strive to evoke and suggest rather than to depict. They single out a part in order to indicate the whole: a tree instead of a forest, a pillar instead of a temple. Stylized elements replace the wealth of detail which ... went counter to nature, competing with dramatic action and wearing down the playgoer's attention.¹

Copeau, as the spearhead of the artistic revolution against stage naturalism, had recognized the virtues of the free, uncluttered Elizabethan, Japanese, and Chinese stage where, as he put it, "mind moves freely", and "we have a

¹ Toby Cole, Directors on Directing, London 1970, p.223
convention which is frank, complete, and self-sufficient, creating a universe in itself - a theatrical universe with actors. He said to them: "Until today, I have its own style and technique". So he was pre-disposed to education, but you have convinced me. From now admire the Nō form. And his attempt at staging Kantan in 1924 can be regarded as the most magnificent tribute the O. P. theatre could receive from the West. The Nō represented the zenith of all his own theatrical aspirations and this was unprepared for his identification with a form of theatrical art so diametrically opposed to the Western con-

quote in full the following account from his Souvenirs du Vieux - Colombier:

Finally, in order to sum up the effort and to show the results of several years, we tackled a Japanese Nō play. Why a Nō play? Because this form is the strictest that we know and demands an exceptional technique from the interpreter. The performance was going to be given in public. If it had taken place, perhaps we would have completely overcome all resistance, perhaps our destinies would have completely changed. Unfortunately, the leading actor having sprained his knee in a fall, we had to give up the project. Some months later we left Paris. But I have no hesitation in saying: This Nō play, as it appeared to me at the final rehearsal, remains through the profundity of its scenic spell, its weight, its style and its emotional quality, one of the most joyful, one of the most secretly rich of all the Vieux Colombier productions. Let praise be given where it is due; to Suzanne Bing above all, for putting everything into the work, and to the young pupils who had followed it with their hearts. Stanislavsky, on his way through Paris, encouraged me. Adolphe Appia wrote to me:

1 Jacques Catulle Mendes, *In Search of Theatre*, op.cit., p.259.
"Your 'little ones' are my entire hope."
Grenville Barker, present at the No rehearsals, jumped onto the stage to congratulate the young actors. He said to them: "Until today, I have never believed in the virtue of a dramatic education, but you have convinced me. From now on you can hope for everything."

Though Copeau received encouragement from Stanislavsky and Appia, who both felt an affinity with the No, Europe was unprepared for his identification with a form of theatrical art so diametrically opposed to the Western concept. This alarm and bewilderment was expressed by Andre Gide who wrote in his Journals:

He (Copeau) wanted to lead to perfection, to style, to purity, an essentially impure art that gets along without all that. He frightens me when he declares that he was never closer to achieving his aim than in the Japanese Noh drama he was putting on, which an accident prevented him from presenting to the public, and of which I saw the last rehearsals.... A play without any relation to our traditions, our customs, our beliefs; in which, artificially, he achieved without much difficulty an arbitrary "stylization" the exactitude of which was absolutely unverifiable, totally factitious, made up of slowness, pauses, something indefinably strained toward the supernatural in the tone of voice, gestures and expressions of the actors. 2


2 In Search of Theatre, op.cit., p.259.
Unfortunately, the Nō continues to bewilder the West by its strangeness. So though the ideals of Copeau may be comprehensible, his equation of them with the Nō has still not been driven home. And yet we have Copeau’s unequivocal acknowledgement of the basic unity between his ideals and the Nō:

"...his revulsion against modern decadent theatre - the idea that it would be necessary to start from nothing - the desire to escape from fame and money...the Nō theatre is simplicity."

The Noh appeared to be the application of the musical, dramatic and plastic studies upon which, for three years, we had nourished our students, so much so that their various improvisations, the goal of these studies was related in style to the Noh, much more than to any contemporary work.

When Copeau died in 1949, Andre Gide said, "The French stage is no longer the same since his glorious efforts."

His influence on French theatre, and indirectly through his nephew, Michel Saint Denis, on the English theatre, is clearly acknowledged. In Copeau’s ideals of theatre, the West has indeed met the East. And beginning with his manifesto, published in the September 1913 issue of the Nouvelle Revue Française in which he advocated the idea of a bare stage, "un treteau nu,...where the tyranny of the stage and its gross artificiality will act on us like a discipline in forcing us to concentrate all of truth in the..."

1 From the uncatalogued papers in the Copeau collection, translated by L.C. Pronko in Theatre: East and West, p.90.
feelings and actions of our characters" - in his removal of footlights bringing the playing area closer to the audience - in the creation of a "dispositif fixe", (or permanent set) which could be adapted to suit any scene from any play - in his use of phrases like the "renewal of man in the theatre" - his revulsion against modern decadent theatre - the idea that it would be necessary to start from nothing - his ideal of creating an ensemble indifferent to fame and money - we recognize the essential principles of the No theatre based on Zen ideals of negation and simplicity.

Besides these, there are three other points of similarity between Copeau's theatre and the No which deserve mention. The first is an uncanny foreshadowing (though unwitting) of the strange resemblance between some of Samuel Beckett's techniques and those of the No. In Copeau's 1914 programme of his first season at the Vieux Colombier, he staged Paul Claudel's L'Echange.¹ What was remarkable about this presentation was the new style of production he had adopted. It was sensational. There was a single tree in the foreground with a backcloth representing the sky. The utter simplicity was intentionally designed to focus attention on the movement of the actors...

¹ See Dorothy Knowles, French Drama of the Inter-war years 1918 - 39, London 1967, p.17.
and their gestures. Today such a setting would remind one of the single tree in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. (This alone should make us realize the avant-garde theatre's debt to Copeau). Beckett's severely simple sets could hardly have been conceived without the artistic revolution led by Copeau against cluttered naturalistic scenery. And as Copeau's ideals were inseparable from the Nō, this may indeed provide the clue to the mystery that, in spite of Beckett's own denial of any conscious Oriental influence in his plays, they are unquestionably Nō-like. Another significant aspect of Copeau's 1914 production was that its use of a single tree, an idea resembling the solitary pine tree on a Nō stage, also foreshadowed Claudel's own interest in the Nō which was to exert a considerable influence on his plays. Claudel was able to study the Nō when he went to Japan as French ambassador.

The second point I want to mention is the emphasis which Copeau and the Nō art have given to the training of the body and to acrobatics. (I have stressed in a previous

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1 In 1922 Claudel wrote *La Femme et son Ombre*, patterned on the Nō. For more details about the influence of Nō on Claudel see the article referred to in Note 2 above, Chapter I, p. 67.
In 1920-21 when Copeau opened his school attached to the Vieux-Colombier, he was determined to provide his pupils with a wide variety of technical training. He engaged three famous clowns, the Pratellini Brothers, to teach his pupils complete freedom of movement. Jean Dorcy, a teacher of mime and acrobatics, was also brought in to develop the art of mime and acrobatics as part of the literary actor's techniques. When his pupils withdrew to Burgundy, they reflected their master's respect for farce which, in Copeau's opinion, became more valuable than literary drama. So his pupils were encouraged to perform farces and diversions at harvest and wine festivals, and mime and improvised scenes, found their way into prepared texts.

This leads to the third point - the uncanny resemblance between Copeau's pupils nicknamed "Les Copiaus" and the original "dengaku" groups which performed farces interlaced with mime and acrobatics at Japanese harvest rice festivals. Copeau had long hankered after a popular theatre which was part of the community life of the people, and in Burgundy he came very close to achieving this ideal. No, as I have

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1 See Chapter II, p. 94. Cf. also Peter Brook's use of the gymnastics of the circus tumbler in helping his actors acquire a basic dexterity during the preparatory rehearsals for The Dream. See J.C. Trewin's Peter Brook, London 1971, p. 180.
previously emphasised, began essentially as a common people's theatre. There is therefore a strong bond of affinity between Copeau's deepest ideas about theatre and the No. It was not a question of Copeau imitating the ideals of the Japanese theatre but rather of him discovering that his own ideas were similar to its basic principles. And so we can conclude by saying that the revolutionary ideas underlying the modern theatre, inspired by Copeau, are shot through with the same ideals as those of the No. The Kantan experiment, had it been publicly acclaimed, might have underlined the remarkable similarity between East and West in their conception of good theatre. (It is indeed tantalising to speculate about what exactly Copeau meant by saying that "our destinies would have completely changed"). But the point remains that Copeau completely embraced the ideals of the No and his attempt to stage Kantan, though abortive, should be examined with more respect.

Drawing on my own impression of the performance of Kantan, which I saw at the Kita No Theatre on 15th December 1973, I will examine what struck me as special points of stagecraft and dramatic economy in this brilliantly conceived dream sequence. Anyone familiar with Copeau's ideas on theatre, expressed in his essay on "Dramatic Economy", will immediately recognize that (by a remarkable coincidence) this No play, with its bare stage and its conventions
of simplicity, frankness and restraint, is an effective illustration of them. Briefly, Zeami based his Kantan on Rosei's dream at Kantan. "The Pillow Tale" of the Chinese writer, Li Pi, (722-789 AD), which the original audiences would have been familiar with, is the earliest form of this story. There is very little plot. Rosei, who is travelling to the land of Sô in search of wisdom, stops at an inn. The hostess offers him the famous pillow of Kantan. While she prepares him some millet, he dreams that for fifty years he rules in glory and splendour over the land of Sô. He is then suddenly awakened from his dream by the hostess who tells him that his meal is ready. With a pang, Rosei realizes that all of life is such a dream and returns home to spend the rest of his life quietly. One can see the application of the principle of economy even in the way Zeami has shaped the No play from a familiar legend. He has eliminated the "sage" altogether and in the dream Rosei immediately becomes Emperor.

The theme: "life is a dream" ¹ is a common one. But Kantan should not be read as a text, but should be seen, before one can fully appreciate the genius of its dramatic techniques. The keynote, from the outset, as is usual with most No openings, is complete artlessness and simplicity.

There is a feeling of intimacy with the stage as its shape and the long bridgeway (hashigakari) allow seating on three sides roughly in the way I've indicated in Fig. 4; p. 43.

The musicians, (hayashi") can be heard tuning their instruments in the ante "mirror" room, indicating that the play is about to begin. They enter slowly, led by the flute (fue) player, and take their positions as shown in Fig. The Chorus (ji) file in ceremoniously and sit with their hands in their pockets having placed their fans on the floor. Then in full view of the audience, the prop, which (in this case) is a dais, is set up. The base is covered with green brocade and the shrine-shaped top is brilliant orange, supported by four white poles. This transparent candour is disarming and goes a long way psychologically in helping us to trust in the arbitrariness of the Nō conventions.

The inn hostess, played by a kyōgen actor, then makes her entrance and in a low key, in strict conformity with the introductory (jō) musical mood, simply and directly addresses the audience. I quote from Waley’s translation which captures magnificently the eloquent simplicity of the opening:
FIG. 4. SKETCH SHOWING THE FIXED POSITIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS ON A NO STAGE WITH ITS DISTINCTIVE LONG-BRIDGE (HASHIGAKARI).

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Indicate where the audience sit. In the Kawamura No Theatre in Kyoto, which is in a private house, the audience have to sit on cushions on the floor. Most No theatres in Japan provide a 'kneeling area' for those who want to watch No in the traditional Japanese habit of sitting on one's heels. I found this posture painful but it certainly contributes to the ritualistic quality of a No performance, uniting the spectator with the waki and chorus who assume this posture throughout.
Hostess: I who stand before you am a woman of the village of Kantan in China.... He who sleeps on this pillow sees in a moment's dream the past or future spread out before him and so wakes illumined....
(She takes the pillow and lays it on the covered "dais" which represents at first the bed and afterwards the palace.)

Rosei then enters, talks to the hostess and goes to the bed. He lies down and goes to sleep. The hostess goes away but does not leave the stage. She merely moves to the hashigakari (bridge), sits down at the kyōgen-za, and remains in full view throughout the entire dream sequence without destroying its magic.

From the moment Rosei sets his head on the magic pillow we enter with him into his dream - the pillow acting as a dramatic device signifying the beginning and also the end of the dream sequence. In full view, a stage attendant enters and removes the pillow to indicate that the "dais" is now a "palace".

Another piece of brilliant technique, which parallels and reinforces that of removing and replacing the pillow, is the use of the same rapping action of the fan on the post of the dais at the beginning and at the end of the dream. Rosei's dream begins with an envoy rapping on his bed twice:

1 The No Plays of Japan, op.cit., p.195.
2 The position specially reserved for the kyōgen actor. See Fig. 4, p. 143.
Envoy: I am come as a messenger to tell you that the Emperor of the Land of So resigns his throne and commands that Rosei shall reign his stead.¹

As seen in Fig. 5 below, a palanquin is brought in to confirm the honour. When the palanquin is not in use, it is casually (but studiedly) propped against the hashigakari. The toy-like quality of its construction

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Fig. 5 Rosei, as Emperor, receives envoys who bring in a palanquin.

1 Waley, p.197
creates a feeling of play-acting, reminiscent of the in-
tensity children put into their games of pretence. It
is as though by treating its props like toys, the No
achieves an intense feeling of highly credible make-believe.
(This is true of all the stage props used in the plays
I'll be discussing but the most brilliant example is the
little toy cart, as shown in the sketch below, which the
heroine in Matsukaze draws along with her.)

Fig. 6 A toy cart covered with pink and blue ribbon
used in Matsukaze.

We are now completely enthralled with Rosei's dream
of glory. He is given the nectar of immortality to drink.
Fig. 7 The touching of two fans indicating that Rosei is given the immortal nectar to drink.

As shown above, this is simply done through the movement of the fans. This is a standard stylized gesture which is part of the general No convention of suggesting rather than realistically portraying an action. A boy dancer known as a "kokata" begins to dance the "Dream Dance". When he finishes Rosei springs up in ecstasy and dances the famous
"Gaku" (Court Dance) on the dais, stamping his foot loudly to the accompaniment of the trance-inducing beat of the musicians. The music and chanting seem appropriate in hypnotically drawing us into that half-world of dream which the No specializes in. This perhaps largely accounts for the effectiveness of No as theatre of dream, trance and fantasy. I was also particularly struck by the insistence and ferocity of Rosei's loud stamping on the dais which powerfully suggested the actuality of his dream to him and the audience. I had gone to Japan at a time when the No play, "Shōjō, The Tippling Elf," was in season and I had seen it three times to be familiar with a different kind of stamping - the quiet underwater stamping of the sea-elf to suggest a dance in the sea. From this I realized that the No convention is remarkably true to nature in certain aspects of its representation.

After dancing on the dais, Rosei steps out of it and dances on the hashigakari (bridge). While he is there, the three envoys quietly leave through the small sliding door on the opposite side. (See sketch, Fig. 8, on next page.) The exit of characters through this door known as the "hurry door" (kirido) is a recognized No convention indicating their death or total disappearance. So through their exit the audience is prepared for the dissolution of
The small sliding door (kirido) with a traditional clump of bamboo painted next to it.

"life is a dream". He then moves to the shifts pillow, the dream. Rosei stamps again, moves towards the dais, and moves slowly, and goes out very slowly, is asleep on the replaced pillow.

At this point the inn hostess, who has been waiting patiently in full view throughout the entire sequence, moves slowly to Rosei's dais which is now a bed. She uses
her fan to tap twice on it to wake him up from his sleep, recalling the same device used by the envoy to introduce his dream of glory. And not only is the perfect symmetry of the dramatic structure emphasized but also its latent irony; reality and dream seem to be the two sides of the same coin. What could have been an awkward dramatic leap from "dream" to "reality" is accomplished by a simple rap. And another important point: the rapping sounds seemed unusually clear and magnified, heightening the dramatic tension within the context of the play's slow, restrained tempo and its deliberately stylized movements. I quote from Waley:

Hostess: Listen traveller! Your millet is ready. !Come quickly and eat your dinner.

(tapping twice with her fan)

Rosei, responding to her tapping, rises slowly from his bed. He lifts and holds up his pillow a few times in a gesture which poignantly conveys the theme of the play: "life is a dream". He then moves to the shite pillar, stamps a few times, and goes out very slowly.

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1 Waley, p.203
Fig. 9 Rosei, waking up from his dream of glory, sees only the pillow.

Out of the twenty-four Nō performances I saw in Japan, I considered Kantan the most impressive in technical brilliance and dramatic compactness. It certainly represents Copeau's dream of the ideal kind of theatre in its
simplicity, economy and conscious restraint, producing an intense state of concentration. In fact it is by exploiting fully the utter sincerity and naivety of its conventions that Kantan is moving and effective as a piece of highly "sophisticated" theatre. And consciously or otherwise, in so far as the Western theatre has benefitted from Copeau, "the seed from which we all grew" (as Barrault calls him), it has drawn on the archetypal principles of effective theatre which underlie Kantan.

The fact that Hajitomi is hinged to a particular idea only roughly defined by the Japanese, misses it especially meaning. Naito Tōzaemon, and which so fascinated Jean Louis Barrault, is a typically "mugen" or dream No play following the standard formula: in the first act, a priest on a journey stops at a certain place and in a dream meets an inhabitant who seems strangely bound to that place; in the second act, the inhabitant appears to the priest in her true form as the heroine of some well known legend. The most important feature of this type of play is that the
entire sequence is conceived as the dream of the priest who is played by a "waki" or secondary actor.

From this one can see that *Hajitomi* is quite a different kind of dream play from *Kantan* in which the central character, Rosei, is himself the hero of his dream of glory. *Hajitomi* was obviously considered an impressive example of a mugen No because it was chosen as the showpiece in Jean Louis Barrault's honour during his visit to Japan in 1960. And Barrault's reactions to it are valuable as they can be taken as representative of a highly acute foreigner's response to this genre.

The fact that *Hajitomi* is hinged to a particular legend, well loved by the Japanese, makes it especially meaningful to those closely familiar with its background. But its impact on a foreign enthusiast of No (however academically conversant he may be with its history) is largely limited to the area of its theatrical techniques. This is because it is in the nature of a "dream" play, and the maximum effectiveness of its appeal is in the unique way it can address the subconscious with which it is in tune. I am of course describing one particular kind of audience participation which responds to the play on a
highly ritualistic level closed to the outsider.¹

This "ritualistic" quality is particularly indicated in the restrained clapping at the end of a No performance in Japan. It also struck me that the reaction of a totally engaged spectator of a No play is so deeply emotional as to transcend any awareness of its brilliant techniques. Conversely it is possible to be dazzled by its techniques and yet fail to come to grips with its essence as ritual. And it is important to recognize dream No as a very specialized ritual, apart from its distinctive techniques, although one realizes that in its origin, the nature and techniques of a theatre art are interdependent.

Let me quote my reaction to Izutsu (a No play belonging to this same group of "mugen" or dream No) which will throw light on the particular difficulties of entering the parochial legendary background of Hajitomi. Izutsu was the only dream No play I saw in Japan which expressed itself through a universally recognized symbolic image of

¹ The impression of No as a closed ritual for initiates comes over clearly in the following observation made by Georges Lerminier in Parisien libéré, June 27, 1957, after the Kanze No troupe performance in Théâtres des Nations in 1957: "This is a privileged theatrical place, not a vulgar scenic apparatus, but a ciborium, where artists, like priests, are celebrating a ritual for initiates."
love - the well. The title, Izutsu, means "well curb", and the highlight of the piece, in which the heroine, wearing her lover's cloak and hat, gazes into the well, seeing him instead of herself, is sufficiently reminiscent of the Narcissus legend and a similar episode in Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose ¹ to affect anyone familiar with those stories. For this reason I could understand the priest's dream in Izutsu though I couldn't fully enter into it because one cannot control the final responses of one's subconscious. And this represents to me the crux of the problem for many foreign enthusiasts of No, who, in the final analysis, cannot fully participate in a dream No ritual. This is because, however well they may have mastered every detail of the text, the special rapport with the legend, as required by No as theatre of dream and ritual, is not easy to achieve intellectually. For example as seen in Fig. 10 on the next page, the heroine in Izutsu, gazing into the well, sees her lover. This image clearly has a universal familiarity, but the question remains whether that is enough to draw the spectator into the heart of a Japanese legend, immortalized in the Tales of Ise.²

² See The Tales of Ise, translated by H.Jay Harris, Tokyo 1972, pp.64-67
Fig. 10  The heroine in Izutsu, gazing into the well, sees her lover.
Fig. // The priest, played by a "waki", performs a mass for flowers.

In a country where there is a real belief in the supernatural world of ghosts and demons, the recognition of a spirit is made with no fuss:

Shite (speaks): From behind the shade of this flower have I come.

Waki (kakaru):¹ Then you must be one no longer in life who has come to attend the flower mass.

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¹ A musical term indicating a switch to singing.
Fig. 12. The ghost of the Lady Yugao appears unaffectedly before the priest.

The shite, who is really the ghost of the Lady Yugao, suggests the legend with which she is associated. While the chant is taken up by the Chorus, the shite makes his exit. To give him time to change into the gorgeous kyogen who performs in the Interval.

See my sketch of a Kyogen, Fig. 16 on p. 143.
costume of the Lady Yugao, when she reveals herself in her true form, there is an interchange between the waki and ai-kyōgen. This is simply to tell the story of Lady Yugao in colloquial prose for the benefit of those who have not followed all the content of the preceding intoned verse.

The shift into the second act, which takes us right into the legend, is brilliantly and economically made. We, in fact, see for ourselves the transition taking place with the bringing in on stage by assistants of a "tsukurimono" (stage property), representing a house and "hajitomi" overgrown with moonflower vine. Quite artlessly, the waki rises and stands at the centre stage facing the stage property. Through this simple posture and his intonation, he indicates the complete change of locale from the first act to the house of Lady Yugao on the 5th Street, overrun with moonflower vine. He then goes to the waki-za and sits down passively throughout the entire sequence. His absolute immobility is significant: he has completed his function as being the agent of the dream and his silent presence on stage makes him the representative of the audience. They can now be actively engaged in the ritual

1 The kyōgen who performs in the interval.
2 See my sketch of a Nō stage, Fig. 4 on p. 143.
which begins with the entrance of the nochi-shite (shite of the second part). He enters, beautifully dressed, as the Lady Yugao herself and steps into the stage property. So with just a few simple devices - the waki standing before the "tsukurimono" and a change of costume by the nochi-shite - we are in the realm of legend.

Fig. 13 The closed "hajitomi" with the Lady Yugao behind.
As shown in the sketch, the stage property consists of a simple bamboo-framework, representing a "hajitomi", at the top. A "hajitomi" literally means half a "shitomi". A "shitomi" is the upper half of the wooden panelling which can still be seen in the fences of old temples. The upper part is fixed while the lower part is free and can be manipulated outwards.

Inside the "tsukurimono" the shite asks the waki or priest:

"Will you pray for my soul?"

The Chorus replies on behalf of the waki (following a definite pattern in Nō of depersonalizing the relationship between the shite and the waki):

"Without fail."

The dialogue continues as follows:

Shite: Hearing this word, the moonflower Chorus: Entwined hajitomi she pushes up of tsukurimono (Shite steps out Moving the beholder to tears profuse.

And comes forward, her figure

It makes its mark on us as pure action - a counterpoint to the chanting taken up by the
Fig. 14 The "hajitomi" is pushed outwards revealing Lady Yugao.

Very often in No, the shite, as can be seen, describes the responses of the heroine in the third person. To reinforce this deliberate objectification, the Chorus completes the description while the shite mimes the action. (In this case the shite is seen to push up the hajitomi. The eloquence of this gesture carries the full force of his undivided attention. It makes its mark on us as pure action - a counterpoint to the chanting taken up by the
chorus. The roles of chanting and miming are distinctly separated.) And the total effect of this kind of distancing, followed by pure mime, is to make everything stand out in bold relief, which is particularly appropriate in a dream sequence where contours appear unrealistically exaggerated and sharp. It is remarkable how the features of this inner dream landscape are outwardly reinforced by the deliberately slow stylized movement of the shite, marionette-like, in his self consciousness and the strange enlarged shape of his costume (as seen in the sketch below). And one must not forget the hypnotic accompaniment of the instrumentalists, each howling out his individual rhythm, and producing aural effects which are closer to dream and trance than reality.

Fig. 15 The Lady Yugao performing a dance after she has stepped out of "tsukurimono"
The way in which the shite objectifies his actions and responses is doubly convincing within a dream context, because in dream most of our actions seem distanced and unrelated to us. There is also an element of self-observation and detachment in dream which exactly characterizes the way the shite in Hajitomi plays the role of the heroine. And paradoxically the shite, by distancing himself from his role and by not pretending to be Lady Yugao but merely someone playing her part, allows the spectator to come close to the heart of the characterization. So the deliberately de-personalized "role" can therefore, in a sense, be played out by anyone in the audience who wants to, and "can", join in the dream ritual.

The next section of the dream sequence is called the "kuse" in which the chorus narrates the main theme of Hajitomi. This is the highlight of the No piece in which the Lady Yugao recollects her poignant meeting with Prince Genji. To show how faithful the "kuse" in Hajitomi is to its original sources, I will quote the relevant section of the legend as recorded in Genji Monogatari and then show how

1 This element of controlled engagement is the chief characteristic of a No play descriptive of both performer and spectator. See my discussion of Zeami's "Theory of Riken" or Detachment in Chapter 1, p. 37.

2 The mask of Lady Yugao worn by the male actor barely conceals his strong jowl and neck.

3 See Keene's Anthology of Japanese Literature, op.cit. p.107
Naito Tōzaemon has adapted it for his play:

There was a wattled fence ... and among the leaves were white flowers with petals half unfolded like the lips of people smiling at their own thoughts. "They are called Yugao, 'evening faces'" one of his servants (i.e. Prince Genji's) told him; "how strange to find so lovely a crowd clustering on this deserted wall...." He sent one of his servants to pick some.* The man entered at the half-open door, and had begun to pluck the flowers, when a little girl ... came through a quite genteel sliding door, and holding out toward Genji's servant a white fan heavily perfumed with incense,* she said to him, "Would you like something to put them on?...." and she handed him the fan.

In Hajitomi, while the chorus chants the well-known details of this familiar incident, the shite mimes them in a slow stylized dance.

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* I have specially underlined the similarity in significant details between the original source and the No - Hajitomi.

1 The servant of Prince Genji.
The shite, holding out an open fan, mimes how the moonflower is brought to Prince Genji.

It is to be noticed that Tōzaemon has carefully retained accurate details from the original legend in his Hajitomi. In the East, as in the West, the flower is associated with love. The play till now is studded with images of flowers (hana): the waki begins by offering a mass for flowers - he sees "a white flower unfolding its petals in secret smile" - the Lady Yugao comes from behind the shade of this flower and no sooner revealing her name, disappears into it - the
"tsukurimono" represents a house with a "hajitomi" and covered with creeping moonflower vine - and this carefully worked out imagery of flowers culminates in the "kuse" - the poignant recollection of the first meeting between the Prince and the Lady Yugao in which Genji orders the "moonflower" to be plucked. His order is obeyed and the Lady Yugao (the plucked flower) is the mass offered up to the Prince and their love is pledged.

After the beautifully slow and stylized "jo-no-mai" (dance) the shite intones:

SHITE: Only when plucked

In the twilight

JI: A dim appearance of

{noru} The flowery evening face... / Hana no iugao
The flowery evening face... / Hana no iugao
The flowery evening face... / Hana no iugao

SHITE: My final abode

Have I revealed.

I have specially included the Japanese transcription of "the flowery evening face" to show how clearly, in the original, the Lady Yugao is indistinguishable from the moonflower in the fence. The ending (recited by the chorus while it is acted out by the shite) tells and shows how the

1 Song in free rhythm.

2 Sung in regular rhythm: eight beats to eight syllabics.
Lady Yugao disappears into the flower (represented by the stage property), reinforcing the dream-like quality of the episode:

JI: Soon it will be morning
Before it grows light
She says, and within the moonflower...
Before it grows light
She says, and within the moonflower —
Entwined hajitomi
Her form disappears.
Within a passing dream
She had faded.

The shite then enters the "tsukurimono". The koken (stage assistant) draws down the "hajitomi". The shite comes out from behind the "tsukurimono" and stamps tome-byōshi, (the farewell stamp) at the jō-za.

The ending of this play with the drawing down of the "hajitomi" makes it movingly circular, recalling the pivotal action point of the piece when the Lady Yugao pushes up the "hajitomi" in order to reveal herself to Prince Genji. What is striking is that the poignancy of a tender encounter is conveyed in all its first lyricism with no trace of any sentimentality. This is achieved through the utmost economy of action and the simplest stage prop. And to bring the play to the conventional Nō-ending, the shite steps out of the "tsukurimono", stamps at the "jō-za", and slowly makes his exit.

On the 13th December 1973, I saw a performance of Hajitomi at the Suidobashi Nō Theatre in Tokyo. Every ticket
had been sold weeks before the performance because the No actor Kanze Hisao was playing the role of the shite and many of his disciples were determined not to miss it. I was particularly interested to see this performance, as I had heard from Chifumi Shimazaki that he had played the same role in a similar performance in honour of Jean Louis Barrault, when he had visited Japan as part of his world theatre tour in April 1960.

There is no doubt that Hajitomi is a major theatrical experience and I had the benefit of Chifumi Shimazaki sitting beside me and explaining any classical allusion she thought I would be interested in. I also had her translated English text of Hajitomi on my lap together with a parallel transcription of the original Japanese text, though I was too engrossed by what was taking place on stage to consult it very much. I would say that I had done more research in Hajitomi than any of the other No plays I saw, chiefly because Chifumi Shimazaki had placed at my disposal all the notes she had made for it in conjunction with her translation. So from an academic point of view, I was quite well equipped to cope with the play. And yet it did not touch me as deeply as some of the other plays of which I had read far less about. The play which moved me most deeply was Yokihi for reasons I will explain in the next section. But the brief sad love affair between Prince Genji and Lady Yūgao seemed
a little too particularized. Though I marvelled at the technical dexterity and economy which could re-create the tender meeting between the lovers, it was not sufficiently abstract or universal to affect me deeply. The moonflower could not trigger off in my mind the necessary chain of associations which would make the story of special significance for me. And so Hajitomi has remained an impressive theatrical experience, though for me, sadly lacking in any personal touch of magic or enchantment.

This is of course a very personal view, but, in studying Jean Louis Barrault's reaction to the Hajitomi performance he saw, I have noticed a similar dazzlement by its techniques, strikingly unaccompanied by any personal response to its essence. There is no reference to any personal significance the love of Yugao for Genji had for him, because clearly what moved Barrault was not what was acted out but rather how it was done. I quote in full Barrault's response to Hajitomi, from an account of the press interview reported in the July 1960 issue of the Kanze magazine:

I was utterly absorbed by the performance. The one who took the part of the shite was really wonderful. What impressed me were the moments of utter stillness which nevertheless throbbed with a life of their own. I felt that it was as though the chorus, the musicians and the solo performer "breathed" in wonderful unison. I was also captivated by the feet movement. How I would love to walk like that. The motion of the fan is like man's "kokoro". The fan seems remarkably capable of representing the movement of "kokoro":
sometimes it rises - develops or falls. These subtle changes are beautifully depicted by the fan. The fan is the soul of man. When Kanze Shizuo 1 admitted his inability to follow the French production of The False Confession and Baptiste which Barrault's company had presented, Barrault said: "I'm luckier in this respect. One does not have to know Japanese to understand Noh." 2

What is interesting about this report is that it contains an accurate catalogue of the most salient features of the special theatrical techniques used in a Nō performance. Barrault seemed particularly impressed by the use of the fan and he repeated his admiration of it in this performance in an account of it in his Journal de bord on his return to Paris and again twelve years later in his recently published book Memories for Tomorrow. 3

But what is noticeably absent from all these reports is that though Barrault is clearly aware of the theatrical technical possibilities of the fan, he does not once connect it with the "plucked white moon-flower" carried to Genji on a fan - a sequence deliberately mimed by the shite for the audience, as shown in my sketch on page 167. And this illustrates very clearly how it is possible for a foreigner, who is not really intimately familiar with the legend of the Nō piece, to be so dazzled

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1 The brother of Kanze Hisao.

2 Kanze magazine, op.cit., pp.42-43. in Theater East and

by its technical brilliance as to miss its essence. The following is Barrault’s own record of Kanze Hisao’s performance which compares well with the press account in the Kanze magazine:

The shite, strikingly immobile, has opened wide his fan. His inner life is there offered to all: his soul unfolded. While the Chorus chants the torments of his character in unison, he makes his fan undulate and tremble. We have the impression that these emanations from the soul literally come from the object itself. The soul quivers. Our eyes are riveted on the fan. The actor’s power of concentration is such that, from a distance, he can direct our attention upon this determined point. There is no lighting, yet it seems that the entire stage is plunged into darkness and only the form is luminous.

And in 1972 he singles out for special mention in his book the deep impression the fan and the slowness of the acting had made on him:

The Noh: The slowness of the acting makes one think of universal gravitation. I who have always been fascinated by the signifying object, was completely held by the fan in the shite’s hand. The fan is like thought. Thought opens slowly, and in small jerks ... it expresses itself in time with the voice.

In this book Barrault also mentions his friendship with Kanze Hisao and expresses a wish that he would have loved.

1 Journal de bord, op.cit., p.83, tr. in Theater East and West, p.95.
2 Memories for Tomorrow, op.cit., p.248
3 ibid., p.250.
to have undergone a course at a Nō school. As a result of Kanze Hisao's fine performance of the shite's role in Hajitomi, Barrault had invited him to go to Paris to study in his school of mime. This offer was taken up by the Nō actor in April 1962 and he remained in Paris till December of that year.

But Barrault, despite his obvious admiration of the Nō, regards the "Bunraku" as the highest form of theatrical art:

... this is metaphysical theatre. It is poetry rendered palpable by the concrete presence of the natural and the supernatural. The marionette is man. The manipulator is God.

From this and other remarks we notice that, as with the Nō, his admiration is strictly limited to its technique rather than to its content. He was certainly more prepared than the average person to respond to Hajitomi. As the Japanese interviewer said:

Barrault had learned about the Japanese Nō and kabuki through Paul Claudel (one time ambassador to Japan) and had taken in a great deal of the techniques of the Japanese theatre. So we see that his view on Japanese theatre is not something he had learned overnight.

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1 Memories for Tomorrow, p.248.
2 Kanze magazine, p.43.
And yet, though he was deeply impressed by the techniques of the Nō, he remained an outsider. He could see that it was a dream "one could have touched" but it was clearly not his dream. Lady Yugao’s love for Genji may be the archetypal love relationship for those bred on the Tales of Genji but it is not sufficiently universal to touch every heart, irrespective of culture. In other words there is a very special element of participation in Nō which makes it particularly meaningful to those who can share its dream but because of this, it shuts out those who cannot do so, except in the appreciation of its techniques.

Having recognized this, the Western theatre, by adjusting not so much the nature but the details of its subject matter, can benefit from the unusual resourcefulness and strategy of techniques in dream Nō. There is in fact evidence of such application, conscious or otherwise. For example, the technique employed in Hajitomi of using the memory as a dramatic focal device for a solo performer to recall a poignant incident from her life, is not unlike that used by Beckett in Not I, Krapp’s Last Tape, Embers and Eh Joe. Beckett’s subject matter is understandably different. The characters in each case are not taken from well known legends but the strategy is essentially the same. And in Not I, the way in which, as suggested by its title, the

1 Journal de bord, p.83.
heroine deliberately distances herself from herself, because she cannot bear self-identification, is remarkably similar to the way Lady Yugao in Hajitomi describes herself in the third person. In both plays the tactical use of detachment produces the converse effect of drawing the spectator close to the heroines, if only because their objective approach corresponds to the way we would describe them in our minds. And this strangely but powerfully forms the bridge into the internal workings of their soul. This quality of being able to get inside someone else's soul is a haunting feature of Beckett's plays. And it was precisely because Barrault observed that the techniques used in Hajitomi provided an entrance into the internal workings of the heroine's soul that he admired it so much.

YOKIHI

The fact that this No play, composed by Zenchiku Komparu, appealed to me on an extremely personal level and also moved me more deeply than all the other plays I saw, has proved for me the limited area of No's validity. As a child I had been made familiar with the story of Yokihi which is really the story of Yang Kuei Fei, the beautiful,
historical-legendary Chinese courtesan who won the Emperor's heart to become the Empress of China. The Nō Yokihi is only "selectively" concerned with the essence of the famous Yang Kuei Fei legend: the sudden violent termination of a great love. Zenchiku has based his composition almost entirely on the famous "Song of Everlasting Sorrow" by the Chinese poet Po Chü-i (772-846). When the Emperor Hsuang Tsung fell in love with Yang Kuei Fei (the original Chinese heroine, called "Yokihi" in Japanese), he was over sixty and she was the wife of his son. For her sake he favoured the members of her family and ironically, it was An Lu-shan, Yang Kuei Fei's adopted son, who brought about her downfall and caused her death by strangling.

But for me and millions of other Chinese and Japanese who have absorbed the legend of Yang Kuei Fei into their subconscious, she was not just an ordinary courtesan famed for her unsurpassable beauty, but represents the ideal beauty. And skilfully Zenchiku plays on this quality of immortality about her in his composition. From her own lips we are told:

Once I too dwelt immortal in the upper world,
But by certain ties of karma
Briefly I came born to the world of men,
Reared carefully in the secluded chambers
Of the house of Yo, there unknown to any man
Until my lord heard of me. 1

1 Twenty Plays of the Nō Theatre, op.cit., p.216.
legendary fantasy, magic and immortality. Her love story and tragic end is part of a collective dream legend fantasy which, because of my upbringing, I could share wholeheartedly. And this I discovered became the determining factor in my spontaneous and intuitive appreciation of the No, Yokihi.

It opens with a magician (the waki) telling us that he has been charged by the Emperor to summon up Yokihi's spirit. He takes a few steps to the right and returns to the original waki position, indicating that he has arrived in the Land of Immortality. The sheer brazenness of a theatrical convention, in which thousands of miles are covered by a few simple steps, makes it completely credible.

Fig. 17  The magician approaches Yokihi's palace.
As shown in the previous sketch, Fig. 17, the magician approaches the stage property representing Yokihi’s palace. We are now in the realm of spirits and ghosts and Zenchiku is anxious to make us believe in it as the following incident shows. The magician asks Yokihi, who has now revealed herself, for some tangible proof to show that he has really succeeded in finding her:

YOKIHI: This shall be a token. So saying, she removes her jewelled hair pin and presents it to the Sorcerer.

(She holds out the hair pin. The Sorcerer takes it and retreats a few steps.)

Fig. 18. Yokihi gives the magician her jewelled hair pin.

1 Ibid., p. 214. (See above, note 1, p. 177.)
But the Sorcerer does not regard the hair pin as sufficient evidence. The spectator and the Sorcerer merge in the figure of Doubting Thomas:

SORCERER: No. No! Such objects may be found in the mortal world too - is it likely my lord would believe me? If there were some pledge you and he exchanged, unknown to any other, that would serve as proof.

(He bows) 

(He bows)

I found this sequence very moving because it showed so pointedly our disbelief in the validity of our private dreams - our cynicism over magic and the supernatural.

Yokihi offers another kind of evidence:

Of course, that is so. I remember now the words we offered the Two Stars as our vow that night in early autumn, Seventh Night:

CHORUS: "In heaven may we be twin birds that share a wing; On earth may we be twin trees with branches intertwined." Remind him of this privately. 

The Sorcerer accepts this proof and the way he finally trusts in intangible evidence is surely meant to be an example to the spectator to believe in the validity of int-

\^{1} \textit{ibid.}, p.214
\^{2} \textit{ibid.}
tangible, and perhaps not wholly explicable, fantasies.

Yokihi is a sad No piece showing the transitoriness of a great love. The play is a re-living of the highest point in Yokihi's memory expressed through a beautiful dance. This is the "Dance of the Robe of Feathers" through which, as legend tells us, she initially won the Emperor's heart. And it is also a dance in which she particularly

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Fig. 19 Yokihi in her "Dance of the Robe of Feathers".
excelled as an immortal. The play ends with the Sorcerer taking leave of a weeping Yokihi. Clearly, the reason I rated the Yokihi, performed at the Kanda Nō Theatre in Kyoto on 5th December 1973, above all the Nō plays I saw (which included Matsukaze usually considered by Japanese connoisseurs to be the crème de la crème) is highly subjective. But this shows how important the subjective element is to a foreigner in appreciating a Nō play whose appeal is largely directed to the subconscious. A total response to the art is largely determined by an intuitive familiarity with its content which makes it difficult for many foreigners who are more easily attracted to the brilliance of its techniques.

KANZE HISAO AND WAITING FOR GODOT

When we think of the qualities which characterize Samuel Beckett's theatre, they seem to have a strong resemblance to those of the Nō. Both can be loosely described as the "theatre of memory" in the way that a single character calls up the past through a poignantly recollected event. And it is difficult not to label as Nō-like (if simply for want of a better known analogy) such striking features as Beckett's extreme simplicity of plot, presenting a single
mood, devoid of psychological, sociological or episodic interest - the use in many plays, such as in Not I, Krapp's Last Tape, Embers, and Eh Joe of only one actor - the stark economy of decor and the general feeling of conscious restraint forcing the audience into a state of intense concentration because all other distractions have been deliberately removed. The fact that Beckett has categorically denied any Oriental influence in his work does not invalidate the recognition of similar elements between his plays and the Nō. As I've said in my chapter on "Brecht and Zeami", the principles of theatre, which Zeami formulated for the Nō, have a universal relevance and significance because they in fact represent the archetypal principles of good effective theatre for all time.

They are the same principles which have informed the whole concept of Japanese aesthetics. For example the three dominant features characteristic of Japanese decor are simplicity, space and restraint. The sliding door, so typical of Japanese architecture, allows for maximum space and clarity of line, underlining their cardinal principles of beauty. In their art of floral arrangement, one also sees essentially the application of the principle of careful selection, if not of deliberate reduction. This struck Jean Louis Barrault forcibly during his visit to Japan and he

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1 See Chapter 1, p. 69.

* I'd also like to include in this list That Time and Footfalls which were both performed for the first time at the Royal Court Theatre on 20.5.76.
mentions it in his recent book that the most typical example of Japanese floral arrangement only consists of three branches: one branch represents the sky, the second—man and the third, the earth.  

On 17th July 1974, the famous Japanese Nō actor, Kanze Hisao, was interviewed on my behalf by Chifumi Shimazaki at the Aoyama Theatre—the same theatre in which he had performed so brilliantly for Barrault in 1960. As I've mentioned above, Kanze Hisao is unique in being a well-known Nō actor who has also performed in a Beckett play. So the Tokyo production of Waiting for Godot seemed to offer an opportunity of finding out if a Nō actor of Kanze Hisao's calibre felt any special affinities with Beckett's techniques. The following is a reproduction of that interview:  

C.S.: When was Waiting for Godot performed and which part did you play? Could you also tell me something about the production?

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1 op.cit., p.246. (See above, note 3, p. 172).

2 The questions in the interview were prepared by me and asked in Japanese by Chifumi Shimazaki who has translated Kanze Hisao's replies.

3 Kanze Hisao did not always answer the questions but from his replies one can gather the main motives which led him to take part in Waiting for Godot, produced by Ishizawa Hideji.
The play was performed on 5th September 1975 and ran till 16th September at the Kinokuniya Hall, Shinjuku, Tokyo. It was an interesting venture undertaken by the "Mei no kai" which comprise of No and kyōgen actors and actors of modern plays. The "Mei no kai" company is an enterprising organisation which provides opportunities for artists in different theatrical traditions to perform together. There is a regulation in Japan which forbids actors to leave their specialized genre, thus making it impossible for an actor in a modern play to perform as well in a No or Kabuki. So the way the roles in Waiting for Godot were distributed made it an exciting experiment for the actors who were specialists in different theatrical traditions. The role of "Estragon" was played by Nomura Mannojo (a kyōgen actor), I played "Vladimir", Kanze Shizuo was "Pozzo", "Lucky" was played by Tamori Toshikazu, a member of the Youth Company, and "the Boy" by Ukai Mirubo, a young actress of the same Youth Company.

C.S.: Why did you want to play in Waiting for Godot? Did you come to know Beckett's work while you were in Paris?

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1 Kanze Hisao's brother and also a No actor.

2 See the three photos of the production (copied from the originals in Kanze Hisao's album) on pp. 127-129, showing mainly the two Kanze brothers, claiming descent from Kannami, the founder of No, and the kyōgen actor in their different roles. I've also included among these photos a coloured illustration of Kanze Hisao, dressed in the traditional wig and costume of the "God of Thunder", in the No play, Kamo. This has been used as the cover design of one of the most recent books on No by Yasuo Nakamura and provides a useful contrasting background against which the Waiting for Godot production should be reviewed.
PHOTOS FROM ISHIZAWA HIDEJI'S PRODUCTION OF WAITING FOR GODOT IN TOKYO, 5TH TO 16TH SEPTEMBER 1973, WITH TWO Nō ACTORS AND ONE KYŌGEN IN THE CAST.

Fig. 20
Left to right: Kanze Hisao - Vladimir, Tamori - Lucky, Nomura Mannojo - Estragon and Kanze Shizuo - Pozzo.
Fig. 2/ The two tramps. Left to right: Nomura Mannojo - Estragon and Kanze Hisao - Vladimir.
Fig. 22 Tamori Toshikazu ("Lucky"), delivering his "Speech", watched by Kanze Hisao ("Vladimir") and Nomura Mannojo ("Estragon").
Fig. 23. Kanze Himao as "God of Thunder" in No play: Kamo.
KANZE: I was interested in the avant garde theatre before I went to Paris in April 1962. For a long time I have known about Beckett and Ionesco whom I think is a great playwright. I'm interested in both classic and avant garde theatre but not in the modern realistic drama. I feel that by performing in modern non-Nō plays I can return to Nō with a new eye. I wanted to play something different from Nō, but I was clear that it must not be realistic drama but classic drama like Racine or Greek tragedy which is partly Western and partly Oriental and which is the base of all drama. So I played in Oedipus the King and Agamemnon and then Waiting for Godot. I regard Waiting for Godot as essentially anti-theatrical, different from naturalistic realism. It contrasts strongly with the conventional form of modern drama by ignoring the usual rules. This is what interested me and the other actors.

C.S.: Did you as a Nō actor feel a special affinity with Waiting for Godot?

KANZE: I was quite at home. The dominant mood in Nō life is transient and inconstant; this attitude resulted from the continuous wars.

C.S.: Beckett's plays are certainly not imitation Nō plays and yet one can trace the use of Nō-like techniques. Would you like to...

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1 Kanze Hisao was referring to the invitation he received from Barrault to go to Paris as his guest. This was a result of his fine performance in Hajitomi in honour of Barrault's visit in 1960.

2 It is interesting that he did not in fact consent on the affirmative was implied in the fact that he had chosen to perform in a play which, like the Nō, departs, as he himself noticed, from the usual run-of-the-mill play dependent on plot development, episodic and psychological interest.
comment on the economy in the stage decor of Waiting for Godot - the use of a single tree - as compared with the use of the pine as a constant backdrop in Nō?

KANZE: The pine of the Nō stage is a relic from the primitive days when a tree was regarded as a medium to invoke deities. There is a legend about the Manifestation Pine at the Kasuga Shrine where God is said to have descended. The pine on the back panel of a Nō theatre represents that tree. So there is a religious element. Similarly there is a religious element in the tree in Waiting for Godot.

C.S.: Like many Nō plays, Waiting for Godot is concerned with the presentation of a single frozen mood; the end is the same as the beginning: Vladimir and Estragon are still waiting for the mysterious Godot. How did you as a Nō actor react to a static plot?

KANZE: I was quite at home. The dominant mood in the middle ages in Japan was to look upon life as transient and inconstant; this attitude resulted from the continuous wars and shifting fortunes. Things kept changing; this "changeableness" never changed.

C.S.: Do you think that the kyogen actor was attracted to Waiting for Godot because of its comic element?

It is interesting that he did not in fact comment on the comparative use of economical stage decor in Waiting for Godot and in a Nō play. My impression is that his instincts as a Nō actor, nourished on the principles of theatre as laid down by Zeami, had made him react to the economical decor in Waiting for Godot almost as a matter of course.
KANZE: I feel strongly against the view which many Westerners have, distinguishing No from kyōgen, and regarding the former as tragic and the latter as comic. Originally No and kyōgen developed from the same stage art; in the former, music and dancing became the main elements, while in the latter, speech predominates. Both No and kyōgen actors wholly discarded their identities as actors of a specific genre. There was no conscious association made between Waiting for Godot and "kyōgen". The kyōgen actor simply regarded Waiting for Godot as anti-theatrical and this was what interested him.

C.S.: Many of Beckett's plays can be described as "monodrama" - dominated by one character. This resembles the absolute dominance of the shite in No. I have noticed that the function of the waki, tsure, kyōgen and the Chorus is to bring out the supremacy of the shite's role. And the way some of the shite's songs are shared out between the shite, chorus and waki, reinforces the dominance of a central character. In Waiting for Godot I see the roles of Vladimir - Estragon - Pozzo and Lucky as complementary and in a sense interchangeable. They all wear bowler hats.

The following remarks of Kanze Hisao as reported in the Asashi Press, Tokyo, on the 5th September 1973, clearly bring out what he means by calling Waiting for Godot "anti-theatrical" and its similarity to No:

... No is not a type of drama where story development is important. In Godot, unlike in other traditional modern dramas, the story is not the central interest. In it, all is in loose fragments which the spectator is required to patch up with his own imagination. In this sense, I should say that I won't be so much at a loss coming into Godot all of a sudden like this.
hats and when Pozzo and Lucky leave the stage, Vladimir and Estragon mime their roles. In other words, they all contribute to the one central mood of waiting, reinforcing the quality of monodrama. Would you like to comment on this quality of monodrama in Nō and Beckett?

KANZE: I cannot explain why the sole dominance of the shite in a two-act visionary Nō - the most typical form of Nō - gives such a tremendous sense of power and unity to the play. It is unrealistic, inexplicable, unaccountable, yet there is unity.

KANZE: I don't think that Waiting for Godot has many songs.

C.S.: Have you anything to say about the use of mime and song in Waiting for Godot?

KANZE: I've read, in the one published in The Drama Review, Vol. 15, 1
P.G. O'Neill says that it was Zeami who ensured the dominance of the shite over other roles, as no sign that anything of the kind existed in 1349. See Early Nō Drama, op.cit., p.95.

2 This concentration of attention on one person and one mood is obviously the strength of Nō and can only be regarded as an inexplicable, aesthetic principle which Beckett has also discovered quite independently of Nō.

3 Chifumi Shimazaki pointed out to him that she could remember Vladimir singing a song in the Mercury production she saw in London in June 1974. Kanze, who had played Vladimir, said that it was impossible to follow the song in Japanese translation.

As can be seen, the interview conducted in a partially closed factory way of conducting an interview. But Nō actors live in a very closed and certainly not in the habit of giving interviews. In fact they are very reclusive, and I've read, in the one published in The Drama Review, Vol. 15, 1

1 P.G. O'Neill says that it was Zeami who ensured the dominance of the shite over other roles, as no sign that anything of the kind existed in 1349. See Early Nō Drama, op.cit., p.95.

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3 Chifumi Shimazaki pointed out to him that she could remember Vladimir singing a song in the Mercury production she saw in London in June 1974. Kanze, who had played Vladimir, said that it was impossible to follow the song in Japanese translation.

The willow is green; the flower is red; Justice and revenge are but one.
There are worldly laws and Buddha's laws, Illusory attachment and enlightenment.
The sinners of gravest sins are saved.

I've referred to this interview in Chapter II. See p.93.
C.S.: Would you like to comment on Beckett's reliance on a Christian background in *Waiting for Godot* as compared with No's on Buddhism?

KANZE: There is something in common between the No and Beckett's theatre in their attitude towards serious issues faced by mankind. The No and Beckett's play assume a religious attitude towards life.¹

As can be seen this is by no means a completely satisfactory way of conducting an interview. But No actors live in a very closed world and are usually reserved about their art and certainly not in the habit of giving interviews. In fact the only recorded interview given by a No actor, which I've read, is the one published in The Drama Review, Vol. 15, No.3 (1971), in which Kanze Hideo (the brother of Kanze Hisao but generally referred to as the defrocked No actor) talked to Concerned Theatre Japan.² I don't think that Kanze Hisao, until I questioned him, had thought very seriously about the similarity between No techniques and those used in *Waiting*

¹ Chifumi Shimazaki in a letter to me said: I've noticed a dualism in *Waiting for Godot* in the reference to the promise of salvation given to only one of the two thieves which has a parallel in some No plays usually expressed in the following way -

The willow is green; the flower is red; Justice and wrongs are but one; There are worldly laws and Buddha's laws, illusory attachment and enlightenment; The sinners of gravest sins are saved.

² I've referred to this interview in Chapter II. See p. 83.
for Godot. He had wanted to take part in a modern non-No play in order to find new inspiration in approaching No.

In December 1972 he had played the part of the Hawk Princess in Takahime¹ as well as being responsible for its music and choreography. He had also staged it twice on two previous occasions in 1968 and 1970. We can see that he is interested in new experiments which have a bearing on No. He certainly shows signs of kicking against the pricks of the narrow No conventions within which he has to work. Unlike his brother, Kanze Hideo, he is determined to remain in the No world while making occasional experiments with other kinds of theatre to find an answer to the problems of a No artist working at his art. He certainly enjoys the reputation of being a radical No actor favouring the more unusual forms of performing in No. I find, however, his involvement in Takahime rather disappointing because it is such a travesty as I've tried to show in Chapter II. But his interest in Beckett and Greek plays² represents a genuine attempt in helping himself, as he put it, "to see No with a new eye".

¹ That production of Takahime was directed by Nomura Mannojo - the kyōgen actor who played "Estragon" and Kanze Shizuo ("Pozzo") played the role of one of the "Rocks". See Appendix B, pp. 521-29.

² In February 1975 he took part in Euripides's The Trojan Women.
Unfortunately, *Waiting for Godot* was badly received by the Japanese audience as reported in the review on September 12th 1973, in the *Asashi Press*, Tokyo:

In spite of the ambitious and courageous undertaking, the result was mediocre and uninteresting. The experiment has proved a failure....

The audience seemed prejudiced against Kanze Hisao - the famous *Nō* actor - playing outside his usual genre. They felt that due to his long conditioning as a *Nō* actor he "frankly showed his confusion" in the role of Vladimir. However the fact that one of the most outstanding *Nō* actors today has performed in a Beckett play and has also expressed his reasons for doing so, in a way which shows he appreciates the theatrical genre Beckett works in, must help to bridge the gulf between Oriental and Western theatrical tradition. And particularly, as I've tried to show and Kanze Hisao himself has endorsed, some of the techniques which Beckett has used, are indeed *Nō*-like.

* * *

**NO INFLUENCE ON CURRENT WESTERN PRODUCTIONS**

In considering the validity of *Nō* for the West, a clear separation has to be made between its techniques and its content which will always remain alien outside Japan.
But the basic principles of conscious economy, simplicity and restraint, underlying its techniques, are gradually being applied here as seen in some current English productions. For example, Jonathan Miller in his production of Hamlet, which I saw at the Greenwich Theatre on May 4th, 1974, adopted a severely simple style of production which I can only describe as Nō-like.

Throughout the entire play, there was nothing on the stage apart from a hexagonal centre piece. This extreme simplicity of decor reminded me of the Nō stage which rarely has more than a single piece of stage property on it, with the pine remaining constant in the background. There was also a refreshing ingenuousness and directness in the presentation of the ghost scene which resembled the utter straightforwardness in the waki or priest’s confrontation with the ghost of the legend. The ghost in Jonathan Miller’s production simply walked to the hexagonal centre piece, sat down and talked (almost chatted) to Hamlet. The conscious avoidance of the usual theatrical fuss, associated with ghost scenes, heightened the poignancy of the meeting between Hamlet and his father’s ghost. The entire production was a deliberate attempt at simplicity and economy in presentation - the chief principles of the Nō theatre.

And this shows that if one has to put one’s finger on the exact nature of Nō influence in the Western theatre, one
must chart its real maximum effect not in the obvious area (e.g. in the use of a No actor as Ariel in Peter Brook's Tempest) but in the less obvious: in the application of archetypal principles of No to Western theatrical forms which, on the surface, bear no relation at all to the 14th century esoteric Japanese art.

But as very powerful examples of the application of No-like theatrical principles to Western productions, I'd like to discuss two plays by Edward Bond: Narrow Road to the Deep North and Bingo. Narrow Road was Bond's fourth play to be staged and it was first performed in June, 1968, at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. The play is set in Japan "about the 17th, 18th, or 19th centuries". And the first scene is based on an incident in Matsuo Basho's The Records of a Weather-Exposed Skeleton. Bingo was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in August 1974. Bingo, subtitled "Scenes of money and death" - is Bond's attempt to show the inner moral dilemma of the artist in society through "Shakespeare", his central character. This play has overtly no links.

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1 This was a workshop project undertaken by the International Centre for Theatre Research in July 1968 at the Roundhouse in London.
at all with the East, and yet both the texts and productions of Narrow Road and Bingo show a striking resemblance to No theatre in the way that qualities of silence, restraint, simplicity, concentration and powerful visual effects, combine together for maximum impact.

On the surface Narrow Road presents the successive establishment and rapid overthrow of two types of government, pointing to an endlessly repetitive cycle. But the subtext is a savage exposure of three different ways of coping with the problem of survival and maintaining order - a process which necessitates violence and death.

Its No-like opening with its bare stage is simple, direct and laconic. Bond makes use of the self-introduction device which is also common in No openings:

Basho: My name is Basho. I am, as you know, the great seventeenth-century Japanese poet... ¹

After the introduction we are in Scene I and we're told by Basho that thirty years have elapsed and this enormous span of time is bridged quite arbitrarily as in a No play. This anti-realistic compression of time is an indication... in an interview Bond defends his use of anti-realistic techniques in the following way:

¹ See 'Introduction' in Edward Bond's Narrow Road to the Deep North, London 1968.
of Bond's 'abstract staging' of the play. But these are minor points of similarity. What is even more No-like is the tightly controlled and circular structure of Narrow Road: the cruelly abandoned baby whom the poet, Basho, discovers by the river bank turns out later to be Shogo - the ruler who believes in atrocity as a way of imposing order. We're also told that the baby is left to die so that the other five children of the peasant and his wife will have a chance to survive. And this prepares us for an extension of the survival pattern in Scene III (Part II). So Basho's journey to find enlightenment is a completely disillusioning experience. Shogo so that he can survive. Bond is depicting a cruel, savage universe where the price of survival is someone else's death. And this in effect is how Narrow Road ends: Kiro, a monk, commits suicide by disembowelment, while a swimmer who has escaped drowning dries himself, completely oblivious of someone else's tragedy.

The first approach to the problem of survival is represented by Basho's retreat to the deep north. Scene I

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1 In an interview Bond defends his use of anti-realistic techniques in the following way:

I do think that that sort of abstract staging is in a way more realistic. If one goes into a room what one sees is what one has gone in expecting to see, or what one is looking for.

opens with his return and it is with a shock that we dis-
cover that the 'narrow road to the deep north' is in fact
an ironical biblical inversion which certainly offers no
salvation. Basho, who left a baby to die because he felt
it more important to seek enlightenment, has to admit to
think I'm evil. I'm not - I'm the lesser of two
Kiros. People are born in a tiger's mouth. I
snatch them out and some of them get caught on
the teeth - that's what you're alleging me for. I
saw there was nothing to learn in the deep
north and I'd already known everything before
I went there. You get enlightenment where
you are.¹

So Basho's journey to find enlightenment is a completely
disillusioning experience.

Having exposed the inhumanity and futility of a
perverted sexuality mixed up with twisted Christianity and
morality as represented by Georgina - the half-demented
religious escape, Bond presents the second approach -
Shogo's rule by atrocity - in basically the same but more
in sacks constitute a sharp visual image, so does the
powerfully abstract and stylized way. It is a monstrous
caricature figure of Georgina, dressed in a Victorian
spectacle but handled with No-like detachment and we see
it through the eyes of Kiro and Basho rather as we see a
No play through the eyes of the intermediary 'waki'. And
far from cushioning us from the horror of Shogo's method
of drowning his prisoners in sacks, this deliberate No-
like distancing sharpens it while making it bearable.

¹ Narrow Road, p.10.
Stylized techniques are indeed a way of making horrific events bearable and allowing sympathy even for monstrous characters like Shogo. This is shown in the way he justifies his method of drowning prisoners to Kiro:

"...life makes people unhappy, not my city. You think I'm evil. I'm not - I'm the lesser of two evils. People are born in a tiger's mouth. I snatch them out and some of them get caught on the teeth - that's what you're blaming me for."

This passage in which Shogo defends his atrocities as acts of mercy killing engages our sympathy because it reminds us of his complexity.

And this leads to the third approach: rule by perverted sexuality mixed up with twisted Christianity and morality as represented by Georgina - the half-demented sister of the British Commodore. Just as Shogo's prisoners in sacks constitute a sharp visual image, so does the caricature figure of Georgina, dressed in a Victorian crinoline and bonnet and shaking a tambourine. It would seem that, as in No, an abstract style of presentation re-quires particularly sharp visual images. Georgina's whole approach is based on negation of instinctive forces and therefore doubly pernicious and more cold blooded than

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1 ibid., p.29.
2 ibid., p.42.
3 ibid., p.45.
Shogo's... Here she explains her methodology of rule to
Basho: episode has not been included solely for its comic
element though it certainly believes an atmosphere dense
with... She reveals the holy pot to free Kiro and also shows that Shogo has
So instead of atrocity I use morality. I per­suead people - in their hearts - that they are
sin, and that they have evil thoughts, and that
they're greedy and violent and destructive, and
more than anything else - that their bodies
must be hidden, and that sex is nasty and
corrupting and must be secret. When they believe
all that they do what they're told. 1

It is the detachment with which Bond handles these three
different approaches that brings out sharply the im­
possibility of coming to any solution. And this impasse
is expressed laconically by Shogo in statements like:
ction
on an unconvincing religious/postic principle. This is
yet another illustration that Shogo is not a straight
villain. For example he has no wish initially to kill the
Emperor's son and hands him over to Basho revealing an
instinct I can't be on both sides of a door at once. 2
And Kiro says:
Some problems have no solution. 3

I'd like now to discuss the episode of Kiro and the
holy pot as an illustration of how a scene achieves maximum
impact through Nō-like economy of presentation. This scene
of initial horseplay resulting in Kiro getting his head
stuck in a holy pot is full of comic pathos and interest-
acolyte they became drunk and the acolyte took a three-
layered iron pot and put it on his head, so often to
pull it off but in vain. This incident is recorded in

1 ibid., p.42. "Dishonesty". See Donald Keene, Anthology of
3 ibid., p.45.
ingly enough, resembles a kyōgen farce sequence. But this episode has not been included solely for its comic element though it certainly relieves an atmosphere dense with atrocities. Through this short and powerfully visual scene, Bond makes several significant points. He reveals Shogo's pragmatic approach by making him smash the holy pot to free Kiro and also shows that Shogo has some compassion in his nature. In fact a deep friendship springs up between Shogo and Kiro - the two most sympathetic characters in the play. Basho, who is the least sympathetic, justifies his disapproval of the action on an unconvincing religious/poetic principle. This is yet another illustration that Shogo is not a straight villain. For example he has no wish initially to kill the Emperor's son and hands him over to Basho revealing an instinctively merciful impulse. He has the child killed eventually, but only because his own safety is threatened.

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1 It is interesting to compare this with a remarkably similar Japanese episode of the priests of the Ninnaji temple. During a celebratory feast in honour of a young acolyte they became drunk and the acolyte took a three-legged iron pot and put it on his head. He tried to pull it off but in vain. This incident is recorded in "Essays in Idleness". See Donald Keene. Anthology of Japanese Literature, op.cit., p.237.
Two other scenes - III and IV (Part II) - are particularly well controlled and concentrated and it is significant that in these two scenes Bond uses No-like effects to bring the play to a climax and a most moving ironical ending. In Scene III we have the much discussed slaughter of five children, not realistically portrayed but deliberately presented by five identical Japanese rag dolls. This scene, which is more complex than it seems, opens with Georgina accompanied by the five rag dolls. By making this episode so abstract and objective, Bond again manages to convey an act of utter horror in a way which the audience can find it bearable while being totally imaginatively involved with it. Georgina, looking dirty and dishevelled, must surely strike one as a nightmarish effigy almost as unreal as the rag dolls she is leading. And this gives the whole episode the quality of a nightmare in which truth and fiction are indistinguishably one and therefore more frighteningly real than reality. Georgina's insistence on pretending that it is all a game of make-believe is exactly the kind of deception we practise on ourselves when truth becomes unbearable, and this is where the rag dolls, whom she talks to like a little girl, cajoling and scolding her toys, assume a poignancy and imaginative reality more
frightening than if real children were used:

... Pray together. Eyes kept shut. That's a good Tojo.1

I said earlier in my discussion of No techniques that the use of toy-like props enhances the intensity and feeling of make-believe, just like childrens' games, and usually makes the scene more effectively real than if straight naturalistic stage properties are used. This is exactly the technique Bond uses in the scene described above. And because it is so deliberately stylized and abstract, Bond has given it a universal primordial dimension: we associate it with all the mass murders of children in history and the archetypal biblical slaughter of children by Herod in order to remove any possible threat to his throne.

The second illustration - Scene IV - begins with an empty stage and with just a few economical strokes we learn that Shogo has been defeated once more. Bond again uses another powerful visual effect to mark his overthrow. Shogo's body is brought in. It is vindictively and sense-

1 ibid., p.48.
lessly mutilated with the limbs and body carelessly arranged, but with one significant detail—his genitals are left intact. This is not a gratuitous horror but significantly reminds us of his past virility and weakness for women and also highlights Georgina's sexual obsession. We are therefore prepared for her fantasies of rape which follow shortly. It is also an illustration that every effect stipulated by Bond is absolutely necessary and when we realize that, we're aware of his discipline and restraint in keeping strictly to only essentials—a cardinal No principle.

Kiro's suicide by hara-kiri is another powerful visual image which takes place in unnerving silence. It is a fearsome ritual to watch because the whole process of disembowelment is simultaneously stylized and yet naturalistic that for a moment it must strike us as being unreal, particularly as Kiro must keep an expressionless, mask-like face throughout. Bond is again using the same double technique of complexity observed in the murder of the five children. And this is the crux: suddenly we realize that this strange silent ritual is an actual suicide and the shock of this realization pounds on our conscious-
ness. Georgina's fantasy of being murdered before being raped by Kiro is ironically pathetic and funny - a misunderstanding which intensifies his plight. The play ends with the swimmer who has escaped drowning reproaching Kiro, now in the final throes of certain death. The full horror of this scene, far from being impaired by the stylized use of red streamers to represent blood and entrails, is powerfully realized by this sharp distancing device. To represent physical details in a naturalistic way could distract the audience from coming to grips with the core of the play. For Bond, it is enough merely to suggest these details. It is the horror of survival entailing death which he is primarily interested in. And this last scene is a brilliant gathering together of all the drowning images in the play. The swimmer is saved but he is utterly oblivious of another person's suicide - an exemplification of the cruel law of survival. The play is in fact open ended with just an ambiguous glimmer of hope, but cruelly at the expense of someone else's life.

And finally I'd like to point out the use of No-like silences in Narrow Road. There are five strikingly significant moments of silence in the two scenes described above. The first of these silences poignantly conveys...
Shogo's dilemma because he genuinely would like to avoid killing all the children. So the 'long complete silence' which follows his 'Help me!' seems like a most expressive extension of his desperation. The second moment of silence is after the killing of the children off stage. This silence reinforces the sense of horror which defies expression. Thirdly, Kiro's suicide by hara-kiri is enacted in unnerving silence, as I've mentioned, broken only by Georgina's hysterical screams. When the soldiers drag her away Bond insists with precision on a minute's silence and another significant moment of silence follows a drowning man's cry of help. These last two moments of silence reinforce powerfully the irony of Kiro's end. So like rests in music, these silences, specified by Bond, must be given their full value - a No-like technique exploited even more effectively in Bingo which I'll be discussing next.

Bingo can be interpreted in various ways. I'd like however to concentrate on the themes of money and guilt. Bingo is an acute examination of an anguished artist's sense of guilt in compromising his integrity for the security money can buy in a powerful money-governed society. As the title suggests, the acquisition of money is like a
game of chance - bingo - capable of totally mesmerizing its zombie-like participants, bent on winning, into accepting unreservedly its implacable laws which run against real human values. Shakespeare chose money and indeed became a zombie under its gradual poisoning effect. But what is remarkable about Bingo is the way in which Bond uses silence as his most potent dramatic device to portray this. And it is precisely his use of this technique which makes the play so No-like in spirit. Another No-like similarity is the powerful concentration on only one central character, Shakespeare, and the deliberate relegation of subsidiary roles to mere extensions of his one all-consuming guilt about money. There is no question but that Shakespeare dominates every scene just like a 'shite' in a No play and for this reason, Bingo is striking for being so free from tempting episodic and psychological complications which a lesser playwright might have been seduced to include to increase its dramatic impact.

It is, however, Bond's No-like use of silence both to reinforce the play's central meaning and to hold it together which I'm primarily concerned with. The play is studded with long moments of silence and a recurring haunting image is that of one of the most articulate and forceful drama-
tists of all time sitting in his garden brooding in isolation and frozen silence - an enormously effective image of guilt and emasculation recalling perhaps the archetypal Garden of Eden: the initial setting for universal guilt. And this oppressive sense of guilt and emasculation becomes even more condemnatory when we realize that in the plot of the play Shakespeare is in fact being paid to keep silence.

In Scene One we see Shakespeare who could have eloquently opposed the local enclosure scheme, which would dispossess the poor of their miserable portions of land, agreeing to remain silent if he were to receive a guarantee against any loss of income. Combe, the enclosing landlord, pleads with him:

Don't support the town or the tenants. When the council write, ignore them. Be noncommittal.... Stay in your garden. I'll pay for that.¹

And so by remaining silent, the playwright who has written with such fine poetic insight about Lear's world and Goneril's, chooses to be part of the corrupt world he inwardly despises - a world whose existence is particularly

dependent on oppressing and whipping the poor under the guise of law, efficiency and justice.

The rest of the play is organized around this central motif of silence and guilt: first of all he becomes emotionally inarticulate - he cannot communicate with his wife or daughter except through the language of money.

He says to his daughter:

"You'll get my property between you when I'm dead.... I loved you with money. The only thing I can afford to give you now is money. But money always turns to hate."¹

Money has certainly poisoned his relationship with his family, and ironically, Shakespeare commits suicide by taking sugar-coated poison. The last scene is indeed shattering: Judith with her father's corpse beside her is only interested in finding his will to take possession of his money.

The second consequence stemming from Shakespeare's policy of remaining silent on the enclosure issue is that he becomes literally inarticulate. The scene at the inn, 'The Golden Cross', with Jonson shows Shakespeare barely articulate and slumped across the table in a drunken way.

¹ ibid., p.41.
Jonson does most of the talking, reviles him and taunts his inability to write any more, while Shakespeare, who has betrayed his soul, has nothing to say - solitary in his material security.

There are two more scenes in which the use of silence as a dramatic device, combined with strong visual effects, brings out the subtext in a powerful way. The scene called 'Hill' shows the much whipped, poverty-stricken young woman, whom Shakespeare ineffectively tries to help in Scene One and Two, gibbeted - a most powerful concretized image of guilt. And we are shown Shakespeare sitting alone on a bench facing away from the body, brooding silently while being reproached silently by the corpse on the gibbet. Two farm labourers enter and share a meal and their obvious fellowship and conversation together only serve to reinforce Shakespeare's solitary silence. They in fact represent the oppressed class trying ineffectively to resist Combe and his enclosure schemes while the one person who could have succeeded in doing so chooses to remain silent. And so like extensions of his guilt, the labourers and the figure on the gibbet join to torment the silent Shakespeare. The scene ends with Shakespeare gazing at the dead woman in a way which recalls Calvary and Pontius Pilate - strong
archetypal symbols of guilt:

Shakespeare: The marks on her face are men's hands. Won't they be washed away.1

The second scene I'd like to discuss is the one called 'Fields (Night-time)' - perhaps the most austere and No-like scene in the play as produced by Jane Howell and John Dove. The scene is presented in bright unnaturalistic lighting with a simple white blinding sheet on the stage floor representing snow, and all our concentration is forced on Shakespeare's guilt and inner suffering. He is deeply affected by the snow and it is as if the stark physical setting - a sheet of white snow representing innocence - reminds him unbearably of his guilt and complicity. The following lines show his obsession with the snow:

The last snow this year. Perhaps the last snow I shall see. How perfect,... When I was young I'd have written on it with a stick,... Writing in the snow - a child's hand fumbling in an old man's beard.2

There is certainly a yearning for lost innocence and articulation in this rather halting and distracted speech.

1 ibid., p.28.
2 ibid., p.42.
However the full weight of his guilt finds expression on his death bed:

I was a hangman's assistant, a gaoler's errand boy. If children go in rags we make the wind. If the table's empty we blight the harvest.... But stolen things have no value.1

It is as though he is trying to recover his old eloquence, but his agreement with Combe to remain silent continues to mock him. And right to the end, he cannot communicate with his wife and daughter whose howling and screaming outside his door merely underline his solitude and silence.

So in Bingo we have an example of a Western play which in essence, if not in content, is close to Nō—the art which maintains that its best moments are the moments of silence which hold it together. Its techniques. And as I've By now these principles of silence, stylization, restraint and concentration, have passed into the general code for effective theatre. What is significant is that the application of these principles, which happen to form the basis of Nō, is capable of creating a powerful impact, as Bond has clearly shown. In scenes like 'Fields (Night-time)' from Bingo, described above, he made use of a startling and stylized simplicity which can be described as Nō-like, although he himself has never seen a Nō play.

1 ibid., p.48
And interestingly enough, Ronald Bryden (The Royal Shakespeare Company's Play Adviser), sees the No as having produced a "ripple of influence" in Bond's work:

For one ripple I claim proudly at least putative responsibility. I once asked Edward Bond whether the No theatre's visit in 1967 had given him the idea of a Japanese setting for his comedy Narrow Road to the Deep North. "Sort of" he said. "I didn't actually see them but I was influenced by a review I read. It might have been yours." Alternatively, of course, it might not. But the possibility alone seems to justify the space I devoted to Peter Daubeney's season when I was critic.1

Bond then is aware, however indirectly, of the broad principles behind No techniques and has applied them to his work. The test of No's validity for the West lies precisely in the applicability of its techniques. And as I've tried to show, the basics of No are coincidental with the fundamentals of good theatre. This was the discovery Copeau made. The impact of No on the West, which significantly began with him, is only now beginning to be reflected in a noticeable tendency towards simplicity and concentration in Western theatre.

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1 See Peter Daubeney's World Theatre Souvenir Programme 1973, p.28.
CHAPTER IV

ANTONIN ARTAUD AND THE BALINESE INSPIRATION

There is no doubt that the most important single incident which shaped the formation of Artaud's dramatic ideas was his initial contact with the Balinese theatre. Jean-Louis Barrault writes: ... in 1931, at the Colonial Exposition, Artaud attended a performance of the Balinese Theater which molded his dramatic doctrine. From that day forth he began to outline his Theater of Cruelty in a series of essays collected in 1938 under the title The Theater and Its Double. Frequently throughout this collection of theatrical manifestos, Artaud expressed his complete admiration for the Balinese Theatre and advises the West to take inspiration - an inspiration which Artaud himself has

1 Paul Arnold, "Note biographique", in Lettres d'Antonin Artaud à Jean-Louis Barrault, p.144. tr. by Eric Sellin, in The Dramatic Concepts of Antonin Artaud, Chicago and London 1968, p.49. The first part of "On the Balinese Theater" was published in the Nouvelle Revue Française, October 1, 1931, under the title "The Balinese Theatre at the Colonial Exposition". ("Le Théâtre balinais, à l'exposition coloniale"). See also 'The Arts Today / Who's Who' in Observer 2.9.73. p.29:

ARTAUD, Antonin.... In 1932 proclaimed his Theatre of Cruelty, sparked off by seeing Balinese dancers.
lessons from it. This admiration is not only apparent in essays like 'On the Balinese Theater', 'Oriental and Occidental Theater' and 'Metaphysics and the Mise en Scène' but in his critical appraisal of Jean Louis Barrault's mime based on William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying, first performed at the end of the 1934-35 season. About this performance Artaud wrote that he felt "as if the very spirit of Fable had come down among us again", and added, significantly:

Up to now only* the Balinese Theater seemed to have kept a trace of this lost spirit.

These facts are clear proof of Artaud's dependence on the Balinese Theatre as a source of inspiration - an inspiration which Artaud himself has

* I've underlined this for emphasis.

See the back cover of Victor Corti's translation of The Theater and Its Double, London 1978.

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The Theater and Its Double, p.146.
passed on to some of the leading Western theatre

directors of today. In an editorial note to

Victor Corti's translation of The Theatre and Its

Double, we read:

To say that this text has been used

as basic working material by Peter

Brook and the Royal Shakespeare

Company, by Grotowski's company

in Poland and by the Living Theatre,

gives some idea of its past influence.

It is widely read throughout the

world as a source of inspiration for

new drama, for those in search of the

meaning of theatre... 1

The importance of the theatrical theories

of Antonin Artaud, 2 which were sparked off in this

way by his contact with the Balinese dancers is

cogently summarized by Charles Marowitz:


1 See the back cover of Victor Corti's translation


2 I'll be using M.C. Richards translation of

The Theater and Its Double in this chapter.
...today, to the extent that we have a contemporary theatre at all, we have a theatre exemplifying the ideals propounded in Artaud's manifestos. The Living Theatre, The Open Theatre, La Mama, Grotowski, and almost every significant permanent company on the Continent have accepted Artaud's dicta on collective structuring, physicality of performance, release from logical-positivist language, and the need to escape from the tyranny of trivializing realism.

In February 1974 I went to Bali in order to examine for myself the theatre which had inspired Artaud and through him has affected the Western theatrical scene. I had barely a week to immerse myself in every available form of theatre, examining it, in particular, in the light of Artaud's amazingly perceptive first impressions of a visiting theatre group in 1931. He had been struck by what he called a "spectacle of "pure theatre" performed by true artists but it was not until the early 1950s when the Living Theatre, The Open Theatre, and the Living Theatre of Canada were founded that this type of theatre was realized.

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spectacle of "pure theatre" performed by true
"meta-physicians of natural disorder":

"... In a word, the Balinese have realized,
with the utmost rigor, the idea of pure
theatre, where everything, conception and
realization alike, has value, has
existence only in proportion to its
degree of objectification on the stage.
They victoriously demonstrate the absolute
preponderance of the director (metteur en
scène) whose creative power eliminates
words."

(This, in fact, contains the crux of much misunderstanding
of the precise nature of his Balinese inspiration and has
set in fashion the current trend in highly physical, non-
verbal means of theatrical communication). There was no
doubt that Artaud was stunned by what he saw and he
attributed the power of the theatrical images to the way
they were realized concretely and objectively on stage.
In other words he felt that the impact was the product
of an extraordinary stage technique.
Artaud, however, seems to have confused the inherent
power of Balinese theatrical images with the almost equally
remarkable way in which they were made to come alive on the

1 The Theater and Its Double, tr. M.C. Richards,
New York 1958, pp.53-54.
stage. This is a very fine distinction but significant because the failure of many current cross-fertilizations of exotic theatrical techniques with Western productions stems from a blurring of this distinction. (See Chapter V).

To understand Artaud's own failure to make this distinction we must examine the Balinese Theatre in some detail.

The theatre in Bali, as an organic part of an unique social and religious system, fulfils an age-old function of the theatre, namely its role in restoring the community's wholeness. And so strong is the connection between the theatre and the community-life of the Balinese that in Bali, no distinction is made between theatre and real life. Though Artaud did not recognize this as a specially Balinese phenomenon, it was, in fact, the very condition he laid down for his own ideal theatre - the theatre of cruelty:

And just as there will be no unoccupied point in space, there will be neither respite nor vacancy in the spectator's mind or sensibility. That is, between life and the theater there will be no distinct division, but instead a continuity.

This unique merging of theatre with real life in Bali

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1 In c. 1931 there were hardly any books about Balinese life written in French.

2 By "cruelty" Artaud meant a kind of "cosmic rigor" and "implacable necessity" and not to be confused with "sadism" or "bloodshed". See op.cit., pp.101-104.

3 op.cit., p.126.
accounts for the fact that it must be one of the few places in the world with a highly active theatre which draws its supply of actors, not from professional groups but from its ordinary citizens - farmers, craftsmen, young girls and boys who are engaged in simple village activities by day. The performers have, since childhood, imbibed the techniques they need from the local village teacher. Although tourism and an increasing world interest are having their effect in commercializing the Balinese acting tradition, the old traditions die hard as the following anecdote shows:

I was present at a Sunday rehearsal at the Konservatori Karawitan ¹ in Den Pasar, Bali, where pupils were being coached in an Ardja ² sequence by an old village expert specially engaged for the occasion. Two Italian representatives from the University of Rome were also there, arranging the final details for a Balinese troupe to visit Italy with the director of the Konservatori, Nyoman Panji. I remember the alarm I felt at the thought of the essential principle of an intensely private theatre being threatened by the inevitable adjustments it would have to make as an "export"

¹ The official institution in Bali for training young dancers as entertainers in the commercial sense.
² The name of the Balinese folk opera. Most Ardja stories are drawn from classical romances of the Kingdoms of Daha, Kediri, Singasari and Madjapahit, the medieval kingdoms of East Java.
on the world market. When I mentioned this to the director, he smiled and said: "We have a theatre for tourists and a theatre for ourselves." He had just heard that on that same evening there was going to be a "ketjak" rehearsal in the remote village of Teges at six o'clock and he strongly recommended me to make the effort to be there. That evening my Balinese guide took me to Teges and we arrived at its Pura Dalem (The Temple of the Dead) a little before six. We waited till nearly eight, (my Western conditioning to punctuality making me more impatient and ill-tempered each minute) and when we finally enquired at the village, we were told that such a rehearsal had indeed been discussed but the leader must have postponed it because of some inauspicious sign he had received. I went back to Den Pasar feeling severely let down by the "unprofessionalism" of it all and then suddenly realized with relief the truth of Nyoman Panji's remark about the dual Balinese approach to their theatre. For example, in his new

Most of the performances I saw in Den Pasar certainly took place at the times scheduled. For example there would be a plaque at Sumerta saying "Ketjak" Dance 18.00 - 19.00. Very rarely would such tourist-packed performances be cancelled, regardless of any promptings from the supernatural

1 See pp. 240-247 for an account of it.
world which really governs Bali. I began to see that this
was, in fact, a conscious concession to the encroaches which
tourism has made into a very private domain. But beyond
the capital of Den Pasar, the true Balinese theatre remains
in tact in most of the villages. Here life and theatre are
shaped not by clocks but by the inexplicable pulsations of
a very closely-felt supernatural world. It remains a
question how long the Balinese theatre can continue to with-stand the corruption which must necessarily follow any
compromise with commercialism.

However, this extraordinary integration of the
Balinese theatre with its society and its religion, has
often been overlooked in the study of Balinese theatre.
Artaud's reactions to the nine items of Balinese dances he
saw (which included a Gong dance, Djanger, Legong, Baris,
Kebyar and Barong) \(^1\) were those of a hypersensitive, poetic,
nature, responding fully to their hypnotic power, without
being aware of their true source. For example in his now
famous essay, "On the Balinese Theater", \(^2\) after advising
the Western theatre to take lessons in spirituality from it,

\(^1\) See L.C. Pronko's Theater East and West, op. cit., p.24.

\(^2\) This is included in The Theater and Its Double, op. cit.,
pp.53-67.
he refers to it as "this purely popular and not sacred theater". In an island where everything is believed to be the property of the gods (even the land is farmed and held in trust by the inhabitants for the gods), where all civic activities are devoted to pleasing the pantheon of Hindu gods who inhabit Gunung Agung and Gunung Batur (the two volcanic peaks), where even a natural phenomenon such as an earthquake is interpreted in what must seem to the outside world, absurdly superstitious terminology, the

1 ibid., p.56.

2 The two periods of closest contact between Bali and the refined culture of Hinduised Java were the period of King Airlangga (Balinese Prince who became King of East Java) in the 11th C. and the Madjapahit period 14th and 15th century. With the fall of Madjapahit in 1478, Bali served as a refuge for the Madjapahit hierarchy, princes, priests, scholars, artists and artisans, fleeing from Islamic persecution. This explains the complete Balinese take-over of the Hindu gods.

3 On February 18, 1963, there was a volcanic eruption at Mt. Agung while a major purification ceremony, the Karya Agung Eka Dasa Rudra, was being held at Besakih (the mother temple of Bali) built on its slopes. Hundreds died. However, the official report, as follows, attributed the eruption to spiritual rather than natural forces, illustrating the unusual depth of Bali's religious beliefs:

The tragic poignancy of the eruption of Mount Agung on Bali lay in the fact that it occurred within days after the climax of the ceremonies connected with the Karya Agung Eka Dasa Rudra.... Clearly, in some respect, and in spite of all the efforts the Bali Hindus have made, men have not yet succeeded in restoring the balance of nature in purification and renewal which brings harmony and happiness to mankind. See the Asia Magazine, Singapore, Feb. 10, 1974, p.8.
theatre, which exists chiefly to entertain and placate the
gods, can only be regarded as sacred. The theatrical masks,
for example, are considered holy, and reverently stored in
special pavilions within the temple with daily offerings
placed before them. (See Fig. 24 on p. 229)¹

Had Artaud visited Bali and seen a theatrical per-
formance in situ he would have been struck by the fact that
most of them take place in a temple courtyard ² - the temple
providing the essential background, and setting the tone.
This makes applause at the end of a performance incongruous
if not sacrilegious (as many tourists are beginning to
realize). In many villages, cock fighting is a prelude to
a day of festivity and to a theatre performance. The
sacrificial act of spilling blood is considered a necessary
part of any propitiation ritual and the theatre certainly
ranks as one of the most efficacious means of placating the
deities. Cock fighting, today, is also indulged in as a form
of gambling, illustrating how an originally religious need
has been turned into a secular activity.

¹ All the coloured illustrations in this chapter (with
three exceptions on p. 237, 233 and p. 242) are either
postcards bought at the various theatre performances I
saw in Bali or taken from Star Black and Hans Hoefer’s
guide to Bali, Singapore 1973, which helped me greatly
while I was there.

² See p. 242 for example.
The Illustration shows Balinese theatrical masks, considered sacred, and reverently housed in a special pavilion within a temple, with suitable offerings before them.
It is extremely important to see the Balinese theatre against its proper background, to realize its original spirituality - a spirituality which has often got lost in slapstick humour and spectacle so that it has become like many other kinds of secular, popular entertainment. But its underlying spirituality certainly did not escape Artaud at the Colonial Exposition:

This purely popular and not sacred theater gives us an extraordinary idea of the intellectual level of a people who take the struggles of a soul preyed upon by ghosts and phantoms from the beyond as the basis for their civic festivals.¹

Although mistaking its outward form, Artaud could not help marvelling at its inner spirituality. Had he visited Bali, he would have no doubt been struck by the all-pervading influence of religion and seen that there is no activity there which is not in some way related to a deep fear of the deities and a constant need to propitiate them. (See Fig. 25 , p.231, showing Balinese women carrying high-tiered temple offerings on their heads, a common, daily sight in Bali, which exactly captures the Balinese preoccupation with the supernatural.)

¹ op.cit., p.56. (See above, note 2 , p. 226).
ISLAND OF THE GODS
For Balinese People, Religion Still Dominates Daily Life
Photos: FRANK FISCHBECK Text: TREA WILTSHIRE

Fig. 25 showing the Balinese preoccupation with the supernatural.¹

¹ This cutting is taken from The Asia Magazine (Asia's largest Sunday magazine), op.cit., p.3.
Artaud's misunderstanding of the source of the Balinese theatre's power has been passed on to his disciples. It is very noticeable, for example, that when Balinese-like theatrical effects are reproduced within a different framework, they seem emasculated and become merely ornamental and spectacular. To illustrate this, I've deliberately juxtaposed on p. 233 a picture of a circular grouping of Western actors, belonging to the "Living Theatre", in one of their most famous productions, Paradise Now, with that of a roughly similar grouping of Balinese actors in the "Ketjak" Dance. I hope by this to contrast the indefinable authenticity or truthfulness of the Balinese grouping with the purely ensemble mimicry effect of the Living Theatre's production. The difference lies in the metaphysical content which is inseparable from the Balinese theatrical image but absent in the Living Theatre's artificially posed group.

The "Living Theatre" was originally an American, off-Broadway company, based primarily on Artaud's Balinese-inspired theatrical manifestos. It was a migrant group, travelling far and wide in Europe, improvising exciting theatrical gestures, based more on the daring political ideals of an utopian anarchist society than on those of an actual community. And as Stefan Brecht suggested in an article called "Revolution at the Brooklyn Academy of Music"
FIG. 26 COLLAGE JUXTAPOSING A CIRCULAR GROUPING OF KETJAK DANCERS WITH A ROUGHLY SIMILAR GROUPING OF WESTERN DANCERS FROM A PRODUCTION OF "THE LIVING THEATRE".

Above: Members of "The Living Theatre" in a mass theatrical spectacle. (This is taken from The Drama Review, Vol. 13, No. 3, T-43, New York, Spring 1969, p. 9.)
for The Drama Review, the fact that the members of the anarchic organization. So there is intensity of execution, but "Living Theatre" did not really belong to a community consisting of convincing primary motives. In other words, the fact contributed largely to this group's dissolution:

We do not need the Becks' mock avowals to interviewers ("we are not yet a community") to know that anarchism has failed this Company. Not only does spontaneity not create its form but the grandiose harmony of these Passion plays is to the eye evidently not the organic life of free personalities in interaction but the conjoined product of directorial genius and of the self-sacrifice of a membership. Stefan Brecht's criticism of the "Living Theatre" is indeed applicable to many other experimental theatrical groups (like Joseph Chaikin's "Open Theatre" or "Pip Simmons Theatre Group", for example) which have collapsed. Unless theatre aims at being the genuine expression of a real community of people (which means that its forms must be shaped by the exigencies of actual living), the fascination with new techniques can become an exercise for its own sake. And this has been the stumbling block of most experimental theatre groups: their images seem passionately but artificially devised from academic constructs and not from

1 Julian Beck and his wife Malina were the joint directors of "The Living Theatre".

2 The Drama Review, Vol.13, No. 3 (T43), Spring 1969, p.72.

* It has since been revived. See Ch. V, note 1, p.386.
organic artefacts. So there is intensity of execution, but no convincing primary motive. In other words the factor of the community is far more significant than has been suggested and indeed a new social outlook in this country, capable of bringing the community closer to the theatre, may provide the working basis for the revival of 'fringe' theatre in Britain. And as to arguments against the narrow constrictions of a "community" theatre, it would seem that its limitations would apply with even more rigour to an "arty" theatre, which is the alternative. And it is against this morass of confusing and conflicting artistic intentions that I find it particularly relevant to examine the unique power of the Balinese, community-derived theatrical forms, as they, in fact, represent the original archetypes, through Artaud, for today's avant garde Western theatre.

At this point I would like to suggest a reason why researchers in the Balinese theatre have not turned their attention to considering its social and religious framework as the basis of its real power. This is because Artaud expressed his ideal theatre, patterned on the Balinese, in terms of an abstract, metaphysical genre, transcending social, psychological and logical realms. And his is the remarkable way in which all the elements in Balinese theatre conspire together to yield maximum work as the basis of its real power. This is because Artaud expressed his ideal theatre, patterned on the Balinese, in terms of an abstract, metaphysical genre,

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1 I will be discussing the 'fringe' theatre in Chapter V.
transcending social, psychological and logical realism. And indeed, the Balinese theatre in its final form, because its themes are vague and abstract, gives exactly such an impression. But in this lies the paradox precisely: because the Balinese theatre is structured on a very firm, social, religious and psychological base, it can afford to flout the more usual boundaries of psychology, sociology and logic; metaphysics are grounded in reality and the effect is at once abstract and dense, as Artaud himself perceived:

Everything is thus regulated and impersonal; not a movement of the muscles, not the rolling of an eye but seems to belong to a kind of reflective mathematics which controls everything and by means of which everything happens. And the strange thing is that in this systematic depersonalization, in these purely muscular facial expressions, applied to the features like masks, everything produces a significance, everything affords the maximum effect. 1

It is the remarkable way in which all the elements in Balinese theatre conspire together to yield maximum significance that makes it difficult for its theatrical forms to be effectively adapted by the West. Everything that hits the eye and ear is invested with an unmistakable force of conviction because all the cries, colours, rhythms, movements, gestures and music are related to a unique social

1 The Theater and Its Double, p.58.
and religious code. One can see how tempting such spectacular
and physical elements are as models to Western theatrical
directors, seeking fresh ways of creating effects. Tempting
but dangerous. The truth is, as with the "Ketjak" Dance
which I'll be discussing next, however bizarre and spectacular
the theatrical effect may be, the Balinese theatrical image
always carries with it a band of metaphysical meaning;
clearly understood by the Balinese audience. This is done
in a way which defies imitation because the technique has
evolved organically from a social and religious structure
which illuminates its meaning. Whereas in the West, because
the theatre is not fully integrated with real life, no
matter how cleverly devised its theatrical spectacles may
be à la Balinais, they will appear incongruous. This fail­
ure led Charles Marowitz to write in an open letter to the
"Living Theatre" expressing his sympathy with a heckler who,
after seeing their performance of a monster at the end of
their show, Frankenstein, shouted out: "Great, now can you
do a dog?":

I can see the point of such a "heckle", for ulti­
mately you are using actors to illustrate events
and that can be construed as a grandiose kind of
mimicry. I know that behind Frankenstein is a
commitment to the idea of our own (of society's)
monstrosities, but in place of ideas I got moral
intensity which, no matter how violent it becomes,
cannot equal meaning. Artaud's miserable life was
wasted trying to devise methods to transcend social
and psychological realism, and it is a poor pass
if all we can come up with is ensemble mimicry. Outsize imagery doesn't automatically engender metaphysical implications.  

Once again Artaud's own misunderstanding of the source of the Balinese theatre's power had led to a barren piece of mimicry. This is specially ironic in view of the fact that the Balinese theatre possessed the very thing Artaud was looking for. The following extract from his theatrical manifestos shows what I mean:

The question, then, for the theater, is to create a metaphysics of speech, gesture, and expression in order to rescue it from its servitude to psychology and 'human interest'. But all this can be of no use unless behind such an effort there is some kind of real metaphysical inclination, an appeal to certain unhabitual ideas, which by their very nature cannot be limited or even formally depicted. These ideas which touch on Creation, Becoming, and Chaos, are all of a cosmic order and furnish a primary notion of a domain from which the theater is now entirely alien. They are able to create a kind of passionate equation between Man, Society, Nature and Object.  

Artaud has, in fact, in the last sentence unwittingly summed up the unique role of the theatre in Bali which, by providing through its metaphysical implications a collective centre to drain the tensions of its society, restores its

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equilibrium. (See my discussion below, pp. 276-290 of the role of various theatrical figures in Balinese Drama.) For the daily ordering of life in Bali necessitates a depletion of spiritual reserves which the theatre seeks to replenish. Artaud, then, has diagnosed the pre-requisites for effective theatre without realizing how the Balinese theatre is able to fulfill them. In the context of the West, his diagnosis leads to the following questions:

a) Do theatrical images lose their power dissociated from their social and religious context?  
b) Can we by-pass the cultural and social context, and in a theatrical workshop, through conscientious exercise, discipline and training, create similar forms of imagery capable of radiating the same kind of power?  
c) Can we establish a real primary identification with a theatrical image without resorting to any prior cultural knowledge or pre-conditioning?

As can be seen there are no straight answers to these questions which I will discuss more thoroughly in Chapter V. They, in fact, represent the preoccupation of Peter Brook and his group of actors in the Centre for International Theatre Research in Paris. I've posed the questions at this point mainly to show that an examination of the unique
interdependence of Balinese theatrical images and community life is, in fact, germane to the whole problem of theatre research today. So at this point I propose to examine in more detail some of the forms of Balinese theatre:

THE "KETJAK" DANCE

I will start by showing how the "Ketjak" Dance, which bears the original character of a trance-exorcism has evolved organically from the combined needs of the Balinese community. The dance features a dramatic excerpt from the Ramayana dealing with the abduction of the Princess Sita, by the demon King, Rawana, and her eventual recovery by her husband, the Prince Rama, with the help of Hanuman, the monkey ally. Another name for the "Ketjak" Dance is the "Monkey" Dance because almost throughout the entire performance (as there is no gamelan orchestra) the dancers simulate rhythmically and most evocatively the "tjak" sounds of monkeys. Because it is impossible to describe the

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1 The "Ketjak" Dance has evolved from the male chorus of the ritual "Sanghyang" trance ceremony.

2 One of the two most popular and widely known Indian epics in Bali, believed to have been composed by the sage Valmiki in the 10th C B.C. The Mahabharata is the other well-loved epic, ascribed to the 9th C B.C. poet Vyasa, grandfather of the leaders of both families in the war of the Bharatas.

3 The traditional orchestra of mainly percussion instruments accompanying most of the dance dramas in Bali.
The audience's familiarity with the "Ramayana" epic is a point which cannot be overstressed. The adventures of the Prince Rama are the popular themes of temple reliefs everywhere in Bali. (See the central cut-out of the collage marked C, on p. 244) They also form the subjects of their shadow plays which are the island's most popular form of entertainment. So the meaning of the dramatic excerpts in the "Ketjak" Dance is something which is absolutely taken for granted in a cultural atmosphere where the legend of the Ramayana not only cries out from stones and shadows, but also from lontar palm leaves on which village artists have skilfully etched illustrations of Prince Rama and his efforts to regain his stolen wife. And the widespread familiarity with the Ramayana has a "supernatural" consequence. Not only does Rama represent the princely virtues of bravery, goodness, and gentleness, and is regarded as a worthy moral example, but the Balinese use his conflict with the demonic rapist, Rawana, to play out their own struggles with dark, supernatural forces. Implicit in this are connotations of sympathetic magic where, by creating a form, one can call to life the force associated with it.

I've deliberately placed this particular cut-out in the centre to show that the ubiquity of this legend is of utmost importance, insuring an instant familiarity with the same recurring themes in the theatre.
(a) Ravana, the evil demon king, carrying a short kris, tries to seduce Sita, Rama’s wife.

(b) Above: Sita, on the left, and Rama with his quiver of arrows, both roles played by two young girls.

(c) Adornments of palace Pura are popular themes of temple reliefs throughout in Bali.

(d) The ‘Garuda’ bird, kneeling before Rama, gives an eyewitness account of Sita’s seduction.

FIG. 28 COLLAGE SHOWING VARIOUS SCENES FROM THE RAMAYANA
From this it can be seen that the interest of the Balinese audience in the performance is not confined to the unfolding of the plot. In fact it is because the plot and its meaning are so firmly entrenched in their subconscious and therefore can be taken completely for granted, that highly stylized, sensuous non-verbal means of theatrical communication have developed to such an extraordinary extent in Bali. Rama and Sita, as shown in the illustration marked (b) on the collage p.244, are very often stylistically played by two attractive young girls. In the picture marked (d), the mythical "Garuda" bird, (another ally), which had witnessed the seduction of Sita by Rawana, offers to help Rama find her. There is, in fact, only the minimum suggestion of a logical sequence of events because every detail of the seduction sequence is known to all, even young children. So a highly sensuous theatrical tradition, full of extravagant colours and rhythmic stylized cries and movements, can be interpreted correctly only by a remarkably spiritually conditioned audience.

The intense degree of involvement the Balinese spectator feels with the performance then can only be appreciated if we can grasp that the spiritual milieu of the island has produced a phenomenal situation in which the whole community actually identifies itself with Rama's
struggle against Rawana. So the "Ketjak" dancers are the chosen witnesses of this drama. When Rawana leaps to the centre of the circle (as shown in the left hand illustration of the collage on p. 244, marked (a)), taking Sita with him, the chorus simulate the flight with long hissing sounds. But when the monkey ally, Hanuman, enters the circle, the dancers become an army of chattering monkeys. Rawana and Hanuman therefore represent the opposing forces at work in the community, the forces of the left and right respectively. And as far as the Balinese are concerned, the "Ketjak" Dance is not only a way of balancing these two forces in a workable harmony for the community but, as my guide pointed out to me, it is a means of extracting a sign from the deities which live in Gunung Agung and Batur. For example, he told me that in the village where he came from, a north-east wind at the end of a performance would be taken very seriously by the people as a sign of an approaching epidemic. This springs from a real belief in a theory (compounded from myth, fantasy and superstition) that Rawana, though crushed between Agung and Batur (roughly lying in the north-east) was not conclusively

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1 I've used the word "chosen" in the sense of being privileged because in Bali it is considered a gift to be able to lapse into a state of ecstasy or trance.

2 For a fuller explanation of the forces of the left and right, see p. 285.
vanquished. The ending of the *Ramayana* has a coda which casts suspicions on the absolute virtue of Sita. It is possible that from this has grown up a concrete fear of the malignant powers of Rawana and his ability to exercise them on the people.

WAYANG KULIT (THE SHADOW PLAYS)

Having suggested that the special power of the "Ketjak" Dance represents the combined force of the Balinese society's social, religious and sexual needs, I'd like to pinpoint exactly how the mechanism of this transference takes place. One of the first things which strikes a visitor to the island is the ubiquity of mirrors, found as ornamental devices in temple paraphernalia (such as the "salang") and in theatrical masks and costumes. (See for example, the illustration of the "Barong", Fig. 36 on p. 280, which is studded with hundreds of circular shaped mirrors, creating a dazzling, shimmering effect each time it moves.) But apart from the obvious decorative function of the mirror, it also provides the key image in an understanding of the Balinese theatre. For if we have to describe the special quality of its undoubted power, it is that it has an astounding ability to create shadows - or reflections, correspondences from the existing social and religious ordering
of daily activities. The power of the Balinese theatre is
the power of the double, a fact which the recurrence of
the mirror, as the most characteristic artefact in their
religious and theatre rituals, strongly reinforces.

It is therefore not a coincidence but a proof of
Artaud's rare poetic intuition that he entitled his
collection of theatre manifestos (inspired by the Balinese
theatre) 'The Theater and its Double'. I quote from his
Preface:

Every real effigy has a shadow which is its double;...
the true theater has its shadows too, and of all
languages and all arts, the theater is the only one
left whose shadows have shattered their limitations....
But the true theater, because it moves and makes
use of living instruments, continues to stir up
shadows where life has never ceased to grope its way.
The actor does not make the same gestures twice, but
he makes gestures, he moves; and although he
brutalizes forms, nevertheless behind them and through
their destruction he rejoins that which outlives forms
and produces their continuation. For the theater as
for culture, it remains a question of naming and
directing shadows.¹

This manifesto about the strange power of shadows which
"outlives forms" exactly describes the mystique of the
Balinese theatre. The most eloquent example of this power in
Bali is the "Wayang Kulit", the shadow plays which, in fact,
forms the inspirational base - the pivotal force from which
all the other forms of theatre draw their strength. They

¹ op.cit., p.12.
also explain why there is a strong belief in the supernatural and to a large degree account for the most striking characteristics of theatrical movement on the live stage. But before I go into this, I want very briefly to describe its origin which certainly has strong magical connotations. Miguel Covarrubias, in his account of the "Wayang Kulit" in Bali, traces its origin to an ancient shamanistic practice, in which the ancestors were brought to this world in the form of shadows to communicate with their descendants.¹

The first performances of "Wayang Kulit" were held during the rule of King Airlangga (1016 - 1045), one of the most revered and popular kings in Bali. This is an important point because Airlangga is associated with Arjuna (one of the princes in the Mahabharata, mentioned by Artaud in his essay) and generally with the fight against the "Rangda" - the powerful antithetical force to a community's well being.²

So because of the great antiquity of the "Wayang Kulit" and its role as a spiritual monitor, the shadow play is regarded as magically potent and performed during religious occasions or from cues which the "dalang" (the mystic narrator in the performance) seems acutely attuned to pick up from invisible forces. Though there are occasional day-time performances,

¹ Miguel Covarrubias, Island of Bali, New York 1956, p.236.
² I'll be discussing this further in the last section of this chapter on pp. 276 - 90.
they are usually dictated by the moon, starting at midnight and continuing till the early hours of morning.

The dalang not only has to remain seated, chanting the story for as long as six to seven hours, but he must also know how to conduct the "gender" wayang orchestra (the ensemble of four xylophones which accompanies the performance), and also to play each instrument he leads. He is fluent in the difficult Kawi language, which consists largely of Sanskrit words, and is able to sing in many different poetical measures the long Kawi versions of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. As an ordained priest, he possesses powers to ward off evil and to protect the people. But it is as the raconteur / manipulator of shadow puppets that he wields his most impressive power, becoming the revered philosopher in touch with magical forces - with that world which does not reflect the real one but represents the secret aspirations of the people. So in this world of shadows, good always triumphs.

On a night heavy with monsoon rain, I was told by my guide who had heard the news passed round by word of mouth, that there would be a "wayang kulit" performance in Den Pasar,

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1 The "gender" is a special percussion instrument which has unusual powers of resonance. It is therefore particularly suited to be incorporated in a shadow play performance - reinforcing the resonantal powers of the shadow world.
Above: The rigidity of a dance pose so characteristic of Balinese dance movements.

Two wayang kulit puppets being manipulated in front of the oil-lamp behind the screen.

FIG. 29 COLLAGE COMPARING A DANCER ON STAGE WITH WAYANG KULIT FIGURES
as the determining factor in many aspects of Balinese life. As an experiment, she asked some children in a village, who had been mainly exposed to "Wayang Kulit" as the chief means of entertainment, to do her a painting of any aspect of village life they wanted to portray. She was amazed at the results because all the figures in the paintings resembled "Wayang Kulit" puppets. This deserves serious consideration because of the close similarity between the angular, jerky, ossified movements of the actors in their live theatre and those of the shadow puppets. (See collage on p. 252). In fact the Balinese dance seems to be made up of a quick succession of such frozen attitudes, performed in the jerky manner of "Wayang Kulit" puppets. To take this a stage further: the frigid attitude of the dancer on the collage on p. 252 is not unlike that of the frozen stone figures in the central cut-out, (c), on p. 244. In fact the stone figures also resemble the attitudes of puppets, illustrating the principle of correspondences at work on a triple level: dancer = stone figure = puppet.

There is no doubt that on a purely visual level the rigid attitudes of the dancers appear to have great strength and authenticity because they are patterned on a theatrical

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1 See Jane Belo, Trance in Bali, New York 1960, pp. 11-12.
tradition of antiquity. The dancers, by resembling puppets, make use of a kind of derived magical significance associated with the "Wayang Kulit". In any case the importance of the link between the dance drama and the shadow plays cannot be overstated. For if the former derives its power from the principle of the double, this is literally put into practice in the latter. In the shadow plays, the doubles or shadows of the puppets are raised, as it were, to play out for the audience their innermost anxieties. These are expressed and resolved through the conflicts and resolutions of the mythological characters from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata whom the audience completely believe in.

The division between "goodies" and "badies" is made extraordinarily simple in the "Wayang Kulit". Its stage is a symbolic microcosm representing a spiritual world: the screen represents the sky; the banana trunk (on which the puppets are stuck while waiting to be manipulated), the earth; the lamp, the sun; the puppets, human beings; and the dalang, the overseeing deity. To his right are set the puppets representing good characters (e.g. Rama). To his left are the puppets representing the evil antagonists (e.g. Rawana). In the centre of the screen is a marionette in the shape of a leaf which represents a tree and is used to mark the beginning and end of an episode. The clowns
provide the audience with therapeutic relief. I was told that many of the jokes were highly obscene. They certainly got laughs.

I spent most of my time in that performance behind the screen as I was fascinated by the incredible skill of the "dalang", chanting out the various parts, manipulating the puppets and accenting the rhythm by tapping a horn held between his toes against the wooden box which contained the puppets. I was intrigued that in a performance of shadow plays, equal weighting seemed to be given to both tangible shapes and shadows, expressed in the way the audience could choose whether they wanted to watch it from behind or in front of the screen. There were more people watching from in front of the screen, but I was impressed by a vision of life which took into serious account both the world of real shapes and the world of shadows.

This combination of the "tangible" and the "intangible", which struck me at the "Wayang Kulit" performance, is a feature which is carried over into the dance drama and forms an unusual aspect of its peculiar strength. I've indicated earlier that its power rests on the principle of reflection or the doubling of effects. And in a close study of the details of how this doubling principle works, I've noticed that it can be roughly divided into two categories. The
first category is "tangible", in the sense of something imitated from the natural world, carrying with it a sensuous physical appeal. The second is "intangible" in the sense that it reflects the social mores and religious ethics of the community, providing the hidden metaphysical strength of the images. I will now discuss the "Legong" dance to show that its power rests on a combination of the "tangible" and "intangible" categories.

THE LEGONG DANCE: LEGONG KRATON (THE LEGONG OF THE PALACE)

I've chosen to describe the "Legong Kraton" because it was this particular type of "Legong" which Artaud saw in 1931 in Paris. This is considered to be the most purified and abstract dance drama in the Balinese repertoire. The drama re-enacts the attempted rape of a princess called Rangkesari by the King of Lasem, the reprisal undertaken by her father, the King's meeting with a bird of ill omen which predicts his death in battle, and his death. The "Legong" usually ends after the encounter with the bird when the King, ignoring its warning, is determined to meet his adversary. The story is usually performed by three very young dancers. One takes the part of the "tjondong", a female attendant of the court, and two identically dressed "legongs" play the roles of all the royal persons in this drama. (See the coloured illustration on p. 259).
The main body of the dance dramatizes the farewells of the King of Lasem as he departs for the battle-field and his meeting with the bird. It opens with an introductory solo by the "tjondong". (In the performance I saw, the "tjondong" was omitted). The two principals, bound from head to foot in glittering gold brocade (see the illustration on p. 257), sometimes doubling as one image and then splitting into separate roles, pick out the main features in the story: Rangkesari repulses Lasem's advances with her fan — Lasem takes leave of his own wife, the queen, and encounters the bird, played usually by the "tjondong".

The plot is thin but its theme of the rape of a virgin princess can touch us deeply (irrespective of different cultures) at what I would call a primary level of mythic consciousness. The performance is so abstract that it hardly bears any resemblance to actual events at all, except to the most distinguishing features of the story e.g. the repulsion of the King and his meeting with the bird. The pertinent question then is: Why does it move one so deeply? The answer is contained in a phrase of Artaud: "this perpetual play of mirrors", (which is really a variation of the concept of the theatre and its double) a phrase which occurs twice in his essay and which for me
exactly describes the technical power of the Balinese theatre. In the two instances where this phrase occurs, as quoted below, Artaud was referring to what I've classified as "tangible" purely sensuous imitation:

... it is all like a perpetual play of mirrors in which human limbs seem resonant with echoes, harmonies in which the notes of the orchestra, the whispers of wind instruments evoke the idea of a monstrous aviary in which the actors themselves would be the fluttering wings.¹

This perpetual play of mirrors passing from color to gesture and from cry to movement.... These strange games of flying hands, like insects in the green air of evening....²

I want now to show how the accompanying music of the "legong" further exploits the "mirror" images which particularly characterize this dance drama.

To understand this at all one must realize that the theatre in Bali cannot be conceived without its music. Nearly all the plays are performed with music and its metric form and inner phrase structure control all the gestures and movements of the actors. Whether these are pictorial or abstract, an observer can see that they are rhythmically integrated with the music. And conversely, the intensity and

¹ op.cit., p.56.
² ibid., p.63.
rhythmic animation with which the Balinese perform much of their music is closely related to the drama. Its endless changes in tempo can only be appreciated through theatrical differentiations of character, "bright" or "dark", "right" or "left", refined (alus) or coarse (kras).

Furthermore, Balinese music which is based on five tones, represents the colours and cosmological significance of the gods of the five directions: North, East, South, West and Centre. In the centre, in the middle of a lotus sits Batara Siva, Creator, Destroyer, Lord God of all. His mystic colour is white and there is a particular musical tone associated with this colour. The colours of the gods of the other directions are red, yellow, blue and black, each with its corresponding tone. And so it can be seen that the colours in the Balinese theatre, which struck Artaud like "painted rhythms", are not merely decorative but significantly related to its music, and have religious implications.

On the level of simple imitation, Balinese music mirrors the immediate physical texture of a dense tropical vegetation swarming with insects. As Appendix C, I have included a five minute tape of the "Legong Kraton" music.

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1 See Colin McPhee, A House in Bali, New York 1944, p.40
which certainly conveys this sense of place. Another striking musical attribute, apparent from the tape, is an insistent pounding quality, producing the strangely syncopated effect in its overall pattern. Anyone who has visited a Balinese village will recognize this rhythmic pounding as part of the sonic pattern of ordinary village activities. (See the illustration, Fig. 3/1, showing women pounding rice, on the next page).

But there is yet another distinctive quality in the music which deserves special treatment: its unusual powers of resonance which reinforce the haunting play of the double - the chief characteristic of both the theatre and its music. In a survey of the percussion instruments which make up the "gamelan" orchestra accompanying the "legong", it is striking how carefully the craftsmen have tried to exploit the potential resonance of their instruments. For instance, let us see how the mysteriously humming throbbing tones, which characterize the music on the tape, are produced. These vibratory qualities are evoked by a pair of "genders" which form the leading melodic instruments for the "legong" dance. The "gender"

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The rhythmical pounding of rice is a familiar daily sound in all Balinese villages.
keys are strung over two leather cords and suspended over individual bamboo resonators arranged upright within a wooden frame. Great attention is paid to trimming each resonator to the exact length at which it will produce an air column vibrating in unison with the key above. It is these resonators, according to Colin McPhee, an American musicologist, who has made an intensive study of Balinese music, which cause the tones to continue humming long after the keys have stopped vibrating. "Genders" and similarly drums, which come in pairs, are also pitched differently to increase their natural vibrancy. And it is indeed this elaborate system of tuning paired instruments to different pitches which gives the gamelan its extraordinarily beautiful resonance. This quality of the double is specially reinforced in the "legong" music with the addition of a small vertical gong called the "kemong" which produces the particularly penetrating tones of remarkable beauty accentuating the melodic period. And so the music, by exploiting the resonance of bronze to the maximum, underlines and extends the perpetual play of doubling effects in the theatre.

The second category of mirror effects is "intangible". It reflects the actual social and religious mores of the community, to produce the unique strength of the theatrical...
To illustrate precisely what I mean, I'd like to relate the "rape" theme in the "Legong" drama to a socially approved Balinese sexual custom. This practice is described by Miguel Covarrubias as follows:

Among the aristocracy, to whom the girl's virginity is of importance, the deflowering of the bride acquires a certain ritualistic, barbaric aspect. In Ubud, where old-style customs are still maintained, I was told of the procedure by which a mapadik marriage is consummated, a description which agrees with that given by De Kat Angelino in his Huwelijkscracht:

... The girl is dressed and then wrapped in yards of cloth like a mummy, until she is unable to move. She is locked in ... from the inside with a number of female attendants. The groom arrives in gala dress and wearing his kris, followed by his retinue, and when he comes to the locked door, he sings in kidung, answered in song by one of the old women inside.... The servant opens the door and receives the money from the bridegroom, who enters with his friends. They pick up the helpless bride, lay her on the bale, cut the wrappings, and leave the couple alone.

After a period of time the groom steps out and announces the marriage consummated; female attendants examine the girl to verify her deflowering, and the couple is bathed - the man in the river - and dressed again. They stand in front of the offering, sesayut tabuh rah, "to end virginity", and are blessed by the priest.

To understand the connection between the "Legong" dance and the ending-of-virginity rite, it must be borne in mind that only very beautiful young virgins are chosen as

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1 The word means "platform".

2 Island of Bali, op. cit., p.150-151
"legong" dancers, an honour which enhances their marriage-ability. (It is interesting that the group which performed the "Legong" for Artaud in 1931 was the Pliatan group led by Sukarti from Ubud, the same place mentioned by Covarrubias as the area in which the ending-of-virginity rite was still practised in 1936 when his book was first published. A dance group, coming from a region where this custom was still alive, must inevitably have reflected it strongly and this in no small measure must have contributed to the impact of the "Legong" on Artaud.) This is an important point for it is from this reflection of an actual sexual ritual that the "legong" draws its power. Indeed the abstract movements of the tightly bound dancers retain so much of the original primal force of this custom that it is possible to respond to this residual power without being aware (as Artaud was not) of its precise derivative nature. The following is Artaud's reaction - a deep-level primary response, by-passing any social or cultural references, Peter Brook's ideal kind of audience reaction to a theatrical image:

1 See Judith Cook's interview with Peter Brook in the Arts Guardian, March 29, 1974, p.12. I'll be referring to this again in Chapter V.

1 op cit., p.64. Swaddling bands are also associated with birth and apply descriptive of the "legong" which is really about the process of breaking into a new state.
And these dancers dressed in dazzling clothes, whose bodies beneath seem wrapped in swaddling bands! There is something umbilical, larval in their movement.¹

This is impressive poetic accuracy of the first order because the epithet "larval" exactly captures all the original nuances of this sexual custom which Artaud knew nothing about. What came across to him very convincingly through the movements (which must have seemed particularly poignant because of the constrictions of the tightly-bound costumes) was in fact its abstracted essence reflected in dance, powerfully striking him as "larval" in character. So, paradoxically, it would seem that the well-defined character of the "legong", making possible a primary communication at a deep level, freed from all traces of any specific cultural reference, in fact, comes from its organic association with a very specific social rite. And it is quite astonishing that the final theatrical abstract impression is of "larval" movements. For the larva represents the intermediate stage between the egg and the imago, the fully-fledged insect, and is therefore appropriately analogous to the young virgin on the edge of breaking into womanhood. This illuminates the end-of-virginity rite in an abstract way and certainly mitigates the barbaric aspect

¹ op.cit., p.64. Swaddling bands are also associated with birth and aptly descriptive of the "legong" which is really about the process of breaking into a new state.
as Miguel Covarrubias suggests. And if we work within the framework of the insect analogy, the chrysalis in its encased stage throws quite a different light on the cocoon-bound young virgin, waiting to emerge as a fully fledged woman, through the ending-of-virginity rite, which receives the full approval of Balinese society as a public and private act.

There is yet another dimension to the "legong" dance which not only relates it to a particular sexual taboo but to an archetypal concept of the sexual psyche. The idea of the tightly-bound virgin (See the costume of the legong dancer on p. 259) has parallels outside Bali: for example with the unbowedlerized Grimm version of the Rapunzel story.¹ In this a voluptuous young virgin is imprisoned in a high tower by a witch till a prince discovers her, gaining access to her prison by climbing up her long hair. A point often glossed over, as it is considered unsuitable for children, is that Rapunzel later gives birth to twins. And there is another parallel theme in the original version of "The Sleeping Beauty", where the prince pushes through thick hedges to discover a beautiful sleeping princess whom he

rapes. I've brought in these two examples to show that the rape theme in Balinese theatre (earlier, I highlighted the rape sequence in the "Ketjak" Dance, where Rawana, as seen in the illustration on p. 244, carrying a sharp knife, reminiscent of the groom who uses one to rip apart the tight wrappings of the virgin, tries to seduce and rape Sita) seems to touch a very deep centre in our consciousness, irrespective of culture. And perhaps it is the rare fusion of a specific local association with an archetypal sexual concept that makes the "legong" the most universally appealing one of all the Balinese dance dramas.

Again we see that the real strength of the Balinese theatrical image lies in its "intangible" connection with a specific social / religious perspective. We may not know exactly how to define this in a categorical way, but there is no doubt that the truthfulness and power of the Balinese theatre depend on this connection. Artaud certainly felt this power and expressed it in the following way:

And at the same time we must remark on the hieroglyphic aspect of their costumes, the horizontal lines of which project beyond the body in every direction. They are like huge insects full of lines and segments drawn to connect them with an unknown natural perspective of which they seem nothing more than a kind of detached geometry. ¹

¹ op. cit., p. 64.
To finish off this section on the "intangible" connections of Balinese theatrical images, I'd like to elaborate on the "invisible" relationship between the highly angular characteristic of the Balinese dance movements and the perspective of superstition which dominates the island. The line sketches of the "legong" dance movements (see p. 269) give some idea of the angularity which characterizes Balinese dance in general. This is also true of male dance movements. (See collage on the next page, showing a coloured illustration of a "baris" dancer, a "kebyar" dancer and three line sketches of the "baris" dance attitudes.) I've selected the "baris" and "kebyar" dance because Artaud had the opportunity to see these two items at the same Exposition in 1931. Reacting to the character of the warrior-like "Baris" dance he wrote in his essay:

... these heels striking the ground in cadences that follow the very automatism of the liberated unconscious, ... — there is a description of fear valid in every latitude, ...

This extraordinary feeling of fear conveyed by the movements is a direct link between the dances, the phantom world and everyday life. Every Balinese home is surrounded by a wall

1 op.cit., p.54.
of whitewashed mud. And behind the doorway there is a screen called the "aling aling" which is supposed to prevent evil spirits from entering the house. This kind of barrier can also be seen in many traditional Chinese houses springing from the same belief that, as evil spirits can only travel in a straight line and are unable to negotiate any angles or corners, the screen serves as a deterrent. Angularity in other words can counteract evil spirits and as with the screens, so with the dance.

I have a final observation to make on the dance movements which occurred to me while I was watching a cremation ceremony at Sanur Beach in Bali. I was positioned close enough to a burning corpse to observe every detail of this ritual process, and it struck me that the crackling explosive sound of burning bones, disintegrating in the fire with a peculiar, jerky rhythm, was strangely familiar. It had the same quality as the dance movements and I felt sure that the dances had been influenced by the cremation ritual. It is interesting that Artaud, unaware of this particular religious background, described the dances as expressions of "spiritual states", "ossified and transformed into gestures - diagrams".¹ And this same intuitive sense of bone movements is seen in the following description:

¹ op. cit., p.53.
A rippling of joints, the musical angle made by the arm with the forearm, a foot falling, a knee bending, fingers that seem to be coming loose from the hand, it is all like a perpetual play of mirrors in which human limbs seem resonant with echoes. ¹

Later on in his essay, he also speaks of the dance movements as having the "character of a magic operation in this intense liberation of signs" crackling in "this effervescence of painted rhythms". ² All this represents an uncanny, exact sense of the burning ritual as the basis of theatre. This is perfectly comprehensible if we realize that in Balinese society, cremation by fire is regarded as a means of liberating the soul from the body and is therefore treated as a joyful event. So the reflection of the cremation ritual in the dance movements can be interpreted as an aspiration towards the highest form of release - that of the liberation of the soul.

THE FEMALE HEADRESS

The next point I want to discuss is the female headdress of the dancers which led Artaud to enthuse:

¹ The Theater and Its Double, p.56. On page 65 Artaud commented that the dancers seemed to have "hollow bones".
² ibid., p.61.
Above: Temple offerings are arranged in high "multi-layered tiers", resembling roughly the shape of a mountain.

Below: A tall cremation tower.

Above: In the background is the sacred Gunung Batur, a mountain full of religious significance which has found its way into many aspects of Balinese life. The superimposed cutout shows the tall towers or 'meru' which make up Besakih (mother temple of Bali) situated on the slope of Gunung Agung.

Fig. 33 Collage relating the shape of female head-dresses to the contours of the two Balinese sacred mountains.
An impression of inhumanity, of the divine, of miraculous revelation is further provided by the exquisite beauty of the women's headdress; this series of banked luminous circles, made from combinations of multicolored feathers or from pearls of so beautiful a coloration that their combination has a quality of revelation, and the crests of which tremble rhythmically, responding consciously, or so it seems, to the tremblings of the body.

This description seems to fit in with the female headdress in the "Djanger" dance which was one of the items performed at the Exposition. The "Djanger" dance, which had its origin in the "Sanghyang" trance ceremony, where the women chant the "Sanghyang" song and the men alternate with the rhythmic sounds of the "Ketjak" Dance, is now a popular social event for young girls and youths. (See illustration on next page.) Artaud sensed correctly that the appeal of the headdress was more than just visual. It is, in fact, (See collage on p. 273) reflective of the widely revered shape of the Balinese sacred mountains - Gunung Agung and Batur - a shape endlessly repeated in the temple offerings, the towers of the temples themselves and in the great carved cremation towers.

The powerful effect of Balinese theatrical images depends on the fact that the division between history, legend, superstition and fact in Bali is extremely thin. Each works 1

1 op. cit., p. 59.
No one really knows the true origin of these two theatrical figures, merges with the historical Queen Medangade who was known for her witchcraft and black magic. It is in no doubt that part of the "Rangda" and "Barong" stories derive from the local religious beliefs and practices that evolved from the early days of human life. This is Miguel Covarrubia's view. See: Islands of Bali, pp. 215; pp. 227-38.

Fig. 34 A "Djanger" Dance.

Upon the other, creating echoes and associations which are almost endless. The best example of this is provided by their monstrous theatrical figures: the "Rangda" and "Barong".
RANGDA AND BARONG

No one really knows the true origin of these two firmly established figures in the Balinese theatre. Roughly speaking, the "Rangda" represents a malignant force, the "Barong", a beneficent one. In the minds of the Balinese, the "Rangda" evokes fear. She is presented as a witch-like mythological figure with exaggerated tusks and pendulous breasts. (See Fig. 35 on the next page.) Associated with her is the equally sinister figure of Durga, (the Hindu goddess of death) the wife of Siva. But there is no proof that they are one and the same person. To historians, the "Rangda" is identifiable with Queen Mahendradatta, the widow-mother of King Airlangga, the Balinese prince who became King of East Java from 1019 - 1049. Literally, the word "rangda" means a widow and to many historians, "Rangda", the theatrical figure, merges with the historical Queen Mahendradatta, whose activities in witchcraft and black magic began in her widowhood.¹ There is no doubt that part of the dread of "Rangda" springs from the social religious fear of widowhood - a fate that used to end in death through cremation on the husband's funeral pyre (suttee).

¹ This is Miguel Covarrubias' view. See Island of Bali, op. cit., pp.327-28.
Fig. 35 A stone-carving of Rangda outside the Temple of the Dead.
And then there is the psychological aspect of "Rangda". She has been interpreted by Margaret Mead as a half-feared and ambivalent mother figure. Margaret Mead has based her theory on her observation of behavioural patterns in child-parent relationship which she finds peculiar to the Balinese culture, resulting on the part of the child in a feeling of dread and fear of the mother and a turning to the father for protection.¹ These early childhood traumas are later transferred into fear of the "Rangda". A Western parallel is again perhaps to be found in the "Rapunzel" legend in which the witch step-mother first protects her charge and then turns against her for reasons associated with the whole dark mystique of fertility and sexuality. Similarly, the father figure in other Western legends like Tom Thumb, Hansel and Gretel, and Cinderella, emerges as a protective alternative force to the mother image.

I've so far sketched possible theories of approaching the identity of "Rangda". But who she really is, continues to perplex. The truth is that as a peculiarly Balinese theatrical figure, she transcends religion, sociology, psychology, fact and fiction and represents, with no contra-

diction, the multiplicity of all these views - a concrete projection of a conglomeration of inner fears.

Counteracting the "Rangda" is the "Barong". Again mystery surrounds the origin of this theatrical figure. It has been suggested by Jane Belo that it is possible the "Barong" is a Buddhist off-shoot springing from a shared ancestry with the Chinese dragon.¹ (See Fig. 36 on the following page.) And as "Rangda" seems to have evolved from the Sivaite faith (through her association with Durga, Siva's wife) it is tempting to regard the "Barong" as a counteracting Buddhist religious force. But this is only a very tentative theory. So is the theory that the "Barong" is merely a "father" figure, a view held by Margaret Mead who has based her conclusion on actual observations of children turning to their fathers for protection from traumatic relationships with their mothers. As with the "Rangda," it is best to see the "Barong" as a theatrical figure which gathers into itself a whole compendium of social, mythical, and religious nuances.

Closely associated with the "Barong" are his followers, known as the Kris dancers. They are the famous dancers who, provoked by "Rangda" and her band of disciples, enter into

The sacred "Barong" studded with countless mirrors which shimmer with dazzling effect each time it moves.

Fig. 36 The sacred "Barong" studded with countless mirrors which shimmer with dazzling effect each time it moves.

One enters a trance and turn their krises onto themselves. This very roughly expresses the conflict between these two opposing
forces. The most famous account of this is the "Tjalonarang" drama which I'll outline later but there are many versions of what is essentially the same conflict between the witch "Rangda" and the "Barong". The following is a version I saw several times, which draws together all the elements in the struggle of these opposing powers. It is drawn from an episode which tells how Dewi Kunti (the mother of the five Pandawas in the Mahabharata) has promised to sacrifice one of her sons, Sadewa, to the "Rangda".

The opening shows the "Barong", effectively framed against the gateway of the temple, flapping its enormous mirror-studded ears. (See Fig. 36 on previous page) The "Barong" is animated by two men, one for the front and one for the back. While the "Barong" rests in front of the temple gate, the "monkey" enters and sits by it. (See Fig. 37 on next page.) There is no doubt that the monkey is very popular with the Balinese sector of the audience. The buffooneries between the monkey and the "Barong" provide the necessary comic element in a very serious drama. Both are called "characters of the right" - the allies of mankind. And the monkey is determined to live out his popularity by being as entertaining as possible, scratching himself obscenely and teasing the "Barong" in a jocular way. The atmosphere is relaxed: the front man inside the "Barong"
The monkey and the "Barong" - the allies of mankind - the forces of the "right".

sits and taps his feet rhythmically to the infectious beats of the "gamelan", and the monkey performs his banana-eating act to draw laughter from the crowd. Each flicker of movement from the "Barong" produces the most stunning, shimmering effect from the mirror-studded costume.
A scuffle between the "Barong" and a group of palm-wine tappers follows. The monkey joins in on the side of the "Barong" and the fight, played out with gusto, results in a victory for the "Barong". During the fight, the nose of a wine-tapper is bitten off to howls of merriment from the Balinese section of the audience who seem actually reassured by the victory of the "Barong". As there are no dogmatic rules on theatre procedure, a "legong" dance follows which re-enacts the "Lasem" theme I've described above.

After this, the conflict between the "Barong" and "Rangda" is ready to be presented. This begins with the entrance of Dewi Kunti's two servants, Punta and Widjil, who discuss sorrowfully the imminent sacrifice of their beloved master, Sadewa. A howling, hair-raising cry is heard, followed by a quick appearance of the "Rangda" at the entrance. The gamelan orchestra accompanies this with appropriately menacing rhythmic sounds. The Prime Minister (known as the "patih") enters the scene but seems powerless to alter the situation. At this moment Dewi Kunti and Sadewa come through the temple gate. Dewi Kunti looks extremely cast down at the thought of losing her son. The "Rangda" hovers at the gate and suddenly the mother is possessed by its demonic powers and orders her son to be
sacrificed to the witch. Evil is clearly seen as possession by the "Rangda".

The Prime Minister hesitates over the ordeal but the appearance of the "Rangda" seems to strengthen his resolution and he ties Sadewa to a tree which is meant to be outside the Rangda's home. There is no change of scenery to indicate a change in locale. The transition is made in the audience's imagination.

While Sadewa is tied to the tree, waiting for the arrival of the "Rangda", the God Siva, robed in white, appears, accompanied by a cascade of flowers. He takes pity on Sadewa and grants him the gift of immortality.

The "Rangda" then approaches Sadewa, followed by her evil-looking disciples who share something of her own hideous appearance. (See Fig. 38 p. 256) She wears a long-flowing white mane with strings of entrails round her neck, displaying her destructive power over her victims. But she is unable to harm Sadewa, because of his gift of immortality; she admits defeat and begs to be redeemed. Sadewa agrees, kills her and so frees her.

The fidelity of this to the archetypal "Tjalon Arang" version needs some comment at this point. In the original, instead of Sadewa, a holy man, called Mpu Bharada, is sent by King Airlangga to confront the witch. Briefly, here is
the original story-line: the widow-witch or "Rangda", because of imagined insults to her daughter, ravages the land of Daha (Airlangga's kingdom). Airlangga's holy man, Mpu Bharada, has managed to learn the secret of Rangda's power through stealthy possession of her magic book. The book is, in fact, a manual of righteousness, read backwards, which gives us an insight into the Balinese morality, where evil is viewed as goodness in reverse; the left as opposed to the right. And the following extract of the archetypal conflict between "Rangda" and the holy man, Mpu Bharada, deserves quoting because Sadewa's battle with the witch is patterned on it:

Armed with the new knowledge, he (the holy man) accused the witch of her crimes, but she challenged him by setting an enormous banyan tree on fire by a single look of her fiery eyes. Bharada foiled the enraged witch by restoring the tree, and she turned her fire against the holy man. Unmoved, he killed her with one of her own mantras; but she died in her monstrous rangda form and Bharada, to absolve her of crimes and enable her to atone for them, revived her, gave her human appearance, and then killed her again.  

The ending of this legendary extract about the conflict between the "Rangda" and humans is a happy one. But only in legend can the "Rangda" be defeated. In real life

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1 Island of Bali, op.cit., p.329.
The Rangda (with a disciple in the background) approaches her victim, Sadewa.

(And the theatre reflects what is truly believed in) the Balinese are too frightened of the power of the "Rangda" to enact her defeat. So in the performance I saw, the drama was unresolved, stopping at the point when the tide began to turn against her. There is also another point I'd like to stress which is primarily conveyed in a kind of dramatic appendix concerning the witch's disciple, Kalika. This
addition is significant, not only because it exemplifies the endless recurrences of Rangda's power, but also provides a great deal of slapstick laughter which seems a necessary adjunct to the portrayal of a theme so deeply feared by the Balinese. So after the death of "Rangda", accompanied by howls of mourning from her followers, Kalika (a special disciple) also asks Sadewa for redemption. She is refused and in anger turns herself into a wild boar. Sadewa kills it and the disembowelling of the boar is played for laughs - nervous laughter, relieving the tension in the atmosphere. And then suddenly, there is a noticeable change in the prevailing mood, regulated perhaps by a quickening of the tempo in the "gamelan". It's as though the forces of the left have been sufficiently baited. Kalika changes into a bird but is again defeated. There is no more laughter. In her third transformation she appears in the most powerful manifestation of "Rangda", with a black, flowing mane. This time she is more than a match for Sadewa. He meditates and changes into the "Barong". The fight between the "Barong" and the "Rangda" ensues. It is undecided and the "Barong" leaves to summon his followers - the Kris dancers.

As shown in Fig.39, p.288, these dancers (each wearing a black and white check "sarong" and a red hibiscus
in his ear) resemble the "Ketjak" dancers. They rush out and try to attack the "Rangda" but unsuccessfully. Then seething with fury and frustration, they turn their krises on themselves. A priest (the "pemangku") enters, carrying with him a goblet of holy water and offerings to the gods. Pig. The kris danoers, unable to outwit the "Rangda" turn their krises on themselves. A chicken is displayed and its head severed. Using a marigold as a sponge, he sprinkles holy water on the kris dancers who seem to be in a state of trance. And the play ends with the conflict unresolved.

Fig. 39 The kris dancers, unable to outwit the "Rangda" turn their krises on themselves.
There is no doubt that, although not entirely decisive, the whole trance sequence constitutes an act of exorcism and, within the context of Balinese society, seems necessary to relieve the anxiety of both performers and the audience. I was told that it could take all night for the trance dancers to return to a normal state. And there have been instances when real wounds have been inflicted, but nothing which the "pemangku" could not cope with. And just as with the "Ketjak" Dance, an analogy to sexual excitement is observable in their seething cries of rage.

As the trance exorcism is the apex of the theatrical performance, it seems to be a recognized vehicle for the community to resolve its tensions. For example, I was told that a normally passive person can become extremely aggressive in trance without any recollection of it afterwards. It is as though the few individuals, who have the gift of lapsing into a trance - the undifferentiated state - contribute to the reinstatement of stability within the community. And as the "Rangda" seems to be a physical concrete manifestation of deeply-hidden unconscious drives associated with fertility and sexuality - in fact the essential processes of living - one can interpret the trance exorcism, which is an attempt to come to terms with the witch and all she stands for, as a means of resolving these
The blood sacrifice of the chicken constitutes an important element in the Balinese theatre. It is, in fact, a by-product of cock fighting, a much misunderstood feature of Balinese life, which should really be seen as essentially part of the need to spill blood - an act of propitiation demanded by the deities. This was indeed the origin of cock fighting, which marked the beginning of a day's festivity, perhaps culminating in a theatre performance. The belief was that if the deities were placated with an actual blood sacrifice, the day's events would run smoothly. Cock fighting is now a socially recognized means of gambling, (See Fig. 40, p. 291) but its original religious purpose should not be forgotten. And it is against this entire socio-religious background of the cock fight that the sacrificial chicken in the "Barong" Dance must be viewed. It is important to recognize the particular brutality of the act as having evolved from a religious obsession with the need to placate the supernatural world. In other words, brutality is not an exercise for its own sake and merely spectacular and macabre. And if we
The savagery of cock fighting should be viewed as a sacrificial blood ritual to placate the supernatural.
examine this element, as it should be examined, within its relevant context, it can be seen immediately how difficult it is to transplant such bold theatrical effects into another culture which is not organized to support them.  

The problems can be summed up as follows: the degree to which the Balinese theatre depends on an extremely intricate fusion of religious and social factors gives it both its strength and its limitation. Artaud was overwhelmed by the extraordinary force of this theatre, unaware though he was of the social and religious framework which made it possible. And paradoxically the Balinese theatrical images have derived so much strength of character from their particular community that it is possible to react to them on a primary level of response without prior knowledge of their culture. As I've described above, most of Artaud's reactions were of this nature. In fact, he felt the metaphysical power of the theatre completely, without understanding the sources of that power. Not surprisingly, many tantalizing questions spring from this misunderstanding. How far, for instance, can Balinese theatrical techniques be incorporated within a Western frame-

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1 See Michael Kirby's article, "On Acting and Not-Acting" in The Drama Review, Vol. 16, No. 1, T - 53, March 1972, p. 12, where he mentions the "Happening-like presentations of Ralph Ortiz - and others before him which had decapitated chickens".
work which is structured differently and therefore may not support them? If the Balinese community has shaped the special character of their theatrical images to such a degree that it is possible to respond to them on a primary level, is there such a thing as a primary level of response per se? Can Peter Brook, for example, succeed in working out in a theatre workshop theatrical images of similar power to the Balinese when they are unrelated to the actual needs of a community? The fact that his actors are international suggests a pooling of several different cultural backgrounds. But how has such a "mixed" base affected the working out and final effectiveness of theatrical images designed to appeal on a primary level? (See Chapter V.)

What struck me about the Balinese theatre was that it is not just a triumph of extraordinary stage techniques, but the unique product of an unusually integrated society. The physical and spectacular aspects of Balinese theatrical techniques have been appreciated at the expense of their metaphysical content. It is, in fact, the way the Balinese theatre interacts with an extraordinarily integrated social and religious background which gives it its special density. And so, if the Balinese theatre is meant to be the ideal example of effective theatre for the West, as Artaud wanted it to be, we cannot, as I've tried to
show in this chapter, ignore the full evidence of its organically derived strength. The West, as yet, has no solid social base from which such a theatre can evolve. And if the West is to treat the theatre as more than an evening's entertainment, then surely what is needed is a society which is completely integrated with the theatre, resolving through it all its tensions.

These are open-ended problems connected with the application of Artaudian ideas which I'll take up again with concrete examples in the next chapter. But the strength of the Balinese theatre is that it is focussed on, and evolved from, the central needs of an entire community. It is thus able to hold the attention of a marvellously mixed audience of all ages, something which hasn't perhaps happened in England since the Elizabethan theatre. As such, Balinese theatre certainly deserves to be taken seriously as the basis for current avant garde Western theatre. That it can be taken seriously is due to the work of Antonin Artaud.
CHAPTER V

Since Artaud, the trend in avant garde theatre has been towards the use of violent techniques, calculated to disturb the audience. Artaud himself certainly stressed that "metaphysics must be made to re-enter our minds ... through the skin" and as I'll be showing, some productions of English 'fringe' theatre provide good illustrations of what he meant. But understandably, techniques involving such strong oppositions of inwardness and physical violence are difficult to practise and the application of his theories has largely meant the clumsy superimposition of shock techniques arresting in themselves but ultimately meaningless.

Even though, as I've tried to show, Artaud didn't altogether understand the relationship between Balinese theatre and its social background, he was nevertheless inspired by the former to formulate theories that have proved stimulating and influential. But the nature of Artaud's failure to understand the basis of Balinese theatre has a fundamental connection with the unsuccessful application of
his theories. He begins his essay on 'Oriental and Occidental Theater' by saying:

The Balinese theater has revealed to us a physical and non-verbal idea of the theater, independently of the written text*. ...\(^1\)  

But this is precisely where Artaud has distorted a crucial point. Balinese theatre depends upon a text, a text drawn from myth, ritual and the experience of the Balinese people, a text in other words provided by Balinese society.\(^2\) Artaud admired the techniques of Balinese theatre without understanding their social basis and attempted to apply them in a vacuum. Sometimes - because he was a brilliant talent - he succeeded in bringing them off as have some of his greater followers like Brook and Arrabal. Many of his lesser disciples however, have blindly applied his techniques and their experiments have failed.

In this chapter I'd like to begin by examining Les Cenci, because, as the earliest production of the 'Theatre of Cruelty', undertaken by Artaud himself, and an exempli-

* I've underlined this for emphasis.

\(^1\) The Theater and its Double, p.68.

\(^2\) As I stressed in Chapter IV, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which provide the main themes for much of Balinese theatre, are epics well known to the Balinese.
fication of his own vision of what theatre ought to be, it remains a landmark in the development of twentieth century theatre. I'll then try to suggest reasons why Artaud's theatrical theories came to England via American anti-establishment theatre. This will be followed by an examination of the British 'fringe' theatrical movement which initially drew its energy and inspiration from America and is closely associated with Artaudian theatre. The major section of this chapter will be devoted to discussing the work of Peter Brook who is considered one of the world's leading exponents of Artaudian theatre. So in examining his application of Artaud's theories to his major productions, beginning with his first experiment of the 'Theatre of Cruelty' in 1964, and ending with his production - Timon of Athens - in Paris, in 1974, we can assess the conditions under which these theories either succeed or collapse in practice. I'd like to end by discussing a few productions by other exponents of Artaudian theatre which will further illuminate the difficulty involved in applying Artaudian theories. This is necessary further evidence because Brook's stature as a theatrical director of extraordinary talent, turns most of his productions into masterpieces in spite of the occasional misfiring of his use of Artaudian techniques.
In order to understand what is meant by Artaudian
techniques and the difficulties of applying them to theatre
today, it is worth examining Artaud's own application of
his ideas in his production of *Les Cenci* at the Théâtre
Folies-Wagram in Paris on the 6th of May 1935. The pro-
duction was a failure, though this need not be interpreted
as an invalidation of his theories, but rather a reflection
of the conservatism of the Parisian audience of 1935.

In a letter written to André Gide, (Paris, February
10, 1935) Artaud gives a hint of the kind of production he
had in mind. Though the play, (adapted from Shelley and
Stendhal), is about incestuous rape and parricide, he was
anxious that it should remain in the realm of pure ideas:

> Everything that is attacked is much less on a
> Social level than on a Metaphysical level.

To Louis Jouvet he wrote, on March 7th, 1935, that the pro-
duction was meant to create an impact on the audience's
"unconsciousness":

> ... it seems to me that all the audiences in the
> world have an unconsciousness that, in a period
> like this, is ready to burst out of its membrane.

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1. The Drama Review, Directing Issue (Artaud), Vol. 16 No.2,
   T-54, June 1972, p.92.

Le Petit Parisien, April 14th, 1935, reported that Artaud was determined to envelop the spectator with sound and put him at "our mercy in a network of vibrations":

What is being prepared in this establishment (the Folies-Wagram) ... is none other than the conclusion to this "Manifesto of the Theatre of Cruelty" published under the name of Artaud by La Nouvelle Française.... "... Cruelty for me has nothing to do with blood or duty.... It means doing everything the director can to the sensibilities of actor and spectator."

"I believe in the necessity of using physical means to bring the spectator to submission, to compel him to participate in the action...." 1

Artaud himself tried to clarify his new techniques by writing about them in Le Figaro on May 5th, 1935:

One will find in the staging a whole attempt at symbolic gesture, where gesture is equal to the written word.

This means that gesture is as important to me as what we call language, for gesture is a language of its own.

The lights, like the gestures, will also be equal to a language, and in this effort toward a unique theatrical language, at every moment, light will verge on joining sound.

Balthus, the set designer, understands the symbolism of forms, just as he knows everything about colors; and just as Desormière, for whom noise is an unleashing of nature, knows everything about the communicative value of noise. 2

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1 ibid., p.97.
2 noted in ibid., p.106.
Pierre Barlatier announced in the *Comoedia* on May 6th, 1935, that the Folies-Wagram Théâtre would be offering an "experiment of a completely new and most unexpected order regarding the means employed for the mise en scène." It was obviously considered a sensation that the audience should be placed in the middle of the action. Artaud had boldly declared that "cruelty also acts against the spectator and it must not permit him to leave the theatre intact, but he must also be exhausted, involved, transformed, perhaps!"

So noise and light were deliberately designed to act on the spectators' nerves and symbolic gestures were meant to carry a hieroglyphic meaning.  

Here is a contemporary account of Artaud's techniques in exploiting sound, showing how revolutionary they were considered in 1935:  

When Artaud was looking for a composer for *Les Cenoi*, his friend Pierre Souvtchinsky introduced him to Roger Desormière. Artaud worked closely with Desormière and was quite explicit about the music and effects that he wanted. He hoped to use real bells and to include other actual sounds, but for the most part he had to settle for recorded noises. Fortunately, Desormière had a good deal of experience working with microphones and recording techniques. Typical of their experimentation was the attempt to

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1 *ibid.*, p.107.
2 This has been translated from French by Victoria Nes Kirby and published in *ibid.*, p.108.
create music for the last scene by using anvils, screw nuts, files and other metal objects. The audience was surrounded and constantly bombarded by sound. The tolling bell resounded from the four corners of the auditorium before the curtain was raised. Desormiere underlined the actors' movements with sounds. At moments the performers' steps were echoed by recorded footsteps at full volume. Rhythmic stamping was backed by sound, broadcast at different volumes, of a metronome oscillating at various speeds. In the assassination scene a tempest rages: Desormiere used the loud, resounding tones of the Martenot 1 and recorded voices that shouted and whispered Cenci's name in a contrapuntal composition; the words crossed one another and were at first separated in time but came closer, rising in a crescendo that was immediately silenced. 2

For the ending, Artaud and Desormiere experimented with seven beat rhythms of Inca music. It was the first time stereophonic sound was used in the theatre with the sound of bells on tape and speakers placed in different points of the auditorium. These sound effects certainly made a strong impression on the audience, though they were not properly appreciated as most of the reviews indicated. On the whole the reviews were very unsympathetic, with only the occasional critic showing an intuitive grasp of Artaud's strange genius - Pierre Audiat's in Paris - Soir, May 9, 1935, for example:

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1 An electric keyboard instrument that sounds only one note at a time, invented by Maurice Martenot.

2 The Drama Review, Directing Issue (Artaud), p.108.
... But if *Les Cenci*... has any interest, it is certainly not because it is normal, intelligible, accessible. It is certainly not because of the acting of the best actors, but entirely because of the divine madness that is the intoxication of art and that appears in Antonin Artaud's text, in his mise en scène and at the same time in the stranger and penetrating accompaniment of M. Roger Désormière. ¹

Typical of the more common reaction is the following review written by a certain F.D. from *Le Temps* May 8, 1935:

... Some young people giggled. Sentences like: "The worst is yet to come ... You see what a jam ... It has misfired ..." ricocheted in the hall, stirring up small, joyous ripples.... The blase liked its daring decor of inexplicable architecture; their passion for theatre was revived by these naive and untamed efforts,...

Alarming noises filled the auditorium. Recorded on records, amplified by giant microphones (sic), the great bell of Chartres rang at full peal over our heads, and we cringed under the vibrations of the tolling ... The glimmering greens and reds of the lanterns signified wickedness and spilt blood.... - a formidable death procession was heard. Pieces of wood were knocked together, as if planks of the stage, the handles of the axes and the headsman's block were following the condemned, limping.

Voilà! The "Theatre of Cruelty!" Cruel and amusing. ²

And finally, here are two more adverse reviews, both addressed to Artaud, which ironically came close to the reactions he wanted:

¹ ibid., p.133.
² ibid., p.130.
... But don't think that you are launching such diabolical vibrations and spells over Paris with impunity. You are playing with fire ... Around me spectators were laughing like lunatics, trembling with hysterical laughter.\(^1\)

The second:

... But why did you use these sonorous and luminous techniques, which were enough to set my nerves on edge...?\(^2\)

From what one can make of a play through reading its text and reviews, *Les Cenci* was far from being a flawless production. A great deal of criticism was levelled at Iya Abdy, (she played the part of "Beatrice", the raped daughter), the beautiful Russian actress, who spoke French with a deplorable accent, and at Artaud himself, (he played the part of the "Cenci", the father), who had shouted so much at rehearsals that he was very hoarse for the actual performance. But there's no question that the new techniques he implemented were original and brilliant even though they at times misfired. We can sum up his audacious visual, and aural effects as follows: a whole range of disturbing visual and aural effects, and the startling use of body movements, gestures, sound and light to drive the

\(^1\) ibid., p.142.

\(^2\) ibid., p.143.
meaning home through the senses. These techniques, in fact, form the basis of our present avant garde theatre. To quote Charles Marowitz: "Today to the extent that we have a contemporary theatre at all we have a theatre exemplifying the ideals propounded in Artaud's manifestos."

Artaud's *Les Cenci* was staged in 1935 and his theatrical manifestos were published in 1938. Yet the first English theatrical experiment, directly inspired by Artaud's theories, did not take place in London till 1964. During these twenty six years Artaudian influence was far more strongly felt in America than in England and it was very largely American influence which finally powered Artaudian experiments here. Why should this have been so? I'd like to suggest that one of the reasons was because information about Balinese culture, which inevitably includes their theatre - Artaud's source of inspiration - was more accessible to the Americans than to the English. As early as 1936, Miguel Covarrubias's *Island of Bali* was published in New York. This was followed in 1942 by Gregory Bateson's and Margaret Mead's *Balinese Character* (A Photographic Analysis), in 1946 by Colin McPhee's *A House in Bali*, and in 1949 by Jane Belo's *Bali: Rangda*.

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1 See the chapter on 'Balinese in America' (pp.198 - 220) in John Loew's *Dancing out of Bali*, London 1954.

See Marowitz, p.143.
Furthermore, strenuous arrangements were made during 1952 for Balinese dancers to tour America. In other words the American intelligentsia had plenty of opportunities during the thirties, forties and fifties, to familiarize themselves with Balinese culture.

There is another reason why it was possible for Artaud's theatrical theories to be influential in America long before they were applied to productions in England. In the mid-fifties, the 'off-Broadway' movement had started in New York. The term 'off-Broadway' covered all those New York theatres that wanted to present work unsuited to the boulevard - both in terms of content and presentation. It was only natural that an experimental movement of this kind, given the knowledge of Balinese theatre and dance I've described above, should have looked to Artaud for its inspiration. All the important American 'off-Broadway' theatrical directors like Charles Marowitz, Jim Haynes, the Becks (founders of the 'Living Theatre'), Joseph Chaikin (founder of the 'Open Theatre') and Tom O'Horgan - the 'elan vital' behind the 'La Mama' group - made use of sensuous and disturbing forms of physical theatre a la Artaud.

1 All these books are listed in my bibliography.
2 See the chapter on 'Balinese in America' (pp.198 - 220) in John Coast's Dancing out of Bali, London 1954.
3 See Marowitz, p.143.
Artaud.¹

By 1958 there was a thriving theatrical movement in America experimenting with forms that would have delighted Artaud. And in this year Charles Marowitz came to England from America and started the 'In-Stage' - the first 'fringe' group in London. The term 'fringe' or alternative theatre is the collective title for that mass of small theatres that have emerged all over Britain since then and particularly since 1968. Marowitz himself, as an ardent admirer of Artaud's ideas on theatre, was to be extremely influential in the rise and growth of Artaudian consciousness in this country. And he has in fact established the strongest link between Artaud and the 'fringe' by asserting that contemporary theatre can only be defined in terms of Artaudian ideas.

Apart from Marowitz, another American theatrical figure - Jim Haynes - has influenced the 'fringe' movement in England and powerfully contributed towards increasing Artaudian consciousness here. In 1963² he left America

¹ See p.22/ above where Marowitz says that Artaud was the inspirational force for all these groups.

² It was a significant year, for in that year "La Mama" and "The Living Theatre" were flourishing in New York which became a "mecca" for anyone interested in new types of theatre.
and started the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh. In 1968 he started the "Arts Laboratory" in Drury Lane, London, and gave the English 'fringe' groups like the "Freehold", the "Portable Theatre" and "Pip Simmons Group" some of their first performances.\(^1\) The "Arts Laboratory" really made a lot of 'fringe' theatre possible in the eighteen months of its existence. By the late sixties\(^2\) avant garde American directors were either bringing their companies to perform in England, or working with English companies. These groups were beginning to have an impact on British audiences. And further support came from Holland: around this time Ritsaert ten Cate, a one time TV producer, started The Mickery there and the Traverse Company was the first British Company which was invited over to perform.

What strikes one in an examination of the British

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\(^1\) All the above information about the growth of the 'fringe' theatre in England is taken from a BBC transcript of a Radio 3 programme called Notes from Underground (The Fringe Theatre) written and introduced by Chris Barlas on 29.10.74.

\(^2\) Just two examples: in October 1967 the La Mama Company under the direction of Tom O'Horgan presented Tom Paine by Paul Foster at the Vaudeville Theatre in London; in September 1968 Tom O'Horgan directed Hair at The Shaftesbury Theatre. Charles Marowitz writes:

In Hair the La Mama style has been wholly realized.

... the remorseless playing out of physical subtexts 

... the unabashed gimmickry, ... the weird musical instruments etc.... The Confessions of a Counterfeit Critic, p.143.
'fringe' movement is that its rise and development seem to coincide with a spell of Artaudian consciousness in Britain. The revolutionary context of the fringe movement was certainly a contributive factor. 1968, which marked the beginning of this movement in Britain, happened also to be a year of great violence, unrest and major student revolutions all over the world - the short-lived Czechoslovak 'spring' and demonstrations of student power in Paris, California, London and elsewhere. The 'fringe' shows with their Artaudian disdain of a logical story line represented a refreshing, different kind of experience for theatre goers. Often the images certainly drew from the same energy. It was therefore inevitable that when it got off the ground in 1968, it should have provided the opportunities for Artaud's anarchist theories of theatre communication via shock techniques to be tested out. So in the rise and present decline of the 'fringe' can be traced to a large extent the public response to Artaudian techniques.

It is interesting in a survey of the British 'fringe' movement, to notice that until 1970 it was developing in an encouraging way. In 1970 there were about sixty 'fringe' groups. And the rapid growth of fringe groups provided more opportunities for the testing out of Artaudian techniques. 1970 also marked the emergence of the popular...
entertainment magazine (still current) *Time Out*. John Ford, its first drama critic, gives the following picture of the 'fringe' at that time:

'... if you saw the People Show¹ at that time in a small theatre, the experience was just so different. There wasn't a script, there was music, there were things being thrown at the audience, there were plastic bags full of guts,* ... it was just not the same thing as going to see Noel Coward at all.²

The 'fringe' shows with their Artaudian disdain of a logical story line represented a refreshing, different kind of experience for theatre goers. Often the images presented were only sign posts for the spectator, and in 1970 the atmosphere seemed to indicate that all these groups could have been on the point of gaining acceptance by the established theatre. The following is an account by Mark Long of "The People Show"³ describing the electrifying

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¹ One of the really experimental fringe groups still functioning.

² N.B. I've deliberately underlined this - a description which exactly captures the infantile fervour of original fringe groups in their rebellious mania to shock audiences.

³ Notes from Underground, op.cit., p.7.

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¹ One of the really experimental fringe groups still functioning.

² N.B. I've deliberately underlined this - a description which exactly captures the infantile fervour of original fringe groups in their rebellious mania to shock audiences.

³ Notes from Underground, op.cit., p.7.
atmosphere of "The Royal Court Come Together":¹

...I remember I had the definite feeling that this was a tremendously successful venture. I did at that time actually feel that the fringe is going to make the real big impact now and that the theatres are actually going to take to it and give it room. But it never happened again. I've no idea why it didn't, but it didn't. But for three weeks the Royal Court was packed afternoon, night, late night in all its spaces - packed - couldn't get in - and millions of different events happening and it didn't even matter if they were bad that was what was so tremendous about it.²

This is an enthusiastic account, but unfortunately the total lack of discrimination, shown at the end of the quotation, is reflected in the quality of experimental theatre in Britain generally. And this no doubt has contributed to its decline.

I want now to examine some of the reasons which have been put forward to explain the decline of the fringe because they are closely linked with the implementation of Artaudian ideas. First of all, as Charles Marowitz suggested, the political social atmosphere of the early Artaudian wave in England did not so much bring about the creation of new physical forms of theatre as emphasize the power of reaching audiences "through the skin," to use Artaud's phrase again. As Jenny Harris of the Brighton Art Festival put it, one ought to view the swing to new techniques as a reaction against straight theatre:

¹ In the early '70's Bill Gaskill of the Royal Court Theatre organized the "Come Together" Festival. For the first time an established fully subsidized professional theatre threw open its doors to the new wave of experimental theatre. During three weeks a plethora of fringe groups performed in the Royal Court's two auditoria.

² Notes from Underground, op.cit., p.7.
seventies was quite different from that of the late sixties; Early '73 a lot of the stalwart groups of the fringe theatre suddenly collapsed at the same time — Pip Simmons, the Freehold and one or two others. It was obvious that they felt that they had come to the end of a creative phase and I think it was tied up with the fact that the political and social atmosphere of Britain had changed somewhat since 1968.¹

There was also a strong tendency towards exhibitionism - a demonstration of skills for their own sake. This was inevitable with the development of a physical theatrical tradition which combined traditional techniques like clowning, dancing, and fire-eating, with new ways of integrating music and live performance. In fact, the Artaudian wave in England did not so much bring about the creation of new physical forms of theatre as emphasize the power of reaching audiences “through the skin”, to use Artaud’s phrase again. As Jenny Harris of the Brighton Combination put it, one ought to view the swing to new techniques as a reaction against straight theatre:

I think what happened was that there were two feelings: One feeling among some of us was that thing I said about the wrong audience and the deadness of the whole institution of theatre and the British way of life. Referring to the Portable Theatre, I said the great strength of the Freehold — a group frequently criticized...
the other very strong feeling was that not only was that the case but that also even more important that the techniques of theatre were no longer vital and they were still stuck in say the '50's or '40's or '30's... So one thing that a lot of people interested in live performance tried to do was to develop new techniques and really explore new techniques and become very disciplined about it. So you've got people like the Freehold exploring movement... and then you've got other groups like us who weren't so interested in technique but were more interested in what was being said and who they were playing to, but to make that vital had to find techniques, but they were more I think traditional techniques that were really beginning to come out now like clowning, dancing and all the sort of stunt techniques such as fire eating and music and really trying to integrate music in a new way into live performance. I think that now what has happened is that a lot of the people working with new techniques in fact explored them fairly fully and they became incorporated into the general mainstream of theatre, so now often, when you go and see shows in what we call straight theatre, you see all the techniques that you were working on being used.

The new wave of experimental theatre had in fact started off well. But why then is it on the decline? Nancy Meckler has pointed to the fringe theatre's adoption of a new physical tradition which she feels is basically alien to the British way of life. Referring to the Portable Theatre, she said:

Notes from Underground, p.8.

1 Ibid., p.10. (See above, note 1, p.307).

2 Founder of the Freehold - a group frequently criticized for being interested merely in style.
... I think that was very interesting that the one English group which really seemed to thrive was a writers' theatre.... The Portable wasn't interested working with actors in a different way, they were interested in doing new plays, giving writers a chance. You really have this physical tradition coming from America and the writing tradition - the language tradition in England and I think maybe that's part of the reason that the fringe didn't go on for very long was that - well, I don't know, obviously the fringe is still around in one shape or form, but all that, the physical theatre thing, it came from elsewhere and in a funny way because it was a transplant ... there wasn't perhaps the energy to keep it going, ... it didn't spawn more groups.¹

But the Portable Theatre couldn't survive either. It died for financial reasons. The last point is important because it helps to illuminate the collapse of Pip Simmons' Theatre Group which certainly did not break up for the same reasons. In fact Pip Simmons' grant had gone up from £1700 in 1970/71 to £7000 in 1971/72 which actually meant physical means could not really take root in Britain. And that he was able to go and do what he wanted to do. But the techniques remained on the level of technical financial security was not at the heart of the problem. There was something fundamentally wrong with the fringe movement. As he himself put it:

There were of course other reasons indicated by the general effectiveness and deficiencies evident at one of the

¹ Notes from Underground, p.8.
... the impetus had gone out of the fringe movement as it existed for me in any case. By 1972 people got cocky and frankly I felt that at the end — for me at the end most of what I saw was rubbish, it had nothing to do with anything except demonstration of people's skill and I'd rather go to the circus because it's better done there.¹

The situation became a vicious circle. One hypothesis was that because the physical techniques adopted by the fringe were regarded as "foreign", as Nancy Meckler suggested above, British audiences were never quite at home with them. Although Jenny Harris of the Brighton Combination has pointed out that these techniques can be viewed as revivals of traditional ones (see pp. 311-312), the majority of fringe audiences became extremely adept at work- ing at new ways of saying things, they had nothing much in common with the new kind of theatre. There was also the tendency to display skills for their own sake and the fact that although in the late sixties and early seventies many of the fringe groups became extremely adept at work­ ing at new ways of saying things, they had nothing much in common with the physical techniques and the content which is communicated clearly and understood by the audience. One physical means could not really take root in Britain. And so the techniques remained on the level of technical exercises which were eventually degraded into acts of exhibitionism.

There were of course other reasons indicated by the general effusiveness and deficient content of some of the fringe manifestos I've quoted. Sheer exuberance in

¹ Notes from Underground, p. 9.
rebelling against straight theatre[^1] is no substitute for the exercise of high powered imagination. And unfortunately, the quality of imagination in many of the experimental productions was exactly what was lacking. Not surprisingly then, these productions lost their original appeal, and the first flush of excitement over a new kind of theatre soon passed. There was also the tendency to display skills for their own sake and the fact that although in the late sixties and early seventies many of the fringe groups became extremely adept at working at new ways of saying things, they had nothing much to say. As I've tried to show in Chapter IV, the power of Artaud's ideal theatre - the Balinese theatre - lies not so much in its techniques but in the content which is communicated clearly and understood by the audience. One could go too far in the cultivation of exciting new theatrical techniques which do not quite match up with the material. This, as Nancy Meckler suggested, was the problem met with by many fringe groups:

[^1]: See for example the account of the beginning of experimental theatre given by John Ford - first drama critic of Time Out on p.309.
We found that one of the real problems we had was that we got awfully good at working at ways of saying things but we couldn't find the material that would get us all committed. That became very much a problem...

And of course another problem related to the implementation of new techniques was that they were expressive only to the theatrically sophisticated.

To summarize: the novelty of physical techniques - the inevitable element of exhibitionism in which style became an end in itself - and the lack of material to match the newly acquired techniques seemed to have contributed to the decline of the fringe. For by the middle of 1973 most of the fringe groups had collapsed. And although lunch time theatre and fringe groups are still performing, there was a visible waning of enthusiasm in 1974. Many of the directors and actors in the fringe have been absorbed into the mainstream theatre. There was clearly an element of 'showcasing' in their motives for working in the fringe.

The result is that Artaudian techniques are now incorporated in straight productions sometimes judiciously and successfully. But from all this one can still isolate what seems an irresolvable resistance of the British

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1 Notes from Underground, p.11.
audiences to Artaudian techniques which are still closely associated with fringe theatre. It is basically a conservatism which distrusts anything out of the ordinary and has certainly stood in the way of a whole-hearted response to Artaudian shock techniques. In other words, the background and temperament of the audience are vital factors which have to be taken into consideration.

This is the sociological aspect of Artaudian application. In Chapter IV, I stressed how much the effective working out of Balinese theatrical images depended on the tacit understanding of the Balinese community. It is in fact the community which provides Balinese theatrical images with a highly charged metaphysical meaning that is nevertheless totally comprehensible to every member of a Balinese audience. The problem of transplanting Oriental theatrical techniques is that while one can imitate them, it is not possible to superimpose their unique social structure on a Western social framework. And it is here that the problem seems to turn on a sociological factor—a point clearly appreciated by Max Stafford Clark who used to run the Traverse Workshop Company, an experimental group loosely attached to the Traverse, and who is now one of the founder members of the Joint Stock, an experimental touring
company in London:

I think what I've got to offer ... is a response
to the conditions in which I find myself. And
that means that on the whole, the things I do
are best appreciated by people with a similar
background. So that's obviously a fault of this
but at the same time I think it's impossible to
conceive of this on a cosmic scale.... I think
finally you are a product of a particular society
and that you're stuck with that and that you have
to express your fears, obsessions and desires in
reference to that really ... there is either a
community theatre or arty theatre.

This is by no means a full explanation why "arty" theatre,
using exotic techniques, has not fared very well in this
country, but it shows a need to relate techniques to the
background of the audience. The decline of the "fringe"
seems connected with its adoption of what is considered
a foreign theatrical tradition which cannot really take root
in the Western social framework. There are of course many
other complex factors outside the scope of this thesis
which have contributed to its decline. I've been mainly
interested in assessing the extent of Artaudian conscious­
ness in Britain, as reflected in the survival or collapse
of the fringe movement in Britain.

\[i p id=n.12. (See above, note 1, p. 307).\]
I'd like now to discuss the most publicized collaboration between an English and American director - the so-called "Theatre of Cruelty" experiment presented in London, in 1964, by Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz at the LAMDA\(^1\) Theatre. It was a workshop designed primarily to fight what Charles Marowitz described as "the primordial instinct in English actors that believes the voice is the medium for good speech, projection and resonance, the carrier of the theatrical "message" and the body a useful but secondary adjunct."\(^2\) The objective was to teach that the body could be used as a means of communication.\(^3\)

Among the items in a very mixed programme was a de production of Artaud's three-minute play, Spurt of Blood,\(^4\) (played through first in sounds, then as Artaud wrote it), and two collages by Brook. The first was called The Public Bath in which a girl (Glenda Jackson) was stripped, bathed, and dressed in a prison uniform, to the words of a reported acknowledged Artaud as his mentor and Artaud had played Marat.

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3. This was also the objective of Peter Brook's African Tour in 1972-73.  
on the then topical Christine Keeler case. Using the same words, the girl transformed herself into Jacqueline Kennedy at her husband's funeral. The second was *The Guillotine*, made up from original sources. The general reaction to the LAMDA "Theatre of Cruelty" experiment was one of bewilderment.¹

But the importance of the experiment was that it led to what has been considered a major achievement - Peter Brook's production of *Marat/Sade*, shortened from what must be the longest ever title for a play: *The Persecution and Assassination of Marat as performed by the inmates of the Asylum of Charenton, under the direction of the Marquis de Sade*. Certain features from the LAMDA experiment were recognizable: Marat's bath-tub, the sound of the guillotine, the buckets of blood, and Charlotte Corday's use of her hair to whip the half naked Sade. But two other factors deserve mentioning: Peter Weiss, who wrote *Marat/Sade*, had acknowledged Artaud as his mentor and Artaud had played Marat in the film *Napoléon* in 1926. So for all these reasons and chiefly because the production had a "kind of stylized mania", it was regarded as "closer to the personality of..."

¹ J.C. Trewin, *Peter Brook, op.cit.*, p.141.
Antonin Artaud than any other single thing". This production of the Marat/Sade, which I saw in September 1964, marked my own first experience of Artaudian theatre. I came out of the performance, completely stunned, in particular by the last scene when the whole assembly of lunatics charged threateningly at the audience, but not really clear what the play was about. The shock of the production was so great that I don't think many people were able to assess intelligently what had happened to them, as Brook hoped they would:

Starting with its title, everything about this play is designed to crack the spectator on the jaw, then douse him with ice-cold water, then force him to assess intelligently what has happened to him, then give him a kick in the balls, then bring him back to his senses again.

It's as though in discovering the effectiveness of shock techniques - the lunatic grimacing, the infinite variety of disturbing cries, the startling use of make-up etc. - the most important point was missed: shock techniques are not meant as substitutes for the meaning but as reinforcements of it. Brook himself said that the Marat was liked in England not so much as a play about revolution,

1 Charles Marowitz, Theatre at Work, p.183.
2 See introduction to Peter Weiss's, The Persecution and Assassination of Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade, London 1965.
war and madness, but as a display of theatricality. And it is interesting to note that the actors found the play much more rewarding to perform in New York than in England, because the audience there more easily accepted the proposition that man is a potential lunatic. So the theatricality powerfully reinforced the strange affinity the audiences felt with the play. ly rhetorical text which was written.

The Marat/Sade certainly helped to set the scene for a series of Artaudian productions in Britain. But I want to continue with my examination of Brook's major Artaudian productions in chronological order: as can be seen with the LAMDA experiment, it is difficult to reach a categorical verdict about their success or failure. Often one is left with the impression of a major piece of theatrical achievement even if one cannot come to terms with some of Brook's overpowering physical effects. Such is the case with his Oedipus which I'll be discussing next. But I'm mainly concerned in examining the following issues from the evidence of his productions: can a director dispense with the written text and substitute the language of sounds and gestures?; if he has a text, should he keep

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1 Another play which Artaud greatly admired was John Ford's Of Mice and Men. A play about the inescapable bonds of brother for his sister. See The Theater and
strong physical effects subordinate?; how free can he be in handling a text?; and lastly, does effective Artaudian theatre depend on combining a total understanding of, and respect for, the text with strong physical effects?.

Oedipus was first performed at the Old Vic Theatre on March 19th 1968. The English poet, Ted Hughes, had adapted it from Seneca's highly rhetorical text which was written to be declaimed rather than acted. Oedipus with its disturbing presentation of incest, violence and destiny is such an intrinsically powerful play that it can support the use of the most arresting physical effects as an outward expression of its inner meaning. It is not a coincidence that Artaud's production of Les Cenci which exemplified his own theories of the theatre of cruelty also dealt with the theme of incest. In other words, Oedipus was a gift for Brook who, as an ardent Artaudian exponent, believes fully in the therapeutic value of violent and disturbing theatrical images and techniques. The following comments by Brook in the Daily Mail, 26.8.64, illustrate this affinity with Artaud:

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1 Another play which Artaud greatly admired was John Ford's 'Tis Pity she's a whore - a play about the incestuous love of a brother for his sister. See The Theater and Its Double, pp.28-30.

Violence is the natural artistic language of the times. A play must leave you in a more receptive mood than you were before. It isn't there to 'move' people. That's a ghastly idea. You cry, you have a bath of sentiment. You come out saying you've had a lovely time. I prefer the notion of disturbance which leaves you in a greater state of disturbance.

So 'in complete sympathy with Peter Brook's guiding idea', Ted Hughes adapted Seneca's Oedipus like a piece of richly textured music and made it possible for the actors experimenting with the most daring vocal techniques under Brook's direction to release "whatever inner power this story, in its plainest, bluntest form, still has, and to unearth ... the ritual possibilities within it." The actors were made to listen to many recordings of primitive tribes and Buddhist and Tibetan monks who could resonate through every part of the body. And from Colin Blakely, who played Creon, we learn that Brook made his actors have a chance to rival Larry's Oedipus with T'ai Chi Ch'üan exercises to teach them control — "to do physically whatever was necessary with the least amount of effort." The performance was in fact a tribute to the power of imaginative vocal orchestration to enforce

2 Trewin, p.166. 19. 9. 73, p.10.
the meaning of the text and, in Artaud's words "to bring the spectator to submission". Apart from the main characters on the stage, actors in roll neck sweaters and slacks were positioned all over the auditorium hissing, thumping and intoning throughout the performance.

Visually, a revolving sheet metal cube which turned from silver to gold when the lights intensified and a gigantic golden phallus, brought in at the end of the play, were riveting focal points. But the main emphasis of the production was on the precise skilful orchestration of words and sounds in order to release the inner power of the text. It is helpful to have John Gielgud's own comments on how he was told to approach his role:

When I did Oedipus with Peter Brook ... it was like going into the army.... He wouldn't let me be emotional. He made me stylized and he wouldn't allow me to let go. I'd been hoping to have a chance to rival Larry's Oedipus with all that screaming and howling. But Brook's Oedipus was so different, so staid, so stylized, so static.¹

If the general character of Brook's Oedipus was "so staid, so stylized, so static", it would be interesting to pin-point why his vocal effects a la Artaud were so disturbing. If the general character of Brook's Oedipus was 'churlishly disguised Open Theater techniques, Grotowski-tactics and lifts from Living Theater'.

¹ Arts Guardian, 19. 9. 73, p.10.
We have indeed ample evidence that they were disturbing. Only J.C. Trewin, writing about this production, said: "We were aware only of the strong assault upon the nerves and senses." Brook obviously succeeded in provoking deeply disturbing physical responses from his audience—a fact which even Charles Marowitz, one of Brook's severest critics, conceded, though Marowitz unfairly added:

Is there really much to be said for provoking physical responses by physical means when no dramatic purpose is served? 2

I'd like now to show why Brook's Oedipus was so disturbing by quoting two versions of the same passage: the original Senecan text and Hughes' adaptation. This will illustrate that the Artaudian effects Brook achieved in his production were particularly disturbing because they were radically derived from the text and therefore served a powerful dramatic purpose. It is to be noted that Hughes' version:

In equal masses rise, each mass cut off,
And covered with a fine transparent membrane, as if refusing to conceal its secret.

1 Trewin, p.168.

2 Though Marowitz and Brook worked jointly in the first major Artaudian production at LAMDA in 1964, they seem to have parted company. Marowitz has, I think, blindly dismissed Brook's Oedipus as 'thinly disguised Open Theater techniques, Grotowsky-tactics and lifts from Living Theater'. See Confessions of a Counterfeit Critic, p.137.

3 ibid., p.136.
adaptation is closely based on the original, differing only in a marked sparsity of style and rhythmic organization of words to bring out the meaning more starkly. Since Tiresias is blind, in this passage where his daughter, Manto, has to describe to him the visible portents of the animal sacrifices, there is every dramatic justification for Hughes and Brook to squeeze out the horror of the omen through the most startling aural devices. The following is Seneca's version:

TIRESIAS: Such evil portents in the sacrifice Are greatly to be feared. Tell me what signs You see in the entrails.

MANTO: Father, what is this? Instead of gently quivering as they should, They make my whole hand shake; there is fresh blood Proceeding from the veins. The heart is shrunken, Withered, and hardly to be seen; the veins Are livid; part of the lungs is missing, The liver putrid, oozing with black gall. And here - always an omen boding ill For monarchy - two heads of swollen flesh In equal masses rise, each mass cut off And covered with a fine transparent membrane, As if refusing to conceal its secret.

... The natural order of the parts is changed, The organs all awry and out of place.1

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Hughes' version reads:

TIRESTIAS: this sacrifice is evil but go deeper lift out the entrails describe all that you see

MANTO: something is wrong no membrane to contain the entrails and the intestines quake father what can this mean usually they quiver a little but these are twisting shuddering look how they shake my arm as if they had separate life much seems to be missing much of the intestines the heart is missing no here is the heart shrivelled withered up diseased black buried down here far from its natural position what does it mean father everything is reversed the lungs are squeezed here far over to the right gorged with blood how did they breathe the liver is rotten breaks in my hand oozing black bitter gall look this liver is double headed the left wing swollen twice its proper size knotted with great veins the right wing is deathly white fungus rotten but the finger of it is enormous stiff black with blood that is a fatal omen every position is wrong how did nature survive this

It is difficult not to be violently disturbed by such a vividly nauseous recitation of gory details. But these are not gratuitous horrors - they evoke relevant physical

\[\text{footnote} 1 \text{ Ted Hughes. } \text{Oedipus, p.28.}\]
revulsion because these details, suggesting a fundamental distortion, are inextricably related to the central meaning of the Oedipic tragedy. Equally chilling is the slave's description of Oedipus' self blinding: every gruesome detail is unsparingly and unbearably delineated till the full force of the myth is driven home. This is Artaudian theatre at its best. Brook's Oedipus is a good example of how effectively Artaudian techniques of unusual vocalization can work if they are radically derived from the text.

After Oedipus, British audiences were beginning to be more familiar with Brook's use of startling vocal orchestrations in his productions. I'd like now to mention briefly his experimental production of The Tempest as a workshop project for a few public performances at the Round House in July 1968. The vocal techniques used in The Tempest were an extension of those in his production of Oedipus.

Originally The Tempest was the first project of the International Centre of Theatrical Research in Paris which Brook had opened in spring 1968 at the invitation of Jean Louis Barrault. But for political reasons\(^1\) the Group

\(^1\) I'm referring to the 1968 French student riots in Paris.
moved to the Round House to complete their experiment. Brook was interested to use this production as a testing ground for enquiring into the nature of theatre and the whole relationship between actors and spectators.

So Brook's Tempest represents another memorable attempt to evoke from the audience new responses to Artaudian application generally. What was strikingly successful was the appearance of Oberon on a trapeze and in the storm scene. But the danger of such a startling innovation is that its total unexpectedness could be self-defeating.

The whole project, blending Artaudian techniques and 
No elements, was certainly an exciting experiment and new techniques to create more effective theatre. Brook himself, however, was hesitant about its complete success as J.C. Trewin reports:

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1 See p.366 below. See also my discussion of 'hana' or 'flower' in Chapter V, p.39.

2 See Trewin, p.180. Brook and Sally Jacob, the designer for his Dream, were inspired by the Chinese acrobats performing in a Chinese circus in Paris.
Peter Brook says he has not got it right yet. One day he will, just as a Japanese Noh actor, searching for what he speaks of as the 'flower' - the true moment of communication - must one day succeed in his task.¹

So Brook's _Tempest_ represents another memorable instance of his quest for effective theatre - a search which is still going on.

Brook's use of Chinese-inspired circus techniques² in his production of _A Midsummer Night's Dream_ in 1970 raises some very challenging questions about the problems of Artaudian application generally. Much was strikingly successful: the appearance of Oberon on a trapeze and Puck on a pair of gigantic stilts suggested in a powerfully physical way characters from another plane - the world of fairies or dreams. And the circus techniques reinforced the double structure of the play: the interaction of an imaginative dream world with reality. But this duality also characterizes the play's central vision. As Hermia (one of the lovers) puts it pointedly at the end of the play: "Methinks I see these things with parted eye,/ When everything seems double." _The Dream_ presents a

¹ See Trewin, p.170. See also my discussion of 'hana' or 'flower' in Chapter I, p.39.
² See Trewin, p.180. Brook and Sally Jacob, the designer for his _Dream_, were inspired by the Chinese acrobats performing in a Chinese circus in Paris.
double vision of love and marriage. And the text of this play brings out clearly the cruelty and vindictiveness of love and marriage as well as their lyrical and restorative aspect.

This is where Brook's production failed. The circus techniques underlined the cruelty but not the harmony of love. For example, the magical flower - 'love in idleness' - was represented in Brook's production by a silver plate spun and caught with admirable dexterity by Puck and Oberon. This entirely fresh representation helped to emphasize the high degree of risk and accident in love. One little slip, as shown in Puck's misapplication of the herbal flower, resulted in the most painful entanglement of emotions as reflected in the lovers' quarrels.

Again, in Sally Jacob's coiled wire forest - another innovation by which Brook shattered our stock reactions to the woodland glade - the savagery of sex was effectively high-lit. This was pointedly brought home when the squabbling lovers fought and chased each other round the metal catwalk surmounting the stage.

But as I've suggested the play isn't simply an indictment of the cruelty in sexual desire even though dissension occurs as a striking motif throughout: the lovers' quarrel;
Theseus has won Hippolita’s love with ‘sword’ and ‘injuries’; Oberon is at war with Titania over the possession of a changeling boy; and Egeus threatens his daughter, Hermia, with death if she refuses to marry the man of his choice. There is, however, harmony as well. Though Oberon uses the magical flower to humiliate Titania and wrench the changeling from her, he is not an entirely unsympathetic character. He also uses the flower to bring Demetrius and Helena together. And the play ends on a happy note with the celebration of three nuptials and the reconciliation between Oberon and Titania who both invoke blessings on the newly married couples. There is undeniably an implication that these newly weds will fall out and hurt each other as Oberon and Titania have done but the mood at the end is celebratory. Admittedly, there was a lot of gaiety at the end of Brook’s production, but on the whole, the warm tender effects of the play weren’t brought out: the massacre of the innocents, the imprisonment of the son by the father, the search for the indefinably magic quality of *The Dream*.

In fact, the use of circus techniques and the novelty of the setting, while generating a very real power, did not catch the comic scenes of the plot involving Bottom and the mechanicals seemed very much reduced by the spectacular feats which Brook had so conscientiously introduced. Indeed, the circus techniques...
proved too powerful and ultimately distracting. And here we have an illustration of Artaudian techniques becoming counterproductive because they generated a force which asserted too visibly a life and character of their own, only partially supported by the text.

**Orghast** - Peter Brook's international experiment in applying Artaudian techniques - performed at the Shiraz-Persepolis theatrical festival on the last day of August and the first day of September in 1971, is not only an important milestone in his work, but seems to have paved the way for his large-scale African experiment in 1972 and 1973. **Orghast**, which means 'sun' and 'ice', is both the name of the invented language and the title of the performance. The following is part of a quotation from the programme:

Orghast stems from certain basic myths - the gift of fire, the massacre of the innocents, the imprisonment of the son by the father, the search for liberation through revenge, the tyrant's destruction of his children and the search for liberation through knowledge - as reflected in the hymns of Zoroaster, the stories of Prometheus and Hercules, Calderon's *Life's a Dream*, Persian legends, and other parallel sources.¹

¹ This is taken from Osvald Trilling's comments in Theatre Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 5, Jan.-Mar., London 1972, p.34.
Ted Hughes was given the job of inventing the language for Orghast. He himself put it "that would deal with precision, and in a completely intelligible way, with a world that is, in a way, closed to direct, rational analysis."

The following is an outline of the methodology used by Brook and Hughes in arriving at the final form of Orghast.

It is worth examining because it provides the key to his experiments in Africa:

We are trying to go beyond the outline formed by certain cultural patterns. We say "look beneath". And, of course, we're all formed by these patterns and our natural starting point is within what is accessible to us. We naturally start with what we know. So Ted and I started work, not from a void, in which we tried to invent pure pattern. The starting-point for both of us was a concrete reference, and that was the image and the myth of Prometheus. And then we set about exploring all the cross-currents that this particular myth evokes, both in ourselves, and in the group and in parallel cultures and so on....

Then, the withering away of forms themselves, of the detail, of the narrative, of the anecdotal side of these myths, led just as naturally to the attempt to look at what lay beneath. 1

On paper, this seems a logical way of arriving at Brook's ideal form of pure theatre. One should be able to do without the outer dress - the anecdotal aspect of a myth - to get at the kernel. But in practice, as Ossia Trilling reported, Orghast, which was meant to show what lay beneath the

1 ibid., p. 38.
Prometheus myth, failed to communicate this to the audience:

Orghast I was given four performances at sundown and at nightfall at Persepolis. The small platform on which the audience of about two hundred squatted in three rows on two of its sides, was dominated by tall overhanging cliff-like hillsides on the summits of which the distant figures of some performers could be recognized in the half-light provided by flares and torches. One apparently transfixed or tied to the rockface, was presumably Prometheus, and another with billowing robes was presently to utter piercing screams, perhaps of a vulture? Who knows?...

We await in strange anticipation. Suddenly a ball of fire swings over our heads. It is lowered by unseen hands. Some one rushes forward and lights a torch from it, while another extinguishes it in a huge, hissing cauldron with a lid on it. From then on the incidents follow close upon another's heels, and only a previous briefing from the literary department or some other collaborator of the director will explain what to all intents and purposes has been conceived as a strange and exotic ritual, as impenetrable as a religious ceremony in a foreign country and in an unfamiliar language.¹

Ossia Trilling concluded his review by saying he found it impressive but entirely unconvincing. The Financial Times was far more enthusiastic but the fact remains that though there were moments when the impact was comparable to "sonic trance," the experiment failed to speak directly to a mixed audience. And most of the reviews of Orghast agree with Ossia Trilling's in that they found it incomprehensible.

One, by a Persian scholar of philosophy, Sayyid Hossein Nasr, which was published in the festival bulletin, deserves

¹ ibid., p.39. (See above, note 1, p. 334.)
mention, because he said quite categorically that it is impossible to touch the audience on the deepest spiritual level without going through the channels of traditional language and myth expressed through concrete examples. And he based his observation on the fact that one of the profoundest effects made on the audience came through two actors, the Japanese and the black African, who could be identified directly with a distinct tradition. This point is by no means overstated because Nigerian audiences during Brook's African Tour were similarly struck by the force of the Japanese actor's performance. (See p.356).

And in his Timon of Athens production in 1974, again, the Japanese actor and the African actor were singled out for special mention.

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1 See A.C.H. Smith's Orghast at Persepolis, London 1972, pp.243-244. The Japanese and African actors referred to, were respectively, Katsuhiro Oida (Yoshi), who played King Krogon and Malick Bagayogo, who played Furorg. Cf. Brook's comments on Yoshi's portrayal of Ariel and how this ex-No actor was able to bring a special force from his own tradition to this role. (See p.366). Cf. also the African element in Timon through the use of chants and African actors which gave Brook's production an added dimension of primal power associated with the African way of life and acting tradition. (See pp.362-65). In Timon, Malick Bagayogo, who had worked with Jersy Grotowski before coming to Brook, played Apemantus, (see in particular p.365) and Yoshi, took the part of Cupidon. (See p.366).

2 See Orghast at Persepolis, pp.147-169.
This leads to a consideration of how far one can achieve theatrical effects without reference to a particular cultural tradition. It is tempting for a director like Brook, working with an international group, to regard a theatrical experience based on "indigenous relationship with roots" as a "romantic and sentimental" concept. Yet ironically it was exactly this narrow type of a theatrical form - the "ruhozi" in Persia - which gave a new impetus to Brook's ideal concept of a universal theatre, capable of speaking to everyone. I want to elaborate a little on the "ruhozi" because it helps to illuminate some of the difficulties inherent in Brook's dream of pure theatrical communication, independent of fixed theatrical forms.

The word "ruhozi" means literally "on the pond" and is a type of theatre performed in the middle of a courtyard boarded over for this purpose at weddings or other parties. The audience sit round in a circle. The bride's father arranges which story the "ruhozi" players are to perform and also specifies the level of jokes acceptable.

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1 At the start there were fifteen actors from England, France, U.S.A., Spain, Portugal, Japan and Morocco. There were directors from England, Roumania and America and a Swiss designer. Later five more nationalities were added - actors from Persia, Mali, Cameroon and Greece and a German director.

2 See Orghast at Persepolis, pp.147-169.
The language alternates between literary and bazaar back-chat. The audience plays a central role in controlling the pace and participates in direct repartee with the actors. It is a narrow, intimate form of theatre with strong indigenous roots. But what struck Brook was that this form of theatre produced an astonishing amount of "fantastically free energy and strong relationships". And here is the paradox: can we break out of the boundaries of a close, restricted form and still produce the force associated with it in a more open way? This clearly tantalized Brook and his later theatrical research in Africa was to test whether this separation could be made. As he put it:

... one of the biggest lessons was from the "ruhozi". Although the "ruhozi" is again a prisoner of its own very set ... in which there are narrowly restricted characters and themes that can only repeat themselves the fantastically free energy and strong relationships that this form produced again confirmed a hunch. If we can catch that form in a new manner - I mean not looked in preconceived forms - so that through a form as open and popular as the "ruhozi" it's possible to have the spectrum that enables us to incorporate the whole range of experiences, we'd be on the track of what, in a totally different way, could compass the range of the Elizabethan experience. 1

But the chief difficulty, as his African tour shows, is that the force of an original form disappears within

1 ibid., p.253.
another context. This can be seen in Brook's celebrated use of boxes in his theatrical experiments. To understand this experiment, here is Brook's own justification of his ideal means of direct theatrical communication, using the example of Pandora's box:

... If the story of Pandora's box is genuinely one of the deep mythic elements in the collective unconscious, then do we have to reach it through an image of Pandora, and an image of her box, or can we - which is really what the whole of the next step of the work is - can we say that in the opening of any cardboard box lurk potentially the entire mythic overtones of Pandora? If so, we need never make any reference to Pandora because just the action of opening a box in a certain way cannot fail to involve anybody in these overtones; because they are true, they are present, and the theatre is the act of concentration by which this banal action suddenly takes on all its other levels of meaning, and doesn't have to explain or illustrate them through dream or myth, or interpretation. This is what we wish to find.1

It was the simplicity of the "ruhozi" which gave Brook the idea of asking his Swiss designer, Jean Monod, to make boxes in sorbo rubber and polystyrene, from which actors could emerge. Speaking optimistically about this project, Brook said: "You could take it anywhere in the world; the word would go round a village that actors are performing, you lay down the carpet, set out the boxes and it's universally understandable."2 Unfortunately, in practice, as A Play

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1 ibid., p.252.
2 ibid., p.152.
about Birds,* presented to Nigerian audiences in his African Tour, showed, the sequence in which his Japanese actor went in and out of a cardboard box was incomprehensible to the spectators. (See p. 356).

At this point I want to examine Brook's African Tour in some detail as it represents an experiment in which Artaudian techniques of theatre were fully explored and tested in all their implications. On December 1st, 1972, Brook and a group of thirty actors left Paris for Africa sponsored by the International Centre for Theatrical Research, to see if theatrical forms could communicate directly in an Artaudian way without a shared language or culture. While producing Shakespeare, Brook said that some of the most powerful performances of the works he had been connected with had taken place when people had understood the language least. This led him to conclude that many signals come through simultaneously in a theatrical performance and in certain instances the performance is felt more powerfully if only some of the signals come through.¹ So the African experiment was to find out what conditions would enable the theatre to speak most directly to an audience. As Brook put it:

* This was based on the 12th C Persian allegory, 'The Conference of the Birds'. See 'Peter Brook's other Dream' in Observer Review, 26.11.72, p.29.
In what conditions is it possible for what happens in a theatre experience to originate from a group of actors and be received and shared by spectators without the help and hindrance of the shared cultural signs and tokens?^1

Brook had chosen Africa as the experimental base because for him it was extremely important that his project was played to the "right" audience. He felt that in Africa he could find an audience which would be as powerful a creative element in the primal event as the actor. The following shows the tremendous importance Brook placed on audience reaction:

Whether the audience participates, in a way that has become fashionable, by showing it is participating because it is moving around, whether it participates by standing motionless (etc. etc.) ... is only of secondary importance. What is of total importance is that the theatre phenomenon only exists when the chemical meeting of what has been prepared by a group of people, and is incomplete, comes into relationship with another group, a wider circle which is the people who are there as spectators. When a fusion takes place, then there is a theatre event. When the fusion doesn't take place there is no event. And this combustion, this chemical process depends very largely on certain elements that the audience brings.\(^2\)

Brook states clearly that he chose Africa because he felt that it would provide him with the "optimum" audience.

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1 ibid., p.47.
2 ibid., p.48. See below the African return to this on p. 352.
3 ibid., pp.49-50.
"an audience that had certain qualities that you could find
ing and therefore one can work without roots because in other parts of the world, but which seemed to exist in
Africa in their most concentrated form; on the one hand, having total openness to forms because they have not in any way been conditioned by western forms."

Brook's own definition of his ideal theatrical form of communication deserves examination. He justifies his position before defining it by saying that it is not meant to be a denial of the small regional or ethnic theatre in which local slang and references are communally understood, but rather its complement:

"... there is still another direction, and this is the one we're for. And that is not to deny the regional principle but to complement it in a different way. And that is to say that within the human body there is another root, because the human body, in all its aspects, organically is common ground for all mankind... aside from minor differences of colour and..."

And the following is an elaboration of the preceding quotation:

Our work is based on the fact that some of the deepest aspects of human experience can reveal themselves through the sounds and movements of the human body in a way that strikes an identical chord in any

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1 ibid., p.48. See below the African retort to this on p. 352.

2 ibid., pp.49-50.
These arguments for using the body as a universally comprehensible means of theatrical expression seem persuasive, coming from a director like Brook, with his vast experience and impressive record of theatrical productions. But although he says that his ideal theatrical form of communication is meant as a complement to the 'regional' principle - in practice, the very nature of his experiment forces him to deny this. Theoretically it seems fascinating to explore the idea of absolute theatre, but it is precisely the "exclusiveness" of the new direction, wholly concentrating on communication through the body, without recognizable language, which makes it dogmatic and limits its validity outside the context of an experiment. To deny the theatre the use of recognizable language is to deny it one of its most potent and irreplaceable forces of communication. This certainly accounts for the fact that many avant garde theatrical experiments which try to communicate without words seem emasculated. Why should

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1 ibid., p.50.

See my account of Brook's production, Zimba which succeeded because respect for the text was sustained with the daring use of Artaudian techniques.
the theatre deny itself the use of language — one of the basic means of communication? One can compare the logic behind theatrical experiments without words to that of someone who chooses to be dumb in order to develop more sharply his other means of expression. This is clearly a means to an end. But unfortunately, the forcefulness of Brook's arguments turns them into dogmas — means become an end in themselves and their experimental premise is often completely forgotten. It is certainly true that there is a need to develop non-linguistic means of communication, but surely development in other directions need not be based on the naive assumption that language is unnecessary. Why can't development in other means of communication progress in conjunction with, and not at the expense of, language?  
And Brook's ideal of reaching everyone, irrespective of culture, must surely in the end lead to a dismal uniformity. Why should cultural barriers be removed anyway and in practice, how can they be removed? And what about irrelevant responses — the deep seated prejudices associated with certain ethnic groups which are called into play when familiar references of plot and language are removed. How successful in practice was Brook's African experiment? 

1 See my account of Brook's production, Timon, which succeeded because respect for the text was combined with the daring use of Artaudian techniques.
Brook himself was pleased with the results. Their journey was certainly impressive. They started out from Algiers, straight through the Sahara into Northern Niger to Agades. From there to south of the Niger, across the frontier into Nigeria to Kano. Then down to the middle of Nigeria to Jos, which is on the Benim Plateau, the centre of Nigeria. Then to Ife and to Cotonon in Dahomey, to Niamey cutting across a bit of Mali to Gao, and then across to Sahara, a different way back to Algiers. At the outset of their journey in Algeria, in the little town of In-Salah, Brook held his first "carpet show". He had conceived this idea in Persia (see p.340) that a troupe of players ought to be able to go anywhere in the world, unroll a carpet, collect an audience and play to it through body movements and sounds.1 The inhabitants of In-Salah were treated to the first improvisation of the troupe in Africa using a pair of boots simply placed in the middle of the carpet. Brook felt pleased that the audience had seemed interested. (See Fig.41, p.347). Later he discovered that nothing resembling this had ever

1 This experience and many others in Africa seemed invaluable for the production of Timon of Athens in Paris which was conceived very much in the character of a carpet show. See p.360.
A moment in improvisation with boots.

Fig. 48 This gives a rough idea of the kind of setting in which Peter Brook's troupe performed.

...that was the overwhelming experience wherever we went. The actual language of the Nigerian audience's reaction to Peter Brook's improvisations. They had seemed attentive, but the reviewer adds: "That bafflement can hold the attention for a long time is no surprise." See p. 352. She was implying that the seeming attention of an African audience was no guarantee of a real response.  

Reporting generally on the results of what must have been a very unusual experience for many of the villagers his group of actors played to, he said:

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1 Cf. the Nigerian audience's reaction to Peter Brook's improvisations. They had seemed attentive, but the reviewer adds: "That bafflement can hold the attention for a long time is no surprise." See p. 352. She was implying that the seeming attention of an African audience was no guarantee of a real response.
... a group of people from different parts of the world had set out to discover if a human contact could be made through this particular form called theatre without a shared language. I'd know by this thought being passed from one person to another and coming back to me perhaps, days later how totally it was understood in all its aspects without further explanation. It seemed unprecedented yet quite natural.  

And on the 29th March 1974, in the Arts Guardian, Brook revealed in an interview with Judith Cook that he considered his experiment in Africa most successful in terms of audience response:

In Africa, in terms of theatre, such an event had to justify itself and live and die on strictly human terms and appeal to people who would respond in a human way. The response was marvellous. When we approached them on that level, on one they respected, then they responded with respect. But they wouldn't give us one second's grace for normal theatre conventions and that was the overwhelming experience wherever we went. The actual language of theatre had to be made up each time.

In that interview Brook also emphasized the importance of experimenting with a theatrical form that could "scoop any audience":

If you believe that every human being has a right to be a natural part of an audience and if you reject the notion of selecting one and having imaginary passports at the door, then you realize an audience consists of whoever wants to come in.

1 The Drama Review, T-59, op.cit., p.43.
So far I've reported the results of this experiment from Brook's point of view. But as this was an experiment aimed at finding out how far it was possible to communicate directly with an African audience, I scoured several African newspapers for reports of African reaction to Brook's experiment. I found two accounts of the tour in a weekly newspaper called West Africa describing audience response - one full of enthusiasm written at the beginning of the experiment and the other dubious, the verdict reached at the end of it. Here's the first one which appeared on 15 January 1975 in West Africa describing the nature of the experiment in favourable terms:

Peter Brook in Kano.
Mr. Brook and his company are exploring ways in which plays can be performed which provide real dramatic experiences for audiences irrespective of their linguistic, cultural and social backgrounds. So the company eschews formal symbolic language and lay great emphasis on mime. For such research, Nigeria with its diversity of languages, cultures and social situations provides an unparalleled laboratory.

Already Mr. Brook's company has performed before three different types of audience in one culture group - the Hausa: in the old city of Kano itself, in a village off the beaten tracks, and in the small walled town of Kura.... For Africa's developing theatre the conclusions Mr. Brook reaches as a result of his research could be of paramount importance. Michael Crowder, head of the Ahmadu Bello centre in Kano, thinks that Brook's radical approach, eschewing the formalities and convention of the Western theatre, and trying to cut across cultural and linguistic barriers, could open up new horizons in drama in Africa.

"Already, he and his international company which in-
cludes a Japanese and a Malian, believe as a result of playing before Tuareg, Bouzo, Fulani and Hausa that they have something positive to offer" says Crowder. "Certainly the rapt attention of the audience in the Birni of Kano indicates they have. And more certainly still none of those concerned with the theatre who saw the company's humorous The Birds and their tragedy Orghast in Kano will ever think about the theatre in conventional terms again. As Mr. Brook said afterwards: 'Nigeria has all the conditions out of which a great new theatre could arise. For this reason it is an ideal place to undertake experiments unblocked by values that elsewhere have largely lost their life.'"

As can be seen, this article is mainly a repetition of Brook's own comments. The Nigerians seemed sympathetic to what he was trying to do and were proud to be chosen as guinea pigs. According to Michael Crowder, the audience in Kano gave him their "rapt attention". The company was planning to go to Ife after Kano, as the guests of the Institute of African Studies. Ife had quite a different report of the reaction to Brook's work.

On 16th April 1973, after Brook and his company had returned to Paris, the same newspaper West Africa published two articles, (one, on the 16th and the other, on the 23rd April), written by a member of the English Department at the University of Ife, based on close observations of

1 West Africa No. 2899. 15th January 1973, p.67.
audience reaction spread over three performances. These two reports aimed at showing what the reviewer felt to be the true audience response to Brook's play without words. And the response, as she saw it, was highly ambiguous. The audience could not really understand what the actors were trying to convey in mime, and this certainly puts a question mark on the complete success of an experiment using non-verbal means which Brook had hoped could communicate clearly and directly to anyone irrespective of culture or language. The body was to have been the working root and the common base of speaking to all.

First, let us examine this review from the beginning, because one has to assess the ground on which the reviewer's observations were made. She starts off clearly by saying that her observations were based on statistical surveys taken in the villages of Ife, Enrin, and Oshogbo in Nigeria. Altogether there were three performances. The play was about Birds - an experimental work in progress. (See Fig.42, p.355). The audiences on three occasions were different. And she distinguishes the so-called sophisticated academic

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1 These two parts of a report called "Brook Experience" I and II, published separately by West Africa, were written by Ming Tsow based on statistical survey of audience response in West Nigeria.
audience of Ife from the ordinary villagers which gives us a fair sample of a cross-section response. She seemed to have grasped fully the objective of Brook's experiment. As she put it, he was looking for the "wholly uninhibited" and not "pre-conditioned" response. She also added that what had really prompted her to write the article was the "seeming unconcern about actual audience reaction" to an experiment whose success was dependent on that audience reaction. On the point of Brook's special selection of Africa as the "optimum" audience she had this to say vis-a-vis Nigeria:

But the Nigerian villager is not a tabula rasa: he is used to local folk drama and masquerades. It is true of course that he is not conditioned in the same way as the Western audience. The actor may catch that moment of contact which may or may not be a wrong cultural interpretation. ¹ Of stillness is strongly contrasted with the different kind arising from the dynamic situation and carries on a dialogue of sounds with the chorus. The next incident begins with two soloists:

Then in answer to the report of the "rapt attention" given by, for instance, the Kano audience (see p.350) to Brook's work, she adds a caveat against equating rapt attention with real understanding:

The problem lies not in arousing attention but in sustaining it.²

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¹ See West Africa, 16 April 1973, "Brook Experience I", p.497.
² Ibid.
I want now to reproduce nearly the whole of her second article (published on 23rd April 1973), because it gives an account of what actually happened at the experiment from the audience's point of view. She has also taken the trouble to tabulate the slightly different reaction of the sophisticated section of the audience from that of the ordinary Nigerian villager. What seemed to be the chief difficulty experienced by the former was that it couldn't help putting different literary interpretations on a performance which was meant to be basically non-literary. The following is her description of the Play about Birds:

... the performance opens with a theatrical moment of stillness and concentration with nine actors (five women and four men) standing in various silhouettes on top of the parapet. The moment of stillness is strongly contrasted with the different bird noises emanating from the actors. The first soloist comes on stage from the opposite direction and carries on a dialogue of sounds with the chorus. A second soloist follows making his appearance as a walking cardboard box and a series of actions follow in which he claims some victims from the chorus. In the meantime he undergoes a change and becomes a woman.

The next incident begins with two soloists coming on stage and making a pattern with bamboos on the floor. The chorus cross the bamboos either alone or in combination. And the last member of the chorus picks up the sticks and ends the episode. What follows next is a series of actions until the reappearance of the two soloists who appear with two torches forming an archway through which the chorus pass in succession. A short interlude of actions follows before the second soloist reappears with a bamboo triangle. One member of the chorus attempts
to face the triangle which resolves into a rectangle. Finally all movements and sounds resolve in stillness and frozen postures. The first soloist then returns with a bundle of cardboard tubes. Each actor chooses a tube and posture and the performance ends.

What emerges clearly from the way the reviewer has described the sequence of actions in *Birds* is a sense of bewilderment at what exactly is taking place. The following is the reaction from the literary minded sophisticated section of the audience as recorded by the interviewer: (Brook perhaps would not have considered them as the ideal guinea pigs. And it is ironic that the objective of his performance which aimed at getting away from literary and cultural identifications tantalized them into placing a host of tentative literary interpretations on it. So the response became totally literary.)

Some have suggested the crossing of the bamboo sticks as the Enactment of the Divine Comedy; others, the danse macabre; and others Exodus. The torch episode becomes the baptism of fire. The human volumes speak, gyrations and movements articulate. Through variety, development and insistent exposure to un

In the absence of language, other means of communication in the performance were highlighted and seemed to hold the audience's attention by their unconventionality:

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2 Ibid.
Brook's troupe performing "ceremony of birds."

But through the use of gestures, postures and movements, the occasional music accompaniment of guitar and drum and the accentuation of the gong, sounds penetrate and the body communicates. Human volumes speak: gyrations and movements articulate. Through variety, development and insistent exposure to unconventional opening up of aural and oral awareness the audience's attention can be sustained. Identifiable states of emotions also provide a context. Aggression, fear, agony, anger, humiliation, suffering and pain are the predominant emotions portrayed ... one's childhood sense of awe and wonder and the joy of play returns.

So instead of the "primary" identification with the play which the audience was meant to make, the response was
either over literary or bewildered. And more seriously, the ordinary Nigerian villager's reaction was affected by irrelevant considerations, as the following report shows:

Without a conventional plot, the audience's curiosity may be directed or misdirected to irrelevant responses. The Nigerian village audience's immediate reaction is an awareness of colour: that the white man can laugh and play and be funny in an uninhibited way. It is rather difficult to see the usual white man, a missionary or doctor or teacher perform the activities as depicted on the stage.

The kind of identification which the Nigerian villager made was, in fact, an ethnic one:

The ethnic identification goes a bit further as evidenced in comments such as "That's a Yoruba laugh!" Had the troupe been predominantly coloured there would not have been such a response. To the Nigerian villager a play without song, dance and words is a strange phenomenon. Various suggestions were made to clarify and explain what was going on. There was general incomprehension as to what was portrayed on stage although the imitation of animal sounds and noises came through. When not bored by incomprehension there was an awareness that one could relate the happenings to human conditions. Most people were lost as to what the actors were actually trying to convey, since there is nothing substantial for them to hold on to. Yet true to the Yoruba saying, "Any play at all is good for the eye" they would be prepared to see similar improvisations.

Yoshi, the Japanese actor, was singled out for his virtuosity. The Nigerian villagers were impressed by his agility in getting in and out of a small cardboard box. They

1 It is true to note, as one of the troupe marks on the fringe theatre in Britain. She argued that the British tradition has been mainly based on language. See notes from [ibid. (See above, note 1, p.354)].
2 * my own underlining.
felt that, with the exception of one or two, the rest of the troupe had not learned the complete discipline over their bodies. And so the question of physical virtuosity—the discipline over the body became an important issue. The reviewer felt that many members of Brook's company were straining themselves to grapple with physical techniques in a way which was out of character with their own individual tradition. This is of course one of the major problems for the Western actor presented with the physical demand of Artaudian techniques. Here is the Nigerian reviewer's reaction to this particular aspect of the problem:

The discipline necessary to such an experiment may not be that of acting. Singing, body movement, acrobatism, dancing are all useful in providing the improvisation with the necessary precision and suggestiveness. The discipline of physical movement, sounds and voices communicate in its own right. With one or two exceptions the troupe has yet to attain

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1 It is interesting that the rest of the reviewer's remarks on the subject of physical prowess correspond closely to the diagnosis given by Nancy Meckler of the "Freehold" on the decline of the 'fringe' theatre in Britain. She argued that a highly physical theatrical tradition of foreign extraction cannot really take root in England because the theatrical tradition here is mainly based on language. See Notes from Underground.
the understanding of discipline. As a reaction against the contemporary Western theatre of intellectualization and a dehumanized aspect of technological society this kind of performance appeals to an uncomplicated and human sense of play. In order to achieve the fundamental intuitive and spontaneous attitude of reaching the audience it would have to become the life style of the actors. Intuition cannot be switched on or off. It has to be nurtured. From this point of view, the Brook experiment is not only theatrical, but sociological as well.

Obviously the group's mastery of physical techniques did not convince the Nigerian audiences. The reviewer ended by posing a few questions which are not only relevant to the kind of experiment Brook had undertaken but valuable as representing the guinea-pig's point of view:

- But value judgments are still necessary and inevitable. If momentary contact has been made, what then? Is the recognizable human form intrinsic to the value of the theatre? Can abstraction to the extent of annihilating all that is human in the theatre still communicate human values?
- In an effort to revitalize the Western stage by resorting to a fundamental simplicity, directness and sincerity in communication, Brook has done away with the dramatist. What then is theatre; a complex of sound, colour and movement; or is the experiment simply a means of revitalizing the conventional theatre?

There is no question that in terms of a theatrical experiment, Brook's African tour is a landmark in theatrical history. That it did not completely succeed in establishing its objectives is made clear by this review. For while the
audience's attention was held, most of the spectators did not really understand what was taking place. They had given it their attention in the typical Yoruba spirit of "any play is good for the eye." published in the printed French translation

I now want to move back to Paris,¹ the home of Peter Brook's International Centre of Theatrical Research and generally significant in the history of theatrical experiments. In November 1974, just as the Folies Wagram had created quite a stir in being picked as the venue for Artaud's experiment in 1935 (one critic called it the ugliest theatre in Paris), Brook's choice of the Théâtre Bouffes du Nord - a dilapidated building in Northern Paris - for the first major work of his I.C.T.R. attracted a great deal of publicity. The Bouffes du Nord is a reclaimed music hall and it really looks as if a bomb has hit it. Where the stage was, there is a huge gaping hole. The walls are blotchy and the seats are certainly not designed for comfort.

I went to Paris to see Brook's production of Timon of Athens which was acclaimed as a tremendous success. It was such a success because having explored all the possible ways of applying Artaudian techniques to productions culminating in BIRDS - A PLAY WITHOUT WORDS - a production which

¹ It is an interesting point which reflects Artaudian consciousness in England that since the Marat/Sade, most of Brook's experiments using Artaudian techniques, have been based in Paris.

See Jean-Claude Carrièr's adaptation of Shakespeare's Timon D'Athènes, Paris 1974, p.103.
Timon struck just the right balance combining the use of powerful Artaudian physical elements with respect for the text.

In an interview published in the printed French translations of the text by Jean-Claude Carrière, sold at the performances, Brook clearly emphasized the topicality of Timon:

"But, to put it simply, there are moments when certain themes are closer to us than others.... Today Timon is a most topical play: It deals with money and inflation. Of course this is only one of its themes.... But credit, growth prices and glut are all in this play. So it puts its finger on the problems that touch us. The history of Timon is that of a man, who living above his means, believes he has bought joy. He creates a world for himself - a sort of Paradise which has nothing to do with the real world he lives in."

Apart from being topical, one can see in this production a fusion of the results of Brook's African experience with an enormous respect for the text.

The production was conceived to give the impression of an impromptu story-telling carpet show. Late arrivals were simply handed sacks filled with sand to sit on the floor. Some of the actors entered casually like a travelling troupe with a child among them and sat with the audience. One noticed that pains had been taken to create an Asiatic atmosphere for the play as a story-telling event designed to appeal to both old and young.

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1 See Jean-Claude Carrière's adaption of Shakespeare's Timon D'Athenes, Paris 1974, p.108.
In that same interview printed on the programme, Brook specifically referred to his own great admiration of the powerful realism of the images in Akiro Kurosawa's film version of Macbeth entitled Throne of Blood. This prepared me for the same powerful presentation of images in this production to reinforce the text. To provide himself with the best conditions for bringing out the reality of his images, Brook had a starkly simple set with minimal props. A catwalk crossed the back wall (see Fig. 43 p. 563) and the audience sat on three sides or three tiers surrounding the actors. There was a feeling that, as with the set and the seating arrangement, everything in this production was stripped down to the barest essentials. The costumes of the actors were emblematic. Timon wore a loose white robe and was surrounded by devotees in more garish ones.

The following is a description of the masque scene at the beginning of the play: It shows how Brook achieved a brilliant impact with a strong visual image which totally illuminated the text: the guests were seated on the floor. Cupidon, played by the Japanese actor, Yoshi, entered, dressed in top hat and mock fur, followed by a masque of ladies. Timon was presented with a glittering globe of golden twine by a purple-cloaked actress chanting in a weird

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way. This golden ball was unravelled before our eyes until it enmeshed all the slightly tipsy guests swaying to the music. Then suddenly one heard the ominous sound of drum beats. Cupidon cut the golden twine and stood threateningly over Timon just about to plunge the shears into him. For a second this moment of danger was frozen. The tension broke as it dissolved and the play continued. This is not, of course, in the text but a subtle piece of theatricality, of great physical appeal, interpolated by Brook to bring out the central themes in Timon — the lure and threat of gold, friends, revelry and flattery. And it worked precisely through this skilful manipulation of the rhythmic flow of the production.

Another good example of a physical image, reinforcing the text, is the scene when Alcibiades pleads with the senators for the life of his warrior friend. While this takes place, the same soldier is pinned against the back wall of the catwalk.

The incorporation of African chants into the play was certainly one of its greatest physical assets. It was achieved with finesse and at no time did the chants seem out of place. Great care had been taken to make them seem to emerge from the very walls of the acting area. This was done by positioning the black actor who performed the chants
Fig. 43 Timon is wooed by the senators in frock-coats and top hats to save Athens.

All the effects worked because they were perfectly integrated with the production: the use of the chants was not an isolated and exotic transplant; it was linked with the casting of two black actors in the roles of Apemantus and Flavius (Timon's servant) to produce a primary dramatic force within the frame of a roughly hewn-out hole in the wall. All the effects worked because they were perfectly integrated with the production: the use of the chants was not an isolated and exotic transplant; it was linked with the casting of two black actors in the roles of Apemantus and Flavius (Timon's servant) to produce a primary dramatic force
associated with the African tradition. Apemantus was played by the Malian actor, Malick Bagayogo, and Flavius by Maurice Benichou; and the latter brought an impassioned intensity to his role, almost comparable in vitality to Timon's.

But what had really made possible the successful use and interpretation of such effects was that they seemed to derive from a close following of the text. Brook, as Michael Billington said in his review of Timon, combined a great respect for the language with a knack of creating images that worked in harmony with the text. Brook's production of Timon certainly showed an acute understanding of the text. It's interesting to compare this with his production of The Dream when he also had a definite and powerful dramatic text but where overabundance of technique ultimately eclipsed its meaning. This seems to indicate an inadequate grasp of the whole meaning of The Dream. We've seen, as with the Nigerian response to Brook's play without words, that highly physical images can be ambiguously interpreted. But as Shakespeare's text of Timon was faithfully followed (and Carrière's translation I noticed was frequently consulted by the French audience during the performance), there was no reason why an African

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1 See p.337 above and p.365 below.
2 Guardian, 22nd October 1974, p.10.
or Japanese actor should not be brought in to play various roles, particularly as they could bring to them the individual strengths of their different acting traditions. ¹

One certainly did not feel that it was odd to see a Japanese "Cupidon" or an African "Apemantus". In other words, an ethnic observation did not lead to an oversimplified identification of that role. Conversely, the audience was given a richer conception of the role by the contribution of a certain force associated with a particular acting tradition which that particular actor had been able to bring to it.

This can be substantiated by two examples. The first is found in the following comments by John Peter in the Times on the performance of Apemantus' role:

Apemantus' bleak grace is delivered by a black actor with the rasping savagery of a primitive stone idol come to life. ²

The special quality of the black actor's acting had enabled the reviewer to make a primary identification with the role. The second example of this special kind of power transfusion into a role which a particular type of actor can achieve is found in the Japanese actor's portrayal of "Cupidon". In

¹ Cf. the Persian review of Orghast on pp. 536-37.
² Times, 27th October 1974, p.33.
an interview with Ronald Hayman in the Times, on 29th August 1970, Brook had this to say about casting Yoshi as Ariel in The Tempest production at the Round House:

There was a Japanese actor, who by approaching Ariel through his breathing and through his body, made Ariel something very understandable. A certain force became tangible in something which to the Japanese was easy to understand because in the basis of the Noh theatre from which he came, there was a certain type of sound, a certain type of cry, a certain type of breath. The idea of that force was truly represented. It could be discussed because it had suddenly happened. There it was amongst us. It was no longer force, an abstract movement, it was force, a reality, something which could even influence other people.

Yoshi seemed to have injected a similar kind of power into his role as Cupidon. John Peter of the Times felt that he had brought a touch of the mock Kabuki style into the masque scene. This is an interesting observation as Yoshi, apart from his experience in Nô acting, was also a Kabuki actor. When I was in Japan in 1973 I saw a very famous production of a Kabuki play: Chushingura (The Revenge of the Forty-Seven Ronin) and was particularly struck by the naive realism and melodrama of this theatre form. There was no doubt that something in the movements of Yoshi as Cupidon enhanced the feeling of melodrama and sharpened the sense of naive realism in the masque scene, particularly in the

1 ibid.
stabbing of Timon. And these two qualities certainly contributed to the special effectiveness of the scene within the context of the play. One of Artaudian techniques.

All these physical effects could not have been comprehensible if the reference of text and language had been ruled out, as it was in Brook's African improvisation. In fact we have a slightly ironic situation in which Artaudian techniques, where so much emphasis is placed on non-verbal effects, really work most effectively in conjunction with respect for language and text—a most delicate balance is called for. Artaud's emphasis on the importance of sound, gestures, lighting and movement in theatre must be seen not as a glorification of them at the expense of language and text but as a corrective to the attitude which regarded them as subsidiary accessories. His famous outcry: "All writing is rubbish" and his essay, "No More Masterpieces", have been far too literally interpreted. The range of Brook's Artaudian productions I've quoted above—all impressive because of their DARING experimental character—clearly show what indeed are the conditions necessary for Artaudian theatre to be most effective. As I've said earlier, it's impossible to classify many of his productions as either successes or failures. For example, in spite of
the mixed reaction to *Marat/Sade*, *Oedipus* and *Orghast*, they were exciting productions and certainly cannot be labelled as misapplications of Artaudian techniques. Perhaps the only one which seems to have misfired was his *Play About Birds* — 'A Play Without Words' — performed before Nigerian audiences. The Africans did not really respond to Brook's play in the way he hoped they would. Yet the gigantic experimental nature of Brook's African project should caution anyone from making a totally dismissive judgement of it. It certainly helped to pave the way for the unreserved success of *Timon* — a production which proves that effective theatre is an illumination of the text through powerful physical images.

While Peter Brook was experimenting with Artaudian theatre in an international context, other directors were at work in Britain applying Artaudian ideas to various 'fringe' productions. One of the most powerful and daring examples of this application was a production of Fernando Arrabal's *And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers*, shown in September 1973 at The Open Space Theatre, London. Arrabal's play, written from first hand experience of a Spanish prison, was a worthy vehicle for the startling visual and aural techniques used in the production. A burning torch
of light was used as a phallic symbol. There was a great
deal of bestial gymnastics and several fantasy sequences
in which the prisoners, deprived of sex and privacy, mime
out their secret hungers. (See Fig. 42, p. 370). The
horrors of imprisonment gave Arrabal the appropriate sub­
ject for his ideal theatre of Panic (derived from the god
Pan) with its associations of exuberance, vulgarity and
vitality. As a disciple of Artaud,¹ Arrabal's play aimed
at communicating directly with the senses of the audience
through strong physical images. I felt that all the
elements in the play, vulgarity and poetry, eroticism and
nightmare, comedy and pathos, bad taste and refinement,
disturbingly combined and worked directly on our nerves
to bring home the horrors of life in a Spanish prison. In
other words, the play and the production was an excellent

¹ The title of one of Arrabal's plays - The Architect and
the Emperor of Assyria - seems to have been inspired by
Artaud's concept of a Theatre of Cruelty. See The Theater
and Its Double, p. 79: But "theater of cruelty" means a
theater difficult and cruel for myself first of all. And,
on the level of performance, it is not the cruelty we can
exercise upon each other by hacking at each other's
bodies, ... or, like Assyrian emperors, sending parcels
of human ears, noses, ... through the mail, but the much
more terrible and necessary cruelty which things can
exercise against us.... And the theater has been created
to teach us that first of all.
'And They Handcuffed the Flowers', by Fernando Arrabal (Open Space)

Fig. 44 Three scenes illustrating the Artaudian influence in Arrabal's work.
should be danced, mimed with subtle directions' and adds that he is "forced to use words that are weighed down with precise ideas." This suggestion is taken very seriously by Kemp in *Flowers* which is dream physical theatre bearing a strong Artaudian character.

The small intimate space of the Bush Theatre, with its bleak grey walls against which precarious looking ladders were mounted, a dilapidated piano and one solitary bedstead, certainly conveyed the desperately claustrophobic atmosphere of a prison cell where the only imaginative means of escape, powerfully suggested by the ladders, was through masturbation and fantasy entering the wildest dream world of sexual desire and fulfilment. And for Genet every thought became an act and out of his fertile imagination he created a highly credible extravagant dream world of beautiful exciting young lovers - his chosen companions. This was certainly evident in Kemp's panto-
mime. It is in fact very similar in theme to Arrabal's *And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers*, where the only outlet for cruel confinement in prison is to dream, phanta-
size and masturbate.

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*Flowers* was first shown in the Bush Theatre in January 1974.
I thought however when I saw *Flowers* on 14th January 1974 at the Bush Theatre, that the opening scene in which a group of actors had to simulate the act of masturbation came over weakly. And that was a pity because in Genet’s book, masturbation was presented as the only acutely physical sensation the convict could enjoy and served as a real means of entering a fantasy world of sexual pleasure and fulfilment. But apart from this flaw, Kemp, with his unearthly beautifully painted face, grey fur and nervously fluttering fan, was a moving Genet/Divine figure. (See Fig. 45, p.374). As Divine, the fragile ageing queen, Kemp conveyed a sense of haunting delicacy and controlled irony in every movement and so prepared us for the end when he ripped off the masks from his actors at the execution of ‘Our Lady’ (one of his fantasy lovers) and alone took the curtain call. It certainly made the point that the dream was over and all his fantasy characters, whom he had so poignantly called to life, were no more. But what remained indelibly fixed in our minds were the magnetic images of eroticism and guilt he had created: the nuns savagely tearing the body of their saviour, the archangel Gabriel visiting the forsaken bride, sailors in white linking arms and strolling together, the black umbrellas
Lindsay Kemp in costume. 'I can't remember when I first painted my face white. I want audiences to find me very exciting and provocative to look at.'

Fig 45 Lindsay Kemp - the 'Beautiful Dreamer'
Lo corps de Marie morte s'envole au ciel et passe au-dessus de la tête des spectateurs. (Ph. B. Matussière).

Fig. 46 A trapeze act from Robinson Crusoe

point about the need for acrobatic techniques

Combat, pour le plaisir du roi Fénéon, entre deux cracheurs de feu. (Ph. J.-P. Roche.)

Fig. 47 A spectacle from a Jerome Savary production, calculated as an assault on nerves and sensibilities.
in February 1974, Le Grand Magic Circus's presentation of From Moses to Mao, a rough scamper through history showing that the so-called progress from savagery to civilization is illusory, had a mixed reaction. This was because the new production was a rambling and discursive affair without a strong central structure which no amount of theatrical trickery could redeem.

This point about the need for Artaudian techniques to work on a powerful text is backed up by another two productions presented in London in 1973 and 1975. Stomu Yamash'ta's Red Buddha Theatre's presentation of The Man From The East in January to February 1973 at the Round House, made use of every conceivable device to involve the audience completely. Before the performance began, the central character, Bossu, an old hunchback, and a little lame girl, Bancale, mingled among the audience selling programmes.

The opening was sudden, like a burst of thunder as a large, noisy procession of actors, waving peace banners, pressed their way through the foyer and down the aisles to the front stage. Several scenes followed from this, accompanied by Oriental rock music, and magnified film projections covering the entire back stage. The satire on
modern Japan was powerfully conveyed through grotesquely masked figures miming the deadening effects of mechanised living. Scenes from everyday life were presented through expressive dance movements: two lesbians showed their tenderness for each other; an aspiring Samurai warrior exercised while another one committed hara-kiri. There was also a flashback to an ancient custom which forced a son and daughter to leave their aged mother to die on the top of a mountain.

The highlight of the performance was called, "A Day in the Life of Hiroshima". It began as a normal day: a young man read the newspapers, another went fishing, children played, the postman delivered a letter, two friends fought and then made up. And then suddenly everything stopped. The man who was cleaning a window, poised on a ladder in the middle of the aisle, was suddenly frozen in that act. (This was beautifully achieved through mime). The light grew stronger and the bodies of the casualties melted on to the floor. One could have heard a pin drop in the auditorium. The whole horror of Hiroshima was conveyed.
it had been so well done. But there's also another factor which throws light on the problems of applying Artaudian techniques. This was the astute choice of a powerful subject — the horror of Hiroshima which gripped everyone in the audience. Artaudian techniques can only be effectively applied to material which is intrinsically powerful to affect the audience. That this is so, is shown clearly in the second Yamash'ta production of Raindog at the Round House, which I saw on 8th February 1975. It was performed on a circular stage right in the middle of the auditorium. The audience was seated around it — an arrangement designed to maximize participation. In terms of breathtaking theatricality, Raindog outstripped its predecessor — The Man From The East — but it was strangely unmoving. This was because no one really felt much rapport with the myth of Hachi, the "Raindog". Briefly, the story was about a fantastical dog, Hachi, which went to heaven and successfully pleaded with the deities to relieve a village driven to madness by prolonged drought. As a reward, Hachi demanded the hand of the village chieftain's daughter, Koko, in marriage. But the chieftain had Hachi treacherously murdered instead. The daughter was inconsolable and during an altercation with her father, he was strangely
knifed. The villagers accused her of parricide but at her execution the tables were unexpectedly turned. Koko miraculously assumed unusual powers and the villagers cringed in fear before her. In the middle of a fierce thunder-storm, brilliantly staged with strobe lighting, severed heads (suddenly released from the flies) bobbing up and down and mingling with glimpses of the storm victims frozen in carefully arranged attitudes of fear, a baby was born. The theme of rebirth was clearly if not crudely stated. But dazzling theatrical effects and cacophonous music cannot really equal meaning. The story of *Raindog* was far too flimsy to accommodate such overpowering techniques. The music throughout was deafening and the lunatic scenes (reminding one of Brook's *Marat/Sade*), with actors foaming and gyrating in the narrow aisles and often colliding with late-comers, were over-played. The result was disappointing, showing the danger of theatricality becoming an end in itself and the need for an appropriately powerful subject if Artaudian techniques are to be truly effective. If Artaudian techniques need a powerful subject, they also need a powerful context in which meaning can from time to time be established independently of language.

Whereas Brook's African experiment failed largely because he did not make sufficiently explicit the meaning of his play *without Words*, Barrie Edward's production of *Ritual Theatre* on September 11th, 1973, at the I.C.A.\(^1\) conveyed the meaning of acting without resource to language. I like his own description of his work — "like seeing theatre with your ears". In an interview for *Time Out*, September 1973, he said that his theatre was based on "the experience of music which does have incredible power":

I suppose you could call it ritual too because you find that sort of fusion, that sort of experience, more in non print societies. For them sound had much more power like trumpets destroying Jericho. We've still got the facilities for that sort of appreciation. It's just that we're not using them so much.

In 1935 Artaud had written this in *Le Petit Parisien*:

The Tibetan Book of the Dead emphasizes the power of sound caught by the human ear; I do not think anyone will question this power, and everyone knows that repetitious sounds have a hypnotic effect.\(^2\)

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1. International Centre for the Arts at the Mall in London.

That Artaud was the inspirational basis for this work was unmistakable. The following was my reaction to it:
the themes of birth, death and resurrection were conveyed through controlled verbal and physical improvisations to the accompaniment of music. In addition to a trombone, a viola and a xylophone, there was also a tin-flute which had a remarkable capacity for producing visceral sounds. The three musicians moved around a white bare stage which resembled a temple. Four oil lamps were lit at the four corners of the stage at the beginning of the performance. The smell of smoke, the staring blue lights, the shaking of beads in bags, the priest-like appearance of the actress in white leotards and the actors in loose, white cheese-cloth collarless tops, helped to reinforce the temple atmosphere. These were aids in preparing the audience for participation in a ritualistic enactment of the whole process of being. Through astonishing acrobatic movements, carefully interpolated music, long pauses serving like rests within a form patterned on music, the anguish of being was communicated to an unbearable degree. Without being aware of it, we were
forced to move along a strong, clear emotional track, charted out by the director. There was no recognizable dialogue. And this enhanced the eloquence of gesture and the non-verbal cries. Through a contortion of his body, one of the actors was transformed into the "Green Man" - the grotesque figure - reminding one of earlier fertility cults. At the end the note was acceptance and the actor who had turned himself into the "Green Man" returned once more to his own body.

Barrie Edwards's Ritual Theatre certainly passed the test. There was a feeling of the celebration of re-birth. Audience involvement had been so intense that, as in a NO play, we needed music to help us return to normality. This was anticipated and provided by the director through the sounds of the tin-flute and xylophone.

It was a small audience. But the response was warm.

I felt sure that the performance was successful because, though the means were largely non-verbal, the actors and musicians had convincingly conveyed the meaning of their movements and sounds. Barrie Edwards had taken pains in training his actors to speak eloquently through their bodies, and the various stages of this theatrical piece - birth - the pain of living - death - resurrection - came over clearly. The meaning of an improvisation should be really worked at and not left to chance or intuition is a vitally important point. Failure to make the meaning clear leads to re-
actions like that of Michael Billington when reviewing Victor Garcia's production of a Calderon religious drama at the Round House:

Even with the help of programme notes and a pocket torch, I could not sort out Sin from Death, the Soul from the Body, or Cain from Abel; and not for the first time I concluded that unless one knows what is happening from moment to moment, ritualized spectacle in the theatre eventually becomes a meaningless charade.  

Barrie Edward's Ritual Theatre certainly passed the test for clarity and intelligibility, illustrating that if these two factors are combined with Artaudian principles, theatre becomes an effective meaningful experience - "a religion once again" - as Artaud tried so hard but failed to make Las Cenci for Paris in 1935.

As a contrast to Ritual Theatre, Nightwalk - an American export, shown at the Round House in June 1973 - can be cited as an Artaudian production which failed to pass the test for clarity. This piece of theatre was described by its director, Joseph Chaikin, as a work-in-progress. He was originally an actor in "The Living Theatre" from 1959 - 1963, eligible to the majority of the audience but lacking in dialogue in the production. Actors were rolled in on castor trolleys, some snoring and...
one saying "Gotta - getgetgetgetget - gotta getgetgetup."
There was clowning, callisthenics of a kind, and quite a
lot more idiotic noises, but I searched in vain to find
a coherent meaning. I had gone to the performance in a
frame of mind predisposed to like it, for I was sympathetic
to Joseph Chaikin's announcement in the press of his re­
nunciation of "the theatre of critics, box offices, real
estate and the conditioned public". My disappointment was
great because the impression I received was one of actors
so caught up with the sheer pleasure of displaying their
skills that the meaning of what they were trying to
communicate was completely lost. Their gestures, one found
out afterwards, were meant to reflect the spiritually
autistic American society. As Chaikin outlined the method­
ology of his group in the programme:

My intention is to make images into theatre events,
beginning simply with those that have meaning for
myself and my collaborators....

But unfortunately the images were so subjectively worked
out by the members of this company that not only did they
seem unintelligible to the majority of the audience but
lacked any ring of real conviction. And if they impressed
at all, it was the actor's virtuosity which caught the eye:
roles of masters to the black slaves (played by actors) who

It has since been revived in June 1975 with a production
of An Die Musik at the ICA. See Arts Guardian, 2-7-75.
the competence in mastering a technique unrelated to
meaning. Another important point I'd like to make about the
difficulty of applying Artaudian techniques to productions
is that sometimes, even if there is a combination of a
powerful text with strong physical effects, they could
misfire. I'm referring to the production of The George
Jackson Black and White Minstrel Show on February 10th,
1973, at The Theatre Upstairs. It was a historic occasion
as it marked the last performance of the Pip Simmons
Theatre Group before it finally dissolved. In
the small auditorium of The Theatre Upstairs was
packed. There was a certain amount of nostalgia for a
fringe group which had reached the end of its road. But
for me, the Group's application of Artaudian techniques
marked the point at which they became counter-productive.
The performance was Artaudian in its techniques for involving
the audience physically with the action. In the small acting
space of The Theatre Upstairs, many of the audience were
certainly not prepared for audience participation of the
kind demanded by the Pip Simmons Theatre Group. Various
spectators were dragged on stage and forced to play the
roles of masters to the black slaves (played by actors) who

1 It has since been revived in June 1975 with a production
of An Die Musik at the ICA. See Arts Guardian, 2-7-75.
were literally chained to them. The intention was presum-

ably to emphasize the obscenity of slavery in a physical
way. But in actuality, what came over more strongly was
intelligently to the play. I felt that the last show of
the obvious discomfort and embarrassment of the spectators
who had been picked on to participate in the way described
and therefore making theatre attendance a mockery, was
above. And this was exactly the impression I had of the
sequence through which the Group tried to show the de-
gradation of a people divided into neat categories by fellow
Shuji Terayama's production - *Origin of Blood* - at the
human beings (or at least, this was the intention I credited
1973 Shiraz Theatrical Festival* because it illustrates
them with when I was safely away from the performance). In
clearly some very real dangers involved in the application
this sequence, various members of the audience were accosted
of Artaudian techniques generally. Terayama, who said that
at random by actors with questions like: "Do yer want a
Artaud was the largest influence on his work, was popularly
fuckin nigger or a cleanin nigger?" etc. As can be imagined,
acclaimed as the hero of this festival. His production was
most of the answers from the spectators, who were not ex-
full of striking physical images - for example, semi-naked
spectators to be challenged in this way, were either hardly
actors and actresses were suspended inside plastic bags
audible or unprintably obscene. The controversial death of
from scaffolding to give the impression of "embryos" growing
George Jackson in an American prison had triggered off the
on trees. During a sequence in the play, one of the actors
show, as its title suggested. It was a shattering pro-
suddenly turned and spat flame. Instead of staying within
duction which left me extremely irritable and covered with
the playing space, the flame reached the front row of the
spittle. The company certainly had a very strong message
spectators and badly burnt somebody's face. Many in the
to convey, but there seemed to be a frenzied mania for in-
audience were so caught up in the atmosphere that they be-
volving the audience, which had the ironic effect of with-

*The Drama Review, Vol. 17, No. 4, (7-60), New York,
December 1973, pp. 46-52.*
waiting in dread of being dragged to perform on stage or mauled by the actors, could not be expected to react intelligently to the play. I felt that the last show of this group, by flouting all respect for the audience and therefore making theatre attendance a mockery, was in effect counter-productive - a case of Artaud misapplied.

And lastly, I'm specially including a discussion of Shuji Terayama's production - Origin of Blood - at the 1973 Shiraz Theatrical Festival because it illustrates clearly some very real dangers involved in the application of Artaudian techniques generally. Terayama, who said that Artaud was the largest influence on his work, was popularly acclaimed as the hero of this festival. His production was full of striking physical images - for example, semi-naked actors and actresses were suspended inside plastic bags from scaffolding to give the impression of "embryos" growing on trees. During a sequence in the play, one of the actors suddenly turned and spat flame. Instead of staying within the playing space, the flame reached the front row of the spectators and badly burnt somebody's face. Many in the audience were so caught up in the atmosphere that they be-

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2 The Drama Review, T-60, op. cit., p. 50.
lieved this act was part of the show. There was however no break in the performance and the actors extended the incident by poking torches at the spectators to heighten the sense of excitement and fear. Apart from the questionable morality of this particular incident, it also reveals the underlying ambiguities in applying Artaudian techniques to the letter. There must surely be a point when the attack on nerves overreaches itself and becomes counter-productive. Shuji Terayama, who was severely taken to task at the press conference for being callous in not stopping the performance to attend to the injured spectator, said that though he was sorry for the accident, he was out to eliminate the "artificial frontiers" between drama and reality. "When my actors do something outrageous as part of the play or get beaten up by spectators, those frontiers are eliminated. I'm pleased by this." He then confirmed reports about several other instances of spectators being hurt at his performances. He seemed pleased to be able to out-Artaud Artaud. This is clearly an example when the reaction against straight theatre has gone too far.

1 He was directing the performance (supervising the timing) from a tower only twenty yards from the accident and clearly saw what had happened.

2 The Drama Review, T-60, op.cit., p.50.
The whole story of the application of Artaud's dramatic techniques however is far from over. Ranging from the cautious introduction of physical elements to a full scale emphasis on the physical which excludes both dramatist and text, it has proved most successful in productions where respect for the text has been combined with the daring application of Artaud's ideas. These ideas, as I've stressed earlier, came from Bali. Artaud's own failure to grasp the religious and cultural basis of Balinese theatre, Zeami's theory of "Riken" both traceable to the Chinese in which the dramatic text can be taken for granted, led him to over-emphasize physical techniques at the expense of the dramatist. In this chapter, I'd like to begin by emphasizing the Chinese style of acting is different from that of the text. But when Artaudian techniques are applied carefully and daringly to a powerful and valid text — Brook's Timon of Athens or Arrabal's And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers, for example — they work triumphantly.

Brecht was reacting against and hoping to supersede with his revolutionary theory. This should not only serve as a useful corrective to the discrepancies in Brecht's theory and its practice, but should also clarify the Western concept of Chinese acting. So I'd like to show, from a Chinese point of view, that the Chinese style of acting is more appropriately described as "Stanislavskian" in the

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1. See Chapter I, p. 31.
2. See Chapter I for a discussion of how Zeami's theory of "Riken" serves as a corrective to Brecht's V-effect.
CHAPTER VI

THE PARADOX OF CHINESE THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES AND THE "VERFREMDEUNGSEFFEKT"

In Chapter I, I pointed out the essential similarities and differences between Brecht's Alienation effect and Zeami's theory of "Riken" both traceable to the Chinese theatre. In this chapter, I'd like to begin by emphasizing that the Chinese style of acting is different from that of the Nō. And ironically - a point which has not yet been realized - Chinese acting, which inspired the "Verfremdungseffekte" ¹ is identifiable with the very style of acting Brecht was reacting against and hoping to supersede with his revolutionary theory. This should not only serve as a useful corrective to the discrepancies in Brecht's theory and its practice,² but should also clarify the Western concept of Chinese acting. So I'd like to show, from a Chinese point of view, that the Chinese style of acting is more appropriately described as "Stanislavskian" in the

¹ See Chapter I, p. 37.
² See Chapter I for a discussion of how Zeami's theory of "Riken" serves as a corrective to Brecht's V-effect.
way the actor lives out his part, than "Brechtian". The Chinese theatre is in fact very concerned to create a convincing illusion of reality for its Chinese audiences and, as will be seen, their reaction to it is emotional and based on empathy and identification. To conclude the chapter, I will discuss the effects of Chinese theatrical influence on five Western modern productions.

What is the difference between the Chinese and the No style of acting? This is evident in the way the No and the Chinese classical theatres portray their heroines on the stage. For example, compare the heroine from the No play, Izutsu, (see Fig. 10, Chapter III, p. 156) with a typical heroine in a Chinese classical play (see Fig. 48 p. 393). In the former, the actor (shite), playing the No heroine, is seen gazing into a well in an attitude of yearning; but his half mask, bearing a fixed gentle expression, hardly conceals his thick jowl and neck and his costume is vastly exaggerated to suggest an out-of-this-world reality. In the latter, the Chinese actor, Mei Lan Fang, playing the heroine Kuei Ying in The Fisherman's Revenge has painted his face to resemble exactly an idealized image of a Chinese beauty. His eyes are pulled outwards by means of a concealed band across his forehead to accentuate their
Fig. 48  MEI LAN FANG AS THE BEAUTIFUL KUEI YING IN THE FISHERMAN'S REVENGE
almond shape,\(^1\) and his costume is an exact imitation of
the kind of dress the heroine might have worn.\(^2\) In other
words the No is concerned with the higher reality of dreams,
the Chinese theatre with true-to-life realism. I want to
clarify this distinction because it will help us to
grasp more clearly what is essentially the Chinese style of
acting.

The following anecdote, taken from Fenollosa's
manuscripts, exactly describes the No style of acting which
is anti-realistic to the point of complete abstraction:

"A young man was following a stately old woman
through the streets of a Japanese town, and
presently she turned to him and spoke: "Why do
you follow me?" "Because you are so interesting."
"That is not so, I am too old to be interesting."
But he wished, he told her, to become a player
of old women on the Noh stage. If he would

\(^1\) It used to be quite a common practice for actors playing
young female roles to use Chinese black ink to darken
and dilate the pupils of their eyes.

\(^2\) See A. E. Zucker's, The Chinese Theatre, London 1925,
p.145:
become famous as a Nō player she said, he must not observe life, nor put on an old voice and stint the music of his voice. He must know how to suggest an old woman and yet find it all in the heart."

The attempts of this Nō pupil to imitate accurately the mannerisms of an actual old woman may be wrong for the Nō theatre, but closely reflect the rationale behind Chinese acting which is indeed based on punctilious observations of real life. In Nō, the most lyrical recollections of a legendary heroine are sung by the main actor in an undisguised male voice. But in the Chinese theatre, the actor cultivates a high vocal falsetto, through the most arduous training, to imitate the idealized female singing voice. From the treatises of Zeami we know in fact that the principle of "yūgen" governs the entire mode of acting in Nō. This rule insists that whatever part is portrayed, whether it is refined or vulgar, it must be rendered not realistically, but "beautifully".

Unfortunately, there is no theatrical treatise in the

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1 There is a reference to this anecdote in Yeats's essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan". See W.B. Yeats, Essays, op. cit., p.286.

2 Young boy actors were taken regularly each morning to practise singing before the Great Wall of China which acted as a sounding board for the strengthening of their voices.

3 See Chapter I, p. 61.
Chinese theatre, comparable to Zeami's Kakyō, laying down and defining the laws underlying Chinese acting. The Western concept of Chinese acting has often been deduced from Brecht's first impressions of Chinese theatrical techniques in 1935. This is because Brecht's "Verfremdungseffekte", one of the most controversial and important Western theatrical theories on audience reaction, was, on Brecht's own admission, inspired by the Chinese actor, Mei Lan Fang. And so Brecht's ideal "epic" form and the V-effect are regarded as virtually synonymous with, if not definitive of, the Chinese style of acting and audience reaction. Brecht's essay, "Alienation effects in Chinese acting", has certainly gone a long way towards making the Chinese style of acting seem indistinguishable from, or very similar to, his revolutionary "epic" style. This has led critics like Kenneth Tynan to assume the connection between the two. Reviewing the Second Paris Drama Festival in 1956 he wrote:

Brecht's troupe, a post-war phenomenon, is some 1200 years younger than the Chinese opera, yet both have much in common.... They mix dance, mime, speech and song in the service of the ultimate good: narrative.... Bertolt Brecht's

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1 See Chapter I, p. 31.
Epic Theatre borrows heavily from the Chinese: the emphasis is classically on how events happen, not romantically on the emotions of the people they happen to.\(^1\)

But what Tynan didn't realize was that the emphasis of the Chinese theatre is precisely on the emotions of its characters caught in a set of events. He concluded his review by mentioning, as further proof of Brecht's indebtedness to the Chinese theatre, his adaptation of the "Chalk Circle" in \textit{The Caucasian Chalk Circle}. This play had its origin in the Chinese play, \textit{Hui - lan - chi} or the "History of the Circle of Chalk", known in the West in the 19th century. \textit{The Good Person of Szechwan},\(^2\) which is set in China and has characters with Chinese names, is another Brechtian play inspired by Chinese theatre.

There is no doubt that Brecht drew widely on foreign sources which he thought coincided with his own preoccupations. He had a remarkable gift for using his borrowings to verify his theories in such a new way that, divested from their original context, they seemed to have lost all traces of their former meaning. This was the case with the


Chinese theatre which certainly inspired his theory, the
"Verfremdungseffekte", and brought the Chinese theatre to
Western notice. None the less Brecht had misunderstood
the Chinese theatre, and Western opinion has shared his
misunderstanding.

The year 1935, which marked the meeting between Brecht
and Mei Lan Fang in Moscow and the origin of "Verfremdungs-
effekte", also saw the loss of a marvellous opportunity for
Londoners to experience true Chinese acting from a great
master. After Moscow, Mei decided to visit London and even
offered to put up fifty per cent of the money required to
perform here. But unfortunately no stage manager was
prepared to take the risk of staging real Chinese theatre,
particularly, because London at that same time was under
the spell of a whimsical piece of dramatic chinoiserie,
Lady Precious Stream, \(^1\) by S.I. Hsiung. The appeal of this
play lay in the fact that it was a mimicry of formal Chinese
theatrical techniques by English actors, done exactly in the
way Westerners had imagined Chinese acting to be. Londoners
at that time \(^2\) preferred the "counterfeit" to the "real"
and a very disappointed Mei left London without having been

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\(^1\) First produced at the Little Theatre, Strand, London,
on 27 November 1934.
given a chance to perform. The following is a quotation from the opening of the play, *Lady Precious Stream*, which has contributed to an oversimplified and therefore distorted view of what is, in effect, a complex and seemingly illogical form of theatre:

OPENING ROUTINE: Stage lights set on dim marks. House lights out. Blue footlights on. When house lights out, gong No. 1. READER enters between curtains to in front of curtain.... READER (to audience): Good evening (afternoon), ladies and gentlemen. You are now introduced to the traditional Chinese stage, which, according to our humble convention, is not in the least realistic. Scenery is a thing we have never heard of, and the property men who are supposed to be unseen by the audience, are taking an active part in the performance. The success or failure of a production is something in their hands. They provide chairs for the actors to sit on.... When the actor has just finished some long lines, they would present him with a cup of tea to ease the throat. These actions would certainly be condemned by a western audience but we accept or rather pretend not to see them.¹

We have only to examine the lighting directions set out in the "Opening Routine" of the passage quoted above to realize that the manipulation of lights from dim to blue contravenes a cardinal principle of Chinese acting, which must be performed either in daylight or constant bright lighting. It may seem illogical, but Chinese theatre makes its impact

through fully exposing the art of the actor rather than by creating, through dim lighting, a sense of mystery about him. And it would be wrong to argue, as Brecht does, that the use of bright lights is in fact to break the magical spell of illusion. Paradoxically, bright lighting in the Chinese theatre, helps to create, rather than to break, that magic of the actor's art. The truth is that the Chinese theatre cannot be classified as non-realistic or realistic, stylized or naturalistic; it mingle without any sense of contradiction a range of diametrically opposed techniques. But what is significant (though often missed) is that its objective is in fact to create an illusion of reality for its audiences. To conclude that Chinese theatre, because of its lack of scenery and the constant intervention of the "property men", is "not in the least realistic" is an over-simplified view. Just to take up the last point about the "property men": in a highly feudal society, (such as China's before the Communist take-over in 1949), dependent on a substrata of servants, whose sole function was to provide service without making their presence felt, the constant intervention of assistants on stage would certainly

(a) horse  
(b) chariot  
(c) snowstorm  
(d) spirit  
(e) high waves at sea.  
(f) strong winds  
(g) city wall

FIG. 49 SOME STANDARD STAGE PROPS
fisherman's daughter in The Fisherman's Revenge, using a little oar, to mime a boating scene (see Fig. 48, p. 393); he seemed impressed by the "stylized" way a Chinese general is depicted on stage, wearing "little ribbons on his shoulders, as many, in fact, as the regiments he commands". And Brecht was absolutely right in observing that:

Poverty is indicated by sewing irregular patches onto silk robes, the patches being also of silk, though of a different color. The personages of a play are characterized by a particular kind of make-up, that is, simply by paint. Certain gestures with both hands represent the forcible opening of a door, and so forth ...

But what escaped him was that these apparently "stylized" techniques were not intended, as he imagined, to stop

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1 Ta Yu Sha Chia, also known as The Valiant Fisherman and His Daughter or The Lucky Pearl, (a reference to the rare pearl given to the fisherman by the Hua family as a sign of his daughter's betrothal to their son). The play is about the fisherman's refusal to pay fishing tax, his severe punishment at the hands of a magistrate who orders the old man to be given forty lashes and the subsequent reprisals taken by the fisherman and his daughter against such injustice before he rejoins his bandit friends. For the fisherman and his daughter used to belong to a group of outlaws who, like Robin Hood and his merry men, would rob the rich to help the poor. See the translated version, The Fisherman's Revenge, tr. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, Peking 1956.

2 Tulane Drama Review, September 1961, p.130.
Chinese audiences from identifying with the action. His entire essay rests on the following premise:

In the first place it is difficult, when watching the Chinese act, to rid ourselves of the feeling of strangeness that they arouse in us because we are Europeans. One must be able to imagine they achieve the alienation effect also in their Chinese spectators.

But this is precisely what they don't do. In other words the whole question of actual Chinese audience reaction to their own theatre is an important one, as it will serve as a test of the applicability of the V-effect to the Chinese theatre. And it is this reaction which I now want to discuss. In an English introduction to The Fisherman's Revenge, the same play Brecht saw in 1935, Ma Yen-hsiang writes:

One of the most important characteristics of Peking opera is the fact that... the opera does not need scenery, many stage properties, or complicated stage effects; but the plot and characters' movements are very clear to the spectators. It is this characteristic which makes Chinese opera so different from most Western operas. Every stage movement is symbolic and at the same time highly realistic. When we require that a drama shall be true to life, this does not mean that all the objects on the stage must be real, but the performance must be convincing. In this respect Peking opera has reached a very high

level, for the actors bring such conviction to their roles that the spectators not only consider all the imaginary objects on the stage as real, but often come completely under the spell of the illusion created.

This passage sums up the whole rationale behind Chinese acting which, far from supporting Brecht's V-effect, runs counter to it. Apparently unfamiliar effects in Chinese acting should be carefully considered before being dismissed as devices to guard "against making the audience feel exactly what the character is feeling". Let's take the extreme example of a "painted" Chinese general (see Fig. 50 p. 407).

There is no question that the Chinese way of depicting a general on stage is highly exaggerated. But it is perhaps not realized in the West that this stylized representation of a general is based on a realistic element - a true life anecdote, familiar to, and well-loved by, most Chinese spectators. The story is that a very effeminate looking general by the name of King Lan Ling of the Northern Chi dynasty (550 - 589) painted black lines curving upward and outward on his face to suggest ferocity and bravery. This

2 Tulane Drama Review, p.132.
3 Josephine Huang Hung, Classical Chinese Plays, Taiwan 1972, p.19.
FIG. 50 A CHING (PAINTED FACE) ROLE: A FIERCE GENERAL
system was completely rejected, but only because the Communist government felt that its "notion of a subconscious and universal creative system was informed by an ideology of bourgeois democracy incompatible with the proletarian drama."¹ In Ou-yang Yu-qian's autobiography entitled Zi wo yan xi yi lai (My Acting Career), this well known Chinese actor emphasized the true-to-life credo, underlying the Chinese actor's technique:

Some actors, in order to play certain roles, really took great pains to study the part. For instance, Wang Wuneng and Lu Xiaowu when they were to portray priests actually invited priests to perform a ceremony and paid to learn from them how to chant and strike the percussion instruments, so that when they came onto the stage the audience would gasp with pleasure at the sight of them and cry: "True to life! True to life!". With other roles too, such as prostitutes, ruffians, policemen, fortune-tellers, opium addicts, confidence tricksters etc., they entered into the minutest detail of every rhythm and tone of their speech and the habitual mannerisms of their profession. ²

¹ ibid., p.257. (See above, note 3, p. 406).
² Ou-yang Yu-qian, Zi wo yan xi yi lai (My Acting Career), Peking 1959, p.225. The quotation was translated by David Pollard, Lecturer of Chinese in the School of Oriental and African Studies. Ou-yang describes how character acting superseded the speech-making of the political phase (1910 - 12) in the history of the "wen ming xi" (sophisticated play). For background, see A.C. Scott, Literature and the Arts in 20th Century China. The "wen ming xi" (sophisticated play) was not the same as the traditional Peking Opera (being essentially spoken), but shared a similar "true-to-life" rationale.
In the following description of how an 18th Century actor, Shen Hsiang-lin prepares himself for the role of a prostitute, we find a confirmation of Ou-yang's account of the pains taken by Chinese actors to enter fully into their roles in order to give audiences realistic character portrayals. His biographer Yen ch'ang-ming wrote:

Shen took a job in the house of Chin-t'an-erh. Chin-t'an-erh was a famous courtesan of Han-yang. Hsiang-lin served her and watched how she spoke, smiled, behaved, ate and drank, and her very great beauty and fascinating manner both when awake and asleep. Everything went fine. He lived there for a year and then said delightedly, "Now I can do it". He again asked to show his skill and the audience were all greatly impressed just as in the story...

And the story of Actor Ma, as recorded by Hou Fang-yu, is as follows:

Ma Chin was known also as ... (Ma the Moslem). It is said that he once competed ... to perform the part of a wicked minister, but was considered inferior to his rival. He then took a job in the mansion of a famous corrupt minister in Peking and observed his employer's speech and actions in minute detail. This produced the desired effect on his acting...

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2 See The Rise of the Peking Opera, p.28. Mackerras says that before the Cultural Revolution, this story was very popular in contemporary China, where great emphasis is placed upon the notion that actors should live among those they portray on the stage.
The next two accounts describe how Ch'eng Chang-keng (known as the father of Peking Opera and probably its most famous exponent in the 19th Century) made his roles thoroughly credible and how the Chinese audiences reacted to him. The first tells of his remarkably faithful performance of the heroic younger Wu brother in the drama *Chao-kuant*.

His robustness in wearing the cap and carrying the sword, the nobility of his voice and rhythm, and his wonderful and chivalrous air made him seem absolutely like a god. The several hundred people in the audience were all very surprised. They rose up and shouted madly, shaking heaven.

The second account shows how Ch'eng Chang-keng, who was in real life a man of highest principles and was very concerned with the political events of his time, excelled particularly in playing the roles of similarly high principled political heroes on stage:

He only liked performing dramas about the heroes of ancient times or the creators of states, like Chu-ko Liang (181 - 234) or Liu Chi (1311 - 75).

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4. Chu Ko Liang and Liu Chi were both famous heroes and both helped to create states.
He showed great depth of feeling and was very imposing. The audience found him awe-inspiring, and when he played characters who were loyal, upright, brave and virtuous, their tears would moisten their garments and there was nobody who did not weep.  

As these quotations illustrate, though little attention is given to scenery, and props are only symbolic, (see Fig. 49, p. 402) the actors in the Chinese theatre are really concerned to give realistic portrayals of characters. This inexplicable blending of styles led Zucker to comment:

"It is a curious thing that on the Chinese stage where fixed conventions leave so much to the imagination, one finds occasionally the most revolting realism in plays of the "shuddering" variety. I have seen, for example, the victim of an assault dragging his entrails across the stage - a nauseating imitation of the real thing. The Chinese love their "horrors" just as much as our medieval ancestors did."

Here is another eye-witness account in the 19th Century, which not only underlines the pains taken by boys-actors to give as accurate and realistic a portrayal of female characters as possible, but emphasizes the magical atmosphere of the Chinese theatre - indeed makes it quite

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1 I-ling chuan, pp. 1b - 2a, translated in The Rise of the Peking Opera, p.184.

removed from the cool, critical atmosphere of Brecht's ideal theatre:

The performances usually extend through three entire days, ... and in villages ... the people act as if they were bewitched, neglecting everything to attend them. The female parts are performed by lads, who not only paint and dress like women, but even squeeze their toes into the "golden lilies", and imitate, upon the stage, a mincing, wriggling gait. These fellows personate the voice, tones, and motions of the sex with wonderful exactness.... The acting is chiefly pantomime, and its fidelity shows the excellent training of the players. This development of their imitative faculties is probably still more encouraged by the difficulty the audience find to understand what is said; for owing to the differences in the dialects, the open construction of the theatre, the high falsetto or recitative key in which many of the parts are spoken, and the din of the orchestra intervening between every few sentences, not one quarter of the people hear or understand a word. 1

The fact that young boys playing female roles (tan) were subjected to long years of training to imitate the mincing gait of mercilessly bound feet, considered a great sign of beauty in pre-Communist China, shows how fanatically concerned the Chinese theatre is with absolute fidelity in some aspects of its representation, while illogically ignoring

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1 See S. Wells Williams, The Middle Kingdom, London 1883, Vol.1, p.821. The author lived in China for forty-three years.
others. For example A.C. Scott in his biography, *Mei Lan Fang*, gives a vivid description of the agonies of a Chinese actor in learning to use the "ch'iao" (stilt-like contraptions bandaged to the feet, in order to teach the actor to walk like women with bound feet):... his voice is high, gentle, and much like that of one of his heroines on stage.

Pupils beginning to learn this technique were made to stand poised on a brick placed on the top of a like wooden bench and they had to remain there for the space of time it took a stick of incense to burn away. At first their legs trembled and wobbled and it was such a painful process that they had to step down immediately. With constant practice their limbs and waists became more subtle and they were able to remain poised in mid air without moving. During the winter the boys used to practise running across the frozen ground while wearing the ch'iao.... This seemingly impossible task gave an added lightness to their movements on the ordinary stage... after their ordeal out of doors.  

So while it is sufficient for a chair to represent a mountain, a well or a prison, and a black banner to signify a storm, the Chinese stage convention seems to insist on actors completely entering into the spirit of their roles and, particularly, in female parts, even on resembling these heroines in real life. For example the great Mei Lan Fang is described by Zucker in the following way:

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Some of the coyness that gives such a true ring to his stage presentations of young ladies clings to Mei off-stage. He seems like a charming, bookish, slightly effeminate boy of seventeen! In reality he is thirty, but like so many Orientals he appears to Westerners much younger than he is. He is of the frail, willowy build demanded in a Chinese beauty.\(^1\) His voice is high, gentle, and soft; in fact, it sounds very much like that of one of his heroines on stage.\(^2\)

Zucker also stressed that it was because of Mei's girl-like face, his slender build and high voice, that he was originally chosen to be trained for beautiful female roles (hua-tan). And Mei had been such a phenomenal success because, instead of merely adopting the method pursued by most tyro actors in attempting to approximate to the minutest mannerisms the style of the actor at the top of their special class, he introduced into his acting traits and foibles observed in the women about him; it was this freshness in

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1 Colin Mackerras in *The Rise of the Peking Opera* stresses the real-life beauty of many of the boy-actors (hsiang kung) who were chosen because of their natural assets to play beautiful female heroines on stage. The famous actor Liu Ch'ing-jui was depicted in terms appropriate for a beautiful woman. Another "tan" (female) actor was described as graceful in his laughter, very beautiful in appearance and endowed with a magnificent voice like the sound of a p'i-p'a (a Chinese lute). According to Mackerras, sources abound in references to love affairs between scholars and the beautiful boy actors. (See p. 150 in his book)

2 Zucker, p.187.
his style which pleased his audiences.¹

From all this it can be deduced that actors were specially chosen because of their true-life resemblance to their roles, so that they could with complete conviction become their parts. It was considered a high tribute if a biographer could write of an actor, as Yang Mou-chien did of Lin Yun-hsiang, that in playing the part of the hero, Chia Pao-yü, of The Dream of the Red Chamber, ² he was elegant and natural in the part, and that one seemed to be meeting Pao-yü himself. ³ And this shows clearly that the kind of alienation or distancing Brecht wanted the actor to feel, and which he thought existed in Chinese acting, was in fact absent from this genre of theatre.

As there are no existing Chinese records of Chinese theatrical theories, the comments of Li Yü (1611 - 1680), a 17th Century Chinese playwright and impresario, are invaluable. Li Yü went beyond a literary approach and saw drama in terms of the performing arts with all sections of

¹ Zucker, p.175.
² Hung Lou Meng, considered the greatest Chinese novel ever written - by Tsao Hsueh-Chin and Kao Ngoh.
³ See Mackerras, p.174.
the community as audience. The following are excerpts from his book, *A Temporary Lodge for My Leisured Thoughts*, which indicate clearly the basic rationale behind the Chinese theatre I've been trying to pinpoint. The first endorses the quotations, I've included so far, by stressing that it is the "realistic" aspect of Chinese theatre which moves the audience:

"...type of role is portrayed. The acting rationale in the Chinese theatre permits a vulgar portrayal of a role and..."

The current taste of the audience and the prevalent practice of the actors centre on hot and noisily exciting plays. The cold and calm lyrics and the elegant tune are shunned like the plague.... I think, what matters most in drama, is not whether it is cold or hot but whether it faithfully reflects human behaviour. If the partings and reunions, sadness and joy of a play are all appropriate manifestations of human nature, it can move the audience to tears, provoke their laughter, excite their anger and hold them in thrilled suspense. 1

Li Yu's remarks on "playing the female role" also support my argument that the great concern of Chinese actors is to give faithful portrayals of character roles:

"...must be more carefully couched and refined."

When a male actor is playing the role of a woman, he has to put on coquettish airs, otherwise he will not look like a woman. On the other hand, when a female painted face (usually generals or warriors); and ch'ou - comedian.

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1 See excerpts from Li Yu's *A Temporary Lodge for My Leisured Thoughts*, translated by Man Sai-cheong in *Renditions*, Autumn issue, Hong Kong 1974, p.64.
actor is playing the role of a woman, her primary concern is to be natural and avoid overacting; once she overacts, then she will resemble a male actor playing that of a female.

In a section entitled "Distinguishing the roles", a philosophy of acting can be traced opposed to the No concept of 'yūgen', which insists on a beautiful/mysterious rendering, whatever type of role is portrayed. The acting rationale in the Chinese theatre permits a vulgar portrayal of a role and the use of crude language so long as it fits the situation.

So Li Yu wrote:
The crudest and basest language can be used in drama, but it must fit the characters who speak it. It is imperative for the dialogue of a "hua-mien" or "painted face" to be crude and vulgar, whereas the words of the songs of the "male" and the "female" roles must be more carefully couched and refined.

Women were forbidden by Imperial decree in the Manchu dynasty to appear on stage.

Broadly speaking, roles in the Chinese Theatre fall into four categories: sheng - male; tan - female; ching - painted face (usually generals or warriors); and ch'ou - comedian.

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1 Women were forbidden by Imperial decree in the Manchu dynasty to appear on stage.
2 Renditions, p.65.
3 Broadly speaking, roles in the Chinese Theatre fall into four categories: sheng - male; tan - female; ching - painted face (usually generals or warriors); and ch'ou - comedian.
4 Renditions, p.63.

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2 See his biography of Mei Lan Yang, p.8.
The section which follows this, called "Different vocal attributes", deserves quoting because it indicates clearly the care taken in the Chinese theatre to cast an actor in a type of role most appropriate to his natural attributes, and therefore underlining its "naturalistic" or "realistic" aspect:

An actor who can produce guttural sounds that are clear and elevated is capable of the role of a "cheng sheng" or "hsiao sheng" ("young male"). One whose guttural sounds are shrill and soft, whose singing is full and round is the material for a "cheng tan" or "t'ieh tan" ("female lead" and "additional female character").

And this leads to the much misinterpreted function of songs in Chinese theatre or Chinese opera, as it is traditionally referred to. A.C. Scott argues, without any qualification, that the falsetto singing required of Chinese actors, shows a disregard for realism on stage. This is simplification. The Chinese theatre abounds in songs, which may seem a stylized means of expression, but have the effect of establishing exactly the mood of a situation. And the creation of the right mood is

1 ibid.

2 See his biography of Mei Lan Fang, p.2.
so vitally important to what the Chinese theatre is all about - in fact characterizes it - that we must examine the role of the "song" within the context of the theatre's primarily emotional appeal.

Another point which Li Yu emphasizes is that Chinese theatre is essentially non-intellectual and popular. Drama is meant to be performed before the literate and the illiterate alike, and for the enjoyment of uneducated women and children. Therefore immediate comprehensibility is preferred to intellectual profundity. 1

And the two qualities, Li Yu specified as being indispensable to a play, - organic wholeness and spontaneous delight - provide a guide as to his conception of Chinese theatre. The second quality, "spontaneous delight" in particular is not often associated with Chinese theatre by Westerners. Yet if we examine the importance of song and music in Chinese Opera, we realize that it gives a clue to a more satisfactory definition of its content and aim. In a section called "Learning to sing" Li Yu states clearly the function of song in the theatre:

In the process of singing, the song must be informed with the right spirit to bring out

1 Renditions, p.62.
exactly the mood of the character in the situation. 1

He goes on to discuss what he calls the "feel" of a song, which he defines as "what the song is about, its plot and emotion". It is this, in fact, which constitutes one of the chief appeals of Chinese opera. The plot of the play, well known to the majority of Chinese theatre-goers, does not exert nearly the same amount of interest. At various points, the plot is interrupted by the beating of gongs and drums which Li Yü describes as "the muscles and joints" of a play. In other words Chinese theatre is meant essentially as a musical/theatrical genre: its appeal is completely emotional and invariably evokes in the Chinese spectator an immediate identification with the character or with the theme - empathy without criticism. Brecht is right that a dominantly emotional response is incompatible with a critical attitude. A questioning spirit is noticeably absent among a Chinese audience in a Chinese theatre.

As a final example to illustrate this, and to show how far off the mark Brecht was in identifying his ideal "epic" theatre with the Chinese, I'd like to examine a popular and typical Chinese play called Ssu Lang T'an Mu.  

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1 Renditions, p.65.
(Ssu Lang Visits His Mother). But first I want to reproduce for comparison, Brecht's own two clear outlines of the "Dramatic Form" and the "Epic Form", one representing what he was rebelling against, and the other what he was striving to achieve, from his essay, "Theatre for Learning":

The following little outlines may indicate in what respect the function of the epic is distinguished from that of the dramatic theatre.

Dramatic Form

The stage "incarnates" an event.

Involves the audience in an action, uses up its activity.

Helps it to feel.

Communicates experiences.

The character is a known quantity.

Man unchangeable.

His drives.

Epic Form

It relates it.

Involves the audience in an action, uses up its activity.

Compels it to make decisions.

Communicates insights.

The character is subjected to investigation.

Man who can change and make changes.

His motives.
Dramatic Form | Epic Form
---|---
Events move in a straight line. | In irregular curves.
Nature non facit saltus. | Facit saltus.
The world as it is. | The world as it is becoming.

II
The audience in the dramatic theatre says:
Yes, I have felt that too. - That's how I am. - That is only natural. - That will always be so. - This person's suffering shocks me because he has no way out. - This is great art: everything in it is self-evident. - I weep with the weeping. I laugh with the laughing.

The audience in the epic theatre says:
I wouldn't have thought that. - People shouldn't do things like that. - That's extremely odd, almost unbelievable. - This has to stop. - This person's suffering shocks me, because there might be a way out for him. - This is great art: nothing in it is self-evident. - I laugh over the weeping. I weep over the laughing.

We can now apply these two forms of theatre - the "epic" and the "dramatic" - to Ssu Lang T'an Mu and see which more appropriately describes it. The plot is taken from Tulane Drama Review, pp.20-21. (Sept. 1961 issue).

Though not performed in Communist China nowadays, A.C. Scott said that its airs used to set heads swaying and voices humming. (See A.C. Scott, The Classical Theatre of China, London 1957, p.208)
a well-known romantic novel of the Ch'ing period called the Yang Chia Chang. The book tells the story of the Yang family during the Sung dynasty (AD 960 - 1279).

During the reign of the Emperor T'ai Tsung (AD 976 - 97), General Yang Chi-yeh and his eight sons led a campaign against the Mongols, which ended in a bloody battle in which many died, and the fourth son, Yang Yen-hui, was taken prisoner. When the Empress Dowager of the Mongols saw Yen-hui, she was so impressed by him that she gave her own daughter, Princess Iron Mirror, to him in marriage. Yen-hui kept his real identity a secret and gave his name as Ssu Lang. When the play opens, he has been married for fifteen years to his Mongolian wife and she has just borne him a son. But Ssu Lang is full of misery. He has heard that his mother and sixth brother have launched a campaign against the Mongols and at that moment are within travelling distance. The core of the play lies in the filial feelings of Ssu Lang towards his old mother - a theme which reflects a deep Chinese sentiment. It would certainly have found immediate rapport with Chinese audiences who would have been likely to respond to it exactly like the audiences in Brecht's

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1 In traditional Chinese society the mourning period for a dead mother used to last for a period of three years, indicating the special degree of honour given to a mother.
imagined "dramatic" form. (See pp. 421-22.)

Princess Iron Mirror, noticing her husband's grief, gets to the root of it and learns his real identity. She devises a plan to reunite him with his mother on condition he returns to her before daybreak. To pass through Mongolian lines, it is necessary for Ssu Lang to show the mandate arrow,* issued only by the Empress Dowager. The Princess uses her baby son to wheedle the arrow from his doting grandmother. Here the play touches on the Chinese feeling of indulgence towards male heirs - something which the audience would have associated themselves with completely. Ssu Lang succeeds in seeing his old mother again, but on his return is arrested, as the Empress Dowager has discovered the ruse during his absence. He is sentenced to death, but his wife, again using her baby son, manages to persuade the Empress to convert the death sentence into one of exile.

I want now to quote part of the first scene from Ssu Lang T'an Mu which contains some so-called "alienation effects": the actor's self-introduction, the intrusion of the property man, the use of the third person, song and stylized gestures. But these devices within the Chinese

* The arrow of command in the past was a small triangular pennant bestowed by the emperor as a sign of vested authority.
theatrical context, far from creating a sense of distance between the actor and his role, and therefore also between the spectator and the actor, in fact have the opposite effect. Let us examine why.

Self-introduction in a Chinese play, a recurring feature, conventionally known as "t'ung ming," in which the character recites his name and parentage for the audience may seem in the West a highly stylized way for an actor to present himself. But it is in fact perfectly natural within Chinese etiquette, for a person to introduce himself, bringing out in particular his parentage. It certainly wouldn't have prevented a Chinese spectator brought up in a traditional milieu from getting close to the role or theme. Ssu Lang's self-introduction, presenting the preliminaries of a plot familiar to the majority of a Chinese audience, is as follows:

(He strokes his beard and recites his name to the audience.)
I am Ssu Lang Yen-hui
My father was the honoured Chin-tao
My mother is the respected She-shih.
Because of the encounter at Sha-t'an fifteen years ago, that bloody battle, the Yang family suffered slaughter ... I was taken prisoner ... my mother has also come to the northern barbarians' land.
I yearn to visit the Sung camp and meet my mother face to face, ....
(Ssu Lang gives a long drawn out sigh of anguish. He then weeps, wiping away his tears first with his left sleeve then his right, .... The gongs and
The cymbals in the orchestra then play a passage called hsiāo-lo mao erh-t'ou and the hu-ch'īn strikes up a kuo-men. In the past, the actor at this point was usually offered tea by the stage attendant.... After this pause for refreshment in public, an old custom discontinued in China today, the audience settled back to listen to the famous and very popular song, whose words follow. It is sung in hsi-p'i man-pan time.

Earlier I mentioned that the function of the song was to create an exact mood. This is illustrated by the song which follows. The fact that it begins in the third person is not meant to create an alienating effect on the audience. On the contrary this seems more likely to represent the beginning of a musical progression - in fact a means of establishing closer audience-identification - as in the course of the song, the third person gives way to

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1 The musical style used for an actor's entry.
2 Two-stringed instrument, used for song accompaniment.
3 An introductory passage which precedes an actor's singing or bridges the intervals in between.
5 See Chapter III, p. 176 where I discuss the use of the third person in NO plays.
the first person, reflecting varying shades of emotional intensity. Let's examine carefully how this particular passage is delivered:

Yang Yen-hui tso kung yuan /Yang Yen-hui sits in the palace

At this point there is a pause in the actor's song while a hsiao kuo men passage is played. The hu ch' in is accompanied by the yüch ch' in.

Tzu ssu tzu t'an / And thinking to himself sighs.

And so this song continues, shifting into the first person and another singing style. Song and passages of musical accompaniment are clearly enlisted in engaging the audience's sympathy with the hero's predicament.

I am like a bird in a cage,
I have wings but cannot stretch them;
I am like a tiger forgotten in the mountain
Alone and suffering.

... I am faint thinking of my old mother
Thinking of my old mother all day, my
tears do not dry.

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1. Traditional Chinese Plays (I), p.35.
3. Four-stringed instrument with a circular body.
4. Traditional Chinese Plays (I), p.35.
(He weeps. The large gong is struck and the actor turns right ... steps forward, his hands clasped together, and sings)

"My mother"

(The large gong is struck. He drops his hand to sing)

How difficult to ... (weeps. The actor now flings his right sleeve out followed by the left and then holds his right sleeve above his head. He next stamps his right foot once, the gong is struck once, and he sings the one word) "meet" (emphasized by two drum beats)

"my old mother."

(The large gong sounds again....) ¹

I have included in the preceding quotation detailed stage directions showing the use of stylized gestures which are completely accepted by Chinese audiences as part of Chinese theatrical conventions. The use of stylized sleeve movements, for instance, in portraying grief, need not prevent the audience from sympathizing fully with Ssu Lang's grief. His grief touches on a very particular, national sentiment - reverence for the mother - and the use of the Chinese orchestra is meant to reinforce this feeling rather than produce a critical appraisal of it. In fact, most Chinese plays present themes which are not meant to be thought-provoking but merely reaffirm traditional beliefs, assumed to be shared by every member of the audience. Until

¹ Traditional Chinese Plays (I), pp.36-37.
the Communists came into power in 1949, an unquestioning acceptance of traditional Confucian sentiments characterized the Chinese way of life. In the theatre, therefore, where such sentiments were simply repeated, empathy with them, on the part of the audience, can be taken for granted. This is why I find it ironical that Brecht should have associated his V-effect theory, meant to produce critical thought, with the Chinese theatre. For in spite of the use of what may seem like stylized conventions to the foreigner, Chinese audiences do react very emotionally to the themes and characters on their stage, sometimes weeping copiously, or even "shouting madly, shaking heaven". The Chinese theatre is in fact more identifiable with the "dramatic form" than the "epic" with which thanks to Brecht it is generally associated.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE THEATRE ON WESTERN PRODUCTIONS

Apart from Lady Precious Stream or The Fisherman's Revenge, the Chinese Opera most well known to the West, is Cross-roads or "The Fight in the Dark", etc. Here is a resume of this opera, based on folk legend. A noble general, who has been unfairly convicted and exiled, stops

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1 See p. 410.
at an inn which stands where three roads meet.\(^1\) At the inn the general's own soldiers plot to murder him. The innkeeper and his wife however overhear the plot, and are determined to save the general.

The opera opens when the general has put out the light in his room and is sleeping in his bed. The innkeeper enters the room in the dark to watch over him but accidentally touches the sleeping general, whom he mistakes for a guard. This wakes the general up in a state of fright and a fight follows in the dark, neither person knowing who the other is. So that although all the lights are on, the audience must be convinced that all this is taking place in the dark. The actors' movements are cleverly performed as they dodge and miss each other by inches, strike imaginary blows, and clamber over imaginary furniture. The main part of this opera consists of this fight in the dark which continues till the innkeeper's wife enters with a light, and they both recognize each other, laughing at their mistake.\(^2\)

In 1956, Ma Yen-hsiang in his introduction to an English translation of The Fisherman's Revenge, uses this

\(^1\) In the programme notes of the Second Paris Drama Festival in 1955, this play was simply called Three Encounters.

For example, *Aien an opera portrays two men fighting desperately in the dark, although the stage is brightly lit, the actors perform so realistically that the spectators are convinced these combatants cannot see each other.¹

In other words the kind of "reality" the Chinese theatre represents, as typified in The Fight in the Dark, is very unusual and was not really fully appreciated in England till 1965. Kenneth Tynan saw this opera, entitled Three Encounters, as it was included in The Second Paris Drama Festival, and was most impressed:

Two warriors fight in a darkened room, miming even the darkness (for the stage is brightly lit), missing each other by inches, prowling and swooping through fifteen minutes of ceaseless comic invention. You may object that nothing very profound takes place; but I cannot call superficial an art that explores, with entranced and exquisite love, the very well-springs of physical movement, speaking the language of the body so ardently that a flexed arm becomes a simile and a simple somersault a metaphor.²


² Curtains, op. cit., p.385.
But in spite of being impressed, the rationale behind Chinese acting seemed to have escaped him, for he ended up his review by firmly bracketing Chinese opera with Brecht's anti-illusion of reality "epic" theatre.

Jean Genet was also present at this festival, and this particular opera was to have far-reaching influences on his conception of The Screens as L.C. Pronko pointed out.¹ But as I'm concerned primarily with plays, written in English, and also because it's such a very close illustration of a direct borrowing, I'd like to discuss the influence of this opera on Peter Shaffer's Black Comedy, which had its first showing in Chichester in July 1965 and was reviewed by Philip French in the New Statesman, March 1st, 1968:

Briefly here is an outline of the action. Brindley and his cast and director John Dexter were responsible for the presentation.

All there was in the programme was a description of the setting as a young man's flat in Kensington one Sunday evening and the cryptic note: "in one of the most celebrated scenes in the repertoire of the Chinese Theatre, two swordsmen fight a duel in a completely darkened room. The scene is performed with the stage fully lit." ... what followed was a beautiful balletic farce, flawlessly come to fruition after months of agonizing preparation by Shaffer, his cast and director John Dexter.

¹ For details of the influence of Chinese opera on Genet see Pronko, pp.63-67.
I have singled out *Black Comedy* for special examination, because in outward form, i.e. apart from unusual lighting, it can be classified as a completely naturalistic play. And yet in essence it has captured the true spirit of Chinese theatrical art.

The whole action takes place in the flat of Brindsley - a young sculptor. The set is realistic. We are told: "It is a gay room, full of colour and space and new shapes. It is littered with marvellous objects - mobiles, manikins, toys and dotty bric-a-brac ...; three elegant Regency chairs ..., a Regency chaise-longue to match; a small Queen Anne table etc." But this use of an elaborately naturalistic decor does not interfere with its essentially Chinese theatrical conception.

Briefly here is an outline of the action. Brindsley and his pretty, but silly, fiancee, have borrowed, without permission, furniture from a friend to impress his prospective father-in-law, Colonel Muskett, whom they are expecting. They have also arranged for an elderly millionaire art collector to turn up at about the same time, in the hope that his interest in Brindsley's sculpture will impress Colonel...
Muskett. But just before the father-in-law-to-be is due to arrive, there is a fuse, resulting in a total blackout. Peter Shaffer solves this problem with a brilliant theatrical stroke. Having opened the play in -

COMPLETE DARKNESS.
Two voices are heard: BRINDSLEY and CAROL. They must give the impression of two people walking round a room with absolute confidence, as if in the light. 1

as soon as the lights are fused -

BRILLIANT LIGHT FLOODS THE STAGE.
The rest of the play, save for the times when matches are struck, ... is acted out in this light, but as if in pitch darkness. 2

And so the action unfolds with a couple of unwanted and unexpected guests turning up, including the owner of the borrowed furniture and Clea, Brindsley's ex-mistress, a dazzling, mischievous girl who can't resist creating a dramatic situation out of the darkness. The whole evening represents Brindsley's progress towards disintegration, and when the electrician Schuppanizigh, a middle class German refugee ("cultivated and effervescent") manages to repair

1 Black Comedy, p.42.
2 ibid., p.45.
the fuse and with a great flourish flicks on the light switch, revealing all Brindsley's ill-concealed skeletons-in-the-cupboard, the stage is covered once again in (as Shaffer demanded):

INSTANT DARKNESS

reinforcing in a literal way the denouement of a BLACK COMEDY.

But nearly the whole of the action, like that of its Chinese archetype, The Fight in the Dark, has been played in bright light, demanding that the actors mime naturalistically in the darkness in such a way as to convince the audience that there is a failure of electricity. It is make-believe of a very strenuous nature, taxing the skill of the actor and director to an extraordinary degree as indicated in the "Author's Note" preceding the text:

Black Comedy was the product of intense corporate effort; the happy enthusiasm of a cast of courageous actors and the immense choreographic skill of John Dexter, to whose sheer theatrical brilliance I shall always be indebted.

(P.S.)

And this marks its similarity to Chinese theatre, where maximum emphasis is placed on acting ability with minimal technical techniques of any particular importance.

help from decor and props. Consequently the skill demanded of the actor must be of an unusually high order if it has to be subjected to such scrutiny. It was this particular quality in Mei Lan Fang's acting which Brecht so admired when Mei, "clad in evening dress" and "in a room with no special lights" displayed his craftsmanship. However, Brecht misinterpreted this as proof that the Chinese technique was intended to achieve distance.

I'd like now to concentrate on the impact of Chinese theatrical techniques on four particularly important Western productions: Brecht's two plays - The Good Person of Szechwan and The Caucasian Chalk Circle - David Hare's Fan Shen and Bernard Sobel's Chinese-derived production of Le Pavillon au bord de la riviere.

The Good Person of Szechwan, with its Chinese setting and Chinese characters, seems to be the most obvious example of Brecht's direct borrowing from the Chinese theatre. But apart from its outward similarity and our complete emotional involvement with its heroine - Shen Te - its ending, which makes us repudiate the way the gods cruelly abandon her after putting her goodness to the most harrowing trial, is

most un-Chinese. Chinese classical plays are usually un­
critical illustrations of traditionally held sentiments, (as shown in my discussion of Ssu Lang T'ian Mu above) and
the ways of Providence are never questioned. But the most
striking point about The Good Person of Szechwan is that
we don't merely end up by being coolly critical of the
gods' behaviour towards Shen Te, but positively angry with
them: in other words a strong emotional reaction is pro­
duced in which our sympathy is completely turned towards
But the distancing effects Brecht uses, far from 'clari­
the abandoned Shen Te precisely because of the gods' diss­
ifying' our emotional Reaction towards Shen Te, draw us into
passionately cool treatment of her. Here we have a skilful
a totally uncritical identification with her - the opposite
use of the alienation effect as a crucially functional
of what he wants. We do not, for example, while watching
the play, criticize her utter naivety in allowing herself
directions: we feel strong antipathy towards the gods for
to be snapped by a host of unworthy parasites. Our reaction
abandoning Shen Te after using her as their guinea-pig to
prove that goodness on earth is possible, and correspond­
the gods' attitude towards her and partly by the fact that
ingly, we feel strong sympathy with the victim of their
she is such a kind and generous person - the unfortunately
experiment. Clearly, it is Brecht's intention that we

seem to have anticipated is that a strong withdrawal of
rather like the way Chinese audiences respond to their
sympathy from them is bound to increase our emotional in­
volvement with Shen Te - an audience reaction which is
described as 'subconsciously' emotional. But there is one
quite different from his ideally cool appraisal of the

situation.

Brecht on Theatre, p.38.
I'm not trying to suggest that Brecht wants us to react completely unemotionally to Shen Te's predicament. It would be difficult for Shen Te, as the heroine, not to enlist our sympathy at all. As Brecht himself puts it in his essay, 'On the use of Music in an Epic Theatre':

> It is a frequently recurring mistake to suggest that this - epic - kind of production simply does without all emotional effects: actually emotions are clarified in it, steering clear of subconscious origins and carrying nobody away.\(^1\)

But the distancing effects Brecht uses, far from 'clarifying' our emotional reaction towards Shen Te, draw us into a totally uncritical identification with her - the opposite of what he wants. We do not, for example, while watching the play, criticize her utter naivety in allowing herself to be sapped by a host of unworthy parasites. Our reaction to her is basically an emotional one, motivated partly by the gods' attitude towards her and partly by the fact that she is such a kind and generous person - the unfortunately gullible choice for the gods' experiment. And so we allow ourselves to be totally transported by our sympathy for her, rather like the way Chinese audiences respond to their heroes and heroines in Chinese theatre - a reaction best described as 'subconsciously' emotional. But there is one

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\(^1\) See Brecht on Theatre, p.88.
major difference between *The Good Person* and a classical Chinese drama which I'd like to clarify: though we feel uncritically and emotionally involved with Shen Te, we're highly critical of the gods' behaviour towards her. And interestingly, this element of criticism stems from Brecht's most striking deviation from traditional Chinese attitudes towards their gods. It is his critical treatment of the gods which gives this play an extra thought-provoking dimension¹ not usually found in Chinese plays. 

But the point I'd like to stress is that when Brecht applies alienation techniques to his plays in accordance with the way he thinks they're used in Chinese acting, they're capable of arousing our emotions totally, as illustrated by *The Good Person of Szechwan*.

The most strikingly cohesive V-effect in this play which reinforces its validity as a 'play' and not a 'slice of real life' is the way Brecht uses a 'fairy tale' to them.

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¹ Cf. this with Brecht's use of a rascally ex-poacher, Azdak, as the judge in his Caucasian Chalk Circle. The original Chinese source for the Chalk Circle uses a respectable 'Governor' and Klabund goes further by choosing an 'Emperor' as the judge. It is interesting that when Brecht departs from traditional Chinese attitudes, he introduces a critical aspect into his work which makes it more complex and rewarding. See p. 455 below.
element — the descent of the three gods to earth in search of a truly good person. But paradoxically, this particular technique of breaking up the illusion of reality has the effect of intensifying our identification with Shen Te and thereby making the situation more poignant rather in the way some fairy stories are more vividly real than reality.

The three gods, with the help of Wang, the water-seller, discover the prostitute, Shen Te, who offers them board and hospitality. When they leave they reward her with a thousand silver dollars — reinforcing a distinctly 'fairy tale' situation. But apart from the two direct confrontations with her at the beginning and at the end — to assess her in the first and judge her in the second — their concern as to how she is coping with such an unexpected windfall is also deliberately expressed in a 'fairy tale' manner — remote and indirect — through the dream fantasies of Wang, whom they've commissioned to keep them posted about Shen Te. This is a most effective use of the 'dream' to indicate 'alienation' at two removes. And in this case, the gods' remote attitude serves powerfully to counterpoint Shen Te's painfully real emotional involvements with aggressive parasites and an unscrupulous worthless lover, as a direct result of her goodness, divine inter-
vention and newly found wealth. When in desperation Shen Te disguises herself as her imaginary cousin, Shui Ta, who coolly and dispassionately (an attitude ironically mirroring the pattern as set by the gods) gets rid of all the parasites and sets up a flourishing tobacco trade, the gods descend to earth, disguised as magistrates, to try him for the suspected murder of Shen Te. It would seem that unlike the gods, Shen Te - the victim of their experiment - is not permitted any form of disguise - a devastating statement about the totally unrelenting destructive price of goodness.

And it is the stylized way in which Brecht presents the gods' callous dismissal of Shen Te's anguished pleas for understanding in the trial scene ("She can manage! She is strong, healthy and well-built, and can endure much.") that makes us sympathize fully with her dilemma on a subconsciously emotional level. It also shocks us that their last parting gift to her, poignantly recalling their first, and a shattering revelation of divine 'generosity', is their grudging permission for her to use her 'Shui Ta' disguise - her one means of survival - only once a month. Before the gods finally ascend to heaven 'on a pink cloud' they sing a song - 'The Trio of the Vanishing Gods on
their Cloud*. The use of song as a means of breaking the illusion of reality is a particularly popular Brechtian device and in this instance, it works powerfully to bring to a climax their consistently distant experimental approach towards Shen Te. Sandwiched between the pomposity and pretentiousness of their song and the cruel jollity of their farewell address¹ is Shen Te's anguished cry of 'Help' - a cry which goes straight to our hearts.

Another powerful example of an ironic reversal of intention through the use of the alienation technique is in one of the interludes when Shen Te enters with Shui Ta's mask and costume and sings the "Song of the Defencelessness of the Good and the Gods." She then puts on Shui Ta's ill-fitting suit and mask and takes a few steps in his style of walking: we are made to observe the change from the good-hearted Shen Te to the hard-hearted Shui Ta. In theory, the devices of song and the frank exposure of the transition from one character to another are meant to break the actor's total identification with either the situation or

¹ Bertolt Brecht. Plays (Vol. II), London 1963, p.310: "Now let us go: the search at last is over. We have to hurry on!"

² See then give three cheers, and one cheer more Aristotelian drama. For the good person of Szechwan! One has for all practical purposes an auditorium full of little Oedipuses."
the illusion of reality and prevent total 'narcotic',\(^1\) identification with either character. Brecht is very insistent that his audience should not be "carried away by the momentum of the events portrayed".\(^2\) In practice, because the actress is so keenly aware of the need to play the hard-hearted role and gives the impression of The Chinese performer does not act as if in 'quoting' it as skilfully as possible, we are 'carried away' in identifying completely with her conflict and the other expedient is this: the actor looks at way she has to try and live out her new part. And the degree of our intense involvement with Chen Te is in inverse proportion to her 'objective' handling of her new role. Here we have a good example of how the law of 'alienation' works. It is paradoxical, as I mentioned in Chapter I, that the application of this principle of 'detachment' has the effect of engaging rather than withdrawing our sympathy from the central character or theme. And lastly, I'd like to discuss Brecht's use of mime in this play which serves as an alienation device to counteract total identification with either the situation or

\(^1\) See 'On the Use of Music in Epic Theatre' in Willett's Brecht on Theatre, p.89 where Brecht specifies the use of music for the purpose of avoiding 'narcotic effects'.

\(^2\) See ibid., p.87. Brecht is rebelling against aristotelian drama in which, for example, 'in a performance of Oedipus one has for all practical purposes an auditorium full of little Oedipuses.'
character. In his essay, 'On Chinese Acting', which I've referred to already, Brecht singles out for special praise the frequent use of mime and symbols in Chinese theatre. He feels that these devices work effectively because of their sound premises:

The Chinese performer does not act as if in addition to the three walls around him there were also a fourth wall. He makes it clear that he knows he is being looked at....

Another expedient is this: the actor looks at himself.... To look at himself is for the performer an artful and artistic act of self-estrangement. Any empathy on the spectator's part is thereby prevented from becoming total, that is from being a complete self-surrender. 1

To support these observations Brecht quotes with admiration the scene from The Fisherman's Revenge in which the fisherman's daughter mimes the act of steering a "non-existent boat with a little oar that hardly comes down to her knees." 2 Through this piece of mime, Brecht feels that the scene acquires a sense of distance or, as he puts it, a "historic quality", which counteracts total surrender on the part of the audience. And this is the effect Brecht is trying to achieve in his own plays. For example, I'd 1

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3. I'm referring to Ian Watt Smith's production at the Hampstead Theatre Club on 14.10.75.
trying to achieve in his own plays. For example, I'd like to refer to the scene from The Good Person in which Shen Te mimes the act of plucking cherries from a bush¹ - one of the moments of joy she hopes to share with her unborn son - and then determine whether the use of mime, which certainly makes a scene more abstract, does not in fact release its full emotional potentialities.

If Brecht's V-effect theory really works in practice, the fact that this scene is mimed should stand in the way of our total surrender to it, because, as interpreted by him, the principle of self-estrangement underlies the art of mime in Chinese acting and this sense of detachment is consequently transferred to the spectators. He is certainly correct in his identification of this principle of detachment in Chinese acting but seems to have misunderstood its underlying emotional rationale. In fact the art of mime, when well performed, can sometimes involve our imaginative powers to such an extent that the result is much more moving than that produced by naturalistic acting. This is true of the mime act from The Good Person referred to above. And for me in the theatre² it was a totally

² I'm referring to Ian Watt Smith's production at the Hampstead Theatre Club on 14.10.75.
poignant piece of make-believe. I was not alone in my re-
action. Outside the theatre, a notice by the 
Guardian's critic proclaimed:

I dare any spectator not to be totally emotionally engaged with the play.

So to conclude, Brecht's use of alienation effects, far from distanc
ing us from what is happening on the stage, creates a powerful bond between us and the central theme and character. And because the theme remains un-
resolved in The Good Person, we're all the more moved by the dilemma of Shen Te and highly critical of, and outr
gaged by, the gods' attitude. The latter reaction, as I've suggested, in fact reinforces our total sympathy with Shen Te. And this makes our final reaction to the play a totally emotional one - quite the reverse of the partially emotional and uninvolved stance Brecht wants his audience to take. By using so-called Chinese distancing effects which paradoxically produce a close identification with the theme, Brecht has unwittingly tapped the central rationale underlying Chinese theatre - a principle he doesn't seem to have understood.

Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle (Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis) — regarded as one of his greatest plays — is an example of a Western work clearly inspired by a Chinese source: Hui-lan-chi (灰蘭記) or the 'History of the Circle of Chalk'. This old Chinese play was part of the repertory of the Chinese theatre called Yüan-chü-po-cheng, i.e. the Hundred Pieces, composed during the Yüan dynasty (1259–1368). Four of these pieces reached the West in the early part of the 19th C — all translated into French. One of them was "Le Cercle de Craie" translated by Stanislas Julien. Almost certainly, it was this translation which Klabund, the German poet and playwright, (real name Alfred Henschke), used to produce his own adaptation — Der Kreidekreis. Klabund's adaptation was considered the German literary success of 1925, and it was clearly his version from which Brecht worked when he wrote his Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis in 1944-45.

Because Brecht worked from what must be considered an indirect source, we should examine two different sets of deviations: Klabund's from the original Chinese source and Brecht's from Klabund's version; these differences

significantly illuminate the whole question of Brecht's indebtedness to Chinese theatre and certainly help to explain why his Chinese-inspired V-effects create a closer identification with, rather than a withdrawal of sympathy from, his central characters.

Briefly, Klabund's version is a straight one-dimensional treatment of the theme of justice in which a distinguished and respectable judge, none other than the 'Emperor' himself, presides over the disputed ownership of a child between its real mother - Hai Tang (the heroine) - and the false claimant - Mrs Ma. To reach a verdict, the 'Emperor' institutes the test of the 'chalk circle' by which the child is placed in the centre of a circle drawn on the ground with a piece of chalk and the two opposing parties are asked to prove their right of ownership by pulling the child to their side. As might be expected, particularly against the background of traditional Chinese maternal attitudes, the real mother prefers to relinquish her claim to the child rather than hurt him in a brutal tug of war and so allows the false one to drag him to her side. The judge then triumphantly rewards the real mother by restoring her child to her and furthermore, Klabund ends his version by making the 'Emperor' marry her as he was.
in fact, her first lover. As can be seen, this is a pre-
dictable and over-sentimental finale which tends to make
us less sympathetic towards the heroine.

In the original Chinese version (Hui-lan-chi) there
is no 'procurer' - the character called 'Tong' who
features prominently in the first act of Klabund's
adaptation - and no 'Emperor'. Hai Tang is not, as Klabund
makes out, just one of the beautiful geisha-like girls
playing on musical instruments while sitting within cages
in a high class Tea-house,¹ but a definite prostitute whose
mother lives off her earnings. A certain Mr Ma seeks Hai
Tang's hand in marriage and her mother only releases her
from prostitution when she has been indemnified with a
hundred ounces of silver. All this is related in a factual
way in the Prologue and the initial act opens with the
first wife of Mr Ma telling us that Hai Tang's son is now
five years old. The first Mrs Ma then confesses herself
to be someone else's mistress and is planning to poison her
husband while craftily shifting the blame onto Hai Tang.
At this point, Hai Tang's brother turns up and Mrs Ma
advises her to give him some robes and a head ornament.

¹ See the Stage Directions in Act 1, p.2 in The Circle of
Chalk, adapted by Klabund. English version by James
Laver. London 1929.
She then goes to Mr Ma and uses this incident to accuse Hai Tang of having a lover. And in this original Chinese version, much is made of Mr Ma severely thrashing Hai Tang.

The trial scene is similar to Klabund's, though the judge is not the 'Emperor', but merely a 'Governor'. And the latter does not marry Hai Tang, as in Klabund's version. The idea of Hai Tang re-marrying would have constituted a transgression of Chinese moral ethics. It was sufficient in the original for Hai Tang to be vindicated and revenged. And the vengeance assumes a very savage form: Hai Tang's brother, at his sister's insistence, takes a sword and hacks her enemies into a "hundred and twenty" pieces.

This original version, as I've tried to show, is full of ruthless details and is markedly unsentimental. The original Hai Tang with her thirst for vengeance to compensate for all the suffering she's been through, seems much more credibly human and sympathetic than Klabund's heroine who pleads with the Emperor to free all those who have plotted against her in the vein of a cardboard too-good-to-be-true character.

It is a pity that Klabund, with a Western audience in
mind, toned down the ruthlessness of the Chinese source and added a maudlin love interest, and by so doing, greatly reduced its original force. Brecht, working from Klabund's diluted and sentimentalized adaptation, was instinctively forced to make caustic alterations, in accordance with his Chinese-inspired alienation theory, which interestingly bring his version far closer in spirit and effect to the original Chinese source.

I'd like now to examine Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* in the light of its differences from Klabund's. In Brecht's version we have a deeper examination of justice through a play within a related play: the dispute over the ownership of a valley - does it belong to its legal owners or those who can more effectively use it? - is telescoped into a dispute over the ownership of a child between its real mother and the foster mother who has saved and raised him at great cost to her own happiness. And whereas in Klabund's version, the judge who institutes the trial of ownership through the test of the chalk circle, is the Emperor himself, the judge in Brecht's version is an ex-poacher - Azdak - with a penchant for dispensing justice in very unorthodox ways. For example, when a father-in-law, on his absent son's behalf, lodges a complaint against a
stableman for raping his daughter-in-law, Azdak turns the tables by declaring that the real offender is the daughter-in-law whose provocative charms have raped the poor stableman. An indication of his complex approach to the comic role of Azdak, this may be interpreted as a comment on the nature of betrayal in marriage.

The most important difference in Brecht's version is the character of his heroine, Grusha, the foster-mother who saves the governor's child during a revolution. The child's real mother is more anxious to escape with her wardrobe intact than bother about the child. So when it comes to the trial of ownership through the test of the chalk circle, Brecht inverts Klabund's version by letting the real mother, Natella Abashvili, pull the child roughly to her side while the foster mother prefers to lose rather than hurt him. Azdak then awards the child to Grusha. And Brecht deliberately avoids the sentimental ending by phasing out the judge completely and, as I'll be elaborating later, adds ironic twists to counteract, as he hoped, excessive emotional identification with the characters.

I'd like now to examine in turn the effect of the significant changes Brecht made to this play. Firstly, by making the 'Chalk Circle' episode a play within a related play - an obvious alienation device - we ultimately get a much sharper focal image of the central issue: Brecht's
theme is the fair dispensation of justice. The way he
concludes the dispute over the valley by handing it over,
not to its real owners but to those who can put it to
communal use, is an indication of his complex approach to
the concept of 'true' justice. And by using a "Singer"
character to narrate the second episode to a stage audience of
peasants as a piece of entertainment to celebrate the
resolution of the dispute, a so-called alienating narrative
technique paradoxically draws us right into the heart of the
action because we identify with the stage audience. This
feeling of intimacy with the narrator's tale is further
reinforced by the Singer's active participation in the
actual unfolding of the story by frequently interrupting
its flow with descriptive confidential asides directed at
Grusha. For example, when Grusha, who has just returned from the war, she finds it
impossible to explain to him the reasons for her supposed
that she thought was the abandoned child, the "Singer",
by appealing directly to us through a description of the
conflicting thoughts which she finds too painful to express and we
identify totally with Grusha because we've been taken into
the visual
For a long time she sat with the child,
...
Till towards morning the temptation grew too strong. She rose, she leaned over, she sighed, she lifted the child she carried it off.

(The she does what the Singer says as he describes it.)

The Singer's role here is like that of the chorus in a No play, describing the event while the central character mimes it and the effect, as I've pointed out, is also similar in that we become totally involved with the heroine. The play is full of such examples and the third person narrative technique is even more effectively used when the 'Singer' describes the heroine's thoughts for us.

For example, when Grusha is reunited with her betrothed, Simon, who has just returned from the war, she finds it impossible to explain to him the reasons for her supposed betrayal of his love. So the 'Singer' describes her thoughts which she finds too painful to express and we identify totally with Grusha because we've been taken into her confidence by being allowed to share her thoughts:

Hear what she thought, but didn't say:

While you fought in the battle, soldier
The bloody battle, the bitter battle
I found a child who was helpless
And hadn't the heart to do away with it.


2 See Chapter III, pp.163 and 176, where I discuss how the third person descriptive technique conversely induces the closest identification with the feelings of the character.

3 The Caucasian Chalk Circle, p.60.
One of Brecht's most striking deviations from Klabund's version is his treatment of the judge. Brecht's Azdak, whose character on paper is not at all suited to the dispensation of justice, becomes the judge whose period of judgment is later referred to as the 'Golden Age'. With this paradox, Brecht adds a new dimension to our concept of justice which because of its contradictory nature, defies logical definition. The distinction Azdak makes between 'real' as opposed to 'legal' ownership is a subtle and complex one. After the 'Chalk Circle' test, Azdak awards the child to the 'foster' rather than to the 'real' mother because it is all too clear that the real mother only wants him back for mercenary reasons - the child being heir to her late husband's estates. And though it is true that, as in Klabund's version, Brecht's play ends happily with Simon reunited to Grusha, Brecht introduces this as almost an accidental stroke - ironically a miscarriage of the ordinary process of justice. Azdak has carelessly brought this about by divorcing the wrong couple and refusing to retract. So Grusha's marriage of convenience, undertaken earlier for Michael's sake, is dissolved as a result of a legal slip - surely another statement about the complexity of justice and its mysterious and accidental
ways of working. A further judicial twist is added by Azdak demanding forty piastres from Simon and Grusha - the fine he imposes on them for contempt of court and which he pockets, saying: "I'll need it." But he gives away the fine he imposes on the real mother for the construction of a playground for children to be called after him "the Garden of Azdak". He then disappears amidst the festivity and the last lines are left to the 'Singer' who talks directly to us making it virtually impossible not to be emotionally involved with the central issue of justice so unexpectedly and objectively presented:

But you, who have listened to the story of the Chalk Circle
Take note of the meaning of the ancient song:
That what there is shall belong to those who are good for it, thus
The children to the maternal, that they thrive;
And the valley to the waterers, that it shall bear fruit.

So Brecht, by using distancing devices and significantly deviating from Klabund's version, has created a play which not only engages our emotions, but makes us think more deeply about the nature of true justice.

\[\text{1 ibid., p.96.}\]
In conclusion the two plays of Brecht I've discussed, have a Chinese base, and like Chinese plays, appeal strongly on an emotional level. Although Brecht himself did not understand the emotional rationale behind Chinese theatrical techniques, it is particularly interesting, in the case of his Caucasian Chalk Circle, that by using alienation effects to counteract Klabund's diluted and sentimental version, Brecht's adaptation is instinctively closer in spirit and effect to the original Chinese source, and like it, succeeds more effectively than Klabund's in creating greater sympathy for the heroine.

A contemporary example of a Western play and production based on Chinese subject matter and techniques is David Hare's Fan Shen (翻转身) which had its first showing at the ICA on 22nd April 1975. Its outward form is in the nature of an episodic documentary account of an actual Chinese village's progress from the abolition of feudalism to the establishment of a communist state between 1945 and 1949. But its imaginative core is a powerful abstract examination of the restitution of justice with all its inherent ironies and contradictions. And for this reason the title of the play 'fan shen', a term culled from Hinton's book for a workshop production. It was such interest that led to the BBC II's decision to devote two and a half hours on 19.10.79, to showing a film of it and an interview with Hinton,
the vocabulary of the Chinese revolution and insistently used in the play with mesmeric resonances—a term which literally means 'to turn the body' or 'to turn over'—takes on metaphorical, if not religious, overtones. One can in fact find direct religious parallels in the play: for example, the public confessions of wrong thinking which the leaders of the revolution are constantly subjected to, are not unlike evangelical testimonies where a person's sins are vastly exaggerated to make his conversion seem all the more miraculous. But Fan Shen is not a religious allegory though it has a religious fanatical edge which helps to underline the extraordinary force and totality of this process of change.

Hare's play is closely based on Hinton's book, Fan Shen,¹ which is meant to be a documentary account of the complex process of conversion ('fan shen') as it took place in an actual Chinese village. For six months Hinton personally observed this change as expressed individually and collectively by the people of the village of William Hinton. Fan Shen. New York and London 1966. William Gaskill, one of the founder members of the Joint Stock Company, originally asked Hare to adapt Hinton's book for a workshop production. It was such a success that not only has the play been shown widely in Britain, but BBC II devoted two and a half hours on 18.10.75, to showing a film of it and an interview with Hinton.

Long Bow, situated four hundred miles, south-west of Peking. And he regarded this local conversion with all its inherent contradictions as a microcosm of the entire Chinese Communist revolution which historically and metaphorically represents one of the most spectacular and radical changes of an entire nation's way of thought and life in the history of the world. So from this point of view 'fan shen' expresses the restitution of justice in its most absolute and abstract sense. And it is this process of turning over in all its complexity of meaning, from a tenacious but false feudalism to a new code of justice - bewildering by the very force of its newness - that is explored in both the book and play.

One can see that *Fan Shen* is thematically similar to Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* which also examines the problem of legal ownership or justice in its technical sense as opposed to true ownership or real justice. And both plays begin with a dispute over ownership of land. But whereas Brecht tackles his subject through a play within a play, Hare has shown a remarkable gift for filtering the abstract through twelve linked documentary episodes.

The strength of Hare's *Fan Shen* lies in the way it confronts us, even more powerfully than the book, with the
applied reality of an abstract concept of justice: a utopia is made practical for an actual community of people who have to learn through many painful blunders that this intricate process of reversal is constantly dynamic and demands a total examination and re-examination of heart, soul and mind to maintain its delicate equilibrium. And it is through using actual episodes from Hinton's book that the imaginative core of Hare's play acquires a unique dimension - the irresistible appeal of the abstract projected through a documentary parable.

This duality is caught by the overall style of the production as specified by the author, which ambiguously shifts from the stylized to the naturalistic: there are no sets and lighting cues but the props and costumes should be authentic; the actors enter and are asked to move and pose in a stylized manner and at the beginning of the play, to use the Chinese method of self introduction. They relate in a dispassionate way disturbing but accurate information about the distribution of wealth in a small village, and this documentary approach is underlined by the unfurling of banners with slogans telling us the passage of time or summing up didactically the gist of a scene; frequent use is made of the narrative technique of the year" - a fact which implies the affinity between the Chinese style of acting and Stanislavski's...
FIG. 51 A PHOTO SHOWING THE ACTORS IN FAN SHEN STRIKING A GROUP STYLIZED ACCUSATORY POSE
FIG 52  ANOTHER GROUP STATUESQUE POSE OF THE ACTORS IN FAN SHEN
peasants by using English rural accents, they tried during their rehearsals to go through the process of 'fan shen' on a personal level. There was in fact one session when the actors were made to categorize themselves in terms of their incomes. This was to enable them to identify more closely with the Chinese peasants who, in one scene in the play, are divided into poor, middle or rich categories. It was inevitably a particularly painful experience but one which enabled the actors to sympathize with the spirit of the revolution. This came over very strongly in the acting particularly in the scene in which the basis of the revolution was worked out.¹ In other words, it was the severe methods which the directors had used to make the actors identify with both the feelings and thought-processes of the revolutionary peasants that enabled them to convey the full force of the revolutionary spirit at work.² In fact the training of all the actors in Fan Shen was rigorous, physically as well as mentally. For example, William Gaskill introduced T'ai Chi Ch'uan exercises during the early stages of rehearsal.³ These 1,200 year

¹ See Fan Shen in Plays and Players, London, September 1975, p.44.
² Cf. my description of some actors of the Chinese classical theatre living with and observing the mannerisms of the characters they wished to portray. See pp.408-9 above.
³ See fig.59, p.496.
FIG. 53 A PHOTO SHOWING CHINESE COMMUNIST PEASANTS PRACTISING T'ai Chi Ch'uan Movements Daily

[This is taken from the cover of The Listener (30. 10. 75)]
old exercises are practised regularly by many in Communist China today (see fig. 53, p. 465). They were clearly a means of identification with the Chinese approach to life and work which the revolution supports. They helped the actors to achieve the control necessary for the frequent moments of stillness in the play.

So the play from the production point of view, was influenced by Chinese theatrical techniques. But this is an incidental derivation which could easily prevent us from getting to the theme of justice at the core. And it is precisely this core - the unsparing revelation of the countless ironies inherent in the restitution of justice that distinguishes Hare's play from either a Communist propaganda play or a classical Chinese drama. In both of these the objective is to evoke a totally emotional and uncritical response. Hare's play ends on a note of courageous optimism but we're nevertheless disturbed by a deep awareness of its unresolved contradictions.

What are the ironies which are brought out in Hare's play and how did the ironic effects achieve their impact in production? One of the ironies of Hare's play is that the ending is so similar to its beginning bringing out the central paradox of 'fan shen' - a radical process of change which insists on a continuous re-examination of the situ-
ation and a readiness to start again. At the end, for example, there is a moving admission by the leaders of the revolution that they have to start all over again and land to those middle peasants from whom because many of their past actions in the name of Communist justice have been mistaken as a result of wrong thinking and excessive zeal - a very chastening and humiliating revelation.

In Hare's treatment of Yu-lai, the ex-bandit, there is a further ironic twist. Yu-lai is brutal and ruthless "Dawn. The village at work." - capture the new beginning in his handling of any situation and because of this, in both the literal and metaphorical sense of the word. powerfully effective, initially, in the overthrow of

This may seem a simple paradox on paper, but was effectively reinforced visually by the directors who organized the last scene in their production as an almost exact replica of the first - the actors assumed the same stylized attitudes as they did at the beginning and the audience was able, by this strong pictorial similarity, to catch the same urgent sense of yet another radical change with its inherent irony.

Hare's play brings out clearly that the process of redressing injustice involves many ironic twists and contradictions. Another example is seen in the change of attitude towards the landlords. In the beginning of the play, we see the peasants torturing and killing the landlord, Fan Shen in Plays and Players, p. 49. Oct. issue. In the beginning of the play, we see the peasants torturing and killing the landlords, and seizing their wealth. At the end, Secretary
Ch'en (one of the leaders of the revolution) declares in a conference:

"We must begin the work of returning goods and land to those middle peasants from whom we have taken too much. And we must ensure that landlords are given enough land to make a living."

In Hare's treatment of Yu-lai, the ex-bandit, there is a further ironic twist. Yu-lai is brutal and ruthless in his handling of any situation and because of this, powerfully effective, initially, in the overthrow of feudalism. He is the first one who dares to accuse the collaborator, Kuo Te Yu, the one who thrashes Tui Chin, a peasant, for refusing to attend a meeting; but he is also the first one who grasps the central issue about 'real' as opposed to 'technical' ownership of land and therefore is vitally responsible for influencing an entire village's way of thinking. But unfortunately, his 'fan shen' remains static at the level of brute force with appalling domestic and personal consequences. He is extremely cruel to his daughter-in-law, Hsien-e, and is suspected of assaulting a member of the visiting work team. And as the story unfolds,

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1 Montage effect rather than a simple image. It is as David Hare, *Fan Shen* in *Plays and Players*, p.49. Oct. issue.
it is his daughter-in-law who brings about his downfall by accusing him at the 'gate' or 'trial' by the village people. But the exposure of Yu-lai's criminal activities is meant as a new starting point; he is certainly not written off as worthless to the communist cause. And through this we gain a further insight into the process of 'fan shen', for the way to real justice is indeed devious and difficult. As secretary Liu puts it:

There is no just do this one thing and we will be there. There is only the patient, daily work of re-making. People over each hill, another hill. Over that hill, a mountain. The Party needs Yu-lai because he is clever and strong and reformed will be more value to the people than if he had never been corrupted. We must save him. We can use him. He can be reformed.

Section 10 of the play is particularly good example of Hare's complex handling of his theme both in terms of his organization of material within the section and his use of it to reflect the ironies and complexities of 'fan shen'. It's an interesting point that the layout of Fan Shen is outwardly clear-cut but inwardly jagged. Although boldly divided into twelve sections, two or three scenes within a section may be shown concurrently producing a montage effect rather than a simple image. It is as

1 ibid., p.46.
though the outwardly bold structure of Hare's play reflects the ruggedly clear conception of a new kind of justice—but for this order to work, endless adjustments must be made and these are reflected in the swift changes of scene within a section as particularly well illustrated by Section 10. To begin with, we're shown three scenes concurrently and the dialogue and action cut cinematically from one to the other till a powerful composite view of the whole makes its impact on us visually. The section ends with Yu-lai's daughter-in-law leading the way to bring him to trial. The stage directions for this section indicate its visual power:

Three different households.
Tui Chin is sitting outside his house. Cheng K'uan is staring into a bucket containing a dead child.
And in Wen-Te's house Hsien-e is working.
The slogan for the section is YU-LAI AND WEN-TE RETURN TO LONG BOW.¹

What we're meant to take in are three different events alternately played before us in a deliberately criss-cross manner calculated to make us see that these multiple issues are inter-related to the process of 'fan shen'. The first centres on Yu-lai's double-edged brutality. We're shown Wen Te (Yu-lai's son) thrashing his wife, Hsien-e, at his

¹ ibid., p.46.
father's instigation for failing to produce a "feast". What is striking is not just the ugliness of wife battering but the ironic hankering after feudal luxury by men who have effectively spear-headed the overthrow of feudalism. The scene in Tui Chin's house where he is persuaded by Chang-ch'uer to attend yet another meeting, focusses our attention on the precariousness of the revolutionary cause which depends so heavily on peasants who are still reluctant to accept full responsibility. And from a political perspective we move to a scene of real human anguish as shown in Cheng-K'uan's grief over the death of his child. Cheng K'uan was the chairman of the first Peasant's association in Long How; he was suspended from office because he failed to pass the 'gate' and accepted this decision with an avowal of love which he said far exceeded his love for his family. But when actually confronted with the death of his child he cries out: modern Communist propaganda drama. Rare's Fan Shen is a fascinating example of the most fertile kind of such cultural contributions to China. It is a token of the judiciously balanced efforts of the Chinese Communists.

1 See William Hinton, Fan Shen, p.440. It is Hsi Tzu and not Cheng K'uan who mourns the loss of his child in this way.

1 ibid., p.47.
In Hinton's documentary, Fan Shen, this same outburst is made, not by Cheng K'uan, but by another person.¹ Hare has deliberately deviated from the documentary account for a dramatic purpose. These words coming from Cheng K'uan - the excommunicated leader - are more poignant. But there is another reason why the ironies in this section come across so sharply in production.² William Gaskill, under the influence of Chinese theatrical techniques, used acutely visual cameo effects, as described above, to reinforce the meaning and so succeeded in making concrete the ironies inherent in the conflicting claims of communal needs and personal loss.

This is not a direct application of Chinese theatrical techniques but of the principle of using strong visual effects to reinforce meaning - a principle which underlies Chinese acting. Although its source material is Chinese, Fan Shen doesn't resemble either a classical Chinese play or a modern Communist propaganda drama. Hare's Fan Shen is a fascinating example of the most fertile kind of cultural interaction where influences have been judiciously

¹ See Robert Cushman's remarks about Brechtian influence on William Gaskill, one of the directors of Fan Shen, in Observers, 4th May, 1973, p.36.
absorbed and turned into a strong base for the dramatist's own poetic vision of justice. A far more obviously direct use of Chinese theatrical techniques can be found in Bernard Sobel's *Le Pavillon au bord de la Riviere* - my final illustration of a Western production influenced by Chinese theatre.

The French production of *Le Pavillon au bord de la Riviere* was a piece of music theatre not only based on a Chinese legend but closer in spirit to classical Chinese opera than any other Chinese-inspired Western production I know of. For this reason I feel justified in breaking my rule of confining, wherever possible, my discussion to British productions influenced by the East. Furthermore, *Le Pavillon* which had its first performance in the Round House on 13th November, 1975, was unanimously acclaimed by leading English critics like Michael Billington, Harold Hobson, Irving Wardle and Peter Hayworth, as a brilliant success. Like *Fan Shen*, it had a cast of nine and a totally Brechtian-orientated director - in this case Bernard Sobel.¹

¹ See Robert Cushman's remarks about Brechtian influence on William Gaskill, one of the directors of *Fan Shen*, in Observer, 4th May, 1975, p.26. From 1955-59, Bernard Sobel worked with the BERLINER ENSEMBLE and took part, as a member of the staging committee, in producing *The Good Woman of Szechwan*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, and *The Exception and the Rule*. 
LE PAVILLON AU BORD DE LA RIVIERE
MUSIC THEATRE BASED ON A CHINESE LEGEND

LE PAVILLON AU BORD DE LA RIVIERE was specially commissioned for the 1975 Avignon Festival and was created by the librettist, musical composer and designer working together. Whilst the presentation is entirely original the collaborators have preserved the elements of traditional Chinese theatre and the essential qualities of the original work.


Kuan Han Chin
The story is based on a Chinese legend by Kuan Han Chin who was born around 1220 and was the most illustrious author of the golden age of Chinese theatre. Like Shakespeare, to whom he has often been compared, he was Director of a company and, on occasion, an actor. China itself was then under Mongol occupation and going through one of the darkest periods of its history. Corruption, murder, rape and theft were rife and often left unpunished. Kuan Han Chin had the courage to expose these abuses and in the eighteen plays (out of 60) that have come down to us he presents an unvarnished picture of his times — although the penalty for criticism was exile or death. A dominant theme in his plays is the extreme prejudice against women as inferior, despised creatures, objects taken as easily as they can be thrown away when they no longer appeal. Women hold the main roles in most of his plays which are pleas in favour of their right to respect and happiness. But this great realist also presented very refined art forms in which music had an important place. Thus opera seemed the most suitable form in which to present a work derived from theatrical traditions very different from our own to a present-day public.

FIG. 54
BERNARD SOBEL’S MUSIC THEATRE BASED ON CHINESE THEATRE AND A CHINESE LEGEND
Le Pavillon (described by Harold Hobson in the *Times* (16.11.75) as "the best musical in London"), tells the story of a beautiful widow, Tan Chi Erh, who wishes to enter a convent but is persuaded by the abbess to marry an erudite judge instead. Their marriage is threatened by the lecherous designs of the powerful Lord Yang on Chi Erh, but through an ingenious device, she manages to outwit him completely. The play as a whole is a plea for the right of women to respect and happiness under Mongolian rule.

I was struck by the stark simplicity and beauty of the staging: the stage had two hessian-like screens, flanked by two bridges for exits, entrances and tableaux and a huge blue back-cloth with delicately etched designs resembling a Chinese scroll painting; it was bare except for a central pedestal seat. There were constant intrusions of property men dressed and hooded in black. All the sleeve and hand movements - the miming of opening a door - the symbolic make-up of Lord Yang with white circles painted round his eyes signifying evil - the precise control of the entire direction - the unstressed economy of the acting and the astonishing acrobatic feats of the clowns - all reminded me of the basic rationale
behind Chinese theatre. Interestingly enough, the theatre opening was No-like: the instrumentalists filed in first, and Chi Erh's scene with the 'Abbess' was reminiscent of the meeting of the 'waki' (usually played by a priest) with the 'shite' in a form which Brecht never really succeeded to. This piece of French music theatre is the best example known to me of a Western production which has been successfully influenced both by Chinese and Brechtian theatrical techniques. In it we can see how Chinese theatrical techniques via Brecht have made an impact on a Western production which I found moving precisely because it had a controlled narrative grace and delicacy. By using a restrained, detached style of production, Brecht's alienation effects have paradoxically produced a piece of theatre capable of involving the audience completely in the predicament of the beautiful heroine. At the end of the play, the entire cast took off their masks and wigs - a Brechtian device to underscore the 'presentational' character of a play as a play and not an imitation of real life. This was a most powerful literal application of the V-effect which drew the audience closer to the heart of the subject matter as Martin Esslin, Brecht: The Man and His Work, p.151, their warm response indicated.
To conclude, if one can separate the Chinese Theatre from all associations with Brecht’s "Verfremdungseffekte", it can be seen as a unique "dramatic form" with immense powers of moving and involving its audience - the antithesis to the "epic form" which Brecht never really succeeded in establishing.

In Antonin Artaud’s collection of theatrical manifestos, he includes a section called "An Affective Athleticism" which outlines the philosophy of acting behind "Brecht's success lies in his partial failure to realize his own intentions." I hope that by showing the Chinese theatre to be the reverse of what Brecht thought it to be, I have helped in some way to throw more light on the discrepancy between the theory and practice of his V-effect, as well as clarifying any misconception about a highly complex and perhaps confusing theatrical genre. And above all, I hope I have shown that the West has learned from the Chinese theatre, as indicated in my illustrations, how to make use of a blend of stylization and naturalism in creating more effective theatre.

Artaudian theatre includes gymnastics as part of the actor’s craft. No one has yet identified Artaud’s own system and philosophy of gymnastics underlying his "Theatre of Cruelty" as expressed in 'Theater and Its Double'.

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1 This is deliberately italicised by Artaud himself from Martin Esslin, Brecht: The Man and His Work, p.151.

2 The Theater and Its Double, p.154.
POSTSCRIPT: T'AI CHI CH'UAN AND ARTAUD'S CONCEPT OF "AN AFFECTIVE ATHLETICISM"

In Antonin Artaud's collection of theatrical manifestos, he includes a section called "An Affective Athleticism" which outlines the philosophy of acting behind his concept of physical theatre. The philosophy goes like this: if the body is to be used as both the means and the target for effective theatre, the actor must know how to tap its powers fully. According to Artaud:

The gifted actor finds by instinct how to tap and radiate certain powers; but he would be astonished indeed if it were revealed to him that these powers, which have their material trajectory by and in the organs, actually exist, for he has never realized they could actually exist.\(^1\)

To help the actor identify and use these powers, Artaudian theatre includes gymnastics as part of the actor's craft. No one has yet identified Artaud's own system and philosophy of gymnastics underlying his "Theatre of Cruelty"

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* This is deliberately italicized by Artaud himself for emphasis.

\(^1\) The Theater and Its Double, p.134.
which has influenced the present serious approach towards physical culture in Western theatre. And neither did Artaud himself specify any particular system to be used, though he refers clearly to the principle behind Chinese medicine and acupuncture as the basis for his essay - "An Affective Athleticism". But unknown to Artaud, there is in fact a form of Chinese callisthenics or gymnastics which is based on exactly the same principle as that underlying Chinese medicine and acupuncture. This form of exercise is called T'ai Chi Ch'uan. It is perhaps therefore not a coincidence that Peter Brook (considered one of the world's greatest exponents of Artaudian theatre) should have used T'ai Chi Ch'uan as preparatory exercises for his production of Oedipus in 1969. And the fact that the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan was part of the daily programme in his Paris Centre of International Theatrical Research drew a great deal of attention to this ancient Taoist art of mastering the body.

Jersy Grotowski has also made use of T'ai Chi Ch'uan exercises drawn from the Japanese and the Chinese. The "yin" and the "yang" (passive and active forces) in T'ai Chi Ch'uan each having its own name and relationship with the organs. The operation consists of stimulating certain points of the body with needles or massage and readjusting the balance of yin and yang forces to prevent the disharmony.

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1 See the reference to this on p. 432.
2 See "Peter Brook’s Other Dream" in Observer Review, Observer, 26, November 1972, p.29.
exercises in his Polish Theatre Laboratory. But it is really Antonin Artaud - the mentor of both Brook and Grotowski - who is responsible for showing the relevance of the principle of T'ai Chi Ch'üan to the Western actor's craft.

If we study his essay, "An Affective Athleticism", carefully, we can identify the fundamentals of T'ai Chi Ch'üan as the basis of his arguments, although he does not refer to it by name. However he clearly delineates the working of its two separate but inter-related principles - the "yin" and the "yang" (passive and active forces respectively) - and specifically mentions his indebtedness to the rationale underlying Chinese medicine and acupuncture.

1 See Tulane Drama Review, Vol. 9, No. 3, Spring 1965, pp. 182, 184, 186. For references to Grotowski's use of exercises drawn from the Japanese and the Chinese classical theatres. T'ai Chi Ch'üan is one of the basic exercises of the latter.

2 To understand what the art of acupuncture is, one must grasp the essential Chinese approach to illness which is seen as the disharmony of yin and yang forces in the body. Acupuncture (invented by Shih Huang Ti in the Ch'in Dynasty) depends on a precise knowledge of 365 points on the skin of the body, each having its own name and relationship with the organs. The operation consists of puncturing certain points of the body with needles of varying size and length in order to readjust the balance of yin and yang forces or to prevent the disharmony taking place in the first instance. See K.C. Wong and Wu Lien Teh, History of Chinese Medicine, Tientsin, 1932, pp. 28-29.
He writes:

The important thing is to become aware of the local­ization of emotive thought. One means of recogn­ition is effort or tension; and the same points which support physical effort are those which also support the emanation of emotive thought.... The man who lifts weights lifts them with his back; it is by a contortion of his back that he supports the fortified strength of his arms; and curiously enough he claims that, inversely, when any feminine feeling hollows him out - sobbing, despair, spasmodic panting, dread - he realizes his emptiness in the small of his back, at the very place where Chinese acupuncture relieves congestion of the kidney. For Chinese medicine proceeds only by concept of empty and full. Convex and concave. Tense and relaxed. Yin and Yang. Masculine and feminine.... I have wanted to give only a few examples bearing on a few fertile principles which comprise the material of this technical essay.... There are 360 points in Chinese acupuncture, with 73 principal ones which are used in current therapy. There are many fewer crude outlets for human affectivity.

Chinese acupuncture and T'ai Chi Ch'uan share the same rationale of the interacting "yin" and "yang" - empty and full movements. So Artaud's "affective athleticism" draws from the common denominator known as the principle of 'T'ai Chi" (太極) - the Supreme Ultimate.1

1 See Gia-Fu Feng and Jerome Kirk, Tai Chi - A Way of Centering and I - Ching, New York 1970, p.8, for the link between T'ai Chi and Chinese Medicine: A related achievement of Taoism was the development of Chinese medicine. This set of techniques, ranging from dietary rules to acupuncture ... is based largely on theories of the Five Elements. This is another ramification of the basic theory of Tai Chi....
Artaud begins his essay by saying:

One must grant the actor a kind of affective musculature which corresponds to the physical localizations of feelings.  

This premise is further explained in the following way:

All the tricks of wrestling, boxing, the hundred yard dash, high jumping etc. find analogous organic bases in the movement of the passions; they have the same physical points of support.  

And from this, Artaud develops his theory of the "fluid materiality of the soul" - his belief that "the soul can be physiologically reduced to a skein of vibrations".  

I want to show that the same basic idea lies behind T'ai Chi Ch'uan. According to Chinese belief, the body is activated by the interplay of two opposing movements - the "yin" and the "yang" which are the physical expressions of the

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1 The Theater and Its Double, p.133.

2 ibid., p.135.

3 ibid., p.135.

4 See History of Chinese medicine, p.10, for a division of the principal organs of the human body into a Yin character and a Yang character:

   In medicine everything is classified under these two main divisions. On the human body the skin or surface is Yang, the interior is Yin; the back is Yang, the abdomen is Yin; the empty organs are Yang, the solid organs are Yin....
human being's twin souls.\(^1\) This interplay also produces the five elements - fire, water, earth, wood and metal. So here we have a simple theory reducing the concept of "soul" to physical vibrations which are essentially linked to two movements which form the basis of Chinese cosmography.\(^2\)

To support my argument that it was not coincidence that Artaud's theory of the "materiality of the soul" should exactly parallel the basic concept behind T'ai Chi Ch'uan and acupuncture, we have evidence from another of his works - The Death of Satan and Other Mystical Writings. This book shows his familiarity with ancient Chinese sources. For example the I ching - the ancient Chinese book of divination, attributed to King Wen (1150 BC) and his son, Duke Chou, is referred to as the "sacred book containing doctrine of Fo-Hi 2900 BC".\(^3\) Artaud also refers to the 64


\(^2\) See Diagram of Yin - Yang Principle on p. 487.

\(^3\) Antonin Artaud, The Death of Satan and other Mystical Writings, London 1974, p.23.
sacred symbols in the 'I Ching,' "formed by permutation of symbols of 3 strokes" and quotes with great attention to detail the following K'an symbol, showing an awareness of the Chinese system of divination:

The 64 permutations of the 8 trigrams, in the following page, is a diagram showing the legendary Fu Hsi symbols arranged in pairs of opposite forces: Chi - the Perfect Balance of Yin/Yang.

Kan Symbol = stomach - water - communication penetration - 2nd son, relations between men, things, invisible forces, equalization of material and moral domain. 

In the same work Artaud also mentions the "8 trigrams of Fo-Hi" which is particularly relevant to an understanding of the basic structure of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. The "Fo-Hi," as mentioned by Artaud, is a mistranslation of Fu Hsi, the first recorded ruler in Chinese history (2852 - 2378 BC) who is now generally regarded as a legendary figure. According to tradition, the 8 trigrams, consisting of different permutations of "yin" and "yang" movements, represented by broken and firm lines respectively, were discovered by him. These trigrams are very ancient in this usage of breath as is fact primary.

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1 The Death of Satan and other Mystical Writings, p.24.

2 The 8 trigrams are traditionally referred to as "Pa Kua"; each "kua" or trigram, consisting of 3 either yin or yang or yin and yang strokes. The legendary Fu Hsi was supposed to have seen them originally on the shell of a tortoise.


origin - certainly older than the Book of Change (I ching) - and have provided the inspirational base for the development of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, which is in fact an exercise representing the body movements of the 64 permutations of the 8 trigrams. On the following page, is a diagram showing the legendary Fu Hsi's 8 trigrams arranged in pairs of opposites, and in the centre is the symbol of T'ai Chi - the Perfect Balance of Yin/Yang. 

Artaud's knowledge and interest in the ancient Chinese sources that lie behind T'ai Chi Ch'uan is made clear by The Death of Satan. Returning to his essay, "An Affective Athleticism", I'd like to draw attention to a few more points of similarity between its underlying philosophy and that behind T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Artaud's emphasis on the actor's need to breathe skilfully finds a parallel in the importance of breathing in T'ai Chi Ch'uan. He writes: 

This question of breath is in fact primary; ... Effort sympathetically accompanies breathing and, according to the quality of the effort to be produced, a preparatory emission of breath will make this effort easy and spontaneous. I insist on the word spontaneous, for breath rekindles life, sets it afire in its own substance.... And breath is either male or female;... And we localize the breath, we apportion it out in states of contraction and release combined.  

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1 See Tai Chi - A Way of Centering and I Ching, p.9.  
T'ai Chi Ch'üan also works on the interacting principle of the male (yang) and the female (yin) breath. And similar to Artaud's idea of breath rekindling life and setting it "afire in its own substance", T'ai Chi Ch'üan regards the whole process of breathing - inhalation and exhalation - as a means of magically recapturing something of the original interaction of Yin (the Female Breath of Earth) and Yang.
(the Male Breath of Heaven). So through proper controlled breathing, which the exercises in T'ai Chi Ch'üan have been devised to encourage, it is believed that a flow of vital energy, called "ch'i", represented by the Chinese character 氣, (the same as that for "breath"), can be produced in the body.¹

Another point of similarity between Artaud’s theory of gymnastics and T'ai Chi Ch'üan is their reliance on the complete mutual interdependence of "yin" and "yang". Artaud has put it in the following way:

It is to be noted that everything feminine - that which is surrender, ... invocation - everything that stretches toward something in a gesture of supplication - is supported also upon the points where effort is localized, but like a diver pressing against the bottom of the sea in order to rise to the surface; it is as if emptiness gushes from the spot where the tension was. But in this case the masculine returns to haunt the place of the feminine like a shadow; while, when the affective state is male, the interior body consists of a sort of inverse geometry, an image of the state reversed.²

So to summarize - the principle of the interacting yin and yang, which Artaud refers to as the basis of his argument for an actor's "affective athleticism", is one and the

¹ The archetypal Yin and Yang forces are referred to as "The Dual Powers", 二氣, literally translated as "The Two Breaths" (Erh Ch'i).

² The Theater and Its Double, p.138.
essentially consists of this interplay and interdependence of masculine and feminine forces.

Lastly, I'd like to draw attention to the Chinese-inspired scientific basis for Artaud's magical theatre - an aspect often ignored in a study of Artaudian theatre. The following is a quotation from the end of his essay - and here Artaud applies the therapeutic principle of Chinese acupuncture, which parallels that of T'ai Chi Ch'üan's concentration on key locations in the body, to his own methodology of assaulting the spectator's sensibilities:

It is not sufficient for this spectator to be enchain by the magic of the play; it will not enchain him if we do not know where to take hold of him. There is enough chance magic ... which has no science to back it up. In the theater, poetry and science must henceforth be identical.... To know in advance what points of the body to touch is the key to throwing the spectator into magical trances.... To know the points of localization in the body is thus to reforge the magical chain. And through the hieroglyph of a breath I am able to recover an idea of the sacred theater. 1

So to summarize: - the principle of the interacting yin and yang, which Artaud refers to as the basis of his arguments for an actor's "affective athleticism", is one and the same as that behind T'ai Chi Ch'üan. I want to stress again

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1 The Theater and Its Double, pp.140-141.
that though Artaud was familiar with this underlying principle, he did not realize that there was in fact a form of callisthenics based on it. This is not surprising as there are not many translated documents on T'ai Chi Ch'üan and it was only recently that China relaxed its closed-door policy, making it possible for this art to be internationally accessible. It’s interesting also that over the past six years, the interest in T'ai Chi Ch'üan here, has grown simultaneously with the enthusiasm of the Western medical world for Chinese acupuncture, clearly showing the close relationship of the two arts. But though it has been left to the exponents of Artaudian theatre, like Brook and Grotowski, to popularize the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'üan among Western actors, it should not be forgotten that the seeds of its current popularity were sown by Artaud himself.

The following are two extracts, showing how this art has been used in Western theatre. Here is A.C.H. Smith's description of how the working day ended during Brook’s preparation for the Orghast production at Persepolis:

The working day ends with Tai Chi, which Brook asks them to approach differently for the next

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1 For evidences of this, see Time Out, Feb. 28 - Mar. 6, No. 261, pp.10-13. (1975).
few days. "The essence of it is when each, understanding the basic principles, begins to feel the flow of the movement. You don't need a lot of movements. Work more deeply on a movement you know. Among the Paris group, people have reached varying depths in Tai Chi. Here, so far, we have tried only one or two basic movements. All right, we can all do the same work with what we have. Never improvise".1

Brook has referred to T'ai Chi Ch'üan as being able "to promote consciousness of movement". His advice to actors is "Get inside it, find the base line". Before the second performance of Orghast, he told his actors to do T'ai Chi in the dimly lit tomb as a means of preparing their concentration.2

The following is what Colin Blakely, an actor who has worked with Brook using T'ai Chi Ch'üan exercises, has to say about the relevance of this art to the production of Oedipus:

We used old Chinese exercises called Tsai Chi which are meant to produce stillness of spirit - a form of Yoga. They developed from a pugilistic art into a very slow balletic set of movements which must be done very correctly. We use a minimum of effort with only gravity as a source of energy. The object in Oedipus was to do physically whatever was necessary with the least amount of effort. Hence the exercises were very relevant.3

1 A.C.H. Smith, Orghast, op.cit., p.125.
2 ibid., p.207.
Finally, to conclude, I have included three photos: Fig. 56, p. 493 illustrating Brook's actors practising T'ai Chi Ch'üan movements in preparation for the Orghast performances in 1970; Fig. 57, p. 494 showing how another avant garde Western theatrical director, Robert Wilson, used it in his production of Journey to Ka Mountain at the Shiraz Festival in 1972; and Fig. 58, p. 495 showing its absorption into Western ballet in a production bearing the name of one of its movements: Embrace Tiger and Return to Mountain in 1973. The most recent example of the use of T'ai Chi Ch'üan exercises in the preparation for a Western production is Fan Shen: a play by David Hare, directed by William Gaskill and Max Stafford Clark at the I.C.A. (April 21 - May 10, 1975). The actors in this production were given nearly two dozen lessons in T'ai Chi Ch'üan movements by Gerda Geddes, teacher of T'ai Chi Ch'üan at 'the Place' in Dukes Road, Euston. (See Fig. 59, p. 496). She told me that in June 1975 more than a third of all her pupils were actors and dancers who found this ancient Chinese exercise helpful to them in their work.

So all this goes to show that though Brook has now abandoned this particular method of training the body, T'ai Chi Ch'üan, which shares the same basic principle as that underlying Artaud's concept of "an affective athleticism", is still in use in Western theatre.

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FIG. 56  BROOK'S ACTORS PRACTISING T'AI CHI MOVEMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR ORGHAST
The Ballet Rambert company in 'Embrace Tiger and Return to Mountain', a modern-style piece to an electronic score by Morton Subotnick. Glen Tetley, an American choreographer, based the ballet on slow-motion shadow-boxing movements that were originally devised by the Chinese in the sixth century as keep-fit exercises.
FIG. 59 PHOTO SHOWING WILLIAM GASKILL PRACTISING A TÂI CHI CHIʻAN MOVEMENT—HAND STRUMS THE LUTE—DURING A REHEARSAL FOR FAN SHEN
This study has not yielded any neat conclusions. It is, for example, wrong to conclude that the reason for the discrepancy between the Eastern-inspired theories and practice of important Western figures like Brecht and Artaud lies in the fact that they did not see Oriental theatre in situ. A good case in point is Jacques Copeau who never saw a single No play in performance, whose only contact with the No was through an experiment with Kantan outside Japan, (never in fact publicly performed) but who seemed to have understood the No completely, as shown in the way he incorporated its principles into his dramatic theories. Indeed there's no fixed rule about the perfect conditions necessary for the evolution of significant theatrical theories. The law of poetic licence works in mysterious ways, and a poet often uses a foreign tradition as a starting point for the development of his own ideas. Such was definitely the case with Brecht and Artaud whose contact with an Oriental theatrical tradition marked the beginning of their own creative work. All that I've done in the preceding chapters is to suggest that perhaps the discrepancy between their theories and their practice can
be explained by their misunderstanding of their inspirational sources.

In my examination of Yeats and the No - I've tried to show that although the poet cannot be blamed for the current degeneration and commercialization of this art - there is an irony in the situation in which the survival of the No depends on the reputation of a great Western poet. The real issues behind this situation have in a sense nothing to do with East-West theatrical contact but with deeper East-West political and psychological repercussions - in fact the whole painful process of recovering confidence after Japan's defeat in the Second World War.

Apart from the obviously important East-West theatrical fusions which I've listed - for example Yeats's plays, the V-effect, Artaud's theatrical manifestos and Copeau's dramatic theories - there is another point which deserves mentioning: the study of these Eastern theatrical forms and how they work in their own setting increases our critical awareness of the utterly naive assumptions underlying some of the Western theatrical theories they have inspired. This does not make the theories invalid but it does throw light on the reasons why they work or don't work in practice. For example, although the Balinese theatre works effectively in situ and succeeds in restoring equilibrium by eliminating
hysteria on a collective basis, as borrowed by Artaud, it brings out the element of unresolved hysteria in his passionate rebellion against the established theatre. The reason is that while it's possible to borrow Balinese theatrical techniques, it's neither possible nor perhaps desirable to superimpose their philosophy, which sees no division between theatre and real life, on the Western way of thinking. And this precisely defines the problem of transposing foreign techniques which can only work effectively under certain untransposable conditions. This chiefly explains why Artaud's revolutionary techniques often misfire. He was clearly reacting against the general complacency of audience response at his time, but the violence of his techniques, borrowed from a theatre he only partially understood, suggests the first fervour of rebellion and an exaggeration of the complacency he wanted to destroy. Certainly hysteria and a crusading assertion that there is no other way but Artaud's for achieving good theatre, have been the downfall of the Artaudian cause.

The same dogmatic quality (differing only in degree) can also be seen in Brecht's V-effect. The fervour with which he pursues his theory is counterproductive as it in fact testifies to the irrefutable existence of empathy between audience and stage. So a study of the Chinese
theatre which is essentially based on close emotional audience-identification with its themes - ironically the opposite of the V-effect with which Brecht associated it - helps to bring out the absurdity of the premises underlying his revolutionary theory of alienation.

While one should guard against being taken in by what in effect are the extremely naive assumptions of some of these Western theatrical theories, one should also guard against making facile observations about Oriental theatre. For example, much of Oriental theatre must seem to Westerners to consist mainly of rhythmic intonations, movement and colour, noticeably lacking in development of story-line and psychological interest. The danger of concluding that meaning and dramatic text are therefore of little importance, compared to brilliance of technique, is only too clearly shown in the problems of applying Artaudian techniques to Western theatre. In fact such exotic techniques are only successfully adapted into Western theatre in conjunction with equal respect for dramatic text and meaning. This is because, in the original Balinese theatrical context, meaning and text, far from being dispensable, happen to be elements which their theatre can take completely for granted. And similarly, we must not be misled by the seeming indifference to story-line in both the Chinese and Nō theatres.
They also rely on the familiarity of native audiences with the plots of their plays. In other words it is only when text and meaning can be taken for granted that a highly visual theatre, full of sound and movement, has arisen. And this is equally true with Western and Eastern theatres.

Lastly, how do we classify the influences and counter-influences of East-West theatrical contact? On the whole they've been mutually enriching and have yielded positive contributions. Inevitably, confusions in judgment have arisen. For example, a great deal of present Chinese propagandist drama make use of third-rate Hollywood sets and techniques and in eliminating the property-men in order to keep up with Western naturalism, it has destroyed one of the chief strengths of Chinese classical theatre. Similarly, a modern No performance, like Hagoromo, in which the angel dances in the nude for the fisherman - in other words a badly disguised strip tease show - represents a retrogressive counter-influence.

When I was in Bali, visiting the village of Teges, I noticed on the walls of the village meeting pavilion pictures of "Ketjak" dancers working out new variations of this dance in order to widen its appeal for cosmopolitan audiences. For me, Teges represented a relatively "unspoiled" village and I was surprised to learn from the headman that it
was the ambition of the Teges "Ketjak" group to be chosen to perform in Paris. It's too early to predict how the continuing onslaught of tourism will eventually affect the Balinese theatre. Will it lose its uniqueness through compromise with modern choreographic techniques and by doing so forfeit its chief appeal?

To judge from the London scene alone, there is at the moment a variety of different acting techniques and production methods in the Western theatre. It's certainly incorrect to identify effective theatre either with exclusively naturalistic or exclusively stylized techniques. For example, the recent David Jones production of Love's Labour's Lost, which I saw at the Aldwych Theatre on May 16th 1975, where live hunting dogs were brought on stage to add to the atmosphere of the hunting-scene, was highly successful and a good example of a mixture of stylization and naturalism. The dogs behaved admirably on stage and by that I mean they didn't entirely steal the show - and notwithstanding Edward Gordon Craig's words about the power of the imagination which "enables you to move your hand and we seem to see lilies or roses or lilac growing", the animals' presences definitely contributed to the theatrical tension of the scene. This example illustrates that there is no fixed recipe for effective theatre. The success of a
Chekovian production depends on a host of minutely worked-out naturalistic details; the success of a Nô drama on the concentration of a few powerful gestures. What we mean by effective theatre is a theatre that moves its audience completely regardless of whether it uses naturalistic or unnaturalistic or "mixed" techniques. Techniques of whichever category are really only means to an end.

Some of the best Balinese theatrical dramas I've seen and for that matter, some of the best scenes from Chinese opera, contain a mixture of naturalistic and stylized elements which defy imitation. This ambivalence is unquestionably the strength of these two theatres. And we should also bear in mind that the Nô theatre, which is associated with the highest degree of stylization, began, as P.O. O'Neill tells us in Early Nô Drama, by using real horses and armour in 14th C performances.

So though there is a recognizable trend at the moment towards economy in stage production, it is no more true to say that extreme economy in decor is the only way to achieve good theatre than to equate good theatre with lavish production. It's possible in fact for good theatre to be found anywhere between these two extremes. Personally I tend to distrust an over-cluttered stage and prefer Copeau-like productions where simplicity and economy are
deliberate guiding principles. However, one should not forget that the sparsity of the No theatre - the best example I can think of a truly effective "economical" theatre - is set against the lavish splendour of their costumes, some of which are in fact museum treasures. This again points to the difficulty of making adaptations from a foreign tradition. One can only, at best, copy partially which at once destroys the truth of the imitation.

Edward Gordon Craig sums up this dilemma pointedly:

I think it is unnecessary to mention the East when speaking of the possible development of Western art; not that I am wanting in respect for what the East possesses and can produce; but there is a danger in becoming too early acquainted with a matured foreign development of an art which should be evolved afresh from one's soil. After working for many years and searching for ways and means to create what at last comes clearer into vision each day, one can with more safety venture into the East to gain encouragement and assistance.

This was published in 1921. Since then, Western figures like Copeau, Yeats, Artaud and Brecht, have indeed turned for inspiration to Eastern theatrical traditions. Through their agency, Western theatre has certainly matured and been enriched. The present moment seems even more appropriate for the Western theatre to follow Craig's advice and look East again, not in blind imitation of their theatrical forms, but "to gain encouragement and assistance".

KANEHIRA*
by Motoikiyo

1ST SHITE: a boatman
2ND SHITE: Imai Ranshirō
WAKI: a travelling priest

Scene in Omi

WAKI. (Shida) This is my first journey. I will seek Kiso.
(Yoshinaka)

(Kotoba) I am a priest— from Chi country of Kiso. I heard that Kisodono was dead in Awadu ga hara, Goshu. So I wish to pray for him. And now I hasten to Awadu ga hara.
(Michiyuki) Passing Shinanoji & the Kakebashi bridge of Kiso (Kaido), and sleeping many nights by the roadside in the grass, I came very near to Omiji, and now I have reached the beach of Yabase (on E. coast of Lake Biwa).

(full 10 minutes interval here between 2 texts)

SHITE. (Jōji) O the boat of hay and sticks (Shibabune) which carries all the sorrows in it. It will burn itself before it gets on fire.

WAKI. No, no. I wish you to pass me over on that boat.
SHITE. (Kotoba) This is not the ferry of Yamada and Yabase. See, this is the boat which carries Shiba; so I will not carry you.
WAKI. O I know that it's a Shibabune, too, but there is no ferryboat here, now. As I am a priest, I ask you special favour to let me pass.
SHITE. Indeed, indeed. Being a priest, you are not like the rest of the world. We see the words "niodo tokusen" (just like we get a boat on the ferry [the blessing of Buddha]) in?
WAKI. O, this evening, when we get the boat!
SHITE. In such a time, in the sea of Omi.

BOTH. If it were a boat in Yabase, that is the ferryboat for travellers.

*Cf. Donald Keene, ed. Twenty Plays of the No Theatre (New York, 1970), pp. 265-266.
CHORUS. But this is a Shikubune crossing the waves of the floating world. Though you are a stranger who is not familiar to me, as you are a man of Law, (nori) how shall I spare my boat. Please get in it.

WAKI. (Kotoba) I have something to say to Sencho. Those beaches and mts. seem to be very famous places. Please tell about them.

SHITE. (Yotoba) Yes, all these are meisho. Please put me questions and I will answer.

WAKI. You great mt. in the front, is that Hieizan?

SHITE. Yes, that is Heizan. There are 21 temples of Sanno on the foot of the mt. that green peak is Hachioji, and the houses of Tozu and Sakamoto are all seen from here.

WAKI. Then is that Hieizan in the direction of Ushitora? (N.E.)

SHITE. Yes, this Mt. Heiz guards the Kannon (devil gate) of oji (King castle) (Kyoto?), and makes scatter all the akuma (evil spirits). It is called the peak of lehobutsujo (the greatest devil peak) in imitation of Washioyama in Tonjou (India). It is called Tendaizan too; in imitation of the Shimel no hara in Shidan (4 lights’ cave) (Shidanpit, “Butter of trembling morning” some part of China)—and the temple was erected in the year of Euryaku? by Dengyo Daishi and Kamru Tenno. From here even the Chiudo on the summit can be seen.

WAKI. Is the temple of Omiai (Gongen) in that Sakcmoto, to?

SHITE. Yes, on the foot where the wood is so shadowy, is the place (spot) where Omiai lies.

WAKI. Arigataya! When we hear “Issai shuyo shatussa

fusho nora” (all natures everything has Bodhi, spirit”) then even our bodies seem to be reliable.

SHITE. As you say, since the Buddha and the people can hold communion with each other, there is no difference between any priest and me.” (lehobutsujo” (Highest jo.)

WAKI. On the peak (of), there are many trees of Shana (Dai Michi.) (trees means flourishing full spirit).

SHITE. On the foot, there is a sea of Shikan (name of a scripture) (“staying seeing”)

WAKI. To show the three learnings of Kai, jo & ye. (Kai—

*This is obviously a spelling error. It ought to be “Kotoba”.

during the chorus S. reaches hand to W. W. goes across stage to boat, is helped into it, and sits forward by the boatman, who still stands as it were rowing, then occurs dialogue.

all this is Kotoba, but towards the last speech it becomes singing. Wonderfully subtle and intervals, then comes Kotoba so wonderfully rich in line that it can hardly be distinguished from singing in strong tone.

boatman looks offside for first time.
SHITE. We have three pagodas (Toko, Saito, and Yoko Kamu).

WAKI. As about man (to men).

CHORUS. To show the Ki (very slight chance) (also weaving of cloth of Ichinen Sanzen) "one thought—three thousand" comes from Shikan "In one thought there are 10 law worlds, and in one law world there are 10 small law worlds, and in one world there are 30 kinds of worlds) We have 3,000 priests. The law of Enyu (round—thorough) has no clouds on it. refers to the moon. O Yokawa of the moon is seen too. (Tsuki no you=night).

On the foot of the lonely pine of Shiga Karasaki of the small waves, ukyoyaki (Sasanami) It is the tree at which the mikoshi (-shrines) of Shichishi (7 temples) rest. As in row along, the opposite bank becomes far, more and more, and we approach the forest of Awazu. All the cherries are now in green leaves, and the scene is just like summer mountains. And we have passed over the sea, and we regret to part with the waves. We have arrived in Awazu. ("Shiba-shiba"—never never).

WAKI. Utas on the grass mat, where the dew lies, the day is gone, and it has become night. O I will pray here for (the dead) on the field of Awazu.

2ND SHITE. The struggle of tearing bones with white swords breaks our eyes—and red waves float the shields. Arrows and quivers are just like the scattering (flowers after a storm), of flowers (feathers in arrow torn (fines) (Iseki) on the morning wind in the fields of Awazu, of clouds & waters.

CHORUS. O the voices in war cry—

SHITE. How noisy is the field of Shura! (fighting demons)

WAKI. Strange! Here by the grass pillow of the fields of Awazu! Who are you, in splendid armour?

SHITE. You ask so foolishly! Is it not for me that you came here? Is it not for your kind heart that Kanehira came here?

WAKI. Now, Imai no Shiro Kanehira is not here in the
world—so it may be a dream.

SHITE: Kotobuki! You seem to forget our talks in the boat—even in reality.

WAKI. Then the one I saw in the boat, the ferryman of the beach of Yabase.

SHITE. That boatman is this Kanehira.

WAKI. So I thought of you from the first, that you were a man of some condition. Then the boatman of yesterday—

SHITE. was not a boatman

WAKI. — nor a fisherman

SHITE. — no—not.

CHORUS. That appeared to be this ferryman of the beach of Yabase. It was I. Please pass me to the opposite shore, making this boat the boat of your law!

(Kuri) Indeed, in the laws of change and deaths, it is very quickly one comes and goes. The old and the young have Zen-go-Tudo before—after unlike—a regular order or successional (young sometimes go first) just like a bubble, we are.

SHITE. 

(Sashi) The glory of a day, of the morning glory flower! this is

CHORUS. Kiso Do no came to this Omí road with only 7 remaining warriors—

SHITE. Kanehira met him here, coming from Seta.

CHORUS. Then we were again more than 200 warriors in all.

SHITE. After that we fought many battles; and we, the master and the follower, remained only two.

CHORUS. O we have no strength now. Let us go to that pine field there! and commit harakiri—So I persuaded him, and lonely and sadly the two warriors, the master and the follower, rode on toward the pinefields of Awazu.

(Kuse) Then Kanehira said—"There comes a great force of the enemy from behind. I must defend against them."

And so he turned his horse.

Then Kiso Do no calmly said "I have fled from many enemies only because I wished to be with you." So he turned his horse too. Then Kanehira said again "I am sorry to hear your words. It is a great shame that the famous Kiso Dana will be killed by enemies. So kill yourself! Imai will follow you bye & bye." So being
advised by Kanehira, he turned his horse back again, and alone he went towards the pinefields in the field of Azazu there.

SHITE: It was about the latter part of the first month of the year.

CHORUS: Though it was spring-like a little, yet the cold piercing winds of Hiei, and the sky when the clouds wander and the road where the thin ice of white snow, all troubled him so much. At last he jumped into a deep mud—he could not get his horse clear of it. Though he beat it, yet the horse could not obey.

O what shall he done? So, to kill himself he put his hand on his sword yet, at that moment he remembered Kanehira, and looked back far behind him to see where K was.

SHITE: Not knowing from where it came.

CHORUS: An arrow flew, and struck on his helmet, and he fell down from the horse. The scene is here. So pray for my master, rather than for me!

SHITE: Though Kanehira did not know at all about this, yet even while he fought, he wished to follow his master.

CHORUS: Then at his back a voice from the side of the enemy—

SHITE: “Kiso Dono is killed!”

CHORUS: hearing that cry—

SHITE: Now what could I do?

CHORUS: So thinking, Kanehira,

SHITE: Thinking this the words of last pride,

CHORUS: He gave stress to the stirrup (stood up on horse lighty).

SHITE: In a loud voice “I am Imai no Shiro among Kiso Dono,

CHORUS: Kanehira “so proclaiming himself he ran into the great force of the enemy, and showing his secret arts of “ikki losen” (one warrior facing a thousand) he drove the forces of the enemy to the beach of Azazu—slaughtered and slaughtered them—in cross and web (technical name of sword strokes) and at last, to show a good
example of self-killing, he having his sword in his mouth jumped into the lake upside down, so that the sword came out through his neck—The last deed of Kanehira was indeed wonderful!

[This whole piece comes from Heike Monogatari and Senfer Seisinubi]

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**SEMIMARU* by Motokiyo**

(used to be called "Sakagami")

SHITE Sakagami
TSURE Semimaru
WAKI An Imperial messenger

Scene in Yamashiro.

WAKI (Sakaido) What shall we do in this changeful world?
WAKI. This is Semimaru no Miya (Prince) the 4th son of Daigo. Indeed, this is the world, where everything has its return (reward). Though he was born a prince, behaving well in the before-world, he was blind from while a baby. The sun & moon of the blue sky have no light for him. The light will not light him in the darkness, and the rain of tears does not cease at midnight. Thus he passed—but the Emperor—what is his idea. I don't know—ordered me to take him secretly to Osakayama, and to shave his hair. Though it is very pitiful for him, yet, as it is an imperial order, strengthless (i.e. unwillingly).

*See Donald Keene, ed., Twenty Plays of the No Theatre (New York, 1970), 550.
GLOSSARY OF THE MUSICAL INDICATIONS USED BY ERNEST FENOLLOSA IN AN UNEDITED NÔ MANUSCRIPT: KANEHIRA

shidai: an introductory or thematic song in regular rhythm sung by characters at their entrance to the stage. Sometimes it is sung by a character or the chorus in the middle of a performance just before the mai (dance).

kotoba: spoken portions written in prose and classified into:
   a) nanori (name introducing) delivered by waki
   b) mondo (dialogue)
   c) katari (narrative) delivered in a somewhat monotonous rhythm.

michiyuki: travel song. A type of age uta song (i.e. high pitched) in ordinary (hira nori) rhythm. (12 syllables divided into 8 feet)

issei: (literally "one voice") formally made up of 29 syllables in three lines of 5; 7,5; 7,5, sung in high pitch.
   1. by an actor or actors after the entrance onto the stage with the prelude called "issei".
   2. before "mai" by the actor, and then by the chorus alone.

uta: represents a body of songs like "shidai", "age uta" (high pitch) "sage uta" (low pitch) etc. where the rhythm follows a beat and whose language mainly consists of 7 and 5 syllable lines.
kuri: the name of the highest pitch. Kuri as a song is very short, very high pitched and melodious. Together with sashi that comes immediately after it, it serves as a prelude to kuse in formal construction. Kuri is sung alternately by the actor and chorus or by the latter alone.

sashi: sung simply and smoothly as in a manner of speaking. It may be sung in solo, duet or chorus by actors or between the actor and the chorus. When the actor changes from speech to song in the middle of a statement or conversation, or when he addresses somebody in song, this is usually called sashi. On such occasions sashi is indicated in the text as kakaru which means "commence". Sashi is sung in various parts of a No. When the character expresses his emotion in sashi it is called kudoki meaning "lament". Kuri - sashi - kuse in that order form the most important part in a formal No construction. Kuri is conventionally compared with a waterfall, sashi with a rapid stream and kuse with a pool of still water.

kuse: generally narrates the story of a No play on which the whole piece is based and is almost always found at the most important point in a play in the third part of the development section. It is a very long song sung all through by the chorus except for one line coming in the middle which is sung by the actor. This line is called age ha meaning "lifting" indicating the lifting of the fan while the actor dances and sings. Kuse which is in hira-nori or ordinary rhythm (12 syllabics to 8 beats) is sung very slowly and in a low pitch at first; after ageha it becomes age-uta (i.e. with heightened, high-pitched tempo). Kuse which forms the core of the performance was incorporated into the No by Kannami Kiyotsugu who adopted it from kusemai, a popular dance.
rongi: means "dialogue". It is a type of very regular 8 beat age-uta (i.e. high pitched song). It is sung between the actor and the chorus, sometimes between the actors and then brought to a climax by the chorus. Rongi sung alternately between the actor and the chorus often comes at the end of the first part of No when the shite reveals his identity to the waki before disappearing. Alternate singing between actors often takes place when the characters part at the end of the first or second part.

and

by

Matsuo Yakinoshi

presented by

The Asiatic Society of Japan

in association with The British Council

Nomido Sala, Osaka

Tuesday, 12 December 1972
6.30 p.m.

Price ¥100
APPENDIX B

PROGRAMME

These plays represent an extraordinary cultural exchange. Yeats was inspired by Japanese Noh plays to write a play about Cuchulain, and Takahime, a Japanese, was in turn inspired to write a Noh play based on the same ideas, yet the creation was surely Japanese--all the richer for the essence of Noh influencing an Irish poet and his play influencing a Japanese.

During the winter William Butler Yeats, Nobel Prize Winner and the greatest lyric poet Ireland has produced, and Ezra Pound, an American poet, whose effects on the poetry and criticism of our time has been profound, were working together in a country house in Sussex. Pound was Yeats's secretary. Both were interested in spiritual aspects of reality, holding the world of the senses to be the realm of shadows. Yeats's was a dream poet, searching for a higher reality involving the occult, magic, and parapsychology. Ernest Fenollosa, an American poet, Orientalist, and educator, played an important role in saving the traditional arts of Japan, including the revival of Noh. When he died in London in 1908, a grateful Japanese government sent a worshop for his ashes and buried them in accordance with his request near the Tendra Sudo in Nara overlooking Lake Biwa. With the help of Noh plays translated by him and finished by Pound, Yeats discovered a possibility of lyric verse by means of an aesthetic with symbolic meaning developed from one image, metaphysical allusion, or one poem.

Takahime

by

Mario Yokomichi

presented by

The Asiatic Society of Japan

in association with The British Council

Nogakudo
Suidobashi
Tokyo

Tuesday, 12 December 1972
6.30 p.m.

Price ¥100
Introductory Note by the Rev. Neal Henry Lawrence OSB

These plays represent an extraordinary cultural exchange. Yeats was inspired by Japanese Noh plays to write a play about Cuchulain, an Irish hero. Yokomichi, a Japanese, was in turn inspired to write a Noh play based on the same idea, yet the creation was purely Japanese - all the richer for the essence of Noh influencing an Irish poet and his play influencing a Japanese.

During the winter of 1913, Yeats, later Nobel Prize Winner and the greatest lyric poet Ireland has produced, and Ezra Pound, an American poet, whose effects on the poetry and criticism of our time has been profound, were working together in a country house in Sussex. Pound was Yeats's secretary. Both were interested in spiritual aspects of reality, holding the world of the senses to be the realm of shadows. Yeats's was a life-long search for a higher reality involving the occult, magic, and parapsychology. Ernest Fenollosa, an American poet, Orientalist and educator, played an important role in saving the traditional arts of Japan, including the revival of Noh. When he died in London in 1908, a grateful Japanese government sent a warship for his ashes and buried them in accordance with his request near the Tendai Buddhist Temple of Homyoin overlooking Lake Biwa. With the help of Noh plays translated by him and finished by Pound, Yeats discovered a possibility of lyric drama by means of an action laden with symbolic meaning developed from one image, one historical allusion, or one poem.

Yeats was intrigued by the integration of poetry, music, dance and the scenic arts. He wrote four Noh plays using the myths of Ireland in the same way as Noh makes use of Shinto and Buddhist tradition. "At the Hawk's Well" was written and premiered in 1916. T.S. Eliot saw it in 1917 in London when Michio Ito was dancing the part of the Hawk and thus gained his first inkling of poetic drama which he would eventually lead to perfection.

The plot of "At the Hawk's Well" is based on an episode in the life of the Irish hero, Cuchulain. It concerns the tragic hero who pursues his aim even when there is no chance of success and excites the enmity of demonic powers causing his own downfall. The scene is Noh-like, being of the...
greatest simplicity - a dried up well, a withered hazel bush (Irish symbol of wisdom), an unfertile island, a guardian of the well (a dumb-maiden), and an old man who has been waiting all his life for the waters of immortality to spring from the well.

Whenever the water comes up, the old man sits in a torpor brought on by evil magic. The young hero, Cuchulain, is attracted by the legend of the water of immortality and wants to wait for it in spite of all warnings of the old man to desist. Suddenly the spirit of the Hawk takes possession of the guardian of the well, the Hawk is the spirit of the place, an evil demon. Her cry makes the old man sink into a torpor again. In her dance, she pushes Cuchulain away from the well just as the water of immortality gushes forth.

The hero takes his sword to overcome the demon and thereby acquire supernatural power, but his attempt ends in failure just as the long wait of the unheroic old man. The final chorus by the musicians puts into contrast the heroic attitude which borders on the absurd with the idyllic life of a simple man who lives all his days "where a hand on the bell can call the milch cows to the comfortable door of his house" and ends with "Who but an idiot would praise a withered tree?"

One part of the sequence about Cuchulain inspired Yokomichi, Noh scholar especially knowledgeable in the musicology of Noh, to make a free adaptation in Japanese which has been put on the stage twice by Hisao Kanze, the great Noh artist, and his troupe in 1968 and 1970. It is a new attempt to create something between Noh and the western poetic drama, just as Yeats tried to create a new form of poetic drama for the west under the direct impact of Noh plays translated by Fenollosa and Pound.

This past summer, Kanze took this play to Europe as part of his repertory. "Takahime" (the Hawk Princess) as it has been titled has all allusions to Irish mythology deleted as well as the final chorus about the absurd hero. The Japanese play becomes a melancholic ballad about the absurdity of human existence. Man wastes his life waiting for something which truly exists, but which he will never find. The Noh play departs from the traditional structure of Noh, because the chorus takes an active part in the story and the dances
are performed by all three main players. The beauty of the Noh costumes and masks have no doubt surpassed anything which Yeats himself envisaged for he saw only some fragmentary performances of Noh and never visited Japan. Yet Hiro Ishibashi in the essay "Yeats and the Noh: Types of Japanese Beauty and their Reflection in Yeats's Plays" published in Yeats's Centenary Papers, 1965, indicates Yeats had an appreciation of the idea of Yugen, ideal beauty of Noh: nobility in speech, behavior, and deportment.

For the first time, "At the Hawk's Well" will be played in the original version with music by Edmund Dulac, which Ishibashi says produces a dreamy, misty, atmospheric, nearer to the music of the early Impressionists, like some of Debussy. It will be the first time that the two plays are produced on one evening. The English version of Yeats will be directed by Peter Mann. Peter Mann, an Australian, has long been connected with drama in Japan, including British Council productions and the Tokyo Amateur Dramatic Club. Masks, costumes, scenery, and lighting are executed by him. He will also play the role of the young man while Bob Austin, another Australian, will take the role of the old man. The Hawk dance will be performed by a Japanese dancer. The chorus will consist of Miranda and Linden Kenrick, British and New Zealanders well-known for their many talents, and Japanese students from English Speaking Societies of several universities.

Hisao Kanze will do the music and the choreography for the Japanese "Takahime" as well as direct it. He himself will also dance the role of Hawk. Hideo Kanze will play the part of the old man, Mansaku Nomura, the young man, and Shizuo Kanze, the Hawk Princess. Arrangements for "Takahime" were made by Fr. Thomas Immoos, SMB, and for "At the Hawk's Well" by Robin Duke, British Council Representative and Cultural Attache at the British Embassy. Both are members of the Council of ASJ. Hiro Ishibashi of Ueno Gakuen has supplied the Dulac musical score.
AT THE HAWK'S WELL

By W. B. Yeats

A dance drama based on the style of the Japanese Noh play. This is one of four plays for dancers, intended to be performed as a program. "At the Hawk's Well" the first of the quartet launches the legendary Irish hero Cuchulain on his vain quest for fame and meaningful existence, fated from the outset by his dual ties to the desire for recognition of his worth, and to the elusive female as the representative of the inspirational ecstasy which life offers. These recurrent themes in Yeats' poetry find expression in dramatic form in this short play and might well read as the mature Yeats' despair at the uncontrollable nature of the writer's muse, in his quest for true inspiration, viewing the young and unabashed launching into the career of art, unaware of its barrenness and solitude. The conflict of Old and Young is a constant contest here and the tantalising female is both ever desirable and destructive to the creation of art. That the imagery and situations superimpose a strongly sexual nature on the conflict is inevitable since Yeats has no awe of the physical side of life.

The Chorus: Linden Kenrick, Miranda Kenrick
The Guardian of the Well: Junko Kojima
An Old Man: Robert Austin
A Young Man: Peter Mann

The Irish Heroic Age

The presentation planned and directed by Peter Mann
Music by Edmund Dulac, directed by Kazuko Takada
Irish Harp Kazuko Takada
Flute Tomoko Takada
Drum Mikio Tanaka
Gong

Assisted on the stage by:

Masafumi Okabe, Osamu Nakabayashi, Saburo Yamamoto
Kenichi Kawai, Koichi Sogabe, Takio Takayama,
Yukiko Kainosho, Fumiko Shinozuka, Fiko Kijima,
Kazutoshi Yanai, Yoshihiro Shinagawa, Akinari Holly,
Yumi Nakanishi, Keiko Takeyama

INTERVAL

Orchestra

Flute (Shan-bue)
Small Hand Drum (Kotsuzumi)
Large Hand Drum (Obasuri)
Stick Drum (Taiko)

Taka Murata
Yukiko Toyoshima
Michiko Toyoshima
Chieko Okada
TAKAHIME
THE HAWK PRINCESS
by
Mario Yokomichi
DIRECTED BY DON HEIN
Mannojo Nomura

A lonely island. The edge of the Hawk's Well surrounded by a grove of hazel trees. From twilight to the dead of night on a late autumn evening. The grove of trees is indicated by a stage property platform (tsukurimono).

CAST

OLD MAN
(actually his Ghost)
KOFURIN
(a young prince of the Land of Persia)
MAIDEN
(the soul of the mountain, the Hawk Princess)
ROCKS
(the rocks themselves, not their spirits)

Hideo Kanze
Mansaku Nomura
Hisao Kanze
Shizuo Kanze
Kan Hosho
Tojiro Yamamoto
Zensuke Oku
Nobuyuki Yamamoto
Hiromitsu Wakamatsu
Masahiro Asami
Akio Kitanami

THE MAIDEN enters from behind.

Part II

Music 2 - A short prelude for Flute and Large Hand Drum

ROCKS: The spring ran dry long ago,
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
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The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
The spring ran dry long ago.
Scene
A lonely island. The edge of the Hawk's Well surrounded by a grove of hazel trees. From twilight to the dead of night on a late autumn evening. The grove of trees is indicated by a stage property platform (tsukurimono).

Part I
The curtain bell rings, and as soon as the audience is seated and quiet, both stage lights and house lights are faded out gradually. The Orchestra plays a prelude from the green room. As soon as the prelude is finished, the stage lights only are faded up half way. Rocks III, IV, II, VII, I, VIII, V, VI file on down the bridgeway in that order, and take their places on the stage. Rocks II, VII, I and VIII bring on the stage property platform. The Orchestra members enter through the small door up stage left (kirido), and take their regular places on the stage. They do not, however, sit on their stools (shogi) for a time.

The MAIDEN enters down the bridgeway and mounts the platform from behind.

Part II
Music I - A short prelude for Flute and Large Hand Drum

ROCKS: The spring ran dry long ago,
The spring ran dry long ago.
Cold winds blow through the hazel grove.
The spring ran dry long ago.
Cold winds blow through the hazel grove.

ROCK I: Look toward the strand yonder!
A small sail boat approaches the beach!

ROCK III: Truly, a small boat approaches the beach.
ROCK II: Look to the bare rock yonder!
    A young man comes walking around it!

ROCK III: Truly, a young man comes walking around it.

ROCK I: Once again, pathetically, once again,
    The light of a young life begins to fade.

ROCKS III & IV: The light of a young life begins to fade.

ROCKS: The spring of young strength runs dry,
    Only the bent hips and twisted arms.
    Of age are left to view.
    Phantom hopes depart,
    And ephemeral dreams disappear.

ROCKS I & II: Oh, pathetic young man.

ROCKS: (whisperingly) Oh, pathetic young man.

Music 2 - A short Large Hand Drum solo.

ROCKS: Hazel branches sway in the breeze,
    (whisperingly) Softly sway in the breeze.
    In the west, the sun sinks away,
    (whisperingly) Silently sinks away.

Part III
    The OLD MAN enters, and stops on the bridgeway.

ROCK I: Look, the Old Man comes climbing up!

ROCK IV: Truly, the Old Man comes climbing up.

ROCK I: Today, once more, as yesterday.

ROCK II: Tomorrow, once more, as today.

ROCK I: Staring at the spring, waiting for the water.

ROCKS: Staring at the spring, waiting for the water.

ROCK II: Fifty years.
ROCK III & IV: No, a century.

ROCKS I, II & V: No, a thousand years.

The ROCKS all gather around the platform.

Music 3 - A piece for Flute and Small Hand Drum.

The OLD MAN enters the main stage. About this time, the stage lights are brought slowly up to full brilliance, and the house lights up half. This lighting remains unchanged for the remainder of the performance.

ROCKS: Gathering leaves and twigs for fire,
     Despite great cold and hunger
     Waiting ever, bearing all.
     Oh, pathetic Old Man.

The Small Hand Drummer and the Large Hand Drummer seat themselves on stools. The OLD MAN proceeds to the down stage left pillar (wakiza) and seats himself there.

ROCKS: How long will your mind stray,
     Dreaming of the unattainable?
     Not a moment of sleep,
     Never a moment of rest.

Part IV

OLD MAN: Maiden, why will you not speak?
     Why do you stare at me
     with your hollow, haunting eyes?
     A long past autumn I recall,
     The eve of an eventful day.
     That day too you stared at me
     With your hollow, haunting eyes.
     Cease your vacant stare! Oh Maid,
     See me, and speak to me!
     Or do you despise this aged frame?

KUFURIN enters.

KUFURIN: Then speak thou unto me!
     I abandoned my sailing ship,
     And climbed the rocks all day.
     Desiring but gaining not,
     Searching, but all in vain.
OLD MAN: Who is that speaking there?
Who dares raise his voice
In this mountain and valley of death?
Is it some man who dares come here?

KUFURIN: Third prince of Persia Land am I.
My name is Kufurin.

OLD MAN: Kufurin, you say?
I've never heard of you!

KUFURIN: From Persia's capital across the seas,
A son of the noble family,
Rulers of the northern castle
For seven hundred years and more.

OLD MAN: And what brings this Persian Prince,
And coming by whose leave,
This day to our lonely isle?

KUFURIN: During great feasting at night,
Between the sweet pleasure of wine,
My ears were titillated by a rumor.
When I heard, I set sail in the sea.
Some sea dragon seemed to be steering,
Some magic wind to be blowing my sails.

KUFURIN ENTERS THE MAIN STAGE.
Thus I conquered the bounding waves,
And today's dawn, gained these shores.

OLD MAN: This isle is the end of the world,
A lonely place, devoid of life,
Of golden wealth, and hope.

KUFURIN: If you be the aged man of the isle,
You are he who knows the spring.
Oh, lead me to the place,
Where lies the spring I seek,
From which, neath hazel boughs,
Flows water of eternal life.
The limpidness welling from that spring,
It is told, grants man's desires.
And the Maiden who guards the flow,
Treads the fallen leaves, they say,
Around the crystal pool of dreams.
OLD MAN: Are not those fallen hazel leaves
Near the cleft in the rock you see,
Where silently yond Maiden sits?

KUFURIN: But how be this a spring?
I see no springlike flow.

OLD MAN: For the water of yond spring
Full ninety-nine years have I waited,
Waited never gaining,
Seeing only waves of falling leaves.
Hearing only sighs of salty winds.

KUFURIN: Doth the long awaited water, then,
From the spring not issue forth?

OLD MAN: Issue forth, indeed, it doth,
And dancing comes the mountain's soul.
A mystic time, a hallowed time,
To man, all unperceivable.

KUFURIN: But waiting's not required of me!
For honored of the gods am I!
A blessed prince, a son of kings!

Music 4 - A piece for Large and Small Hand Drums.

ROCKS: Oh, no! The Maiden owns the spring!
It belongs to the princess of the hawks!
The Hawk Princess owns the mountain's soul!

OLD MAN: I, the aged one, own that spring!
When very young, like you, I came
Leaving home the spring to seek,
And came to live upon this isle.
Begging the gods day by day,
Begging the gods year after year,
Waiting, but gaining never a drop.
Thrice the waited waters came,
Thrice slept I by the curse of the fiend,
Thrice waked I, thrice found it dry.
Full of the tide of age I am,
My body on the rocks exposed,
Of the past I dream; the lonely past,
And yearn for the flowing of the spring.
Part V

The MAIDEN suddenly begins to quiver.

KUFURIN: Hark, hark, the hawk doth cry!
The hawk will now appear!

OLD MAN: Indeed, it's not the hawk you hear!

KUFURIN: The voice of the hawk it is indeed!
For when across the shore I strode,
And up the craggy cliffs I climbed,
The soaring hawk I clearly saw.

OLD MAN: That hawk itself's the mountain's soul,
Never quiet knows that shade,
It lures man, leading him astray,
Fiendishly watching until his ruin.
Before the cursed threads entangle,
Before young breath's no longer yours,
Away, far away from this isle go!

KUFURIN: You think, Old Man, you can deceive me?
Or with your withered bones to menace?
Undauntable Prince of Persia am I,
The blessed darling of the gods!

OLD MAN: The power of the curse upon me has fallen,
Nor will you, Kufurin, its clutches escape.

ROCKS: Nor will Kufurin its clutches escape.
From its clutches he'll never escape.

OLD MAN: Away, far away from this isle go!

ROCKS 1, 2, 3, 4: Oh, terror! Oh, wo!

Music 6 - A solo for the Flute.
ROCKS: The Maiden's body tenses, her sleeves begin to sway, 
The Maiden's fingers clench, her hips begin to move, 
The blood of the Hawk Princess begins to wildly rage.

OLD MAN: Quickly this isle depart, Kufurin! 
Centuries, eons I've waited, Kufurin! 
Vainly the water yearning, Kufurin! 
Pity an old man who pines, Kufurin! 
Go, leave the water for me, Kufurin!

The OLD MAN exits down the bridgeway.

Part VI

Music 7

The ROCKS move out to various positions seeming to cover the whole stage. The MAIDEN reveals herself as the Hawk Princess, and attacks with her talons. KUFURIN draws his sword and defends himself, but soon exhausts his strength and falls into a deep sleep.

ROCKS II, IV, VI, & VIII: Oh, terror! Oh, woe!

ROCKS I, III, V & VII: Oh, terror! Oh, woe!

ROCKS: Kufurin doth regard the hawk. 
The Hawk Princess at Kufurin glares. 
The Hawk Princess at Kufurin glares.

KUFURIN: Dance if you will, Oh, hawk Maiden! 
Dance if you will, Oh, Hawk Princess!

ROCKS II, IV, VI & VIII: Oh, terror! Oh, woe!

ROCKS I, III, V & VII: Oh, terror! Oh, woe!

Music 8

ROCKS: Noise and rumbling, flowing, bubbling!

ROCK III: Hark, hark! The time is come!

ROCKS: Hark, hark! The time is come!
ROCK III: Hark, hark! The water welleth forth!

ROCKS: The water welleth forth.
   The water welleth forth.

ROCKS II, IV, VI & VIII: Noise and rumbling, flowing, bubbling!
   Noise and rumbling, flowing, bubbling!
   Welling up
   And springing forth!

ROCK III: Water!

ROCK IV: Water!

ROCKS I, III, V & VI: Noise and rumbling, flowing, bubbling!
   Noise and rumbling, flowing, bubbling!
   Welling up
   And springing forth!

Music 9
The Hawk Princess dances and exits.

ROCKS: Oh, pathetic Kufurin!
   Rather than desire the water,
   Rather than pursue the hawk,
   Had thou but let thy mother hold thee,
   Had thou but been content, with friends,
   Blissful would thy life have been!
   Oh, pathetic Kufurin!

Music 10 - Solo for Stick Drum. The ROCKS gather around the platform. The GHOST appears.

GHOST: Oh, the pain of separation from the hawk's spring in the grove,
   Fruitless centuries I've waited
   And once more the chance I've lost.
   How I curse the flow of water,
   The rustling dead leaves fallen there.

   The GHOST dances a violent battle (tachimawari).
   Drawn to fight with storms in treetops,
   Led astray by evil specter,
   By the long threads of its curse.
ROCKS: By the long threads of its curse,
   Tangled in the thousand strands,
   Soul and body tied securely,
   Never from this place to go,
   Struggle ever as he might.
   Soul and body tied securely
   To relentless towering crags.
   Thus forever strongly fettered,
   He becomes the mountain's soul.

Music II

GHOST: Perplexed, delusioned, led astray.

ROCKS: Perplexed, delusioned, led astray,
   But ever yearning toward his goal.
   Oh, the pain of separation
   From the spring's beloved side.
   Among the crags his voice reechoes,
   But his form is seen no more.
   With the storm beyond the mountain,
   With the storm, lost in confusion,
   In deep darkness far away.
   Still remains the hazel forest,
   Ever silent hazel grove.

The GHOST (Old Man), KUFURIN, ROCKS, and Orchestra
members quietly leave the stage in that order.
Both stage and house lights are brought up full
brilliance. Stage assistants carry the platform off.

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