From the Rest to the West: Staging Differences and Redefining Intercultural Performances

by

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Abstract

Intercultural theatre has seen a significant increase recently on the world stage; however, many well-known contemporary intercultural productions are built on Western traditions incorporating elements from other cultures mostly as exotic embellishment to enrich the original plays without reorienting cultural position and significance. The focus of this research is on shifting the main narrative in intercultural discourse from the West to the Rest, and attempts to deconstruct conventional limitations and further redefine intercultural performances beyond the established framework. Wu Hsing-Kuo and Suzuki Tadashi's intercultural approaches are examined as examples on how they, basing theatrical performance on their own traditional cultures, react to the encounter with classic texts not simply through reproductions and mixture of cultures but through interweaving personal or collective experiences with the context of original plays. Adaptations and retheatricalization of the original plays allow the plays to speak to contemporary audience and audience with different cultural backgrounds. The two productions, Wu Hsing-Kuo's *King Lear* and Suzuki Tadashi's *Electra,* are studied as embodiments for the two practitioners' theatrical approach and intercultural adaptations. Through the research on their practices and productions, it clearly shows how such performance challenges the original hierarchical intercultural relationship, and further enables a different experience of producing or viewing intercultural theatre.

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Introduction: Reapproaching Intercultural Performances

Interculturalism has been one of the most studied academic fields of the last few decades. Enabled by popular culture, media, and international travel, encounters between different cultures have become more frequent than ever before. Scholarly research on the meaning of such encounters has spanned a variety of academic disciplines, including theatre studies and performance practice. Theatre productions incorporating multiple cultural elements have increased, especially since the 1980s, when "both Eastern and Western theatre faced the pressure of not being able to catch up with the contemporary trend and suffered the loss of audience. As a result, they started to turn to each other for new possibilities" (Chu 24).[1] Theatrical interculturalism includes the transplantation of theatre aesthetics about directing, playwriting and designing. The word interculturalism, as either a cultural concept or theatrical approach, is used extensively in contemporary theatre, often in diverse contexts: sometimes it is interpreted as multiculturalism, cross-culturalism, and transculturalism, among others. According to Patrice Pavis' definition, there are at least six forms of theatrical interculturalism: intercultural theatre, multicultural theatre, cultural collage, syncretic theatre, post-colonial theatre and the "theatre of the fourth wall" (*The Intercultural Performance Reader* 8-10). He clarifies the boundaries of intercultural theatre as creating "hybrid forms drawing upon a more or less conscious and voluntary mixing of performance traditions traceable to distinct cultural areas. The hybridization is very often such that the original forms can no longer be distinguished" (8). Pavis uses the hourglass model to explain the process and relationship between the source culture and the target

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[1] All citations from references in languages other than English are translated by the writer.
「當東西方傳統劇場面臨跟不上時代的思潮，流失現代觀眾壓力，紛紛轉向對方的劇場取經。」

culture, which has been widely studied by theatre scholars and practitioners. The source culture, or the foreign culture, is put in the upper bowl of the hourglass model and must go through the narrow neck of the hourglass which acts as a selection process. When the source culture finally reaches the lower bowl, its "grains" are restructured according to the cultural frames and paradigms of the target culture. As the first critic who theorizes and modelizes intercultural exchange, Pavis focuses on "the intercultural transfer between source and target culture," and his model depicts the relativity of the notion of culture and the complicated relationship existing between every cultural material in the exchange (*Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* 5). Through the process from the top to the bottom, the grains will rearrange themselves in a way which seems to be random, but is partly regulated by their passage through dozens of filters put in place by the target culture and the audience (4).

Pavis' explanation of the hourglass model is often criticized for not being able to explain the complications arising from intercultural encounters. Rustom Bharucha opposed the hourglass model for its unidirectional trajectory, and provided instead a more dynamic and fluid model: "interculturalism evokes a back-and-forth movement, suggesting the swing of a pendulum rather than a downward movement through the narrow trajectory of filters by which the 'source culture' is emptied while the 'target culture' is filled" (244). Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert also questioned Pavis' hourglass model because it "cannot account for blockage, collisions, and retroaction as sites of either intervention or resistance" (43). The teleology of the model marks the fact that the centre of the intercultural exchange belongs to the target culture, and ultimately, the source culture must be assimilated into the former. The model itself inherently creates an unbalanced relationship between cultures. Similar to Bharucha's approach, Lo and Gilbert

proposed shifting the focus from the direction of intercultural theatre to the "filters" existing in the intercultural exchange, which ultimately determine both the process and outcome of theatrical representation.

There are a number of interpretations and disagreements about the very definition of intercultural theatre among theatre scholars. Theatre practitioners also approach the subject in different manners and differ from each other on the scope of interculturalism as well as on how it is absorbed in their creations. What follows is a brief excursus of the most important contributions to the history and development of intercultural theatre starting in the 1930s. Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud are known as two of the earliest theatre creators to approach the concept of interculturalism. Artaud recognized the limitations of Western realist theatre and saw the need to break its rigid structure. After seeing a Balinese theatre at the 1931 Paris Colonial Exhibition, he wrote:

> The Balinese productions take shape at the very heart of matter, life, reality. There is in them something of the ceremonial quality of a religious rite, in the sense that they extirpate from the mind of the onlooker all idea of pretense, of cheap imitations of reality. [. . .] The thoughts it aims at, the spiritual states it seeks to create, the mystic solutions it proposes are aroused and attained without delay or circumlocution (60).

He was enlightened by the ritualistic performing style of Balinese theatre, which later became an important reference for his Theatre of Cruelty. Like Artaud, Brecht sought inspiration in another Eastern performing tradition. After watching the performance of Mei Lan-fang, he grew interested in the performing method used in traditional Chinese performing arts, which distances the viewers naturally, and he used it as an inspiration for his theory of *verfremdungseffekt*, commonly known as alienation effect. His connection with Asian cultures was even clearer in his later work *The Good Person of Szechwan*, a play set in China and whose plot was believed to be

influenced by Chinese philosophy.

Jerzy Grotowski's Theatre of Sources takes an intercultural approach to theatre as well. He traveled extensively through India, China, Mexico, Haiti, among other places, to seek elements in the traditional practices of native cultures that he felt shared the same cultural origin. The Theatre of Source "deal[s] with the phenomenon of source techniques, archaic or nascent, that brings us [those actively involved] back to the source of life, to direct, so we say, primeval perception, to organic primary experience of life" (9). Influenced by Grotowski, Eugenio Barba developed the Eurasian Theatre to seek the "movement between West and East" (40) and concluded that the connection between human cultures is not aligned sequentially throughout historical time but is rather a connection among diversified cultures coexisting in the same timeframe. He noticed many differences between European and non-European theatre conventions; for example, European theatre separates dance from drama while the latter doesn't. In order to put his hypothesis to practice, he applied Chinese *jing-jù*, Japanese *nō* and *kyōgen*, Balinese dance-drama, and Indian *odissi*, *chhau*, and *bharatanatyam* into the performance training of his renowned company, the Odin Teatret.[2] For Barba, the Eurasian theatre is to create a space where people can explore professional theatre identity in the context of the complex root system that is theatre (Turner 23).

Robert Wilson, one of the best-known contemporary directors for intercultural theatre, also takes the experiences gained from collaborating with artists from different countries and

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[2] *Jing-jù* is also known as Peking opera or Beijing opera, is a form of traditional Chinese theatre. Chinese: 京劇
Nō is a form of traditional Japanese performing arts, and *kyōgen* is a form of traditional Japanese comic theatre. It was developed and performed alongside *nō* as an intermission between *nō* acts. Japanese: 能、狂言
Balinese dance-drama theatre is an ancient dance tradition which is part of the religious and artistic expression. *Odissi* (Odia: ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ Oḍiśī) is one of the eight classical dance forms of India. *Chhau* dance is a genre of Indian tribal martial dance. *Bharatanatyam* is a form of Indian classical dance originated in the temples of Tamil Nadu.

integrates it into the multiple cultural elements of his creations. In one of his interviews with Richard Schechner, Wilson mentioned that his theatre of interculturalism aspired to include theatre workers from all over the world and to be performed internationally. Schechner describes how the financial difficulties encountered by Wilson are somehow responsible for the intercultural aesthetics of his theatre and his international vocation:

> It has not been possible to raise the money for [Robert Wilson's] projects here in the United States, so the resources for the work have come from different parts of the world, the actors have come from different parts of the world. He constructs his works on several continents and shows them at various international venues, moving freely across national border. (Newman 113)

Each of the artists mentioned above approaches interculturalism in distinctively unique manners, but in spite of their differences, they share one common feature: their theorization and practice of intercultural theatre are mostly based on existent, Western performing systems.[3] Their creations are multicultural, but are essentially grounded in Western performance's methods and aesthetics. Many of these artists tend to incorporate elements from other cultures mostly as exotic embellishment to enrich the original performing styles of their cultures, but neglect to address the importance of reorienting the cultural context of both source and target culture. The performing techniques of other cultures are "removed from their social contexts, histories, and belief systems," and are often *Othered*, as Ric Knowles maintains (12). Cultural diversity is often homogenized by the dominant/target culture during the intercultural exchange process and hence it loses its uniqueness and significance. Even Richard Schechner's "culture of choice," which suggests that artists with different backgrounds have a complete and open choice of selecting

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[3] The East refers to the constructed *Orient* discussed in Edward Said's *Orientalism* or the *Rest* in the dichotomy of "the West and the Rest." The West is the First World, including Western Europe and North America.

materials from other cultures, fails to consider the unbalanced power relationship between source and target cultures, which ultimately affects the choice being made. His problematic 'culture shopping' stance is often still the praxis in contemporary intercultural theatre and performance:

> If you are Japanese, for example, you are born into a kind of homogenous, post-modern world culture; but if you choose to, you can also participate in specific things that are concretely Japanese — maybe at the concrete level of learning Noh drama, maybe something more diffuse. (*The Intercultural Performance Reader* 49)

Schechner did not take into consideration the fact that for the most part dominant cultures intrinsically have more power to select and adopt other cultures in the intercultural exchange process.

Daphne Lei defines the intercultural theatre that "combines First World capital and brainpower with Third World raw material and labor, and Western classical texts with Eastern performance traditions" as hegemonic intercultural theatre, or HIT (571), and includes Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine, Richard Schechner and Robert Wilson among its practitioners. She agrees with the fact that HIT helps rescue some of the vanishing artistic traditions of the East, but also raises concerns about the limits and biases of HIT's cultural politics: "[. . .] supporting HIT, rather than inviting performances from other cultures, is a way to comply with an official rhetoric of multiculturalism and diversity without doing too much outsourcing" (573). This kind of theatre limits and interrupts cultural flow from the East because it is mostly based on a hierarchy of privilege, according to Lo and Gilbert (42). The cultural flow in HIT is manipulated by the more predominant culture and thus reflects only a univocal narrative instead of multiple ones. This kind of performance will eventually wear out its novelty because while people may at first appreciate its experimental freshness, they will later grow tired of its skewed and

unidirectional cultural flow. Lei emphasizes that only by seeking non-hierarchical and balanced cultural connections and flows can intercultural theatre survive. Yet, what are the non-hierarchical cultural connections and flows? And what are the best ways to present them?

Taiwanese poet, director, and theatre critic Yen Hung-ya mentions that "The starting structure of every artistic creation arises from the creator's thoughts of his own culture" (242).[4] However, does the process of intercultural adaptation change also the ideological and cultural consciousness reflected in the collective experiences of a specific time and place? In other words, how does one ensure that the source culture is properly represented within the cultural context of the target culture? I intend to problematize these questions by redirecting the focus from cultural integration to cultural differentiation. In my opinion, the goal of performance is to "produce the experience of difference" (Una Chaudhuri 196). Staging the differences provides a chance for the creators not only to recognize the subjectivity of all cultures, but also reexamine their own cultures vis-à-vis the intercultural negotiations.

In this thesis, I want to probe the possibilities for a repositioning of the cultural and political *Other* in theatre and the preservation of cultural subjectivity in intercultural relationships. Inspired by "The West and the Rest," the chapter title in Ric Knowles' *Theatre and Interculturalism*, my goal is to move past the one-wayness of Pavis' hourglass model, and further research how the cultures which are usually defined as the *Rest* or the *Other* might draw on the notion of "reversed force" to suggest alternative intercultural paradigms of theatre and performance. I refer to reversed force as a resistance that aims to destroy the traditional hierarchy of cultural flow that is controlled by hegemonic or dominant cultures. Ultimately, the reversed

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[4] 鴻鴻：「每一齣劇本的開始結構都是創作者出於對他自己的那個文化的思考。」

force enables the *Rest*, or cultural *Other*, to have a "culture of choice." I propose a close critical investigation of two Asian theatre practitioners and their productions. I will concentrate especially on how these artists define cultural identity and build cultural subjectivity through the connection between the source play and the target culture.

Starting from the *Rest*

I will focus on the study of Wu Hsing-Kuo's theatre practice, including the historical background of his theatre group and how his involvement in traditional Chinese performing arts influences the creative process of intercultural productions. Special emphasis will be given to his production of *King Lear*, which he adapted autobiographically. I will also study Suzuki Tadashi's performing method and his adaptation of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra*. The emphasis will be on how Suzuki approaches intercultural performance as a reaction to rapid globalization and modernization of Japan after World War II. Through the study of his production of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra*, I hope to demonstrate how he places Japanese consciousness at the center of the intercultural exchange by 'centering' the performers' body and creating a unique and fitting space for performance. My research aims at illustrating how these two directors and their productions provide both the audience and the performers with the opportunity to experience non-hierarchical cultural connections and flows within the intercultural exchange.

First I will explain my reason for choosing Asian theatre as my example for the theatrical *Other/Rest* paradigm, and then I will focus on how the two practitioners are regarded as the fitting manifestations of the concept of "reversed force." When discussing intercultural theatre, there are many cultures that are often considered as the *Other*/*Rest*, especially those that have

been once colonized in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Australia. The reason why I find Asian theatre, especially Taiwanese, Japanese, and Chinese theatres, to be the best exemplifications for my research on cultural subjectivity can be explained through the concept of 'Extra-daily balance' that Eugenio Barba defines in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*:

> Extra-daily balance demands a greater physical effort - it is this extra effort that dilates the body's tensions in such a way that the performer seems to be alive even before he begins to express. The performers of the various Asian traditions have codified the acquisition of a new balance and have fixed the basic positions that the student must learn and master through exercise and training. (32)

Both *jing-jù* performance, the foundation of Wu Hsing-Kuo's work, and *nō* and *kabuki* movements, which Suzuki applies in his actor training method, reject natural state of body and create balance and stability. Wu and Suzuki draw on the training for extra-daily balance in order to help their actors develop a stable state of body and mind. Rejecting the natural state also means to move past an unbalanced relationship between the different cultures that Wu and Suzuki interact with and shape in their respective intercultural practices.

When intercultural performance, especially adaptation of Western classics, became a trend for Asian theatre in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, many productions were literal translations of foreign plays that simply ignored the relevancy of the original works in the target society as well as the compatibility between the cultural context of the original works and the cultures of Asia.[5] Starting from the performance of body instead of written texts, Wu and Suzuki's creations are able to abstract themselves from the pre-existing framework and limitations of the original texts. Their practice draws on internalizing the text, identifying and

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[5] The Western classics referred to in this thesis are artistic and literary creations especially in ancient Greek, Roman, the medieval age, and Renaissance.

experiencing it through the body, and then presenting it on stage. Through this process, Wu and Suzuki's productions are not simply Asian interpretations of Western classics but complete new forms of performance representing their very own cultural psyche.

I believe that Wu's representation of Taiwanese society and Suzuki's account of Japanese society are similar in how they both reflect on the transformation of their countries since the end of World War II. Reactions to globalization and cultural Westernization are the two main themes indispensable and inseparable in their creations. Those directors find their plots and characters in either the ancient Greek tragedy of Electra or Shakespeare's story of Lear in order to portray the society in which they reside. Although the two productions may not be the most successful Wu and Suzuki have realized in their long careers, I think they are the most befitting to support my arguments about the vitality of an intercultural theatre of the *Rest*.

To examine more closely how the two practitioners break the unbalanced relationship in intercultural exchange and rebuild the connection between the *Rest* and the West, I want to focus specifically on adaptation and retheatricalization, two concepts that Iris Hsin-Chun Tuan has used in her book *Western Canon in Taiwan Theatre: Adaptation and Transformation* to analyze intercultural productions (43-47).

Adaptation and Retheatricalization

Tuan writes that the adaptation of Western dramatic texts in Asian theatre can be generally put into four categories: literal translation, adaptation through localization, postmodern collage, and intercultural theatre (i.e. integration of the East and the West) (44). She considers the order of these categories as the progression of intercultural theatre adaptations, and argues that

the ultimate mature state for intercultural productions is the integration of the East and the West. I do not agree with her view that the complete integration of elements from different cultural backgrounds should be the final goal. Undoubtedly, there are many great productions that have achieved the state of cultural integration. For instance, Singaporean theatre director Ong Keng Sen places a wide range of performers of different traditions on the same stage, each independently maintaining their own unique cultural tradition and aesthetics without being integrated or homogenized. His use of a variety of languages onstage is also famous; for example, Bahasa Indonesian, Japanese, Mandarin and Korean are spoken simultaneously in the production *Lear Dreaming*. Ong's adaptation is regarded as befitting embodiment of postmodern collage and successful integration of Western texts and Eastern performances. Nevertheless, I wonder whether such integration should be the ultimate goal for intercultural performance? Is this the only way to build connections between cultures?

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon argues that the six main features of adaptation are what, who, why, how, where, and when. Adaptation not only brings changes to the essence of the original text, but is "both a product and a process of creation and reception" (xiv). It is a process that includes selection, collage, indigenization, integration and hybridization, and that may change the identity of the source text. In Hutcheon's definition, the integration of elements from different sources covers only a part of the process of adaptation. She explains that "what is involved in adapting can be a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests, and talents" (18). To bestow adapters the dual role of interpreters and creators makes the process of adaptation subjective and complicated. Yen Hung-ya's understanding that "every artistic creation arises

from the creator's thoughts of his own culture" illustrates how intercultural theatre might fail when the adapters' own background and personal taste blind them to the reality of the source culture(s) (242).

Specifically, the visual elements in intercultural adaptations are more emphasized than the text because it is easier for the former to be understood and appreciated. In Asian intercultural adaptations of classical Greek theatre and Shakespearean plays, the aesthetic of language is often overlooked due to the difficult task of transforming the unique poetry of the source texts into the language of the target culture. However, more intercultural adaptations have overcome the language barrier by deconstructing the original source and creating a completely new play through the creators' personal interpretations.

Wu Hsing-Kuo's *King Lear* and Suzuki Tadashi's *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* are two cases that break away from the framework of textual adaptation and become completely new creations. In fact, the source texts are no longer recognizable after the adaptation. Furthermore, Wu and Suzuki weave their personal experiences and reflections on their social and cultural circumstances into their works, which marks the uniqueness of these adaptations. Adaptations are often considered as imitations of the original texts through another genre or performing style. I would argue that adaptations are more than re-presentations of the original work; they are also representations standing on their own and speaking from within their unique social and cultural context, as evidenced in the productions by Wu Hsing-Kuo and Suzuki Tadashi. I will also focus on why these two directors find Western classics to be the best source for presenting their reflections and consciousness, and how they manage to charge their productions with new meanings.

The word "retheatricalization" first appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century and was widely used by members of the avant-garde movements in Europe. At the time when avant-gardists were seeking a revolution in theatre and a space to present an *other* theatre, they proposed the concept of the retheatricalization.[6] It is a form of theatre "which did not imitate a reality which actually existed, but which created its own reality; a theatre which nullified the radical split between stage and spectator and which developed new forms of communication between them" (Fischer-Lichte 115). The retheatricalization of theatre focused on a theatre that could be freed from the textual dominance and build a new relationship between text and performance.

In *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*, Erika Fischer-Lichte offers a thorough account on the concept of retheatricalization focusing on how the avant-gardists of early twentieth century Europe had searched for a new code of theatrical performance through the incorporation of non-illusionistic elements such as those common in Asian theatre. Fischer-Lichte states that modernist retheatricalization is connected not only to textual and performative aspects of theatre, but also cultural aspects. She argues that it is not possible to separate the non-illusionistic concept of retheatricalization from cross-cultural or intercultural exchange in early twentieth century when Europeans began to encounter foreign theatre:

> […] the retheatricalization of theatre means the process of productive reception by which modern European avant-garde theatre adopted elements of nonliterary traditions from utterly dissimilar European and non-European traditions and fertilized the development of a new theatrical code. (116)

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[6] The word was first introduced by Georg Fuchs.

Fischer-Lichte takes note of the retheatricalization of Eastern theatres, including Chinese and Japanese theatres, since their theatrical traditions are mainly non-literal. In my research of Wu Hsing-Kuo and Suzuki Tadashi's theatres, the concept of retheatricalization in theatre is critical because both directors focus more on the performativity of the body than the text. They downplay the logocentric textuality of Western classics and highlight instead the body as privileged site that can support cultural exchange because it is not framed or defined by either language or text. Their use of traditional performing arts not only builds a new relationship with the original texts, but also creates a new form of theatre resulting in a process of reception, which Fischer-Lichte refers to as "a subjective construction of theatrical reality" (69).

Furthermore, another aim for retheatricalization in theatre is to develop "an opening of the theatrical sphere to others: to cultural, political, magical, philosophical" (51), as Hans-Thies Lehmann writes in his *Postdramatic Theatre*. Retheatricalization for Wu and Suzuki entails more than a re-creation and re-presentation of cultural reality in theatre. In their creative process, retheatricalization is an embodiment of how intercultural performance has diversified and multiplied and has further been enriched and made complicated by modern issues such as globalization, modernization, diaspora and ethnicity. Wu and Suzuki's practices and creations re-present the reverse power from the Rest, a "rhizomatic (multiple, horizontal, non-hierarchical) intercultural performance-from-below," and how the force challenges the original landscape of cultural exchange (Knowles 59). In the following chapters, I will shed light on the intercultural aspect of retheatricalization, in particular how intercultural performances build a new relationship between textual references of the Western classics and non-literal traditions of Eastern performing arts.

Chapter 1: Contemporary Legend Theatre and the Search for Lear

In his book *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Hayden White points out that there are three approaches to the interpretation of historical narrative: cognitive, moral and aesthetic, and each comes with its own limitations (70-74). The aesthetic, which includes the manipulation and influence of institutional authorities, the selection of historical record, and the censorship system is often the most complex and subtle among the three. The limitation of official historical narratives is evident when dealing with the writing of contemporary Chinese accounts of Taiwanese history, where historical records are directly dependent on the dominant socio-political ideology, especially during the times when censorship had restricted themes and subjects suitable for literary creations.

According to Yeh Wei-Lien, under a unique and complicated political environment where opposing forces were suppressed, the dominant party in postwar Taiwan ideologically marginalized many other aspects of life and emphasized only those which were politically correct (6).[7] Every artistic narrative inevitably reflects and reproduces specific socio-political perspectives, thus it is not possible to separate Taiwan's literary development from its history or to neglect the biases inherent in its cultural discourses. The acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of the country's cultural, social and political consciousness becomes crucial for studying literary texts and artistic creations, including theatre and performance. My argument is that intercultural theatre was affected by the progress of such consciousness, especially after the emergence of The Little Theatre Movement in the 1980s which generated new ideas about

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[7] Yeh is a contemporary Taiwanese poet and professor of literature born and raised in Hong Kong. Chinese: 葉維廉 The quote is taken from the foreword Yeh wrote for the Chinese version of the book *Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, Cinema, and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary*, written by June Yip.

theatre and performance.[8] The Little Theatre Movement which, according to Chung Minder, is propelled by "the momentum of an exploding society and the cries of the people for a better life" (ix), opened up the first turning point for theatre development in Taiwan and fostered the development of intercultural theatre in the late 1990s.

Before I continue my discussion of the development of intercultural theatre in Taiwan, I should situate chronologically the historical background and literary development of the country. Due to political and economic changes, the twentieth century was a crucial era for a multitude of transformations and modernizations in Taiwan. In 1895, Japan began its 50-year colonization of Taiwan after Qing China lost the first Sino-Japanese War and was forced to give up the island. Although it was not the first time Taiwan was taken over by a foreign regime, it was the first time the island was fully occupied and systematically governed by outsiders.[9] The colonization ended along with the defeat of Japan in World War II, and Taiwan was returned to China. Shortly afterwards, in 1949, the Nationalist party lost the Civil War to the Communist party in mainland China and was forced to retreat to Taiwan establishing it as Republic of China.[10] People's

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[8] The term "Little Theatre" was first introduced by Song Chun-fang (宋春舫), a theatre professor in Beijing University in 1919. He defined Little Theatre as anti-commercial and experimental. Taiwanese theatre scholar Chung Minder (鍾明德) clarified in his PhD thesis "The Little Theatre Movement of Taiwan (1980-1989)" that the foundation of Lan-ling Theatre (蘭陵劇坊) in late1970s can be seen as the beginning of the Little Theatre Movement.

[9] Taiwan had been partially occupied by Netherland and Spain in the Age of Discovery.

[10] The Chinese Civil War here refers to the second Chinese Civil War from 1946 to1950, or the Chinese Communist Revolution or the 1949 Revolution. Chinese: 第二次國共內戰

Republic of China was founded in the same year on the mainland and the complex Cross-Strait (China-Taiwan) relations thus began and continued to this date.[11]

Stemming from the Nationalists' loss to the Communists, the imposition of Taiwan martial law was announced in 1949 in order to prevent infiltration of communist ideology, and to block other revolutionary ideas, which might undermine people's faith in the ruling government and their determination to recover the sovereignty of mainland China once again.[12] Publications were subjected to censorship and controlled by the government, which also regulated all literary and artistic creations. For the most part only anti-communist literature was allowed and encouraged. Theatre development was also tightly connected to the anti-communist ideology. *Jing-jù*, the traditional Chinese theatre also known as Peking Opera, was the only performing art that was officially supported at that time due to its non-political subjects, which are mainly about ancient legends or historical events (H. Lin 231-5).[13]

In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. invested a large amount of resources into industrial development in Taiwan in order to block the expansion of communism. U.S. capital saved Taiwan from the devastating effects of the war, and further enabled postwar restoration and re-construction. It was also the first time that Taiwan was exposed to such a large influx of Western philosophy and literature, which became readily available in translation. Popular culture in the form of films and TV programs was also introduced at the same time. The former audience of

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[11] Originally the Cross Taiwan Strait Relations, which refers to the relation between the two countries, China and Taiwan, separated by the strait. The word was first used in 1949 after the separation between People's Republic of China and Republic of China (Taiwan).

[12] The Governor of Taiwan Province and the Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China, Chen Cheng, promulgated the "Order of Martial Law" to announce the imposition of Taiwan martial law on May 19, 1949. Chinese: 臺灣省戒嚴令

[13] *Jing-jù* is often translated as Peking opera or Beijing opera. Chinese: 京劇

jing-jù gradually turned their attention to Western pop culture and this led to the gradual marginalization of traditional performing arts. *Jing-jù* could no longer hold the audience's attention because of its dated and predictable storylines and its overall indifference to social themes.

In contrast to the stagnation of *jing-jù*, modern theatre, *huà-jù,* flourished in Taiwan thanks to its exposure to Western modern drama.[14] Many features of *huà-jù* were taken from Western theatre that focused on realistic depictions of life on stage, and plays were either written by contemporary playwrights or translated from other languages. From the 1970s, Taiwanese society experienced a huge transformation spurred by the economic boom and political difficulties, which brought about the confusion of national and cultural identification. During this period of social transition, Taiwanese theatre built itself completely on Western models, attempting to break the established framework of traditional drama and experimenting with different theatrical possibilities. Young theatre practitioners started to produce small scale experimental plays which allowed them the chance to try out a variety of forms, styles, and themes.

The success of *huà-jù* indirectly contributed to the decline of traditional Chinese performing arts supported by the government. One of the reasons why traditional Chinese theatre was preserved by the government since 1950s is due to its subject matters. Many of the plays were written in imperial China and drew mostly on old-fashioned values that avoided controversial issues and thus escaped censorship. Traditional performing arts were still supported

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[14] 話劇

by a small nostalgic audience who had left the mainland for Taiwan during the Chinese Civil War.

For traditional Chinese theatre performed in Taiwan, the process of transformation was quite difficult. Firstly, the new audience expected to hear new and exciting stories; secondly, theatregoers were no longer interested in narratives told through traditional staging conventions. However, it is notable that the traditional performing methods of *jing-jù,* such as the use of one table and two chairs on stage to represent all sets and the formalistic gestures and movements, were easily accepted by new theatre spectators and even implemented in modern plays. To *huà-jù* practitioners, the minimalistic performing aesthetics of traditional Chinese theatre seemed contemporary and even avant-garde. The aesthetics of *jing-jù* were often adopted on new plays or translated works, for examples through the lack of the fourth wall and depictions of characters through symbolic movements and gestures (H. Lin 313). Nevertheless, *jing-jù*'s lack of clear and logical plots was the major obstacle to its development. Those plays written in the previous centuries reflected specific ideas and sentiments of the specific eras, and since they had no connection with contemporary society, they failed to attract audience. The strict formalities made it difficult to compete with modern works. For the old spectators who were familiar with traditional Chinese theatre, it was easy to appreciate the play's lengthy soliloquies and enjoy the actors' movements and the mise-en-scène. However, it was not so for the new generation of theatregoers who had grown accustomed to a vast array of new staging techniques and dramaturgical narratives, such as flashback and collages. The way stories were told in traditional Chinese theatre became so tedious and undesirable to them that both techniques and aesthetics had to be modified if they were to meet the needs and demands of a contemporary audience.

Another crucial factor which made *jing-jù* socially and politically antiquated is the unique features it bore during postwar era when Nationalists left mainland China to establish *jing-jù* in Taiwan for the first time. There were schools and organizations devoted to promoting the performing arts under government propaganda. *Jing-jù* was popular among the nostalgic Chinese public who were forced to leave their homeland. It was even called *guó-jù*, which can be translated as "national drama," by the Nationalist government during the early years of Taiwan's occupation.[15] But to the native Taiwanese, it did not bear the same meaning. The controversy and skepticism about *jing-jù* being considered as national drama is tightly related to the ambiguity of national identity for Taiwanese people during the postwar era. Both transplanted Chinese people and native Taiwanese people, raised and educated during Japanese colonization, wanted to stake their legitimate claim to the nation as proven by several violent conflicts that were harshly suppressed by the Nationalist government. The national identity of Taiwan has always been a sensitive issue and has been the reason for serious problems, such as the February 28 Incident and the White Terror when the clash between different ethnic groups caused many casualties.[16] For these reasons, the naming of *jing-jù* as national drama and as the only performing arts promoted by the ruling Nationalist government until the 1980s certainly became a point of tension.

After Taiwan was forced out of the United Nations in 1971, which in essence made Taiwan an isolated regime, local elites began to pay attention to the importance of establishing a

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[15] 國劇

[16] The February 28 Incident was an anti-government uprising in Taiwan which began on February 27, 1947. The incident, violently suppressed by the Nationalist government, caused thousands of civilians to be killed. The White Terror was the suppression of political dissidents following the February 28 Incident.
Chinese: 二二八事件、白色恐怖

new national identity. This identity, however, was complicated during this time because the Chinese exiles started to recognize the fact that it would be nearly impossible for them to regain sovereignty over mainland China. Since return to, or unification with China was no longer a possibility, the search for a new geo-political identity became necessary. The focus on locality emerged as a reflection on nationalism and a reaction against new imperialism, which contributed to the creation of a new Taiwanese identity. Only through a redefinition of nationality and a repositioning of themselves as independent and distinct from mainland China, could people identify more with locality and build new connections with the global community. For Taiwanese locals, recognizing and accepting their multiple ethnicities, Chinese and Taiwanese in particular, was one of the most important tasks in the postwar era especially when the definition of a national identity was often politically manipulated by the ruling party through institutional and regulatory frameworks (Yip 8-9).

Theatre, both traditional and modern, is always "a site for the continuing renegotiation of cultural values and the reconstitution of individual and community identities and subject positions" (Knowles 5); furthermore, the interactions and connections fostered by theatre are always fluid. This is very much true in Taiwan where the emergence of a national consciousness played a crucial role in the development of both traditional *jing-jù* theatre and modern theatre. Theatre in Taiwan reflected the transition from a deceptively homogenous society to a consciously diverse one. The national consciousness of Taiwanese people shifted from being united and stable to being fractured and fluid. Ever since the 1980s, practitioners started to contemplate questions such as: For whom are we performing? Where are we performing? Why

are we performing? Whose values do we stage? It was a time for artists to create a performance that was about themselves and for themselves.

This was also the time when the East and the West truly met and clashed on stage: two different backgrounds and traditions created confrontational experiences which in turn enriched Taiwan's theatre culture. According to Pavis, "Cultural debate [. . .] clearly indicates that the alternative is in reality no longer monocultural theatre or multicultural/intercultural theatre. It lies between a concept of culture as a supporter or bastion of a cultural identity, and a conception of culture of heterogeneity and collage" (13). Theatre is a place where interactions and connections are always adaptable and varied. Its instability allows for cultural heterogeneity to emerge. Through its constantly changing relations, theatre fosters a knowledge of self that is directly predicated on knowledge of others. The *Us* in the era of globalization can thus instantaneously adjust itself, and further influence the relation between the individual, the nation, and the world.

Theatre of Hybridity

The Foundation of Contemporary Legend Theatre

The very name of the theatre troupe Contemporary Legend Theatre (CLT), founded in 1986 by Wu Hsing-Kuo, a traditionally trained *jing-jù* actor, suggests an intention to transform the traditional *jing-jù* and its environment.[17] The theatre troupe's mission is to create performances about contemporary issues and for contemporary audience, and to re-connect modern audience to traditional theatre. The term 'Legend' means to track and to continue the *jing-jù* traditions, and also to chart new possibilities of *jing-jù*. 'Theatre,' which points to a

[17] 吳興國、當代傳奇劇場

specific space of performance, is often of no importance in traditional *jing-jù* performance but it represents CLT's dedication to providing a modern and diversified performing space which allows for experimental performance styles. Wu Hsing-Kuo's aspiration and ambition for CLT is to allow the traditional performing arts to "step out the age-old framework, and to communicate with new audience in a new form of theatre. Through the reflection and presentation of modern actors, *jing-jù* will welcome its rebirth" (Wu "From Tradition to the World of Shakespeare" 50).[18]

The word hybridity is often mentioned in the context of CLT's productions. However, CLT was not the first theatre in Taiwan to introduce hybrid performance that integrates new or old elements, and modern or traditional conventions from different performing styles. In the late seventies, a small renowned troupe, Yayin Ensemble, invited the new generation of designers and musicians to participate in *jing-jù* productions and experimented on theatrical mise-en-scène.[19] *Jing-jù* scholar Wang An-chi wrote in *Lights on Yayin* that Yayin Ensemble invites Chinese orchestra and modern theatre professions into *jing-jù* productions. These 'amateurs' might taint the pure *jing-jù* traditions, but they make the productions heterogeneous, and further arouse the artists' sense of involvement. One could argue that they taught the unsociable *jing-jù* how to make friends with other theatrical approaches (104-5).[20]

Although Yayin Ensemble kept the traditional performing style and updated only stage and lighting design, it was heavily criticized as not authentic and for destabilizing traditions. In

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[18] 吳興國: 從傳統走入莎翁世界「希望能讓國劇從古老的時空中走出來，在新的劇場、 與新觀眾溝通，透過現代演員不同的思考、運用，以新生的面貌復甦。」

[19] Yayin Ensemble. Chinese: 雅音小集

[20] 王安祈：《光照雅音》

fact, the argument and debate over authenticity have always been a major issue for contemporary *jing-jù* development. Wu, on the contrary, saw interesting possibilities in playing with the supposed authenticity of *jing-jù* tradition and creating a new genre of performance rooted in hybridity of various performing styles. He believed that, if Bertolt Brecht could develop the alienation effect from the influence of traditional Chinese theatre and Sergei Eisenstein could create the aesthetics of montage through the inspiration of Japanese *nō* theatre, there must be possibility for the transformation of *jing-jù* (Lu 155). He proceeded to study other performing styles, including contemporary dance, and extensively read Western canonical authors such as William Shakespeare, Anton Chekhov and Samuel Beckett. Wu found similarities between an Chinese play titled *The Punishment of Zi-Du* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in that both plays describe how power and desire lead a country to destruction.[21] The result of Wu's initial adaptations of Western classics became the main and initial direction for the founding of CLT.

Although *jing-jù* is abstract and conceptual in its features, it can successfully portray full-fledged characters through symbolic gestures and the use of props. Instead of telling a complete story with a complicated plot, traditional Chinese theatre, including *jing-jù*, focuses more on the performance of body and the presentation of the four indispensable elements and skills of traditional performing arts: singing, dialogue, dancing and acrobatics.[22] This is also the reason why traditional Chinese performance is often dramaturgically simpler than Western theatre and without elaborate scene changes. Thus, the adaptation of a Western classical play to a performable piece for traditional Chinese theatre includes not only the translation of the text, but

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[21] *The Punishment of Zi-Du.* Chinese: 《伐子都》

[22] 唱念做打

also the translation of the theatrical sign-system in order so to allow for crucial aesthetics in the target culture to resonate meaningfully on stage.

For Wu Hsing-Kuo, the first step of adapting Western classics to *jing-jù* was to make the characters Chinese and present them within a convincing cultural context. The creative process centered not simply on the co-existence or integration of diversified elements from two different cultures in one production, but on how the differences interact and interrelate with each other, whether harmoniously or discordantly. CLT's very first production, *The Kingdom of Desire* (1986), an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* set in China's East Chou Dynasty, was about courtiers of a small country revolting against the emperor and how desire and ambition set off radical changes in the world.[23] After many experimentations, the final production was not simply a *jing-jù* interpretation of Shakespeare, nor a combination of *jing-jù* and Shakespeare's text, but rather it could be regarded as both or neither. This intercultural and hybrid production went beyond the framework of prescribed conventions of traditional performing arts. It could be seen as a completely new performing style or a new genre of theatre.

Unlike Yayin Ensemble attempt to give *jing-jù* a new life through reforming its mise-en-scène, Wu started from the training of the actors and the building of characters. There is a fundamental change in how he directed not only the main characters but also all the extras in the production. Amazed by the stunning vigor shown in Japanese director Kurosawa Akira's *Throne of Blood* (*Kumonosu-jō*), a movie adaptation of *Macbeth*, Wu wanted to fuel such dramatic urgency in his *jing-jù* version of the Shakespearian tragedy.[24] In traditional *jing-jù* productions,

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[23] *The Kingdom of Desire*. Chinese:《慾望城國》

[24] 黒澤 明、《蜘蛛巢城》 (1957)

extras are mostly passive and appear as a part of set design, but Wu aspired to give life to those characters. Every character in *The Kingdom of Desire*, whether main or secondary, had their own characteristics and was indispensable to the whole production. The traditional relationship between the master (*jing-jù* director) and the actors was also changed so that the actors were now allowed to ask questions, to think, to internalize and build up their characters instead of simply executing whatever the master wanted them to. Through the process of inquiring and understanding the play and their roles in staging it, actors transformed and grew to embody their characters. According to *The Contemporary Legend of Wu Hsing-Kuo*, it was not Wu Hsing-Kuo's intention to revolt against the traditional *jing-jù*, but rather to create a complete new form or a new genre of performance, which did not fit into any prescribed category because it was hybridized with heterogeneous elements.[25]

The success of *The Kingdom of Desire* could be attributed to the social atmosphere of the time and the fact the whole society was craving social and artistic change. The atmosphere of Taiwanese society in the 1980s could be described as limbo-like. In 1987, a year before the end of the Martial Law, society was no longer fully censored and controlled. It was a time when the composition of the society gradually proceeded from homogeneity and singularity to heterogeneity and multiplicity. Artistic creations followed the same progression from homogeneity to heterogeneity and hybridity. Homi Bhabha referred to hybridity in *The Location of Culture* as a "strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal" (159). Hybridity can be regarded as a subversive tool whereby oppressed people might challenge various forms of injustice. It opens up a space where the construction of a new social or political

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[25] 盧健英：《絶境萌芽: 吳興國的當代傳奇》

relationship between the *Us* and the *Other*, the dominant culture and the subaltern, becomes possible.

Hybridization became a main theme for both social and cultural development during those years. In addition to CTL's *The Kingdom of Desire*, Lang-lin Theatre's *Hezhu Xinpei* (1980), a newly adapted *jing-jù* production premiering in the first Experimental Theatre Festival in Taiwan, also reflected the second generation Chinese-Taiwanese's reading of traditional performing arts, their reaction to political and social change, and their understanding of themselves in the changing society.[26]

After *The Kingdom of Desire*

After the success of *The Kingdom of Desire*, adapting Western classics officially became one of the main artistic directions for CLT. However, the following adapted productions, including *War and Eternity* (1990), *Medea* (1993), and *Oresteia* (1995) were not received as well.[27] There was a fundamental problem in CLT's interpretation of the concept of hybridity and interculturality. The word hybrid first appeared in the transcripts of a conversation between Chung Minder, a professor and scholar of theatre, and Lin Hsiu-Wei, the main producer of CLT in the article "From Tradition to Legend: on Contemporary Legend Theatre's Reformation of *Jing-jù.*" Lin said, "we want to absorb every heterogeneous performing system and give birth to a hybrid after digesting and organizing. This is the ultimate target for Contemporary Legend

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[26] Lang-lin Theatre's *Hezhu Xinpei.* Chinese: 蘭陵劇坊的《荷珠新配》
Experimental Theatre Festival. Chinese: 實驗劇展

[27] 《王子復仇記》 (1990)、《樓蘭女》(1993)、《奧瑞斯提亞》(1995)

Theatre" (70).[28] Wang An-Chi in *Fifty Years of Jing-jù in Taiwan* also used the same word to describe CLT's productions, "From *The Kingdom of Desire* to *Medea* and *Oresteia*, the performing formula of *jing-jù* is gradually decreasing. The method taken is controversial, but is indeed creative in 'the integration and hybridization of the classics and the modern'" (111).[29] Although both Lin and Wang used the same concept to refer to the productions of CLT, their interpretations are not exactly the same. First of all, Lin regarded the concept of hybrid as the final product of a creation, while Wang considered it as a process or a method. Lin's conception overlooks the fact that creating a hybrid and intercultural performance is not as simple as yoking together two different cultures or styles of acting. Even though the elements chosen from each culture appear to be the most appropriate, they cannot ensure that the final intercultural production will bear resemblances to both cultures to a satisfactory degree. There are too many variables at the core of the negotiations between the source and the target culture, as well as in selecting the very cultural traits that are going to be adapted. It is clear from Wu's experiments, regardless of whether they were successful or not, that hybridization inevitably brings a sense of randomness to the processes, methods, and outcomes of intercultural performance.

In addition, Lin's notion of hybridity refers to a horizontal conception that places all performing systems, be them from the East or the West, on the same plane; while Wang focuses on a vertical conception of history in which the hybrid performance bridges the historical divides

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[28] Transcribed and edited by Chiang Shi-Fang.
鍾明德和林秀偉對談，江世芳紀錄〈從傳統到傳奇：談「當代傳奇」劇場的京劇革新之路〉
林秀偉：「我們希望能吸納各種異質的表演體系，經過消化整理，然後，生下一個具 有特色的混血兒。這是『當代傳奇』最終的目標。」

[29] 王安祈：《臺灣京劇五十年》「由《慾望城國》到《樓蘭女》到《奧瑞斯提亞》，京劇的表演程式越來越減少，這樣的作法頗具爭議性，但在『古典與現代的融合混血』上頗具創意。」

between the classic and the modern. Lo and Gilbert argue that every cross-cultural performance "necessitates the negotiation of cultural differences both temporally (across history) and spatially (across geographical and social categories)" (32). Intercultural performance, defined by Lo and Gilbert as a branch of cross-cultural performance, suggests a crossing of the boundary and the limitation of culturally defined values. Jonathan Dollimore's reminder that "to cross is not only to traverse, but to mix (as in to cross-breed) and to contradict (as in to cross someone)" points out the possibilities for theatre to include multiple cultures and disrupt hegemonic theatre practices (288). Instead of emphasizing the integration of cultures, CLT's brand of hybridity looks at the adaptive process and the adapted product as equally important. It speaks to Wu Hsing-Kuo's original notion of hybridity as a new form of performance, with its own specific aesthetics, instead of an integration of materials from different cultures.

Where is Lear? Who is Lear? — Autobiographical Adaptation of CLT's *King Lear*

Fifteen years after *The Kingdom of Desire*, CLT's *King Lear* became another great hit. Wu Hsing-Kuo's adaptation of the Shakespearean tragedy, based on the legend of a mythological pre-Roman Celtic king, completely deconstructed the original story and reinterpreted it to reflect Wu's personal experience.

King Lear, the third CTL's production adapted from Shakespeare's plays, premiered in 2001 for the official re-opening of the theatre company. Back in 1995, when CLT was collaborating with Richard Schechner on a production of *Oresteia*, the planning of the first presidential election in Taiwan caused the 1995–6 Taiwan Strait Crisis, and put the country in a

state of unease and instability.[30] The internal disunity intensified the tension between Taiwanese localism and mainland-Chinese nationalism. *Jing-jù*, a performance which was brought in from mainland China and was continuously supported by the Nationalist government, became a target of attack. Nancy Guy notes that *jing-jù* in post-1980s Taiwan has been "an art caught up in a whirlwind of ideologies " and an art that is "in a state of limbo" (2-4). Although CLT was invited to numerous international festivals, resources were so limited that the theatre company found it difficult to develop new plays. In 1998, after Wu Hsing-Kuo's submission of an adaptation of *Waiting for Godot* was turned down by Taipei Arts Festival, he decided to suspend the operation of CLT.

Ariane Mnouchkine was responsible for the development of Wu's *King Lear* and the restart of CLT. In 2000, Wu Hsing-Kuo was invited by Mnouchkine to do a 25-minute solo performance of *King Lear* in France. Due to her encouragement and support, the adaptation was extended into 90 minutes, and premiered a year later in Taiwan.

Wu's *King Lear* is a one-man show experimental in nature. Although it is an adaptation from Shakespeare's play, the original plot and layered characters have been completely merged into a three-act play featuring ten characters, all played by Wu. Wu Hsing-Kuo himself also becomes one of the characters which highlights the performativity of the production and further brings out his critique of contemporary society. The autobiographical adaptation further deconstructs the play and provides opportunities for self-conversation and (re-)presentation of self.

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[30]Also known as the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. It was caused by a series of missile tests conducted by the People's Republic of China which were meant to threaten the Taiwan government under Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), which had been seen as moving ROC foreign policy away from the One-China policy. Chinese: 臺灣海峽飛彈危機

The Searching for Lear/ Wu

King Lear, the official English title that CLT chose, is not quite accurate, in my opinion. In fact, the direct translation of the Chinese title should read as *Lear Is Here* which is a better choice of words because the main theme of this production is the searching for Lear/Wu.[31] The title *Lear Is Here* implies that, although the characters fail to find the real Lear, as long as Wu is onstage, Lear is here. Lear is never gone, but he cannot be recognized, either by himself or by other characters. Unlike the original play, CLT's version begins with King Lear's wandering in the tempest after he is betrayed by his daughters and is banished into the wilderness. In this act, Wu, as Lear, acts erratically and keeps asking "Do you know who I am?", and then replies "I am Lear." This form of self-conversation repeats throughout the whole play, continuously and simultaneously questioning the character/performer and the audience. Wu contradicts and challenges his own words and behaviors as a way to show his doubt over his own identity. Suddenly, he starts to remove his costumes and makeup, and at the end of the undressing process he states, "I am back. The decision to be back is harder than to forsake the world." This can be seen as the moment when both Lear and Wu come to the agreement that to be insane is to be awake, and to be awake means to face the truth and reality. "Who can tell me who I am? I want to know who I am!" This is not only a question for the audience, but also for the character and for Wu Hsing-Kuo himself to track throughout the play. The first act ends with Wu being no longer King Lear, and Lear is also no longer the king when he states, "I am back, back to the intrinsic self."

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[31] The title *Lear Is Here* is the translation used by Alexander Huang, a Chinese Shakespearean scholar. In this thesis, *Lear Is Here* is used while referring to CLT's production, in order to distinguish from Shakespeare's original version of *King Lear*.
Chinese title of the production: 《李爾在此》

Shakespearean scholar Dennis Kennedy has commented on what appears to be a common trend in Asian directors' interpretation and adaptation of Shakespeare's plays:

> This is the age for 'cultural tour.' The interpretation of Shakespearean plays by Asian intercultural theatre often 'reflects self' and 'sense self.' [. . .] According to the fact, the key point of intercultural adaptation and interpretation does not lie on whether it is close to the source text, but on what conception and creation it presents based on personal cultural traditions (qtd. in Chen 5)

The interpretation of Shakespearean plays becomes a very personal act that speaks about Wu's personal experience. The adaptation of *King Lear* is not a mere hybridization of Western text and Eastern performing method, but a complete re-presentation of the play based on personal interpretation. Linda Hutcheon wrote in *A Theory of Adaptation* that, "Adaptation is not only a formal entity, however; it is also a process. [. . .] Determining precisely who is the adapter [. . .] is the first task undertaken" (XV). Therefore, it is crucial to focus on Wu's position as both the adapter and the performer since the creative process of the production includes an embodiment of private experiences onstage. Another question that is important to answer is: why did Wu choose to draw on Shakespeare's *King Lear* as the source text for his adaptation? The reason can be traced back to the time when Wu was preparing for the 25-minute solo performance in France in 2000. He said,

> I heard the calling of King Lear in my mind. In the dream, I saw my master Zhou Zhengrong trying to kill me with his sword which reminds me of Gloucester and Edgar who love each other but refuse to recognize it. The father and son eventually reunited however; in my dream, I grabbed the sword and killed my master. My master did not give me any chance to repent that I got the news of his death shortly after returning to Taiwan. ("Imaging New Forms for Traditional Operas in China" 92)[32]

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[32] 吳興國：〈形塑新中國戲曲〉「我腦中聽見《李爾王》的召喚。在夢中，我看見師父周正榮拿劍要殺我，我想起葛羅斯特和愛德佳，這一對相愛卻不相認的父子。劇 中這對父子終於團聚而相依為命，但在夢中，我奪劍殺死師父。而我的師父沒給我懺悔的機會，回台後不久就接到他的死訊。」

The starting point for the adaptation is not Wu's identification with the character King Lear, but the relationship between Gloucester and Edgar, which reflects Wu's recollection and projection of his own relationship with his mentor. Wu lost his father in the Chinese civil war, and his master Zhou Zhengrong taught him and mentored him as a father figure at the Taipei Fuxing Conservatory.[33] However, as Wu became an established performer and began to create his own aesthetics, a conflict with Zhou ensued, and the two broke off their relations. Gloucester and Edgar's story is incorporated as a subplot for the second act, which focuses on a tragicomical storytelling of Lear's life before exile. At the end of this act, Wu as Edgar says, "My father gave me a chance to kill him. But I did not kill him. After this encounter both father and son are reborn. This must be the most tender moment in *King Lear*. But Lear is still a madman." It is the moment when Wu can finally get some perspective about the dream of killing his mentor, but the fact that he did cut ties with his master still remains. Wu consciously drew on his own memory and autobiographically adapted it into the play, and one can argue that the show rehashes a painful memory hoping to come to some sort of self-redemption.

Besides Wu's relationship with his master, his endless search for self-identity also tightly connects to the narrative of the production. He used dreams and recollections to re-present critical moments of the Shakespearian story. The whole play revolves around the question "Who am I?" which brings together the relationship between Wu's real life experience and the fictional characters he plays. It further unpacks Wu's own self-doubting and self-identification at that time. After he left his master to pursue a career in the theatre, he faced a lot of rejection and had

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[33] Also as National Fu Hsing Dramatic Arts Academy. In 1999, the National Fu Hsing Dramatic Arts Academy merged with the National Kuo Kuang Academy of Arts to establish National Taiwan College of Performing Arts. Chinese: 復興劇校 (現國立臺灣戲曲學院)

to wait until *The Kingdom of Desire* to become a successful artist. Severing the relationship with his master was an act of betrayal to the profession, and it is feasible to argue that his autobiographical adaptation provided him with an opportunity to reexamine his previous works and his profession as a *jing-jù* performer who consciously moved away from his master and former training. Alexander Huang, scholar of Chinese adaptations of Shakespeare, points out "the new form of adaptation emphasizes individual reading perspective which often reflects the adapter or actor's interests, unsolved problems, or even crisis of personal identification" (*Chinese Shakespeares* 115). This interpretation expands on Philippe Lejeune's belief that historically autobiography appears at the point where traditional values crack and individuals react to exterior turmoil by crafting narratives of/for themselves (164). For autobiography, the writing is a process to capture the author's essence and its connection to collective memory. It is "the place where a collective identity is elaborated, reproduced, and transformed, the *patterns of life* appropriate to the ruling classes" (Lejeune 198). Such writing stresses the autobiographer's consistency and the uniqueness of his/her self-narration. However, for a society where the linearity of narrative and the highest authority has been destroyed after social and political changes, fragmentation and heterogeneity become the main form of autobiography. Wu wrote in the program for the 2008 production "I have a personality similar to Lear's: stubborn, willful, fierce and irritable. I can always be on my own path without bothering thinking about how others' will judge me."[34] In *Lear Is Here*, Wu shows his passion, ambition, and pride toward the pursuit of his profession as a *jing-jù* artist. The pride and loneliness are

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[34] Wu Hsing-Kuo "King Lear Q&A", Contemporary Legend Theatre's *King Lear*, 2008 TSMC Art Festival
吳興國: 李爾在此 Q&A 當代傳奇劇場《李爾在此》2008 台積心築藝術季節目冊「我的個性與李爾王十分相近：固執、任性、強勢而暴躁。我可以不顧他人 眼光地隨心所欲。」

embodied in his portrayal of the characters as well as in his innate bias against people who reject *jing-jù*. It is also a strike against the narrow-mindedness of national policies about the arts which hindered the development of theatre. In fact, during the first performance of the play in 2001, Wu Hsing-Kuo shouted out the names of several well-known figures in Taiwan's cultural circles and administration. He accompanied the list of names with lines such as "where are you?" to depict his solitary search for the future of Taiwanese theatre. However his political *j'accuse* was considered controversial, and thus the passage was removed after the first production.

The Metatheatricality of the Play

There are three acts in *Lear Is Here* that are titled The Play, The Playing, and The Player.[35] Although the plot is completely deconstructed, some important dialogues from the source text are ingeniously interpolated into *Lear Is Here*. The first act starts with the mad Lear standing in the storm. The fool wakes Lear up in the second act and uses flashbacks to narrate how and why Lear was banished. The story between Gloucester and his two sons is also revealed in this act as a subplot. The last act is completely independent from the rest. Here Wu steps out of the play and becomes the player, turning King Lear from a character to an object for his reinterpretation. At the very end of the play, one sentence is projected on the back screen saying "Life returns to its original place, and the play is only to search for the intrinsic essence of man."[36] These words suggests the transformation of Wu's frame of mind that occurred as a result of his self-searching the connection of the play to his real life experience.

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[35] The title of the three acts in Chinese:「戲」、「弄」、「人」

[36] 「生命回到原點，戲，不過是為了尋找人的本質」

In *Lear Is Here*, Wu Hsing-Kuo attempts to endow a specific voice to every character through his interpretation of the text. He creates a unique brand of metatheatricality which draws on the deconstruction of the original text and its reconstruction into a new performative narrative. Metatheatre draws attention to the moment when the theatre is aware of itself and when it separates itself from the natural depiction of reality. By adding himself as a character into the play, Wu consciously reminds the audience that the play is only a play. Through the breakdown of the theatrical illusion, he opens up a conversation among his self, the characters in *King Lear*, and the audience. He replaces Shakespeare's narrative with an imaginary world which blurs the boundary between reality and illusion, and makes up a hybrid space which allows fluid connection between different elements.

Metatheatre also implies, according to Lionel Abel's definition, "an extension of human conscience, not accepting prescribed societal norms, but allowing for more imaginative variation, or a possible social change" (183). It begins by sharpening the audience's awareness of the fictionality of theatre, but ends up proving the uncanny likeness of life and theatre.

It is a fairly common theme for contemporary theatre and performance to focus on the relationship between self and other, or more specifically between an internal self and its external social environment. By cultivating and promoting their culture, Taiwanese people are able to understand themselves and their position in society better. Artists search for subject matters from local history and surroundings, and further extract new elements from tradition. Aiming to transform traditional *jing-jù*, CLT recognizes that the search for self requires not only a review of the past, but a reexamination of the present. The program of *The Kingdom of Desire* maintains that the mission statement of the company is to "first of all, adapt Western plays and learn the

essence of Western theories, structures and performativity; secondly, make use of the elements from ancient myths and legends; eventually, obtain materials from modern daily experience, and further find an original and unique theatricality" (qtd. in Diamond 40).[37]

Lear Is Here starts by nurturing the audience's appreciation of the *jing-jù* performance and the story of King Lear, but as the performance proceeds and refers back to the player himself, the societal and political implications of the piece become more obvious. Traditional Chinese *jing-jù* reminds the audience of the illusionistic and artificial reality of the performance, which is its theatricality, and provides an encoded depiction of life through the use of gestures and movements to carry specific meanings. Actors are to be fully dressed up before entering the stage and must wear makeup, costumes, and accessories to transform into their characters. However, Wu Hsing-Kuo breaks down these restrictions in *Lear Is Here* offering the audience a completely different viewing experience. Toward the end of act I, for instance, he discusses his perceptions about his own career and apprenticeship "to bear on what he perceives as comparable emotions and conditions represented in *King Lear*" (Huang *Chinese Shakespeares*, 221). In front of the spectators, he transforms himself from the character of Lear to a *jing-jù* actor, removing his headdress and accessories, and taking off his costume onstage. By revealing what is underneath the costume and his makeup, Wu explicates the process of theatre-making which is supposed to be hidden from all the audience. The process of 'undoing' himself is also ritualistic in that it shows slowly the re-emergence of the performer underneath the garments and embellishments of the character.

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[37] 「一、由古老神話傳奇中尋求素材，二、取材，三、取材自現在人的生活經驗，找尋原創獨到的戲劇表現。」

> WU: I am back!
> (*Looking at the beard in his hand*) Who is he?
> (*To audience*) Does anyone here know him?
> (*Looking at the beard again*) This is not Lear.
> (*Standing up*) Where is Lear?
> (*Strolling*) Is this Lear walking? Is this Lear speaking?
> (*Touching his own eyes*) Where are his eyes?

The passage above describes the changing narratives of the character onstage in less than ten sentences. Starting from the first person narrative, the actor makes a statement that he is back, but soon he realizes the inadequacy of any answer: who is really back? Is it Lear? Is it Wu? The self-questioning immediately brings the audience back to reality, and invites them into the conversation. This moment continues to erode the very idea of theatrical illusion. By addressing the notion of role-playing, Wu stages the actor as two-bodied: one is a fictional character and the other is a real performer representing the character. The two are juxtaposed simultaneously onstage to show the performer's ultimate goal of searching for identity.

At the very end of act I, Wu kneels down, folds the costume, and then leaves it at the centre of the stage. This moment is marked by the fall of four huge stone pillars which stand at the four corners of the stage, a symbolic action signifying the actor's returning to his profession without any disguise. The scene breaks down the illusions created through the play and reveals the truth behind the staging of the play and the characters. Moreover, it symbolizes an act of overcoming and breaking away from the fetters of criticism and disinterest of the audience that had forced CLT from experimenting and creating a new form of *jing-jù* performance for a short time. It was a declaration that they had decided to restart the theatre by revealing the artistic director's thoughts and personal experience and facing the audience directly without any disguise.

Distinguished from former *jing-jù* performance which focuses mainly on aesthetic presentation of stories from the past, *Lear Is Here* is strongly tied to the social and political environment, and is specifically directed at contemporary audiences. Wu interweaves the performance with his personal life experience and his response to the society in order to instill new life into traditional performing arts.

Re-present the Player and the Play

Lear Is Here proceeds from the life of old and mad King Lear in act I, to the storytelling of King Lear and Gloucester's regrets and solitude, and finally ends with the question "Why do people live?" in act III. In the beginning of the third act, two musicians, both dressed in black, move about the stage playing the most sorrowful melody which leads to Wu/Lear's following monologue:

> Who am I? I am me.
> I am looking for me! I think of me.
> I look at me, I know me!
> I ask me, I hate me,
> I also love me! I damn me!
> I kill me! I forget myself!
> I dream about me again! I see not me.
> I see through me, I want me!
> I should not be me. I detest me!
> I am still me! Would I be me!
> I must face me. I want to find me!

The searching for self is endless, contradictory and disordered. The whole play can be seen as a projection of Wu's subconscious. Lear and all other characters in *Lear Is Here*, not only bring out and reflect Wu's struggles within himself and his impulse to speak, but also project his most private aspiration to find a new and unique identity.

The atmosphere throughout the play is dream-like, and many important scenes are tied to the ambivalence between dream and reality. For example, after Lear/Wu genuinely confesses onstage, "I am back. The decision to be back is harder than to forsake the world," he suddenly changes into a playful tone and says, "I am back again. Just now…I guess it was Lear dreaming." The state of dream allows for a personal yet neutral space where self-transformation and freedom from external conventions are possible. "The new form of adaptation emphasizes the individual's aspect of reading," writes Alexander Huang, "*Lear Is Here* presents the important scenes in the play through dreams and memories. The play centers on an important question — Who am I? — to analyze the relationship between the actor's real life experience and the fictitious character he plays" ("Small-Time Shakespeare" 116).[38]

Instead of adopting the chronological narrative of *King Lear*, *Lear Is Here* begins in medias res with the protagonist's wandering in the wilderness during a tempest. Shakespeare scholar Fang Ping stated the importance of this scene in the play:

> For King Lear, the storm with lightning and thunder brings a spiritual catharsis to him. It is a strong medicine for serious illness. He is mad, but accompanying the madness is the moment when he starts to recognize the world soberly, and the moment when he knows his origin: the madness is the start of Lear's consciousness. (12)[39]

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[38]「《李爾在此》以夢境和回憶的方式呈現《李爾王》的重要片段，全劇環繞 《李爾王》中一個重要的問題 —「我是誰?」— 來剖析演員的現實人 生經驗與他所扮演的虛擬角色之間的關係，並探討李爾王和吳興國的身分認同的危機。」

[39] Quoted from the preface of Fang Ping's translation of Shakespeare's *King Lear* published in 2001.
方平：「對李爾王說來，這場挾著閃電和霹靂而來的暴風雨是一次精神上的洗禮，是一劑醫治重病的烈藥。他瘋了，但他的發瘋卻正是他開始清醒地重新認識現實世界，清醒地重新認識自己的起點：他的發瘋正是他頭腦清醒的開始。」

Lear is re-introduced to reality through his madness and dreams, which help him recognize and embrace everything that happened in his life. Theatre critic Chi Hui-Ling wrote about the connection between Wu's dream and his performance:

> In his dream, Wu pulled the sword out of his master's body. The action is just the same as the one which he withstood, the stick his master hit him with. He withstood the hit, and killed the master. The dream implies imperceptibly but inexorably that, Wu Hsing-Kuo is destined to be an actor and act, and take responsibility for passing down his master's profession. (A6)[40]

The sword, which at first seems to be a symbol of Wu's rejection of his master and tradition, is in fact the vehicle that connects Wu and his master, as well as modern and traditional *jing-jù*. The dream reflects the deep regret Wu has always borne for rejecting the traditional *jing-jù* performance passed down by his master, but it is also the dream that provides him with a chance to process the relationship with his mentor and advance his mission to revitalize *jing-jù*.

The dream functions as a theatrical autobiography that does not simply replay the past, but rather manipulates it through the use of imagination. As a result, the final product is often fragmented, without a singular and chronological narrative. Wu's autobiographical adaptation of the play marks an anti-narrative stance that does not renounce plot and story, but rather transforms both the way the story is told and for whom it is told. Although there is only one actor and one character seen onstage at any given time, the play is multivocal and constantly shifting from character to character. This fosters a meaningful conversation between Wu the man and the actor, the characters he plays, and his audience. Meanwhile, it provides a soundboard to reflect

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[40] 紀慧玲：〈李爾在此 今晚且看吳興國獨腳戲〉
「夢中他拔掉老師的劍，那姿勢，不就是當時他擋住老師棍子的那個手！他擋掉了棍子，也殺死了老師，這一切冥冥中暗示著，吳興國你逃不掉的，你終究要唱戲、演戲，為老師交下的棒子負責。」

on cultural and social issues, such as the conflicts between different ethnic groups, brought up by the creation of a new identity in the work.

Wu's goal to build a connection with the audience through a story imbued with his personal experience is central to *Lear is Here*. His task is especially difficult due to the rich intertextuality of the Shakespearian drama and the layered history of Asian performing arts. Indeed, even for local audiences in Taiwan, *jing-jù* with its ancient roots, somehow suggests a sense of distance and inaccessibility even though the linguistic obstacles have been gradually removed.[41] The signs and symbols thwart spectators' understanding of the performing style and its traditions. Chinese theatre critic Kong Zaiqi explains that Chinese theatre "consciously differentiates from realistic and natural state of life" (61).[42] There exists a systematic procedure of the depiction of life in Chinese theatre which focuses on the transformation of the real world into the art on stage. Every emotion is embodied into movements and gesture, and actions are mostly simplified.

Presenting Shakespeare's plays through traditional Chinese performing arts can be difficult due to their complicated plots and large cast. But this has not been a problem for Wu who has toured *Lear Is Here* to more than fifteen countries. Many reviewers, however, stated that without a solid knowledge of *King Lear*, the audience might struggle to follow what happens on stage. Órla Murray wrote in her review of the production when it toured to the Edinburgh International Festival:

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[41] Recent traditional Chinese theatre mostly uses a combination of classical Chinese which is rather poetic and modern Chinese in performance.

[42] 孔在齊：《京劇六講》「有意識地區別於生活的自然形態之物。」

> Whilst the production was incredibly striking and deeply touching in parts, there was a distinct inaccessibility hanging over the reinterpretation. For those who are unacquainted with the twists and turns of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, this production might not provide sufficient context or explanation to sufficiently engage and enthrall as it does for those familiar with the original story. Regardless of this, however, the cultural and aesthetic elements are incredibly beautiful and absorbing, giving ample opportunity for even the most unenthused theatre-goer to find delight and wonder in this blend of Shakespeare and Peking Opera.

The statement points out the difficulties for multicultural collaborations and intercultural productions to present successfully their implied metaphors and symbols. These difficulties are exacerbated by the fact that most intercultural theatre practitioners tend to focus on visual aesthetics, such as costumes, stage design, and soundscape, simply because they are accessible and more likely to be appreciated by viewers.

Wu keeps trying to find a voice in his creations through the intercultural merging of *jing-jù* and Western canonical texts, but there are still obstacles that limit the cultural flow and inevitably put his creations into the prescribed category of Far East Asian or Oriental arts. David C. Jones criticized the presentation of *Lear Is Here* at the 2013 PuSh Festival for its unrelatable aesthetics: "Because this Lear doesn't explore deeper relatable truths and is more about style – it lands only as cultural curiosity." In all fairness, the production itself is undoubtedly far more complicated than Jones gives it credit for, but it is undeniable that communicability has always troubled intercultural creators such as Wu who problematize conventional adaptive strategies and notions of interculturality. *Lear Is Here* surely contains its own aesthetics and meanings, which are different from either the traditional *jing-jù* and Shakespeare's *King Lear* and arise from the interplay of various sources. James R. Oestreich compared *Lear Is Here* to CLT's former adaptation of *Macbeth*, *The Kingdom of Desire*, after watching the former at the 2007 Lincoln

Center Festival: "Unlike the *Macbeth*, which — exotic as it was — unfolded in more or less linear fashion, *King Lear* is largely free-form."[43] He later described in detail how Wu fused his personality with Lear's in this production. By deconstructing the linearity of the original play and performing style, Wu's adaptation becomes a new entity with a life of its own. There are aesthetics and meanings that arise from the intercultural encounters and interactions that give the performance a new identity and make it unique in its context.

The haunting question "Who am I?" can refer to Wu Hsing-Kuo's search for himself as an artist lodged in-between the traditional and the modern, and the search for a new identity for *jing-jù* as a performing art. Meanwhile, the essence of intercultural creations is also the search for the "I," repeatedly emphasized in the play, as the identity of the performer and the subjectivity of his own culture. How the "I" is positioned in the intercultural interaction is further articulated by the performer through the play. How Wu positions himself is similar to his attitude toward *jing-jù* as a traditional performing art: it is less about preservation, and more about creation.

Alexander Huang commented on the production in *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*:

> *Lear Is Here* consciously mobilizes cultural differences, not to serve larger national politics, but to reconcile personal identity crises. It epitomizes a paradigm shift within the Asian tradition of adapting Western works, from seeking authenticity to foregrounding artistic subjectivity in modes of cultural production that re-produce global texts. (206)

In comparison with CLT's other intercultural productions, which center more on the use of *jing-jù* to stage the original plot and cast, *Lear Is Here* is a relatively small production. The vision and

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[43] The official translation of CLT's production, which I referred to in my research as *Lear Is Here*.

the themes addressed are also more individual and personal. The play goes beyond the original framework of the Eastern intercultural performance which is often limited by the formality of traditions. It provides a chance for the theatre group and the artists to reexamine their selves and how their own culture is positioned in the cross-cultural, multicultural, and intercultural negotiations that belie any adaptation. Through returning to self and the performance of body, such intercultural productions do not obstruct the preservation of tradition nor hold back the progression toward modernity, but rather they enable a positive and constructive interaction between diverse cultures onstage.

Chapter 2: Suzuki Tadashi and the Postwar Electra

Suzuki Tadashi's Theatre and Its Postwar Influence

Japanese theatre was also highly affected by social and political changes, especially in the postwar era, the period starting from the end of World War II (August 15th, 1945) to the present day. Since most Japanese politicians were put on trial in the postwar era, the country was in many ways governed by Allied Powers that were to be involved in Japan's democratization until the 1952 San Francisco Treaty.[44] Although this foreign presence helped Japan recover from the devastation of the war, it was also viewed as a new kind of imperial domination, replacing the 80-year regime of the Empire of Japan and rewriting the historical narrative of the country.[45] After the occupation of the Allied Powers, Japan joined the Western bloc, also called Capitalist bloc, led by the United States and in direct opposition to the Soviet Union. Japan, a country that had been isolated but independent for more than a thousand years, experienced drastic transformations in ten years and the lasting results are still visible today.

Although the economy started blooming under U.S.' guidance (Y. Lin 25-6), the Japanese society experienced anxiety and instability. Japanese youngsters and college students started to express their anger toward the government's acquiescence to the U.S. presence through various anti-America movements, especially after The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security

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[44] The chief Allied Powers in World War II were Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States and China. More generally the Allies included all the wartime members of the United Nations, the signatories to the Declaration of the United Nations.
The San Francisco Treaty is also referred to as the Treaty of Peace with Japan which was officially signed between Japan and the Allied Powers on September 8, 1951, at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco, California, United States. It came into force on April 28, 1952. Japanese: 日本国との平和条約

[45] The Empire of Japan was the historical Japanese nation that existed from the Meiji Restoration (1868) to the enactment of the 1947 constitution of modern Japan. Japanese: 大日本帝国

between the United States and Japan was signed in 1960.[46] This is a document that allowed the U.S. to continue its military presence in Japan and, albeit indirectly, established the subordinate position of Japan (Y. Lin 24-6). There were two serious protests in 1959-60 and 1970 led by the All-Japan Federation of Students' Self-Governing Associations.[47] Public discontent reached its highest when student protesters broke into the parliament and occupied the Haneda Airport to stop Japan's prime minister's visit to the U.S.. With the death of student protester Kanba Michiko and support from scholars and critics such as Shimizu Ikutarou and Yoshimoto Takaaki, people who were previously indifferent to political issues started to join the protest against the government (Lin 23-24).[48] The movement gained momentum when professional writers and artists, such as Mishima Yukio, Yokoo Tadanori, and Nakamura Hiroshi, also joined in.[49]

Theatre was used in part as a tool to protest against the government's decision and reflect the actual condition of the society during that period. Several theatre practitioners such as Suzuki Tadashi, Betsuyaku Minoru and Terayama Shuji focused on anti-realist avant-garde theatre productions which bore strong and radical rebellious features.[50] During the postwar era, theatre

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[46] Also known as *Anpo*. Japanese: 日本国とアメリカ合衆国との間の相互協力及び安全保障条約

[47] 全日本学生自治会総連合

[48] Kanba Michiki was a student of the University of Tokyo. She was the only protester who died in the two protests. Japanese: 樺 美智子
Shimizu Ikutarou. Japanese: 清水 幾太郎
Yoshimoto Takaaki was a Japanese poet, literary critic, and philosopher. Japanese: 吉本 隆明

[49] Mishima was a Japanese author, poet, playwright, and film director. He was active as a nationalist and founded a private militia which swore to protect the Emperor of Japan. He committed suicide after a failed coup d'état attempt in 1970. Japanese: 三島 由紀夫
Yokoo Tadanori is a Japanese graphic designer, illustrator, printmaker and painter. Japanese: 横尾 忠則
Nakamura Hiroshi is a Japanese artist. His early works, such as "Sunagawa No.5" (1955) and "The Base," (1957) bore strong criticism on the U.S. military presence in Japan. Japanese: 中村 宏

[50] 鈴木 忠志、別役 実、寺山 修司

became a catalyst reflecting cultural and political disorder, and a strong anti-American feeling that had been internalized as a part of daily life. Theatre, as a newly mobilized public sphere, "established more competing publics through their productions," (2) says Myriam Sas. It also turned into a space to work out anti-American feelings and reexamine public desires and concerns.

Another facet of the postwar development was the country's encounter with globalization in which "internationally standardized economic, political, technological, and media regimes made new inroads into the structures of everyday life" (Morris-Suzuki 171). Globalization in postwar Japan implied not simply the breakdown of boundary and distinction between the country and the world; rather, it pointed to the Westernization or, to be more precise, the Americanization of the country, a phenomenon largely due to the U.S. military control. Americanization became as a consequence, an inseparable reality in Japanese life. Sociologist Yoshimi Shunya points out that

> 50 years after Japan's surrender, the land completely opened wide its space to America which contributed to Americanized consumption, and its enthusiasm was rare comparing to every other countries in the world. [. . .] The Japanese society viewed the U.S. as a superior mirror, and found the possibility of reconstructing self-recognition through the mirror. (58)[51]

The defeat and surrender in 1945 meant frustration and humiliation for Japanese people, but it also enabled their freedom from the old society, so the relationship with the U.S. cannot be simply understood as rooted in resentment. Anti-American feelings were complicated by the fact that the Japanese, while wary of their subordination, actually affirmed their national identity of

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[51] Yoshimi Shunya. Japanese: 吉見 俊哉
The quote, originally in Japanese, is translated by the writer of this thesis from the Chinese translation by Lin Yubing.

Self by positioning Americans as the *Other*. By rejecting America and making it a common enemy, Japanese people were able to unite and identify more with their own nation (Y. Lin 28-30). Theorists such as Ishida Eiichiro developed a new discourse called *Nihonjinron* which elaborated a postwar image of Japanese uniqueness and exceptionalism through a differentiation between *Self* and the *Other*.[52] According to Peter Dale in *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, this discourse is a "recognition of Japanese specificity as a positive model for a uniquely Japanese road towards modernity and its global outreach" (213). Thus, the main theme for postwar artists and theatre practitioners centers on searching for national identity through encountering and also distancing from the *Other*. Theatre, as a form of art, provides the most primitive, sensuous, and honest conversation between the performers and the audience. It is a perfect space for a communication that is immediate and "[makes] 'direct hit' on the audience" (Sas 98).

Furthermore, postwar Japanese theatre was highly influenced by the ongoing social struggles, including the U.S. military presence and the student uprisings and civil protests against the security treaty. Theatre practitioners at the time tended to reject all established values and institutions, and criticized the society for its blind pursuit of everything "foreign." Unlike their predecessors, they devoted themselves to anti-realist and anti-*shingeki* aesthetics.[53] Theatre critic Kan Takayuki has metaphorically stated that for *shingeki*, its postwar history did not exist, that is, *shingeki* did not adjust itself to the postwar societal and cultural changes due to its negation and indifference to the impacts and aftereffects caused by the war (11-18).[54] It also transplanted

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[52] Ishida Eiichiro. Japanese: 石田 英一郎

[53] *Shingeki*, literally translated as "New drama," was the introduction of Western-style realist theatre to Japan in the twentieth century. Japanese: 新劇

[54] Kan Takayuki. Japanese: 菅 孝行

Western theatre performance style and plays directly without accounting for the new social and cultural circumstances. Suzuki Tadashi, for instance, criticized the ridiculousness of the actors dressing like Westerners, but using Japanese language and movements. For the practitioners who disliked this foreignization of Japanese culture, theatre was more than mere entertainment in that it carried social significance. Theatre was a space where meanings could be constructed and deconstructed, and the Japanese cultural identity, which was disappearing due to modernization and globalization, could be reshaped.

In this chapter, I will focus on how Suzuki Tadashi, one of the most renowned theatre directors in Japan, reacted to the changes brought about by postwar social and political circumstances and globalization, and how he further developed unique performing methodologies and spaces which allowed for a completely new form of performance based on Japanese theatrical traditions. The following section addresses Suzuki's production of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* as an example of his practice of interculturalism in the body, the space, and the culture.

Suzuki's Theatre and the Suzuki Method

Suzuki Tadashi, born in 1939, is one of the very first theatre directors of postwar Japan. Growing up in the 1960s amidst harsh anti-American feelings and criticism of the U.S.–Japan treaty, Suzuki expressed his anger and anxiety through his theatre practice. He founded the *Waseda Shogekijo* in 1966 with other theatre practitioners in order to have a space to showcase the works of playwright Betsuyaku Minoru, whose plays were deeply inspired by Samuel Beckett's theatre of the absurd and addressed the notion of life's meaninglessness and the

inadequacy of existing values.[55] However, shortly after the establishment of the theatre troupe, Suzuki broke up the partnership with Betsuyaku, and started experimenting on productions focusing more on physical theatre and textual collages. He took several scenes from different plays and pieced them together, and found that the collages in fact helped him break the fixed framework and limitations of the scripts, and allowed him to magnify the role of gestuality and physicality on stage.

The series of *On the Dramatic Passions*, Suzuki Tadashi's well-known theatrical collages, were great hits in the 60s.[56] He juxtaposed texts including Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, classic *kabuki* play *Sakura Hime Azuma Bunshô*, and Japanese novelist Izumi Kyōka's *Yushima Mode*.[57] Through the collage, Suzuki felt that the performances could break away from the limitations of written texts and allow the audience to feel and experience happenings onstage more directly. Regarding *On the Dramatic Passions II*, Suzuki stated, "my piece did not intend to connect words of different plays but to connect the body" (qtd. in Koto 36). His approach is about the clash between institutions, texts and words; and it relies on a process of recomposition that centers on the body. He sensed that the breakdown and fragmentation of texts were not enough for the audience to appreciate the subtle changes of actors' performance. Suzuki found that the overuse of modern theatre lighting and technical equipment takes the focus away from the performers (*Culture Is the Body* 2015, 124-5).

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[55] Also known as Waseda Little Theatre.
Japanese: 早稲田小劇場

[56] *On the Dramatic Passions*. Japanese: 『劇的なるものをめぐって』

[57] Sakura Hime Azuma Bunshô. Japanese:『桜姫東文章』
Izumi Kyōka's *Yushima Mode.* Japanese: 泉 鏡花、「湯島詣」

Performers' expressions are often overlooked and substituted by fancy lighting and resplendent sets. Suzuki had therefore, since the late 1970's, started to develop a series of training methods based on traditional *kabuki* and *nō* movements which focuses basically on the control of the lower body. Through the training, the actors are able to generate and continue to hold power over their entire bodies. The strengthening of the lower body extends to the core and further enables the building of actors' awareness of themselves. As Suzuki said, his method "consists of training to learn to speak powerfully and with clear articulation, and also make the whole body speak even when one keeps silent" (qtd. in Allain 126). He believed that with this approach, actors would be more aware of their natural expressiveness and this would allow them to commit fully to the physical and emotional requirements of acting. Through the training of the Suzuki Method, performers are able to sustain their performance and draw the audience's full attention without being distracted.

Standing, stomping and walking are the three basic but essential exercises to increase the stability of the body that Suzuki derived from traditional Japanese performance. Stability here refers to the physical training of the body, as well as the spiritual training of the mind. Suzuki wrote in "Culture Is the Body" that "the main purpose of [the] method is to uncover and bring to the surface the physically perceptive sensibility which actors had originally, before the theatre acquired its various codified performing styles, and to heighten their innate expressive abilities" (1991, 241). Through the awareness of self, the body can react consciously to exterior forces through its inner stability. In a famous passage, Suzuki argued,

> The way in which the feet are used is the basis of a stage performance. Even the movements of the arms and hands can only augment the feeling inherent in the body positions established by the feet. There are many cases in which the position of the feet

determines even the strength and nuance of the actor's voice. (*The Way of Acting* 6)

Different from other methods which center on the performer's relationship with the surrounding environment, the use of feet in the Suzuki training emphasizes the vertical connection to the ground. It forces the performer to be conscious of his/her relationship with the land he/she steps on. Suzuki knew that contemporary realist theatre naturalizes the movements of the feet and overlooks the importance of each step taken onstage. Unlike traditional *kabuki* and *nō* where performers are mostly shoeless, wearing shoes in realistic theatre limits the action and movement of the feet, and disables the performers' ability to apply fully a more dynamic and animalistic energy to their performance.

Suzuki's method distances itself from the logic of realistic acting which considers movement as a function of the character's expression, gesture and locomotion; instead it focuses on performing the inner experience, feelings and consciousness. Raised and educated in the postwar era, Suzuki embraces the idea of the unstable nature of the world, and recognizes that in order to transcend instability and (re)create meaning, subjectivity must be embedded in the body and emanate powerfully during a performance. Realistic theatre aspires to reproduce the experience of daily life on stage, while for Suzuki, the self in the real world represents nothing but an alienated and de-individualized self, inhabiting a world devoid of meanings. Thus, performing is not a process of reproduction, but rather a presentation of the primitive and animal-like energy force coming from the inner body and expressed through a vibrant physicalization.

The movements of the Suzuki Method are neither graceful nor harmonic from the perspective of realistic theatre; they focus on deconstructing the illusionistic devices of representation and presenting the subjectivity of the body. They also de-naturalize the notion of

movements taken from traditional Japanese theatre. Suzuki's deconstruction of Japanese theatre is similar to his critical deconstruction of Western canons for both are used to fashion a new Japanese aesthetics. This creation does not come to fruition through the preservation of the original culture but rather through the making of a new methodology grounded on the strenuous training of body. One of the most respected students of Suzuki, Ellen Lauren, once said:

> All of the exercises are basically impossible. What Suzuki is asking you to do are movements that are not seen in daily life [. . .] that take the body out of a habitual way of moving. [. . .] you need to stop all of that energy in the centre of the body. [. . .] So you create a collision and try and control it, keeping a very strong outward focus at the same time. [. . .] Suzuki thinks the actor should be doing something extraordinary on the stage something that not just anybody can do. (qtd. in Carruthers 182-183)

Suzuki's Intercultural Approach

While intercultural theatre productions have significantly increased in number and populate stages all over the world, most well-known intercultural productions are built on Western traditions and incorporate elements from other cultures mostly as exotic embellishments to enrich the original plays without reorienting cultural traits and meanings. This trend is inherently problematic, as clarified by Daryl Chin: "The idea of interculturalism as simply a way of joining disparate cultural artifacts together has a hidden agenda of imperialism" (87). There are always power struggles between different cultures placed together on stage. Most of the time, it becomes a conflict not only about cultural differences, but also about the political and economic influence. Furthermore, many practitioners working on intercultural performance often overlook cultural variances that might help problematize the interpretation of the play.

Similar problems also exist in the development of contemporary Japanese theatre, especially after *shingeki* became the leading form. In the early 20th century, theatre practitioners

turned away from the old-fashioned and over-commercialized traditional *kabuki* and *nō* and dedicated themselves to translating foreign plays, especially from Europe and America, such as those written by Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, Maxim Gorky, and Eugene O'Neill. Before the Second World War, theatre practitioners fancied theatre of social-realism, and themes rooted in anti-commercialization and left-wing ideology. However, shortly after the end of the Second World War, Japan was rapidly modernized and the society became highly capitalistic which affected the development of *shingeki*. As a consequence, *shingeki* began catering to people's taste for modern and lavish productions of translated plays, and thus, ironically, became completely commercialized itself. Suzuki criticized the fact that *shingeki* theatre did not consider the changes of the society in their contents, including the destruction of the war and the rebuilding and economic growth of the postwar era. *Shingeki* simply transplanted Western theatre traditions into Japanese drama without dealing with the transformation of Japaneseness from prewar to postwar.

The Trojan Women was one of the most successful adaptations directed by Suzuki reflecting the anxiety and restlessness of Japanese society.[58] Euripides's play *The Trojan Women* was originally performed in Athens in 415 BC during the Peloponnesian War. The play considers the horror of the war and also "reworks a heroic mythic past in terms of contemporary realities," allowing Euripides to portray the horror of his time through the popular epic frame of Homer's *Iliad* (Carruthers 124). This play served as a perfect vehicle for Suzuki's artistic and cultural concerns in his 1974 production of *The Trojan Women*. As he had done in previous productions, Suzuki drew on a large amount of deconstructed images and collages in this play. For example,

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[58] *The Trojan Women*. Japanese:『トロイアの女』

he paralleled the destruction of Troy with the devastation of Tokyo after the war. The Greek play was completely transformed and reinterpreted through the context of postwar Japan. Shiraishi Kayoko, the most important actress in Suzuki's company, played the lead role.[59] Her performance showed the plaintive struggle of women's bodies and lives, which in a sense echoed Japan's inability to resist the intrusion of external forces after the war. She also channeled Suzuki's sharp criticism against the country's cultural policies which embraced everything that was foreign to the country without considering the consequences. This criticism was also directed at theatre practitioners' indifference toward deciphering and framing cultural codes that were either foreign or unfamiliar to the Japanese people. For Suzuki every material used in theatre had to be chosen carefully due to its inherent cultural complexity and unique aesthetics. As noted in *The Theatre Practice of Tadashi Suzuki*,

> The definition of terms such as multiculturalism, fusion, intraculturalism and interculturalism, by the likes of Richard Schechner and Patrice Pavis, has meant that theatre artists can no longer work in ignorance of post-colonial and global perspectives. They must acknowledge questions posed by the cultural complexity and intermingling which the move towards globalization has produced, even if they do not specifically intend to answer these in practice. (9)

It is no longer possible to ignore the significance of culture, especially how a culture is reflected in an art creation and under what cultural context the work is created. This becomes even more pressing when dealing with intercultural encounters occurring in the aftermath of sweeping social and political transformations.

Another fact that Suzuki found troubling in the entire theatre industry of Japan was the standardization and homogeneity caused by globalization. The Westernization of Japanese

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[59] Shiraishi Kayoko. Japanese: 白石 加代子

society in the 1950s, the globalization caused by the Energy Revolution in the 1960s, and the Information Technology Revolution in the 1990s were the three major causes. The 1960 Energy Revolution, when oil replaced coal as energy source, changed the development of many industries as well as people's daily life. The rapid growth of information technology in the 1990s again altered the overall industrial structure and personal life style with the popularization of computers and cellphones, which brought people around the world closer (*Culture Is the Body 2015*, 141). There were more opportunities for communication and interaction, so the boundaries between countries, cultures, and races became more fluid. However, these socio-political and economic changes also made evident the latent imperialism and the dominance of Eurocentrism which lay at the core of Japan-U.S. relationships (Morris-Suzuki 140-2). Culturally, according to Daryl Chin, especially for Asian theatre,

> In the context of the United States, the culture power structure is one which is dominated by the ideology of a specifically white, Eurocentric, specifically capitalist establishment. In addition, all questions regarding interculturalism must be complicated by the pervasiveness of a commercialized pop culture. (87)

On the one hand, cross-boundary interactions between cultures and nations suggest positive cultural exchange; on the other hand, it is a process of homogenization which leads to possible extinction of cultural identity and significance.

Suzuki found an insurmountable incompatibility between the standardized and homogenized features of modern society and the medium of theatre. Theatre suggests a certain degree of fortuity, inaccuracy, and slippage in meaning because it is performed by humans, and the audience's reaction is never the same. Due to these two reasons, Suzuki believes that theatre can be seen as an art which is intrinsically against the standardization and homogenization of

contemporary society. In the practice of the Suzuki Method, theatre provides a space for people to get away from the habitual expression, and "make the actor newly aware through experimental acting, of the physical sensibilities that have become degenerate in his or her daily life" (Allain 128). This is the reason why minimalist set, lighting, and sound design are often adopted in Suzuki's theatre productions; for the simpler the designs are, the more the performer's body is highlighted.

Suzuki has a love-hate relationship with interculturalism. If, on one hand, it suggests inevitable power struggle and cultural imperialism, on the other, it offers a chance for Japanese theatre practitioners to experience in new ways their own culture and connect their traditions to the world. Similar to the influence of Americanization and globalization, interculturalism is a mirror which can reflect the Japanese self. Unlike Wu Hsing-Kuo's intercultural approach which emphasizes the connection between the East and the West, and modern and traditional theatre, Suzuki's work centers on the clash and conflict arisen from the coexistence of theatrical elements from the East and the West, and modern *shingeki* and traditional performing arts. In Suzuki's brand of interculturalism, there is no process of translation or adaptation of foreign plays into a Japanese context, or vice versa; instead, he emphasizes the heterogeneity and the conflicts between the Japanese performer's body and his spoken delivery of foreign texts. Suzuki never attempts to contain the cultural inconsistencies or incompatibilities created on stage, but leaves the spectators to figure them out for themselves (Y. Lin 77).

These disjunctions and fragmentations appear consistently in Suzuki's intercultural productions; for example, in *Clytemnestra*, parts of the text come from Aeschylus' *The Oresteia*

Trilogy, Sophocles' *Electra*, and Euripides' *Electra* and *Orestes*.[60] He broke the structure of the original play and tried to create a production which reflects Japanese contemporary society through its similarities with the Greek classical world. Suzuki was heavily criticized for having performers reciting lines directly translated from the original texts while dressed in kimono and using the Suzuki Method which is based on *kabuki* and *nō*. There exists an obvious contradiction in his productions; however, he believes that as long as the actors are trained to have stability in their bodies, they are able to absorb and present the heterogeneous cultural elements through a new performing style. Suzuki said in *The Way of Acting* that, it is his attempt

> to break through those other styles and create a play that shows the relationship between them. In comparison with the earlier plays, this one might thus be said to be conceived in a *contemporary* style [. . .] [He] hope[s] that [. . .] the plays will suggest how that genre we refer to as the drama can intersect with contemporary society. (123)

Suzuki believes that in order to preserve traditional Japanese culture, it is necessary to create a completely new culture that reshapes and redefines the old one.

This re-creation not only points to the destruction of former values but also the reconstruction of existent meanings that were either misinterpreted or distorted. It is a process of searching for a new genre which connects to contemporary society and the people living in it. Suzuki's intercultural approach breaks the standardized and homogenized cultural and societal structure and presents the rich diversity that exists within the Japanese society under the age of globalization. Suzuki recognizes and accepts the fact that it will never be possible to separate Japan from the world, nor to restore Japanese culture to what it used to be before the war. His main objective is that of continuing to transform the spirit of postwar theatre and at the same

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[60] 鈴木忠志の『王妃クリテムネストラ』

time looking for a new space for Japanese theatre to sustain and perform its uniqueness. He wishes to vitalize theatre to react against the inequality between dominant and the subaltern cultures, and destabilize or reverse the binary relationship between cultures through a rigorous training of the body.

From Original to Adaptation — Suzuki's Re-interpretation of the Play

The 2012 production of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* at the Edinburgh International Festival was not Suzuki's first encounter with the story of Electra and her family. In 1983, he directed *Clytemnestra* using *bunraku*, a form of traditional Japanese puppet theatre, to present the story of Queen Clytemnestra's murder of her husband, Agamemnon. In this play, most of the actions take place in Orestes' mind: he is haunted by the ghost of his mother who returns to kill him for committing incest with his sister Electra.

Later in the same year, Suzuki composed *Tragedy - the Fall of the House of Atreus*.[61] He wrote in the program notes that he used the production to illuminate a condition of his own time: "By examining the disintegration of the family, considered the fundamental constituent of society [. . .] I have intended to present an internal view of contemporary man, who is becoming more and more isolated because he cannot help but live in a spiritually chaotic state" (qtd. in McDonald 47).[62] Suzuki is fascinated by the legend of Orestes and the relationship he found between the ancient mythology and the contemporary world. He is interested in "the issue of power, and how it shifted from women to men at the time when ancient Greek values were being

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[61] 『悲劇 アトレウス家の崩壊』

[62] Originally from *SCOT Program*, p.23.

rent asunder" (*The Way of Acting* 121). His understanding of power wielding and distribution reflects a critical perspective that resonates within contemporary feminist discourses. Suzuki uses the stories of ancient mythologies to express his reflection and commentary on modern social crisis.

In 1995, *Electra* toured to Delphi for the First International Theatre Olympics, and the production was revived with minor changes a year later in Japan and continued touring to other world festivals.[63] Ever since then, *Electra* has become one of the most frequently performed pieces by Suzuki's company. The production was brought to NTFI, Napoli Teatro Festival Italia in 2009 and officially changed its English title to *Waiting for Orestes: Electra.* There are in fact many differences between each version of Suzuki's *Electra* including the actors' performance and the overall mise-en-scène. In the next section, I will focus mainly on the 2009 and 2012 versions of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* which do a better job at illustrating Suzuki's theory and practice of intercultural theatre.[64]

On the Text and the Performance

Suzuki Tadashi based his *Electra* on the play *Elektra* written by early-twentieth century Austrian poet and dramatist Hugo von Hofmannsthal who loosely adapted it from Sophocles. Hofmannsthal either discarded much of the original myth or used it as background information, focusing mainly on the characterization of Electra. Unlike his adaptation of *Clytemnestra* which

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[63] There is no difference between "Elektra" and "Electra" in the original Japanese title. The English title of the performance differs from each production. Japanese: 『エレクトラ』

[64] *Electra* would be used when referring to Suzuki's productions of the play in short, and *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* would be used when referring specifically to the 2009 and 2012 production in this chapter.

is based on several original texts by Greek playwrights, Suzuki's *Electra* was solely developed from the text by Hofmannsthal which is definitely not a random choice. Suzuki found that the story of Electra told by Hofmannsthal, which provided a fin-de-siècle atmosphere and reflected controversial political culture at the end of the nineteenth century, somehow responded to similar condition in modern society. Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* was first performed in Germany in 1903, and was later adapted to a libretto for the opera by Richard Strauss.[65] *Elektra* is a loose adaptation that focuses on the consequences of the murder of Agamemnon perpetrated by Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. It takes place ten years after the killing. Agamemnon's daughter Electra has been mourning for his death and obsessively waits for her revenge, which she gets when she finally convinces her brother Orestes, who has returned from exile, to kill their mother. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories, which had come out just a few years before, were instrumental in the portrayal of the story and the characters in Hofmannsthal's play. The play focuses mainly on the internal struggle of a single character, Electra, who is obsessed with revenge and matricide. It is emotional, irrational, personal, and highly expressionistic; ultimately, it reflects the complex embodiment of the character's psychology.

At the turn of the century, Hofmannsthal reinvented classical mythology of *Elektra* to mirror his own time. Unlike other European cities that embraced modernism enthusiastically and optimistically, Vienna was not as positive regarding the influence of modernism, possibly because it was conscious of the slow but unstoppable decay of the Austro-Hungarian empire. To quote Jill Scott, "instead of attempting to bring about social change with the pseudo-science of extreme realism as did the naturalists, Vienna turned to the psyche, focusing on inner suffering

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[65] The German title *Elektra* is used here to differentiate from Suzuki's *Electra*.

and ignoring political reality. This fin-de-siècle society turned to art to aestheticize its own death scene" (33). Responding to the social reality, Hofmannsthal's Electra is aware of her inescapable fate and upcoming death from the very beginning, but she is incapable of doing anything to change the trajectory of her life and her choices. She recognizes that she and her mother become more alike as she is plotting her mother's murder, but her obsession with revenge has overpowered any rational resistance. Both Electra and Clytemnestra are locked in a horrific interdependency.

Within the framework of the old world decay and the sociopolitical transition during the fin-de-siècle period, Hofmannsthal saw the whole society eagerly welcoming the new century and modernism without noticing the inevitable fate of the crumbling empire. Theatre and drama, especially when inspired by well-known narratives from classical Greece, provided a chance for both artists and viewers to re-think their social condition. "Despite its removal in time and space from Hofmannsthal's Austria," says Scott, "the Electra myth responds to the desire on the part of its audiences to escape their social reality. [. . .] The play maintains a comfortable distance from everyday problems, all the while evoking moral stability and fixed cultural codes" (34). It was not the story of an ancient myth that Hofmannsthal wanted to tell, but the cruel and authentic social reality that he wished to present to contemporary audience through the psyche of Electra.

Based on Hofmannsthal's expressionistic and psychological *Elektra*, the action of Suzuki's production takes place in a mental institution, a setting that reflects his concern for human psychology and social institutions. This locale resonates with Suzuki's belief that "all the world's a hospital, and all the men and women merely inmates," as he wrote in the program

notes.[66] In Hofmannsthal's *Elektra*, the chorus comprises a group of quarreling maids reflecting Electra's mental state. Suzuki pushes the symbol of the hospital further by transforming the chorus into five men in wheelchairs. In fact, all the characters from the Greek mythology, including Electra, Clytemnestra, Chrysothemis and Orestes, appear onstage in wheelchairs as well. For Suzuki, "wheelchairs do not represent a physical dependency on something outside of ourselves, but rather a psychological dependency that occurs within ourselves" (qtd. in Cooper). The characters in the production are not physically, but mentally confined. The play begins with Electra and her sister Chrysothemis imprisoned by their murderous mother in a mental hospital. Chrysothemis disagrees with Electra's obsession with revenge, and wants only to leave the hospital and have a family of her own. On the other hand, Electra is waiting for her brother Orestes, who remains absent throughout the play until the last moment, so he can exact her revenge.

The two female protagonists, Electra and Clytemnestra, are trapped in the same state of criminal psychosis. Clytemnestra is driven mad by her struggle to justify the murder of her husband, while Electra is obsessed with the not-yet-committed crime of matricide. Both of them seem guilty in different senses, and for Suzuki, these very personal acts and motivations of crime and violence have far wider implications:

> Just as Clytemnestra and Electra use violence to free themselves from the oppression of their circumstances, terrorists employ similar tactics to challenge our contemporary world order. What is important to understand is that any act of terror is a complex reaction and cannot be seen as simply good or evil. [. . .] I believe these violent struggles for freedom could multiply as globalization expands. (qtd. in Cooper)

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[66] 「世界は病院である」、「世界あるいは地球上は病院で、その中に人間は住んでいるのではないか」

It is similar to the impact of modernism and globalization on postwar Japan which indeed brought prosperity but at the same time downplayed cultural differences through a standardization of the political, social and economic systems (Morris-Suzuki 172). Being one of the characters confined to a wheelchair, Electra must fight to maintain her identity as an individual and avoid being dependent on the wheelchair, a metaphor for the standardized but disabled society. The experience of entrapment and dependence might be shared by all people around the world, as they struggle to keep a sense of self in a world trying to homogenize everybody.

While Hofmannsthal's text focuses more on language to express the characters' psychosis, *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* draws on the Suzuki Method to physicalize characters' inner struggles while confined to wheelchairs. It is not simply a Japanese version of the play, but a manifestation of Japanese psyche through the body and the text. Suzuki's intercultural approach is very obvious in this production as the performance itself is a reaction and reflection on postwar influence and rapid globalization that created a cultural disconnect in the country and distorted its identity for decades. Similar to Suzuki's other productions, the reason for selecting Western classics as the targets for adaptations is not accidental. He finds resemblance between the Greek socio-cultural context and contemporary Japanese society (*The Way of Acting* 121-3). Unlike many modern intercultural performances that adapt plays to a completely different cultural or social context, Suzuki's attempt is to break the fixed conventions and boundaries existing between intercultural interactions and adaptations, and further create a play that shows the relationship between them. The actors' performance of the Suzuki Method is the foundation for Suzuki's attempt, which I will analyze in the following section.

The logical progression of the storyline of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* is completely fractured with a series of interruptions in the narrative flow which echo the characters' mental state. The intention of the play is not to prove the characters' sanity, nor to save them from their predicaments, but to understand the reasons for their insanity. Eventually, the audience will be able to find a connection with the characters and interpret the play personally, and possibly reexamine their identity together with their fellow spectators. Suzuki believes that, "it is a theatre that encourages an interrogation of social problems collectively" (*Culture Is the Body* 2015, 115). It is a space providing encounters with the world and with one's own inner self.

The Performance of Body

On the Space and the Body

In *Culture Is the Body*, Suzuki wrote that there are several fundamental characteristics that define the unique nature of traditional *nō* theatre. One of the characteristics is that "from rehearsal to performance, virtually no energy that is not human, not 'animal,' goes into production" (2015, 124). Suzuki defines non-animal energy as energy which is not directly created by human nor animal, such as the electricity used to light the theatre. Contemporary performance tends to use non-animal energy to enrich theatrical mise-en-scène, while *nō* theatre relies only on minimal electric lighting, and music and sound effects are live and produced by traditional instruments. Suzuki's pursuit for theatre of animal energy pushed him to leave Tokyo for Toga, a small village in the mountains that is almost 400 miles away from Tokyo.

He drew on the traditional architecture of the *gasshō-zukuri* style, whose name is derived from the shape of the roof appearing as two hands in prayer, to build his new theatre space.[67] Although it was not Suzuki's initial intention, the design of *gasshō-zukuri* house turned out to be the best spatial configuration for his performance which focuses on the manifestation of Japanese psyche.

Traditional Japanese houses are mostly built haphazardly; not only the layout but pillars and beams are all arranged without a certain regularity, which is a huge obstacle for staging plays because these architectonical features can easily create blind areas onstage. However, Suzuki appreciates such unsighted-ness since it resembles a real living experience. Besides pillars and beams, the shape of the roof of *gasshō-zukuri* houses also creates inevitable darkness and shadows no matter how many lights are used. "If a specific place is emphasized by lighting," said Suzuki, "equal portion of darkness would appear in another area. The only way to keep a balance of light and shade is to lower the overall lighting and let brightness and darkness coexist" (*Culture Is the Body* 2011, 100).[68] It is a complete reversal of modern lighting technique, which normally uses extensive lights to create a specific sense of place. Suzuki's theatre, instead, is predicated on the notion that the space should fit in with the performance, and that the performance should also be designed to fit it with the space. In this sense, theatre is not only a performing space but also a living space.

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[67] *Gasshō-zukuri.* Japanese: 合掌造り

[68] 「越要把一個地方照得越亮，某處就會產生等比例的暗度。為了保持整體的明暗度，唯一的方法是把整體的光線調暗。光明與黑暗共生。」

Japanese writer Tanizaki Jun'ichirō wrote in *In Praise of Shadows* that "the beauty of a Japanese room depends on a variation of shadows" (18).[69] He also points out that the reason why recent *kabuki* and *nō* performances have become less interesting is due to the extensive use of modern lighting technique. The actors are revealed and exposed too much under such brightness. It is not simply the mystique that is lost, but also the subtle movements and actions of the actors' bodies that become difficult to be noticed because the stage is too bright and, as a consequence focus and attention are easily lost. The shadows and the shades that exist naturally in *gasshō-zukuri* houses enhance Suzuki's performance which centers heavily on the performer's body. The *kabuki* and *nō* movements adopted in the Suzuki Method are thus able to be elaborated fully for they were traditionally developed to be performed in such environment.

The mise-en-scène of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* presented in a black box theatre creates a fairly similar *gasshō-zukuri* house atmosphere. The initial impact of the production is its darkness. Beginning with complete darkness and silence, the audience can somehow feel that there is something onstage even though it is not visible. The light then gradually increases and the shape of men onstage is slowly revealed. Even though the lighting covers more parts of the stage as the show progresses, there are still many shadowy areas.

The entrance of the stage is also dim. Unlike modern Western drama which focuses on 'what happens onstage,' *nō* theatre, according to Suzuki, centers on 'who comes onstage' (*Culture Is the Body* 2011, 101). Shadows and darkness are crucial for such performance as they force the audience to take notice and pay close attention to the slightest change as new characters gradually appear from the darkness without being immediately

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[69] 谷崎 潤一郎、『陰翳礼讃』

recognized. The slow revelation provides a time interval for transitions informing the audience that something meaningful is going to happen. It also goes along with the *mie*-like pose which is a powerful and emotional pose struck by the actor who enters the playing area to draw attention to a particularly important moment.[70] Although not the traditional *mie* pose used in *kabuki*, the actors in *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* also strike and hold a pose, which creates a ritualistic moment for each entrance.

The stage is never fully lit throughout the performance of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* which resembles the effect created by *gasshō-zukuri* house. The light falls solely on several specific spots onstage where the characters are to stress their performance of body. Regarding the soundscape of the performance, silence is as important as the use of darkness and shades onstage because it emphasizes physical exertions of the actors. The sound effect of the production comes only from the performers and the musicians who use traditional percussion instruments to mark actors' actions and movements. The percussion can be seen as an embodiment of characters' emotions and mentality. It is used as a form of utterance that expresses the deepest thoughts inside the characters' mind. In fact, in ancient Greece, unlike other melodious instruments, percussion was used to "arouse excitement in people" (273), according to Dodds. It was closely associated with orgiastic rituals in ancient Greece. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century European classical music, percussion instruments were considered inferior to other musical instruments due to their lack of harmony. Therefore, Suzuki's use of percussion in *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* may be considered as an attempt to revive the primitive power of percussive sound of ancient Greek rituals.

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[70] *Mie*. Japanese: 見得

Despite the use of percussion, there are many moments that the actors move slowly in complete silence. The idea of silence is important in traditional Japanese culture because, in the natural world, there is no such thing as complete silence. It can only be found in a non-natural space or inside people's mind. The meaning of silence in Japanese culture can be explained by the Japanese idea of *ma*, which literally means a gap or in-between space.[71] According to Linda Fujie, "*Ma* refers to the overall timing of a piece — not just the pauses and rests but also the relationship between sound and silence on which all music is fundamentally based. It embraces the idea that sound enhances silence and silence enhances sound" (343). *Ma* is also the tension in the silence and in the space surrounded by sounds and objects. The seemingly tranquil scene creates a tense and mysterious atmosphere which Tanizaki describes as "the uncanny silence of [the] dark places" (20). There is a restlessness in silence and darkness which will soon transform into a burst of intense and sharp percussion. The overall atmosphere created through sounds is similar to the state of actors' bodies throughout the performance: tense, repressed and always ready for an explosion of energy.

In contrast to other productions of Greek tragedies, the overall pace and atmosphere of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* is relatively slow and calm, without ever being dull. The specially designed mise-en-scène enables actors to get the full attention of the spectators and focus on their performance without being distracted. In such space, the audience can clearly feel the flow of energy and how it congregates and accumulates in the performers' bodies. Through the practice of the Suzuki Method, performers learn to constantly and stably release the energy so that even when no one moves or speaks, the play is always progressing slowly at its own pace,

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[71] *Ma*. Japanese: 間

sustained by a dynamic energy. This is also how Suzuki differentiates the performing and viewing experience of theatre from films: theatre is "a space for tactile sense" (*Culture Is the Body* 2011, 102).[72] Everyone in this space, including performers and the audience, shares the collective experience of feeling the rhythm and the breath of each other. Even though nothing is seen nor heard directly, subtle changes can be felt through the flow of energy.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines darkness as "absence of light" and silence as "absence of sound," but in Japanese culture and especially in Suzuki's aesthetics, darkness and silence do not necessarily mean absence or lack of something. For example, darkness can be translated as *ankoku* or *in'ei* which can also mean shades, and silence translated as *shizukesa* also means tranquility and serenity.[73] The two terms are often used to represent restraint or understatement, which reflects Japan's complex social value system. *Waiting for Orestes: Electra*, especially important for being set in a mental hospital, is surely a projection of the mental illness which Suzuki has discovered in his society and culture. The presentation of darkness and silence through the mise-en-scène illustrates the neurotic state of mind of the characters as well as the whole Japanese society. The bodies become the only thing that can resist the illness brought by exterior forces. Toward the end of the play, the tension is gradually relieved and the stage is back to silence as Electra, following the doctor in the front, walks slowly toward complete darkness again.

Suzuki has never said whether the play ends with hope or despair. But it is certain that he is concerned with the changing society, and he finds the condition of contemporary society

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[72] 「觸覺式的空間」

[73] Darkness - 暗黒や陰翳, silence - 静けさ

resembling Greek tragedy. Suzuki "'reread' [the stuff of Greek tragedy] altogether in terms of the Japanese national sensibility and body movements" (Senda 50). It is not possible for the play to completely present his intention without the specific use of the space, and the relationship built between the space, the performers and the audience. In the next section, I will focus on how the space informs the performer's movements and frames Suzuki's focus on the body as the center of performance. I will also examine Suzuki's intercultural approach through an analysis of the performance of the body.

On the Space within the Body

> In my opinion, a cultured society is one in which the perceptive and expressive abilities of its people are cultivated through the use of their innate animal energy. Such animal energy fosters the sense of security and trust needed for healthy communication in human relationships and the communities they form. [. . .] For me, however, a civilized society is not necessarily a cultured one. (Suzuki *Culture Is the Body* 2015, 63).

Suzuki distinguishes a civilized society from a cultured society. For him, the origin of civilization comes from the intrinsic needs of the body. The invention of telescope and hearing aid, for example, arose from human aspiration to see and hear more than our natural state allows us to. What differentiates a civilized society from a primitive one is the former's ability of using and controlling energy, which is often related to modernization. As mentioned before, most contemporary theatre has already been modernized and depends heavily on the use of non-animal energy, while Japanese *nō* theatre can be seen as premodern because its creation is based mostly on the use of animal energy.

Suzuki argues that the extensive use of non-animal energy in most contemporary theatre has damaged the art form because "modernization has severed our natural organs from our essential selves" (65). For example, the automobile, to some extent, replaces the act of walking so that people no longer have the chance to feel their feet on the ground and enjoy the changing sceneries passing by. The more non-animal energy is used, the less people are able to communicate with nature because they have lost the ability of direct body percipience. It is especially a severe alert to performers in theatre that their expressions gradually become dull and standardized because they cannot sense the subtle change of their surroundings through their bodies. Suzuki is hence devoted to restoring the wholeness of human body through the art of theatre. The method he devises is not only a revitalization of traditional performing arts such as *kabuki* and *nō*, but also a re-presentation of the psyche of tradition. By doing so, we can "ensure the flourishing of culture within civilization," said Suzuki (65).

The first step in the Suzuki's method is the creation of a virtual space within the performer's body. It is a ritual space created through the act of stomping. The training for traditional Japanese performing arts centers heavily on the lower body and offers stability anchoring the whole body to the ground. Stomping is especially important for the performers to focus on the energy and power within their bodies. In the myth of *shinto*, the ethnic religion of the people of Japan, the goddess Ame no Uzume no Mikoto danced on an overturned bucket with the act of stomping and pounding to lure the Amaterasu-ōmikami out of the cave.[74] The dance is

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[74] Shinto. Japanese: 神道
Ame no Uzume no Mikoto. Japanese: 天宇受売命, also referred to as 天鈿女命（アメノウズメ）
Amaterasu-ōmikami is the goddess of the sun and the universe in *shinto* religion. In the mythology, Amaterasu was enraged by her brother, the storm god Susano'o, so she retreated into the Heavenly Rock Cave, Amano-Iwato. The world, without the illumination of the sun, became dark, so the gods then tried to lure Amaterasu out of her hiding place. Japanese: 天照大神

often considered the origin of the *shinto* theatrical and ceremonial dance *kagura*.[75] Japanese theatre scholar, Orikuchi Shinobu describes the dance in his *Six Lectures on the History of Traditional Performing Arts* that,

> This overturned bucket can be said to represent the earth; it serves as a symbol of the ground. To stamp resoundingly on the earth, to pound on it with a stave, and to cry out, indicates that the soul, which has been sleeping inside the earth, lying concealed within it, or kept inside, can now come forth. The soul can now be released to join the other gods who are close beside. (qtd. in Suzuki, *The Way of Acting* 13)[76]

The concealed energy is awakened and exposed, and can be further absorbed into the body through the act of stomping and pounding. The ritualistic process contributes not simply to the obtainment of energy, but more crucially, the awakening of sensibility to the flow of energy. By the act of stomping, the performer is able to feel and control the energy, and release it onstage both physically and mentally.

Waiting for Orestes: Electra starts with a group of men as chorus stomping heavily on the ground and breathing deeply. Their stomps, lasting for over ten minutes, start with a slow pace with long intervals and progress to fast and constant stomps without pause. Every stomp is so hard and sturdy that the audience can feel the vibration and see it. Even when they move fast, the performers' breath and their bodies are still stable and appear to be in the same state as they were when moving slowly. The chorus begins to go around the stage in circles while stomping at certain points, and then goes offstage. The act reaches a climax when the stage is empty: the sound of stomping can still be clearly heard in the background when a sudden scream breaks out.

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[75] *Kagura*, which literally means "godly entertainment." Japanese: 神楽

[76] Orikuchi Shinobu's *Six Lectures on the History of Traditional Performing Arts.* Japanese: 折口 信夫『日本藝能史六講』

Shortly afterwards, silence takes over the stage and Electra comes out calmly to the center of the stage in a wheelchair. The act of stomping at the beginning of this production is ritualistic, specifically designed for Electra's entrance. It resembles the ritual to awake and summon the spirits to take over the performer's body. Stomping "works to call forth the energy of an object that is worshipped and to take that energy into oneself," (139) says Simon Shepherd in *Theatre, Body and Pleasure*.

For Suzuki, the performers' delivery of the text is also tied to the stability of body. Modern actors have to deal with all kinds of texts such as traditional plays with lines in classical Japanese, translations of plays from other languages, and contemporary plays with a combination of slangs and loanwords. Suzuki, however, feels that many languages do not fit in with the Japanese body due to cultural and habitual differences which cause the actors' speech to be an impediment to the development of a physical idiom. In order to accurately present the play to the audience, a proper relationship between the words spoken and the movements of the actor should be established. One way to build such relationship is to strengthen the sensibility of body. Suzuki suggests that actors should "objectify those bodily situations, determine the emotional context that words will create under each set of circumstances, and then be conscious of these relationships" (*Culture Is the Body* 2015, 75). It is not his intention to limit the actors' performance by a fixed pattern, but rather to strengthen their consciousness of the relationships between words, emotions and movements.

Besides the incompatibility of body and language, another problem for contemporary intercultural theatre is the misconception of foreign cultures. Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer wrote that "it is misunderstanding which marks the beginning of intercultural approaches in the history of

the arts" (367). In Japanese theatre, for instance, actors often dress and act like Westerners but fail to comprehend the cultural meanings that lie behind words and appearances. On the other hand, Western intercultural theatre often regards "Asian theatre as a substantial unity and neglecting the differences between the cultural and national sphere, as well as between the different genres" (368).

Both Japanese or Western theatre are capable of creating a new form of theatrical performance, but it is not likely to be successful if the performers do not "feel at home." They are forced to put on unfamiliar costumes that limit their performance, and the audience can feel the unease in their movements. However, the actors in Suzuki's production are different in that the audience sees the actors are well-fitted to speak the text and embody their characters. It is because the actors have transcended their daily body and mind, and are transformed into a ritualistic state that provides them with energy to sustain their performance.

The 2012 version of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* is an especially interesting example of how Suzuki presents the heterogeneity of texts and performers' bodies. First of all, the text of *Electra* is not colloquial or easy for a Japanese audience especially because Suzuki deconstructed the linearity of the plot and deleted most of the lines. Secondly, there is a unique feature of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* which, if not handled properly, may cause misunderstandings and compromise the whole performance: the actress playing Electra speaks a different language.[77] Suzuki never explained why this choice was made. Interestingly, according to the reviews I found, not many people mentioned or even noticed that she was in fact speaking Korean when the production was played at the Edinburgh International Festival. It might be because people's

[77] The actress playing Electra is called Yoo-Jeong Byun who is Korean and is the only performer speaking Korean instead of Japanese in this production.

attention was mostly focused on the English subtitles. Although I have a rudimentary knowledge of both Japanese and Korean, I did not notice the language difference when I first watched the recorded video with no subtitles. I would argue that this is exactly the state of body and mind that Suzuki wants his performers to acquire through his training method. When the performers and the words they speak are in a proper and stable alignment, the space within their body can directly react to the text, regardless of the language difference, without affecting their performance.

It is the revival of physicality and perceptive sensibility that heightens the performers' innate expressive abilities so they are able to deal with various circumstances under different contexts. Another reason for why the perceptive sensibility is especially important for performers is that they need to be always conscious of being watched. Zeami illustrates this point in "A Mirror to the Flower"

> As seen by the audience, your attitude is a vision apart from your own, but what your own eyes see is your own vision. It is not a Vantage from Vision Apart. To see with the Vantage from Vision Apart is, in effect, to see with the same mind as the audience does. At that time, you achieve a vantage on your own attitude. [. . .] For this reason, you need to present as graceful form through your entire body by seeing form the Vantage from Vision Apart, taking on the same vision as the audience and learning how you look in places where you cannot yourself see" (103).

For Suzuki's actors building a stable space within the body and being aware of the flow of energy inside the body is just as important as generating energy from being watched. It is the awareness of themselves that derives from someone else's perception that helps them, because it is through the gaze of others that they can assess the maturity of their performance.

In *Waiting for Orestes: Electra*, the actors all face the audience and look straight into the

eyes without once turning their back. As the play unravels, their connection with the audience grows allowing the performers to see themselves and develop a more responsive body through the vision of others. I believe this interaction between the actors on stage and the spectators in the auditorium shows that one's own true identity is always the outcome of a social negotiation. Since the characters in this production are all patients in a mental hospital, they are uncertain of who they are and what to do, and cannot rely on each other. The audience is the only one in this space they can turn to express their feelings, and their relationship is very intimate. However, the actors' bodies and minds must be calm and controlled so that they are able to sense external responses coming from the audience without losing their focus. By means of the training, the actors are able to properly and accurately convey and present what is in the play to the audience through their performance of body and further create a stable relationship with the audience without being distracted.

Suzuki wrote in the article "Tradition and Creative Power" that,

> In Japanese, the lack of physical sensitivity and control in these areas is also reflected in expressions that refer to psychological phenomena. For example, [. . .] people who are not mature, who cannot be trusted or who are not settle 'don't have their feet on the ground.' [. . .] Similarly, 'your hips are not grounded' refers to somebody who is not yet settle down in life. (*Culture Is the Body* 2015, 148-9)

The terms show how Japanese culture attributes psychological instability to the lack of sensibility and physical control of body. The reason why these expressions are used is due to the collective experience and shared value of the culture. There is a standard of the culture on how a healthy or unhealthy state of body is like. The conception can be linked back to Suzuki's belief that "all the world's a hospital, and all the men and women merely inmates." To him, the

Japanese culture and society is ill and is gradually losing its control of itself in globalization and modernization. It is through the revival of a stable and sensible body that the country and its culture can resist against the rapid and drastic changes.

Suzuki has often stated that his actor training is not designed for Japanese only, but for anyone who has the intention to transform current state of body and mind through performance. The use of *nō* and *kabuki* movements is also not simply a restoration of traditional Japanese performing arts, but can be seen as a way to generate something original and create new possibilities in performance. "Tradition is not something to be protected," said Suzuki, "but rather must be actively engaged so it may provide a springboard for new creation" (151).

In my opinion, the production of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* can be regarded as one of the most successful integrations of Suzuki's theories and practices into the staging of intercultural theatre. It reflects his concern for contemporary Japanese society through the story of the Greek play, and avoids any dogmatism. It is instead reflective and invites actors and spectators alike to share their experience and find something valuable in the play and in each other. Regarding Suzuki's development of physical theatre,

> creating theatre is a process [. . .] of using motivation and opportunity for expression to be found in a text to establish a space where certain director and certain seductive actors can exist and, at a certain moment in time, lure on an audience that has come, not to see a certain drama, but to experience what it is like to be in that particular space with these people. (qtd. in Carruthers 96)

I would like to reiterate that Suzuki's intercultural productions are surely not just a Japanese interpretation or adaptation of Western classics. Unlike Wu Hsing-Kuo's creations which are relatively personal, Suzuki's are about collective experiences and memories. He finds similarities and connections between classical and the modern society, and then extends this idea to creations

which are fictional while echoing with real events in life. Focusing heavily on physical strength, the movements are based on traditional performing arts which Suzuki believes to effectively fortify both body and mind. A new and original performance rooted within the Japanese psyche is thus created and presented to audiences all over the world.

Conclusion: Creating a Third Space in Theatre

Intercultural performance suggests a space involving constant crossings between cultures, continuous constructions and deconstructions of meanings, and interactions between the performers and the spectators. It also implies being in a state of ambivalence, contradiction, and hybridity, where heterogeneous cultural materials are cohesively assimilated. Instead of presenting only the integration of different cultures, practitioners of intercultural performance such as Wu Hsing-Kuo and Suzuki Tadashi emphasize the diversity and subjectivity of each culture. In addition to preserving the uniqueness of each culture, new identities are created through cultural exchanges occurring during the performance. Wu and Suzuki's intercultural performances, where multiple cultures are interwoven through practice, redefine the relationships between different cultural materials, and between the creators' and viewers' perceptions of source and target cultures.

Homi Bhabha's concept of the Third Space furthers the understanding of intercultural theatre as experienced in Wu and Suzuki's practice because it enables the deconstruction of traditional and institutional cultures and emphasizes the power struggles that thwart cultural interactions:

> The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People. (Bhabha 54)

The Third Space refers not to a physical, but a virtual and conceptual space where it is neither *One (us)* nor *the Other (them),* but rather a liminal space characterized by the state of being in-

between. It points to the fact that cultures "are never unitary in themselves, not simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other" (52). The concept not only suggests the transcendence of boundaries and limitations of cultural dualisms, but also allows each culture to build and sustain its identity and significance in the intercultural relationship. It also questions and expands on the notion of cultural subjectivity by emphasizing emerging differences within contemporary cultural discourse.

The concept of the Third Space can best manifest the practices and theories of Wu and Suzuki's intercultural performances discussed in previous chapters since both practitioners open up opportunities for new cultural practices and narratives. Echoing with the title of this research, the Third Space in theatre, or ultimately theatre as the Third Space, provides a ground for reversing dominant discourses from the West to the Rest. Wu and Suzuki establish a new perspective on creating and viewing intercultural performances through adapting and retheatricalizing the plays from other cultures. They further interweave the cultural context of the original play and the collective psychosis, personal experience, and reflections on the society of their time.

The concept of the Third Space is useful in illustrating performing methods and textual adaptations of Wu and Suzuki's theatre practices, as seen in *Lear Is Here* and *Waiting for Orestes: Electra*. Seeing the loss of popularity of traditional theatre, Wu Hsing-Kuo, a trained *jing-jù* performer, founded Contemporary Legend Theatre to transform the traditional performance and its environment, and create performances that are about current issues and are for contemporary audiences. Wu challenged the rigidity of *jing-jù* and created a new genre of performance by building connections between modern and traditional styles from the West and

the East. What makes Wu's adaptations of Western canonical texts different from other *jing-jù* interpretations is that his process of adaptation includes not only literal translation of the text, but also the translation of the complete cultural context. The process is not simply about preserving traditional performing arts, but rather about creating a new genre of theatre.

CLT's production of *Lear Is Here* is autobiographically adapted from Shakespeare's *King Lear* into a solo performance where Wu is both the only performer and one of the characters. The whole performance is constructed around the question "Who am I?" which centers on the relationship between the performer's real life experience and the fictional characters he plays. Wu intentionally reminds the audience that the play is a fictional construction by casting himself as a character in the show and changing costumes onstage in front of the spectators. By breaking the theatrical illusion, he opens up a conversation among himself, the characters in *King Lear*, and the viewers.

Even though his approach to theatre is quite different from Wu's, Suzuki Tadashi also focuses on the body. He was concerned with the rapid modernization, globalization, and Westernization of Japanese society, and wanted to preserve the Japanese unique identity, which was losing ground to Western theatre and Japanese imitations of Western theatre models. The Suzuki Method was developed to help performers be more aware of natural expressiveness and changing surroundings, and allow them to commit fully to the physical and emotional demands of acting. Only through a well-trained body can performers regain their own cultural and national identity. For Suzuki, *Japaneseness* is achieved not merely through the preservation of the traditional culture but through the creation of new theatrical experiments grounded in a rigorous training of the actors' bodies.

Another foundational aspect of Suzuki's intercultural performance is his adaptation of Western canonical texts. He found that the story of *Electra* echoed with the concerns of Japanese people of his time. His production of *Waiting for Orestes: Electra* takes place in a mental institution, a setting reflecting his preoccupation with collective psychosis in the postwar era. He found similarities and connections between classic and the modern societies, and traced them in narratives that paralleled the zeitgeist of Japan.

Wu and Suzuki's theatre practices also echo with Bhabha's use of the stairwell as a symbolic space to display the deconstruction of binary logic. The stairwell, as liminal space in-between destinations of identity, enables the process of symbolic interaction that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white, and other polarities (5). The stairwell provides a space where associations are made between certain binary divisions. It is a pathway between categories or hierarchical states. The two practitioners' intercultural theatres can be viewed as a physicalization of the Third Space and the stairwell since they break the boundary existing between the East and the West, classic and modern, and past and present. They also call into question fixed traditional categorizations and seek new possibilities for repositioning cultural identities which used to be polarized as either *Us* or *Other* in theatre. In their dramaturgical and theatrical practices, different cultures are able to freely interact with each other instead of being arbitrarily integrated and homogenized.

The concept of the Third Space illustrates how Wu and Suzuki select cultural materials that do not fall within the traditional East/West binary and use them to create a new style of performance that connects, merge, and sometimes annihilates traditional and modern tales. Rather than relying on linear and logical narratives, Wu and Suzuki emphasize the heterogeneity

of the cultural materials being used, as well as the breakdown of the original storylines. This can be seen in their textual deconstruction and their use of collage. The dissection and scrutiny to which the original texts are subjected enable the creators to re-tell the story based on personal and/or collective experiences. The same critique and deconstructive analysis is also directed at the traditional performing arts of Taiwan and Japan: Wu has completely transformed *jing-jù* conventions and Suzuki does not use traditional *nō* and *kabuki* movements in his theatre but develops his actor training method out of them. In order to bring vitality and multiplicity into theatre, the transformation and even destruction of traditions seem to be inevitable.

Wu and Suzuki have always been questioned and criticized for claiming to create performances showing the uniqueness of their own cultures while at the same time altering or even destroying the essence of tradition. Although both creators have clearly stated that it is not their goal to simply preserve traditional performing arts but to create a new genre of performance out of them, how they position the subjectivity of the traditions is still questionable. This is also why Daphne Lei included Wu and Suzuki Tadashi's theatres as the Eastern counterparts of HIT since they adopt similar methods of producing intercultural performance as Western HIT practitioners:

> Elitism and vast capital are crucial to this form: international festivals, master directors, traditional artists with the stature of "living national treasures," academic sponsorship, and intellectual discourse all contribute to the hegemony of this type of intercultural theatre. (571)

Lei stated that "hegemonic" is not necessarily a negative connotation; what really matters is whether theatre fosters cultural connections and flows or, on the contrary, interrupts and limits them. In the case of Wu and Suzuki, an important question must be asked: do they really provide

a space in which traditions are granted a new life and new cultural identities are negotiated in performance? Or do they simply accelerate the disappearance of traditional theatre arts?

On the other hand, what can be considered traditional in Wu and Suzuki's theatre? The simple answer might be *jing-jù*, *nō* and *kabuki* traditions. However, can theatrical hybridity and collage be developed into a new kind of tradition itself? Despite their effort to reposition or create an identity in intercultural relationships, Wu and Suzuki aim at transforming the tradition that they value. Their intercultural productions experiment with traditional performance in order to create an original aesthetic that reflects the socio-cultural and artistic concerns of their time.

I would like to point out that although the two productions chosen in this research were first drafted and produced more than two decades ago, they have been continuously revived with adjustments. Besides the revival of old productions, Wu and Suzuki keep experimenting on bringing different genres of performance and texts into their intercultural theatres. For example, CLT's recent production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, written to celebrate the thirty-year anniversary of the company's foundation, includes not only *jing-jù*, but also modern dance, classical ballet, and elements of realistic theatre and musical. Wu continues to merge different genres of performing arts into *jing-jù* theatre. On the other hand, Suzuki adapted Alexandre Dumas fils' *La Dame aux Camélias* and co-produced the play with Taiwan International Festival of Arts in 2011. The production, presented in the style of musical, features more than forty Taiwanese pop songs, and the performers' body and vocal performances were trained through the Suzuki Method. Similar to Suzuki's *Electra* and other productions, his *La Dame aux Camélias* also centers on the physicalization of characters' mentality. It can be gathered from this

production that Suzuki is still experimenting with the adaptation and retheatricalization of plays through interweaving different styles of performance and cultures.

Thanks to their efforts, Asian intercultural theatre gradually turned its focus to experimental practices instead of blindly imitating and reproducing foreign models. Their experiments rectified former unbalanced relationships between cultures and broke the binary relations between the West and the East, the modern and the traditional, the dominant and the subaltern. It is this kind of theatre that enables vulnerable cultures to speak and stand for themselves while continuing cross-cultural exchanges and vitalizing their own cultures through various encounters and interactions. Wu and Suzuki's intercultural approaches provide a chance to reconfigure and reimagine the cultural subjectivity of both source and target cultures.

This thesis has also illustrated how for Wu and Suzuki the creation of a new intercultural aesthetic requires a complete focus on the body as the primary vessel to deliver personal and/or collective experiences. Their physical re-presentation of cultural subjectivity can never be substituted by means of the mise-en-scène. It is about internalizing someone else's story, searching for connections between the story and one's own personal experience, and ultimately staging the new experience through the body. The presence of both the source and target cultures within Wu's and Suzuki's adaptations multiplies the levels of interpretation of the performance. These two artists provide chances not only for the creators and performers to reexamine their own cultures, but they also allow the spectators to further connect the performances to their personal experience. They challenge a passive approach to one's own culture and invite their audiences to embrace the conflicts brought about by a changing world. This is how Wu and

Suzuki redress the limitations of first-wave intercultural theatre and shift the focus from the West to the *Rest*.

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