1992

"Borrowing from the East" : a study of types of Western theatre adaptations of Chinese opera, Japanese noh, and kabuki

Belinda Saxon
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San Jose State University, 1992

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"BORROWING FROM THE EAST"
A STUDY OF TYPES OF WESTERN THEATER ADAPTATIONS
OF CHINESE OPERA, JAPANESE NOH, AND KABUKI

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Theater Arts
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
San Jose State University

By
Belinda Saxon
December, 1992

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

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ABSTRACT

"BORROWING FROM THE EAST" A STUDY OF TYPES OF WESTERN THEATER ADAPTATIONS OF CHINESE OPERA, JAPANESE NOH, AND KABUKI

by Belinda Saxon

This thesis analyzes directors' choices when they adapt Chinese Opera, Japanese Noh, and Kabuki theatrical conventions to their productions. This thesis suggests that Chinese Opera, Japanese Noh, and Kabuki theatrical conventions can be adapted to Western theater in three ways: Direct, Effect, and Syncretic Adaptation.

Direct Adaptation occurs when a play is produced and/or written to follow as closely as possible the original production from another culture.

Effect Adaptation occurs by applying segments (such as masks, costumes, and movements) of theatrical conventions from one culture's theater to another's. These conventions are often seen as foreign by the adopting culture.

Syncretic Adaptation occurs when gestures, movements, staging configuration, and other theatrical elements from another culture's theater are blended with Western elements to produce a new art form.

Examples of productions which adapted Chinese Opera, Japanese Noh, and Kabuki theatrical conventions will be analyzed by looking at the directors' approaches and objectives in each of the three adaptation categories.

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Many thanks to my family without whose support this thesis would not have been possible. I also wish to thank Dr. Karl Toepfer, Dr. David Kahn, and Dr. Ethel Walker for their invaluable help.

The problem is having superficial knowledge and applying Western standards to everything. It seems more valuable now to emphasize the specialness of theatre in other cultures and grapple directly with learning their unique features.

James R. Brandon

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INTRODUCTION

When the famous director Peter Brook went to India, he heard the story of Mahabharata, a book of ancient stories that the Indians simply call the "epic." At the time he thought,

A dancer was presenting a scene from this work; when his sudden, first appearance from behind a curtain gives an unforgettable shock. His costume was red and gold, his face was red and green, his nose was like a white billiard ball, his fingernails were like knives, in the place of beard and mustache, two white crescent moons thrust forward from his lips, his eyebrows shot up and down like drum sticks and his fingers spelled out strange coded messages.¹

Brook's first impression was based on the exoticism of the production. After this introduction, he began thinking about directing Mahabharata. While the exotic nature of Asian theater is what first appealed to him, he later developed a deeper appreciation of Indian culture. This thesis aims to study the changing of the Western attitude toward Asian theater: a change from a mere interest in Asian exoticism to a deeper appreciation. This study is done by investigating the types of Asian-theater adaptation in the West. Instead of Indian theater, this thesis studies Chinese and Japanese theaters.

Before analyzing the types of adaptations in detail, this thesis needs to discuss two previous works in the field of theatrical adaptation: Leonard C. Pronko's Theater East and West: Perspectives Towards a Total Theater (1967) and James R. Brandon's article "A New World: Asian Theater in the West Today" in The Drama Review (vol. 33, Summer 1989). Though

owing much to Pronko's book, this thesis was developed by questioning some of Pronko's notions of East and West adaptation. Pronko believes that theater practitioners' understanding of the theatrical conventions is the key to a successful adaptation. He insists that theatrical practitioners should learn the conventions directly from the original source and then proceed to "seek out Occidental parallels to Oriental classical forms. Not imitation, but re-creation."² Pronko's Theater East and West gives many examples of productions that attempted to create new kinds of theater from the use of Asian conventions (such as Brecht's productions). He feels that most of the examples cited in his book are not true Asian adaptations and that they have nothing to do with Chinese Opera, Japanese Noh, and Kabuki. He states that productions such as Brecht's are not Asian adaptations because they do not have the same feeling as the original art form. According to Pronko, an adaptation has less value when it does not copy the authentic feeling of the original art form.

James R. Brandon also believes that Direct Adaptation is of high value. However, he goes a step further by stating that theater practitioners who learned Asian acting techniques should "create [their own] innovative performing styles."³ He felt that theater practitioners should use the old conventions to invent new forms of theater. He disapproves of productions that use segments of Asian theater to create "an

Oriental atmosphere", described as Effect Adaptation in this thesis. "Western artistic values were applied willy-nilly to Asian genres, regardless of appropriateness."⁴ This thesis intends to look into this idea; Effect Adaptation does not always present distorted images of Asian conventions when it is appropriately used. The problem is: how can a director define the appropriateness of the Asian theater adaptation? This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

Directors face many choices in their productions. This thesis explores the choices that are available to those who adapt theatrical conventions from Chinese opera, Japanese Noh, and Kabuki to their productions. By classifying the adaptations into three types (Direct, Effect, and Syncretic Adaptation) this thesis suggests that directors should look at the differences between each type of adaptation, rather than perceiving all adaptations as a single theatrical technique. The following are the definitions of the three types:

- 1) Direct Adaptation. Direct Adaptation occurs when a play is produced and/or written to follow as close as possible to the original production from another culture. The overall feeling remains, but since some elements cannot be duplicated (such as the audience, the cultural background of the actors, and the environment) it is an adaptation.

- 2) Effect Adaptation. Effect Adaptation occurs by applying segments (such as masks, costumes, and movements) of theatrical conventions from one culture's theater to another's. Effect Adaptation is often used to intensify emotions, to alienate a person or a certain object on stage, and to reinforce the text or the directors intended meaning.
- 3) Syncretic Adaptation. Syncretic Adaptation occurs when themes, gestures, movements, staging configuration, and other theatrical elements from another culture's theater are blended with Western elements to produce a new art form.

Each of the three types of adaptations has different objectives and approaches. The directors who use Direct Adaptation need to develop a global perception of the performance modes and the culture in which the conventions originated. This is because in Direct Adaptation the directors recreate an Asian art form. To achieve this, directors need to read about the conventions and see performances of Asian theater so they can develop an "awareness" of what the Asian conventions signify; they try to perceive the Asian theater not only from their Western viewpoint, but also from that of the native audience. In Effect Adaptation the directors need to be aware of what effect the adapted convention may create in the audience. In

Syncretic Adaptation the directors need to be aware of the creative possibilities that can be achieved by combining Eastern and Western theatrical conventions. The individual director's objectives correspond with the adaptation approaches and will be discussed in the following chapters.

The Problem with the Classification of Asian Theater

Adaptation Types

The classifications of Asian adaptations can be done in several ways. In Theater East and West, Pronko divided all adaptations into two opposite types, direct and non-direct types. This dualistic classification, however, is too limited when applied to adaptations; dualism allows little room for nuances. This thesis' division of Asian adaptations into three categories aims to soften the opposition of "direct" and "non-direct," as proposed by Pronko.

This thesis classifies Asian adaptations according to the directors' objectives and approaches to their adaptations. Pronko does not differentiate Effect and Syncretic Adaptations; he classifies Brecht's and Yeats' works as the same kind of adaptation, a non-direct one. The division between these two kinds of adaptations needs to be made clear in order to give directors greater freedom of choice.

However, in order to separate non-direct adaptations into two types, this thesis needs to draw a fine yet definite line.

This line distinguishes Effect Adaptation from Syncretic Adaptation. In Effect Adaptation, Asian conventions are treated in three different types. In the first type, the adapted conventions are presented as Asian. In the second type, the Asian conventions are slightly changed to create an effect. And in the third type, Asian conventions are hidden or concealed, yet a director uses them to produce a certain effect in his or her production. (Examples of these three types of Effect Adaptation will be elaborated on in Chapter Three.) In Syncretic Adaptation, Eastern and Western theatrical elements are combined to create a new art form.

When comparing Effect Adaptation with Syncretic Adaptation, the question arises, what is the difference between the slightly changed Effect Adaptation and Effect Adaptation whose Asian nature is hidden when compared to Syncretic Adaptation? The answer is that Effect Adaptation is always done to produce an effect, while Syncretic Adaptation aims to use existing conventions from the East and the West to produce a non-existing theatrical art form. In other words, while Effect Adaptation directors are concerned about borrowing Asian conventions (either direct, hidden, or changed), Syncretic Adaptation directors are neither concerned with presenting conventions that are seen as Asian, nor are they concerned with putting an unchanged convention in the production to produce an effect. The director transforms the

Asian convention into something new that goes beyond Western and Eastern theaters.

The Purposes and Limitations of the Study

Through the investigation of the preexisting cases and methods of adapting Chinese Opera, Japanese Noh, and Kabuki theatrical conventions to Western theater, this thesis will study types of adaptations in which Chinese and Japanese theatrical conventions can be applied to Western theater in the three categories. This will provide a basic structure for directors to make choices when they adapt Asian theatrical conventions to their productions. This thesis will compare the three types of adaptations and discuss specific examples from past performances that use each type of adaptation.

This thesis bases most of its examples on secondary sources. The author relies on written texts and past analyses to formulate the core of the thesis. Thus, the scope is often limited to textual analysis. Realizing the importance of non-verbal elements of any theater, this thesis includes discussions of stage movements and other non-verbal theatrical elements when possible. The purpose of this thesis is to classify the types of adaptation. Therefore, this thesis examines examples that best illustrate each type of adaptation without making a detailed analysis of each

element in the selected production. The method of example selection in this thesis is not empirical: this thesis does not attempt to study all adaptations available. This thesis attempts to exemplify the various shades and nuances of Asian theater adaptation. Each example presents the characteristics and problems in each type of adaptation. This thesis illustrates the classifications by using the following examples: Lady Aoi, a Noh "Direct Adaptation" by Yukio Mishima; Curlew River, a Noh "Direct Adaptation" by Benjamin Britten; Turandot, a Chinese Opera "Effect Adaptation" by Giacomo Puccini; At Hawk's Well, a Noh "Effect Adaptation" by W. B. Yeats; Othello and Medea, Kabuki "Effect Adaptations" by Shozo Sato; The Exception and the Rule, a Chinese Opera "Syncretic Adaptation" by Bertolt Brecht; Old and New (a film), a Kabuki "Syncretic Adaptation" by Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein. This thesis makes no attempt to investigate the complete history of Asian theater adaptations in the West.

Method of Investigation

The classifications purposed here in this thesis, are neither rigid nor absolute; they are a means by which the adaptation process can be measured and distinguished. In reality, many theatrical productions fall into more than one category. The criterion that this thesis uses to draw lines

in Asian theater adaptations is the difference between theater practitioners' objectives and approaches when they apply each type of adaptation to their productions.

All examples used in this thesis were adapted by playwrights/directors who approached theater from a Western viewpoint. While Mishima and Sato are Japanese, they carried Western attitudes and viewpoints when they wrote/directed their plays/productions. They also used Asian texts with Western acting techniques (Mishima's Lady Aoi) and borrowed Asian acting techniques to be used in a Western context (Sato's Othello and Medea).

It is important here to discuss the similarities and differences between playwrights' and directors' adaptations. The playwright-adaptor has the same theatrical choices as the director-adaptor. Such choices are the choices of movements, costumes, etc. The difference, however, is in the way each type of adaptor approaches the production. Playwright-adaptors tend to focus on dramatic elements of Asian plays. They have the freedom to mold their adaptations to any shape or form. Director-adaptors, even though working with a fixed text, think in terms of performing techniques such as stage directions and so forth. The director-adaptors also decide what the play means and how the Asian conventions will add meanings to the production.

The reason that most examples are playwright adaptations is that in most selected examples, this thesis focuses on the

process of theatrical adaptation, starting from the text to the performance. All selected playwrights, with the exception of Yukio Mishima and Puccini, took part in the first productions as directors. They had full control of all the elements in the productions. This thesis also includes Shozo Sato's Othello and Medea as examples of director's adaptation of well-known classical plays.

Significance

By categorizing the adaptations into three types, this thesis prevents the usual generalization that all adaptations are alike. Besides looking at adaptation as a theatrical means for directors to use, this thesis will observe what forms and what level of changes occur in the conventions through adaptation. Since the three categories are not limited to only Chinese and Japanese theatrical conventions, they may be applied to all forms of adaptation.

The use of the three classifications depends largely on the motivations and the performance goals of the directors or theatrical groups. By being conscious of the implications of cross-cultural adaptation, theater practitioners can adapt Asian theatrical conventions less haphazardly than in the past. Awareness of the conventions from another culture's theater, and the lack of haphazardness on the theater practitioners' part many times reduce the chance of what some

called "cultural contamination." Gordon Craig wrote an article "Asia American Europe" (1918), which appeared in The Mask magazine. (Part of this article also appeared in "A New World: Asian Theater in the West Today" in The Drama Review.) In this article Craig stated that he believed that any theatrical innovation must develop from within one's culture. That any kind of borrowing, be it Direct, Effect, or Syncretic, is bound to distract the natural course of development in Western theater. According to Craig, Western adaptation of Asian theater is at its best a mere "echo" of the original, at its worst an "aping," a less than perfect imitation of the original.⁵ Craig warns those Westerners who attempt to use Asian elements in their theater by raising the following question:

Do you prefer Annihilation to the chance that is before you? If so, then annihilate yourself and the toil of your forefathers in your gratified desire to see the marvel for an instant and die.⁶

Craig concludes his article with the following thought,

They over there are wonderful, and we can know it, admit it, admire it, and goodnight. We love them and all their works, and just because we do sincerely we go on along our own way.⁷

James R. Brandon, in "A New World: Asian Theater in the West Today," summarizes Craig attitude towards theater practitioners who study Asian arts: "[that they] would contaminate the inherent qualities of the West."⁸ Out of this union of East and West, contamination does not have to be the result. A society can keep its classic-

theatrical art forms, such as Shakespearean plays, and still have room for Shakespearean Kabuki plays. Both types of art forms can exist side-by-side without any damage to both cultures.

CHAPTER ONE

The Western Adaptation of Asian Arts and Theater

All adaptations involve the transference of one cultural element to another culture. There are basically two major influences on how the process of change occurs within a society. Such influences are technology and social interaction. Technology plays a major role in communicating new ideas from other cultures. Communication technology has made it possible for people to interact on a greater scale. Through the invention of different modes of transportation, such as automobiles and airplanes, more interaction between people takes place. Social interaction occurs when people from one culture exchange ideas with those of other cultures. Change takes place because of the new ideas that are introduced. "Social interaction by its very nature implies change."¹

In Europe, adaptation of Asian art originated in the technology of seafaring, which allowed Europeans to travel beyond Europe and interact with people of different cultures. Commerce was the most rudimentary form of interaction that took place between Europeans and Asians. The West had a long history of trading with Asia, starting from the near East and eventually stretching out to the Far East itself. China began trading with the West in 1664. Japan was forced to open its doors to the West in 1853. By the early seventeenth

century, Chinese art work, Japanese wood-block prints, lacquer wares, ceramics and china, and other such items were in great demand in Europe. Part of the popularity of Asian goods in Europe was the product of colonial expansion to the East during that time. Chinese and Japanese art works eventually became an exotic novelty in European society. This fad occurred in many areas of society, from dishes to fashions.

In the first section of this chapter, this thesis intends to present the two influences that shaped the European perception of the Far East. One is the European interest in Asia because of its economical and political significance; the other is the European tendency to romanticize the cultures and people of the Orient. These two influences appear time after time, and shape how theater practitioners in different periods approach Asian theater and its adaptations. Rather than presenting the complete history of the West's relationship with the East, the first half of this chapter focuses on the emergence of adaptation types in different periods, from the colonial time to the multi-culturalism of today. Even though chronologically arranged, the periods presented in this section sometimes overlap.

Colonialism: Oriental Treasure Hunts and
Exoticism: Oriental Trinkets

The West had its eye on the East as the land of wealth. The West expanded its political power by means of colonial rule from the middle East to south Asia, and eventually to the Far East. The notorious Opium war (1839-1842) between the Chinese and the British naval fleets is but one of many examples of Western expansion in the East. The West, with its relentless effort to colonize Asia, had brought home tremendous amounts of art work. This marked the beginning of the European exposure to the Eastern-style arts and treasures. However, since the West viewed Asia as its subject, most of the Asian cultural values were being reduced to mere exoticism. Colonialism, with its Eurocentric attitude, gave birth to European interest in the "mystique" of the Orient.

Colonialism kept this interest alive well into the twentieth century. Contact with strange peoples and foreign lands gave artists of many categories impulses to exoticism.²

Chinese and Japanese arts played a significant role in shaping European architectural design. In 1753, the palace of Queen Louisa Ulrika of Sweden was built after a Chinese-style pavilion. When Queen Louisa Ulrika first saw the palace, she made the following statement:

I was surprised suddenly to see a real fairy-land, for his majesty had ordered a Chinese pavilion to be built; the most beautiful ever to be seen. The body-guard dressed in Chinese clothes. My eldest son was at the entrance of the pavilion dressed as a Chinese prince, and was attended by gentleman in waiting attired as mandarins of civil rank.³

The majority of people thought of Asians in terms of geisha, samurai, and other romanticized images. For example, there was a display of Chinese art and furniture in a London exhibition in 1842. David Broomfield, in his Doctoral dissertation from University of Leeds "The Art Of Japan in Later Nineteenth Century Europe: Problems of Art Criticism and Theory" (1977), wrote about the impact the exhibition had on London society.

The exhibition gave an overall image of the Far East to hundreds of thousands of English people. It did this through the first-hand presentation of works of art and craft. It thus contributed greatly to the Western cultural myth of the Far East which developed in the mid-nineteenth century.⁴

Myths and misconceptions develop when items from a culture are displayed without any other contact with that culture.

At the same time that the exotic Asian novelties were spreading in Europe, theater practitioners utilized fragmented adaptations of Asian elements in their productions. As early as the sixteenth century, Western theater practitioners looked at exotic elements of Asian theater rather than at its theatrical ideology. In 1680 a play entitled Les Chinois was presented as an authentic Chinese play, even though, the play was "really an Italian Comedy with

a few pagodas thrown in,"⁵ and Chinese costumes were also used for court balls. In 1735, Father J. B. du Halde wrote Description of the Chinese Empire of Chinese Tartary. Du Halde's book includes a translation by Father de Prémare of the Chinese opera, The Orphan of the House of Tchao. De Prémare's translation, like so many others at this time, did not present Chinese opera accurately, mostly because he failed to translate the songs and the verses from the original opera.⁶ Another example of this attitude of exoticism towards Asian theater occurred in 1867, when French poet Ernest D. Hervilly wrote a play, La Belle Sainara. In this play, the characters' actions show the artificiality of their portrayal.

The charmingly quixotic behavior of the incomprehensible Japanese was manifested in this play by a character named Musmé, which in Japanese is not a name at all, but a noun meaning girl, daughter, maiden. Musmé is given to frequent and inexplicable pirouettes.⁷

La Belle Sainara was performed at the Paris Exposition in 1867. The scenery was filled with many flower pots holding all types of flowers. At the end of the play, a character read a French-style poem that was thinly disguised as Japanese Haiku.⁸ This play was a great success in its day, and reflected how Western societies viewed Japanese art and culture as mere exotica. In 1872, Saint-Saens wrote an opera, Princess Jaure, in which a Japanese theme was used; and, Judith Gautier used Japan as the scene for her novel Usupteur (1885). Many of these early theatrical productions would be thought of today as racist.

Oliver Impey sums up the mood of this period in his book Chinoiserie (1977).

Nowadays, Roco-Chinoiserie would be regarded as distinctly racist; it has a faintly derisory air that is comparable to the patronizing attitude that has been so criticized recently in such books as *Little Black Sambo*.⁹

All the plays of this period presented Japanese and Chinese cultures in an "artificial concept of Asian culture."¹⁰

Romanticism

The circulations and exhibitions of Asian arts and the condition of the newly industrialized Europe spurred a counter movement in the early nineteenth century, the Romantic movement. Unhappy with the condition of Europe, the Romantics turned to Asian arts as a source of their inspirations.

In the nineteenth century, interest in far Eastern art received greater impetus from "romantic exoticism"—that is, from the inclination of artists to condemn the "vulgarity" of industrial techniques.¹¹

For the Europeans, Asian art was equal to a simpler time (a non-industrialized time) in Europe. The painters chose Japanese arts' because they were objects of everyday life. European painters admired Japanese art because it was perceived of as being more pastoral than Western art. In Europe this movement was known as Art Nouveau (1890-1910). Art Nouveau was a reaction against the "bad taste of

industrial production and against its negative influence upon the esthetic sensibility of the public."¹² This group, even though it treated Asian art in terms of exoticism, is the first group of European artists who viewed Asian art with a degree of seriousness. They moved from mere exoticism to a serious attempt to understand Asian art forms.

A serious attempt to adapt Asian painting techniques and its aesthetic ideologies was done by Western painters of the impressionistic school, Manet (1862-1879), Whistler (1864-1877), Monet (1866- 1878), Degas (1866-1886). Monet painted a picture, La Japonaise, which shows his wife dressed in a kimono, holding a fan (1875-76), "a deliberately commercial venture into fashionable far Eastern bric brac which Monet later dismissed as rubbish!"¹³ This quotation, however, does not reflect the attitude of all the painters in 1875. Many painters such as Manet, Whistler, Degas, felt that Japanese and Chinese painting techniques had much to offer the painters of the 1800s. They felt a sense of freedom in Asian arts, a freedom that Western-style painting did not possess. New techniques, such as the use of the silhouette, diagonal composition, and composite formats became available. New subjects, such as women wearing kimonos and Japanese scenery, became the focal point of their art works. The combination of new techniques and ideologies influenced the painters' work. "The nineteenth century [painters] saw a dissolution of the absolute norms that had governed the previous era."¹⁴

Standard painting techniques were no longer absolute because Asian painting techniques had been introduced.

The feeling of exoticism started to develop into a valuing of Asian culture that went deeper than Asia's exotic exterior. Some impressionistic and symbolistic painters in the 1900s were interested in Japanese painting because of its use "of space that was free of all constructions based on perspective, drawing that was rhythmic rather than descriptive."¹⁵ Painters and theater artists increasingly "began to lose confidence in their own spiritual heritage and feel that there were other valuable world views and systems of values quite different from those of the West."¹⁶ For the first time, Western painters went to Japan to study Japanese art and religion. It is worth noting that the painters in this Romantic movement were the first group of Europeans who believed that the combination of the Eastern- and Western-style arts would bring about new vocabularies of artistic expression. Asian art's status had changed from mere decorative items to a source of creative imagination. This change of status set the stage for the following trend of European artist adapting Asian arts.

Post World War I: the Surrealists

Antonin Artaud's work, the Theater and Its Double, stands as the milestone of a European shift in perception of Asian

theater. Never before had a theater practitioner given serious attention to Asian theater and what it had to offer. Discontented with Western civilization itself, Artaud proposed a drastic change in the infrastructure of European theater by looking to the virtues of the Balinese theater. It is true that while he regards the Balinese theater highly, Artaud has a distorted view of what the Balinese theater is about. Despite this distortion he was able to address the problems of Western theater by comparing it to that of the Balinese. Artaud was convinced that the West had a lot to learn from the East. Artaud was one of the many directors who were being exposed to authentic Asian productions during the late twenties and thirties. More theatrical troupes were coming to Europe and America, so theater directors and actors could see performances of Chinese Opera, Japanese Kabuki, and Balinese dance dramas. These troupes influenced many of the adaptations that took place in Western theater. In 1928, Sergei Eisenstein, after he viewed Ichikawa Sadanji's troupe in Russia, used Kabuki techniques in his film montage. Meyerhold and Brecht both viewed Mei-Lang-fang's performance of Chinese Opera in 1935, which greatly influenced their works. Their types of adaptations share the similarity with the nineteenth century Romantics since both groups hoped to syncretize European- and Asian-style theaters. This movement occurred throughout the beginning of World War II, the war

which would redefine the West's perception of Asia and its people.

The East as Enemy: the Rise of Asian Military Power

The European concept of the gentle and submissive Asian was first challenged when the Japanese won the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. The Europeans could no longer think of the Japanese in the term of the exotic East. Japan had risen to the same rank as the European superpowers, that of Germany, England, and Russia. Japanese people and Japanese products were no longer thought of as being exotic.

In America, there was also a growing uneasiness about the immigrations of Japanese to California. Racial distrustfulness was a strong factor in California's treatment of Japanese immigrants. In 1905, the San Francisco Chronicle published a series of articles whose headlines were as follows: "Japanese a Menace to American Women", "Brown Men and Evil in the Schools," "the Yellow Peril-How the Japanese Crowded out the White Race," "Brown Artisans Steal the Brains of Whites."¹⁷ The film industry also participated in the anti-Japanese bandwagon, with such films as "Shadows of the West" (1920). "[This film] depicted Japanese immigrant farmers as spies posing a threat to the nation and sexual predators lying in wait for innocent white girls."¹⁸ In 1924,

Congress passed an Immigration Act that specifically excluded Japanese from any further immigration to the United States.

The anti-Japanese sentiment drastically intensified during World War II, resulted in the U. S. government's sending of Americans of Japanese descent to detention camps. There was much anti-Japanese propaganda such as a cartoon, in the News Chronicle (1942), of a Japanese soldier with highly exaggerated slanted eyes and buck teeth, carrying a long sword in one hand and the flag of Japan in the other, while running among the bodies of his victims.¹⁹ The Japanese were depicted "as butchers, as fanatics, as suicidal maniacs, as inhuman animals of war."²⁰

How does the theater of the 1939-1945 seasons reflect its environment? One thing for certain is the reduced popularity of Asian-theme plays during the war. One of the few plays that had any Asian elements in its performance was the musical Bloomer Girl (1944). In this musical there is a scene which is called the yellow pavilion, named after the *Kinkaku-ji* Temple (the Gold Pavilion) in Kyoto. The yellow pavilion in the musical looks more like a large umbrella than a pavilion. The musical's use of an Asian element during the war years shows that while Asians and Asian-theme plays were not portrayed on stage, stylized theatrical Asian elements, such as the pavilion, were still acceptable to a Western audience of 1944.

There were also many plays that reflected the World War II situation. The Day Will Come (1944) was set in Russian Isba and one of the characters was Hitler; The Streets are Guarded (1944) dramatized a U.S. Naval hospital on an island (Japan); Lower North (1944), a Navy comedy, and Home of the Brave (1945), depicted a war time drama, located on a Pacific island (Japan). There were many Army and Navy comedies because these helped people laugh at a time when they needed relief from the pressures of the war.

The Japanese defeat in 1945 resulted in the United States' occupation of Japan for seven years. During this time the Americans, while launching its post-war reconstruction programs in Japan, gathered and learned many facets of Japanese culture. The occupation of the U. S. military in the Far East would bring many valuable Eastern ideologies and arts home.

It is interesting to note that the West drew a line between Chinese and Japanese plays. In 1946, there was a very popular Chinese-style musical, Lute Song, which is adapted from a famous Chinese Play (Pi-Pa-Ki). This play is presented more directly than the adaptation of the Japanese yellow pavilion in Bloomer Girl. One possible reason for this is that China was our ally during the war and Japan was our enemy. When a play is adapted directly, the viewing culture feels that the Asian people have a valuable culture, while Effect Adaptation has been used to present propaganda about

Asian people by taking elements of Asian theater and presenting them in a distorted way.

Sixties: Searches and Experiments

The Post-war United States was filled with confidence. However, the social values that were held in the United States were questioned strongly by the post-war generation. During the 1960s, there was another revival of interest in Asian culture because people felt dissatisfied with their society. The 1960s was a time when young people were looking for an alternative lifestyle, a time when diverse ideas from the East were often used. Many youths adopted Asian culture in a superficial way. "The borrowing society copies patterns of behavior as it apprehends them, usually without understanding their original culture context."²¹ Many people rebelled against the prevailing Western beliefs by adapting Asian concepts without understanding Asian culture. Asian conventions were chosen because many young people thought that Asia had a spiritual wisdom that the West lacked. Many young people felt the need to change the situation in their society. One of the ways to achieve this was by adapting the elements of Asian culture to their own culture.

The 1960s counterculture movement was focusing on "a Dionysian, ecstatic, mystic and bodily [experience]."²² The motivations of the "hippies" can be divided into two

groups. One group assumed that Eastern spiritual beliefs coincided with their advocated principles. The other group wanted to use Eastern beliefs as a tool to go against Western beliefs. (The reason this thesis divides the "hippies" movement into two groups is to focus on their different attitudes towards Asian culture: while both value Asian culture, they have different motivations for feeling this way.)

The first group, started before the "hippies" movement, had come into full force in 1959. One of the "Beat" leaders, Jack Kerouac, who had traveled to Japan and India, recognized that the ideology of his group shared more similarity to Asian religions than to Western religions; his goal was to reach nirvana and to end his sufferings.²³ He introduced the principles that he had learned in Asia to his followers.

The second group was represented by Ken Kesey, who said that the goal of his group, the Merry Pranksters, was to make America into an "electric Tibet."²⁴ He chose the East because it is supposed to be the direct opposite of the West.²⁵ The young people in this movement turned to Eastern beliefs because they challenged the prevailing political beliefs.

[The young people] embrace an alien tradition using it as a standard against which the religion in their own backgrounds can be criticized and reversed.²⁶

During the Sixties, many Asian theater groups came to the United States. The Grand Kabuki of Japan (1960) was one such group; they performed Musme Dojoji, a well-known Kabuki play

plus many other plays. There was also a group from China who performed two Chinese Operas, The Beautiful Bait and The White Snake, before Western audiences in 1963.

Along with authentic productions of Asian groups mentioned above, there were also Direct Adaptation productions. One popular Direct Adaptation was the Institute for Advanced Studies in Theater Arts' production, The Butterfly Dream, which was performed in 1966. This production was a Direct Adaptation of a Chinese Opera. It was translated by A. C. Scott, a well-known expert on Chinese Opera. ISTA was a product of the 1960s cultural awareness. ISTA treated Asian theater as a complicated art form. The group aimed to study systematically the theater of other cultures.

[The study] made it possible for one to understand one's own culture in a more precise way. By means of confrontation with what appears to be foreign, one educates one's way of seeing and renders it both participatory and detached. ²⁷

The Sixties also produced many conventional adaptations. On Broadway in 1960 there was a revival of Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado, an Effect Adaptation Asian-theme opera; in 1961 Rodgers and Hammerstein's Flower Drum Song, a Chinese Effect Adaptation; and a Broadway production of 1963, Tennessee Williams' the Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore, which was set in Italy but presented a character who is dressed in a Kimono and wears a Japanese-style wig.

The Rise of the Pacific-Rim Economic Boom

Today, Asia comes into focus once more, but this time by its economic progress. Japan's economic progress has made Western countries more aware of Japanese culture and theater. There are many examples of plays that have dealt with Japan's economic progress. For example, in the Kabuki musical Pacific Overtures (1976), the music and lyrics were composed by Stephen Sondheim, and the production was produced by Harold Prince. This play presents the history of Japan from its forced opening to the economic Western Japan of today. In the first scene of the play, Admiral Commodore Perry's naval presence makes Japan open its door to the West after over 200 years of isolation. The end of this play shows a Japan that has lost its culture through Westernization, a Japan that can only produce a gaudy imitation of Western culture. This is reflected by the bright clothing and fluorescent street signs present in the last scene. This play carries anti-Western sentiments, "the condemnation of Western imperialism."²⁸ This play questions America's role in Japan's economic progress and how this rapid industrialization has affected Japan negatively.

Surprisingly, in the 1970s some productions still reflected an earlier exotic attitude towards Asian culture. For example, in the musical The Emerald Slippers (1970), the characters were named Blossom Flower, Magic Mirror, Truth box, Liar box, Prince Won Ton, Chow Mien, Butterfly. These

characters' names are reminiscent of an earlier time when Effect Adaptation was used without discretion and presented stereotypes of Asian culture.

Another element that needs to be discussed here is the term Multi-culturalism. Multi-culturalism is a condition in which cultural identity depends on contact with other cultures, separate yet interdependent. Multi-culturalism brings awareness of other cultures. As Rick Simonson states in his book, Multicultural Literacy (1988).

Other cultures reveal ancestry and knowledge that has bearing on who we are and where we are going. By understanding more about our immediate locale, the native soil we stand on and the other living things that show our world, we expand our imagination and expand our culture.²⁹

Through multi-culturalism, some theater groups have become more specialized. This is reflected in the different theatrical companies on Broadway. The Pan-Asian Repertory presents Asian-American situation plays and Asian plays such as Shogun Macbeth (1984); the Irish Repertory presents Yeats' plays and other Irish playwrights'; the Negro Ensemble Company presents African and Black American plays; the Jewish Repertory performs plays that deal with Jewish life; and, the Puerto Rican Traveling theater presents plays about the Puerto Rican experience.

Conclusion of Western Trends in
Adaptations of Asian Theater and Arts

As is shown by what occurred in sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century Europe, early superficial contact with other cultures often results in exoticism. In regard to the types of adaptation, one can see that in the early period, theater practitioners tended to treat Asian art forms as exotic. Many times the productions used only fragments of Asian theater to create a desired effect in the audience, such as the use of a gong or Asian masks. Effect Adaptation is, therefore, the most common form of Western adaptation of Asian theater. One can still see remnants of that attitude in many Hollywood and Broadway Japanoise and Chinoiserie productions. Effect Adaptations also flourished during wartimes. It is easy to ridicule one's enemy by presenting only fragments of an enemy's culture. This may be the reason that Effect Adaptation has a reputation of distorting other cultures.

Romanticism both in the nineteenth century (in the tradition of Art Nouveau painters), and in the Sixties (in the tradition of Ken Kesey), fostered the idea of a Utopian art form and ideology which would be created through the blending of Eastern and Western cultural elements. In this thesis, such attempts to combine Eastern and Western art forms are defined as Syncretic Adaptation.

Artaud and Brecht also shared this idea; they believed that by combining the two opposites, they could invent a total theater. This idea has been over-shadowed by the introduction of multi-culturalism, which promotes the coexistence of each culture side-by-side, without succumbing to any norms or standardization. The theater practitioners who believe in this idea prefer to leave the original art form as it is; they welcome the concept of Direct Adaptation.

This thesis aims to discuss chapter-by-chapter the different types of adaptations. As one can see by the shifts in attitudes among the theater practitioners in the different periods, all the directors have different motivations for adapting Asian theater. Different motivations for adaptation require different approaches. The following section discusses Western directors' motivations and approaches for adapting Asian conventions.

Directors' Motivations for Adapting

Asian Conventions to their Productions

The first reason that directors become interested in adapting Asian conventions to their productions is the exoticism of Asian theater. One such director is Peter Brook, who was looking for a way to produce a new form of theater when he directed Mahabharata. Brook initially was drawn to the Indian theater because of its exoticism. He described his

first impression of Indian theater with words such as "unforgettable shock" and "strange coded message"³⁰ (see p.1). His first impression gave way to a deeper interest in Indian theater and culture. Exoticism, nonetheless, was the first facet of the Indian theater that sparked his interest.

The second reason is some directors feel that our theater needs to go back to its ritualized roots, and one way of achieving this is by looking at the ritual elements of Asian theatrical conventions. Artaud wanted to bring the ritualistic elements from Balinese dance into the Western theater. He stated in his book The Theater and its Double, (1938)

The Balinese, who have a vocabulary of gesture and mime for every circumstance of life, reinstate the superior worth of theatrical conventions, demonstrate the forcefulness and greater emotional value of a certain number of perfectly learned and above all masterfully applied conventions.³¹

Artaud felt that Western theater should follow the Balinese example and become more spiritual and ritualistic. Artaud was interested in going under the surface of drama and getting back to a ritualized start. He wanted to create a more physical theater that does not rely on words alone, a theater that also allows the actors to express meanings by the use of their bodies. Artaud wanted his theater to have the ritualistic elements that he thought Western theater had lost. For him, the Balinese art form was ideal for this purpose. Bali is a place where the physical and spiritual worlds still

coexisted in the theater. They use the stories from great Hindu epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana of Balinese adaptations, and added their local religious elements to the performances. Artaud wanted to eliminate the division between art and life, to bring life back to the theater. As Pronko states in Theater East and West:

The spectacle of Balinese theater which draws upon dance, song, pantomime--and a little of the theater as we understand it in the Occident--restores the theater, by means of ceremonies of indubitable age, and well-tried efficacy, to its original destiny which it presents as a combination of all these elements fused in a perspective of hallucination and fear. . . . Artaud was convinced that the path to rebirth and renewal in the theater lay to the East.³²

Within this group of directors who want the Western theater to become more ritualistic, there are those who insist upon recreating Asian theater in the West. One such person is Pronko, who believes that Western actors should spend time learning about Asian arts, first as an exercise, and finally as an art. For Pronko, the most reasonable thing to do is to produce Asian plays verbatim. He believes that only through this can Western actors and directors learn any meaningful theatrical techniques from the East.

There is another group that relies more on creative impulses. They believe that by mixing the elements of Asian arts in their productions, they will revitalize Western theater. Brecht integrated Chinese Opera's techniques into his theatrical productions without having directed an

authentic Chinese Opera. Each group has its own reasons which will be explored in the following chapters.

All the groups have different motivations for adapting Asian conventions to their productions, but their need to adapt Asian conventions stems from their dissatisfaction with Western theater. By looking at the directors' motivations, one can discover why directors want to adapt Asian conventions, and how they approach adapting them. The following are the different approaches in relation to the three adaptation types.

Directors' Approaches to Adaptation

There are two ways that directors adapt Asian theatrical conventions to their Western productions. One way is the textual approach. This occurs when a director has not seen (or has seen only a limited amount of) the productions of the art form that he or she is adapting. The director bases his or her adaptation on the text alone (Yeats). The use of the text alone can lead to misconceptions about the Asian conventions and what meanings the conventions convey.

The second way is by using the visual approach. The visual approach occurs when a director only sees a number of performances of an Asian genre and bases his or her adaptation on his or her assumptions about the conventions and what they mean (Artaud). This happens many times in Asian theater since

some of the Asian plays do not have a written text. This also happens when the art form is performance-oriented and not textual-oriented. The visual approach does not prevent a director from having a misconception about Asian theater. A Director can reduce his or her chance of misinterpreting the original art by studying the Asian theater's conventions.

Direct Adaptation is developed through both the visual approach and the textual approach, because in Direct Adaptation the director must know all the textual elements and all the performance elements to produce a duplication of the original production. The visual approach is the most often used approach in Effect Adaptation. This is not because the directors cannot study the textual materials (except in the past when translated texts were not available) but because their interest lies in other areas of performance. The directors want to explore the more visual and physical side of Asian theater rather than to study the subtlety of the textual elements. However, textual elements are sometimes used in this category, but they are not the main focus of the production. For example, Yeats' use of the more startling Noh masks overshadowed his use of the subtle Noh chorus. In Syncretic Adaptation, directors have used the visual approach when they adapt Asian conventions. The difference between the textual and visual approaches lies in the director's objectives and his or her choice of adaptation. Of course, the textual approach has been used in combination with the

visual approach. Considering the availability of audio-visual materials today, a director can view the performances of Asian theater. There is, however, a limitation in the use of video tapes. What is presented is often limited and many times the plays are not shown in their entirety. As with any kind of taped theater, much is lost since the viewers do not see live actors performing before them on stage. The play, when filmed, cannot be seen in its theatrical format since, many times, the blocking must be changed to accommodate the use of the camera. In theater, the audience has the freedom to choose what it wants to see on stage, while in film, the audience is shown what the film director has decided to film or tape.

Since many Asian plays and taped performances are now available, directors are exposed more to both the text and the performing elements of Asian theater. It is true that translations of any kind (language, media, etc.) have limitations, since it is difficult for directors to know if the translation is true to the original; while taped theater and translation are not identical to live performance and the original text, they are the next best thing.

Asian theatrical forms have been adapted to Western theater in many ways. In the following chapters, this thesis discusses the methods which Western theater practitioners use when they adapt Chinese Opera, Japanese Noh, and Kabuki theatrical conventions.

CHAPTER TWO

Direct Adaptation

There are two types of Direct Adaptation: 1) Direct Adaptation in which the text is changed but the play's plot is the same as the original production (such as Mishima's Lady Aoi); and 2) Direct Adaptation, when a play is written and/or produced to follow as closely as possible to the original production from another culture. A play in this category can also be written by a Westerner who follows the text of an Asian play. An example of this is the opera Curlew River (1964), written by an Englishman, Benjamin Britten (this will be discussed in more detail in the last section of this chapter).

Objectives and Approaches to Direct Adaptation

The objectives and approaches to Direct Adaptation involve the following: the awareness of the Asian theatrical conventions and the culture that produced the conventions, and the act of duplicating the conventions.

Awareness. In Direct Adaptation, awareness of the theatrical conventions from Asian theater is important because if directors want to duplicate Asian productions, they have to know the conventions and what meanings they signify in order to represent a production from another

culture accurately. This happens through an awareness of the culture that developed the theatrical conventions. Theater is part of society, so in order to be aware of a culture's theater one should learn about the culture in which the theater originates. Theater cannot always be directly presented if taken from its context.

There are those who assert that contextual awareness is not necessary and that the performance can be understood on its own terms. However, if directors want to produce a "direct" production, they need to learn first what the native audience sees, what meanings it perceives in the original work. Without this knowledge, directors cannot define the nature of their productions in relation to the original performances. For example, when directing Shakespearean plays in general, the director can choose to direct them according to his or her creative impulse. However, if he or she chooses to direct them as the plays were performed in Elizabethan England, he or she needs to study the period dress, the period pronunciation, and so forth. It is the same as putting on a performance of Death of a Salesman in Bali, where some of the elements (such as family relationships and human emotions) will be understood by the Balinese audience; but without an awareness of American cultural codes (such as the life of a traveling salesperson), the interpretation of the play will be very different from the American audience's interpretation.

Duplicating the conventions. In Direct Adaptation, the act of duplicating becomes the end in itself. Some of the elements can be more easily transferred than others. Generally, the duplication of the original genre's physical elements, such as the basic movements, the make-up, and costume construction are easier than the duplication of its performing elements, such as acting techniques. In the case of Kabuki costumes and headdress, the attempt to duplicate the conventions is relatively easy compared to the actual use of those conventions. The Kabuki costumes and headdress weigh over twenty pounds. An actor would have to spend months of training to be able to achieve the basic stage movements without strain. For example, in Kabuki the Onnagata (a female impersonator) must gracefully walk and dance. A Western male actor would not be accustomed to performing such movements. Kabuki actors start training at "fourteen to seventeen years of age,"¹ and from that time they train constantly so they will be able to perform the complex movements to perfection. To perform more than the basic movements, a Western actor needs a longer rehearsal time than most productions would allow, so only the basic movements are practical in most Direct Adaptations.

In the process of duplication, there are some elements that are transferable and other elements that cannot be transferred. The following is a discussion of each element in Direct Adaptation.

Non-Transferable Elements

One non-transferable element is the native audience, whose cultural background is part of the performance. It is non-transferable because the plays are part of the audience's past, something that they value. Without them the meaning of the play is changed. The Japanese or Chinese audience, for the most part, knows all the stories that are being presented before them. For example, most Chinese audiences know the stories and themes of Chinese Opera; they come to the performance to watch the individual actor's skillful dancing and singing.² Because the native audience would be impossible to duplicate, an attempt at total duplication would be futile.

The performance's meaning is changed when alienated from its native environment. The meaning that occurs in theater is conceived by the members of the theatrical community: the director, actors, and the audience; each member assigns significance to the meaning of the production. Without one or more of these members, the theater cannot adhere to its original meaning.

Transferable Elements

What elements are transferable? What is common among all transferable elements? Physical elements are the easiest to transfer because they are tangible. By studying the make-up

design, stage design, or costume design, directors can recreate the conventions to a degree, but they must study the right usage and context of the conventions. The right usage and context of the conventions are determined by reading how the conventions are used in the performance, by training in performance techniques, and by viewing the performances themselves.

The director borrows conventions directly from the original production. For example, a wicked male character in Kabuki would wear more red make-up than the other characters do, because the redder signifies wickedness.³ If this fact is not known, the choice of make-up color would not follow the convention of the original art form. A director who wanted to stage a Direct Adaptation would follow all the conventions according to their original intention. Thus, a Western Kabuki production must signify the wickedness of a character by red make-up, regardless of whether the Western audience perceives red as the color of wickedness. In Direct Adaptation, directors put their priority on an accurate representation of the conventions over the audience's understanding of the message, because the director's goal in Direct Adaptation is to duplicate the original conventions and present a production as close as possible to the Asian play. Next, this thesis looks into each transferable element.

What is Being Transferred in Translations?

The story and the plot, while they are transferable, present many different problems. Since the text is translated, the subtle structure (exact lines, etc.) are many times lost while the plot and story can be adapted easily if they conform to "global" structural categories. Of course, such plots involve a universal theme, and are not attached to the concerns of one culture. However, theater, in more than one way, is connected with its culture. When one compares theatrical plot with that of an epic for instance, one sees that theater, by its use of actors, limited space, etc., is more provincial and topic-oriented in its presentation.

The translation of the text, if not precise, will change the meanings of the original play. Many playwrights have worried about this situation. For example, Anton Chekhov was worried that his plays might be misunderstood, and felt that plays from one culture were non-transferable to another culture. As Patrice Davis states in her essay, "Problems of Translation for the Stage: Interculturalism and Post Modern Theatre," there are three kinds of translators. One group follows the original text to the letter "by trying too hard to maintain the source culture would end up by making it unreadable to the target culture."⁴ The second group of translators do the opposite by "smoothing out differences, by normalizing the cultural situation to the point that we can no

longer comprehend the origin of the all familiar text."⁵ The third group falls between the other two groups by "not translating words or meaning that would not be understood in Western culture."⁶ For example, when Jean-Claude Carrière translated Mahabharata,

In refusing to translate certain Indian words like dharma or kshartra, I want to point out that the French language and way of thinking cannot cover everything.⁷

A director in Direct Adaptation chooses the translation that is closer to the meaning of the original text. Of the three translation types, two are the products of direct adaptations. The translator in the first group follows the text to the letter; and, the translator in the third group does not translate words that do not have an exact meaning in Western language. Directors who use Direct Adaptation, can choose between these two types of translations. One type of director would feel that it is important not to leave out Asian words from the text even if the audience cannot understand their meanings; another type of director would feel the importance of the audience's understanding of the text. This group warranted the changing of some of the words in the translation. The second translation type is a Syncretic translation whose process is the same as Syncretic Adaptation. By being aware of the types of translation, directors can determine the degree of textual alteration in the translated piece. Directors' awareness of textual alteration assists

them in choosing the type of adaptation they might use in their productions, since textual alteration dictates the type of adaptation that the directors will use. For example, if a director's objective is to recreate the "emotion" of an Asian play instead of duplicating its outward appearance, his or her choice of translation should not be based on a word-for-word accuracy of the translated text. The director should base his or her decision on how accurate the translated emotions are, when compared to the emotions of the original text.

Many times translation styles have attached very different interpretations to the same text. The Japanese Classics Translation Committee of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai and Arthur Waley have both interpreted the character of Rokujo as a living person. This corresponds with Mishima's Rokujo, who is also a living person. Ernest Fenollosa translated Aoi No Uye very differently from the Japanese Classics Translation Committee of Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai's and Arthur Waley's translations. Fenollosa's translation treated the Noh play as a "psychological drama."⁸ In his translation, Rokujo is "a phantom of Awois No Uyo's [sic] own jealousy [and not a person]."⁹ Fenollosa attempted to make the play appear logical in a Western fashion, by making the play into a "psychological drama." There are problems with his interpretation of the play. As Arthur Waley states in No Plays of Japan (1957),

Fenollosa seems to have misunderstood the play and read into it complications and confusions which do not exist.¹⁰

The characteristics of the characters can also be changed through translation. This is evident in the two translations of the Noh play Aoi No Uye, one by Arthur Waley and the other by the Japanese Classics Translation Committee of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai. The character of Rokujo in Arthur Waley's translation does not feel sad about having to appear as a ghost: "Yet none comes to me, that is not in the flesh,"¹¹ while in the Japanese Classics Translation Committee's translation the character feels sad about having to appear as a living ghost but she cannot help herself: "Having no form, people pass me by."¹² Obviously by changing the wording of the character's lines, the translators also change the meaning of the play.

When a director chooses a translation, it is necessary to recognize that a translation is not a "transference" of a culture, but a "modification" of it. If the director cannot read the original language, the director can look at the background of the individual who translated the play. Looking at the above examples, the first translation of Aoi No Uye was done by a well-known Western expert on Noh theater, Arthur Waley; the second translation was done by the Japanese Classics Translation Committee of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, a Japanese group that wanted to bring Noh plays to

a Western audience. To compare the two translations, one must look at their respective beliefs about theatrical elements.

For instance, Noh theater often presents ghosts and demons in a forgiving way, as beings caught in something over which they have no control. They desire only peace. This idea is reflected in many Noh plays. In the Noh play Sanemori, a ghost haunts the battlefield where he died. A priest performs a ceremony that sets the ghost free. The ghost is no longer forced to haunt the living; he can now be at peace. This theme is a standard theme presented in Noh plays. This type of theme is presented in Komachi and the Hundred Nights, Shokun, and many other Noh plays. From this point-of-view, the Japanese Classics Translation Committee of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai's translation would be closer to the original's story/plot, because the authentic atmosphere dominates the adaptation. This translation, like Mishima's Lady Aoi, has the same supernatural atmosphere which is invoked by the actors' actions (such as Rokujo's ability to strangle Lady Aoi without touching her) and the ghostly underlying theme (Rokujo as a living ghost who seeks revenge). In both the Japanese Classics Translation Committee of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai's translation and in Mishima's play, the source of supernatural events is the character Rokujo. In Mishima's play, Rokujo uses her supernatural powers to kill Lady Aoi; in Aoi No Uye, she turns into a demon and then repents torturing her victim.

The Transference of Theatrical Movements

Most movements in Asian performance are very complex and stylized. It would be difficult to transfer precise movements down to the last detail. However, there are some movements that are easier to duplicate than others. For example, in Kabuki, when an actor does a tableau that is called mie, he wears a fierce expression, walks to the center of the stage and crosses his eyes. This action would be easy to duplicate on a surface level because of its exaggerated nature and its expression of general emotion. There are some movements that are more difficult to duplicate. In Kabuki, there is an underlying element called kata. Kata comes from generations after generations of actors performing the same patterns of movement; the actors refined kata through the years. The best the Western actor can do is to learn the less complex movements that portray general emotions. For example, in Kabuki the aragoto-style actor stands with one knee bent and the other leg spread wide in a diagonal line while holding a sword over his head, a stance easily learned by a Western actor. The actors in Japan start training at an early age. As children they start by handling props as they learn how to execute the complex and stylized movements of the characters, until they are able to execute the complex movements to perfection. In most cases, a Western actor could not produce

the same result as the Asian actor, when the Asian actor spends years learning the complex gestures and the Western actor only has a few months of rehearsal to learn these conventions.

The actors' cultural background also influences how the conventions are perceived and transmitted. Western actors need to make an effort by studying the culture in which the art form originates so that the actors understand the meanings and social decorums that underlie the conventions, not just the forms themselves.

Despite all the difficulties Western actors must face, many times a loss can also be a gain; the adapters also add new elements to the production. In the case of Direct Adaptation, new elements are gained because some of the original conventions are untransferable. Western actors who are presenting a play from another culture will sometimes present slight movement variations from the original movements, such as not arching the feet as high and not extending the arms as much as a Balinese dancer would, because the original movements are very complex. Out of this imperfect imitation, slight movement variations have to be added in order to maintain the original meaning. The following variations are examples of what is gained in Direct Adaptation: speech pattern changes, the Western audience, and a translated or changed text.

The Transference of Speech Patterns. Most of the time, speech patterns from Asian theater are too difficult for a Western actor to imitate, so the speech patterns have to be changed. As in the production of Irraku Sennin (1964), a Noh theater adaptation, performed by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Theater Arts, the American actors failed to imitate the Japanese patterns of speech. William Packard adapted the text to follow the Japanese syllables, but some of the syllables were elongated, so he had to replace them with English syllables that could also be elongated.¹³ This occurred because in Noh theater the lines are chanted, so some syllables must be suitable for syllabic elongation.

Audience: the Transferred Performance's Counterpart. The audience is the counterpart that perceives what meanings are being transmitted by the performance. When certain gestures or other elements from Asian theater are performed, a Western audience may not perceive the same meaning as the native audience. The Western audience will add its own perceptions and meanings to the production, so the meaning of the adapted play would be changed. For example, in Chinese Opera, gestures that represent fear in women characters (the character kneels, crosses her arms, and looks downward) could be seen by a Western audience as submissive (not fearful) behavior. This different perception occurs because each culture attaches its own meanings to the same stimuli. This different perception also occurs in societies. For example,

in the United States, gifts are often unwrapped before the giver, while in Asia this would never happen because it is thought of as bad manners to open a gift before the giver: it is "the thought that counts," not the value of the gift.

The Translation of the Text. When a text is translated, some meanings are lost and some other meanings are added. These added meanings can make an Asian work more approachable to the actors and the audience. Certain translations are more approachable than others. Such translations are those that do not include foreign words which have no meaning to a Western audience.

Western Limitations of Adaptations

Western culture imposes limits on the adapting culture's conventions, because of the Western perceptions of time and resources. Many Westerners feel that a four-hour performance is too long to sit through so when these plays are adapted they are cut to fit into the Western concept of a play's length. Also taken into consideration is the training time which in most Western-style rehearsals is too short to learn all the conventions needed in a direct production. The actors' and audiences' backgrounds, as mentioned earlier, also pose limitations on the directors.

A director must weigh between what the actors, the audience, and the director can understand, and to what extent he or she

wishes to adhere to the original conventions. These factors are what influence the transferability of the conventions.

Direct Adaptation as a Means
to Gain Another Culture's Insight

By valuing and being aware of other cultures, the director and the actor can prescribe the meanings the playwright intended. By watching Asian theatrical performances, one gains an insight into another culture's attitudes. For example, in Kabuki, women characters are represented by certain conventions: the character of the courtesan who jealously poisons her protector reflects the Japanese men's perception of the ideal women in the Tokugawa period. In the Tokugawa period, the teachings of Buddha and Confucius were used and women were thought of as evil, and it was also thought that women needed moral training to rid themselves of their evilness.¹⁴

Asian acting techniques can also portray actual social customs. For example, in Chinese Opera the Ching Hsi actor walks as a bound-foot Chinese lady would walk. This social custom of foot binding lasted from the Shang dynasty (twelfth century B. C. to 1914). As a result, women could not leave their houses without assistance and, therefore, were powerless. Theater embodies social values, so by studying theater, the societies' structure can be revealed.

In Asian theater, meanings are achieved through physical, non-verbal means that are units of emotion. Units of emotion produce the actions, but they are not the sources of the actions. For example, in Chinese Opera, when a character puts her face to her sleeve, she is symbolizing the act of crying. A feeling of sadness is perceived by the audience but not her psychological motivations for the sadness.

The object of the Chinese drama is not to recount events but to express emotions and the object of the acting is not to reproduce action but to invoke feelings.¹⁵

These meanings are achieved through physical means. In Asian theater, the dance movements are separated from the plot:

Without the music they would be complete dramas, without the actor's speeches, they would be complete dances.¹⁶

A pure form of theater is what is sought in Asian theater; this is done by separating the dance movements from the plot. What is meant by pure form is that the dance and the spoken drama are separate units that do not mix as in Western musicals. Each theatrical element of a certain action (crying for instance) can be singled out. (The crying-tear-shedding and the crying-noise-making can be separated to focus on each aspect of crying.)

The main sources of meanings in most Western theater are created through the use of words, while in Asian theater, the audience already has the preconception of the play's meanings; what the audience comes to see is the performers' acting

styles. Through stylized acting technique, an actor can use a single object to create varied emotions in the audience. For example, in Kabuki the use of a fan can signify many emotions. A fan can be a stern weapon, a Samurai sword; it can represent the gentle motion of tea pouring ceremony; and, when it is used as a dipper which a young girl dips into the ocean for the making of salt, it can convey sensuality. The native audience would know what the actor's action symbolizes, whereas a non-native audience may not.

Examples of Direct Adaptation

Next, this chapter discusses two productions which fall into this category by focusing on certain outstanding elements and analyzing how they fit into the Direct Adaptation category. The first example is Mishima's Lady Aoi (1957), a play that was adapted from the Noh play Aoi No Uye (1440).

Lady Aoi

Mishima incorporated a Western point-of-view and style of writing to Noh plays. He wrote with introspection as a person alienated from his culture. Mishima, while he is Japanese, is also very Western, so his work falls into an Adaptation category. This is because Mishima, a Westernized Japanese, held a Western romantic image of Japanese culture; he saw his

country as a nation of Samurai warriors and Bushidò. Mishima's character reflects an inner conflict between his Eastern roots and his Western education. Out of this inner conflict, he saw the same kind of conflict in modern Japanese society. To Mishima, Japan lost not only the war, but also its cultural identity. He believed that "everyone in Japan was running after money, the old spiritual tradition had vanished; materialism is the order of the day [because of Westernization]." ¹⁷ In reaction to this, Mishima looked to the past when Japan was powerful, and attempted to go back to the old (Bushidò) values. Mishima's motivations for adapting his play as a Direct Adaptation are complex, and comes from his nationalistic beliefs about Japan.

The translation of Aoi No Uye that will be used to analyze Mishima's Lady Aoi is by the Japanese Classics Translation Committee of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai. This translation was chosen for analysis because it is what a Japanese authority believes to be the standard interpretation of this play.

Yukio Mishima adapted this play into a more modern setting while still maintaining the story line and structure of the original Noh play. Mishima's Noh plays were produced by Bungakuza, a Shingeki company. (Shingeki theatrical groups acted in Western style as a revolt against the tight rules of the classical Japanese art forms). His fascination with Noh

theater was also based on his own death wish, a wish that the violent beauty of Noh theater reinforced.

Beneath its mask that beauty must conceal death for someday, just as surely, it will finally lead me away to destruction and silence.¹⁸

In 1970, Mishima, with the statement that he was willing to die for the Emperor and constitutional reforms, stormed into the army self-defense force office with his followers (the Shield Society) to make their demands known. After his attempt failed, he performed seppuku. Mishima wanted his death to make a great visual impact (like a theatrical event) by making sure that it attracted great attention from the mass media.

Mishima's Objectives and Approaches

Mishima often went to see Noh performances, he was aware of the textual and performance elements of Noh theater, but he chose to adapt Aoi No Uye and other Noh plays by text alteration which kept the basic plot of the original play but updated the play's situation with modern details. His objective was that through the use of modern Noh plays he would make Noh theater more accessible to the modern Japanese audience, many of whom have never seen a Noh performance. The theatrical elements that he used in his adaptation included the text and blocking.

Mishima's adaptation is textual, for it has the basic plot of the original play plus added characters and a modern setting. His text is similar but not identical to the original. There is the same feeling of the supernatural that occurs in the Noh play. The main supernatural force is the character of Mrs. Rokujo, who appears in both the Japanese Classics Translation Committee of Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai's translation of the original play and Mishima's adaptation. In both plays she is a living ghost. The character of Rokujo in both Aoi No Uye and The Lady Aoi has the same traits with some variations, such as Rokujo's feeling of no remorse in Mishima's play and Rokujo's feeling of fear in Aoi No Uye. In both plays, Rokujo has the same feeling of hate against Lady Aoi. Rokujo projects her hatred through supernatural means. In the Noh play she creeps towards the bed and hits the head of the pillow with her fan while saying: "Say what you will I must strike her now!"¹⁹ In Mishima's adaptation she touches Aoi's throat and says:

Aoi will dream she is being strangled. A rush of blood comes to her face, the breath is choked. Her hand and feet writhe in anguish.²⁰

Rokujo's blocking has symbolic and supernatural meanings. Rokujo's power comes from her strong emotion through which she can influence others by her will. Examples of Rokujo's supernatural power from The Lady Aoi text are the following: when Rokujo holds her hands over Lady Aoi's face, "Aoi is dreaming that her face has become hideous to look

at,"²¹ and when she touches Lady Aoi's throat, she says, "if now I gently touch my hand to her throat, Aoi will dream she is being strangled."²² Lady Aoi reacts to these actions by crying out in pain.

Rokujo's character development in the Aoi No Uye text is different from that of The Lady Aoi text. In the Aoi No Uye text, Rokujo repents and spares Lady Aoi's life, while in Mishima's play, Rokujo kills Lady Aoi without regrets. Mishima did not want the audience to feel sorry for Rokujo in any way; he wanted the audience to sympathize with Lady Aoi. Unlike the Aoi No Uye text, Mishima's play does not direct the sympathy towards Rokujo. This fact is shown by the ending dialogue. The first quotation is from the Noh play, and the second is from Mishima's adaptation.

Rokujo: How fearful is the chanting of the Sutra!
My end at last has come. Never again will [I]
come as an evil spirit.²³

Rokujo: Try to get a hold of yourself! You're not
in love with Aoi. Look at me. Make no mistake.
You're in love with me. With Me!²⁴

Mishima wanted the audience's sympathy to remain with Lady Aoi. He did this by making Rokujo very evil, so that the death of Lady Aoi is acceptable to the audience. By doing this, her supernatural powers are shown as being stronger than the same character in the Aoi No Uye text. Mishima's feeling of Japan's loss of culture is shown by the different ending of his adaptation. In the original play, Rokujo repents through her Buddhist beliefs while in Mishima's play there are no

beliefs to save Lady Aoi from her death. The values (such as a strong belief in Buddhism) that Japan held in the past were perceived as lost by Mishima.

There are many new elements that Mishima added to his play that were not in the original play. Since Mishima wanted to retain the supernatural atmosphere, while at the same time modernizing the play, he added new elements to offset the elements that he lost through the modernization of the text. For example, in Mishima's play, Lady Aoi is performed by a living person; while, in the original Noh play, she was represented by a kimono. Also at the end of the play, Rokujo cannot put on the horned Aoi No Ue Deigan demon mask that signifies her true nature, since Mishima's play is contemporary in setting. Mishima had to find other means to portray these stylized supernatural elements. Mishima has added new elements that take the place of the old elements. The new elements are Western in content (such as the telephone and the sailboat); they are used in such a way that they create the same supernatural atmosphere as in the Noh play. Mishima's play starts with a sense of mystery. This occurs when the nurse informs Hikaru of the nightly visitor that comes to his wife's room late at night.

Nurse: That strange visitor who comes here every night. . . . It's always late, around this time, because the visitor isn't free any earlier.²⁵

Also in this first scene, the supernatural element of the telephone is introduced. The telephone is the central

supernatural focus during the play. Throughout the play the telephone's presence is felt as a threatening element of the unknown. In the play the telephone rings three times: 1) in the opening section of the play when the nurse is introducing the plot; as the telephone rings the nurse says "it often rings that way about this time of night;"²⁶ 2) with the first entrance of Rokujo, the ring of the telephone takes on a sinister tone to indicate that all is not well; 3) at the end of the play telephone is used as an unmasking device just like in the Noh play when Rokujo throws down her fan and begins to slip off her embroidered robe and changes into the horned Aoi No Ue Deigan, revealing her true nature. In Mishima's adaptation, the telephone is used to reveal Rokujo's true nature in the same way. Rokujo, whom the audience has just seen on stage, is really a living ghost. Hikaru calls Rokujo at her home, waking her from her sleep: "Yes, the voice is certainly hers . . . then what I saw was a living ghost."²⁷ Right after this, the ghost returns for her gloves and exits. Then Hikaru exits. The voice of Rokujo is heard coming from the telephone, as Lady Aoi reaches for it and dies.

Mishima introduces the character of Hikaru to bring out more strongly the supernatural atmosphere of the play. For example, when Rokujo holds Hikaru's hand he says, "your hand is like ice."²⁸ Later in the play, she holds him by the knees and he says, "It's funny. It doesn't feel as if a human being

were holding me, and yet I can't move my feet."²⁹ In this way the audience discovers that Rokujo is not what she seems.

The theme of dreams along with supernatural influences are introduced by Mishima when he has Rokujo put Hikaru under a spell in which he thinks that he is on a sailboat with Rokujo, back in the past when he was not married to Lady Aoi. During this, she tries to make him confess that he still loves her. At the same time, Rokujo is still torturing Lady Aoi with her supernatural power. In this scene, Rokujo reveals what she has done and what she really is:

I wouldn't die, but I would certainly kill her. My spirit would leave my body even while I was still alive and it would go to torture her. My living ghost would not cease until it killed her. She poor creature, would die haunted night after night by an evil spirit.³⁰

The spell is broken after Lady Aoi cries out in pain and Hikaru is finally able to reject Rokujo.

The set from this scene reinforces the dream-like supernatural atmosphere. A large cloth object shaped like a sailboat's sail glides on stage and moves right before Lady Aoi's bed, covering it. The lights become low with a bright light glowing in the darkness from the sail where the shadow of Lady Aoi's outreached arms can be seen.

The music in the sailboat scene, which Mishima describes in his text as "weird," sets the supernatural dream-like atmosphere of the scene. The audience perceives that something unreal is going to happen, something that moves away from

everyday life. As the scene ends, the "weird" music is repeated as the sailboat moves off stage, indicating to the audience that the spell has been broken and Hikaru is free.

Mishima's play with its supernatural atmosphere and its dream-like qualities is very much like its Noh counterpart. In the Noh play the supernatural atmosphere comes from the characters of the witch and the saint, along with the character of Lady Aoi, who is represented by a kimono. These characters add to the ghostly feeling, perceived in the Noh play. Mishima's play does not have these characters; but, he is able to achieve the same ghostly feeling through his characterization of Rokujo and from his use of Western inanimate objects (the telephone, the lighting, and music elements) along with his added dialogue. These are the same qualities that Donald Keene states in the preface to Five Modern No Plays:

Some modern works have enjoyed temporary popularity but they were essentially curiosities, having neither the beauty of the language and the mood of the old plays, nor the complexity of character delineation we expect of a modern work. The first genuinely successful modern No plays have been those by Yukio Mishima.³¹

Curlew River

The next example in this category was written by British composer Benjamin Britten, who visited Japan in 1956. While he was in Japan, he saw a performance of the Noh play,

Sumidagawa, written by Juro Montomasa (1395-1431). Greatly impressed, he wrote Curlew River (1956), which follows the Sumidagawa text closely.

The whole occasion made a tremendous impression upon me. The simple, touching story, the economy of the style, the intense slowness of action, the marvelous skill and control of the performers, the beautiful costumes, the mixture of chanting, speech, and singing which, with the three instruments, made up of the strange music—it all offered a totally new "operatic experience."³²

Britten's Objectives and Approaches

Britten's motivation in adapting a Noh play lies in his recognition of the similarity between Noh and Western dramas. He felt that the themes of Japanese Noh plays have universal appeal and possess qualities that parallel to those of Western drama. He also believed that Eastern and Western culture are not as far removed from each other as one might have thought.

Britten wanted to create a musical play that would not fall into the category of being an opera; he wanted Curlew River to be "a parable for church performance."³³ To do this, he found that it was necessary to create a new style of acting and performance.³⁴ His approach to this adaptation was to change the text so that it conformed to Christian ideals and not the Buddhist ideals of the Noh text. He did this by putting the play in a medieval period so the use of a Noh play

would be acceptable to Western audiences. The following is a discussion of how Curlew River's textual elements are the same or different from the Sumidagawa text.

Curlew River has the same characters as the original play. In his adaptation, the lines are paraphrased and in some cases they are directly translated from the Sumidagawa text. In the following statement, Britten discusses the similarity between his production and the Noh play:

The lighting was non-theatrical. The cast was all male, the one female character wearing an exquisite mask that made no attempt to hide the male jowl behind it. The memory of this play has seldom left my mind in years. . . . Surely the medieval religious drama in England would have had a comparable setting—an all male cast of ecclesiastics a simple austere staging in a church—a very limited instrumental accompaniment—a moral story?³⁵

In adapting the play, Britten followed Sumidagawa's plot. The following is a common plot of both plays:

Going across the river, the Ferryman tells the Madwoman the story of a boy who was stolen and was left to die by the river, and how the people who live in the area tried to cure him, even though he was too ill to survive. The Ferryman tells the Madwoman that today is the anniversary of the boy's death and there will be a service at his grave site. The Madwoman tells him that the boy was her son. The Ferryman helps her to the grave and gets her to pray.

Despite the similarity of the plots and some line-for-line adaptation, Britten made some alterations which directly

affect the meaning of his adaptation. The changes that Britten put into Curlew River text are: 1) a change in characters' qualities; 2) line alterations; and 3) the change of the play's ending.

Unlike Mishima, who focuses on the supernatural elements of Noh theater, Britten focuses on its religious elements. By setting his play in medieval England, he changes the religious base of the play. While maintaining the general structure of the Sumidagawa text, Britten substitutes his Christian beliefs for the Noh religious elements. This change of beliefs results in new meanings in the Curlew River text.

First, he adds Christian qualities to the characters in Curlew River. The chorus consists of an abbot, monks, and pilgrims. At the beginning of Curlew River, the chorus sets the scene as a religious drama opening the play with the following Latin prayer:

Te lucis ante terminum rerum creator, poscimus, ut
pro tua clementia, sis praesul et custodia.³⁶

The characters of the Ferryman and the Traveller in Curlew River are more humanistic than those of Sumidagawa. Britten did this because he wanted these two characters, whom he made Christian, to reflect Christianity in a good light.

There are some variations within the Ferryman's character; for example, the Ferryman's wording in Curlew River has less harshness than the wording of Sumidagawa's Ferryman.

Curlew River's Ferryman: I will not take you across the Curlew river unless you entertain us with your singing.³⁷

Sumidagawa's Ferryman: Since you are a woman of Miyako and mad to boot, I will not take you across unless you amuse us with one of your crazy dances.³⁸

The Ferryman in Curlew River also gives information about how people treated her son as religious idol.

The folks are gathering to pray before a grave, as if it were a shrine. A year ago today there was a burial; the river folks believe some special grace is there to heal the sick in body and soul.³⁹

In Sumidagawa, this character is thought of as merely an unfortunate young boy who has earned the people's sympathy. The portrayals of the boy as idol and the boy as victim in Curlew River represent the difference between Christian and Buddhist ideals that occur in the plays.

Second, Britten transfers one of the Madwoman's speeches to the Traveller to make the Traveller in Curlew River a more sympathetic, caring character than the character in Sumidagawa. Again, Benjamin Britten wanted the character to be portrayed as a caring Christian person. When the Madwoman wants to ride on the boat, the Traveller says to the Ferryman:

Ferryman she begs of you to let her come aboard,
she sees the boat is crowded but let her come
aboard, let her come aboard!⁴⁰

In Sumidagawa, the Madwoman must defend herself and does not receive any help from the Traveller.

Pray, oh boatman, let me come on board.
Though crowded be your boat,
Oh, let me on board I pray.⁴¹

Another example of this kind of line alteration is when Britten has the Madwoman talk hysterically to herself:

You mock me; you ask me whither I go.

.
You mock me! You ask me! How should I, how should
I know? ⁴²

By giving the Madwoman highly emotional lines, Britten has made her appear more insane than the same character in Sumida-gawa. (The analysis of Britten's motivation in doing this will be discussed below.) Britten's concept of insanity is different than the Buddhist concept of insanity. In Sumida-gawa, she is presented as a mother in pain from her maternal instinct and not from insanity as in Curlew River,

Although a mother's mind may be unclouded, she well
may lose her way through love of her child. How
true that is! Where does my darling stray? Shall I
ask these travellers? Does he know his mother's
grief?⁴³

By replacing the character's maternal pain with insanity, Britten is able to make a more powerful statement when the Madwoman becomes sane through her faith in God. This is Britten's dramatic ploy to show the power of God in curing a seemingly irreversibly mentally-ill person.

Britten also used musical elements to reinforce the mad quality of the Madwoman's lines. Her character is introduced with the high sound of a flute which mimics the sound of her speech. When she momentarily recovers her reason by thinking about her son, a viola is heard, a less lively and less excited sound than that of the flute. The viola also mimics

the sound of her speech in a calmer fashion. When she becomes mad again, the flute is once again heard.

The last and the most drastic change occurs at the end of Sumidagawa. When the Madwoman was praying to Namu Amida Buddha, she heard the praying voice of her son coming from the grave. He appears from his grave and she tries to hold him but he disappears. The ghost appears a second time. This time she runs with her arms open wide as he disappears forever back into his grave. The dawn breaks as she falls to her knees weeping in despair.

By contrast, in Curlew River, the voice of her son is heard praying. The spirit appears and tells her "to be peaceful and that they will meet in heaven;"⁴⁴ after this, he disappears back into his grave. The Madwoman loses her madness and finds happiness through her faith in God.

Britten changes the Madwoman's feeling of despair to a feeling of redemption through Christian faith. In Curlew River, salvation comes from the Madwoman being one with God and by knowing that she will go to heaven and be reunited with her son. Through God's power she becomes sane.

The Buddhist idea of salvation is very different from the Christian idea of salvation. Buddhist salvation occurs through self-awareness. One must realize the truth of one's existence to reach nirvana. It is for this reason that Sumidagawa's ending is very different from Curlew River's. In Sumidagawa, the ghost of her son appears and asks her "is it

you mother?"⁴⁵ The Madwoman, then, tries to put her arms around him twice but both times he disappears back into the grave. As the sun rises, the mother falls to her knees in great grief knowing that she will never see her son again, that he is lost to her forever. At the end of Sumidagawa, the Madwoman cannot follow the Buddhist ideals of non-attachment. Her faith in Buddhism has not lessened her grief or made her peaceful. She reaches out twice for her son and each time he disappears; her action illustrates her painful attachment to worldly elements. She must release herself from this attachment before she can feel peace within herself.

Those who wish to be free from pain, from suffering must come to a clear understanding [enlightenment] concerning suffering, impermanence, nonself, and reality. To attain true knowledge all lust and attachment—the root of all illusion—must be extinguished.⁴⁶

The Madwoman in Sumidagawa prays to *Amida* Buddha, a saving Buddha, a Buddha of long life. *Amida* Buddhism was formed by a monk named Honen (Jodo sect) in 1175. He believed that:

Salvation meant rebirth in Western paradise. Open to any and all who called on the name of *Amida*.⁴⁷

Honen insisted that through this rebirth, the followers can reach enlightenment and become Buddha. In Sumidagawa, the Madwoman is unable to pray to *Amida* Buddha, because of her attachment to her son. This attachment is a negative lesson about the goal of all Buddhism: the letting go of all earthly desires.

In summary, faith in Curlew River is able to perform a miracle, but in Sumidagawa, faith is not strong enough to free the Madwoman. The Madwoman is still attached to her son, so she is not yet on the road to enlightenment. She has to free herself.

Both Lady Aoi and Curlew River are examples of playwright-adaptor productions. Both of the plays are Direct Adaptations because their texts are very close to the meaning of the original text. Curlew River is more textually based than Lady Aoi. Even though Benjamin Britten used the same lines, he changed the meaning by replacing the Buddhist elements in the Sumidagawa text with Christian elements. Lady Aoi is closer in meaning to the Aoi No Uye text than Curlew River is to the Sumidagawa text. Mishima added new characters and a modern setting to the Lady Aoi text, but these new elements reinforced the meaning of the original Aoi No Uye text.

Conclusion

The benefit of Direct Adaptation is that it develops a relationship which leads to interaction between cultures. Through adaptation, different cultures achieve awareness of each other. The actors, the director, and the production staff will learn new skills, such as patterns of movement, that they could not have learned before because these kinds of

productions are the only type that uses these conventions. These skills can enhance known skills, and help the actors to grow as performers.

The text is a very important element in Direct Adaptation, as shown by the chosen examples in this chapter. The director needs to look at the background of the person who translated the text and see if the plot follows the original text.

When looking at Mishima's and Britten's adaptations, one discovers that their approaches have much in common. They both approached the adaptation textually; while there are some line changes and character changes, both plays contain the plot and atmosphere of the original Noh plays. Both theater practitioners were also aware of the Noh conventions (even though they did not use many of them) and saw Noh performances many times.

In Direct Adaptation, there are different shades of directness. Some productions are more direct than others, for example, ISTA's Kabuki production Irraku Sennin (1964), in which the text was translated directly from the original text along with costumes and directors who were imported from Japan. There are also less Direct Adaptations as shown by Mishima's and Britten's adaptations.

There are difficulties that directors need to keep in mind. One is that the transferable elements from the original production may be limited because of time and resources. Many

of the elements in Asian theater are very complex; therefore, they would be very difficult to duplicate. For example, in Chinese Opera there are one hundred and seven sleeve movements, which are divided among four kinds of roles, the sheng (male) roles, the tan (female) roles, and the Ching (painted faced) roles, the Ch'ou (comic) roles. There are also fifty-seven hand positions and numerous leg positions that a director must know in order to reproduce them on stage. Directors need to study all the elements to duplicate the original production. This can be very time consuming; a director can spend years studying the conventions and how to perform them on stage. Asian theater has many rules of movement and acting styles which the director must strictly adhere to. If directors want more control of the duplicated elements, they should use a more selective type of adaptation such as Effect or Syncretic Adaptation. These two types of adaptation would offer a director a wider choice than in Direct Adaptation.

CHAPTER THREE

Effect Adaptation

Effect Adaptation occurs when theater practitioners apply segments of Asian theatrical conventions from one culture to the plays of another culture. These occur through the use of Asian conventions in the following ways: 1) conventions that are seen as Asian; for example, the use of the Noh masks in a Western play; 2) Asian conventions that are slightly changed to create an effect; for example, in the play Fool's Fire (1992), which is based on Edgar Allen Poe's short story Hopfrog (1847-1849), where Hopfrog's girlfriend, Trippetta, does a dance wearing long feathers on her fingers, creating the same effect as Balinese dancers using long artificial nails; this use of Asian costume, the long fingernails, is an effect, since its sole purpose is to show that the character "is from Asia;"¹ 3) Asian conventions whose nature is hidden to produce an effect; for example, in Chinese opera the courtesan's gesture of holding a handkerchief in a fluttering fashion could be adapted to a Western play without the audience being aware that this gesture is from the Chinese Opera.

Directors who use Effect Adaptation, often rely on several different types of Asian-theater conventions in one production. They can, for example, choose several Asian

elements from different origins; they can combine the acrobatic movements from the Chinese Opera with Noh musical accompaniment in their production. In Puccini's Turandot which was first performed in 1926, the director uses Middle Eastern-style costumes for the characters of Liù and Timur, along with the Chinese costume of Turandot and the Chinese music and setting.

Objectives and Approaches to Effect Adaptation

The director's objectives and approaches in using Effect Adaptations are different from those of Direct Adaptation. In Direct Adaptation, the director's objective is to duplicate as much as possible the meaning, feeling, and theatrical elements of the original Asian play, while in Effect Adaptation the objective is to take one or more Asian conventions and put them in a Western play to produce an effect that reinforces the text. The elements that need to be discussed in regards to Effect Adaptation are: 1) the appropriateness of the conventions; 2) the method of selection; 3) the director's goals when using Effect Adaptation; 4) trends in Effect Adaptation--parallels between Shakespearean and Japanese theaters.

Appropriateness

This thesis focuses on the appropriateness of the chosen Asian convention. Appropriateness in this thesis is defined as Asian theatrical techniques that create the director's desired effect. For example, if a director wants to show that a character is from China, he or she may choose to use the sound of a gong to accompany the character's entrances and exits. True, the given example seems crude; however, if the Western audience understands the message which the director intended, the use of gong is an appropriate effect. This is why Effect Adaptation is popular among war propagandists. One should not jump to a conclusion that because Effect Adaptation can be used for ill purposes, it is not worth one's consideration. Directors alone are responsible for the content of their productions. There are many cases where a director used Effect Adaptation to create wonderful results; Puccini's Turandot is one. Of all the three types of adaptation, Effect Adaptation is the most flexible form of adaptation. What is important here is that the director must make sure the chosen fragment of Asian theater communicates what he or she has in mind. Every time a director borrows a segment of theatrical element from a culture which is foreign to him or her, he or she takes the risk of conveying an unintended message to his or her audience. As in the case of the gong sound, a director might use the sound only to signify

the character's nationality. However, most Western audience will perceive the gong sound as comic. And if executed in a certain manner, the sound can also mean obtrusive or even barbarous. These meanings, though unintended, are legitimate meanings. The director must be aware of this when he attempts cross-cultural adaptation. Borrowed messages can convey very different meanings to each individual. The followings are discussions of directors' choices in Effect Adaptation, starting with directors' selection of Asian elements.

Directors' Selections of Asian Theaters'

Fragments to Use in Their Effect Adaptations

Wilbur Schramm states in The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (1971), "much selective exposure is accidental or impulsive;"² this fact also applies to most directors' selective exposures. Directors' methods of selecting which fragments of Asian theater to use in their productions are often non-systematic. The director sees an Asian production and chooses a certain aspect of the production because it has qualities that appeal to him or her. For example, Puccini did not systematically search for the Chinese tunes in Turandot, he was concerned mostly with their musical qualities not their authenticity.

An Asian convention will add different meanings to the existing text regardless of the directors' awareness of such

nuances. For example, in Hamlet, (Act I, Scene IX), when the players perform their play before Claudius, the director could use Bunrakun puppets to perform the play for the king or have the king and other characters performed by Bunrakun puppets and have real actors perform the players' roles. Both decisions, each of which embodies a different meaning, create estrangement by shifting the audience's focus. This estrangement occurs by the unrealistic use of Bunrakun puppets to represent people. In the first case, the director is making the statement that the players are merely puppets who follow Hamlet's plot unknowingly. In the second case, the other characters are puppets who have no control over their own actions. There are unseen influences at work; they have no free will.

Needless to say, since all adapted elements will affect the Western production in one way or another, directors must be aware of: 1) the change in the meaning of the play which the directors will use Effect Adaptation; and, 2) the change in the meaning of the adapted element(s) within the new context. Directors can create distractions or unintended meanings in their productions. For instance, the director can portray a character who is in great grief by using Chinese Opera's convention of having a character walk on his or her knees. By adding these kinds of movements, characters communicate meanings through physical means without verbal reinforcement. A director must be aware that by making a

character walk on his or her knees to express sadness, the audience might see such a stylized gesture as a director's suggestion of the submissive nature of the character. As a rule, stylized gestures tend to lose their original meanings when they are performed out of their context. This occurs because the uninitiated Western audience many times does not perceive the stylized Asian conventions as having the same meaning as the Asian audience might perceive. Every culture without proper understanding could easily misinterpret the strange codes and messages from another culture. When one looks at Asian theater, whose gestures are mainly stylized, and Western theater, whose gestures are mainly realistic, one can see that many stylized gestures used in Noh theater such as the raising of a hand which means weeping, or anger (expressed by a quick turn of the head) might be seen as having a different meaning when viewed by a Western audience.

Despite non-systematic selection, and the possibility of creating distractions and unintended meanings, the adaptation of an Asian convention can be effectively applied when it reinforces the meaning of the existing text. The director can choose the convention that reinforces the character or scene so that it reveals the sub-plot more strongly. An example of the use of Asian conventions to reveal the sub-plot can be found in Kabuki Macbeth (1986), which was performed at the Wisdom Bridge Theater in Chicago. Shozo Sato used Kabuki's

stylized movements to express the Weird Sisters' power over Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth's movements were at times literally controlled by the witches as fatal puppeteers; when the witches moved a head or an arm, so did Lady Macbeth.³

According to this production, Lady Macbeth is innocent, since Lady Macbeth's movements are controlled by the witches, who are the forces behind the murder of Duncan. Lady Macbeth was a tool of the witches, not the culprit of the crime.

Comparing this interpretation to Orson Welles' interpretation, for example, one can see that Sato's Lady Macbeth is a mere puppet on the witches' string, whereas Welles' Lady Macbeth is a strong headed female antagonist. Sato's use of the Kabuki conventions gave a new interpretation to the role.

Effect Adaptation and Estrangement

Generally, the use of Effect Adaptation creates estrangement to a certain degree. Since "the artist's object [to achieve Estrangement] is to appear strange and even surprising to the audience,"⁴ the adapted Asian elements can provoke the audience to look at everyday objects or situations in its culture differently. Comparing this quality of Effect Adaptation with Direct Adaptation (as described in the previous chapter) one sees a clear distinction. The Asian conventions in Effect Adaptation are a means to achieve an

effect; whereas, in Direct Adaptation duplication of the conventions is the end goal. While in Direct Adaptation, the director aims to "recreate" the original Asian play for the Western audience, the Effect Adaptation director borrows a section of Asian theater in order to "create" certain effects in the Western audience. This effect usually involves estrangement which reinforces the text. The reinforcement of the text could be how the exotic costumes or masks bring out the character's traits or the plot situation. An example of this is Brecht's The Good Women of Setzuan (1940), in which the main character, Shen Te, disguises the forceful side of her nature behind a male mask (Shui Ta). As a woman she must refrain from any male-like behavior.

Effect Adaptation as an Alternative Mode of Performance

Estrangement, however, is not the only effect directors want to achieve. For example, Yeats used Effect Adaptation to experiment with the boundaries of his theater. He saw Asian theater as an alternate route to theatrical expression. He believed that Asian theater, which stresses gesture articulation, can offer Western directors a non-verbal means to communicate with their audience.

Yeats held the opinion that [all] the emotions of a character can be expressed not by the movements of the performer's facial muscles but by the movements of his whole body.⁵

Yeats uses masks to force the actors to rely on their bodies to express the play's meanings. In the beginning of At the Hawk's Well (1916), for instance, the old man character expresses coldness by moving his hands (as if he is making a fire) instead of using by his facial expression.

Effect Adaptation in Shakespearean Plays

There is also a trend to use Effect Adaptation in Shakespearean plays. Shozo Sato used Kabuki conventions in several Shakespearean plays. Sato stated that the audiences in both Kabuki and Elizabethan theaters were not there only for the story.

In Japan [plays] are performed repeatedly, people go to Kabuki not for the story but to see how this or that company approaches it. It is very similar to an English-speaking audience visiting a great actor's Macbeth—the story is known already, but not the approach.⁶

Clearly, the objective of this group of directors is to make strange the well-known texts, to provoke new responses from the audience. This group of theater practitioners also believes in the parallelism between Kabuki and Elizabethan plays. Pronko's Theater East and West states the similarity between the two theatrical forms.

1. The blending of the old and the new, the refined and the barbaric, which typified Elizabethan England and Tokugawa Japan, is seen in the theaters of both countries. Both theaters were used as fronts for prostitution and the plays

have themes of prostitution, violence, bloodshed, vengeance.

2. Elizabethan and Kabuki actors are versatile being able to dance, act, and do acrobatics.

3. Actors in both theaters use a board-acting style. Elizabethan and Kabuki theaters are presentational.

4. The Elizabethan actor drew attention to climactic moments by stamping. The Kabuki actor drew attention by performing a mie.⁷

Examples of Effect Adaptation

The following are examples of different kinds of Effect Adaptation. W. B. Yeats created an Asian-theme play that used the masks and the chorus from the Noh theater. Puccini mixed Eastern and Western elements to create an atmosphere of an exotic paradise in Turandot. Shozo Sato adapted Kabuki conventions to Western texts in an attempt to create a balance between the Kabuki conventions and the Western text.

At the Hawk's Well

Of the three examples, this stands out as the most typical form of Effect Adaptation. In his attempt to invent a new dramatic form, Yeats wrote Four Plays for Dancers, the first of which was At the Hawk's Well, written in 1916. The play epitomizes theater practitioners' intention to use Asian theater to achieve a certain effect.

Yeats did not attempt to write imitation Noh plays, but adapted the form to his own purposes and embodied not only his own themes but his philosophy.⁸

Yeats' Objectives and Approaches

The Irish poet felt that the use of Noh conventions was an alternative to the realistic theater of Europe. He felt that the realistic theater of his time could express meanings only within a limited set of conventions. Yeats wanted to use gestures, not just to accompany words as in Western theater, but to express emotions or the words themselves.

His contact with Noh revealed to Yeats the possibility of devising a form for his own theatrical work with a discipline which could possibly accommodate without using the devices and trappings of the conventional stage. He used foreign elements to break away from established conventions and to create new meanings in his production. He felt that Noh theater offered him the means to which he could achieve his goals of creating a new art form based on symbolic gestures.⁹

Yeats was looking for a way to use ritualistic movements and gestures to create an art form that was a mixture of "the exotic East and the intellectual West."

The Noh play had suggested to him a new form of drama played by few actors. He discovered he had much to learn, not in the realistic theater of Europe but in the symbolic and esoteric art of the East. . . . To him such symbols leave strong impressions upon us and evoke deep emotion, and are more important than those which appeal to the intellect.¹⁰

Yeats' approach to Effect Adaptation was to take Noh theatrical conventions, such as non-changing lighting, the use of masks, etc., to create an Asian-theme play. Yeats also added his own theatrical elements to the production, the plot

structure, the movements, and the use of make-up and costumes. The two most outstanding elements of At the Hawk's Well are the use of the chorus and Noh masks. The following two elements will be analyzed according to how they helped to create an Asian atmosphere in the play.

The use of the chorus in At the Hawk's Well falls into the seen-as-Asian-category of Effect Adaptation, because while there is a Western-style chorus (the Greek chorus), Yeats' musicians and the Noh chorus are different from the Western chorus. The Noh chorus and the musicians are not characters as the chorus in Greek dramas are; they are but by-standers, more or less detached from the stage action.

The four musicians who play a zither, a flute, a drum, and a bowed instrument, are comparable to the four members of the chorus in Noh dramas. Yeats' chorus also chants as the Noh chorus does.

Yeats' chorus created an Asian atmosphere in the play by presenting disintegration acting (which is often used in both Noh and Kabuki theaters), an acting style in which several actors perform a single theatrical action. Disintegration acting is an acting style that does not present the course of events in their natural order. For example, the sound of crying is made from backstage when the character who is supposed to be crying is already on stage. The on-stage character waits until he hears the crying sound before he starts to make the gestures that signify crying. The crying

sound and the gestures that signify crying are acted out separately (disintegratingly). In the following quotation, the chorus describes the actions before the actor performs them.

He lays the dry sticks on the leaves and, shivering with cold, he has taken up the fire stick and socket from its hole.¹¹

Yeats uses the chorus as by-standers who play instruments in the same way as those used in Noh. The use of disintegration acting techniques in the play's opening speech also creates an Asian atmosphere.

Another way that Yeats gives his play an Asian atmosphere is through the use of masks. Yeats' use of masks falls into the second Effect Adaptation category because Yeats creates his own "Noh" masks, which use some of the same features (such as the same high cheekbones and nose shape as those of Noh's sho-jo mask). He, however, changes some of the features, such as the wrinkles on the forehead of the sho-jo mask, which traditionally go upward in sorrow, while the wrinkles on Yeats' old-man mask go downward in anger to create an effect. Yeats feels that the type of mask used presents a certain interpretation that the actor wearing the mask must follow.

[The Noh actor] gives up his individuality when he puts on the mask, and his interpretation of the part he plays is almost completely governed by the mask he has chosen.¹²

Yeats felt that the mask has its own "life" and that

Eventually plays will probably be written for the existing masks rather than masks made for use in already written plays.¹³

It is for this reason that Yeats uses Noh masks in many of his plays. Also by substituting the masks for facial expressions, he encourages the actors to use the whole body as an instrument of expression without relying only on their facial expressions. The functions of masks in Yeats' performance are: 1) to create a different mode of expression; 2) to create an Asian atmosphere; and 3) to create estrangement.

The following is how Yeats uses masks and make-up to create estrangement in his production. In Noh theater characters do not wear make-up, but in Yeats' plays some characters do. He creates his own style of make-up design by having characters wear make-up that gives them the appearance of wearing masks. The guardian with the use of make-up is made to look as if she is wearing a mask. As A. S. Knowlands states in his book Dramatist of Vision (1975),

the distinction between those that wear masks and those that do not is between those who are simplified to essential qualities and those who meditate between the human and the supernatural (the musicians) and those who start as human and end up as supernatural, the guardian.¹⁴

In summary, Yeats uses an Asian theme along with masks, movements, and props to create an Asian atmosphere and estrangement in At the Hawk's Well. He wants to create an elite theater where only a small group of his friends would

experience his attempts at creating a new form of theater by using Asian conventions. Yeats also wants to establish a set of symbols by the use of gestures, but the gestures became so esoteric that they risk losing their meanings not to mention their audience. The gestures proved to be so abstract that the audience did not know what the symbolic gestures represented. As Richard Taylor states in The Drama of W. B. Yeats Irish Myth and Japanese No (1976),

The trouble with Yeats' dance plays was that in addition to an almost obsolete heroic apparatus and an all together out-dated occultism, his production method was highly stylized, his subject matter and theatrical aims, the non-realistic and expressive staging of the dance dramas was not yet acceptable to the theater-going public.¹⁵

Even though Yeats used Asian theater as a rebellious tool to break away from the preexisting conventions, he did not treat Asian theater as an art form which he intended to emulate. Just because a director attempts to find a new art form, Syncretic Adaptation is not always the result. The use of fragmented Asian elements does not create a new art form, it merely introduces an Asian atmosphere into the play.

Turandot

Comparing Yeats' At the Hawk's Well with the second example, Giacomo Puccini's Turandot, one can see that Puccini has gone a step further in trying to blend the Eastern arts with those of the West. Estrangement in this production

occurs from the Western-style love-conquers-all theme (with the tragic death of Liù added), presented with Asian conventions. Puccini, who had already experimented with Asian themes and conventions in his opera Madam Butterfly (1909), was looking for another opportunity to use an Asian theme.

He wanted to strike out on new paths, his thoughts were turning in the direction of some fantastic fairy tale, a tale, however, full of human emotions and a moving heart.¹⁶

Puccini's Objectives and Approaches

Puccini's objective was to write an Asian-theme opera, so he adapted Chinese elements that remained unmistakably Chinese: he wanted to maintain their exoticism. Puccini's motivations in using Asian conventions lie in his interest in the exotic culture of Asia. He based Turandot (1926), on one of the Chinese folk tales in Carlo Gozzi's collection. (Puccini died in 1924 and Franco Alfano wrote the ending of Turandot from drafts and fragmentary sketches left by Puccini). Puccini was not concerned with representing the Chinese culture accurately.

The exotic element was achieved by avoiding precise historical references and incorporating authentic Chinese themes in the score.¹⁷

Even though Turandot had already been adapted in an opera before, Puccini "gradually came to believe that he was

creating an original opera."¹⁸ Since music helps create an exotic atmosphere in the opera, the following will be a discussion of the different tunes and how they contributed to the atmosphere of the opera.

The use of music creates an Asian environment in the opera by presenting genuine Chinese tunes. He drew from only two sources of Chinese music, one was from a music box belonging to Baron Fassini and the other was from Chinese Music (1964), a book by J. A. Van Aalst. Puccini discovered both sources by chance. Out of the six tunes in the opera, three of them are derived from Fassini's music box, and the other three tunes are from Van Aalst's book, Chinese music. The music box tunes are Moo-Lee-Wha, the National Anthem or the Imperial Hymn, and the Temple Melody. The remaining three tunes are the Ceremonial Melody, Hymn of Confucius, and Tao-yin (the Guiding March). The tunes from the music box, which are the most recognizable as Chinese, were used to accentuate the comic masks of Ping, Pong, and Pang. Since the tunes are recognizable by Westerners as "Chinese," and they added comic quality to the scenes. The music from the Van Aalst's book was more subtle in nature and not as obviously "Chinese."

One of the opening tunes that set the Asian environment of the opera is Moo-Lee-Wha (the Chinese name is Mo-li hua, which means jasmine flower). This tune is sung by the boys chorus in Act I. [see Appendix: Plate A.]

Over on the Eastern mountains the stork sang. But
 April did not bloom again, the snow did not thaw.
 From the desert to the sea do you not hear a
 thousand voices whisper: "Princess, come to me!
 everything will blossom, everything will shine."¹⁹

The National Anthem or the Imperial Hymn is a recognizable
 "Chinese" tune that reflects the comic masked characters of
 Ping, Pong, and Pang. [see Appendix: Plate B.]

Ping, Pong, Pang: Stop! What are you doing? Halt!
 Who are you? What are you doing? What do you want?
 Go away! Go; this is the door of a great
 slaughterhouse!
 Fool, go away!²⁰

The third tune, accompanied the Emperor's entrance in
 Act I, is called Temple Music. Since it is a religious tune
 it is solemn. (This tune was traditionally used in sacrificial
 rites by the Chinese). [see Appendix: Plate C.]

People: May our Emperor live ten thousand years!
 Glory to thee!²¹

The rest of the Chinese tunes come from J. A. Van Aalst's
 book, Chinese Music. The Ceremonial Melody first occurs in
 Act II. It is associated with the Emperor, because this music
 "stands for the idea of legendary China, incarnated in the
 Emperor, and it is intoned in all ceremonial scenes."²² [see
 Appendix: Plate D.] The next tune is called Tao-yin (the
 Guiding March) which Puccini used for a comic scene in Act I.
 [see Appendix: Plate E.]

Ping: Ho there, Pang! Ho there, Pong!
 Since the fatal gong awakes the palace and the city,
 we are prepared for anything: for a wedding, should
 the stranger win, for a funeral, should he lose.²³

Puccini also adapted a tune called the Hymn of Confucius. In China, this tune was sung according to a decree issued in the eighth year of Chien Lung (1743 A.D.). This hymn honors the spirit of Confucius, who, according to the Chinese belief, will receive their offerings. In the opera, only fragments of this tune are used in different variations. This tune occurs in the March of the Persian prince. [see Appendix: Plate F.]

One of Puccini's accomplishments is in his invention of Chinese-style music which contributes to the Asian atmosphere of his opera. He used Western instruments to play the Chinese melody and harmony in Liù's Speech in Act I, when she pleas

My lord, hear me! Oh, hear, my lord! Liù can bear no more, her heart is breaking! Alas, how many miles have I walked with your name in my heart, with your name on my lips! But if your fate tomorrow be decided, we shall die on the path of exile.²⁴ [see Appendix: Plate G.]

Besides the pieces mentioned above, Turandot is a marriage between Western and Eastern music. Puccini created a Chinese-style music in Act III. [see Appendix: Plate H.]

[Puccini] went as far as to suggest an approximation to heterophony, a primitive kind of counterpoint in Eastern Music where the same melody is repeated by several instruments.²⁵

In addition to Puccini's use of the Chinese tunes from the music box belonging to Baron Fassini and the Chinese music from J. A. Van Aalst's book Chinese Music, he introduced his own version of Chinese tunes which greatly contributed to the Asian environment of the opera. Puccini's eclectic method in composing Turandot results in his drawing from Western and

Chinese musical styles to create an original Chinese-sounding composition. To be able to achieve the desired congruity between the Western instruments and Eastern musical style, Puccini studied the harmonic principles of Chinese music and its orchestration, which consists of a vertical flute, a horizontal flute, a shown (similar to a oboe but without keys), a moon lute, a banjo, a fiddle, a fiddle with a milder tone, a gong (which was used in Turandot), cymbals, a small gong, a t'ang drum (a small barrel shaped drum), single face drum, and castanets.

By using Western instruments to play both Chinese and Western tunes, Puccini created a very complex and varied opera. Through his choice of music, his use of both recognizable and subtle Chinese tunes, and his own invented Chinese tunes, Puccini was able to create an atmosphere of an exotic Asian society.

The discussion deals, so far, with adaptations that borrow relatively unknown texts to be performed in a fragmentary fashion, such as Puccini's adaptation of the Chinese story in Turandot. The following case is an example of a well-known text being adapted so that the texts have been greatly altered.

American Kabuki

As mentioned earlier, there is a trend in using Effect Adaptation in Shakespearean plays and in Greek plays. One of the theater practitioners who adapted many Shakespearean and Greek plays to Kabuki conventions is Shozo Sato, who described his theatrical movement as "American Kabuki." He directed Kabuki Medea in 1985, and Kabuki Othello in 1986.

Sato's Objectives and Approaches

Sato, who is an artist in residence at the University of Illinois, learned Kabuki conventions from the great master, Nakamura Kanzaburo. He told Nakamura that his objective was to bring Japanese culture to Western understanding; he wanted to introduce "traditional Japanese culture to Occidental audiences."²⁶ Sato chose Kabuki conventions because he felt that the conventions, which are very physical and less abstract than Noh's, were more adaptable to Western plays. He felt that Kabuki conventions would be more acceptable to a Western audience because its tradition is based on the popular needs of the Japanese merchant class, in comparison to Noh's tradition, which is based on the spiritual needs of the Japanese nobles.

Sato's approach to Western plays was to use Kabuki conventions with an altered Western text. Sato realized that

"the logical way to present Kabuki in the West was to take a saga or myth, a story as familiar to Americans as the Kabuki legends are to the Japanese [and adapt it to Japanese theater]."²⁷ He felt that Americans could not understand Kabuki conventions in a non-Western environment. He also felt that a Western audience would be more accepting of a play that is set in the past and had a universal theme. Like Pronko, Sato saw a parallel between Kabuki and Elizabethan theater. His productions will be analyzed according to how the Kabuki conventions reinforce the text and how the text was changed to complement the conventions.

Use of Kabuki Conventions

Sato's adaptations of Kabuki Medea and Kabuki Othello fit into the first kind of Effect Adaptation because the adapted conventions are seen as Asian. A deep contrast between the Asian conventions and the Western text was created. Next, this thesis will discuss the Kabuki elements that Sato introduced in both plays. They include dance, movements, music, speech, costumes, and text alteration.

Dance. In Kabuki Medea, he introduced Japanese-stylized dance when Jason's bride puts on Medea's present. In this scene, Jason's bride does a dance of death while pieces of colored fabric that represent blood appear from her costume. In Kabuki, dance is composed of everyday life activities such

as rice planting or casting fishing nets into the sea. Sato's use of dance is very different from Western-style dance.

[Unlike Japanese dance] Western dance tends to express itself in more or less abstract movements whose source in the movement of real life is not immediately evident; and the ideas expressed in it, if they exist at all, are general rather than specific.²⁸

The dance of Jason's bride also has these qualities of Japanese dance but Sato has added his own invention of the red fabric that represents blood and fire in his production. The combination of a Japanese dance with the red fabric makes the character's death seems more specific; her death is not merely from her wound and her lost of blood, but also from her loss of internal fire. Jason and Medea's sons are represented by two child-size puppets that contain red fabric that becomes visible when they are killed. Sato wants to show his Medea as being so selfish that she does not care about her children because right after she killed them, Medea is seen having a romance with the King of Korea.

Movements. In Asian theater, each character has his or her own set of movements and gestures. Daniel Orekes, who played Othello, speaks of his character's movements:

Each kind of character usually has a specific way of walking, Othello is a prototype of the Kabuki warrior and he has a specific warrior walk which is sort of an exaggerated human walk.²⁹

Othello is a very proud soldier who might very well be portrayed with the type of walk described above. Othello also performs a mie after he finds Desdemona's fan in Cassio's room. Mie is composed of a roppo walk and nirami. The nirami is when the actor glares at the audience with an exaggerated facial expression. In Kabuki theater, through the use of mie, the actor is able to show the character's great depth of emotion. Sato's use of mie with the character Othello brings out the plot and play situation. Othello, who is a very jealous character, is able to show the full force of his uncontrollable rage through the use of the mie.

Sato's use of Kabuki-acting style in Othello created different responses among Western actors. Dean Fortunato, who played Jason in Medea, has this to say about Kabuki-acting style.

The idea that no matter how agitated you may be as a character, there must be a tremendous tranquility on the surface. You must reduce that agitation outwardly by 50%, so it can be made to appear stronger than 100%—but this technique is not taught in the United States.³⁰

Stylized gestures and movements are done slowly and poses are held as in Kabuki. Susan Wilde, who played Desdemona, describes the stylized Kabuki movement as follows:

There is more an elongation of the movement, until finally the fingers come into play . . . adding that handing the fan she uses for the Kabuki production becomes a natural extension of ballet finger positions.³¹

The Chorus. The chorus in Kabuki is called Chobo. The Chobo serves as a narrator, setting the play's environment, commenting on the play's actions and on its characters. In Medea, a group of black robed koken was used as a chorus which acts out the other characters' thoughts. In the beginning of the play, a dammari or a dumb show, with the chorus singing narrative, is performed. In this dammari, Medea and Jason are shown as being in love. Together they kill Medea's family and, finally, Jason kills the "golden dragon." (Sato changed golden fleece to the golden dragon so that would tie into the Asian theme of the play.)

Change of the text. Sato's attempt at adapting the plays also changed the texts so they conformed to the Kabuki conventions. In Othello and Macbeth, the texts were greatly changed. The locations of both plays were changed to Japan to suit the use of the Kabuki acting style, costumes, sets, and music.

When Sato changed the ending of Othello, he also changed the meaning of the play. In Sato's ending, Othello is not made aware of his mistake, so he does not kill himself and Iago is not punished for his crime. In traditional Kabuki, there is no rule preventing the protagonist from killing himself to right a wrong that he has done. For example, in the Kabuki play Benten Kozo, the protagonist commits suicide and the rest of his gang of thieves are caught.

The ending of Medea was also changed. In his production, Medea and the king of Korea (instead of the king of Athens) are saying words of love to each other in the same way that Medea and Jason did in the beginning of the play. This gives the audience the feeling that the pattern of Medea's relationship with Jason will repeat itself with the King of Korea. He cuts out Medea's lines when she speaks lovingly to her children. Sato's Medea does not appear to care for her children, so she kills them without any thought of maternal love. Jason's character is also changed. Jason, "whom Medea liked for his looks, was made from evil to an obnoxious simpleton."³² Sato's alteration of the text created a Medea, who is evil and uncaring. He ignored the Western Medea, who, in her rage, is a victim of her own passion.

Sato gave the following reason for the alterations that took place in his productions: he felt that he needed to simplify the Western texts to "minimize dialogue in favor of other forms of storytelling."³³ Sato states:

Kabuki deals with stylization and exaggeration, it uses much of the visual aspect of the theater, in order to make its effectiveness clear, we had to make the story simpler.³⁴

This simplification occurred in Medea, Act I, for example, when Jason and Medea are shown as being in love and Medea's betrayal of her family is also shown. Jason is then seen fighting the golden dragon. Sato's idea showed much imagination by using Kabuki gestures to express an idea that

is normally conveyed by texts. This substitution, however, simplified the plot of the play greatly. By focusing on the physical aspect of Kabuki conventions, Sato's productions tend to over-simplify the plots. This is because Western theater is based on words and Kabuki is not, so limitations were presented in the productions. This brings up the question of to what extent are borrowed theatrical conventions limitations? The answer to this question depends on what convention the director wants to adapt and what meanings he wants to portray. Sato, for example, changed the text to conform not only to the Kabuki conventions but also to portray the meanings that he wanted shown on stage.

Many Western critics interpreted Sato's simplification of the text as Sato's misunderstanding of the play. David Bevington made a remark about Othello in Shakespeare Quarterly that "man gets away with murder as far as women are concern."³⁵ He said this because the end of the play shows both men standing by their victims in a tableau. No one is punished for crimes in Sato's Othello. By changing the ending of Othello, Sato altered the meaning of the original text and made a statement about how women are thought of as objects in societies.

Some of the changes in Sato's productions were demanded by the use of Kabuki conventions. Kabuki theater is very physical. Sato eliminated many of the character's lines for

physical actions which he thought would express the meanings better.

Assessment of Sato's Production

While the critics enjoyed the production, they were very concerned with the ways in which their Western characters became distorted. Tony Mastroianni, who reviewed the production, felt that Medea's lines to her children were the most touching part of the play, and when these lines were cut he became very disappointed. As David Bevington states: "This is not Shakespeare without words but Shakespeare with someone else's words."³⁶ Tony Mastroianni wrote:

The problem with this production is they cut out much of the original text and had put nothing back in its place so a hole was left, that changed the meaning of the character.³⁷

These critics' responses throw some light on the subject of Effect Adaptation: when texts, which are thought of highly in one's culture, are changed (either to suit the adapted conventions of other culture's theater or to suit the ideology of the theater practitioner) people of the original culture will interpret the adapted play in relation to the original. It is difficult to balance the use of the Asian conventions in well-known Western texts, as shown in Sato's case. Sato's solution was to tailor the text to the Kabuki conventions by

changing the play's location and eliminating lines for Kabuki movements.

Conclusion

The benefit in Effect Adaptation is that the director has a full range of choices when adapting elements in a production. All the conventions can be used separately or in combination with other conventions, such as having one scene acted in Kabuki style and the rest in Western style.

Effect Adaptation is the most popular form of adaptation because it is the most flexible form of adaptation. Many Effect Adaptations, however, present distorted images of Asian culture. For this reason the appropriateness of conventions is a great consideration when borrowing only fragments from another culture's theater. If directors develop sensitivity to Asian cultures and theatrical conventions, they are less likely to create stereotypes of Asian culture.

The director has full control of what meanings are to be presented in the text and where those meanings occur in the text. Directors do not have to be aware of the chosen conventions' original meanings, but they need to know what the conventions would represent in their own culture. Being aware of what a convention would mean to the Western audience is important in Effect Adaptation because if this element of awareness is missing, then unintended meanings may be

portrayed in the production (see David Bevington's review of Sato's Othello). The director should know what meanings the audience will perceive from the adapted Asian conventions, so that the chosen conventions will convey the director's meanings.

Difficulties in Effect Adaptation occur when the conventions are added in a too-superficial way. Stereotyped characters become the result. The adapted conventions do not fit or portray the director's intended meaning. They look as if no thought was given as to why these conventions were used and what meanings the conventions would represent. For example, Judith Gautier used stereotypes of "doll-like creatures, with names like Forest Well, Veiled Light, Little Fir Tree, and Golden Lotus"⁴³ in her play—The Vendor of Smiles (1880).

What is important in Effect Adaptation is knowing what the adapted conventions mean to the Western audience and how to best execute the conventions to produce the desired effect.

CHAPTER FOUR

Syncretic Adaptation

The two previous chapters describe two Western adaptations of Asian theater: Direct Adaptation and Effect Adaptation. Both adaptations deal with the adaptor's borrowing of either a total sum (Direct Adaptation) or parts (Effect Adaptation) from the original culture (Asian culture). This chapter defines an adaptation process that invents new theatrical elements instead of borrowing existing theatrical elements from Asian theater and deals with Western theatrical inventions which are effected (sic) by Asian theater influence.

Objectives and Approaches

The director approaches Syncretic Adaptation by blending Eastern gestures and movements or other theatrical elements with elements of Western theater to create a theater that goes beyond the notion of Eastern and Western theaters. To do this, the director needs to be sensitive to the possibilities of blending Eastern and Western elements into a new art form. Syncretic Adaptation is very independent from the original; it develops into a separate theatrical form. The Syncretic Adaptation of theatrical conventions is seen by the audience

as the natural outgrowth of a culture, when it is, in part, influenced by a theatrical convention from another culture. The director in this category is able to neutralize the feeling that the adapted theatrical convention is Asian.

In sociology, the term Syncretic Adaptation describes the process of innovation which is a result of the mixing of two cultures that creates a new cultural element(s).¹ In Social and Cultural Change, Bruce F. Ryan defines Syncretic Adaptation.

The fusion of the new is merged with the old to prove a single trait or idea.²

In sociology, this term usually defines what occurs when different religious elements are mixed together. For example, the Native Americans' lives were changed when they were conquered by the Spaniards, so much so that they adopted the Spaniard's Christianity while still keeping many of their own native beliefs.

This cultural change occurs not only when one culture dominates the other. Europe has taken many things from Asia. This cultural borrowing ranges from natural objects, such as horses, donkeys, cattle, cereals, vegetables, fruit trees, to man-made objects, such as paper, printing, harnesses, playing cards, and pajamas. Some items were adopted directly as shown above, and others were adapted to create something new. For example, the invention of the European compass was a result of the Chinese discovery of the magnet, or the classic case of

the Chinese invention of gun powder for entertainment, and the European adaptation of gun powder as a weapon. Syncretic Adaptation occurred not only in the scientific field but also in European literature, architecture, art, and theater.

East Meets West: Reality or Myth or Both?

Before the discussion of the Syncretic Adaptation in theater can take place, the notion of "East meets West" needs to be explored, since there is a prevalent belief in this society that the perfect ideology, social order, and art form will emerge from the combination of Western materialism with Eastern spiritualism. The East is often thought of as holistic and spiritual, while the West is often thought of as dualistic and materialistic. There is a feeling that if "Eastern mysticism were integrated with Western science and rationalism [something better would be created]."³ This union would create an "intercultural person."

The intercultural person represents a type of person whose cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics are not limited but are open to grow beyond the psychological parameters of his or her own culture.⁴

It is often felt by many Westerners that mixing Eastern and Western cultural elements will eliminate "cultural blind spots [such as always valuing logic over intuition]."⁵

One group that represents this trend in attempting to create a new literary form is the Imagists (1930s). They

were dissatisfied with "[the way poems in] English were being written, and were determined to do something to improve the general quality of contemporary poetry."⁶ The members of this group were T. Hulme, F. S. Flint, Edward Storer, F. W. Tancred, Joseph Campbell, Ezra Pound, and Florence Farr. Japanese and Chinese poetry influenced their works. Ezra Pound wrote a haiku poem

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on wet, black bough.⁷

This poem is similar to a well-known haiku poem.

Fallen flower returning to the branch;
Behold! It is a butterfly.⁸

Imagists wanted to create new forms of poetry by using different Asian poetry writing techniques.

There also have been attempts in creating new forms of architecture by adapting Japanese design to Western architecture,

The best being those where the architect has tried to make use of the principles of Japanese building rather than to reproduce the 'quaint' or 'charming' effect of a Japanese house.⁹

For example, the adaptation of Japanese design creates more space in the home, with windows running from ceiling to floor. Japanese design and Western design were mixed in an attempt to create new forms of architecture.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, one group that represents a trend in creating new forms of art is the Impressionists (1880s), artists who wanted "a new theory of

art and literature that was revelation of Japanese colour wood prints."¹⁰ Impressionists borrowed Japanese painting techniques and attempted to create new forms of painting by mixing Asian technique with Western technique and subject matter. Manet's La Chanteuse Des Rues (1862), "with its flat colours and stark unsentimental portrayal of the figure,"¹¹ combines both Japanese- and Western-painting techniques. Whistler painted La Princess Du Pays De La Porcelaine, (1864), (Arrangement in Rose and Silver), in which the outline of the princess' dress was painted with Japanese-painting techniques. These painters felt dissatisfied with European-painting techniques, so they looked for the solution in Japan.

East Meets West in Theater

In theater, there also is a belief in creating new forms of theater and opera by applying Asian conventions to Western productions. There have been many theater practitioners who wanted to create a new form of theater by using Asian conventions. The following are examples of this trend.

W. B. Yeats wanted to create a new form of drama in which gestures would communicate symbolically. Stephen Sondheim wrote Pacific Overtures and proclaimed it as "American Kabuki." Shozo Sato also called his attempts of using Kabuki conventions in Shakespearean texts as "American Kabuki."

Brecht and Artaud wanted to create their own systems of performance by using Asian conventions in their productions.

In opera, many composers are looking to Asia for material when attempting to create new forms of opera or subject matter. Gilbert and Sullivan wrote Mikado (1885), which was a satire on England, set in Japan. In this way Gilbert and Sullivan could criticize England without the fact being obvious. Richard Wagner (1813-1883), "in his attempts to find new opera forms . . . turned to Indian philosophy."¹² As Michael Edwards states in his book East-West Passage (1971), Wagner in his opera Parsifal (1882), "used an episode from Ramayana."¹³ The author states that in both Ramayana and Parsifal a bird is killed by the protagonist so he is cursed.

[There is] a direct similarity between the story of the opera and that of the Ramayana in the idea of sin that can never be expiated.¹⁴

All the above examples of the trend of attempting to create something new through the use of Asian elements in the fields of literature, architecture, art, and theater were chosen to illustrate the basic belief of this movement.

In most Syncretic Adaptations, a true mixing of theatrical elements occurs within related cultures, cultures whose backgrounds have much in common with each other. These cultures share a religious and social heritage.

The Mixing of Two Types of Western Theater

Syncretic Adaptation has occurred between different Western cultures. In Russia, Constantin Stanislavski created an acting method, which was imported to America by Lee Strasberg, who created his own American version of Stanislavski's method:

The Method which seems even more confused than politics, is merely the sum total of the experience of the great actors throughout all ages and countries. The best things in it comes from Stanislavsky the rest comes from me [Strasberg].¹⁵

The Method is a mixture of Russian and American influences to create new elements in actor training. Lee Strasberg did this by adding his own interpretations and exercises to Stanislavski's work. Strasberg redefined Stanislavski's "creative if," which was unsatisfactory when used in Modern plays. Strasberg redefined the concept of the "creative if" by basing it on the character's motivations and not on the actor's past psychological experiences.

The Mixing of Two Types of Eastern Theater

Syncretic Adaptation also occurs between different Asian cultures. A good example of this is the Javanese shadow play. The shadow play began as a Sanskrit drama and became a mixture of Sanskrit and native Javanese drama as the two elements

entwined to make a new art form that was neither a Sanskrit shadow play nor a native Javanese shadow play, but the new art form which is known today as the Javanese shadow play. As Maung Htin Aung states in Burmese Drama (1957):

Hindu tradition was so strong that once it was destroyed, not only did Hindu drama in Java decay and disappear, but a native drama in a developed form failed to appear. Stories from Hindu sources as well as stories from native history and mythology are still shown on the Java shadow-stage, but the plays are all formless and crude.¹⁶

Maung Htin Aung felt that the mixture of the Sanskrit and Javanese shadow plays is what in the end created a "formless and crude" art form. Aung held the attitude that the Sanskrit shadow plays were more advanced than the Javanese native dramas, and felt that the Javanese should have kept the elements from Sanskrit shadow plays from being mixed with the native Javanese shadow plays.

Past Attempts to Syncretize Western and Asian Theaters

The question at hand is whether there is any successful Syncretic Adaptation between the Eastern and Western theaters? There have been attempts at Syncretic Adaptation between Eastern and Western cultures. The two most outstanding cases of this are works by Antonin Artaud and Bertolt Brecht. Both Artaud and Brecht felt that Asian culture had value and that Asian theatrical conventions were not just a tool to be used with a colonial attitude. Both Artaud and Brecht, with their

positive attitudes toward Asian arts, were men ahead of their time. Many other adaptations of Asian art forms were distorted by the colonial attitude of the theater practitioners. For example, Voltaire adapted the Chinese Opera The Orphan of Tchao. In L'Orphelin de la Chine (1755)

[The] smug, self-satisfied attitude adopted by Voltaire and other Europeans in the eighteenth century [is] typical of Western attitudes toward the Oriental theater until a relatively recent period.¹⁷

In the past, theater practitioners had no opportunity to go to Asia. They based their understanding on what they read and saw in Europe. This included those who admire Asian theater such as Brecht and Artaud; both theater practitioners have many misconceptions about Asian theater. Today more theater field research is being done in Asia by Westerners who go to Asia to experience the conventions in their native environment in an attempt to be aware of how the conventions are correctly performed.

In Syncretic Adaptation, the theater practitioners' understanding of the Asian conventions does not always render successful adaptation. Creative imagination seems to play a major role in shaping the outcome of the adaptation, as shown by the following examples of Artaud's and Brecht's works.

Artaud had misconceptions of Balinese dance theater, which, according to James R. Brandon, in "A New World: Asian Theater in the West Today" (1989), are the following:

He [Artaud] drew many wrong conclusions; for example; that the Balinese spectacle required a powerful director, that improvisation could not occur, and that the movements were "ritual gestures" conveying direct meaning.¹⁸

Artaud thought that there was no improvisation in Balinese theater, "nothing is left to chance or to personal initiative."¹⁹ In fact the actors in the Balinese theater often use improvisation in their roles. Artaud was exposed to only one production of Balinese dance, performed in Paris at the Colonial Exposition in 1931. Artaud drew his conception of Balinese ritualistic elements, which he later elaborated in his book, The Theater and its Double, mainly from this one performance. Since he was aware of the possibility of blending Eastern and Western art forms into a new art form, his misconceptions about Balinese drama did not affect his use of the Balinese theatrical conventions in his productions.

Brecht also had misconceptions about Chinese theatrical conventions. Bertolt Brecht used Syncretic Adaptation after he had viewed a performance of the Chinese actor Mei-Lan-Fang. He was so impressed by the Chinese acting techniques that he applied many Chinese theatrical conventions to his Epic Theater. In his essay, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" (1936), Brecht presented some misconceptions about Chinese Opera. When Brecht compares the Western actors to the Chinese actors, he sees the Western actor in a negative light:

A Western actor does all to bring his spectators into the events and Characters; while the Chinese actor constantly keeps a distance between himself, his character and the spectators.²⁰

The Chinese actor achieves the distance by bringing everything to a conscious level that the actor is an actor, that there is an audience viewing the performance.²¹ Many of Brecht's statements show his misconception on the relationship between the Chinese actor and the Chinese audience. Brecht identified what he felt when watching Chinese Opera to what the Chinese audience felt when viewing the same performance, which, in this case, could not be accurate since Brecht did not belong to the same culture as the Chinese audience. Brecht, therefore, insisted that German theater must alienate the audience in the same way that he had been alienated from the Chinese theater.

Brecht focuses his analysis not on the Chinese audience but on the Western audience. However, since his adaptation was solely designed for Westerners, his misconceptions did not affect his work in a negative way. He was able to adapt theatrical conventions from the Chinese Opera to his productions so these conventions were no longer thought of as "Chinese," yet these conventions, at the same time, represented the meanings which he had experienced from the Chinese theater.

As has already been mentioned, awareness of the Asian conventions and their cultural context is important to Direct Adaptation, while in Effect Adaptation, directors appreciate

the "strangeness" of the convention and do not have to be aware of its original meaning. Directors in Effect Adaptation can use Asian theatrical conventions to create estrangement, to reinforce the text, and to present the meanings that they want to portray. In Syncretic Adaptation, the director needs to be aware of how the Asian conventions can blend with Western conventions to create new art forms or techniques.

Brecht's Objectives and Approaches

Brecht's approach to Syncretic Adaptation was to use the structural elements from Chinese opera in non-Asian context. He wrote his plays with loosely connected scenes; this segregation of the scenes made it so that each scene was a complete unit in itself. Chinese opera's scenes are constructed in this way. The audience no longer thinks of such a segregation coming from a Chinese influence, but the fact is such a segregation undeniably originated in the Chinese theater.

Some of Brecht's plays are often presented in excerpt, much as the Chinese opera are. The titles that Brecht often projects over individual scenes give them a sense of autonomy, so that through sufficient familiarity with all his plays, one carefully chosen act from each of three or four might furnish as unified an experience as the complete presentation of a whole play.²²

Brecht's objective was to create a new theatrical system that would present new possibilities for instruction through theater.

Both Artaud's and Brecht's attempts to use Syncretic Adaptation created new theatrical techniques that were incorporated into Western theater practice but did not create a new art form, independent from Eastern and Western cultures in the way that the Javanese theatrical conventions are removed from Indian culture.

The meanings that are produced in Syncretic Adaptation involve an evolution of ideas that create new images. Syncretic Adaptation is the one form of adaptation that will give birth to new forms of drama and theatrical techniques. For example, Brecht's use of Chinese opera conventions created new theatrical techniques. Direct Adaptation is a copy of an already-created performance so the result cannot be a new form of drama. In Effect Adaptation, the theatrical elements are fragmentary so they do not create anything new; so the elements cannot become part of the non-native culture's theater. The followings are examples of Syncretic Adaptation.

The Exception and the Rule

Bertolt Brecht wrote The Exception and the Rule in 1937. This play, along with many of Brecht's other plays, was influenced by the Chinese Opera's theatrical conventions. The

Epic Theater and Chinese theater are both non-concealing theaters; the musicians and lighting are visible. This non-concealing element affects the actor's "commentary" performance style and stage presentation. Brecht's treatment of the actors in his Epic Theater is similar to the actor's alienation approach in the Chinese theater. In both theaters the actor is playing the character as a storyteller who is telling the character's story. In The Exception and the Rule, before the merchant has the coolie beaten, he says to the audience: "I'm not for beating but right now there's no other way: if I don't get there first, I'm ruined."²³ The beating is done in slow motion without hitting the victim, as in Chinese Opera, where in battle scenes no blood is shown.

The actors in both theaters have an acting manner which Brecht calls "gestus," which is "an attitude of a single aspect of an attitude, expressible in words or actions."²⁴ In Chinese Opera the gestus of every character is well defined. Every character has a certain manner of movement and gesture, and this "attitude" communicates to the audience what traits the character embodies. Gestus, however, is different from stereotype since stereotype creates its effect by reducing the character's depth (generalization). Gestus, on the other hand, adds new dimensions to the character; Gestus specifies the character's attitude by adding different levels of meaning to the character.

The audience is reminded in both theaters that they are viewing a play. One of the elements where this occurs is the stage set. The river crossing scene in The Exception and the Rule was presented on stage by two long blocks that the coolie was forced to cross while holding a large block over his head. This use of simple set of blocks to represent the river, parallels the use of the set and props in Chinese opera. For example, in Chinese Opera when a character steps on to a chair and then steps down, the character has traveled some distance. Props like chairs and blocks are used to symbolize other objects.

In [the] last analysis, however, clearly Brecht's figures do not any longer stick in the mind as Chinese. There are some elements in it still, in the music, in the masks, in the acting manner in the nonrepresentational landscape and stage setting, but all these elements take their place along with many other non-Chinese elements to create something entirely new.²⁵

The structure of Brecht's play is segmented in the same way as that of the Chinese theater. In Brecht's plays, the scenes are connected by film projections that state what the different sections of the play contain. While these projections are not of Chinese origin, they serve the same function by segmenting the scenes. Brecht's theater was influenced by the segmented structure of the Chinese theater and he also added other elements of his own invention.

As a result the Chinese conventions were adapted into Brecht's theater. These segmented structural elements are

what influenced Brecht's alienation theory. This alienation approach was in Chinese theater but it was not formulated into a theory. What Brecht did was to articulate what the Chinese were doing and to add other alienation elements of his own to create his theory.

Old and New

Brecht and Sergei Mikailovich Eisenstein had the same objectives when using Syncretic Adaptation. Both felt that theater and film could be used "to inspire an audience with socialist ideals" through a "didactic process of identification."²⁶ Eisenstein's method of "didactic identification" was film montage. His approach to Syncretic Adaptation was to take different qualities of Kabuki theater and to blend them in order to create new film-making techniques. Eisenstein's early use of montage was an attempt to shock the audience into action. For example, in the "Odessa Steps" sequence of Potemkin (1925), the crowd is sympathetic toward sailors who have mutinied on a government ship, so the Cossack soldiers start firing on the crowd. A nurse with a baby is shot and the carriage starts rolling down the steps. A student sees the carriage but he can do nothing. The carriage overturns onto a pile of dead bodies. A Cossack soldier swings his sword at the mass of bodies lying on the ground, so the audience viewing this thinks that the baby is

the soldier's victim until a lady with a bloody eye is shown as the real victim.

Eisenstein's use of montage changed after he attended a performance of Ichikawa Sadaji's Kabuki troupe in Russia in 1928. His montage style changed from one of shocking images to

montage as an activity of mental fusion or synthesis, through which particular details were united at a higher level of thought.²⁷

Eisenstein uses Syncretic Adaptation in his montage Old And New, which originally was named The General Line, and filmed in 1929. In this montage, Eisenstein uses techniques that have qualities of the Kabuki theater.

My characterization of kabuki theater proved prophetic. This method became the basis for the montage of Old and New.²⁸

Old And New is what Eisenstein termed as "intellectual montage."²⁹ It is a story about the values of collectivism. This is shown through the images of fertilization and fertility that are presented throughout the film. One scene, the marriage scene, shows it clearly, when a bull is mated to a heifer. It is a community event that is celebrated in a festive manner. Everyone is wearing garlands, even the cow. The film move slowly frame-by-frame from the depiction of happy village people to the finalization of the cow's marriage. The milk separators' udders pour milk on to Martha. The clouds over head rain down milk; through collectivism, prosperity is the result. In one scene a man is able to own a

tractor through the wealth of collectivism. When he needs a piece of cloth, he merely rips it from Martha's skirt. Instead of being mad at him, she takes a ride on his tractor (the whole scene symbolizes Martha's and the tractor driver's initiation in the prosperity that collectivism brings). The message is that through collectivism prosperity occurs.

Eisenstein wanted to

make a piece of social agitation that would stimulate to action and that would be informative of what the new collective peasantry would gain by reacting as individuals.³⁰

Eisenstein uses Kabuki conventions to structure his film Old And New. In Old And New and in Kabuki theater, theatrical elements (units of sound, movement, and voice) are separated. As Earle Ernest states:

In Kabuki, with its visual fragmentation of time, the series of action which in real life would occur simultaneously are before the audience separately so that a single impression of each of them is stated unambiguously.³¹

The action on the Kabuki stage is not always simultaneous (in many cases all the characters freeze in place, except the character who performs the action). This is so the audience can focus on what is happening to a character on stage and not on the other character's reaction to the event. For example, in the Kabuki play Moritsuna's Camp (n.d.), when Koshiro kills himself, the other characters do not react until after Koshiro has stabbed himself. The other characters only react to clarify the situation in the play.

Eisenstein also uses disintegration acting in his montage. An example of disintegration acting in Kabuki plays is Futa Omote (n.d.), in which one actor plays two parts. Two spirits, Hokaibo and Nowake, are combined to make the shape of a woman named Okimi. The actor who plays the role has to make it clear to the audience that one side of his body is controlled by a female spirit and the other side by a male spirit. This disjointed acting style influenced Eisenstein's style of film montage.

In Old and New, he filmed a face with slowly changing expressions. These expressions were contrasting and exaggerated, somewhat like the way a Kabuki actor uses facial expressions. For example, in Izayoi Seishn (n.d.), a priest, after killing a youth, turns to a life of crime. The audience sees the character's exaggerated facial expression slowly changes to an expression of evilness.

Eisenstein's montages are similar to that of Kabuki theater, where all the elements are shown to the audience; in his montages he made the joints of the film obvious to the audience viewing the film.

In Old and New, Eisenstein uses a Syncretic Adaptation of Kabuki conventions. He filmed different images that showed separate units of expression, these separate units present a unified meaning. His method of montage, which is based on Kabuki disjointed acting and the slowing down of physical

actions, was ahead of his time. For this reason, his films were rejected by Soviet officials.

The artist takes its village outside of its real relations, outside of living conditions. He thinks in terms of things. He disintegrates reality into disconnected, unrelated pieces. . . . This film, arising [from] the desire to express a most urgent page of living reality, full of throbbing interest, proves to be a production torn away from reality itself.³²

They thought that Eisenstein's montages were too stylized. They felt that his films did not portray the "reality" of the Soviet's collectivism.

Conclusion

Brecht and Eisenstein used Asian theatrical conventions as departure points from which they created their own theatrical styles. Brecht adapted elements from the Chinese theater to create new theatrical techniques and Eisenstein used Kabuki elements to create new film techniques. Their styles were created by a combination of Asian art and the creative genius of the directors involved. The directors were not able to eliminate the strangeness of the adapted conventions, so this strangeness became part of each director's style. Both Brecht and Eisenstein created new techniques in theater and film through the use of Asian theatrical conventions.

Syncretic Adaptation presents directors with many benefits. The conventions used must be able to interact with the theatrical elements of Western theater. These conventions must be used so that they relate to and have meaning for the adapting culture. In Syncretic Adaptation, a director can create new theatrical techniques or forms of theater.

The difficulties of this adaptation are that directors need to understand their own culture so they will discover what conventions the audience will accept and what conventions will be of value to their culture. The director's awareness of the conventions by field research in combination with reading about the conventions could possibly lead to better production choices.

There is a great difficulty in blending Asian and Western theatrical conventions to produce a new form of theater. While Syncretic Adaptations are the goal of many directors, few have been able to reach this goal. Even though the Syncretic Adaptation has not been totally accomplished, the trend is well-justified. Brecht, Artaud, and Eisenstein have achieved a rudimentary level of Syncretic Adaptation. Rudimentary level in this case means that the adaptation created new theatrical techniques that were incorporated into Western theater's practices but these adaptations did not create a new non-Western, non-Asian art forms. Since there are successful examples of two Eastern elements mixing and two Western elements mixing, it is safe to presume that the mixing

of Eastern and Western elements is also possible. For example, the Javanese native culture was very different from that of the Hindu culture. If they can mix, then, perhaps, Eastern and Western culture elements can also mix. There is the need for more theatrical research that might produce a fuller understanding of Syncretic Adaptation. A rudimentary level of Syncretic Adaptation is a step towards creating a fuller form of Syncretic Adaptation.³³

CONCLUSION

The art of adapting one theatrical element from one culture to another is taking place not only in the United States, but also in many other countries. In Japan, one theatrical group staged Macbeth using Japanese marionettes, dressed in Scottish costumes, with the puppet handlers speaking their puppets' lines directly to the other puppets. In this production, Lady Macbeth danced to the Japanese samisen and wore a kimono. Lady Macbeth's costume was the only Japanese-style costume in the play; the other characters' costumes were Western. This group is also going to present The Rocky Horror Show with Japanese theatrical conventions. A Cross-cultural Adaptation has taken place.

This global adaptation movement to reach out to other cultures makes it important for directors to be aware of the types and processes of adaptation. There are no answers as to which conventions are the best in a particular production; directors alone can make that decision. As discussed in this thesis, directors can expand their imaginative scopes, first, by taking all the elements into account, such as the lighting, set, text, blocking, and movements. By studying different conventions of a genre, directors will expand the creative possibilities in their productions. Second, directors should try to avoid making choices by relying only on random exposures to other cultures: they should make an effort to

explore and to learn the multi-facets of Asian theater when they adapt Asian theatrical conventions. Lastly, to realize a true global theater, one must not limit one's vision only to the meeting of the East and the West. One should remember that Asian arts are not the only art that offers Western directors possibilities of creating new theatrical elements in their productions. Other cultural poles besides the East-West axis, such as African, Central and South American, and American Indian cultures should also be taken in consideration.

NOTES

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25 Ibid., 150.

26 Ibid., 147.

27 Ibid., 171.

28 Ibid., 154.

29 Ibid., 158.

- 30 Ibid., 168.
- 31 Ibid., xi.
- 32 Benjamin Britten, Curlew River, (London: The Decca Records, 1965), 3.
- 33 Ibid., 2.
- 34 Ibid., 3.
- 35 Ibid., 4.
- 36 Ibid., 3.
- 37 Benjamin Britten, Curlew River, 3.
- 38 Nippon Gakujutsu Shikokai, The Noh Drama, 96, 151.
- 39 Britten, Curlew River, 5.
- 40 Nippon Gakujutsu Shikokai, The Noh Drama, 153.
- 41 Ibid., 149.
- 42 Benjamin Britten, Curlew River, 3.
- 43 Nippon Gakujutsu Shikokai, The Noh Drama, 15.
- 44 Benjamin Britten, Curlew River, 7.
- 45 Ibid., 159.
- 46 "Buddhism," The Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan. (Toyko: Kodansha, 1983), 77.
- 47 E.Dale Saudes, Buddhism in Japan, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 137.

CHAPTER THREE

¹ "Fool's Fire," American Playhouse, writ. and dir. Julie Taymor, Pubic Broadcasting System, KQED-TV, 26 March 1992.

² Wilbur Schramm and Donald F. Roberts, The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, (Chicago: University Of Illinois, 1971), n. pag.

³ David Bevington, "Kabuki Othello at the Wisdom Bridge Theatre, Chicago," Shakespeare Quarterly, no. 38, (Summer 1986): 12-14.

⁴ Bertolt Brecht, Brecht On Theatre, trans. by John Willett, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 92.

⁵ Shotaro Oshima, W. B. Yeats and Japan, (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1936), 54.

⁶ Sid Smith, "Ritualistic Kabuki Series Brings Japanese Artists' Dream on Stage," Chicago Tribune, (13 March 1986): E12.

⁷ Pronko, Theater East and West: Perspective Toward a Total Theater, 161-163.

⁸ Liam Miller, The Noble Drama of W. B. Yeats, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1970), 217.

⁹ Ibid., 192.

¹⁰ Shotaro Oshima, W. B. Yeats and Japan, 37.

¹¹ Norman A. Jeffares and A. S. Knowland, A Commentary on the Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats, (London: Macmillan Press, 1975), 210.

¹² Ibid., 208.

¹³ Ibid., 210.

¹⁴ Jeffares and Knowland, A Commentary on the Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats, 89.

15 Richard Taylor, The Drama of W. B. Yeats: Irish Myth and Japanese No, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 119.

16 Mosco Garner, "The genesis of opera," Turandot, (New York: River Press, 1984), 17.

17 Ibid., n. pag.

18 Giacomo Puccini, Turandot, (New York: the Decca Records, 1973), 12.

19 Ibid., 13.

20 Ibid., 14.

21 Ibid., 22.

22 Garner, "The genesis of opera", Turandot, 19.

23 Ibid., 16.

24 Ibid., 18.

25 Ibid., 23.

26 Smith, "Ritualistic Kabuki Series Brings Japanese Artists' Dream on Stage," Chicago Tribune, 13 Mar.1986: E12.

27 Ibid.

28 Earle Ernst, The Kabuki Theater, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 170.

29 Stephen Salisbury, "Theatre That is Born of the East and West," Philadelphia Inquirer, 21 Sept. 1986: A11-12.

30 Robert Finn, "Greek Drama Spiced with Soy," Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6 Jan. 1985: D7-8.

31 "Unknown Author of Shakespeare's Moor is a Japanese Ainu in Shozo Sato's "Kabuki Othello", " The New York Times, 31 Aug. 1986: A66.

32 David Bevington, "Kabuki Othello at the Wisdom Bridge Theatre," Shakespeare Quarterly, (Spring 1986): 213.

33 Tony Mastroianni, "Kabuki Medea a Visually Dazzling Production," Akron Beacon Journal, (10 Jan. 1985): D9.

34 Smith, "Ritualistic Kabuki Series Brings Japanese Artists Dream on Stage,": E12.

35 Bevington, 211.

36 Ibid.

37 Mastroianni, "Kabuki Medea a Visually Dazzling production,": D9.

CHAPTER FOUR

1 Clyde M. Woods, Culture Change, (Dubuque: Brown, 1975), 21. Syncretic as a term to define the East meets West theatre: "Syncretism is the blending of single traits or complexes rather than whole tradition." This corresponds with how the selective process is used in this adaptation more than the word "assimilation", which is "when a whole tradition is changed" [and not just certain elements]. In this adaptation the elements are not used in totality so Syncretic Adaptation is a better term to apply to this adaptation than Assimilation Adaptation.

2 Bryce F. Ryan, Social and Cultural Change, (New York: the Ronald Press, 1969), 282.

3 Young Yun Kim, "Intercultural Personhood: an integration of Eastern and Western Perspectives," in Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter's, Intercultural Communication: a Reader, (Berkeley: Wadsworth, 1972), 363.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 John Gould Fletcher, "the Orient and Contemporary Poetry" in Arthur E. Christy's, The Asian Legacy and American Life, (New York: The John Day, 1945), 146.

7 Ibid., 158.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 77.

- 10 Michael Edwards, East-West Passage, (New York: Taplinger, 1971), 122.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid., 166.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Cindy Heller Adams and Lee Strasberg, the Imperfect Genius of the Actors, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1980), 7.
- 16 Maung, Htin-Aung, Burmese Drama, (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 26.
- 17 Pronko, Theater East and West: Perspective Toward a Total Theater, 35.
- 18 James R. Brandon, "Asian Theater in the West Today," 34.
- 19 Artaud, The Theater and Its Double, 57.
- 20 Brecht, Brecht on Theatre, 92.
- 21 Pronko, Theater East and West: Perspective Toward a Total Theater, 56.
- 22 Martin Esslin, Brecht: the Man and His Work, (New York: Anchor, 1961), 128-139.
- 23 Bertolt Brecht, The Jewish Wife and Other Short Plays, trans. by Eric Bentley, (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 121.
- 24 Ibid., 112.
- 25 J. M. Ritchie, Brecht: Der Kaukasische Kridekreis, (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), 6.
- 26 Andrew Tudor, Theories of Film, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1974), 51.

27 Peter Wollen, Signs and Meaning in the Cinema, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 51.

28 Sergei Mikailovich Eisenstein, Film Form, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1949), 64.

29 Yon Barna, Eisenstein, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), 25.

30 Lewis Jacobs, The Compound Cinema, (New York: Teacher's College Press, Columbia University, 1977), 461.

31 Earle Ernst, The Kabuki Theater, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 191.

32 Wollen, Signs and Meaning in the Cinema, 56.

33 A rudimentary level of Syncretic Adaptation is achieved when Asian conventions create new theatrical techniques which are incorporated into Western theater practice, while a fuller form of Syncretic Adaptation would create a new art form neither Eastern, nor Western.

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Appendix

All the following tunes are sections of musical themes from Giacomo Puccini's Turandot, as analyzed by Mosco Garner in one of his articles, "the Score." (Garner, Mosco. Turandot. New York: River Press, 1984.)

A. Moo- Lee-Wa, the boys chorus scene, Act I.

B. The National Anthem, Ping, Pong, and Pang scene, Act I.

C. Temple music, the Emperor's entrance, Act I.

D. Ceremonial melody, the Emperor's music, Act II.

E. The Guiding March, Ping, Pong, and Pang scene, Act II.

F. Hymn of Confucius, the march of the Persian prince, Act I.

G. Liù's song, Act I.

Adagio

Sig-nore, s - scol - ta! Ah, sig-nore s -

- scol - ta! Liù non reg - ge più!

H. Invented Chinese-style music, Act III.

Oboe

Trpt SOLO

Vin