

Cross-Culturalism and Intertextuality in the Genre Drama

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ABSTRACT: *In this paper I intend to explore the cross-cultural and inter-textual influences on the genre drama. Taking into account the statement by Erika Fischer Lichte (1943-) that the theatres of widely differing cultures have shared an increasing trend of transplanting elements of foreign theatre tradition (“Familiar and Foreign Theatre”, 133) I see that the cross cultural influences on the genre drama evolve dynamic forms that integrate the literary and performative together. While focusing on western drama I explore the Asian and South Asian theatre and drama, its influence on European drama. I argue that the genre manifests itself in a complex of cultural systems to depict multiplicity of reality by the integration of elements from foreign theatre traditions.*

“Recently theatres of widely differing cultures have shared an increasing trend of transplanting elements of foreign theatre traditions into own productions and as a result of the dynamic combinations between European, Asian, African, and other theatre traditions, entirely new dramatic and theatrical forms have been created that depict both western and indigenous properties in form and content”.
 (“Familiar and Foreign Theatre”, 133)

Erika Fischer’s observations regarding cross-cultural influences on the genre of drama can be taken as a preliminary to the dynamic forms that develop through an integration of the literary and the performance together. As I discuss cross-culturalism and intertextuality in Western/European drama I also analyze the impact of Asian and South Asian drama on it. I intend to show that cross culturalism and intertextuality transfigure postmodern drama influencing a creative recombination of the respective cultural or textual elements/codes, without slavish adherence to any one tradition. This form of drama manifested aesthetically in the concept of cultural interaction and change uses varied cultural systems to depict reality in all its multiplicity.

Drama or theatre has a representational capacity as it engages with multifold meaning and a manifestation of reality. Reality that may be constructed upon mental and cultural factors such as perceptions, beliefs, and other mental states or cultural artifacts, such as religious and political beliefs and movements is observable or comprehensible in theatre and drama only through dialogue and performance or verbal and non-verbal signs. These sign systems having cultural manifestations give drama a global dimension as theatres from differing cultures increasingly transplant elements of foreign theatre traditions as is evident from the above mentioned statement by Erika Fischer.

As I trace the evolution of western drama to the development of hybrid or syncretic drama and then discuss the elements of classical Asian drama I intend to show that the cross-culturalism and intertextuality brings in the postmodern drama a multimodality that challenges the reader/audience to go beyond the given realities and explore their complexities. Since drama is a communal or social activity therefore, the literary and the performance elements integrate and a shared meaning making process helps create a total effect.

The theatre anthropologists and performance ethnologists like Erika Fischer closely link performance and drama with cultural traditions and socio-political practices. They recognize the aesthetic richness of Asian, African and Latin American cultures that influence the European aesthetics and its techniques. They believe that this leads to a decentralization of Euro –American values and practices in theatre and drama conferring a global dimension to it.

In this connection, one may state that under intercultural impact, theatre and drama is reinvented as now it moves beyond the narrow confines of a particular vernacular by adopting the performance aspects of a culture that manifest much deeper and broader meaning. The highly developed cultural signs or visual codes and performance techniques such as gesture, movement, dance, song, and make up, masking and so on, from different cultures and theatres incorporated into Western theatrical practices not only broadens the scope of drama but they also suggest a sense of inadequacy pertaining to Western dialogic drama. Christopher Balme in his “Introduction” to *Decolonizing the Stage* observes that the integration of cross-cultural texts into the framework of a theatrical text involves a process of cultural and aesthetic semiotic recoding (reconstruction of signs in either their syntactic, semantic or pragmatic functions) therefore it ultimately questions the basis of normative or dialogue-based Western drama (4)”. It may be stated that postmodern drama with its emphasis on performance or enactment of drama by the actors shows diversity and functionality through a conjunction of various aesthetic and cultural codes. At the same time it shows that meaning-making processes involve not only dialogue, but also performance elements like gestures, body movements, dance, songs, and so on.

Diversity in meaning-making processes in drama and performance is possible only through cultural interaction for performance involves action that varies from culture to culture and from historical period to historical period. Johannes Birringer emphasizes in “Repetition and Revolution” on a need for cultural pluralism and an open dialogue and collaboration across cultural borders and refutes the concept of “dominant” language that commodifies and homogenizes ethnicity (150). His criticism on the postmodern neutralization of cultural difference and historical positions seems valid given that theatre is a “social learning

process” but in this context it becomes an imperative to understand one’s history and traditions for reinterpreting realities in the intercultural paradigm (153). Eugenio Barba too in his article “Eurasian Theatre” while supporting cross-culturalism and inter- textuality in theatre and drama states that theatre is a relationship, which neither establishes a union, nor creates a communion, but ritualizes the reciprocal strangeness and the laceration of the social body hidden beneath the uniform skin of dead myth and values (153).

Considering the above premises on cross-culturalism and intertextuality, I observe that the dramatists while borrowing from other cultural texts or representing their own socio-cultural and political values and practices experiment upon new modes of presentations and enactments. As a result of this, a profound change can be recorded from the miracle and morality plays of medieval ages to the secular drama of Elizabethan age, from Naturalism and Absurdism (early twentieth century) to the development of the cross cultural drama or the syncretic theatre of post modern era, thus, showing great evolution in the meaning-making processes that overlap literary and performance drama.

Aristotle’s definition of drama as *a kind of imitation* (*Poetics* 1-3, 1) entuses much deliberation linguistically and semiotically as dramatists and theatre anthropologists explore its new dimensions. Based on Greek models Aristotle considers drama as an imitation of action that represents life (1) and considers a well constructed plot with a proper beginning, middle and an end as a prerequisite for a successful drama(6). Aristotle’s three unities namely the unity of action ,time and place are well followed by the Elizabethans (1580-1640) who mainly focus on the flexibility of technique, largeness of vision and subtlety of language as a result Elizabethan drama is regarded as *poetic drama*. Especially Shakespeare’s plays show strict adherence to the three unities and following the Greek modals like those of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides represent human suffering and its understanding of it as the hero moves from prosperity to adversity. The intertextual references are evident in his plays as *King Lear* (1605-06) borrows from ancient British myth and the folk tale of the king and his three daughters. Originally the Celtic sea-god, Lear is attached with the king of the folk tale by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century and since then it has been repeatedly

used by many predecessors of Shakespeare like Holinshed and Spencer. Shakespeare has also used the tale of Gloucester and his two sons from Sidney's *Arcadia* as sub-plot to present a larger cosmic view of man's fate and the individual tragedies of Lear and his daughters. The play reveals depths of human psyche through images of nature, sex, astronomy and through the binaries like light- dark, sight- blindness, and knowledge-ignorance and of good and evil. It can be stated that what starts as a ritualistic practice in the ancient Rome and Greece passes on to the Elizabethans and Jacobean (1567–1625) as court drama and moves on to develop into a vehicle of representing or propagating norms and ideas relevant to the given society. Ben Jonson (1573- 1637) a contemporary of Shakespeare shows a diversion from classical modals in presenting boisterous comedies like *Every Man in his Humor* (1598). It borrows from Roman comedy the element of intrigue but maintains its original tone and manner of a satire, making a dig on the contemporary urban society for its human errors and foibles. The development of masque¹, literary and visual or technical aspects in the genre marks this period. Rather as David Daiches observes that the eighteenth century also marks as the great age of pantomime and spectacular shows depending on ingenious and abundant use of stage "machinery" (*A Critical History..*, Vol. Four, 1100). The pantomime converging with masque, mime and *commedia dell'arte*, and dance from the Italian opera in the nineteenth century become a frequent part of English stage. Cross cultural and intertextual assimilation depicted by the incorporation of masque, pantomime from Italian opera traditions in the nineteenth century paves way for what we now call "theatre" or "performance drama" and in the last third of the nineteenth century the notion of theatre as an art form begins to gain recognition. Though satirical wit and verbal dexterity remains a pivotal element of drama even in the Victorian age (1837 -1901) and on stage melodrama and farce prevailed yet the debate remains on as to the various means of representation of reality in art and literature. The plays of Oscar Wilde indicate the beginning of the aesthetic movement in art and literature as art is taken less as an escape from life than as a substitute for life, his play "*The Importance of Being Ernest*" (1895) show witty dialogues projecting the sham of upper-class society empty of genuine emotion and morals. His epigrammatic exchanges become too stylized to be followed. Meanwhile, Dr Johnson (1709-1784) has already refuted in the *Preface*

to *Shakespeare* the Renaissance concept that the audience is being constantly in a state of some delusion or deception(7) and George Bernard Shaw's (1858-1950) discontentment with the stylized drama of restoration has led to the rise of an anti-romantic realistic drama. Shaw sees drama as a vehicle for presenting in an entertaining and provocative form his views of the abuses and contradictions of the social order and his suggestions of the true way in which to view experience and institutions (1104). He satirizes the follies and foibles of the society and institutions through his characters in the play like *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906). He recognizes Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) as an exponent of *Naturalism* in drama. Ibsen's emphasis on the presentation of life as it really lived in contemporary society opens up a new discussion in drama and with the increasing technical development; naturalism on stage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century paves way for the growth of modern drama; in *A Doll's House* (1879) Ibsen employs the themes and structures of classical tragedy while writing in prose about every day, unexceptional people. It also manifests Ibsen's concern for women's rights and for human rights in general. The setting is the typical middle class drawing room with the fourth wall being removed and the illusion of something being watched is created on the stage (Act One). Anton Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) is yet another play that can be taken as a naturalistic play because it focuses on scientific, objective, details. It thus is like realism, in that it attempts to portray life as it really is. Although these details are selected, sketched and presented in a certain way, guided by the author's intent. The playwright uses nature as a metaphor for past and memory. The "cherry orchard" that remains in the background throughout is used as a motif to reveal the clash between the values of modernity and the values of old Russia. Modernity here signifies Western modernity, its rationalism, secularism and materialism. The conflict between Gayev(Ranevsky's infantile elder brother) and Ranevsky (the owner of the orchard, in debt and impoverished) regarding the sale of the house and orchard and her spendthrift ways on the one hand and Lopakhin (a local businessman with a brutal peasant background who ultimately buys the property) and Trofimov(Ranevsky's dead son Grisha's tutor who constantly reminds her of the tragedy) on the other are emblematic of the disputes between the old feudal order and Westernization. The conflict is made most explicit in the speeches of Trofimov, who views Russia's historical

legacy as an oppressive one, something to be abandoned instead of exalted, and proposes an ideology that is distinctly influenced by the Western ideas such as Marxism and Darwinism (Act II). Irony as a tool is also employed to reveal the bitter past of the characters and the situations as they really are, for instance when Lopakhin gloats about how far he has come from his brutal peasant origins, he does it in a brutal manner, thus betraying those origins (Act II). The play is recognized for its new formal innovations in terms of the use of the empty stage, lost dialogue and the mixing of comic and tragic elements. The play that was intended by its playwright to be a comedy in four acts is interpreted as a drama by its director Stanislavsky against the wishes of Chekov. Nevertheless, this play marks an innovation in the naturalist or realist tendencies with its symbolism.

Another significant playwright who brings in the cultural phenomenon on stage for the first time is John Osborne (1929-1994). In his *Look Back in Anger* (1956) the presentation of the frustrations of the young British middle class generation in a postwar society that remains loyal to traditional aristocratic snobbery opens up a new phase of twentieth century English drama. Jimmy the representative of the 'angry young generation' alienated by the postwar social framework disintegrating itself expresses his frustration in vengeful torture of his wife Alison who comes from an upper middle class family. Jimmy's passion is dissipated in his garrulity: "why don't we brawl? It's the only thing left I'm good at (Act II Sc.I 53)", and tirade (Act 1, 17, 20, Act II Sc.I 57-58). Paul Bond in his article on *Look Back in Anger* writes that Osborne's style of domestic realism as it is known conveys the language of everyday speech, and shocks with its bluntness. Eric Keown, reviewing *Look Back in Anger* in *Punch* magazine at the time, wrote that Osborne "draws liberally on the vocabulary of the intestines and laces his tirades with the steamier epithets of the tripe butcher"ⁱⁱ.

It is obvious that European drama is undergoing a transformation as it is now moving into the arena of the ordinary especially with the avant garde movements like modernism influenced by Swedish playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912) who introduces symbolism and expressionism on stage. He believes in presenting Ibsenian like natural environment to characters that speak and act naturally like ordinary

people. He does not assign them long eloquent speeches or mechanical movements or superfluous gestures rather their feelings and motives are expressed through real and familiar objects such as the ringing of door bell at the end of *Miss Julie* (1888) represents the fateful tragedy of Miss Julie (146). There is an historical element in his plays as he depicts the social struggle and the Darwinian battle of sexes. His tragic plays such as *Fadren* or *The Father* (1887), *Fröken Julie* or *Miss Julie* are an example of his desire to present complexity of human soul and multiplicity of motives behind a tragedy. Thus, we find in his characters a split as he himself states in the foreword to *Miss Julie*:

“My souls (characters) are agglomerations of past and present cultures ,scraps from books and newspapers, fragments of humanity, torn of once-fine clothing, patched together as is the human soul. And I have also provided a little documentation of character development by making the weaker steal and repeat the words of the stronger, and by making the characters borrow ideas or "suggestions" from one another (95)”.

A shift from well-constructed plots to the delineation of character is quite noticeable as the character has now gained the pivotal place in drama as it now explores human nature anthropologically, psychologically and in terms of gender identity. Strindberg's Characters are not idiosyncratic or one-dimensional; rather they are human beings with simple motives and emotions. In style Strindberg adheres to realism, in content (for example the explicit references to menstruation, blasphemy, lust, and bodily functions in *Miss Julie*), staging (the elimination of footlights and makeup); and time (*Miss Julie*, takes place over a single, compressed, and unbroken episode). But expressionistic devices can be detected in *Miss Julie* such as the use of symbols, ritualized dance, the backdrop of the pagan festival (mid- summer eve), and the construction of an absent, shadowy, and yet reckless center of authority in the figure of the Count. The drama has a historical element as like her mother the aristocratic *Miss Julie*, rebels against the restrictions placed on her as a woman and as a member of the upper-class. From the beginning of the play, her behavior is shown to alienate her peer class and shock the servants. She displays a blatant disregard for class and gender conventions, at one moment claiming that class differences should not exist and the next demanding proper treatment as a woman of aristocracy. Strindberg lived in a time in "which gender and

class roles were becoming more fluid, and the play reflects the conflicts that are inevitable in a society struggling with change. Class and gender conflict is evident in Julie and Jean's struggle for survival in their society. Julie is Jean's superior in terms of class; Jean is Julie's superior in terms of morality, because Jean is a man and Julie is a "degenerate" woman. These differences structure most of the play's action. Under Julie's orders, Jean kneels in mock gallantry and kisses her foot (114). Pantomimes function as pauses in action, interrupting the otherwise unbroken episode with slow, highly realistic interludes. Christine cleans the kitchen, curls her hair, and hums a tune; Jean scribbles a few calculations (111). These are typical of the naturalistic theater. Also a sort of pantomime, the dance of the peasants operates differently, laying waste to the kitchen and disrupting a largely two-person play with a rowdy crowd. Many critics have identified this pagan festivity of the rumor-mongering crowd as symbolic of Miss Julie's ruin and a prefiguring of German expressionism. Dreams in the play are reflective of the character's struggle for escape from their situations; in a dream, Miss Julie declares that she is "climbing down" from her social position. Jean has dreamed the opposite, yearning to improve his status (116). Animal imagery in *Miss Julie* has symbolical significance. The two pets function as doubles for the heroine. The first pet is Diana, Julie's dog, who is pregnant by the gatekeeper's mongrel. Diana's name is a joke, for the goddess Diana is the goddess of virgins. Her resemblance to her owner implies that Miss Julie is not good looking. The second pet is Serena the canary, who Jean decapitates on a chopping block after deciding that Miss Julie cannot take the bird with them on their journey. The decapitation of the bird is linked to the story of Saint John the Baptist, who was decapitated. Saint John's story can be read as an allegory of a castration staged by a conspiracy of women. Here the terms of the allegory are reversed: Serena (or Miss Julie, who Serena symbolizes) is submitted to the chopping block. The execution of Serena sends Julie into a rage. She restores the biblical story in her fantasy, imagining Jean (French for "John") and his "entire sex" swimming in blood (137-139). With expressionism being introduced on stage the shift in drama from well constructed plots to character delineation and presentation of episodes or events from life introduce bourgeois culture and a fusion of poetry, music, dance, and painting on stage for the first time.

The *futurist movement* in the first decade of twentieth century (1909) focuses on industrialization and its effects and especially the changes that it brings in Russia and Italy. Intellectual radicals discuss the problem of popular culture, of the bringing together of the people and the world of Art. In Ireland, W.B. Yeats, the mystical poet, presents a fusion of peasant mythology and idealism with the high cultural forms of poetry and mysticism, to create a Nationalist movement of the soul. In Germany Wagner composes operas which forge the idea of a German Spirit by adopting the mythologies of the Teutonic warrior and farmer, and so inspires the beginnings of Nazi ideology. War and violence was projected. The futurists wanted to liberate art in Italy by complete breaking away from the past and tradition. They take inspiration for their new work from their surroundings, which include modern life and the urban environment of the new Italy. Works of the Futurist Luigi Pirandello (1867- 1936) show innovations in drama and stage especially his use of farce gives his drama a new dimension antecedent of the absurd drama. In *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921) Pirandello uses metatheatrical elements like the scene opens with the already raised curtain and a director and his cast in the process of beginning a rehearsal of Pirandello's another play "The Rules of the Game (Act I 2). The rehearsal is interrupted by the arrival of six strange people who told that they are unfinished characters in search of an author to finish their story. Pirandello suggests that their essential contrast with the living actors is enhanced by special lighting; their stiffly statuesque clothes; and by masks that leave free their eyes, noses and mouths. The mother particularly has wax tears fixed on her cheeks. The play comments on the relationship between an author, his characters and the theatre practitioners. The realism of the characters as they are portrayed by the actors is questioned as the characters laugh at the histrionic mannerisms of the characters; the step daughter (excitedly) "What? What? I, that woman there? [Bursts out laughing] (Act II 19)". The speech act "that woman" referring to the actor playing the character indicates a disparity between the character and the actor for the actor only fills the role as the Manager affirms,

"Your soul or whatever you like to call it takes shape here. The actors give body and form to it, voice and gesture... (Act II 19)". Here the

literary culminates the performance on the stage as the Manager tells the Father that “actors act” where as the characters are there in the “book” (Act II 18). The age old debate on reality and its representation is very deftly taken up by Pirandello when he puts these words in his character’s mouth:

The Father (dominating the protests): Excuse me, all of you!
Why are you so anxious to destroy in the name of a vulgar commonplace sense of truth, this reality which comes to birth attracted and formed by the magic of the stage itself, which has indeed more right to live here than you, since it is much truer than you...(Act II 22).

The stage is the space where reality is realized and enacted by the actors who are just playing the roles caught and confined in the timeless moment of realizing their individual nature and destiny and so imprisoned and damned as the Son blurts out that it isn’t possible to live in front of a mirror which not only freezes us with the image of ourselves, but throws our likeness back at us with a horrible grimace (Act III 36). Reality and its representation are two different phenomena as the Father argues with the Manager:

“Our reality doesn’t change; it can’t change! It can’t be other than what it is, because it is fixed for ever... ours is an immutable reality which should make you shudder when you approach us if you are really conscious of the fact that your reality is a mere transitory and fleeting illusion, taking this form today and that tomorrow, according to the conditions, according to your will, your sentiments, which in turn are controlled by an intellect that shows them to you today in one manner and tomorrow ... who knows how? Illusions of reality represented in this fatuous comedy of life that never ends, nor can ever end!”
(Act III 33)

However, reality and illusion blur as the step daughter explains the scene during an argument with the Director over the reality and its representation on stage. The scene culminates in an embrace between the Father and the Stepdaughter which is realistically broken up by the distressed Mother (Act III 35-36). The line between reality and acting is blurring gradually. The final words of the Director show his confusion when the characters disappear and he is left on the stage mumbling: “Pretence! Reality! To hell with it all! (Act III 38)!”

One can state that with Pirandello’s endeavor to lay the basis of the contemporary theory of drama, a shift is evident from the literary to the

performance drama especially with the blurring of the boundaries between reality and enactment that is exposed through metadramatic elements such as the play-with-in-play technique or impressionism such as the sound of the revolver being shot behind the tree depicting the suicide committed by the Boy or the Step-Daughter bending over the fountain to show the drowning of the Child (Act III 38).

An introduction of visual arts, paintings and the scenographic concepts without dramatic texts in the theatre mark the later part of modern era along with the spectacles geared to a musical or sound score composed of moving shapes and changing lights. Ridicule and parody of social behavior and dramatic histrionics become prominent theatrical practices. This spirit continues with the bitterness recorded at the atrocities of First World War as the playwrights use farce to question intellectualism, modernism, and dogmatism. They favor the spontaneity and a cabaret environment by presenting poems, dance, songs dialogues, cubist paintings, and cacophonous music on stage and prefer non-western cultures opposing all kinds of '-isms' such as *Modernism*.

French writer and artist Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), in theatre introduces innovative stage setting, unique visual aids, puppetry movements and mime eliciting the grotesque and bawdy on stage for example the creation of *King Ubu* an anti-Christ like figure. Meanwhile a new term *surrealism* coined by Guillaume Apollinaire describes these changes in theatre and drama. The surrealist movement under Breton's leadership shows influences of Alfred Jarry's theatre of the grotesque.

Surrealism and *Farce* together give rise to the 'Theatre of the Absurd' in 1950s. The Romanian absurdist Eugene Ionesco (1906-1989) and Harold Pinter (1930-2008) propagate the philosophy of *Existentialism* and depict the absurd status of the post-world war man who lives invariably in a purposeless universe without any motive and meaning. Pinter's plays such as *The Birthday Party* ((1958) and *The Caretaker* (1960) involve strong conflicts among ambivalent characters who struggle for verbal and territorial dominance and for their own versions of the past. Stylistically, theatrical pauses and silences, comedic timing, irony, and menace mark these works. Thematically ambiguous, they raise complex

issues of individual identity oppressed by social forces, language, and vicissitudes of memory.

Epic and historical dimensions are also found in the works of John Arden (1930) a writer of post *Look Back in Anger* era. His play *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959) is a protest of war and its horrors. In the "Introduction" to this play, Arden declares it to be a realistic but not a naturalistic play (Daiches, vol.4, 1117). David Daiches maintains that Arden seeks to probe the human dimensions of the situation he has chosen to develop. In order to achieve this he turns to the tragic yet earthy imagination of the folk-singer and balladist (1118). *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* (1964) is another play that shows epic dimensions. His works bear the heavy influence of Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and the Epic Theatre.

Yet another significant development in drama that marks cross-culturalism and intertextuality is the introduction of The *Dialectic theatre* of Bertolt Brecht in Germany in 1920s; this exemplifies a postmodernist influential style of theatrical presentation and dramatic writing. Brecht introduces a deliberate alienating effect and the concepts of *Gestus* or gesture and *die Fabel* or story as the tools for creating an alienating effect ('On Brecht's Notion of Gestus', Patrice Pavis, pp.291). This technique constantly reminds the audience or the reader of the play as a non-illusionist piece of enactment. In this connection, Erika Fischer in "Familiar and Foreign Theatres: The Intercultural trend in Contemporary Theatre" observes that the most profound changes with the European avant-garde achieved in theatre aimed against the literary, psychological realistic theatre of illusion and directly affected the status of the literary text and language, performance art, conception of space and the quality of audience perception (136).

Brecht in his essay on epic theatre comments that the epic and the dramatic are not only two distinct forms but they have different methods of constructions and rules of aesthetics (112). He successfully integrates these two diverse forms creating an environment that according to him "stands on its own and does not depict any one point of view rather the stage begins to tell a story as events unfold on it (113)". He achieves this by showing simultaneously alternative views through characters that

directly speak to the audience or move in and out of their roles, e.g. In *Good Woman of Setzuan* (1940) Wong the water seller directly speaks to the audience in the Prologue (349) or abstract conversations or projecting documents, placards inviting the audience or the reader to create an opinion or view of their own. Thus, the spectator of the *Dialectic or Epic Theatre* suddenly finds himself in the role of an active participant creating his own story and critique of the situation presented. Brecht considers this process of alienation essential for understanding and an active audience/reader participation in the meaning-making processes.

However, Brecht's concept of literary forms of expression are conditioned by the question of how, when and for what class they are made use of since he aims at attracting the masses by making use of all the means, old and new, tried and untried, from art and other sources. He believes in putting "living reality in the hands of living people" ('On Brecht's Notion of Gestus', Patrice Pavis 190) and he does so by going beyond the created atmosphere in which stories are developed in such a way that characters are psychologically stripped down. Rather he presents a broader political perspective free from aesthetic restrictions and independent of convention. Thus, putting more responsibility on the shoulders of the artist who, Brecht believes, should be without any prejudices, and has the liberty of stating truths in the way he wants. In theatre, according to Brecht, realities can be represented in a factual or fantastic form and the indignation of human conditions can be stimulated in many ways such as by description, by narrating stories and parallels, by jokes and by over and understatements (190). To prove his point Brecht has borrowed the epic theatre techniques such as the element of storytelling, dance, and music from Asian theatre and drama. His works show profound influence of a Beijing Opera performance by Mei Lanfang and his troupe that he has seen in 1935 on a visit to Moscow. He discovers in Chinese performance both an attitude and a set of corresponding techniques. Rather than pretending to feel emotions, the actor represents them through depiction. His works like, *The Good Person of Szechuan* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* illustrate an influence of Chinese theatre in making effective use of the story-telling techniques. Brecht's rejection of the theatre of illusion manifests cross-culturalism as he makes use of various dramatic techniques such as

projected captions, songs, and presentational acting depicting reality from different standpoints.

Edward Bond (1939) another noticeable playwright of the modern era who followed the epic traditions of Brecht maintains: “epic isn’t a style but a philosophical undertaking and art is not universal, not some ideal statement that appeals to all people, but is class-derived and historical (in a letter to his publisher, 9 February, 1982)”ⁱⁱⁱ. Bond considers that theatre should talk about the causes of human misery and the sources of human strength (‘A Note to Young Writers’, *The Worlds*, pp.107-109). He regards theatre as a platform for protest, reinterpreting the political and economic processes underlying history, culture and lifestyle of individuals. For him culture is an individual’s understanding of his community and his commitment to it whereas the artist’s job is to make the process public, to create public images, literal or- figurative, in signs, sound and movement of the human condition for self-recognition and confirmation (“Introduction” to *The Fool* pp. xiv-vi). The difference between Brecht and Bond lies in their different approaches as Bond puts it, “Brecht wrote in the time of the “masses”, I write in the time of “individuals”, yet this must be seen not as a reactionary retreat but as a further concretization of socialism (Letter, 4 March 1982)”. His plays are a series of episodes, dealing with one or two incidents relevant to the immediate situations, showing an intention to reveal the historical, political and social forces controlling people’s lives. Bond’s *Lear* (1971) reminiscent of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* but resembles more with the classical Greek trilogy *Orestia* in its dialectic progress from thesis to antithesis to the synthesis of the final part. Act One shows a world dominated by myth. Act Two a clash between myth and reality, between superstitious men and the autonomous world. Act Three shows a resolution of this, in a world proved real by dying in it. The eighteen short scenes are coherently woven in a three act structure with each act moving from one point of conflict to some kind of resolution embodying Bond’s idea that the rational is threatened by the irrational through unjust class divisions, the inequitable distribution of wealth, privilege and power and the application of law and order as a travesty of justice (*Epic/Rational Theatre*, xii-iii). Art for him is always optimistic and rational. It makes the present relationship between people easier to understand by destroying the cloak of sentimentality, hypocrisy and

myth and it makes the potential rationality of these relationships more certain (Epic/Rational Theatre, xii).

In addition to Brecht's epic and Bond's rational theatre the works of the dramatist Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) bear cross cultural influences of the Asiatic theatre as he considers the Asiatic techniques of putting ideas into practice very fascinating. Impressed by Balinese dance, Artaud regards gestures, mime, and the rhythm effective in representing the psychological makeup and mental construction of the characters. In his theatrical representation of reality he moves away from a purely *verbal or dialogic theatre* believing that it is unaware of the sum total of theatre and the correct use of music for concrete dramatic purposes (301). He considers *performance* as a 'language' that could speak to the mind below and above the level of verbal concept and touch those nodal points of consciousness that the eloquent speeches of French drama could never reach (293). Artaud's emphasis on the use of meta-lingual elements in recapturing the experience on stage highlights intercultural influences on stage indicating a shift from literary to performance drama as focus is more now on non-verbal codes or body language and other elements of theatre such as costumes, music, lights and the stage itself.

Effective meaning-making is possible only when the reader or the viewers are able to understand and interpret the meta-lingual codes and signs in their cultural context. New dramatic and performance theories in theatre and drama focus more on para-lingual elements than verbal speeches. Brecht, Bond, Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski (1933-) and Peter Brook (1925) the avant garde European dramatists believe in going beyond the apparent possibilities and connecting to the audience by reaching out to them through performance that involves both the lingual and paralingual elements or codes. In this connection, they take myth and history as important dramatic tools forming connection between the text and performance. These dramatic tools enable the audience to stretch their everyday perceptions as they go beyond the apparent realities, developing an insight into matters of life, and becoming part of a creative process.

It becomes obvious that under the cross cultural influences western modern drama is becoming more visual and multimodal. The influence

of Asian and African theatres is now becoming more evident as European playwrights include the expository (introduction of a character or chorus) techniques, prologues, epilogues of the epic theatre in their works. The skills such as the African and Japanese use of mask and dance in theatre, elements of Chinese opera (such as conception of space), the dance techniques of Indian *Kathakali* with its precise costumes, masks, dance steps, facial gestures and body movements found in European modern drama indicate cross assimilation and cross culturalism.

Peter Brooks once stated that the complete human truth is global, and the theatre is the place in which the jigsaw can be pierced together (*Twentieth Century Theatre: a Source Book* 320). Obviously, he is referring to the creative process that reproduces realities of human existence by employing varied literary and performance tools within the framework of integrative intercultural practices. This is supported by Erika Fischer's observation quoted in the beginning that, "In recent years, theatres of widely differing cultures have shared an increasing trend of transplanting elements of foreign theatre traditions into own productions (14)". Clearly Erika Fischer is referring to the development of *Syncretic Theatre*. In the context of intercultural and inter textual paradigms, the phenomenon of *hybridity* gains significance as it not only invokes a wider range of cultural codes involved in various cultural forms of expression but also give them new kinds of cultural expression through spontaneous invention and elaboration. Robert J.C. Young maintains that *hybridity* is defined variably; it is a process of the grafting of diversity into singularity ("Hybridity and Diaspora" 10), an amalgamation, and a polygenic maintain the differences (18, 19). Hybridity involves processes of interaction that create new social spaces to which new meanings are given. These relations enable the articulation of experiences of change in societies splintered by modernity, and they facilitate consequent demands for social transformation (79, Hybridity). This reminds one of Homi Bhabha's (1949-) multiculturalism that rises out of cultural diversity and difference significant in meaning making processes. These processes involve the *difference* in language and its discursive enunciation creating ambivalence in its interpretation ("Cultural Diversity..." 207-208). Bhabha claims that cultural purity and originality is untenable as presentation of empirical histories demonstrate

their hybridity (208). One can take this hybridity or cross-culturalism as a closely linked phenomenon with the syncretic *theatre*, as this form of theatre is a conscious effort to fashion a new form of theatre in the light of colonial or post-colonial experience. The postcolonial writers along with other genres also use drama and performance to reinterpret subject, body, gender, and identity to articulate the “other” innovatively and aesthetically and show the multidimensional reality of the post colonial subject that strives to gain centrality through the articulation and representation of the self. Christopher Balme recognizes *syncretic theatre* as one of the most effective means of decolonizing the stage, because according to him it utilizes the performance forms of both European and indigenous cultures in a creative recombination of their respective elements, without slavish adherence to one tradition or the other (Introduction:2). This form of theatre usually manifests bi or multilingualism in varying degrees with its emphasis on a euro phone language. Syncretic theatre is not just an aesthetic phenomenon but it has roots in the concept of cultural interaction and change.

However, we may agree with Balme’s observation in ‘Introduction’ to *Decolonizing the Stage* that both *syncretic theatre* and *theatrical exoticism* use indigenous cultural texts but in quite different ways. Western theatre uses Asian or African theatrical elements like the music, dance, masks, and puppets purely for their aesthetic value and not for their original cultural semantic significance. Western aesthetic and ideological framework recode and semanticize them arbitrarily (5, Balme). This results in a shift from what Balme refers to as ‘the hierarchy of dominant’ organized according to genre and performance codes, i.e. a dialogic dominant for drama or a musical dominant for opera, or a kinesics one for ballet and dance(6) and shows a mingling of intercultural dramatic and theatrical elements.

‘Syncretic theater’ not only illustrates the conditions of the dispossessed in the formally colonized nations by Western imperial powers but it also depicts European literary influences especially in the use of English language as a medium of communication. Maria Tymoczko in her article, “Post-colonial writing, and literary translation” maintains irrefutably that the culture or tradition of a post-colonial writer acts as a metatext rewritten in the act of literary creation (21). The post-colonial

playwrights create a scholarly niche by drawing at myth and history and strive to redefine their identities in representing their complex post colonial situations. They use English language as a tool of communication and show its malleability by incorporating in it the registers^{iv} and dialects of their native languages endorsing the capacity of English language to reach out to a larger audience or reader from various nationalities and communities. For instance Soyinka in *A dance of the Forest* uses the registers of Yoruba culture to invoke past to redress grievances in the present; likewise Girish Karnad in his plays creates a typically indigenous atmosphere using local registers particularly drawing from Indian folk tradition of *Kathakali* or 'story play'.

This kind of drama not only recaptures local histories but also revives the indigenous performance traditions. The dramatists like Derek Walcott (1930), Wole Soyinka (1934-), Athol Fugard (1932-), Brian Friel (1929), Badal Sircar (1925 by -), Girish Karnad, Ama Ata Aidoo (1942), Femi Osofisan (1946) are some of the prominent writers who show intercultural and intertextual influences. The dynamic use of myth and history in their works illustrates their efforts to articulate and reinterpret the notions of subject, body, gender, and identity. They successfully integrate both European and their local dramatic and performance techniques to represent their very complex post colonial situations. As example, Soyinka uses the rituals and dance tradition of Yoruba culture in *A Dance of the Forest* (1960); the technique of magical realism is also employed to reconstruct past that is as tainted as the present. Helen Gilbert quotes Femi Osofisan in *Postcolonial Plays* that against the inert silence which autocrats seek to impose upon their subjects, the dissenting artiste can triumph through the gift of metaphor and magic, parody and parable, masking and mimicry ("General Introduction" 1). No doubt theatre and drama have the capacity to give expression to the hopes and concerns of the dispossessed by criticizing the oppressive systems of powers especially the works of the playwrights from the formally colonized nations by western powers show a revival of local histories and local cultural performance traditions challenging the western notions of representation. This type of syncretic theatre is vibrant, diverse and often provocative. This kind of theatre has over the years expanded its conceptual reach and in Stephen Slemon's words, "it now describes a remarkably heterogeneous set of subject positions, professional fields,

and critical enterprises (Helen Gilbert: General Introduction 1)”. The narrative structures and the performative features coded in their particular cultural contexts show the passionate, angry, ambivalent or celebratory responses of playwrights of the syncretic theatre.

In the context of the changes taking place in the genre drama concerning the issues of representation within the intercultural and inter textual paradigms, one finds dynamic theatrical and dramatic forms. At the same time there evolves diverse drama and theatre theories and practices. However, amid these progressive changes South Asian drama (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Srilanka) remains on the periphery struggling to gain centrality. I believe this is owing to the fact that most of the post-colonial theories focus on the conditions of colonial or post colonialism or the issues of identity and survival in the Diasporas or expatriates. Epistemically marginalized status of South Asian drama and theatre in particular is owing to the limitations of it being indigenous and more localized.

However, unlike South Asian drama, Asian Drama shows diversity and richness in its performance aspect and many western playwrights borrow various dramatic techniques from them. *Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre* recognizes Asian drama as a kaleidoscope of rich, unique, highly developed, and diversified forms within the respective cultural and historical contexts of the Asian continent. From Pakistan in the west to the Hawaiian Islands in the east, and from China in the north to Indonesia in the south, the theatrical arts have evolved into as many as 700 to 800 distinct forms or genres. Each stands apart from the neighboring theatre forms as each reflects the unique language, religious views, social structures, and daily lives of the people. Each form distinguishes from other in its music, movement, acting style and staging conventions analogous to its particular dramatic content and form. *Kabuki*^v or *Bunraku*^{vi} in Japan differ from Indian *Bhavai*^{vii} or *Beijing Opera*^{viii} in China as each displays distinct form and dramatic elements (1-2).

Since Asian Pacific Islands divide into East Asian and South Asian regions therefore according to *The Columbia Online Encyclopedia Sixth Edition* the dramatic works produced in the east are broadly categorized

as Japanese literature, Chinese literature, and Sanskrit literature (n.pag.). The East Asian Territories of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea share cultures based on Confucian civil ethics, systems of imperial rule and Buddhist philosophy. All these areas adopt the Chinese writing system of calligraphic characters, thus making the Chinese literature, art of brush painting, music, and dance more popular. In East Asia, a spirit of decorum and restraint and a concern for structural simplicity and clarity also prevails in performing arts (*Cambridge Guide*, 2-3).

Bangladesh, Srilanka, Nepal, Pakistan, and India together form the region called South Asia. This region is the home of Hinduism and the other dominant religions are Islam and Buddhism. The main sources of dramatic themes in this region are the epics, folk legends, Ramayana and Mahabharata. Performing art shows influences of multifaceted classical dance traditions and displays the vibrant use of color and emotion (*Introduction to Cambridge Guide*, 3).

The countries of Southeast Asia, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam show influences of both south and east Asian religions, literatures and dance forms, thus their performing arts depict a fusion of art forms from both the regions (“Introduction to Cambridge Guide”, 3).

The cross-cultural and intertextual influences in the Asian drama are also traceable. In Asian drama the three distinct social milieus play a vital role as they give rise to three theatrical forms namely *the elite*, *the folk* and *the urban* theatres. These theatres depict certain properties peculiar to their respective social milieu. As for instance the elite forms of theatre are created with the support of the ruling classes, therefore they propound the ideologies of the rulers as well as the politically and economically powerful classes. In the past, the court functionaries, actors, dancers, musicians and storytellers to please the rulers, presented performances. Thus, *Performance* was considered a civic and political ritual demonstrating royal prerogative reflecting the highest literary and aesthetic values of the respective cultures they represent, as for instance *Sanskrit* drama in India, *Nō*^{ix} in Japan, and *Wayang*^x in Indonesia are considered elitist theatres. With the weakening of the royal courts and their support to art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the performers

were forced to turn to other audiences for support. Even today, some of these former 'royal' theatre forms persist as cultural artifacts (4).

In the twentieth century with the advent of western imperialism, a new kind of elite theatre flourished under the patronage of the western oriented, student elite. This kind of theatre known as the 'spoken drama' influenced by the realism and modernism of the English drama elicited the gospels of social reform. However, a division occurred as the Second World War broke and the artists were divided into two distinct groups: those committed to humanistic, psychological drama of the individual that might be called the 'art' or 'non-political' theatre; and those who allied to 'progressive' or socialist ideologies saw theatre as a means of promoting the struggle for socialist-communist societies (4-5). This division still persists in the present times though current modern theatre in Asia and the pacific region shows cross-cultural influences as well as the post-modernist tendencies of deconstructionism with the aim to (re)create realities akin to their local conditions. The dominance of language in drama has constantly been questioned in the twentieth century.

As my focus is particularly on the evolution of meaning making processes in European drama that culminates into performance drama under the influence of cross-culturalism and intertextuality I assert that under the impact of Asian and South Asian drama western drama demonstrates a creative recombination of various cultural or textual elements representing reality in all its multiplicity. To understand these cultural systems or elements it is pertinent to first recognize the various elements in traditional or classical Asian drama. Asian drama depicts through its semiotics that action can be created without being dependent on language, in fact there are other theatrical elements such as the body movements of the actor, facial gestures, the stage setting, music, light and so on that can generate meaning affectively.

In this context, Japanese traditional *kabuki* theatre illustrates the remarkable quality of using the space called theatre to create reality through the semiotic devices other than the language. Here Asian drama shows a diversion from the semantics to the semiotics. As discussed above the European literary drama while evolving into performance

drama learns to utilize the stage for the spatial and temporal representation of realities.

In most of the Asian countries, folk theatre popular among the masses was created by the villagers performing during the festivals and on religious occasions. Their performances aimed at entertaining the local communities. These performances included *Manutimdu* in Nepal, *Hat Cheo* in Vietnam, *Sandeguk* in Korea, *Kuda Kepang* in Indonesia and *Kutiyattam* in India. Incidentally, the contemporary Western and Asian drama borrowed from these folk performances the forms like the music, dance, puppetry, and the act of story –telling along with many other elements.

One may mention here that early Asian drama like those of the Greek and Roman plays had a religious relevance as Asian and Oceanic performances were associated with the gods and man's relation to these gods. Early Asian drama had ritualistic connotations as it was meant to appease the gods for their forgiveness and bounties. It was considered as a channel to invite the sacred spirits into the temporal world for goodwill. Such ritualistic plays were and are still common in Srilanka, Thailand and India. *Raslila*^{xi}, *Kutiyattam*^{xii} are known Indian religious plays. The Korean *mask* and *puppet* plays depict the belief that human performer is a mere vessel of a god's appearance. In Indonesian *Barong* and Indian *Prahlada Nataka* the performances show a spirit possession that reaffirms the bond between man and the spirits or gods. The Hindu *Ramayana*^{xiii} also contains one of the world's greatest mythic motifs incorporated in later plays as well.

An intermingling of Asian and Pacific performance styles occurs with the performers frequently visiting their neighboring regions or states; this results in the innovative use of music, dance, and other dramatic skills that attract the western playwrights. Especially after World War II, one sees theatrical interchanges between Asia, Oceania, Europe, and America. However, one cannot deny the influence of western drama on Asian drama as in the beginning of 16th century western traders and colonial administrators introduce the popular western performance forms such as the melodrama, spoken and the realistic drama. Ibsen and Stanislavski induce interest in realistic and dialogic theatre as a result in

the countries like Malaysia, Burma, Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore English language theatre become increasingly strong (4-5). However, what distinguish the Asian drama from the western dialogic drama are the Asian performance styles. In performance training and transmission in most of the Asian traditional theatre the actor is considered as the source and repository of most performance information. In most cases the performer, the musician, and the actor conceive and present the written text through their performance. Unlike the Western drama, where a director conceives a performance, in Asian traditional performance no special outside vision of the director is required. The actors or musicians themselves are the source of knowledge and work as a self-directing ensemble. A performance thus is one momentary arrangement of pre-known elements that keeps on changing according to the content, and acting follows well-defined movement codes as every stage performance is carefully controlled and choreographed along with dialogue, music, lyric and dance(5-6). Mask dance, puppetry are the unique features of Asian drama and these have increasingly influenced Western theatre and especially the works of Jerzy Grotowski^{xiv}, Peter Brook^{xv}, Ariane Mnouchkine^{xvi}, David Henry Hwang,^{xvii} and Peter Sellers^{xviii}(6-8).

Asian drama includes Chinese, Japanese and Sanskrit classical and modern theatrical forms, showing varied aesthetics, structural patterns, and performance styles that may be opposed to each other in one way or the other. For instance in the Japanese traditional drama forms *Nö* and *Kabuki*, the performer tries to shock or surprise the audience through the unexpected. These short, virtually plot less, tragic plays depict highly stylized performances integrating singing, speech, instrumental music (drums, flute), dancing and mime with an avid use of wooden masks by the principal characters, women characters and old people. In comparison, Chinese classical drama depicts highly conventionalized acting style, character types, and stage properties. Initially (19th century) it was a mixture of music and declamation relying more on music, song, acrobats, mimicry and costuming. The stock characters like a comic drunk were a regular figure on stage. Later it included dialogues integrated with music and the movement of body. Traditionally Chinese plays lacked any form as for instance Hung Sheng's *Palace of Eternal Youth* (1688) had 49 scenes without any act divisions in it. Contrary to

the Western realism Chinese classical drama showed symbolism as the props and scenes stand for one thing or the other for example, a flag represents an army. According to the online *Columbia Encyclopedia*, the property man was present on the stage; characters at times directly address the audience and often only parts of plays are performed (n.pag). The post modern epic and syncretic theatres of today utilize these performance elements as part of the deconstructive strategies to present the complex realities in their particular socio-cultural, religious, political and economic conditions.

From the above discussion it is concluded that the phenomena of cross culturalism and intertextuality influence the integration of the literary and the performance elements from varied foreign cultures in drama so that the genre moves past the narrowness of boundaries and ideologies to represent shared human experiences as the viewers/readers interpret them in their respective cultural contexts. Thus drama or performance becomes a global phenomenon in meaning making and its interpretation.

Notes

ⁱ The masque was a form of festive courtly entertainment which flourished in 16th and early 17th century Europe, though it was developed earlier in Italy, its forms included the intermedio (a theatrical performance or spectacle with music and often dance which was performed between the acts of a play to celebrate special occasions in Italian). It involved music and dancing, singing and acting, within an elaborate stag design, in which the architectural framing and costumes were designed by a renowned architect, to present a deferential allegory flattering to the patrons. Professional actors and musicians were hired for the speaking and singing parts.

ⁱⁱ “*An inarticulate hope: Look Back in Anger*” by John Osborne. *Paul Bond*, 14 September

1999<<http://www.wsws.org/images/title.png>>

ⁱⁱⁱ “Epic/Rational Theatre”, *Lear*. Edward Bond. London: Methuen, 1983.

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- ^{iv} In linguistics, a *register* is a subset of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. For example, an English speaker may adhere more closely to prescribed grammar, pronounce words ending in -ing with a velar nasal (e.g. "walking", not "walkin'") and refrain from using the word "aint" when speaking in a formal setting, but the same person could violate all of these prescriptions in an informal setting. The term was first used by the linguist Thomas Bertram Reid in 1956, and brought into general currency in the 1960s by a group of linguists who wanted to distinguish between variations in language according to the *user* (defined by variables such as social background, geography, sex and age), and variations according to *use*, "in the sense that each speaker has a range of varieties and choices between them at different times" (Halliday et al, 1964). The focus is on the way language is used in particular situations, such as the language of a biology research lab, of a news report or of the bedroom. The elements of language may vary in different registers — vocabulary, syntax, phonology, morphology, pragmatic rules or different prosodic features such as pitch, volume and intonation in spoken English, or size and speed of sign production in a sign language. Registers often also have non-linguistic prescriptions such as appropriate dress codes, body language.
- ^v *Kabuki* and *Ningyo-Shibai* (marionettes) are two dramatic forms developed in 16th and 17th centuries. These show an integration of movement, music and language. The Kabuki uses only male actors, even for female roles. Emphasis in these plays is laid on conflict in the plot. Unlike the Nō plays these have more characters and less symbolical. The most popular Kabuki play is entitled *The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*. The Kabuki stage is marked by a walkway (hanamichi), which extends from the stage into the audience and to the back of the auditorium. This form both in classical and modern form continues to be popular in Japan.
- ^{vi} Bunaku is also known as *Ningyō jōruri* is a form of traditional Japanese puppet theater, founded in Osaka in 1684. Three kinds of performers take part in a bunaku performance: Ningyōtsukai or Ningyōzukai Puppeteers, Tayū - the chanters, Shamisen players and occasionally other instruments such as taiko drums are used. However, the most accurate term for the traditional puppet theater in Japan is *ningyō jōruri*. The combination of chanting and shamisen playing is called *joruri* and the Japanese word for puppet is
- ^{vii} *Bhavai* (Strolling Players) is a popular folk theatre form of Gujrat. Veshas (means costume) or Bhavai plays are also known as *swang*. The origin of Bhavai dates from the 14th Century. Bhavai is a form of entertainment as well as a kind of ritual offering made to Goddess Amba. In the courtyard of the Ambaji temple near Mount Abu the Navratri festival is celebrated with Bhavai

performances. Amba is the presiding deity of Bhavai and the mother of the universe. Subtle social criticism laced with pungent humor is the specialty of Bhavai. The pompous and incongruous behavior of the high caste people is scoffed at in Bhavai. Some of the Bhavai plays present a scathing review of the caste-ridden social structure. People belonging to different levels of social such as the barbers, knife-sharpener, robbers, bangle sellers and social and economic thieves, banjaras, odas, fakirs and sadhus, darjis are portrayed in Bhavai. The language of Bhavai is a blend of Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, and Marwari.

- viii Beijing opera or Peking opera is a form of traditional Chinese theatre which combines music, vocal performance, mime, dance and acrobatics. It arose in the late 18th century and became fully developed and recognized by the mid-19th century. The form was extremely popular in the Qing Dynasty court and was regarded as one of the cultural treasures of China. Major performance troupes are based in Beijing and Tianjin in the north and Shanghai in the south. The art form is also enjoyed in Taiwan, where it is known as Guoju. It has also spread to other countries such as the United States and Japan. Beijing opera features four main types of performers. With their elaborate and colorful costumes, performers are the only focal points on Beijing opera's characteristically sparse stage. They utilize the skills of speech, song, dance, and combat in movements that are symbolic and suggestive, rather than realistic. Performers also adhere to a variety of stylistic conventions that help audiences navigate the plot of the production. The layers of meaning within each movement must be expressed in time with music. The repertoire of Beijing opera includes over 1,400 works, which are based on Chinese history, folklore and contemporary life. In recent years some Western works have been adopted as new plays, but an adverse political climate has left Beijing opera's fate uncertain as the form enters the 21st century.
- ix The *No* drama was developed in the 14th cent., bringing together elements from the earlier *sarugaku* [monkey music] and *dengaku* [rustic music]. Its invention is attributed to Kanami Kiyotsugu (1333-84), while his son Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443) brought the *No* to its peak of refinement. Zeami was also a playwright who produced such classics of the *No* drama as *The Well-Curb* and *The Lady Aoi*. There may have been thousands of *No* plays written, but only about 250 are still performed. The language of the *No* is concise and symbolical. Quotations from Chinese and Japanese poetry are included to give the works a traditional basis; they are often central to the theme. The setting is

usually limited to a single place of extreme importance to the main character. All the actors are male. The plays center around a single character called the *shite*. Of secondary importance is the *waki*, who is often a priest and who serves as a foil to the *shite*. Both the *shite* and the *waki* have one or two attendants. There is also a chorus whose sole function is to sing. Frequently the chorus sings the lines appropriate for the *shite*, while he dances or mimes the action. It is common for characters to speak lines meant for another character or to finish up another character's speech; finally, a character may speak of himself in the third person. The effect of these devices is to objectify and universalize what otherwise is a highly emotional and personalized experience. The usual form of the play is to present two manifestations of the *shite*. In the first part the *shite* presents a false or disguised appearance. In the second part he presents his true or spiritual self. The No stage is a plain platform about 20 ft (6 m) square with a walkway leading from the back of the stage to the greenroom. The musicians are placed at the back of the stage, and the chorus is on the right. The positions of all characters are very precisely set, as is the stylized movement on stage. Developing about the same time as the No was a type of short farce known as the *Kyogen*. The *Kyogen* are placed between No plays as comic relief. They do not use music, take about 20 min to perform, and are broad in their humor.

- ^x Wayang is an Indonesian and Malay word for Theatre. The term is used to refer to certain kinds of Puppet Theater; sometimes the puppet itself is referred to as wayang. "*Bayang*", the Javanese word for shadow or imagination, also connotes "spirit." Performances of shadow Puppet Theater are accompanied by gamelan in Java and by "gender wayang" in Bali.
- ^{xi} The Rasa lila or Rasa dance is part of the traditional story of *Krishna* described in Hindu scriptures such as the *Bhagavata Purana*, and literature such as the *Gita Govinda*, where he dances with Radha and her sakhis. The term, *rasa* means 'emotion' or 'performance' and *lila* is a concept from Hinduism, which roughly translates to "play (lila) of the dance (rasa)," or more broadly as "Dance of Divine Love". The rasa lila takes place one night when the *Gopis* of *Vrindavan* upon hearing the sound of Krishna's flute, sneak away from their households and families to the forest to dance with Krishna throughout the night, which Krishna supernaturally stretches to the length of one *Night of Brahma*, a Hindu unit of time lasting approximately 4.32 billion years. In the Krishna Bhakti traditions, the rasa-lila is considered to be one of the highest and most esoteric of Krishna's pastimes. In these traditions, romantic love between

human beings in the material world is seen as merely a diminished, illusionary reflection of the soul's original, ecstatic spiritual love for Krishna, God, in the spiritual world.

- ^{xii} Koodiyattam or Kutiyattam is a form of Sanskrit Theatre traditionally performed in the Indian state of Kerala. Performed in the Sanskrit language in Hindu temples, it is believed to be 2000 years old. It is officially recognized by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.
- ^{xiii} According to the Columbia Electronic encyclopedia, *Ramayana* [story of Rama] is a classical Sanskrit epic of India. It was probably composed in the 3d cent. B.C. based on numerous legends, it is traditionally the work of Valmiki, one of the minor characters. The epic was revised and set down in its best-known form by the poet Tulsī Das (1532-1623). The *Ramayana*, because of its single subject, has more unity and is far shorter than the *Mahabharata*, the other great Indian epic. Incorporating much earlier sacred material from the Veda, the *Ramayana* relates the adventures of Rama, who, together with his three half brothers, collectively made up the seventh avatar (incarnation) of the Hindu god Vishnu. Rama was deprived by guile of the throne of Ayodhya and forced into a long exile with his wife, Sita, the prototype of noble womanhood. When Sita was abducted by a demon, Rama allied himself with the king of the monkeys, Sugriva, and the monkey general, Hanuman, and fought a mighty battle in Lanka (Sri Lanka). Finally, Sita was recovered, and Rama was restored to his kingdom. The *Adhyatma Ramayana*, a popular work of more recent date, tells how Sita's mother (the earth mother) rose from a great chasm to reclaim her daughter. The epic influenced many of the literatures of Southeast Asia. Its principal characters are still worshiped in India.
- ^{xiv} Grotowski, Jerzy, 1933-99, Polish stage director and theatrical theorist. Grotowski was founder and director of the small but influential Polish Laboratory Theatre (1959). He propounded a "poor theatre," which eliminates all nonessentials, i.e., costumes, sound effects, makeup, sets, lighting, and strictly defined playing area, in an effort to redefine the relation between actors and the audience. His famous productions are "Orpheus" by Jean Cocteau, "Shakuntala" based on text by Kalidasa, "Dziady" by Adam Mickiewicz and "Akropolis" by Stanislaw Wyspianski. His theatre premiered "The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus" based on the Elizabethan drama by Marlowe. Foregoing the use of props altogether, Grotowski let the actors' bodies represent different objects, establishing an intimate dynamic of relation between actors and spectators by seating audience members as the guests at

Faust's last supper, with the action unfolding on and around the table where they were seated.

^{xv} Peter Stephen Paul Brook (1925-) is a British theatre and film director and innovator. His work is inspired by the theories of experimental theatre of Jerzy Grotowski, Bertolt Brecht, Meyerhold, G.I. Guardijeff and the works of Edward Gordon Craig and Stuart Davis. Brook is also influenced by Antonin Artaud and his ideas of Theatre of Cruelty. The Empty Space by Brooks remains an influential piece of work in Theatre Studies. It has four parts with each describing a version of the notion and nature of theatre. His following quote has become something of a mantra for practitioners of site-specific theatre, and also for those working with devising, "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all I need for an act of theatre to be engaged". Some important works by Brooks are enumerated here: *The Empty Space* strips theatre down to the bare bones of what performance is, rejecting the necessity for traditional theatre spaces, elements or form in themselves, and placed a huge emphasis on the direct relationship between actor and audience. These ideas are shared with Grotowski. *The Mahabharata*: In the mid 1970s, Brook, with writer Jean-Claude-Carriere, began work on adapting the Indian epic poem *Mahabharata* into a stage play which was first performed in 1985 and then later into a televised miniseries. The production using an international cast caused heated intercultural debate. Negative criticism came from Indian scholar Pradip Bhattacharya who felt that Brook's interpretation "was not a portrayal of a titanic clash between the forces of good and evil, which is the stuff of the epic but the story of the warring progeny of some rustic landlord". *Tierno Bokar*: In 2005 Brook directed *Tierno Bokar*, based on the life of the Malian Sufi of the same name. The play was adapted for the stage by Marie-Helene Estienne from a book by Amadou Hampate Ba (translated into English under ASpirit of Tolerance: The Inspiring Life of Tierno Bokar).

^{xvi} Ariane Mnouchkine (1939-) is a world-renowned French stage director. She founded the Parisian avant-garde stage ensemble Theatre du Soleil in 1964. She has written and directed *1789* (1974) and *Moliere* (1978), and in 1989, she directed *La Nuit Miraculeuse*. Mnouchkine is a strong influence in modern theatre. She builds her work with her company *Théâtre du Soleil* and develops their works using many techniques. Sometimes, the troupe develops ideas out of improvisational exercises. They also incorporate multiple styles of theatre in their work - ranging from commedia dell'arte to various Asian rituals.

Théâtre du Soleil's productions are often performed in found spaces like barns or gymnasiums because Mnouchkine does not like being confined to a typical stage. Similarly, she feels theatre cannot be restricted with the "fourth wall". When audiences enter a Mnouchkine production, they will often find the actors preparing (putting on makeup, getting into costume) right before their eyes. Between 1981 and 1984, she translated and directed a series of William Shakespeare's plays: *Richard II*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Henry IV, Part 1*. She developed *Iphigenia*, by Euripides and the *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon*, *Choephoroi*, and *The Eumenides*) between 1990 and 1992.

^{xvii} David Henry Hwang (1957-) is a contemporary American playwright who has risen to prominence as an Asian American dramatist in the U.S. His first play was produced at the Okada House dormitory at Stanford and he briefly studied playwriting with Sam Shepherd and Maria Irene Fornes. Hwang's early plays concerned the role of the Chinese American and Asian American in the modern day world. His first play *Fresh Off the Boat* depicts the contrasts and conflicts between established Asian Americans and newcomer immigrants. The Pulitzer-Prize nominated drama *The Dance and the Railroad* tells the story of a former Chinese Opera star working as a coolie laborer in the nineteenth century, and *Family Devotions* a darkly comic take on the effects of Western religion on a Chinese family. Those three plays added up to a "Trilogy of Chinese America" as the author described. His best-known play, *M. Butterfly*, won him a Tony Award, the Drama Desk Award, the John Gassner Award, and the Outer Critics Circle Award. It was also his second play to be a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The play is a deconstruction of Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly*. The play is also loosely based on news reports of the relationship between a French diplomat, Bernard Boursicot and Shi Pei Pu, a male Chinese opera singer who purportedly convinced Boursicot that he was a woman throughout their twenty-year relationship. Hwang's latest full-length play *Yellow Face* made him a third-time finalist for the Pulitzer-Prize for drama. Hwang has continued to work steadily in the world of opera and musical theatre and has also written for children's theatre as well.

^{xviii} Richard Henry Sellers, commonly known as Peter Sellers (1925–1980) was a British comedian and actor best known for his three roles in *Dr. Strangelov* as Inspector Clouseau in *Pink Panther* films, and as Clare Quilty in the original 1962 screen version of *Lolita*. His ability to speak in different accents (e.g., French, Indian, American, British, German), along with his talent to portray a range of characters, contributed to his success as radio personality and screen actor and earned him national and international nominations and awards.

Many of his characters and cultural stereotypes became ingrained in public perception of his work.

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