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Memory and Performance.
Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals

Edited by Francesca Bortoletti, Giovanna Di Martino,
and Eugenio Refini

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info@skeneproject.it

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An Appointment with Japanese Noh Theatre in Verona and Milan

Abstract

Noh theatre has the potential to influence world theatre of the future with its pantomime, theatricality and its grotesquery. Some aspects of this ancient Japanese theatre stray far from realism and are particularly interesting, especially in relation to European modernism. Noh theatre is a synthesis of stage genres combined with a unique stylisation of acting. Zeami (1363-1443) succeeded in developing the doctrine of the actor's skill and to create the illusory artistic drama Mugen-Noh. What is interesting in Noh theatre is that to improve the quality of the performance, theatre operators always tried to create an ideal relationship with the public. They were aware of the fact that the spectator himself participates in the creative process.

KEYWORDS: Noh theatre; theatricality; grotesquery; pantomime; mask; imitation; method of acting

1. Preface¹

My friendship and collaboration with Prof. Shin'ichi Murata, who teaches Russian literature at the Sophia University in Tokyo and is a specialist in comparative theatre history, gave me the opportunity to organise an unusual tour that from Kyoto, Japan, brought to Italy (Verona and then Milan) one of the greatest masters of Noh theatre art: Haruhisa Kawamura.

Here is the background: Haruhisa Kawamura, born in Kyoto in 1956, is heir to a dynasty of actors belonging to the main strand of the great school of theatre in the Japanese tradition known as Noh, whose originator is Maestro Zeami, who lived at the turn of the fourteenth-fifteenth century. Zeami was an actor and playwright, but above all he founded a deeply philosophical theory of theatrical expression. An eerie and enigmatic theatre of shadows and ghosts that has been transmitted from generation to generation, keeping its characteristics alive and unaltered. Haruhisa Kawamura learnt this art

¹ Section 1 is by Stefano Aloe.

* Sophia University, Tokyo, luna_gatto@m5.dion.ne.jp;
University of Verona – stefano.aloe@univr.it

from his father, Haruo Kawamura, then studied with Maestro Kiemon Hayashi XIII, until he became one of the most famous Noh actors in today's Japan.² His activity is not limited to the performative sphere: Kawamura-san has also been engaged for decades in a passionate work of dissemination and teaching on several levels: from the scientific (he teaches Noh Theatre at Doshisha University in Kyoto) to that of popularisation (he holds multiple initiatives to bring young people closer to an art that is today considered distant and little understood). Noh for Kawamura-san is a philosophy of life, and as such it is universal. So much so that he wanted to transmit it as an asset not only to modern secularised Japanese society, but also to the rest of the world. Maestro Kawamura has thus devised a formula of 'lecture-performances', conducted in English with the help of audiovisuals, masks and stage requirements, which very effectively introduce audiences from any continent to Noh art.³

Maestro Kawamura's Italian tour was the result of a fortunate triangulation: Prof. Murata, mentioned at the beginning, had already collaborated with Kawamura-san, leading him to Ukraine a few years ago and establishing a solid friendship with him. My friendship with Murata-san is no less solid: so when in 2023 Kawamura expressed to him his wish to visit Italy for the first time in his life, offering universities free lecture-performances on Noh theatre, Murata addressed this proposal to me. Even without being a specialist in Japanese culture, I understood the uniqueness of this proposal, and accepted it with great enthusiasm. This led to the idea of the Italian tour, for which I sounded out a number of universities and theatre institutions, not always successfully... but in Verona I received from the very first moment the unconditional support of the director of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature where I work, Prof. Roberta Facchinetti, and this allowed me to manage every aspect of the organisation with serenity. I also had a very positive response from the director of the Studio Teatrale Novecento in Milan, Marco Pernich, who also involved the Municipality of Milan by obtaining a prestigious location for Maestro Kawamura's performance: a space in the Fabbrica del Vapore. In this way, the auditorium of the University

² For a short biography of Haruhisa Kawamura, see <https://kyoto-kanze.hinokishoten.co.jp/en/player/KawamuraHaruhisa> (Accessed 13 June 2024).

³ Among the venues where he offered these flashes of Japanese theatre art were Harvard University, the UNESCO headquarters in New York, the "Electrotheater Stanislavsky" in Moscow and the "Tanzquartier" in Vienna. See <https://electrotheatre.com/people/haruhisa-kawamura>; <https://tw.at/en/workshop/noh-theater-workshop/> (Accessed 13 June 2024).

of Verona and the Fabbrica del Vapore in Milan were, on 15⁴ and 16⁵ March 2024 respectively, the exclusive venues for this extraordinary demonstration of the theatrical art of the Far East. The event in Verona, in particular, was enriched with content for reflection on the theatre of the East and the West in a comparative key, thanks to two moments prior to Master Kawamura's performance. First of all, the *lectio magistralis* held in Italian by Prof. Shin'ichi Murata on Zeami and the history of Noh theatre: a precious introductory text that is reproduced here below in English translation; and then the round table, moderated by me, in which, in addition to Prof. Murata, my colleague Nicola Pasqualicchio, lecturer in theatre history at the University of Verona, and the theatre director from Verona, but known above all in north-eastern Europe, Matteo Spiazzi, took part. The discussion underlined the influences that Noh theatre exerted on the twentieth-century theatre avant-gardes (Pasqualicchio) and the expressive and philosophical power of the mask, in the variants derived from the Commedia dell'Arte, but also contaminated with the mask traditions of Asian cultures, emerged with force (Spiazzi).

Haruhisa Kawamura's lecture-performance offered an hour of real full-immersion in the tradition of Noh theatre: which if not completely comprehensible, is always capable of moving and soliciting in the spectator an immediate, total empathy, through the measured, ritualised gesture, rhythms, and the enchanting use of the voice, in an ancestral song that puts the living in communication with the afterlife. All of it demonstrated and explained with grace, clarity and a touch of fine humour. The Noh theatre actor, as Kawamura-san also explained and demonstrated, is a kind of monk, and acting a form of prayer. The ancient links of theatre with the sacred in this form of expression still remain evident and active.

⁴ "Alla scoperta del Teatro Giapponese: Lezione/performance del maestro Haruhisa Kawamura (Kawamura Noh Theatre, Kyoto)" (Rediscovering Japanese theatre: lecture performance of Maestro Haruhisa Kawamura, Kawamura Noh Theatre, Kyoto), organised by Stefano Aloe (University of Verona) and Shin'ichi Murata (Sophia University, Tokyo). With the collaboration of director Matteo Spiazzi and Nicola Pasqualicchio (University of Verona). https://www.univr.it/it/iniziativa/-/evento/11920?p_auth=aLGo2bDf; <https://www.giapponeitalia.org/events/alla-scoperta-del-teatro-giapponese-lezione-performance-del-maestro-haruhisa-kawamura/> (Accessed 13 June 2024).

⁵ "Alla scoperta del Teatro Giapponese: 'La poesia che si muove nel mondo del sogno e nel passato'" (Rediscovering Japanese theatre: poetry moves in the world of the dream and in the past), lecture held by Prof. Shin'ichi Murata (Sophia University, Tokyo) and conference-show of Maestro Haruhisa Kawamura (Kanze Kyoto School), Sala Colonne of the Fabbrica del Vapore, Milan, STN-Studionovecento, in collaboration with Fabbrica del Vapore-Municipality of Milan, with the support of the University of Verona (Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures) and of the Consulate-General of Japan in Milan (<https://www.studionovecento.com/il-maestro-haruhisa-kawamura-per-la-prima-volta-in-italia/>; Accessed 13 June 2024).

In Prof. Murata's essay, which follows, we will be able to read more precise clarifications on the subject. Personally, I am very proud to have contributed to this magnificent initiative.

2. Aspects of Modernity of Ancient Japanese Theatre – Zeami's Legacy⁶

The essence of ancient Japanese theatre is difficult, not only for foreigners but also for the Japanese, to understand. At the same time ancient theatre can be a source of inspiration for contemporary theatre.

Let us take a look at the Noh theatre, an ancient form of Japanese theatre which has the potential to influence the world theatre of the future with its pantomime, theatricality and grotesquery. In the eyes of today's Japanese, this form of theatre looks otherworldly or simply ritualistic and we must therefore try to understand it better.

Traditional Japanese theatre of all genres existed in parallel and in accordance with strict theatrical conventions, which could also be applied to modern dramaturgy. However, there were conflicts between the different theatrical schools.

The Noh theatre was preceded by Gigaku – “theatre of processions”, Bugaku – “theatre of masks and dance”, and Sarugaku – “theatre of acrobatics and mimicry”, all primitive forms of theatre. It should be noted that all forms of traditional Japanese theatre have preserved their unique style and musical characteristics.

Some aspects of ancient Japanese theatre stray far from realism and are particularly interesting, especially in relation to European modernism. Some scholars believe that the peculiar theatricality of ancient Japanese theatre is similar to baroque European theatre.

2.1

The birth and development of Noh theatre have had great meaning for ancient Japanese culture with artists appearing from different social classes.

The characters in Noh theatre come from ancient literary works such as short stories and novels. Noh theatre flourished during the reign of Shogun Yoshimitsu Ashikaga. The Shogun witnessed a Noh performance for the first time in 1374 and was fascinated by its synthetic and stylised aspects as well as the beauty of the leading actor, which we will talk about later.

⁶ Section 2 is by Shin'ichi Murata. When completing the present paper, the author drew on several sections of the following articles: Murata 2002 and 2003. All quotations are from Chitetsuo Iji, Omotesho, Riichi Kuriyama, 1992.

In Noh theatre the essential elements are “monomane”, “yugen” and “hana”. “Monomane” is the imitation of the nature of things. “Yugen” is the underlying, hidden beauty of things, the charm of the understated and the obscure. “Hana” is the flower or symbolic beauty. In Noh these elements combine to form a whole.

Noh theatre is a synthesis of stage genres combined with a unique stylisation of acting. Let us then observe the peculiarities of Noh theatre, from the point of view of the acquisition of acting skills.

Professional actors first appeared in the fourteenth century. In Japan there is an expression explaining the qualities of the ideal actor. “First the gesture, then the voice, and finally the appearance”.

For the ancient Japanese spectator, it was most important to see the beauty of the movements of the actor, rather than following the development of complex conflicts or dramatic situations to their final resolution. Words and dialogues were not the main elements in the theatricality of Noh. In Noh, drama is of an epic nature, born deep in the soul of one individual. In Japanese theatre the appearance of symbolic recitation has long been considered a principal element.

It is interesting to note that the main characters of Noh are all ghosts. However, they are different from the ghosts of European imagination which torment or harm the living. How is the role of such a ghost played? As a rule, the hero is called “shite” and is an active character. The rest of the roles are “waki”, or secondary characters, expressing feelings through dance and gesture. The characters on stage, including the hero, do not say a word. Only the chorus gives cues to the viewer to make him understand the context. The genre of Noh theatre is similar to tragedy, but not as it is known in the West.

We should remember that Noh theatre is a theatre based on purely conventional forms. It has a form of interpretation called “kata”, based on a canon of stylised movements, as is also the case in Kabuki theatre. Generally, on stage, the actors must remain within the limits imposed by the kata. However, kata can be interpreted in diverse ways. Noh theatre actors regard kata as a musical instrument while scenography and traditional techniques are the score. Thus, the canon has changed very slowly over the centuries.

2.2

In the fourteenth century Noh theory already existed and continued to develop. Zeami, the famous actor and theorist of Noh and Japanese theatre in general wrote a remarkably interesting book about Noh theory, *The Flowering Spirit*.

Motokiyo Zeami was born in 1363 and died in 1443. He was the son of a skilled artist, Kan’ami, who brought together traveling actors who performed Sarugaku shows in the western Yamato province, which is the present-day

Nara Prefecture, near Kyoto. Kan'ami was already famous for his skills as an interpreter. Shogun Yoshimitsu Ashikaga (1358-1408), then head of state, admired the performance of the eleven-year-old Zeami who from that moment began working under the patronage of the shogun. In other words, he became a protected 'favourite' of the Shogun. Zeami succeeded in developing the doctrine of the actor's skill and to create the illusory artistic drama "Mugen-Noh" reflecting the Buddhist vision of time. He wrote plays that describe the transformation of a single individual, rather than conflict between personages. The main characters are reincarnated as ghosts. We see characters like the priest-wanderer, who in the course of his wanderings, has casual encounters with old men or women, mythical heroes of plays – and listening to their stories changes your inner soul.

In his creative process, it can be said that Zeami has courageously transformed the Buddhist religion into theatrical art. In his book *The Flowering Spirit*, Zeami develops his teachings on the education and training of actors, on direction, on the education of the spectator. In Japan this book is considered the most comprehensive treatise on the teachings of the Noh theatre, like Diderot's *Actor's Paradox*. For actors, Zeami's work offers a better understanding of the art of acting and transmits to ordinary readers the aesthetics of the Japanese Middle Ages. And any reader is able to understand the reasoning of the author on the art and method of acting.

Why did Zeami decide to write such a book? The title gives us a clue: *The Flowering Spirit* – this is a book about hidden beauty, made accessible to all. The canon of theoretical works had to be passed down generation after generation. When Zeami authored his book, times were troubled and the principle of 'winner takes it all' was also in force in the world of art. In order to find patrons to finance it, the theatrical company "Yusaki-za" – now the current Noh school "Kanze-ryu", had to overcome other theatre companies in theatrical competitions. After the Shogun's fall from power Yoshimitsu, also changed the fate of Zeami who however, in addition to theatrical works, also left twenty-four theoretical works.

Let us now talk about "monomane": the imitation of the nature of things, a very important principle that defines this kind of theatre. For actors "monomane" means to "enter the essence of the character", Zeami teaches. "First of all become the subject and then transform that into action" (286-7). The biggest challenge for an actor is to merge psychologically with the character: a process that evolves from external imitation to internal transformation. In this way the spectator is presented with life's inner truths which is the ultimate purpose of art. Western art theory of the twentieth century also touches upon this theme in works by Stanislavski, Tairov, and Chekhov.

In Noh theatre we find three roles; a deity or demon who appears on stage as an old man, a deity or demon in the form of an old woman, or a deity

or a demon in the form of a warrior. The first two roles are considered more difficult. In Noh theatre actors must embody these different ages as well as female roles.

The success of their transformation lies in the concept of “yugen”. Noh evolves from a farcical spectacle to the mysterious and profound beauty of the spirit of “yugen”. Figuratively speaking “monomane” is the form and “yugen” is the content. “Hana” is a flower, embodying the concept of hidden beauty.

Zeami says:

It is all about the flower of youth, which is ephemeral and transitory. The old actor has already lost the flower of youth but after the age of thirty, despite his physical decline, it is replaced by the true flower of maturity which he will have to maintain until old age. (242)

2.3

Noh theatre is based on three primary ideas; imitation (or great craftsmanship), hidden beauty (philosophy) and the flower (stagecraft). Here is the real flower without which the actor and the theatre do not exist. The actor must develop and strengthen his stagecraft through perfect mastery of the art of imitation and familiarity with the hidden beauty of “yugen”.

Zeami wrote in his theory work *The Flower Mirror*: “Human life is limited, but there should be no dead end in the performance of an actor of Noh theatre” (341). This concept reflects the medieval and also the current way of thinking of the Japanese; the constant desire to reach the heights of the spirit and their influence on the human soul. This is an important quote from *The Flowering Spirit* of Zeami:

When you say ‘flower’ you think of what blooms on trees and in meadows season after season in which we capture the wonder of the moment of full flowering. In the theatre it is the moment that is born in the heart of the individual, the wonder before the beauty of a show, which is the source of fascination. The flower, the fascinating and the wonderful constitute a triad which is one in its essence. A flower can never remain in its perfect form. Its wonder lies in its transience. The same applies to theatrical mastery, which must be considered as a flower and never immutable. Constantly evolving into a variety of styles, theatrical mastery gives rise to wonder. It will never defeat the old actor if he possesses the true flower (243).

We say that Noh theatre has no dialogue but is that true? In reality there is dialogue. You will ask yourself: “What kind of dialogue can there be without words? It is just dance and music.” In reality, the Noh theatre actor, with silent movements, is showing the audience the suffering of human existence

as he continuously dialogues with the invisible world. As you can see, all the actors wear masks and in this way, they can face the invisible on the stage as if they were mediators in a dialogue with god. In Noh theatre there are religious elements which Zeami transformed into theatrical art.

As for external conventions and stylisation, Noh theatre has often been cited in the research works of scholars from all over the world. They have highlighted its religious origins without even considering that it is a form of theatrical art. Attention has rarely been paid to the aesthetic conventions at the heart of the Noh theatre.

In European theatre the actor wearing a mask feels liberated and inspired by the vast range of possibilities that opens up before him. The Noh actor not only hides his face behind the mask, but he is also deprived of his usual image, freedom of movement, clarity of speech and even normal breathing. Wearing the mask and seeing almost nothing around him, the Noh actor is forced to walk shuffling his feet, as if barely feeling the physical and psychological connection to the surrounding world. His gestures are particularly limited.

In short, the Noh actor is deprived of his freedom to see and move in the ordinary way and is completely isolated from the outside world and the audience, resulting in a helpless and tense perception of the world behind the boundary of the mask. Yet despite the intense physical and psychological pressure he is under, he must play his part and must strive to overcome the imposed limitations with more internal expressiveness and create his own poetic space on the stage. The simplified and limited use of gestures offers the Noh actor opportunities for internal interpretation, through an immobile execution, yet bringing dynamism to the role; a paradox that allows the theatricality of Noh to express its strength from within.

The actor will never try to 'get into the character' or to reproduce a character that is familiar to the viewer and from behind the mask is forced to look at himself not only with his own eyes, but through the eyes of the author and the spectator.

Even the face of the kabuki actor, emphasised by make-up, can be considered a kind of mask which, along with his body movements, informs the spectator of the actor's character, as happens in *commedia dell'arte*. Facial expression rarely reflects the ardour and momentary hesitation that arises from the depths of human feeling. In Kabuki theatre, the external movement dynamic and appearance of the actor shows in an explicit way the development of the action and the character's labours under the influence of the inexorable force of destiny, rather than being a metaphor for internal conflict.

In Noh theatre the spectator must always be an observer and cannot help but feel a sense of discomfort. The viewer must breathe with the rhythm of the internal breathing of the "waki" performer, who plays the secondary role. And that, with the help of the spectator himself, determines the

internal rhythm of the performance. The “shite”, who plays the main role, in most cases is a ghost from another world. The spectator can sympathise with the main character, the “shite”, or admire the universal tragedy of the world, reflected in a specific destiny.

The Japanese playwright Junji Kinoshita notes that thanks to the constant presence of “waki”, the actions of the “shite” are made explicit and the “waki” guarantees the reality of the world created by the “shite”.

There are a lot of different Noh theatre masks. The mask was inherited from ancient masks mainly used in Western Asia. Each mask represents the image of a fixed character.

Masks ‘dress’ the face, rather than ‘cover it’. Wearing a mask, the actor takes control of the character sheltering behind it as a character-spectator. So, the actor does not forget that he is playing a role in a scene. Among other things, as it gradually evolved, the Noh mask diminished in size, thus losing the ritual aspect of the theatre.

In the world of Noh theatre there are so-called ‘half expressions’. A minimal internal movement or fluctuation of feeling can interrupt this balanced ‘half expression’. Using the ‘semi-expressive’ property of the mask, the performer gives its basic traits. Noh recitation requires not only a dynamic external movement, but also internal gestures, born from the control of the body and from the tension of the soul. The executor must abandon the puppet quality of the mask. In Noh theatre the actor is not a living doll.

2.4

In Noh theater there is also a maskless role, the “hita-men” play the secondary role of “waki”. But the actor’s facial expression is strictly limited and must be absolutely neutral, therefore even the naked face becomes in reality a theatrical mask.

Zeami radically influenced the development of Noh theatre as a whole, and in detail in the “Fukushiki-Mugen-Noh”. The drama *Izutsu* written by him responds to the new needs of the public of the time, providing the Noh theatre with more dynamic plots.

With the advent of “Mugen-Noh”, Noh theatre owes its significant transformation precisely to the female mask and the double structure of the play. The first act takes place in the present, while the second act is a dream in which the main character remembers the past. This dream takes place at the same time as the dream of the secondary character “waki” and of the spectator. It is interesting to note that the Noh theatre mask has the power to enhance the scenic reality that determines the theatrical meaning

of the work, in particular in the double illusory “Mugen-Noh”, as happens for example in the play *Izutsu*.

Let us look at *Izutsu*. The action takes place in the Ariwara temple in autumn on a moonlit night. A wandering priest, who loves the story of *Ise-monogatari*, enters a temple, formerly the residence of the famous General Ariwara no Narihira and his wife – daughter of Ki no Arisune. The priest sees the ghost of a woman drawing water from a well to tend a grave. The ghost tells him the story of a well-known married couple based on the story *Ise-monogatari* and reveals Narihira’s infidelity. After the priest finishes telling this story, the ghost reveals that she herself is the daughter of Ki-no-Arisune and then suddenly disappears. In a dream the priest sees the ghost dancing in the guise of Narihira. During the dance, the woman transforms into Narihira and when she looks into the well, she sees the image of Narihira reflected in herself. Narihira disappears as soon as she says the word: “Darling...”. Sunrise. End of the dream.

In the first act, the woman’s ghost, seen by the priest, tells him of her past, and in the second act – in the priest’s dream – the ghost dances in the guise of the man she loved. The action takes place in the dual world of imagination.

The “Shite”, who plays the role of the female ghost, the “waki”, who plays the priest, and the “Hita-men”, are busy in a dialogue. The entire action takes place only between the two of them, or in the dream of the “waki”. The “waki” gradually takes the spectator into the illusory world with the continuous questions he asks the “shite”. The techniques of Zeami’s plays are clear in the dialogues between “shite” and “waki”. The “shite” usually speaks in the first person, but in reality, often violates this canon and starts speaking in the third person. But speaking in the third person, the “shite” assumes the part of another character, not only to allude to the possibility of transforming into another character, but also to further enhance the sense of illusion and of the theatricality of the piece. And the “waki” listens to the speech of the “shite” with the ears of the spectators, to tell the spectators themselves of human existence. The more the “shite” tells his own stories, the better the “waki” can objectify his actions in poetic expression. When the “shite” appears on the scene, the female ghost speaks to herself. Zeami, as a playwright when he composes the dialogues of the work, uses homonyms as a poetic device borrowed from ancient Japanese “waka” poems. He manages to develop a synthetic rhythm of gestures and language gestures, combining poetic form with dramaturgy. To indicate a character, the first sentence is pronounced in the third person and the last in the first person. Zeami tries to present the complexity of the show to the spectator. Noh theatre, based on ancient poems broadens our knowledge of them.

To achieve this goal Zeami uses the technique of changing the grammatical subject. And the interpreter accompanies this shift not with a direct change

in tone of voice, but with a small gesture: Let us now see in a dialogue how Zeami introduces the gesture in the speech. The “waki” presses the narrator “shite” to tell his story and impels the viewer into the world of illusion.

WAKI Everything you said is true, but in ancient times there was a house here.

SHITE The owner Narihira is far away,

WAKI There are remnants left still.

SHITE The glory of its history is not lost.

WAKI It tells a story.

SHITE About the man who once lived here.

Ji-UTAI In the name of the temple only the name Ariwara remains, but the remains are decrepit, the remains are decrepit, the pine is aged, grass grows on the grave.

The aspect of homophony that we find in the theatrical text may be found in an example such as ‘the pine is aged’ that in Japanese sounds like ‘the pine has grown’. “Pine – matsu” is also associated in sound with the verb ‘to wait’ or ‘to expect’. Therefore, this sentence can be also translated as ‘getting old while waiting’.

When translating Japanese poetry into foreign languages, nuances are often lost which are nested in the homophonies, which are intricately linked to the profound content of poetic works. Zeami used the multiple meanings of the homophonies to evoke in the spectator a sense of active participation in the theatrical process. From the point of view of acting and public perception, Zeami wanted the interpreter on stage to act in such a way that the gesture follows the words and not vice versa.

The words spoken by the “waki” encourage the “shite” to continue the dialogue or complete the sentences. So, without haste, as if reaching for a fleeting shadow of emotion on the mask of the “shite”, the “waki”’s goal of encouraging the spectator to listen to the story of the “shite” is successful: Until the moment the “ji” begins utai” (singing), the audience’s attention is increasingly attracted by the slightest changes in the expression of the naked mask. Next, the “shite” will sit down and will tell the “waki” about the past as well as the present, in a mask that has already changed expression, all in a sort of interior polyphony of the voices of the five different roles: “shite”, “waki”, “ji-utai”, “Zeami” and “spectator”.

In the dual illusory representation of the “Mugen-Noh” everyone present participates in a highly effective theatrical performance.

It is evident that the originality of the mask and the polyphony of voices are an integral part of Zeami’s dramaturgical technique. It should also be noted that Zeami did not copy the story *Ise-monogatari*, but reworked it

inventively and presented his interpretation of history, creating a theatrical work based on short poems taken from the story.

2.5 Conclusion

To conclude, we can say first that theatrical art by its nature must be constantly reinterpreted. Theatre is a synthesis of beauty and truth. The process of preparing a production, writing a play, reading the text, rehearsals, all this is theatre. And only theatre has such a wide range of artistic creative processes. The history of theatre says that it is a universal art, regardless of where it was born. This demonstrates, for example, the fact that once you have experienced ancient Japanese theatre, you feel in touch with the inner truth of life. Theatre is a common treasure that enriches the spirit of humanity.

Secondly, theatre is not a simple mirror of life and conflicts between characters, but it is an expression of human feelings: experiences, suffering, fear, sadness, joy, expectations. Performances in the best theatres in the world reflect the vanity and illusoriness of life, and they make us reflect not on how, but on why we live. *The Flowering of Spirit*, Zeami's work on Noh theatre theory, also says so. I consider traditional Japanese theatre can have a significant impact on the development of modern theatre globally. Not only regarding the worldly, technical side of productions, but for the theory, the approach to theatrical art and vision of the world.

Third, what is interesting in Japanese theatre is that to improve the quality of the performance, theatre operators have always tried to create an ideal relationship with the public. They were aware of the fact that the spectator himself participates in the creative process. Zeami says: "People have quite different tastes. Tastes in singing, style and in mimicry vary depending on location and represent great diversity, so it is unacceptable to adhere to an unchanging theatrical style. That is why an actor who has achieved complete mastery of the entire range of mimicry is like someone who owns the seeds of various flowers which bloom all year: from the blackthorn spring until the final flowering of autumn chrysanthemum. But each flower should then only be shown at a time that satisfies the needs and hopes of the that is born in the heart of the beholder" (282). Thus, the quote, from which it is clear that Zeami has tried to create a theatre in constant relationship with the public.

We may not have revealed all the mysteries of this genre of ancient Japanese theatre. Indeed, it may have complicated the concept of theatre. But we want to underline the fact that theatre is a living thing. It is impossible to imagine what it will be like in a hundred years. We hope that the theatre

can continue to improve itself and change our stereotypical ideas in this regard, in the most unexpected and amazing ways. This is the legacy left to us by the best of theatre.

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