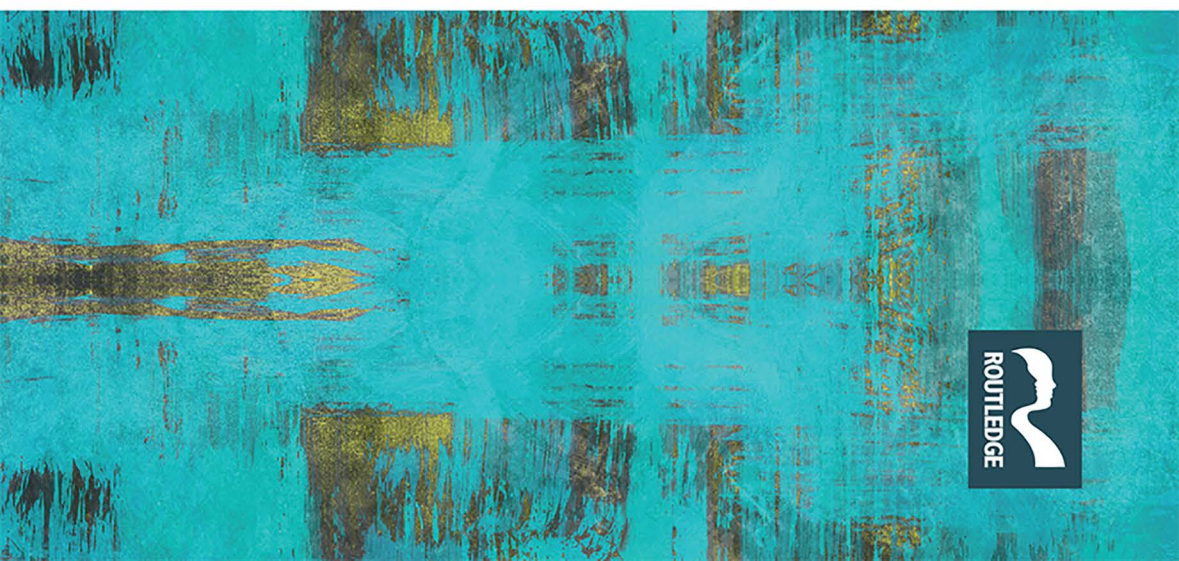
THEATRICAL SPEECH ACTS: PERFORMING LANGUAGE

POLITICS, TRANSLATIONS, EMBODIMENTS

Edited by
Erika Fischer-Lichte,
Torsten Jost and Saskya Iris Jain



Theatrical Speech Acts: Performing Language

Theatrical Speech Acts: Performing Language explores the significance and impact of words in performance, probing how language functions in theatrical scenarios, what it can achieve under particular conditions, and what kinds of problems may arise as a result.

Presenting case studies from around the globe—spanning Argentina, Egypt, Germany, India, Indonesia, Korea, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Thailand, the UK and the US—the authors explore key issues related to theatrical speech acts, such as (post)colonial language politics; histories, practices and theories of translation for/in performance; as well as practices and processes of embodiment. With scholars from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds examining theatrical speech acts—their preconditions, their cultural and bodily dimensions as well as their manifold political effects—the book introduces readers to a crucial linguistic dimension of historical and contemporary processes of interweaving performance cultures.

Ideal for drama, theater, performance, and translation scholars worldwide, *Theatrical Speech Acts* opens up a unique perspective on the transformative power of language in performance.

Erika Fischer-Lichte is Director of the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin.

Torsten Jost is Researcher at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin.

Saskya Iris Jain is a writer, translator and editor, educated at Freie Universität Berlin and at Columbia University, New York.

Theatrical Speech Acts: Performing Language

Politics, Translations, Embodiments

Edited by
Erika Fischer-Lichte,
Torsten Jost and
Saskya Iris Jain

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2020
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN: 978-0-367-81973-6 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-01111-8 (ebk)

Typeset in Baskerville
by codeMantra

Contents

Figures

Contributors

Nora Amin is a writer, performer, choreographer, theater director, and founder of Lamusica Independent Theatre Group (Egypt, 2000) and the nationwide Egyptian Project for Theatre of the Oppressed and its Arab network (2011). She is the theater columnist of *Al-Ahram Weekly* and the author of *Migrating the Feminine* (2016). She was Samuel Fischer Visiting Professor for Literature (Freie Universität Berlin, 2004–2005), guest lecturer on acting (Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA, 2005), Fellow of the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin (2015–2016) and Valeska Gert Visiting Professor of Dance Studies (Freie Universität Berlin, 2018).

Ananthakrishnan Balakrishnan is Professor at the Department of Theater Arts, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad. He obtained his MA in Drama and Theater Arts from Pondicherry Central University and his PhD in contemporary Malayalam theater from the University of Madras. Since 1991, he has worked as a researcher in the field of performance and folklore at St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu, and at the University of Calicut, Kerala, before joining S. N. School as Associate Professor in 2000. Currently, he teaches production process and contemporary Indian theater. Specializing in Indian performance studies, he has published articles on Indian theater in journals such as *Theatre India* and *Theatre Research International*, and has contributed to different anthologies and encyclopedia, such as the *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre* (2007). As the Executive Committee Member of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) and Founder General Secretary of the Indian Society for Theatre Research (ISTR), he has taken up different research initiatives on theater to foster the research culture in the field.

Ananda Breed is Professor in Theatre at University of Lincoln. Prior to this, she was the co-director of the Centre for Performing Arts Development (CPAD) at the University of East London (2014–2017) and Fellow at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin (2013–2014). She is author of *Performing the Nation: Genocide, Justice, Reconciliation* (2014) and co-editor of *Performance and Civic Engagement* (2017), in

addition to several publications that address transitional systems of governance and the arts. She has worked as a consultant for International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Kyrgyzstan on issues concerning conflict prevention and conducted applied arts workshops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda and Turkey. Breed is Principal Investigator of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) project "Ubwuzu: Shaping the Rwandan National Curriculum through Arts" (2018–2019) and Co-Investigator of the AHRC "GCRF" project "Changing the Story: Building Inclusive Societies with and for Young People" (2017–2021).

Adam Czirak teaches at the Department of Theater and Performance Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. He graduated in German Studies from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and in Theater Studies and Comparative Literature from Freie Universität Berlin. He wrote his dissertation on participative practices of looking in intersubjective-based art and has a PhD in Theater Studies. He recently held guest lectureships in Tokyo, Lisbon and Budapest. His research focuses on the aesthetics of contemporary theater, visual culture, dramaturgy and performance art in the Eastern European neo-avant-garde. He founded the international network Action Art beyond the Iron Curtain (www.aktionskunst-jenseits.de), financially supported by the German Research Foundation. In February 2018, he co-curated the exhibition "Left Performance Histories" at nGbk gallery in Berlin. He also works as a dramaturge in Naoko Tanaka's and Doris Uhlich's performance productions. Recent publications include *Performance Art in the Second Public Sphere: Event-based Art in Late Socialist Europe* (co-ed., 2018) and *Left Performance Histories: Recollecting Artistic Practices of (South-)East Europe* (co-ed., 2018).

Aparna Dharwadker is Professor of English and Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she teaches a wide range of courses in modern and contemporary theater, South Asian diasporic fiction and film, and world literature. Her book *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India Since 1947* received the Joe A. Callaway Prize in 2006 as the best book on drama or theater published in 2004–2005. Dharwadker's essays and articles have appeared in numerous journals and collections, including *PMLA, Modern Drama, Theatre Journal, New Theatre Quarterly, Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Theatre Research International, Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* and *The Routledge Handbook of Asian Theatre.* She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the American Institute of Indian Studies, the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin, the Folger Library and the Newberry Library, among others. Dharwadker's collaborative translation of a modernist play by the Hindi playwright Mohan Rakesh, titled *One Day in the Season of Rain*, appeared in the Penguin Modern Classics series in 2015, and her edited collection, *A Poetics of Modernity: Indian Theatre Theory, 1850 to the Present,* was published by Oxford University

Press in 2018. Dharwadker's current work includes two book-length projects: a study of modernist theater in India titled *Cosmo-Modernism and the Other Theatre* and a study of the constitutive features of Indian theatrical modernity titled *Ambivalent Modernity and the Processes of Modernization in Urban Indian Theatre.*

Erika Fischer-Lichte is Director of the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin. From 1973 to 1996, she was Professor of Modern German Literature, Comparative Literature and Theater Studies at the universities of Frankfurt am Main, Bayreuth and Mainz. In 1996, she joined the faculty of the Theater and Performance Studies Department at Freie Universität Berlin. Between 1995 and 1999, she served as President of the International Federation for Theatre Research. She is a member of the Academia Europaea; the Academy of Sciences, Göttingen; the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences; the National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina in Halle; and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She has held visiting professorships in China, India, Japan, Russia, Norway, Brazil and the US. Her research interests and recent as well as forthcoming publications focus on the interweaving of performance cultures in the context of historical and contemporary forms of globalization, transformative aesthetics, performances of ancient Greek tragedies since 1800 worldwide and performance-related concepts in non-European languages.

Jean Graham-Jones is the Lucille Lortel Professor of Theatre at the City University of New York's Graduate Center, where she served as head of the PhD Program in Theatre and Performance (2009–2016). A trained actor and director, she is a scholar and translator of Argentine and Latin American theater and performance. Her major publications include: *Exorcising History: Argentine Theater under Dictatorship* (2000), *Reason Obscured: Nine Plays by Ricardo Monti* (ed. and trans., 2004), *BAiT: Buenos Aires in Translation* (ed. and trans., 2008), *Timbre 4: Two Plays by Claudio Tolcachir* (ed. and trans., 2010) and *Evita, Inevitably: Performing Argentina's Female Icons Before and After Eva Perón* (2014). A former editor of *Theatre Journal*, she recently completed her term as President of the International Federation for Theatre Research (2015–2019) and was a Fellow at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" in 2011, 2013 and 2016. Her latest monographic project centers on contemporary performance translation.

Saskya Iris Jain is a writer, translator and editor who was educated at Freie Universität Berlin and at Columbia University, New York. She holds an MFA in Fiction from Boston University, where she received the Florence Engel Randall Award and the Robert Pinsky Global Fellowship. Her short stories and essays have appeared in numerous journals and magazines, most recently in the *Economist* and *Intelligent Life*. Her translation of Erika Fischer-Lichte's *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* was published by Routledge in 2008. Her first novel, *Fire Under Ash* (Random House India), was published in 2014.

Biodun Jeyifo is Emeritus Professor of English at Cornell University and Research Professor of African and African American Studies and Comparative Literature at Harvard University. He was educated at the University of Ibadan (BA First Class Honors in English) and New York University (MA, PhD). He has taught at several African and American universities, and has served as an external examiner at major universities in Africa, Europe, North America and Asia. He has also lectured widely in universities and to wider audiences in many parts of the world. Professor Jeyifo has published many books, monographs and essays on Anglophone African and Caribbean writings, drama, Marxist and postcolonial literary and cultural studies. *Wole So-yinka: Politics, Poetics, and Postcolonialism*, which he published in 2005, won one of the American Library Association's Outstanding Academic Texts (OATS) awards for that year. The two-volume *Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought* which Jeyifo co-edited with the late Abiola Irele was published in 2010. His most recent book-length publication is *Against the Predators' Republic: Political and Cultural Journalism, 2007–2013* (2016).

Torsten Jost is Researcher at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin. After receiving his PhD from Freie Universität Berlin in 2017, he joined the faculty of the university's Department of Theater and Performance Studies, where he teaches courses in the bachelor's and master's degree programs. In 2018, Jost was invited as a guest lecturer by the Shanghai Theater Academy, China. Together with the celebrated Chinese theater artist Tian Mansha, he co-edited a book presenting essays by and interviews with twelve renowned Chinese theater directors entitled *Regiekunst heute: Stimmen und Positionen aus China* (2018; The Art of Directing Today: Voices and Positions from China), which is currently being translated to Chinese and English. His dissertation, which was nominated for the Ernst-Reuter-Prize, was published by Wilhelm Fink Verlag under the title *Gertrude Stein: Nervosität und das Theater* (2019; Gertrude Stein: Nervousness and the Theater). Together with Erika Fischer-Lichte, he co-edited numerous books on theater and performance in German and English, including *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism* (2014).

Tara McAllister-Viel has been Head of Voice and Speech at East 15 Acting School, University of Essex, England, since 2012. Previously, she was Lecturer of Voice at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London, England (2005–2012), and Visiting Professor of Voice at the Korean National University of Arts (KNUA), School of Drama, Seoul, South Korea (2000–2005). While teaching at KNUA, she studied a traditional Korean vocal art form called *p'ansori* with Human Cultural Treasures Han Nongsŏn and Sŏng Uhyang, over the course of four years. The interweaving of adaptations of p'ansori with the Anglo-American voice practices she was teaching at KNUA became the foundation of her research area, investigating ways of training actors' voices through an intercultural approach. Her experiences also became

the foundation for her recently published monograph, titled *Training Actors' Voices: Towards an Intercultural/Interdisciplinary Approach*, part of the Routledge Voice Studies series. This monograph was written with the generous support of a fully funded, year-long fellowship at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures," Freie Universität Berlin, Germany (2015–2016). She earned her PhD in Performance Practice (Voice) from the University of Exeter (UK) and her MFA in Acting from the Asian/Experimental Theatre program, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Ramona Mosse is a Lecturer in Theater, Film and Media Studies at the Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. Her current research focuses on the politics of contemporary sound cultures and the notion of public listening. She has published on a range of topics, including modern tragedy across different media, metatheatricality, intermediality and VR performance, and philosophy and theater. Previously, she has taught at Freie Universität Berlin, Columbia University, Barnard College and Bard College Berlin. She is also a Core Convener of the Performance Philosophy Network and works as a dramaturge and translator. She received her PhD in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University.

Chetana Nagavajara is Emeritus Professor of German at Silpakorn University, Thailand. He graduated with a BA Hons. degree in Modern Languages from Cambridge University and a D. Phil. degree in Comparative Literature from Tübingen University, from which he also received an honorary doctorate. He publishes in Thai, English, German and French in the fields of Literary Studies, Comparative Arts and Higher Education, and is active as literary, art, music and theater critic. From 2008 to 2017, Professor Nagavajara was Fellow at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin. Among the international honors and awards he has received are the Goethe-Medaille, the Bundesverdienstkreuz (First Class), the Chevalier dans l'ordre des arts et des lettres, the Fulbright Visiting Professorship, the Vice Presidency of the Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes and the Humboldt Research Award. In addition to teaching and research, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development Planning of his university, and Deputy Director of the Secretariat of the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, formerly Erich Maria Remarque Professor of Languages and Professor of Comparative Literature and Performance Studies, New York University, is a novelist, essayist, playwright, journalist, editor, academic and social activist from Kenya. He is currently Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. He is the recipient of thirteen honorary doctorates, a Fellow of the Modern Language Association, an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a 2014 Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. His

literary work is an oeuvre of exceptional density: His early works include *Weep Not Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Secret Lives* (1969) and *Petals of Blood* (1977). His most recent books are *Wresting with the Devil: A Prison Memoir* (2018), *Minutes of Glory and Other Stories* (2018) and *Kenda Mũiyũrũ: Rũgano Rwa Gĩkũyũ Na Mũmbi* (2018).

Hypatia Vourloumis is a performance studies scholar and experimental writer working across anticolonial, feminist, critical race and queer theory; Southeast Asian and modern Greek cultural production; music, poetics, language and popular culture; and aesthetic theory and practice. She received her PhD in Performance Studies at New York University and was Fellow at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin and the Research Centre for the Humanities in Athens. She teaches critical theory in the MA Art Praxis at the Dutch Art Institute.

Acknowledgments

Editors rely on the help of many institutions and people, without whom their books would never get published. We would like to thank the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) as well as the Freie Universität Berlin for the continuous support of the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures." Without their trust and backing, this book could not have been conceived, let alone completed—like many other Research Center publications from the last eleven years. Our special thanks go to all the contributors to this book: we are deeply grateful for their inspiring commitment to their individual research topics; for their enthusiasm to engage in stimulating discussions; and, not least, for their great reliability and patience in the process of this book's creation. Furthermore, we would like to thank Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Biodun Jeyifo and the *Journal of African Cultural Studies* for allowing us to reprint their articles. We are grateful and delighted that they now open the book's first part on politics. We would also like to thank Dr. Christel Weiler, the Research Center's Senior Advisor, for her indispensable counsel and unfaltering encouragement as well as Claudia Daseking, the Center's financial and operations manager, for her tireless assistance. Last but not least, we are grateful to Omid Soltani, Research Associate at the Research Center, for his diligent editorial work on all chapters; his dedication and eye for detail significantly facilitated the process of preparing the book's manuscript.

Erika Fischer-Lichte, Torsten Jost and Saskya Iris Jain
Berlin, Summer 2019

Introduction

Reflections on the politics and philosophy of language in performance

Erika Fischer-Lichte

In the beginning was the Word, […]
and the Word became flesh.
—John 1:1 and 1:14

The title of this volume deliberately evokes John L. Austin and the discussion he triggered on the status of speech acts on the stage. As is well known, he denied that words, uttered as a speech act by an actor in a performance, are able to actually bring about the reality they refer to. This statement sparked off a heated debate, in the course of which it was refuted by several scholars via a variety of arguments, most prominently and effectively by Jacques Derrida (1977). The following chapters are not meant as a contribution to this debate, though some of them might refer to it, if only passingly. However, the book in which Austin developed his theory of speech acts bears the title *How to Do Things with Words* and, thus, raises a question that is crucial to this volume. It proceeds from the assumption that each and every word uttered in a performance does something—even if it is not what it says, which is how Austin defined the speech act. The phrase "theatrical speech acts" is meant to emphasize the fact that words in performances actually "do things." The essays collected here explore some of these "things," probing how language functions in certain performances, what it may accomplish under particular conditions and what kinds of problems may arise as a result. They also examine whether and how theatrical speech acts contribute to or even initiate processes of interweaving performance cultures or whether they prevent, counteract or undermine them.[1]

Words in performance, i.e. theatrical speech acts, entail some important political and philosophical issues—the two often being closely intertwined. To begin with, the very act of choosing the language of the performance already poses problems regarding these issues. In multilingual societies, it is by no means self-evident which language—or languages—will be spoken on stage. This dynamic is particularly relevant in postcolonial societies, where even today a multitude of native languages usually compete with the language of the former colonizer, whereby the latter is often accorded a higher value in cultural policy.

Another important issue refers to the differences between languages. Besides the question of consequences with regard to ways of perceiving and thinking, or in terms of "worldviews" and modes of interaction, these differences are pivotal to the question of translation. What happens when a play written in a certain language for a particular performance culture is translated and thus staged within a different performance aesthetics? Does such a situation require special modes of interweaving or can it do without any? These questions arise because, unlike translated texts meant for reading,[2] translations for performance have to deal with the problem of whether and in what ways a particular performance aesthetics can and should be applied to the translation.

That is to say, in all the cases addressed here, language is always investigated as an embodied medium, whereby the processes of embodiment depend on specific performance aesthetics. This applies not only to the gestures and movements of the body but also to the particular use of the voice. Since the focus of this volume is on theatrical speech acts, the aesthetics of embodiment is discussed with a view to spoken—or sung—words.

As already mentioned, they entail a number of political and philosophical issues, which will be discussed separately. Let us begin with the political ones.

Politics of language

The Kenya National Theatre, set up in the 1950s, was still "dominated by British directors and British amateur groups"[3] in the 1970s, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o laments in his highly influential book *Decolonising the Mind*. Accordingly, English was the only language spoken on the stage of this so-called National Theatre. If theater is to be understood as a means of protest against imperialism and neocolonialism, Ngũgĩ argues, it must not only address problems related to these topics but also leave the theater buildings introduced by the British and move into "empty spaces" in open fields—as traditional performances did in precolonial times. More importantly, it must abandon English and use African languages instead, for language is regarded as culture—as "the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history."[4]

In his philosophy of language, Ngũgĩ identifies three aspects of language as culture—it "is a product of the history which it in turn reflects," "an image-forming agent in the mind of a child" and it "mediat[es] between me and my own self; between my own self and other selves; between me and nature. Language is mediating in my very being." Finally, "culture transmits or imparts those images of the world and reality through the spoken and the written language, that is through a specific language."[5] Since British colonialism marginalized, suppressed and even destroyed the precolonial tradition of performances, which sometimes went on for days, weeks or even months, it would be utterly futile to copy the British theater tradition.

The very act of using Gĩkũyũ or Kiswahili in a performance is therefore not only a form of protest against the prevalent colonization of the mind but also a self-decolonizing act of the Kenyan people. This is precisely what Ngũgĩ's

practice of writing in Gĩkũyũ in the 1980s accomplished and what the corresponding theatrical speech acts achieved in performance. It was a political gesture that accomplished something—the self-liberation of the people concerned (see Chapter 1, Ngũgĩ's contribution to this volume). This self-liberation occurs without any processes of interweaving with the colonizers' performance aesthetics. It is performed by and through theatrical speech acts uttered in Gĩkũyũ and by taking recourse to that particular tradition.

This is not to say that in all former colonized countries, taking recourse to "one's own" language works as an act of self-liberation. In some cases, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find such a native, unifying language. In Indonesia, for instance, language politics was and still is aimed at creating a national state out of an ethnically and culturally heterogeneous society by way of a unitary language: "The Indonesian national language is the postcolonial standardization of a jargon that seeps out of unsettled contexts and conventions and that belongs to no one and every one at the same time" (see Chapter 3, Hypatia Vourloumis's contribution to this volume). Here, the politics of language serves the creation of a national identity. That is to say, the nation is based on a sovereign space constructed and produced by language. This is why the use of this language is heavily reinforced by dictatorial policies and censorship preventing all processes of interweaving between different languages and cultures, which, to the authorities, pose a direct threat to this national identity. Under these circumstances, any form of resistance must find very particular theatrical speech acts—for example, those that foreground the materiality of the words and their sound, thus avoiding acts of signification. In such a situation, they can be understood as veering away "from the ideological pressures put on the Indonesian national language."[6] Theatrical speech acts here refuse to embody the national language—much less the national identity and state—but rather "ex-body" it.

Choosing one particular language—or indeed several languages—usually follows a certain politics, even beyond postcolonial agendas. In *Campo minado/Minefield* (2016) by the Argentine theater artist Lola Arias, Argentine and British veterans from the Malvinas/Falklands War re-enacted their own memories of this event using their respective native language, no matter whether the production was shown in Buenos Aires or in London. In both places, the respective foreign language was translated in supertitles, so that the audiences had no trouble understanding (see Chapter 6, Jean Graham-Jones's contribution to this volume). The performance's language politics not only ensured that each former war party was granted the right to speak in its own language, while the respective foreign language was merely embodied without being understood, and also appeared in a mediated written form, making it accessible to non-native speakers. Moreover, via translation, all spectators were able to understand the perspective of "the others," irrespective of their knowledge of the other language. Be it in Buenos Aires or in London, the Argentine and British veterans and their points of view enjoyed the same status. The choice of both languages thus played a crucial role. They were interwoven in a way that each remained intact and clearly recognizable while also being inextricably linked to one another, as two threads of different color woven into a single piece of cloth.

Yet there was a third language involved, which in all likelihood was understood neither by the Argentine nor by the English spectators: Nepali. A Gurkha soldier enlisted in the British army sang songs in his own language in between and read an unidentified text at the end of the performance. Neither his songs nor his reading in Nepali was translated.

Both strategies, the use of Spanish and English and the absence of any Nepali translation, functioned as theatrical speech acts. They did something. The act of uttering words in the languages of both war parties could be perceived as bringing about a kind of reconciliation between the former enemies, while the words in untranslated Nepali excluded the Gurkha soldier from the reconciliation, thus undermining it.

Reconciliation is also a desired outcome with regard to sentences in judicial trials, through which two oppositional parties receive justice. The sentence functions as a speech act that—ideally—performs a reconciliation. In her contribution to this volume (Chapter 4), Ananda Breed writes about the *gacaca* courts set up in Rwanda between 2005 and 2012, which aimed to administer justice and bring about a reconciliation following the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsis. The gacaca courts were a reinvention of an indigenous system used in precolonial times to mediate between aggrieved parties. Interestingly, the process involved not just the actual gacaca courts but also theater performances pre-enacting them. These served as a rehearsal of sorts for the real ones, which, as Breed shows, also unfolded as if they were staged. However, an important difference remains regarding the sentences spoken at the end of both. In the "real" gacaca court, the sentence, of course, did what it said—the defendant was either found guilty or not guilty, and in the first case, this meant a certain punishment. In the mock gacaca court, the sentence obviously had no such consequences.

Still, even in the latter case, all the words uttered over the course of the entire trial did something to the people who spoke them as well as to those who listened. As Breed explains, they allowed for the emergence of a particular Rwandanicity, spreading its ideology and having it be incorporated into society. Moreover, these theatrical speech acts determined who was to be regarded as the perpetrator and who as the victim.

It remains doubtful whether the real or the mock courts were able to bring about the proclaimed forgiveness and reconciliation. Rather, the politics of speech in these two models produced and strengthened the ideology of Rwandanicity. In this respect, it is comparable to the language politics in Indonesia. In both cases, a new national identity was proclaimed and brought forth through the specific use of language reinforced by a dictatorship. In both cases, theatrical speech acts are shown to be effective: they do things that support—or undermine, as in the case of Indonesian sound poetry—the ruling ideology of national identity.

As the example of *Campo minado/Minefield* indicated, the politics of language in performance is often coterminous with the politics of translation. Leaving aside here the philosophical implications of translation, which will be addressed in the second section of this introduction, the following reflections refer to the political

dynamics in postcolonial societies, specifically concerning different Indian languages. India is a special case in point, since ancient Indian drama in Sanskrit was recognized and accepted as part of the classical canon by the colonizers and already at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century translated into English, German and French, and later on also into other European languages. However, Shakespeare, the undisputed icon of British and even so-called Western drama until the 1920s, was translated into several Indian languages from the middle of the nineteenth century onward. From the 1920s onward, an abundance of Western drama was translated, adapted and performed (see Chapter 5, Aparna Dharwadker's contribution to this volume). The plays by non-English European authors were usually translated from the English translation. In light of the many Indian languages and different performance traditions prevalent in the Indian states, any attempt to identify a single, overarching politics of translation makes no sense.

In this volume, the focus lies on politics that strive to incorporate dramatic texts from another tradition into one's own in a way that emphasizes aspects deemed relevant at that particular moment in time. That is to say that the politics of translation in such cases is directed toward the specific traditional performance aesthetics in which the translation will be performed. One prominent example includes the Kathaprasangam performance of the Malayalam translation of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1986) (see Chapter 7, B. Ananthakrishnan's contribution to this volume). Kathaprasangam is a form of storytelling popular in Kerala, particularly during temple festivals and public meetings of the Communist Party—a connection that might appear surprising at first glance. It was performed by V. Sambavasian (1929–96), who over the course of his career told the stories of Othello, Macbeth and many others from the Western as well as the Indian canon.

Two other productions worth mentioning here are Sadanam Balakrishnan's *Kathakali King Lear* (1989) and his *Kathakali Bacchae* (1998). In all three cases, the respective translation into Hindi and Malayalam had to be adapted to the aesthetics of the traditional style. Though there may have been certain minute changes within this aesthetics—such as the choice of the "knife" makeup that refers to "mixed characters" for Lear instead of the royal "green," or the "realistic" removal of Lear's royal accoutrements and typifying makeup during the storm scene—in general, the interventions in the traditional aesthetics were kept to a minimum and did not significantly alter it. The texts, however, had to undergo—partly substantial—changes. The embodiment of the characters according to particular traditional aesthetics absorbed the "Western" plays into these Indian traditions, thus also enriching them.

Here, the politics of translation strives to enable the incorporation of Western plays into a given traditional Indian performance aesthetics. In this regard, it can be understood as a politics of interweaving that proceeds from the needs and preferences of the Indian performers and spectators, turning it into a politics of empowerment and a display of sovereignty.

It is therefore small wonder that guest tours of such productions were not met only with applause and enthusiasm when they toured Europe. Sadanam

Balakrishnan's *Kathakali King Lear* (1989), for example, was shown in Paris and London. While the French dance critics received it with high praise, the theater critics mostly responded disdainfully. They either stressed the difficulties of coming to grips with such an unfamiliar, "foreign" theater form, or they lamented the particular reading of the play, which they largely disapproved of.[7] The British critics especially were unanimous in their opinion that *Kathakali King Lear* had "little to do with Shakespeare"[8]—which was not meant as praise but as the most damning criticism. Their aggressive response might indicate that they understood the particular mode of interweaving an English play with an Indian performance aesthetics as a statement that clearly dismissed the notion of the superiority of Shakespeare to Indian aesthetics, and, by extension, of the British to the Indians.

It is important to remember that the production toured Europe at the end of the 1980s, i.e. the heyday of so-called intercultural theater, with Peter Brook's *Mahabharata* (1985) being praised by the British and European press as the epitome of interculturalism. Against this background, the incapability or unwillingness of the critics to consider seriously a "foreign" theater form that incorporated elements from the Western tradition—in particular that of the former colonizers—seems rather telling. No critic in the Western world asked whether Peter Brook's "reading" of the *Mahabharata* was acceptable to Indian spectators. Yet they measured Shakespeare's play realized in *Kathakali King Lear* exclusively against their own reading of it. While Peter Brook in their view opened up the possibility for an encounter between cultures—even as Indian critics and scholars regarded it as highly problematic[9]—they mostly dismissed *Kathakali King Lear* as a kind of blasphemy and as a clash of cultures.[10]

In all of these cases, the politics of translation aimed to bring about the "decolonization of the mind." The play, taken from the British or, more generally, from the Western tradition, was translated in such a way that it enabled two strategies: first, to make it suit the demands of a given traditional performance aesthetics and, second, to reinvigorate and renew this very aesthetics. In the process of embodiment, the political and the aesthetic appeared as inextricably intertwined.

This holds true in various ways also for other genres of performance that do not work *with* translations but *as* translation. Hip-hop culture began to establish itself and evolve from its local origins as dance parties in the South Bronx in New York City in the 1970s. The term "hip-hop theater" was coined by the artist Eisa Davis at the turn of the twentieth to the twenty-first century. Years later, she explained it as an "ascriptive, voluntary" term that is "utilized by a self-described hip-hop generation that speaks through theatre; we are *found* in translation. Here it is, finally: a form that describes and comprises our 'multiness.'"[11] Hip-hop performances were hailed and received as acts of political engagement, resistance and rebellion. Through this new form, the political and the aesthetic bled into each other, primarily in terms of the politics of language but also with regard to the aesthetics of embodiment. It is rather revealing that the Oakland-based hip-hop artist Marc Bamuthi Joseph attributed the title *Word Becomes Flesh* (2003) to one of his performances. He elaborates that "if you are a child of hip-hop, the

simple truth is that in the beginning was the word, and the *word* was *spoken* in body language."[12] Here, the politics of language and the aesthetics of embodiment go hand in hand.

This is made possible by the use of verses that are structured by rhythm. Rhythm is an organizing principle that stands in contrast to temporal units of beats and meter; it does not aim for total symmetry but for regularity. It designates a dynamic principle through which the foreseeable and the unforeseeable interact. The exchange between repetition and deviation is what produces rhythm, which thus appears as an organizing principle that presupposes permanent transformation. Once body and language are rhythmically attuned, they can no longer be separated. An aesthetics based on rhythmic principles guiding speech and movement makes all language appear embodied because of the inextricable link between language and the body. In this case, the politics of language and that of embodiment are more or less the same (see Chapter 11, Ramona Mosse's contribution to this volume).

However, what happens when the two politics become divorced from each other? This can happen when, for instance, the voice is unable to utter language and only produces screams, sighs, moans, sobs or laughter. These, of course, are processes of embodiment. The sounds engage in a process that involves the entire body: it bends over, becomes contorted or tenses up. Yet these speechless assertions of the voice might deeply move those who hear them. To hear someone scream, sigh, moan, sob or laugh is to perceive these sounds as a specific process of embodiment but not, however, as the embodiment of language. It may signify something to the listener and, in this respect, replace language. At the same time, it communicates to the listener that the person screaming, sighing, moaning, etc. is in a state that makes her/him unable to speak.[13]

Just as there is a politics of language, there is also a politics of screaming. Such a politics might be related to various protest movements. That was the case in Egypt, for instance, during the protest movement against the failure of the Egyptian regime—"the movement of 5 September." It not only left its imprint on theater performances between 2005 and 2011 but was shaped and indeed realized through such performances. One of the results was the liberation of the female voice. In various performances, it was not so much what the female character or actress said, i.e. her language, that voiced resistance and protest but first and foremost her screams that helped her find her voice and, consequently, the words via which to resist and protest (see Chapter 10, Nora Amin's contribution to this volume). Thus, even in this instance of speechlessness, the politics of language, of screaming, functioned as a politics of self-liberation.

As has become evident, the politics of language examined in this volume does not primarily refer to political topics that are dealt with linguistically in performances. Rather, the focus lies on aspects that precede them and define certain prerequisites or even conditions for their reception, such as the choice of the language and, more importantly, the means of the aesthetics of its embodiment. These are aspects that might have an even deeper and prolonged impact on the participants of the performance than explicitly political problems addressed by it.

We can conclude that, in this respect, theatrical speech acts in fact perform or accomplish what they say.

Philosophical aspects of theatrical speech acts

When Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o defined language as culture, he formulated a certain philosophy of language on which the politics of language underlying a performance is based—in a way forming its *conditio sine qua non*.

He was continuing a centuries-old philosophical tradition. There is no need in our context to recapitulate it in full. However, it might be fruitful to go back to Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) and his ideas on language, which he articulated in a large number of writings. In elaborating his philosophy of language, he could take recourse to his own solid knowledge of a number of Indo-European languages—including Sanskrit—in addition to many others, among them Basque from Europe as well as Chinese and various Malay languages. In his view, language is the very "organ of thinking," the medium through which the world becomes knowable. This idea is by no means to be equated with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which leans toward a deterministic view of language: the structure of any given language determines the possibilities and ways in which their speakers perceive the world and interpret it. In this view, language becomes a kind of cage imprisoning each of its speakers. This is far from Humboldt's concept. He insists that language is not simply a given which one has to adopt as it stands, but that it is in a permanent state of becoming; it is an activity:

> *Language*, regarded in its real nature, is an enduring thing, and at every moment a *transitory* one. Even its maintenance by writing is always just an incomplete, mummy-like preservation, only needed again in attempting thereby to picture the living utterance. In itself it is no product (*Ergon*), but an activity (*Energeia*). Its true definition can therefore only be a genetic one.[14]

Since language is not a work, an *ergon*, but an activity, *energeia*, it is always in flux. This holds true not just for the poets and philosophers who adapt their language to their own purposes and needs, thus not only exploiting the given possibilities in unexpected ways but also creating new ones. Language is versatile and each individual speaker contributes to its ongoing transformation.

This applies in particular to multilingual speakers, who use all of their languages in a highly subjective and individual way, utilizing their versatility to their own needs and ends. That is to say, all speakers of a language take part in the ongoing process of its permanent transformation. Since English has become the second or indeed first language for many people in Africa and India, they contribute to its constant change. The language, initially imposed on them, has meanwhile become one of their own. Of course, in the linguistic sense of language families, English is not an African language but belongs to the group of Indo-European languages. However, when a language is introduced to or taken up by a group of people who understand and use it as an *energeia* and not as an

ergon, it becomes their language. In this sense, English can indeed be regarded as an African—or an Indian—language (see Chapter 2, Biodun Jeyifo's contribution to this volume).

When plays written in English by Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka or Femi Osofisan—to name just a few important writers—which feature *oríkìs* and songs in Yorùbá, were performed in Nigeria or other African countries, they were received by the audiences as African, in the sense that they not only dealt with African problems and questions but also followed an African aesthetics. Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides*, for instance, is not only written in English; it is also an adaptation of a Greek tragedy, i.e. the so-called epitome of Western culture. In his early essay "The Fourth Stage," Soyinka highlighted the striking correspondences as well as the fundamental differences between the Greek and Yorùbá gods, particularly between Dionysus and Ogun. In his *Bacchae*, he replaced Dionysus with Ogun while keeping the name of the Greek god. When the play was performed in Nigeria by the National Troupe in Lagos in 2008, the "twinning" of Dionysus and Ogun was emphasized in the production. It found expression in the god's appearance as well as in the mode and objects of worship:

> For instance, the bacchants, devotees of Dionysus, were costumed in adire, Yoruba traditional fabric, and the thyrsus, the mystic staff borne by Dionysus, is similar to Opa Ogun held by the male devotees of the Yoruba deity, likewise is the ivy and the palm fronds.[15]

Another critic describes them as "flaunting costumes that depict a life of the living, the dead and the unborn,"[16] which at least communicates that they referred to the unity of these three modes so crucial to Yorùbá culture.

As far as can be said from the reviews, the production was received as that of an African play. Interestingly, this understanding was not only grounded in its aesthetics. It also referred to the subject. For in the view of many critics, the play dealt with "the misuse and peril of power, especially in developing countries." This critic goes on to state that since the time when the play was written and "the crass opportunism of the military elite of that era" was obvious, "nearly 40 years after, little or nothing has changed. Nigeria, like most African countries, is still in the grip of dictatorship and maladministration, while crime, insecurity, nepotism and looting of the treasury still remain a dominant feature."[17] Pentheus was not associated with the British colonizers but with "the visionless and purposeless political leaders, many of whom occupy the political space not only in Nigeria but also in Africa and many other third world countries."[18] It is evident that the performance was received as that of an African and highly topical play.

One might argue, of course, that in such cases the audiences probably did not include peasants and workers. However, this would apply to certain kinds, if not the majority, of European theater, too, where the so-called respective national language is spoken. This is indeed a serious problem that goes back to class society, i.e. to the particular social class of the spectators. At the end of the nineteenth century in Germany, this led to the foundation of the *Volksbühne*, a theater

organized by workers for workers. Yet, even here, the language problem arose. The dialects of German partly differ from each other to such an extent that, for instance, a person speaking Bavarian will not be understood by someone speaking Low German and vice versa. Gerhart Hauptmann's *The Weavers* (1891), written in Silesian dialect, was seen as championing the workers' cause, which is why the government banned it from being publicly staged. The *Volksbühne* responded to this situation by having the play performed as a private event for members of the *Volksbühne*.

Here, too, the language issue manifested itself as a social one. This is even more the case on an entire continent such as Africa, where many different languages are spoken. A performance must be held in Yorùbá or Gĩkũyũ or whichever language is shared. Performances would have to be staged in a variety of languages if they are to reach a large number of citizens.

Even if it is not a question of whether English—or French or Portuguese, for that matter—is an African language, it should be discussed whether the dominance of English, for example, prevents the native languages from undergoing their own processes of transformation, so that they are in danger of degenerating or even vanishing. English or any other colonial language and the respective native languages should be in a position to cross-pollinate each other, thus keeping processes of transformation alive on both sides. For only in this case can Humboldt's vision for the further development of his own, the German language, be realized, when "Indian literature and language become as well known to us as Greek." In this case:

> [T]he character of both will, on the one hand, leave its mark on our treatment of our own language, on our thinking and creative writing, and, on the other hand, both provide us with a powerful aid to the expansion of the sphere of ideas and help in the search for the diverse paths which lead man to become acquainted with that sphere.
>
> When viewed from this angle, the difference between languages acquires a relevance to the history of the world. The convergence of diverse individual qualities provides man's thought with new forms which influence future generations […].[19]

In this regard, performance could turn into a kind of utopian space where a native African language such as Yorùbá interacts with English as a new African language in order to open up so far unknown possibilities and horizons for the processes of transformation that both might undergo in the future.

The differences between languages, however, call for translation. In our context, this raises the question of translations for performances. We are not interested in questions of "speakability" or "performatibility" of the translated text, and even less so in the issue of "fidelity." Rather, we have to tackle the problem of how to translate with regard to all the paralinguistic phenomena that go together with spoken language or with regard to the demands of music when words are sung, and most of all, with regard to the relevant performance aesthetics.

Before embarking on the discussion of this problem, the question has to be addressed whether a translation should familiarize the spoken or sung language or alienate it. In his famous essay "The Task of the Translator," Walter Benjamin praises Martin Luther, Johann Heinrich Voss (the translator of Homer), Friedrich Hölderlin (for his Sophocles translations) and Stefan George for having "extended the boundaries of the German language" through their translations.[20] He makes the following comparison to explain his argument:

> Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point, with this touch rather than with the point setting the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity, a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux.[21]

The translation is therefore subject to the dialectics of estrangement and familiarization. In order to make this point beyond the above-quoted "simile," Benjamin cites Rudolf Pannwitz, who, in his seminal work *Die Krisis der europäischen Kultur* (1917, The Crisis of European Culture), summarized a respective theory of translation as follows:

> Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. Our translators have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign works…. The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own, he must go back to the primal elements of language itself and penetrate to the point where word, image, and tone converge. He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language. It is not generally realized to what extent this is possible, to what extent any language can be transformed […].[22]

Pannwitz's notion of the ideal way of translating seems to call for the concept of interweaving. In fact, relating two languages to each other in the manner described here points to a unique kind of transformation—one brought about by processes that interweave one with the other in a very particular way. The source language leaves a lasting imprint on the target language. In other words, translation functions as an important means of transformation. If works written in Hindi, Gĩkũyũ, Arabic or Chinese were translated according to the above approach into English, French or German, this would expand the possibilities of these languages, and vice versa. The constant transformation of language discussed above would be even further augmented through translation.

What interests us here is when such a translation is used in performance, which entails yet another transformative dimension. How it manifests itself will

depend on the particular performance aesthetics. By adapting the translation to its needs, a traditional performance—such as the *Kathakali King Lear*—will most likely transform it once again in a way that renders it familiar to those acquainted with the style, and even more estranging to those who do not know it. An experimental performance might reinforce the estranging effects.

Regardless of whether a translation familiarizes, domesticates or estranges the language used in a performance, it is just one factor guiding the reception and response of the audience—a factor that usually cannot even be isolated, since it appears as part of the performance aesthetics. This is to say that a theory of translation in performance must also consider the production process through which the translated text is adapted to the needs of the performance aesthetics, be it traditional, "realistic" or experimental. Ultimately, it is this process that determines the version of the translation realized in the performance. The question of whether and to what extent the final version works as an appropriation or as an estrangement becomes part of the politics of language as discussed in the first section.[23]

As Adam Czirak demonstrates in his contribution to this volume (Chapter 8), Benjamin's theory of translation can most fruitfully be applied also to contemporary performances that do not use a translation themselves. Performances such as Nature Theater of Oklahoma's *Romeo and Juliet* (2008), Forced Entertainment's *Speak Bitterness* (1994) or Nicolas Stemann's 2014 production of Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Schutzbefohlenen* (*Charges (The Supplicants)*) create a novel aesthetics by relating the spoken words to the speaking person in very particular ways that might remind us of the messenger's report in Greek tragedy or of Brecht's "Street Scene." Thus, they raise fundamental "questions about theatrical representation: who speaks, and on whose behalf, with whose voice and who bears responsibility?"[24]—questions that turn out to be as philosophical as they are political.

Although in performance the actor's whole body is involved when speaking or singing or even screaming, the voice stands out in some ways. Via the process of breathing, the voice allows the body to expand into the space surrounding it and to enter the bodies of the listeners through their ears, thus establishing a very intimate relationship. This relationship is established even when no language is being transmitted; in the act of screaming or moaning, the voice itself becomes a language of sorts. It is a language in which a bodily being-in-the-world expresses itself and addresses the listeners in a pure form. The listener perceives the concerned persons in their bodily being-in-the-world, which immediately affects the listener's own being-in-the-world as the scream penetrates, resonates in and is absorbed by the listener's body.[25]

In many ways, the voice represents a remarkable if strange "material" that contradicts all semiotic principles. It comes into existence only when it is heard. It cannot survive the breath that created it but must be brought forth anew with every inhalation; it is a "material" that exists only in "ecstasy." The voice builds a bridge and establishes a relationship between subjects. It fills the space

between them. By making their voices audible, people reach out to touch those who hear them.[26]

Accordingly, voices ringing out in the space play a key role in performances. However, the voice is not just a natural given. Voice training for actors differs in terms of its main principles depending on the underlying philosophy. The voice training for the Korean traditional performance genre *p'ansori*, for instance, follows a particular philosophical line of thought from Chinese metaphysics, focusing on the notion of *ki*, which can be translated as "energy": the breath circulates through the entire body, traveling down its back and up its front in a cyclical process. This is not meant as a metaphor but as "a physical reality of the manifestation of breath into ki (energy)."[27] As Tara McAllister-Viel goes on to explain in her contribution to this volume (Chapter 9), there are three different types of *ki*:

> *Won-ki* is "inherited energy" the fetus receives from its mother in the uterus, before breath as lung function is possible; *Jong-ki* is "acquired energy" from nourishment, such as eating and breathing oxygen; and the third type is *Jin-ki*, "cultivated energy" through training processes such as p'ansori. It is this "cultivated energy" along with the tremendous intra-abdominal support (muscular contraction) that helps give the *sŏngŭm* its unique sound.[28]

In this case, the voice of the performer is able to connect with the listener(s) because of this cultivation of ki through the breath. Moreover, breath, ki and mind form a unit through the voice. That is to say, training the breath means simultaneously exercising ki and the mind. "Voice is the acoustic reflection of the mind," as the p'ansori practitioner and scholar Chan Park describes it.[29]

Whether it is Helmuth Plessner's phenomenology or Chinese metaphysics, both philosophies understand voice as an important agent in processes of connecting people with each other—such as the actors and spectators or listeners in a performance. As such, according to these philosophies, the autopoietic feedback loop, as I have termed this permanent flow between both parties that goes on during a performance,[30] is largely due to the voice and its particular—albeit in each case quite unique—qualities. The voice's resonance in the theatrical space—no matter whether it is producing words or sounds, or is just heard breathing—can therefore by itself be regarded as a theatrical speech act par excellence: it does something, namely connect people and possibly even bring forth a particular kind of community.

This is also true, in a very particular way, with regard to oral literature. It is usually realized as a performance within a community, contributing to the awareness of a common tradition and the connectedness between all present. The Epilogue, concluding the third part of this volume, talks about orality in Thai culture. Held as the opening lecture of the academic year 2016/17 by the Research Center's senior fellow Chetana Nagavajara, it not only deals with the topic of orality but also in a remarkable way displays characteristic features of oral literature when doing what he is saying.

Conclusion: Theatrical speech acts as agents or interceptors of interweaving performance cultures

Theatrical speech acts can indeed do a number of things and are therefore able to serve very different and partly even contradictory purposes and goals. With regard to processes of interweaving performance cultures, they may function as their agents but also may prevent or obstruct them. Neither is by itself positive or negative. That is to say, the very fact that processes of interweaving are occurring in a performance cannot serve as the basis for the reflection and judgment of their political and philosophical implications. As we have seen, avoiding such processes can signify an act of resistance, even self-liberation, but it can just as well expose a consequence of dictatorship and censorship, preventing respective acts of resistance. Whether theatrical speech acts that thwart interweaving serve as a means of resistance or oppression can only be assessed when putting a performance in its context, considering the highly specific political and cultural conditions unique to each case.

The same holds true when we are dealing with translations used in performances. Translations, by definition, perform acts of interweaving, at least between two languages. A familiarizing translation by itself is no better or worse than an estranging one. The question cannot even be settled with regard to its relationship to the performance aesthetics used. Only the context of the performance allows for a more critical assessment. If we refer to the examples of Sadanam Balakrishnan's *Kathakali King Lear* and Brook's *Mahabharata*, the differences in the critiques are quite telling. While for the Indian audiences and critics, *Lear* was a successful attempt to incorporate a Shakespearean play into the Kathakali aesthetics and, in this way, to use an icon of British culture for invigorating this aesthetics, for the British critics this was taken as an attack on their right to determine how to understand Shakespeare's *Lear*. In the case of the *Mahabharata*, the British critics praised Brook's genius in creating a new aesthetics by taking recourse to an Indian epos, while a number of Indian critics and scholars deemed it to be an act of blatant and blasphemous appropriation.

Both cases involved processes of interweaving performance cultures. However, their assessment as positive or negative depended on the self-understanding of the two parties as the former colonized and the former colonizer. This is a very delicate issue that cannot be settled by taking recourse to criteria referring exclusively to one's own aesthetics.

Yet translations, when used in performance, invariably act as a means of interweaving, even if this process does not come to the fore because the translation has domesticated the foreign language to an extent that almost all traces of it are extinguished. The translation then denies itself the philosophical possibilities of transforming the target language in a positive way. In the cases discussed above, it was the particular relationship between language and the performance aesthetics that determined the manner and mode of interweaving.

The very fact that theatrical speech acts may promote or prevent processes of interweaving performance cultures does not reveal much by itself. Any critical

assessment requires a consideration of the context and especially of the different political and philosophical implications that go with each case. Only under this condition will theatrical speech acts—and not only those discussed in this volume—reveal their enormous potential to do different things.

Notes

1 The chapters collected in this volume mostly resulted from projects pursued by their authors during their fellowship at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin.
2 See Emily Apter, ed., *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).
3 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986), 39–40.
4 Ibid., 37, 15.
5 Ibid.
6 Hypatia Vourloumis, "Doing Things with Words: Indonesian Paralanguage and Performance", in this volume, 56.
7 See Phillip B. Zarrilli, *Kathakali Dance-Drama: Where Gods and Demons Come to Play* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 188–95.
8 Tom Morris, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 August 1990, quoted in ibid., 189.
9 See Rustom Bharucha, *Theatre and the World: Essays on Performance and Politics of Cultures* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1990); "Foreign Asia/Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization," *Theatre Journal* 56, no. 1 (March 2004): 1–28; and Gautam Dasgupta, "*The Mahabharata*: Peter Brook's 'Orientalism,'" in *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ*, ed. B. Marranca and G. Dasgupta (New York, NY: PAJ, 1991), 75–82.
10 See Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Dionysus Resurrected: Performances of Euripides'* The Bacchae *in a Globalizing World* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 186–204.
11 Eisa Davis, "Found in Translation: The Emergence of Hip-Hop Theatre," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, ed. J. Chang (New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006), 75, original emphasis.
12 Marc Bamuthi Joseph, "(Yet Another) Letter to a Young Poet," in Chang, *Total Chaos*, 12, original emphasis.
13 Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 125ff.
14 Wilhelm von Humboldt, *On Language: On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and Its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*, ed. M. Losonsky, trans. P. Heath (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 49, original emphases.
15 Segun Ayayi, "Soyinka's Bacchae Opens Theatre Season in Lagos," *Daily Sun*, 2 April 2008.
16 Akeene Lasisi, "Soyinka Is Very Protective of Bacchae – Yerima," *Punch*, 30 March 2008.
17 Sylvester Asoya, "*Bacchae of Euripides*, a Satirical Play by Wole Soyinka Comes Alive at the National Theatre," *A Warning Defied*, 8 April 2008.
18 McPhillips Nwachukwu, "National Troupe Presents Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* as Parable of Power," *Vanguard*, 29 March 2008; see Fischer-Lichte, *Dionysus Resurrected*, 48–71.
19 Wilhelm von Humboldt, "On the National Character of Languages," in *Essays on Language*, by Wilhelm von Humboldt, ed. T. Harden and D. Farrelly (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997), 58.

20 Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. R. Schulte and J. Biguenet (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 81.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Regarding related problems, see Carole-Anne Upton, ed., *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation* (Manchester and North Hampton, MA: St. Jerome, 2000).
24 Adam Czirak, "The Task of Theatrical Translation: Second-hand Speech Acts in Contemporary Performances", in this volume, 149, 161.
25 See Helmuth Plessner, *Laughing and Crying: A Study of the Limits of Human Behaviour*, trans. J. S. Churchill and M. Grene (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970).
26 See Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance*, 125–30.
27 See Tara McAllister-Viel, "Transmitting Voice Pedagogy: Interweaving Korean *P'ansori* and Contemporary Modes of Anglo-American Voice Training", in this volume, 177.
28 Ibid., 177–78.
29 Chan E. Park, *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Singing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), quoted in ibid., 178.
30 Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance*, 38–40.

Bibliography

Apter, Emily, ed. *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Asoya, Sylvester. "*Bacchae of Euripides*, a Satirical Play by Wole Soyinka Comes Alive at the National Theatre." *A Warning Defied*, 8 April 2008.

Ayayi, Segun. "Soyinka's Bacchae Opens Theatre Season in Lagos." *Daily Sun*, 2 April 2008.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." In *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, edited by R. Schulte and J. Biguenet, 71–82. Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Bharucha, Rustom. "Foreign Asia/Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization." *Theatre Journal* 56, no. 1 (March 2004): 1–28.

———. *Theatre and the World: Essays on Performance and Politics of Cultures*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1990.

Dasgupta, Gautam. "*The Mahabharata*: Peter Brook's 'Orientalism.'" In *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ*, edited by B. Marranca and G. Dasgupta, 75–82. New York, NY: PAJ, 1991.

Davis, Eisa. "Found in Translation: The Emergence of Hip-Hop Theatre." In *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, edited by J. Chang, 70–77. New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006.

Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." Translated by A. Bass. In *Limited Inc*, 1–24. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1977.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Dionysus Resurrected: Performances of Euripides'* The Bacchae *in a Globalizing World*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

———. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2008.

Humboldt, Wilhelm von. *On Language: On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and Its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*. Edited by M. Losonsky. Translated by P. Heath. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

———. "On the National Character of Languages." In *Essays on Language*, edited by T. Harden and D. Farrelly, 52–67. Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997.

Joseph, Marc Bamuthi. "(Yet Another) Letter to a Young Poet." In *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, edited by J. Chang, 11–17. New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006.

Lasisi, Akeene. "Soyinka Is Very Protective of Bacchae – Yerima." *Punch*, 30 March 2008.

Morris, Tom. "A Midsummer Night's Dream." *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 August 1990.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey, 1986.

Nwachukwu, McPhillips. "National Troupe Presents Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* as Parable of Power." *Vanguard*, 29 March 2008.

Pannwitz, Rudolf. *Die Krisis der europäischen Kultur* [The Crisis of European Culture]. In *Werke*, vol. 2. Nuremberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1917.

Park, Chan E. *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Singing*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

Plessner, Helmuth. *Laughing and Crying: A Study of the Limits of Human Behaviour*. Translated by J. S. Churchill and M. Grene. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970.

Upton, Carole-Anne, ed. *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation*. Manchester and North Hampton, MA: St. Jerome, 2000.

Zarrilli, Phillip B. *Kathakali Dance-Drama: Where Gods and Demons Come to Play*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2000.

Part I

Politics

1 The politics of translation

Notes towards an African language policy[1]

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

Recently, I published a collection of essays with Seagull Press under the title *Secure the Base: Making Africa Visible in the Globe.* When two armies fight, they protect their own base while they try to destabilize and even capture their opponent's. Both sides gather intelligence about the other's base through covert and overt means. But suppose the spies sent to the other side are held captives or willingly enjoy the reception, so that instead of sending back what they know, they give away the information about their own base. One side is said to lose a battle when their base is overrun by the enemy forces. If the defeated want to fight back, they try and secure their base. The security of one's base, even when two armies are cooperating to achieve a jointly held tactical or strategic end against a third, is necessary. So, either in opposition or in cooperation, fighting units keep their bases secure, and not in disarray.

In the history of conquest, the first thing the victorious conqueror does is to attack people's names and languages. The idea was to deny them the authority of naming self and the world, to delegitimize the history and the knowledge they already possessed, delegitimize their own language as a credible source of knowledge and definition of the world so that the conquestor's language can become the source of the very definition of being. This was true with the English conquest of Ireland, Wales, Scotland or the Japanese conquest of South Korea; or the USA's takeover of Hawaii: to ban or weaken the languages of the conquered, and then impose by gun, guise or guile their own language and accord it all the authority of naming the world. It was done with the enslaved. African languages and names were banned in the plantations; and later in the continent as a whole, so much so that African people now accept Europhonity to define their countries and who they are: Francophone, Anglophone or Lusophone.

I invite you to keep in mind the image of the base and the relationships between bases—hostile or hospitable—as I offer some notes towards an African language policy and the role of inter-African languages translation in that process.

Neville Alexander, whom we have come to honor with this annual lecture, was a noble warrior for multilingualism and the driving force behind the eleven-language policy of postapartheid South Africa. The language struggles between English and Afrikaans, and between both and African languages had always been part of the country's history and it reflected the underlying struggles for

economic and political power and dominance among the racial communities. Similar struggles between European and African languages prevail in all the other African countries. But South Africa is one of the few that have not shied away from the challenge of formulating a policy, which recognizes multilingualism as the founding social reality of the nation. The consistent and effective implementation of the policy is another matter, but its very existence is important.

Some, of course, may want to argue that it is easier to do so as South Africa has only eleven languages to contend with, but what about other African countries where they have many more languages? Hundreds even? But hundreds of languages also mean that there are hundreds of communities that use them, and these communities constitute the geographic nation! This linguistic picture confronts policy-makers as a nightmare, and they think that if they can ignore the nightmare long enough, or frighten it away with more emphasis on European languages, the nightmare will vanish, and they will wake up to the bliss of a harmonious European-language-speaking African nation. So they engineer a massive transfer of resources from African to European languages. Ninety percent of the resources earmarked for language education go to European ones, a minuscule percent to African languages, if at all. But reality, however, is stubborn, and they wake up to the same nightmare. European language speakers in any one of the African nations is at most ten percent of the population only; the other ninety percent are African languages speakers.

Ironically, in some countries, the colonial period had a more progressive language policy, which ensured basic literacy in mother tongue. That was how I came to learn Gĩkũyũ. But after Independence, the four years' elementary education in mother tongue was scrapped. Through and by every means possible, children were immersed in English from kindergarten onward. This resulted in a generation of Kenyans who could barely speak mother tongue, or who could speak it but could not read or write it. Belatedly, the state tried to rectify the damage and introduced mother tongue as subject and even produced some texts to meet the need, but these half-hearted efforts were later abandoned. In most schools, the hour earmarked for mother tongue is used for further drilling in English. What began in the colonial era, the delegitimization of African languages as credible sources and basis of knowledge, was completed and normalized in the postcolonial era.

Where English was now equated with the gate to progress and modernity, African languages came to be seen as barriers to this glittering thing called progress and modernity. In Kenya, whenever and wherever a speaker's mother tongue made the speaker not able to pronounce certain English sounds, he was denounced as "shrubbing" English. He had brought bush and darkness to obscure the light and clarity of English. In an article he recently published in the *Jalada* of 15 September 2015 under the title "Writing in African Languages: A Question for Our Times," Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ tells hilarious stories of African students in Kenya laughing outright at one another for "shrubbing" English. At a party in New Jersey some years ago, I was witness to a video that was supposedly very funny, of a Cabinet Minister who had difficulties in pronouncing long words like

"prosperity" and "procrastination." Before his appointment to the cabinet, the minister had already proven himself as one of the most successful businessmen in the country, employing hundreds of university graduates. Yet in the video he is portrayed as ignorant and an object of fun and scorn.

Clearly, this view of African languages as synonymous with the darkness of the bush becomes a big barrier to imagining and therefore crafting a practical language policy. Another barrier is the fundamentalism of monolingualism. A nation is not really a nation without a common language to go with the commonality of territory, economy and culture. In this context, African languages, because of their huge number, are seen as anti-nationhood. Monolingualism is seen as the centripetal answer to the centrifugal anarchy of multiplicity of languages. European languages are seen as coming to the rescue of a cohesive Africa, otherwise threatened by its own languages. It is in the same vein as what colonial military expeditions touted as the pacification of primitive tribes; only now, in the postcolonial era, it is linguistic pacification of languages of anarchy and blood. The difference is that now it is the *African* governments and policy-makers who are at the head of the linguistic pacification programs. In the colonial era, the slogan behind the pacification was ending tribal wars—Hobbes's war of all against all in a state of nature; now in the postcolonial era, it is ending ethnic wars fueled by African languages. The subtext is that African languages are inherently incapable of relating to each other, but ironically they each can relate to English, especially when Anglophone writing dives into them for a proverb or two to spice their literary offering to a europhone modernity of monolingualism.

In reality, there are very few, if any, monolingual nations in the world. What most have is an officially imposed language as the national language: the language of power. The language of power is a dictatorship of the monolingual on a plurality of languages and it negates the human right to one's language.

For Africa, and generally the postcolonial state, this dictatorship was imposed by imperial powers, who put their language at the center of the universe, the source of light. The postcolonial state merely nationalized the already linguistic dictatorship, which in effect means foreign languages assuming the mantle of the identity of the national. In reality, it is simply the borrowed language of the ten percent, but spread across the nation. This acquired national language has the double character of being both foreign and elitist. And yet, this is what is touted as its advantage: that it is equally accessible to the ten percent of each linguistic community and equally inaccessible to all the constituent communities. So its accessibility to the elite but its inaccessibility to the majority is therefore what makes it the best language to unify the country. The European languages-speaking elite thus sees itself as constituting the nation. European languages become the knight on a horse rescuing the postcolonial state, otherwise trapped within the linguistic House of Babel, by enabling communication across a problematic plurality.

The third barrier arises from fears of being left out of the heaven promised by globalization. This arises from the earlier colonially rooted notion that African languages are not modern enough and that European ones are the only ladder to global heaven. If Africa promotes its languages, the continent will miss the

train to Heaven. But globalization is a function of finance capital, its dominance in the world, a logical development of historical capitalism from its mercantile phase, through its industrial, to its present phase where, as finance capital, and aided by technology, it smashes all state barriers to its movement. There must not be any barriers to movement of capital across state borders, but there have to be barriers, even actual physical walls, to prevent the movement of labor across state barriers in pursuit of what that finance capital has stolen from their regions. Is the result, as I have asked elsewhere in my book *Secure the Base*, that states are too weak to interfere with the operation of finance capital but strong enough to police the population, should they want to do something about it and its negative impact on their lives? For example, in the postcolonial state, police and the military have been used many more times against the population than against any external threat from elsewhere. The joint military exercises that the Western powers have with the militaries of the postcolonial state have never been for purposes of a jointly perceived threat from a third country; otherwise, they would also be having joint military exercises on the soil of France, Britain and America.

But, for some reason, globalization—despite the control of resources by corporate capital from the West—is seen as a good thing, and African languages seem to stand in the way of the elite receiving their share of "global goodies." In my recent book, *Secure the Base*, I have tried to make the distinction between globalism and Globalization. Globalization is really "gobblization" of other people's resources by a greedy corporate elite protected by the might of imperial powers. Globalism is a form of social networking of peoples across race, regions and religions, and it tries to mobilize people against corporate greed and its divisive tactics of divide and conquer.

The fourth barrier to a comprehensive and all-embracing national policy is the conception of the relationship of languages in terms of hierarchy, with the officially sanctioned language, sitting at the top, as the language of power, law, justice, education, administration and economic exchange. If that language is the former colonial language and they want to replace it, they can only think of choosing one African language among the many to occupy the same position in the hierarchy. The prospect of "the one" becoming the new language of power rings alarm bells in the speakers of other languages.

Hierarchy is not inherent in plurality. The plural can relate either vertically as in steps of a ladder—a hierarchical relation—or horizontally as when people link arms to form a line or a circle—a network. Both are relational but the hierarchical one means the energy of the higher suffocating the lower, while the network means shared synergy from the contact.

Together, the four barriers (I am sure there are others) form a kind of orthodoxy, with the assumptions behind it normalized as self-evident truth. The orthodoxy becomes an invisible boulder rock that cannot be moved, the very thought of moving it making the mind tired. The prospects of the hopelessness make us not even make a gesture.

Border communities challenge that orthodoxy. These communities that exist on either side of national boundaries speak a variety of languages, but the

relationship between the languages is not hierarchical but rather "networkingly." Hierarchy is a question of power. It assumes that some languages are more of a language than other languages. But the notion of a network assumes a give and take: and that there is no language which is more of a language than another language.

Of course, border communities do face the challenge of a member of one language group being able to communicate with the member of another. They solve this through multilingualism: most are polyglots. But in addition to that, sometimes there develops a *lingua franca* among them, but this *lingua franca* functions differently from the language of power. A language of power assumes that for it to be, other languages must cease to be. It desires to replace or silence all the other languages. But a *lingua franca* assumes the existence of co-equal languages. It simply facilitates communication and dialogue among language equals. The condition of the existence of one is the existence of all. The *lingua franca* helps facilitate the give and take of a network of languages. It does not replace them. Such a *lingua franca* is often a distinctive language but known by most other language speakers, in addition to their own.

Translation—a kind of dialogue or conversation among languages—is another challenge to the orthodoxy. The *Jalada* translation project, an instance of that challenge, is unfolding before our very eyes. *Jalada* is an online literary journal run by a pan-African writers' collective, a group of young people who come from different parts of the continent. *Jalada*'s chief editor, Moses Kilolo, comes from Kenya. *Jalada* itself is an online journal in English but, ironically, what has created the waves is not their English writings but their translation project. In a recent article in the online journal *Africa is a Country*, Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ described the effort as "a revolution in many tongues." This was very strong praise for their first and, so far, only translation issue. I feel honored that this first translation issue features my own story, "Ituĩka rĩa Mũrũngarũ: Kana Kĩrĩa Gĩtũmaga Andũ Mathiĩ Marũngiĩ," translatable as "The Upright Revolution, or Why Humans Walk Upright."

I first wrote the story in Gĩkũyũ for my daughter, Mũmbi, as a 2012 Christmas gift. In my family, we have developed a tradition of the gift of stories and poems for birthdays, mother's and father's days in place of material gifts (or in addition to them). I have found it a much better deal, for whereas material gifts perish and are forgotten, the gift of stories, whether published or not, lives on and never loses its luster. Stories are forever. The story "Ituĩka rĩa Mũrũngarũ, or Why Humans Walk Upright" tells about the competition between legs and hands to see which pair is more essential to the body. It was a titanic struggle, whose consequences have impacted the course of human history and civilization. It is really a fable. Once delivered as a gift, I put the story aside and forgot all about it until the *Jalada* group, through Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ, approached me for a contribution to their inaugural translation number. I gave them the only story at hand. The result has been astounding by any measure.

The story was translated into thirty African languages,[2] the most translated single story on the continent, according to the *Guardian* that carried the news

analysis of the phenomenon.[3] It is indeed rare for the publication of a story to become news, but several newspapers carried reports on the *Jalada* translation feat. Recently, a Sunday magazine from Bangalore State in India carried a Kannada or Tamil translation for their three million readers. Three million readers[4] for a story originating in an African language. That in itself is another story. Translations into more languages in and outside Africa continue, and they are hoping to release another issue with the new batch of translations.

Translations as such are not new phenomena in Africa. Of the evening stories that left a mark on me as a child was one about a father, his son and their donkey, who, trying to live up to every opinion of neighbors and strangers as to who should carry whom, end up carrying the donkey on their shoulders. Later, when I learned to read and write, I was very surprised to come across the same story but with the added pleasure of illustrations. The image of a donkey hanging upside down from a pole supported by the shoulders of Father and Son, with the market crowd laughing at their foolishness, still lives within me.

The storyteller in the evening must have oralized the story from its literary source, a process that I have described in my book *Globalectics: Theory and Politics of Knowing*, as the oralization of the literary. It is only last year in Irvine, seventy years after my childhood encounter with it, that I made another discovery, thanks to my YouTube lessons in Spanish. The story was a free translation and adaptation of the Spanish story, *Padre, Hijo, O Caballo* by the medieval Spanish writer Don Juan Manuel. Only that in the Gĩkũyũ language version, *el Caballo*, the horse becomes the Donkey. Whatever the sequencing, the story, through translation, was now part of my Gĩkũyũ culture.

The Bible in Gĩkũyũ, another part of my culture, was a translation of a series of translations, English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic all the way back to whatever language that God, Adam and Eve used in the Garden of Eden. I was very impressed by the fact that Jesus and all the characters in the New and Old Testament spoke Gĩkũyũ! Even God, in the Garden of Eden, spoke Gĩkũyũ!

This inheritance from translation is not unique to Gĩkũyũ or Africa. The Bible in translation has similarly had an impact on the growth of many languages in the world. In my memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter*, I have talked of my Scottish teacher who used to say that Jesus spoke very simple English. Not just the Bible! The translation of the Greek and Latin classics into English, French and German not only aided in the growth of the languages but the same classics, in their translation, have made an impact on the study and development of drama, poetry and philosophy in general. It is impossible to imagine Shakespeare without translations. He worked within a culture where translations from other languages into the emerging national tongues were the literary equivalent of piracy for silver and gold on the high seas, a phenomenon I first mentioned in my book on the politics of memory, titled *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*.

The *Jalada* translation project then has clearly followed on one of the most consistent threads in world cultures, but similar translation trends in Africa. The East Africa Educational Publishers have brought out Kiswahili translations of most of the classics of African fiction originally written in English, French and

Portuguese. In the article titled "A Revolution in Many Tongues," Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ has detailed other efforts in this direction, citing, for instance, Boubacar Boris Diop of Senegal who has set up a publishing outfit, *Céytu*, dedicated to publishing Wolof translations of major classics of African thought, such as Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. In 2014, SUNY Press brought out a book *Listening to Ourselves: A Multilingual Anthology of African Philosophy*. Brought together and edited by the African-Caribbean-Canadian intellectual Chike Jeffers, this volume carries essays on the different aspects of philosophy but written originally in African languages, including Amharic, Dholuo, Gĩkũyũ, Wolof, Yorùbá and Akan. As far as I know, these essays are among the very first in modern times that have African philosophers philosophizing directly in an African language. The volume does also carry translation into English versions, but it is worth noting that this reverses the old order, which is translations from the European into the African languages.

I cannot overstress the work on African languages pioneered by John Mugane at Harvard as well in other institutions like SOAS, University of London and the University of Cairo. I was surprised at a conference in Ghana on African Studies to meet with the delegation from Egypt, who said that writing dissertations on Africa in African languages is normal at their institution. I hope that there develops more contacts between institutions of higher learning in and outside Africa that take African languages seriously as legitimate sources and mediators of knowledge.

But the real breakthrough in the *Jalada* project is not just the fact of translation—this has always been done—it is their emphasis on inter-African language translations. This centrality, from one African language to other African languages, is crucial if we are going to change the terms of the debate and even the paradigm. In this one issue, more than thirty African languages were in direct conversation, the most in Africa's literary history. But there were also translations into languages outside Africa, that is English, French, Portuguese and some of the Indian languages. In short, the *Jalada* translation issue, in a practical sense, has made the arguments that many of us have made: from Herbert I. E. Dhlomo and B. Wallet Vilakazi in the South Africa of the 1940s; Cheikh Anta Diop in the 1950s; to my 1984 publication, *Decolonising the Mind*. And it is simple: that African languages have been and still are legitimate sources of knowledge; that thought can originate in any African language and spread to other African languages and to all the other languages of the world.

But for African languages to occupy their rightful place in Africa and the world, there have to be positive government policies with the political will and financial muscle behind the policies. There have to be publishers and writers too, and academic institutions as well. It has to be an alliance, including patriotic private capital, and I am glad to see that amidst us is Baila Ly from Conakry in Guinea, who, I am told, is a very successful businessman and supports African languages. It was a Kenyan business enterprise that came up with an endowment that helped in the founding of the Mabati-Cornell Kiswahili Prize for African Literature. So the entire language enterprise calls for a grand alliance of government, private capital—particularly Africa-based—academies, universities, publishers, writers, translators, interpreters and readers.

A meaningful and practical policy has to start with the assumption that every language has a right to be, and each community has a right to their own language, or the language of their culture. That means equitable resources for their development as means of knowledge and culture. Such languages will not see other languages as threats to their own being. As in border communities, a language of communication across regions can emerge without threatening the individuality of the other languages. In such a situation, it can only strengthen the linguistic network.

You could have, at the very least, a three-language policy for every child: their mother tongue; the *lingua franca*; and whatever is the most useful language of global reach, that is the reach beyond their communities. In the case of East Africa, for instance, this would mean mother tongue plus Kiswahili plus English. But there could be other innovations around such a policy: for instance the requirement of a fourth, which must be other than the mother tongue, that is any one of the other several people's languages. In any African country, we can offer rewards for showing additional knowledge of African languages; we could even link promotion to such knowledge. If you have two judges equally qualified fighting for promotion, then the one who demonstrates competence in African languages within the nation gets extra points. This could be extended to the entire civil service and the academic establishment. And certainly nobody in the world should get a job as an expert of things in Africa without their demonstrating a knowledge of one or more African languages spoken within their field of research and expertise. Every interview for such academic positions, in Africa and the world, should include questions such as: How many African languages can you read and write? Have you ever published a paper in an African language in the field of your expertise? A combination of some of these tactics and requirements can only result in the empowerment of African languages.

This can help in the complex give and take among languages and cultures. The human cultures should reflect that of nature, where variety and difference are a source of richness in color and nutritional value. Nature thrives on cross-fertilization and the general circle of life. So, too, the human culture, and it is not an accident that cultures of innovation throve at the crossroads of travel and exchange. Marketplaces of ideas were always the centers of knowledge and innovations. In his book *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire once said that culture contact was the oxygen of civilization.

Translation, the universal language of languages, can really help in that generation of such oxygen. Translation involves one distinct unit understanding signals from another distinct unit in terms of itself, for instance, within or between biological cells. So, translation is inherent in all systems of communication: natural, social and even mechanical. Nature is multilingual in a multicultural sense but also interconnected through continuous translation. Translation is an integral part of the everyday in nature and society and has been central to all cultures, but we may not always notice it.

But while it is true that translation is the common language of languages, hierarchies of power and domination distort its full function as our common

heritage. In more equitable relations of wealth, power and values, translation can play a crucial and ultimate role of enabling mutuality of being and becoming, even within a plurality of languages.

In the article in which Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ described the *Jalada* translation issue as ushering "a revolution in many tongues," he also said that "in translation, there are no indigenous, vernacular, native, local, ethnic and tribal languages producing vernacular, native, local, ethnic and tribal literatures, while English and French produce world and global literature. There are only languages and literatures."[5]

I will end with where I began: securing African languages should be part of a whole vision of Africans securing our resources, for as I told the *Jalada* group, when I gave them my story "Ituĩka rĩa Mũrũngarũ":

> The cruel genius of colonialism was to turn normality into abnormality and then make the colonised accept the abnormality as the real norm [. . .]. The moment we lost our languages was also the moment we lost our bodies, our gold, diamonds, copper, coffee, tea. The moment we accepted (or being made to accept) that we could not do things with our languages was the moment we accepted that we could not make things with our vast resources.[6]

So our language policies and actions should empower Africa by making Africans own their resources from languages—making dreams with our languages—to other natural resources—making things with them, consuming some, exchanging some. Then, and only then, can Africa become truly visible in the world under its own terms and from the security of its own base.

Notes

1 This paper was presented as the Neville Alexander Memorial Lecture, Harvard, at the Harvard Centre for African Studies on 19 April 2016. I want to thank the Centre and the Harvard Department of African and African American Studies for inviting me and Njeeri, and to congratulate John Mugane and the African languages program for the tremendous work they have done and continue to do with and for African languages. (*Note from the editors: We would like to thank Taylor & Francis Ltd. www.tandfonline.com on behalf of the Journal of African Cultural Studies for their permission to reprint this article by* Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "The Politics of Translation: Notes towards an African Language Policy," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 30, no. 2 (2018): 124–32.)

2 The story is available in Gĩkũyũ, Amharic, isiNdebele, isiZulu and Xitsonga, Dholuo, Kikamba, Lwisukha-Lwidakho, Ikinyarwada, Arabic, Luganda, Kiswahili, Hausa, Meru, Lingala, Igbo, Ibibio, Somali, Nandi, Rukiga, Bamanankan, Lugbarati, Shona, Lubukusu, Kimaragoli, Giriama, Sheng, Ewe, Naija Languej, Marakwet as well as Afrikaans, English and French.

3 Alison Flood, "Short Story by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o Translated into Over 30 Languages in One Publication," *Guardian*, 29 March 2016, last accessed 9 July 2019, www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/29/jalada-africa-short-story-ngugi-wa-thiongo-translated-over-30-languages-publication.

4 Kumar S, the editor, in email message to the author, Tuesday, 12 April 2016: Moses Kilolo. In the email, thanking the *Jalada* group, he says the story published on April

10 in the Sunday Magazine was read by more than thirty lakh people and it got very good response (NB: One lakh is 100,000).

5 Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ, "A Revolution in Many Tongues," *Africa is a Country*, 8 April 2016, last accessed 9 July 2019, https://africasacountry.com/2016/04/a-revolution-in-many-tongues.

6 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, quoted in Dennis Abrams, "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Short Story: Long on African Translations," *Publishing Perspectives*, 30 March 2016, last accessed 30 July 2019, https://publishingperspectives.com/2016/03/ngugi-wa-thiongo-short-story-30-languages/.

Bibliography

Abrams, Dennis. "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Short Story: Long on African Translations." *Publishing Perspectives*, 30 March 2016. Last accessed 30 July 2019. https://publishingperspectives.com/2016/03/ngugi-wa-thiongo-short-story-30-languages/.

Flood, Alison. "Short Story by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o Translated into Over 30 Languages in One Publication." *Guardian*, 29 March 2016. Last accessed 9 July 2019. www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/29/jalada-africa-short-story-ngugi-wa-thiongo-translated-over-30-languages-publication.

Jeffers, Chike, ed. *Listening to Ourselves: A Multilingual Anthology of African Philosophy*. Foreword by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. New York, NY: SUNY, 2014.

Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ. "A Revolution in Many Tongues." *Africa is a Country*, 4 August 2016. Last accessed 9 July 2019. https://africasacountry.com/2016/04/a-revolution-in-many-tongues.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey, 1986.

———. *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012.

———. *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir*. London: Harvill Secker, 2012.

———. *Secure the Base: Making Africa Visible in the Globe*. London: Seagull, 2016.

———. *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2009.

2 English is an African language – Ka Dupe!

For and against Ngũgĩ[1]

Biodun Jeyifo

> Ko si ede t'olorun ko gbo (There is no language that is unintelligible to God).
> —Yorùbá aphorism of vintage idealist metaphysics of language

> There is no language which is more of a language than another language.
> —Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "The Politics of Translation: Notes towards an African Language Policy"

> The diversity of African languages is evidenced by their populations. In total, there are at least 75 languages in Africa which have more than one million speakers. The rest are spoken by populations ranging from a few hundred to several hundred thousand speakers. *Most of the languages are primarily oral with little available in written forms.* [My emphasis]
> —John Mugane, "Introduction to African Languages," Program Website, The African Language Program at Harvard

> Where one thing stands, another thing will stand beside it.
> —Chinua Achebe (From an Igbo proverb)

Ka Dupe: Reading Ngũgĩ against Fanon and Achebe, and going beyond them

I welcome the invitation—and the opportunity—to respond to Ngũgĩ's paper in writing if only because when it was first delivered at Harvard as the Neville Alexander Lecture for 2016 on April 19, even though Ngũgĩ "acoustically" heard the short commentary that I made on his lecture, he apparently did not "ideationally" hear me at all, not in the least! My verbal commentary that Ngũgĩ did not "hear" on that occasion is almost exactly the same commentary that I am making here at a greater length and in the medium of writing. However, it would be insincere of me not to confess that my stance in the present context is significantly more vigorous and in some respects more deliberately "strategic" than the generally mild and friendly tone of the "unheard" commentary after the lecture that Ngũgĩ gave on April 19. Nowhere is this strategic but non-adversarial stance more inherent than in the title of my commentary, "English Is an African Language – Ka Dupe!"

A literal, uncomplicated translation of the Yorùbá phrase "ka dupe" would be "let us give thanks." But this ignores or erases the complex etymological and discursive uses and history of the phrase. Such "history" would begin from the phrase's liturgical use in traditional Òrìṣa worship with regard to giving thanks to the gods and the ancestors for life itself; it would then go through the invocation of the phrase and its many variant forms both in common, everyday use and in weighty philosophical discourses on the phenomenon of unearned grace in human existence; and it would perhaps end in contemporary ludic usages of the phrase that entail a corrosive bitterness in expressing ironic "thanks" for the reversals, defeats and tragedies we sometimes encounter in the course of individual or collective human life. Against this profuse etymological background, each instance of the use of the phrase would alert the knowing and sophisticated listener or reader to be on guard, to detect which particular contextual semantic register is intended—straightforward and uncomplicated expression of thanks; ironic imputations that cast a pall of doubt on the act of giving thanks; or densely ambiguous and perhaps even undecidable intimations in which expressing or receiving thanks might be unhinged from any referential subject or object.

In choosing a title for this response to Ngũgĩ's lecture, I tried to think of a word, a phrase, a trope in the English language that could do the work of "ka dupe" in relation to the declarative statement that "English is (now) an African language," but completely came up short. This left me no choice but to resort to our phrase, "ka dupe!" In other words, the declaration that English is an African language now is the fundamental basis of my commentary on Ngũgĩ's paper, but only in close relation to this complexly allusive and elliptical Yorùbá phrase could I make this declaration, this claim. English words like "hurray," "amen" and "halleluiah," no matter how lexically inflected with an extra word or phrase to indicate irony, could not even begin to evoke the contextual ambiguities and indeterminacies of "ka dupe." But how does this all relate to Ngũgĩ's powerful, persuasive and wide-ranging observations, reflections and claims in his paper, "The Politics of Translation: Notes towards an African Language Policy"?

English is a foreign language that was never, is not now and never shall be an "African" language: that is the unstated but rigorously authorizing thesis of Ngũgĩ's paper. Note that though linked, this thesis is quite separate and distinct from the claim often made that English—like French and Portuguese—was forcibly imposed on Africa and Africans through politically, linguistically and epistemologically violent colonial-imperial conquest. In other words, far beyond the irrefutable thesis of the imposition of English on Africans through colonial conquest, there is the distinct thesis or claim of absolute, originary autochthony in determining which languages are African and which are not. One of the most telling instantiations of the rigid operation of this principle of absolute autochthony is the fact that though Ngũgĩ can and does talk of "Europhone African *writers*," he absolutely never speaks of "Europhone African *languages*" since, based on the principle of absolute autochthony as the only

determinant of which languages are African and which are not, there cannot be such languages.

The fundamental basis of my response to Ngũgĩ rests on a critique, indeed a refutation of this principle of absolute autochthony. As indicated in the title of this piece, I declare, against Ngũgĩ, that English (and French and Portuguese) can no longer be described or classified as a foreign language in Africa; it is, in fact, now an "African" language. However, almost at the same moment and with the same breath with which I say this, I immediately bracket this declaration with all the ambiguities, all the contradictions and indeterminacies of that appropriated Yorùbá phrase, "ka dupe." English is now an African language, I argue, precisely in the same manner in which it is now an Indian, Irish or Australasian language. In all these nations or regions of the world, English has not only been around for centuries now, but it is also a leading language in virtually all areas of life—the economy, education, politics, science and technology. If this is the case, there must be a compelling reason, a reason beyond disputation, to continue to label English a foreign language in these countries and regions of the world; and this is absolute autochthony.

Absolute autochthony in the attachment of languages to specific nations and regions of the world has a power of appeal to people around the world that we do not sufficiently recognize. For instance, though Ngũgĩ is indisputably the most insistent exponent of the thesis in the African context, he speaks for almost everybody that has ever taken a position on the language question, including even those like Chinua Achebe who famously took a strong stand against Ngũgĩ when the disputation first erupted in the early 1960s and peaked in 1984 with the publication of Ngũgĩ's book, *Decolonising the Mind*: *The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986). For instance, in staking his own position, Achebe had declared: "Theatricalities aside, the difference between Ngũgĩ and myself on the issue of indigenous or European languages for African writers is that while Ngũgĩ now believes that it is either/or, I have always thought that it was both."[2] Note that as different as his position was from Ngũgĩ, Achebe was, it seemed, caught on the horns of the dilemma that the Kenyan writer had more or less powerfully set up, this being the proposition that the choice was between indigenous African languages and languages which, being "European," were foreign languages that were not and presumably could never become African languages. I contend that we continue to be trapped and fixated by the terms of this dilemma precisely because its heuristic and highly emotive base in absolute autochthony has never been challenged. My comments in this piece are fundamentally based on a direct challenge to this unstated but widely accepted thesis, that remains unchallenged partly because it has never been clearly or explicitly stated, but also by the fact of its rigid enforcement by what appears to be the seemingly unassailable "authority" of Ngũgĩ's claims and positions on the language question. I arrived at this "ka dupe" position through a reading of Ngũgĩ in the light of the revolutionary theories of Frantz Fanon and some ideas of Achebe. Permit me to briefly explain what I mean by this claim.

Without ignoring the originality of Ngũgĩ as a thinker in his own right, it is important, however, to note that the central theoretical framework of his paper is derived from Fanon. In other words, it is "Fanonist"—but with a twist. For it was Fanon who first theorized that all colonizers in the modern period act exactly the same way in imposing their languages, cultures and values on peoples and nations they colonize while simultaneously waging a total war of devaluation on the languages and cultures of the colonized. Fanon arrived at this proposition by asking—and answering—a deceptively simple question: How does a colonizing group behave? It testifies to the genius of Fanon that though he had posed the question in the specific context of the colonization of Algeria by the French, the answer that he gave to the question has, without any exceptions, been validated in every instance or location of modern colonialism. So far, Ngũgĩ, in his paper (published here in this collection) in particular, and all his writings on the language question in general, is completely Fanonist. However, Fanon also asked—and answered—another question: The peoples who are colonized, how do *they* behave, how do they react to colonization? This is where Ngũgĩ departs substantially, if not completely, from Fanon. By the way, the most relevant texts of Fanon for this discussion are the article "Racism and Culture," that was first given as a speech at the famous Negro Writers and Artists Conference in Paris, 1956, and was subsequently published in the collection of Fanon's (1961, 1967) writings titled *Toward the African Revolution*, and the third chapter of his magnum opus, *The Wretched of the Earth*, titled "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness." In what way(s) does Ngũgĩ depart from Fanon with regard to the issue of how all colonized peoples respond to colonization?

Famously, Fanon gave an outline of the response of the colonized in three stages, namely a first stage of total assimilation and/or imitation of the language and culture of the colonizer; a second stage of a nativist revolt against and total rejection of the language and culture of the colonizer; and a third and final stage of a revolutionary revolt in which all the weapons and means necessary for success are deployed, including sources from the language and culture of the colonizer. Most readers and even ardent followers of Fanon have ignored a crucial warning that Fanon gave with regard to the second stage: *it tends to harden and become fixated into a more or less permanent opposition to and rejection of the language and culture of the colonizer.* While it could be plausibly argued that in the uncompromising stand that he took in *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ corresponded completely with that hardening, that sclerosis of Fanon's second stage, his subsequent and present ideas and positions present us with a more complex profile. Meanwhile, Achebe's "middle ground" rejection of Ngũgĩ's either/or option in the choice of language between indigenous and European languages and his choice of "both" would seem to indicate that the Nigerian author is more "Fanonist" than Ngũgĩ. But the matter is not that simple and one indication of this is the fact that our discussion, our critique ought to start with Fanon himself before we extend it to Ngũgĩ.

It is, of course, widely known that Fanon's three stages derive from Hegelian dialectics and correspond to the three "moments" in the historical unraveling

of the dialectic: first, a "thesis"; second, the "antithesis" to the thesis; third and finally, the "synthesis" that arises from the confrontation of the thesis by the antithesis. Famously, Jean-Paul Sartre (1964–65) also applied this Hegelianism to his analysis of Négritude in his celebrated essay "Orphée noir" (Black Orpheus), that served as the Introduction to Senghor's famous anthology of Négritude poetry published in 1948. In that essay, Sartre had confidently identified Négritude as a "second stage" in which cultural and political nationalism would lead to a self-transcending historical process of universalization that was a "third stage" destined to end all racial particularisms, all cultural nationalisms. Although Fanon did not take this Sartrean route of universalization in his theorization of the response of the colonized to colonization, his warnings that the "second stage" should not be allowed to harden and last for too long were pretty close to Sartre's schematic or abstract dialectics. To his credit, Fanon did bring concrete and unfolding events in the historical process to bear on his warnings about the second stage. This is especially true of that seminal third chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness." But it is equally true that there was an unquestionable "outsider" dimension to Fanon's theorizations, expressed in its most notable dimension in the fact that he came from the Caribbean and thus was not exactly a "native" in the African colony.

Ngũgĩ is, of course, a "native." And so was Achebe. And so, by the way, is this writer. Of course, I am bracketing the term here to indicate that I am not using it in the literal sense in which a people, a plant or an entire ecosystem could be said to be "native" to a place. Rather, I am using the term in the very specific and loaded sense of the colonial process of being "nativized." Seen in this light, Ngũgĩ's theoretical departures from Fanon rest fundamentally on the weight that he places on nativization: in a searing sense, for him, we are still fundamentally in Fanon's first stage even if, paradoxically, Ngũgĩ is anything but "nativist" in his ideas and positions on the language question—as I intend to demonstrate presently. This is indeed the complexity, the aporia in Ngũgĩ's position: in a move that more or less abolishes the dialectics of history and replaces it with an unrestrained empiricism, he invests Fanon's "first stage" with the psychic weight of an unchanging "original sin"; but in his ideas and "solutions" to the language problem, he is resolutely anti-nativist. But let us not ignore the fact that Ngũgĩ leaves no space, none at all, for writers and intellectuals who accept Fanon's promptings to move beyond or athwart the second stage to embrace all means and resources necessary for Africa's liberation in an ever-changing historical process. Writers like Chinua Achebe, whose rejection of the either/or option in favor of "both" is nothing if not Fanonist in a manner that Fanon himself could not have been existentially. Achebe did not formally reject the criterion of absolute autochthony as the determinant of which languages are African and which are not; however, I think he was pretty close to it. We, on our own part, must now embrace it, as we shall see in the concluding section of this commentary. Before we get to that section, there are a few other issues with which to engage, the next one being my claim, "resolutely against Ngũgĩ," that English is (now) an African language.

English in Africa: History, historicity—and catachresis

The standard justification for English in Africa, for an "African" English, is well known, perhaps on account of it being one of the constitutive cultural foundations of postcoloniality. Its most important features can be succinctly stated: English is a national *lingua franca* that serves as a "link language" for and between all the indigenous languages of the nation; it is the effective, or perhaps even preferred, language of official administrative, judicial, commercial, scientific and technological transactions and operations. As decisive cultural and political markers of postcoloniality, these features are not unique to Africa but occur nearly everywhere in the former colonies of the British Empire; it is, however, the case that they are more decisive in their African incarnations. To these features can be added a few others that do not have their origins in the historic experience of colonization: English is the most widely used language for writing on our continent; and beyond this in terms of "speaking" as distinct from writing, English is also the most widely spoken language in Africa, if we combine first-language speakers with second-language users as a consolidated pool. These are all important factors surrounding the influence of English in Africa, but for my purposes in this commentary, I wish to go beyond them to aspects that I consider more decisive, aspects that Ngũgĩ has never considered at all in any of his ideas and positions.

And so, I think, first, of extraordinary documents of political philosophy and constitution-making like the South African Constitution, the Arusha Declaration and the Ahiara Declaration by the Biafrans during the Nigerian-Biafra war, all in English (the South African Constitution and the Arusha Declaration are also in indigenous African languages), and I see that English in these documents is a medium, indeed a linguistic weapon working for Africans on the African continent. Also, I see innumerable works of creative writing, scholarship, journalism and jurisprudence in English, written by and for Africans, many of them of inestimable value to the prospects of Africa and Africans in the modern world. Because he has just passed away and I am in deep mourning about his demise, I cite here the example of the scholarship of the Nigerian theorist, scholar and critic of oral literatures, Isidore Okpewho, all of them in English: *The Epic in Africa: Towards a Poetics of the Oral Performance* (Columbia University Press, 1979); *Myth in Africa: A Study of Its Aesthetic and Cultural Relevance* (Cambridge University Press, 1983) and *Once Upon a Kingdom: Myth, Hegemony and Identity* (Indiana University Press, 1998). These were all groundbreaking works of scholarship that brilliantly corrected long-held intellectual biases against the heritage of myth and orature in and of Africa. Ngũgĩ has (in)famously claimed that all works by Africans in "foreign" languages of the order of excellence of Okpewho's scholarship are only and merely helping to promote and develop those "foreign" languages. This is absurd because, in the end, Okpewho's scholarship, though of immense value to scholars around the whole world, was and is, first and foremost, of great value to Africa and Africans. At any rate, English was in no way "foreign" to Okpewho, both personally and in the larger context of the history and historicity of English on our continent.

On this idea of the "historicity" of English in Africa, I have in mind here a pioneering book with a rather (appropriately?) longish title: *Two Centuries of African English: A Study and Anthology of Non-Fictional Prose by African Writers Since 1769*. The book was written by Professor Lalage Bown (1973) of the University of Lagos and was published in 1973. In some of the anthologized and chronologically ordered entries in this book, the reader can see some items that clearly indicate that English was very foreign to the writer(s), while in other items, only an arbitrary and externally imposed conception of foreignness would say that the given writer found English a foreign language. My point here with regard to the example of Isidore Okpewho is that he comes in the long line of this evolving historicity of English on its way to becoming an African language that only a total disregard for history of the order of Ngũgĩ's principle of absolute autochthony would ignore or even deny.

From the sublime to the banal, and from the elevated to the mock-absurd: on its way to losing its foreignness in Africa, English in our continent has produced a rich and extensive discursive order of playful, ironic or ludic meta-commentary on the very idea of it being foreign. In other words, in this phenomenon, the very idea and reality of the foreignness of English is made an object of signification. In his paper, Ngũgĩ makes much of pervasive cultural acts of racial and linguistic self-abnegation in which Africans unable to pronounce English words and sounds correctly on account of "interference" from the pronunciation patterns of their mother tongue are savagely mocked. He even has a term for this act, one invented by his son, the writer and scholar, Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ. The term is "shrubbing"; it is a neologism formed from the word "shrub" considered as a sort of synecdoche for "bush," the master trope of unalterable African savagery in the discourses of colonialist racism. On this account, "shrubbing" means to so mangle the putative civilized elegance of English that the savagery of the "bush" comes to infect and degrade the language of the foreign conquerors. Well, consider the existence in Nigeria of many popular comic shows on radio and television in which the main attraction is the colorful murder of the English language. The most celebrated of the comedians in this tradition is the so-called Chief Zebrudaya Okoroigwe Nwogbo, alias "4:30," of the comedy series titled *New Masquerade* that ran on national television in Nigeria for ten years between 1983 and 1993. Zebrudaya was so profuse in his malapropisms, his overall catachresis, that one is forced to ponder for a while on "catachresis" in both the colonial and postcolonial contexts.

"Catachresis" is the figure for a notable misuse of language; it is the mark of a figure of speech whose deployment is overstrained, a mixed metaphor that obfuscates rather than clarifies meaning or the word that clearly does not belong in the context into which it has been placed discursively. It occurs far more often than we realize in all languages, sometimes even with the most gifted users of language. If this is true of every language, it becomes magnified in languages that have either been imposed on non-native speakers or have traveled far from their homelands through trade and the exchange of cultural and linguistic capital. In the case of colonially imposed languages, catachresis is often a bitter reminder

of the original "sin" of colonization long after the historic event. If this is the case, its extensive and deliberate appropriation turns what is deemed naturally or "racially" catachrestic—as in Ngũgĩ's example of "shrubbing"—into its opposite, becoming in Hegelian terms a negation of the negation. I don't know about Kenya and East Africa, but there is a long tradition in West Africa of catachresis being deliberately and willfully turned inside out and inverted so as to signify on the foreignness of English, together with the presumed superiority that this confers on English in relation to the indigenous African languages. It is a tradition with a very ambiguous history of past and present uses and meanings. Let me give a brief illustration of this observation.

Long before Zebrudaya and *The New Masquerade*, a tradition of deliberate and willful signification on the foreignness of English had surfaced in West Africa, from *The Blinkards* (1916) of the Ghanaian dramatist and pan-African thinker Kobina Sekyi, to *This Is Our Chance* (1956) by James Ene Henshaw (1964), and from Ken Saro-Wiwa in *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (1985) to Uzodinma Iweala, *Beasts of No Nation* (2005). In all of these texts and others like them, in the mouths of a character or a group of characters, or indeed the entire linguistic universe of plays, novels or poems, the text is pervaded by skillful and transformative use of catachresis. The result is that we get a distinct sense that though in Africa English may have strayed far from its own autochthonous homeland, it has become a language that the "locals" have domesticated through a therapeutic "containment" of the errors and slippages that always seem to lie in wait for non-native users of the language.

Sekyi's *The Blinkards* is particularly brilliant in this respect. Based on an early twentieth-century West African appropriation of the English dramatic form of the comedy of manners, this riotously funny play divides its *dramatis personae* into three groups: social-climbing and deracinated elites who in dress, attitudes and language imitate what they imagine to be English upper-class values and manners but are actually grotesque parodies of the originals; wealthy African cocoa farmers and businessmen who imitate the imitators of imagined British *haute couture*; and African nationalists attired as a matter of principle in resplendent Ghanaian robes who speak in Fanti, even though they have the requisite education to speak the Queen's English. The second group of characters, comprising the imitators of imitators, have the highest level of manifestations of the Ngũgĩs' "shrubbing" solecisms, but they are sympathetically portrayed by Sekyi, and at the end of the play, they abandon their imitativeness of imagined British linguistic and social upper-class values and practices. Thus, this play, in particular, more or less effectively reveals that the "shrubbing" thesis of the Ngũgĩs' pertains to a phenomenon whose historic and cultural roots are not in "administrative" colonialism (whose region of location was West Africa) but mostly in "settler" colonialism and its legacies in Kenya and East Africa. (More on this point in the concluding section of this chapter.)

This is precisely the point at which to address those aspects of Ngũgĩ's explicit claims and implicit presuppositions that seem to read the necessary response to colonialism, neocolonialism and neoliberalism differently from Fanon. However,

there is one more step to take before this critique and this entails an appreciation of Ngũgĩ in his own right. Indeed, I draw the attention of the reader to the bracketed subtitle of this piece—"For and Against Ngũgĩ"—as a mark of the deeply ambiguous nature of this commentary on Ngũgĩ's Harvard lecture. For, on the one hand, there is a big and hugely consequential disagreement with many of both his explicit claims and implicit assumptions, and, on the other hand, there is also a genuine approval, indeed a celebration of many of Ngũgĩ's ideas and projects on the so-called language question in Africa, with regard to both the particular paper to which I am responding and, more generally, the positions that the Kenyan writer and thinker has staked over the last few decades. First then, we go to "For Ngũgĩ" before we return in the concluding section of this chapter to "Against Ngũgĩ."

For Ngũgĩ: Uncompromising idealism in the promotion of indigenous African languages

Call him a romantic idealist if you wish, but Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is one of the last great thinkers/activists that remain unshaken and unshakeable in their advocacy for the survival and development of all the threatened languages and cultures of the world. The second epigraph for this commentary—"there is no language which is more of a language than another language"—does not in the least reflect the actual terribly hierarchical and unequal state of affairs between the languages of the world, especially now at this historical moment. And yet, this simple but deeply moving declaration is a fundamental article of faith for Ngũgĩ as a language rights activist and thinker. He has made contact with and become solidary with many indigenous language rights movements in the world. He is a robust, witty and canny theorist of "ethnocide," this being a war of extermination not directly on the "physical" existence of a people but on their language, their way of life, their mode of being-in-the-world-with-others, to use a Heideggerian term. Irish Gaelic linguistic nationalists have invited Ngũgĩ to share with them his views and positions on the situation in Africa and other parts of the world. In the specific African context, Ngũgĩ is unquestionably the greatest advocate for rational and progressive state policy and action for the promotion of indigenous African languages against the indisputable advantages of languages of European derivation, like English, French and Portuguese. Of especial noteworthiness is the fact that Ngũgĩ has no illusions, no blinkers regarding the scale of the problem that he and other language rights activists face. This is perhaps due to the fact that though he has worked long and hard on the problems and challenges that advocates of the development of indigenous African languages have confronted without seeming to have made much progress, in place of an understandable disillusionment, Ngũgĩ has shown a resilience that can be described in the symbolic terms of the resilience of the long-distance runner. In this respect, it is notable that of recent, Ngũgĩ has found a stable and indeed growing cadre of young African and African Diasporic writers and scholars ardently inspired by his views and his example. If the problems and challenges will not go away,

neither will Ngũgĩ and his passionate and committed followers relent in their efforts.

There is also the extraordinarily significant fact that Ngũgĩ is no conservative, rearguard nativist in his advocacy for the development and promotion of indigenous African languages, as most linguistic and cultural "indigenists" tend to be—in Africa and virtually all the other regions of the world. Of the many symbols and objects of the claims constantly and perennially used to validate both a unique presence in the world and the right to have that presence sustained in perpetuity, none is as emotive and as open to primordial sentiments as language. Much of Ngũgĩ's writings on the language question in Africa unapologetically show all the indications of this tradition. However, both in theoretical and practical terms, Ngũgĩ's analyses of and positions on language have been shaped by an uncompromising opposition to imperialism and its local, comprador political and cultural supporters at the same time that he has courageously struggled with and on the side of workers, farmers and both the rural and the urban poor. In other words, his opposition to the dominance of English may seem to be based on strong indigenist grounds but he has consistently linked his language positions to actual struggles on the ground in his native Kenya and other parts of the world. In this, he is avowedly a historical materialist whose ideas about the relationship of language to power, hierarchy and hegemony are closely shaped by his praxis as a writer, dramatist and translator. His general praxis and some of his positions sometimes stray far from nuanced, rigorously "materialist" perspectives, but he cannot be found in the company of promoters of indigenous African languages who scoff at Marxism and class politics as "Western" impurities. Above all else, Ngũgĩ's dedication to language as a tool of liberation of Africa and, especially, of the masses of Africans at the bottom heap of the prevailing world economic order is without equal among African writers, not only of his generation but of all the waves of modern African writing in both the indigenous languages and the languages of initial colonial imposition. Thus, Ngũgĩ's ideas and positions on language are inseparable from the towering moral and ideological authority of the struggles that he has waged unrelentingly in the last four decades.

For Ngũgĩ: this profile, this "celebration" would be incomplete without drawing attention to the comparative impact of the Kenyan author's writings in an indigenous African language—Gĩkũyũ—relative to the impact of his and other African authors' writings in English, French or Portuguese. I know no better way to express this than to make a comparison between Ngũgĩ and another canonical African author who, like Ngũgĩ, has also experienced imprisonment and exile on the basis of the impact of his works and pronouncements as an author. I have in mind here none other than Wole Soyinka of Nigeria. It is no diminishment of the worth of Soyinka's impact that no warrant has ever been issued for the arrest of any of the characters of his literary works. Nevertheless, this is not without some significance for it does set up a contrast with Ngũgĩ concerning whom the government of Daniel Arap Moi issued a warrant for the arrest of Matigari, the eponymous protagonist and hero of Ngũgĩ's Gĩkũyũ novel of the same title.

This would be a rather trite and gratuitous point were it not for the fact that it demonstrates that the impact of Ngũgĩ's works in his homeland, if not in the rest of Africa and the world, tremendously increased when he began to write in Gĩkũyũ. In other words, Matigari, both the novel and the character, had an impact in Kenya that none of Ngũgĩ's works in English and "their" characters had or could have had. Bearing this in mind, we can confidently assert that Ngũgĩ has not only proved that there was a potentially large audience base for writings in indigenous African languages but also that the impact of the writing could go far beyond anything that any African writer could produce in English or French. Indeed, there is an almost identical repetition of this differentiation "within" Ngũgĩ's own works, for while the celebrated revolutionary English-language play, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, that Ngũgĩ co-authored with Micere Mugo apparently greatly troubled the political authorities, it was when Ngũgĩ wrote and performed a Gĩkũyũ-language play, *Ngahika Ndenda* (I Will Marry when I Want) that the Kenyan State felt threatened enough to close down the Kamiirithu Educational and Cultural Center that had staged the play with a cast mostly made up of amateur actors comprising workers, farmers and the rural poor. Some of his critics like to lay emphasis on the fact that after his famous promise in 1984 in the book, *Decolonising the Mind*, that he was never again going to write in English, Ngũgĩ later broke this promise and resumed writing in English (while continuing to write in Gĩkũyũ). Such critics will do well to take to heart the deeper implications of these two examples of *Matigari* and *Ngahika Ndenda*: writing in an indigenous African language is far from being an act of self-consignment to a barren literary and cultural wasteland; as a matter of fact, it might lead to unimaginable forms and levels of a sustaining relationship between author and readers, and between the writer, the nation and the world. But is it the case that what Ngũgĩ has demonstrated in Gĩkũyũ with *Matigari* and *Ngahika Ndenda* can be repeated in all or even most of the indigenous languages of our continent? This question leads us directly to the next section of this commentary in which, "against Ngũgĩ," we examine the limits, perhaps the dangers even of what can be usefully described as the magisterial authority of Ngũgĩ's achievement in indigenous African language writing in one Kenyan language, Gĩkũyũ.

Against Ngũgĩ: From colonial and postcolonial shrubbing to neoliberal frenectomy

We come now to a number of problems in Ngũgĩ's ideas and positions on the language question that are so startling in their egregiousness that we are forced to conclude that paradoxically, these problems occur precisely because they seem excused or justified by the commanding authority of Ngũgĩ's exemplary writings and activities in the promotion and development of indigenous African languages. Perhaps, the most surprising of these problems, the one to which we can ascribe the root of Ngũgĩ's criterion or principle of absolute autochthony, is the complete absence of consideration of, or reflections on "writing," in and of itself,

in virtually all of his writings on the language question. If this phenomenon of extensive writings about languages *of* and *in* Africa that is completely silent on "writing" itself seems to be an aporia, I give confirmation that I do, in fact, consider it aporetic. Here, I wish to identify and then build on the two distinct but closely connected expressions of this aporia in Ngũgĩ's writings and politics on the language question. What are these?

First, there is Ngũgĩ's seeming total unawareness of, or indifference to, the enormously crucial fact that an African "writer"—or indeed any "writer" in any region or nation of the world—does not simply move from interest, skill and expertise in her or his language to writing in the given mother tongue but must necessarily go through the existing and flourishing infrastructure of writing in the mother tongue. If there is no such infrastructure in existence, the move is impossible. In the light of this observation, consider the italicized sentence in the third of the four epigraphs to this commentary from none other than Professor John Mugane, Head of the African Language Program at Harvard and one of Ngũgĩ's self-avowed ardent followers: "Most of the languages (i.e. of Africa) are primarily oral with little available in written forms." Expressed in a simple and uncomplicated form, this observation boils down to the following crucial question that Ngũgĩ has absolutely never posed in all his writings on language: what should a would-be African writer do who wishes to write in the indigenous mother tongue but whose language neither has a writing script nor print capitalism of even an embryonic form? On the expert evidence provided by Mugane, this, in fact, applies to the vast majority of the indigenous African languages. I assert again that Ngũgĩ has never given this massively important fact any consideration in his extensive writings on the language question. Among many consequences of this "blindness" is Ngũgĩ's unexamined, erroneous and simplifying assumption *first, of parity or equality between all indigenous African languages and secondly, a vast inequality between, on one side, all indigenous African languages taken together and, on the other side of the divide, all the languages of colonial imposition like English, French and Portuguese.* This is a gross and unhelpful simplification of the structure of power and dominance among the languages in use in Africa at the present time. It is a product of that willful empiricism with which, as we have seen earlier in this discussion, Ngũgĩ displaced Fanonist dialectics in his account of how colonized people (should) respond to colonization. We shall return to this issue at the end of this commentary. For now, let us turn to the second of the two expressions of the aporia inherent in Ngũgĩ's silence on "writing" in his writings on language.

Here, we move from the "external" dimensions of the writing script of a language, the medium of print and the production processes of either developed or undeveloped print capitalism to processes "internal" to writing as the medium through which a language, any language, emerges as literature in its written form. In his writings, Ngũgĩ pays scant attention to the external factors of writing that we have succinctly elaborated here. If that is the case, consider the fact that Ngũgĩ pays absolutely no attention at all to factors "internal" to language on its way to producing and being received as literature. The starkest and indeed somewhat very brutal expression of this particular aporia is that at one level Ngũgĩ is

dismissive of or indifferent to anything new, refreshing and innovative in developments within English as a medium of African literature while, at another level, he gives no specifications at all of the same phenomenon within writings in indigenous African languages. Indeed, I was totally flummoxed by the fact that a writer of Ngũgĩ's stature who happens also to be a professor of comparative literature could, in his Harvard lecture, write the following simply astonishing statement about internal processes of writing in the English language by African writers:

> The subtext is that African languages are inherently incapable of relating to each other, but ironically they can relate to English, especially when Anglophone writing dives into them for a proverb or two to spice their literary offering to Europhone modernity of monolingualism.

This is all that Professor Ngũgĩ can say about the connection with their mother tongue languages in writings in English of any of the following authors: Chinua Achebe (1958, 1964), Wole Soyinka (1967, 1971, 1975), Ama Ata Aidoo (1979, 1993), J. P. Clark, Christopher Okigbo, Okot p'Bitek, Kofi Awoonor or Niyi Osundare? *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*? *Kongi's Harvest*, *Madmen and Specialists*, and *Death and the King's Horseman*? *Anowa* and *Changes: A Love Story*? A proverb or two to spice their literary offerings to Europhone modernity? This is worse than mediocre literary criticism and banal cultural theorizing; it is a bizarre distortion of the mature vision of writers and writings that have profoundly engaged the crises and dilemmas of African and global modernity, colonial, neocolonial and neoliberal.

We must begin to move to the conclusion of this commentary on Ngũgĩ's latest paper on our language problem in Africa and indeed, the whole world. Nothing I have said or can say here can blunt the edge of the deep psychological and cultural roots of Ngũgĩ's stand against English and the other European languages of initial colonial imposition. One thinks here of the force of James Joyce's (1964) feelings of loss and deprivation, writing in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* more than four hundred years after the English colonization of Ireland:

> The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *ale*, *Christ*, *master* on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of the spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.[3]

Widely adjudged by scholars and critics as one of the most gifted and innovative writers that have ever written in the English language, to the end Joyce nonetheless remained vigilant to the ambiguous uses of the language that had been bequeathed to him and his people by colonization. And he turned this vigilance into stunning acts of creative "de-formation" of English as a literary language, reaching almost unmatched peaks in *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses*. In Africa, in the

Caribbean, in South Asia and New Zealand (especially among Maori writers), this Joycean paradigm has been repeated and finessed many, many times over.

This is far from the path taken by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o who writes in English now apparently because he feels that he must, and then only as a supplement to his primary concern with his writings *in* and concern *for* the real or "true" African languages. He is absolutely without equal among all Anglophone writers of the past and the present in his total indifference to the present circumstances and future prospects of the bequeathed colonial language(s) in his homeland and his continent. All he cares about, all he is unwaveringly dedicated to is the development and promotion of African languages, where "African" implies autochthony of belonging. Not for him the words of the fourth epigraph to this discussion, Achebe's simple but luminous saying: "where one thing stands, another thing will stand beside it." In the context of this discussion, this means: where the indigenous languages stand, the non-indigenous languages stand beside them. In other words, it seems that Ngũgĩ cannot commit to, cannot even envisage promoting and developing, "all" languages effectively in use in Africa, whether they are indigenous or became African through the history and historicity of their evolution as non-indigenous African languages. This leads us to three particular blindnesses traceable to Ngũgĩ's abandonment of dialectics and rigorous historical materialism for empiricism. I will end this piece with them because of their significance.

First, contrary to Ngũgĩ's perennial affirmations of the far greater resources devoted to the development of foreign or European languages in relation to indigenous languages, as a matter of fact and at a deeper level of long-term consequences, all languages without exception are very badly or poorly taught in African schools and universities today. The failure rates may be higher in English, French and Portuguese, but they are not much better in the indigenous languages. This is due in part to factors identified and repeatedly decried by Ngũgĩ, such as the wrong-headed policies of the African states themselves. But Ngũgĩ completely leaves out the considerable impact of neoliberal impositions by the World Bank and the IMF of massive disinvestments in education and other areas of public expenditure, all in the name of privatization and deregulation, the capstones of neoliberal economic and social hegemony both at home in the heartland of global capitalism and in the world at large in the peripheries in the global South. I repeat: "all" languages are badly or poorly taught, with dire consequences now and in the future ahead of us.

Secondly, Ngũgĩ misrepresents and greatly oversimplifies the structure of power, hierarchy and advantage between languages in use in Africa. While the old colonial divide between the languages of colonial imposition and the indigenous African languages has not disappeared, it has been massively complicated by postcolonial and neoliberal mutations that we ignore only at our peril. For instance, over all the other languages of colonization, English now exercises a hegemony across all states in Africa and the world that it did not have before it effectively became the language of neoliberalism worldwide. As a consequence of this, in Africa some countries that were historically Francophone or Lusophone

have either formally become Anglophone or have effectively become Anglophone without the formal declaration, as in, respectively, the case of Mozambique that has actually joined the Commonwealth and that of Rwanda that has not made the formal declaration but is to all intents and purposes practically now "Anglophone."

And among African states, "writing," that very cultural edifice that Ngũgĩ has ignored and completely left out of his consideration in all his writings, has come back with a vengeance to haunt his uncompromising stand that all languages are equal and "no language is more of a language than another language." For the truth is that indigenous African languages that have well-established alphabets and writing scripts, together with consolidated infrastructures of print capitalism to back them, are inestimably privileged over languages that do not have these material and infrastructural consolidations in place. Thus, Ngũgĩ's idealistic declaration that all languages are equal is exactly as contingent on the recognition that you have to fight against objective impediments to its realization as the recognition that the noble and humanistic sentiment that all men and women are born equal can be made real only if we recognize and dismantle the objective conditions of inequalities of wealth, education and opportunity between people. But how could Ngũgĩ arrive at this revolutionary critique of idealism and abstract humanism if he pays no attention whatsoever to the inequalities between and among indigenous African languages themselves, quite apart from the world dominance of English in the neoliberal phase of global capitalism? This question logically leads to our final item in the list of the blindnesses in Ngũgĩ's refusal to see, pace Achebe, that where one thing stands, another thing will stand beside it: "lingual frenectomy" as the specter, the worst nightmare of neoliberal English (dubbed "Globish" by some critics) beside which Ngũgĩ's notion of "shrubbing" is very tame indeed. What exactly is this?

The story of lingual frenectomy can be very succinctly told since it has been widely discussed on the Internet with a book like *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes* (2010) providing a sort of scholarly context for the popular discussions on the phenomenon. Thus, it is the portents and ramifications throughout the world that present us with a formidable challenge. Roughly around the last quarter of the last century, extending to the beginning of the new millennium, the rage for English as the preferred, hegemonic language of global capitalism took a particularly bizarre turn when many parents in China and South Korea began to have surgical frenectomy performed on their children in order to make it easier to speak English correctly or even perfectly. Frenectomy is the severing or slicing of the frenulum, the thick tissue below the tongue, the aim being to lengthen the tongue thereby making it easier for that organ of speech to, among other things, easily pronounce words with "r" in it. This, of course, had absolutely no physiological or scientific basis as children of first-language English speakers have their frenulum in place providing no hindrance to pronunciation of any words. This frenectomic frenzy took extreme forms and proportions in South Korea where educators, psychologists and socio-linguists found it impossible to persuade parents of the futility, the dangers of lingual frenectomy. The National

Human Rights Commission of South Korea even made documentary films to popularize the case against frenectomy. In the end, the rage for this surgical and symbolic self-mutilation in South Korea faded away or petered out. The demand for English in the country has not abated, but the Korean language, in its spoken and written forms, still endures: where one thing stands, another thing will stand beside it.

South Korea was never colonized by the English and yet linguistic alienation based on the assumed and actual hegemony of English took a more severe form in that country than the trauma of "shrubbing" in postcolonial Kenya. In his paper, Ngũgĩ seems bemused or perplexed that colonial Kenya, in which he had learned to read and write Gĩkũyũ, seems paradoxically more "progressive" than the postcolonial Kenya in which his son was savagely humiliated by "shrubbing." But this is a misperception caused by an extreme empiricism that cannot perceive that there are continuities and discontinuities between the colonial, postcolonial and neoliberal phases of capitalism, both within the nations and regions of the world and across the entire planet. And there is also this complexity to think about here: Korea has one of the longest continuously spoken and "written" languages in the world. There is even a probability that printing and the moveable type may have been in existence in Korea before it emerged in the West. Against these historical complexities, lingual frenectomy could only make a bit of a dent in the opposition of the Koreans to the linguistic hegemony of English in the epoch of neoliberalism. With this thought in mind, I say to Ngũgĩ: complexity and ambiguity also pervade the speaking and, especially "writing" of all the languages in use on our continent and we must deal with them. This is because if we do not deal with complexity and ambiguity, they will deal with us.

Notes

1 *Note from the editors*: We would like to thank Taylor & Francis Ltd. www.tandfonline.com on behalf of the *Journal of African Cultural Studies* for their permission to reprint this article by Biodun Jeyifo, "English is an African language – Ka Dupe! [for and against Ngũgĩ]," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 30, no. 2 (2018): 133–47.
2 Chinua Achebe, "Politics and Politicians of Language in African Literature," in *The Education of a British-Protected Child: Essays* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 97.
3 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1964), 189.

Bibliography

Achebe, Chinua. *Arrow of God*. London: Heinemann, 1964.
———. "Politics and Politicians of Language in African Literature." In *The Education of a British-Protected Child*: *Essays*, 96–106. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.
———. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1958.
Aidoo, Ama Ata. *Anowa*. In *The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa*, 50–128. Lagos: Longman West African Writers, 1979.
———. *Changes: A Love Story*. New York, NY: Feminist Press, 1993.

Bown, Lalage. *Two Centuries of African English: A Study and Anthology of Non-Fictional Prose by African Writers since 1769*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973.
Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution*. New York, NY: Grove Press, 1967.
———. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York, NY: Grove Press, 1961.
Henshaw, James Ene. *Children of the Goddess and Other Plays*. London: London University Press, 1964.
———. *This Is Our Chance*. London: London University Press, 1956.
Iweala, Uzodinma. *Beasts of No Nation*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2005.
Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York, NY: Huebsch, 1916.
Kirkpatrick, Andy, ed. *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey, 1986.
Okpewho, Isidore. *The Epic in Africa: Towards a Poetics of the Oral Performance*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1979.
———. *Myth in Africa: A Study of Its Aesthetic and Cultural Relevance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
———. *Once upon a Kingdom: Myth, Hegemony and Identity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
Saro-Wiwa, Ken. *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*. Port Harcourt: Saros Publications, 1985.
Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Black Orpheus." *The Massachusetts Review* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1964–Winter 1965): 13–52.
Sekyi, Kobina. *The Blinkards*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1974. (African Writers Series No. 136).
Soyinka, Wole. *Death and the King's Horseman*. London: Methuen, 1975.
———. *Kongi's Harvest*. London and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967.
———. *Madmen and Specialists*. London: Methuen, 1971.

3 Doing things with words

Indonesian paralanguage and performance

Hypatia Vourloumis

This chapter contends with and connects disparate performances of language by and through the performance of writing. The enactments analyzed are paralinguistic performances occupying postcolonial, national, autobiographical and psycho-cultural realms.[1] These theatrical speech acts are unleashed across differing sites including streets, courthouses, hospitals and kitchens. Bringing these gestured and enunciated multiplicities together in a short essay is most likely considered the thing not to do with words. Yet I do so because I have found that thinking about what it is to be-in-language necessarily entails a (re)performing of diverse events of communicability. Moreover, this chapter argues that paying attention to paralanguage as the compositional makeup of communicability reveals the ways in which expression consists of combinations of both materialized sense and nonsense. Hence, I have chosen to head the sections below "TSA" for "theatrical speech act" and/or "theatrical sound act." The sign "TSA" can alternatively be read as an acronym or the sound "tsa."[2]

Focusing on how minority theatrical speech and sound acts challenge official narratives of national and cultural production, I examine how a language meant to unify an Indonesian archipelagic multitude within a single state identity comes to be both the material for the transmission and concretization of postcolonial authority, and a means for those resistant to that authority. Defining acts of paralanguage as vital and inescapable parts of composition through precisely non-signifying elements of language such as sound, tone, rhythm, noise, incoherent signs and gestures, I point to the ways in which paralinguistic performances embody and emit dissonant interjections to coded value and meaning, and in so doing reveal "the ever-varying manyness of all that comes as one."[3] The varying performances of paralinguistic communicability visited here and understood as an infinite series of "singular plural" theatrical speech/sound acts mirror each other through constant refractions that tumble into worlds of histories and potentialities.[4]

TSA 1: The street

Let us enter a scene: singled out in a moving crowd, a man stands still. It is May 1998, a few days preceding President Suharto's resignation from office and Indonesians from all over the archipelago are witness to a political sea change. Television

cameras swoop over the streets of Jakarta, depicting protestors scrambling toward the parliament building occupied by hundreds of students and local demonstrators. A camera's roving eye, hovering high above, zooms in, beckoned by the immobile lone figure. I inch closer to watch this enigmatic presence framed by the television screen, a figure weighed down by heavy chains and covered in a blood-like fluid standing as if oblivious to the throngs of moving bodies and the watchful camera. The young man slowly begins to move, flexing his arms in postures reminiscent of traditional Javanese dance. Suddenly, he convulses and dislocates the movements from the prescribed vocabulary of custom by way of contorting and dismantling the gestures that uphold them. Dissolving his facial passivity, he contorts his features to release a muffled scream, gaping mouth stuffed with cloth.

This performance simultaneously archives and deconstructs a history of a nation and its language. It takes place in a space and time where a young postcolonial nation is in the throes of dismantling a repressive regime and its instruments of control. Yet this dance can at the same time be understood as a political gesture that is, in Giorgio Agamben's words, "completely independent of any ambulatory end."[5] Agamben insightfully defines the political gesture as a means with no end while still revealing itself as a means:

> The gesture is, in this sense, communication of a communicability. It has precisely nothing to say because what it shows is the being-in-language of human beings as pure mediality. However, because being-in-language is not something that could be said in sentences, the gesture is essentially always a gesture of not being able to figure something out in language; it is always a *gag* in the proper meaning of the term, indicating first of all something that could be put in your mouth to hinder speech, as well as in the sense of the actor's improvisation meant to compensate a loss of memory or an inability to speak.[6]

I am interested in this notion of "the communication of communicability" as a political gesture that is a means without an end, which can lead to an understanding of the being-in-language of the gagged dancer, discerned on the streets of Jakarta as "pure mediality." I am interested in the performance of communicability that defies signification yet paradoxically occupies a political realm which, in turn, searches for a communicability that can produce binding effects.

These theoretical leanings are in part a response to the fact that the history of the Indonesian nation is a history of language, or rather, as we shall see, the history of the Indonesian nation is the history of the *idea* of language understood as a potentiality for archipelagic communicability. The Indonesian national language itself begins as an event, as a theory that points to a necessary forthcoming communicability as the condition for the nation it invokes. Founded on a Malay-based archipelagic *lingua franca*, the advent and relatively recent institutional proliferation of this language (a mere eight decades) enable a fragile national unity made up of islands of linguistic, ethnic and cultural heterogeneity and plurality. The function of this language as a deliberate tool for unifying communication (a means with a very clear-cut end) necessarily produces differences in communicability that stem out of this explicit linguistic endeavor. Language becomes an

intentional national and political project as well as a language learned and used by those in the process of articulating how to politically resist the centralizing forces it represents.

TSA 2: The anticolonial gathering

When Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) was hailed by the National Youth Congress in 1928 as a resistant response to the Dutch colonial administration that governed the region, the participants of this organization pledged their *Sumpah Pemuda* (Oath of Youth):

- We sons and daughters of Indonesia declare that we have one birthplace, the land of Indonesia.
- We sons and daughters of Indonesia declare that we are one nation, the Indonesian nation.
- We sons and daughters of Indonesia uphold (revere) the language of unity, the Indonesian language.[7]

The birth of this nation was proclaimed via the language its representatives very deliberately chose. The enormity of this event cannot be overemphasized because most Indonesian citizens outside of urban areas, when celebrating their newfound independence in 1949, were unfamiliar with the language that sounded these words for the first time. Indonesian, in its essence, enters a nascent national scene as a new political structure and echoes Agamben's philosophical project that "considers not merely what is revealed through language, but also the revelation of language itself."[8] The Sumpah Pemuda is a performative *par excellence*, for what is the performative if not the revelation of language itself? What does it do through its utterance? It conjures an "Indonesian" space into existence that opposes the Dutch East Indies colonial enterprise. This oath creates "Indonesians" and states that this can only be accomplished through a unitary language.[9] This pivotal moment where language is expressed consciously and explicitly *as* language is made ironically evident by the fact that many of the members of the Sumpah Pemuda movement were not as yet fluent in the "Indonesian" language they were rallying for. Revealing the self-conscious communication of communicability itself, Indonesian is a system of signification that signifies the concept of a nation and in so doing reflexively signifies itself as signifier.

This signifying that signifies a future made possible through it relates to Agamben's notion of communicability as gestural capacity and potentiality. The Indonesian national language can be traced as an ideology that seeks to define a potential national identity as well as how human "being-in-language" necessarily always exceeds such ends. This is a language through which its producers and reproducers explicitly state that its very existence as emancipatory anticolonial project will come to politically perform national sovereignty in the postcolonial future. By way of attaining "modernity via a new language," an Indonesian subjectivity is generated through a relationship with an object fixed through discourse.[10] Language was synthesized in order to contain Indonesian citizens that are islanders in need

of a common vocabulary into a unified national category, a desire to alleviate and come to terms with the ever-present fragment. As anthropologist James Siegel points out, Indonesian is based on a *lingua franca* that could enable communicability only by way of "ceaseless alternation," that the condition for a *lingua franca* to communicate is by way of a turbulent mutual learning to speak at the same time.[11] The Indonesian national language is the postcolonial standardization of a jargon that seeps out of unsettled contexts and conventions and that belongs to no one and everyone at the same time. The state, in its attempts to control this ceaseless agentive alternation, promotes Indonesian as an ideology, not just the material in which to convey ideology, but ideology made material in itself. Due to an emphasis on "correct" linguistic performance, those who perform language improperly are seen as a threat to the normativities of nationhood. Thus, signifying mis-performances and mistakes and those who enact them are labeled deviant and worthless. This discord raises important questions surrounding the politics of language and the inextricable relationship between performances of national language and paralanguage. What becomes apparent is that the state meets these differences in iterability by instituting a certain formula. As socio-linguist Robert Englebretson writes in his study of colloquial Indonesian:

> In general, language attitudes among educated Indonesians tend to be prescriptive, characterized by a strong sense of "correct" and "incorrect." This is due in large part to the normative policies of Pusat Pembinaan Dan Pengembangan Bahasa (Center for Language Development), the language planning body of the Indonesian government. The overt mission of this organization is the promotion and standardization of Indonesian, and the development of grammar as a means towards "clear" and "effective" communication. Results of these policies have, unfortunately, not always been positive from a linguistic standpoint. [. . .] [A]s sociolinguistic literature abundantly demonstrates, prescriptive traditions tend to lead to moral judgments about the (lack of) value of "nonstandard" language varieties and their speakers.[12]

In light of these policies, it is vital to think about how differing performances of language relate to Indonesia's totalizing state doctrine of "Unity in Diversity" in order to see and hear those who lack "value" as they perform language in their own way. Language proliferates and tense resonances intervene within the process of its institutionalization and development. Unsettled contexts lacking convention produce a plurality of linguistic production; learning by reciprocal imitation reveals a staggering heterogeneity and polyphony. Minority practices of communicability historically challenge official narratives of cultural production through artistic and quotidian paralinguistic acts that articulate multiplicities of national difference and belonging.

TSA 3: The trial

In September 2003, at the "Bali Bombers" trial held in Denpasar on the island of Bali, the main defendant recited an Islamic poem in his defense. In response,

on the final day of deliberations, the judge pronounced his death sentence by incanting the following stanza:

> this time I come to Legian
> to rinse away exhaustion
> and cultivate roots of love
> writhing body played by waves
> our writhing frees our selves
> from each of our origins
> and in the dust of Legian beach
> we stand in between the sun and moon
> in a wholeness that is undivided.[13]

It was in Legian where a series of massive detonations ripped through two packed nightclubs on 12 October 2002 and the presiding judge chose to pass sentence by uttering, as a supplement to official juridical discourse, the poem "Legian" written by the Balinese poet Putu Oka Sukanta in 1983.[14] This particular event reveals how the dissemination of the institutional Indonesian national language is complicated by its manifold and non-masterable materializations. In *How to Do Things with Words*, J. L. Austin introduces the concept of the performative statement as a speech act in which the speaker does something by uttering it. Austin says that "[t]he name is derived, of course, from 'perform,' the usual verb with the noun 'action': it indicates that the issuing utterance is the performing of an action—it is not normally thought of as just saying something."[15] However, Austin famously goes on to state that the performative fails if not uttered following a conventional procedure in the proper context.[16]

For Austin, poetic and theatrical language pales in comparison to speech acts uttered in the proper context and fails to succeed performatively because it parasitically cites language used in ordinary circumstances. This possibility of failure fuels Jacques Derrida's critique of Austin in "Signature Event Context." Derrida's theory of communication's iterability as necessary and incessant repetition (that is difference) demonstrates that the performative cannot function if it does not repeat itself.[17] What is enabled through Derrida's critique is the understanding that all communication depends on repetition without boundaries, whether spoken or written, and thus contexts are destabilized. Communication, instead, becomes a series of perpetual citations, quotations and re-insertions that are repeated in difference.

The Indonesian national language, as an imposed unitary language that intends to re/produce national identification, exemplifies this necessary citationality of ordinary language and, as enacted in the judiciary setting, produces a performative that cites unconventionally. In what can arguably be seen as one of the most critical moments in the recent history of Indonesian juridical practice (considering the international attention focused on this particular trial due to the post-9/11 war on terrorism), the use of poetics to make a case, to take away life, the myriad ways in which language can issue forth in any context, come to question the norms and conventions of institutional discourse and reveal

poetry's illocutionary force. The performative cannot be separated from the performance of language itself. And this fissuring is made evident even within the space that epitomizes national law and order where a representative of the Indonesian state chooses to recite poetry. Julia Kristeva's notion in *Desire in Language* that poetic language shows how the "speaking subject" is split between individual and collective being is made evident in the scene of a courthouse that becomes a theater where "language escapes linearity (law) to live as drama in three dimensions."[18] This moment of juridical discourse performs a "potential infinity" of language where "prohibition (representations, 'monologism') and their transgression (dream, body, 'dialogism') coexist."[19] Kristeva's semiotic approach is inflected by an understanding of poetic language as not merely a departure from a linguistic norm, but rather as the performance of language's alterity made evident in its actual materiality.[20] The poetic coexistence of both representation and transgression as seen in the "Bali Bombers" trial, where the representative of the law performs a breaching of legal discourse itself, produces a performative that breaks away from Austin and reveals how iterability and citation can find remarkably curious sources when assimilating the preceding words of others. As Barbara Johnson writes, "[t]he performative utterance thus automatically fictionalizes its utterer when it makes him the mouthpiece of a conventionalized authority." She continues, stating that "it is, of course not our intention to nullify all differences between a poem and, say, a verdict, but only to problematize the assumptions on which such distinctions are based. If people are put to death by a verdict and not by a poem, it is not because the law is not a fiction." For Johnson, passing judgment with a poem is where the words Austin excludes take "revenge" in a performance of "Poetic justice."[21]

The Indonesian national language itself, as a performative that *does* the nation, exposes how all conventions and contexts produced by this (and any) language are enactments. The conscious search for language, for a structural system, for a potential for communicability, has resulted in a unitary national language for a vast archipelago. Yet the Indonesian nation-state, allocating a particular language and attempting to determine the ways in which this communicability comes to be performed as a means to "Unity in Diversity," necessarily falters because communication's condition of possibility is performance. Since communicability relies on exchange, interchange, repetition with difference, call and response, singularity and plurality, the institutionalized language of the Indonesian nation-state, in its attempts to control this ceaseless agentive alternation, must come to terms with the ever-present fragment, an ever-present (mis)performing alterity and unintelligibility.

TSA 4: The poetry reading

These tensions, over-determinations and intensities are revealed through the very specific contexts from which the national language of Indonesia emerges. For while ideological discursive practices seek to tap sensorial and experiential multiplicities into order, demarcating and disciplining through the use of language, at the same time, that very language eternally laughs in the face of such naming.

Wound [Luka]
ha ha

(1976)[22]

The inextricable embracement of language, recording and sound that gestures toward questions of value and meaning leads me to look at Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, an Indonesian poet notorious for his screams during his poetry readings and his attempts to write paralanguage down. The poems presented here were created in the 1970s, a time in Indonesia when the US-backed New Order regime of General-turned-President Suharto's grip over the nation was becoming more apparent and steadfast. The disillusionment of the literary world with the state of affairs becomes particularly evident as a consequence of the 1965–67 purging of the Indonesian Communist Party and suspected leftists that left over an estimated million murdered and a nation traumatically reeling. Sutardji's laughing wound spills out of a world that floundered in the wake of this systematic persecution and the censoring of all practices that critiqued governmental policies. The Indonesian public fell silent. As a consequence, many artists reverted to the cryptic and the absurd, even trying to escape meaning altogether in order to discover the fissures that allowed for the release of their breath. Sutardji exhales:

Q

```
                !!
                ! ! !
                    !  !!  !! !
                          !
                ! a
                   lif !  !
                 l
                 l     a
                l       a       m

!                                          !
                              mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm
mmmmmmmmmmmm
                              mmmm
                        iiiiiiiiiiiiiii
                 mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm
mmmmmmm
```
[23]

"Q" can be read as an exasperated cry aimed at the political and social situation at hand. Yet its indecipherability in both sound and sign acts as a mystery that resists rational attachments and elucidations. The poem "Q" enacts minor literature's sequential vibrations as it intends "to open the word onto unexpected internal intensities—in short, an asignifying *intensive utilization* of language."[24] This outcry can be seen as an obvious jab at the censorial forces at work but also deals with a certain mysticism that has always existed vibrantly in the world of

Javanese Islam. For "Q" is also intended to act as a mantra, as its main concern is grappling with the mysterious letters *alif*, *lam* and *mim* that head several chapters of the Koran (*Qur'an*) and have no assigned meaning attached to them.[25] The poem is about the materiality of the sign and serves as a textual exercise propelled from the sounds of prayer, magical spells and spellings. Here, it is meaning that is arbitrary for there are no words in Indonesian beginning with the letter q. The signs that Sutardji has transported onto the page emphasize the materiality of the word, the materiality of the hieroglyph as opposed to its function in meaning.

Reflecting Brian Massumi's notion that affect is an "expression-event" and is the "system of the inexplicable: emergence, into and against regeneration (the reproduction of structure),"[26] Sutardji's manifestation of language distances itself from formal concepts, the reproduction of ideology and sense-making. In his manifesto titled "Poetic Creed," Sutardji claims: "Words are not tools which convey meaning. They are not like a pipe which carries water. They are free."[27] Sutardji goes on to write that the word can jump, strip, unite with other words or even kill itself in order to resist the imposition of meaning. The body of the word that is free to do as it desires acts as a metaphor for the body of the Indonesian national. The fact that this desire for flight, a falling away from structure, is expressed by way of a "creed" subverts state doctrines at the same time as it echoes them, exemplifying the way minor literature resists major language from within. Affect, then, becomes an emergence of possibility, an expression-event, a moving appearance that is "about a process before signification and coding."[28] When Sutardji writes that his desire is to set words free, his minor literature brings to the fore the varying "machines" that condition human existence by creating a new way, without precedence, of using language. For as Gregory Bateson notes, "All that is not information, not redundancy, not form and not restraints—is noise, the only possible source of new patterns."[29] In his valorizing noise as poetry, in his effort to write sound and exclamation down so as to encourage language's matter to escape meaning, Sutardji's poetry refuses signification and releases communicability's potential to not signify. Sutardji's poetic practices and his manifesto bring up vital questions regarding the relationship between theatricality, iterability and the uncitability of paralanguage.

> I want flesh in the field and the bird to fly and fruit to grow tiktaktiktaktiktaktiktaktiktak the sexologists smile the boat sails do you want to use your marriage machine stainless steel shockproof water resistant guaranteed fresh would you like to shake yourself free of pain? Tiktaktiktak tiktaktiktaktiktak prick prick prick pri zzzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzzzz prick[30]

The above excerpt from the poem "Marriage Machine" attempts to resist the conventions and contexts that fossilize language. This poem speaks to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's notion of the machine being a "clustered proximity between independent terms."[31] It also elucidates how the social machine is the condition for the infinite gestures of its elements and how minor literature's actuality brings our attention to the successive machines that produce it.[32] Sutardji's

desire is to emphasize the materiality of the word and to veer away from the ideological pressures put on the Indonesian national language. With his poetry, Sutardji creates a minor literature where "[t]he sound or the word that traverses this new deterritorialization no longer belongs to a language of sense, even though it derives from it [. . .]."[33]

Sutardji creates in the major Indonesian language a minor literature as a "field of continuous intensities" through an effusion of signs. It is within this tension that Indonesian's artistic development and transfigurations can speak to Deleuze and Guattari's contestation that minor literature "must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sproutings. When a form is broken, one must reconstruct the content that will necessarily be part of the rupture in the order of things. To take over, to anticipate the material."[34] Sutardji's poetry readings were unpredictable events remembered for his screams and howls, his gurgling of countless bottles of beer, his burps and passing wind that became part of his renditions. He would dance at the podium, hurl himself onto the ground and once even strung up an axe that swung precariously above his head. He gestured and gesticulated as he read—his moves mirroring the lone dancing body that opened this chapter.

TSA 5: The hospital and the essay

My interest in paralanguage as (mis)performing alterity derives from my own experience of losing coherent speech due to illness. Any attempt to write about my experience with aphasia is ultimately a paradox, as I now have to use those very words that once eluded me. I am making statements that coexist in a realm of importance and arbitrariness. Important because in this context this is the only vocabulary I can use to make myself understood; and arbitrary because this vocabulary is only a means for communication and not communicability itself. This dance with aphasia made me frustratingly conscious of an utter dependence on communication through speech. I had lost the ability to prove that I was a thinking being. However, I was acutely aware that the disintegration of "correct" verbal expression did not eradicate my ability to think. Was the problem my mind's inability to express my thoughts "normally" or was it the inadequacy of language itself? Did it matter if I called a pen a spoon if I recognized it as a writing implement in my mind?

"Unity in Diversity"—could the social unit accept my aphasic alterity? Aphasia made me realize that one has to perform communicability in a certain way to prove that one has language; that one must tap into a particular system in order to communicate with others. But aphasia also made me keenly aware that this is not the *only* way to perform communicability. The "loss" of the sign, the dislocation from a certain linguistic field that could faintly be discerned but not reached on the horizon of my consciousness was brought clearly to my attention as it moved away from me. I could not partake in that unity that Saussure names *la langue*. And *la parole*, the actual event of language now marked by the different ways my communicability was fissuring—this diversity—was clearly not going to be assimilated into the unit I was once fluent in but no longer privy to.

Akin to Wittgenstein's metaphor of the fly in the glass, whereby the fly is the human being trapped in language that it cannot see but *through which* it sees the world, I suddenly saw the glass I was in.[35] Aphasia made me painfully conscious that it was absolutely essential that I recover "normal" speech while *at the same time* my being in language was expressed through gestures and sounds beyond sense and meaning. I had a grammar, but it was a heterogeneous one: a grammar of the multitude.

In *A Grammar of the Multitude*, Paolo Virno differentiates between the idea of the people and the notion of the multitude. Virno writes: "Multitude signifies plurality—literally: being many—as a lasting form of social and political existence, as opposed to the cohesive unity of the people. Thus, multitude consists of a network of *individuals*; the many are a *singularity*."[36] The ordered chaos and fixed heterogeneity implicit in this notion of the multitude is, I feel, indispensable to both an analysis on the performance of the Indonesian national language and aphasia. Virno writes that what is enabled from this notion of a heterogeneous grammar is that "to experience rules directly means also to recognize their conventionality and groundlessness."[37] It is to recognize one's capacity to speak "as a performing artist," making use of the potentiality of language without an end product.[38] Thus, everything becomes performative because "the fundamental nature of performance [is]: not 'I bet,' or 'I swear,' or 'I take this woman as my wife,' but above all, 'I speak.'"[39] The fact that "I speak" was made clear to me through the paradoxical loss of language—that what was communicated to me and what I aphasically communicated to the concerned doctor was communicability itself: "I speak"; "we speak."

What becomes clear here is the relationship between the performance of a national language and paralanguage—in other words, the relationship between my brush with aphasia and the politics of Indonesian communicability. For both have to do with what gets deemed as correct expression. Both have to do with questions of value, with communication to a certain end and the performance of communicability as a means without end. Furthermore, this linguistic limbo brings to light the divide between the Indonesian spoken at home and the streets and the official Indonesian heard in institutional settings and on formal occasions. They are two separate languages and those who communicate in colloquial Indonesian often have difficulty deciphering its official, "correct" version. How Indonesian are we then? How is it that we can do Indonesian one way but not another?

Importantly, my experience with aphasia made clear that there is no simple opposition between the institutional expressions of the Indonesian state and the dissonant negotiations with its paragons. The state, in attempting to fix a national language based on an archipelagic *lingua franca* already spoken in idiosyncratic, divergent and non-standardized ways across the region, must organize a field of linguistic anarchy that precedes it. And in order for me to be able to sit here at all, I must have regained the system of communication I had lost with aphasia; that in order for me to write about the potential glimmers of agency within incoherency and agrammaticality in the context of the Indonesian

national language I must speak coherently in this context and use a code that we share. And this reflects how the Indonesian nation cannot exist without a shared language that, though imposed, conduces commonality within a vast space of multitudinous ethnic, cultural and linguistic difference.

Communication can therefore be seen as essential performance. By essential, I mean necessary because, in order for a standard to connect an archipelagic multitude, it must follow fundamental rules. But by essential, I also mean immanent in the sense that no matter how collective an act is, it inexorably stems from an intrinsic singularity. In short, no matter how hard national discourse tries to stifle expressions felt to be excessive and a threat to a unified national category, paralanguage can never be separated from the actuality of doing language. At the same time, discrepantly doing Indonesian "in a certain kind of way," to borrow Antonio Benitez-Rojo's notion of performance, is the expression of a multitude committed to a common language that registers belonging across and within variance and divergence.[40]

And so, this paradox necessarily flies to and settles on another: that my writing of paralanguage is made possible through the use of standard English. In order to write about sounds and signs that exceed meaning, my writing itself must make sense, must mean through its signification. The instrument of coherent language makes possible my critique of coherency and enables me to write that: as I type these words and watch them emerge on this blank screen, I have become (whilst always still now becoming) aware of the simultaneously conjunctive and disjunctive nature of my specific actions on this word processor in relation to what these processed words seek to communicate. They hover in front of me mockingly now, inexorably surpassing my thoughts and actions. I am concerned with unraveling the sign's complex existence as a manifestation that always stems from the body and comes to exist outside of it, and how it comes to exceed, both in its gesturing and sounding, being-in-language as a means to an end. An Indonesian flute wails human voice. I hear the similarity, the almost indistinguishable in and in-between woody breath and tremulous throat because I hear the difference. I must differentiate so as to be able to hear the space that straddles in and between limits and connections. As Virno writes,

> The crucial point is to consider these singularities as a point of arrival, not as a starting point; as the ultimate result of a *process of individuation*, not as solipsistic atoms. Precisely because they are the complex result of a progressive differentiation, the "many" do not postulate an ulterior synthesis.[41]

To hear the nation, I must hear all its internal singularities. This quest for a "whole" depends entirely on an emphasis on difference.

By looking at collective performances that thread back to the singular act "as a point of arrival," I argue that within the respective expressions studied is a negotiation of structure, a derisive manipulation of uniformity through the contortions and sonorities that are the conditional extensions of these stances. The philosophical premise of this analysis has been one that understands

systematic structure as an anarchic foundational ground. "Ground" here is not only the surface that we motion across and build upon but also as a metaphor for all those systems that we inhabit and that in return inhabit us. To be more succinct, in this context, I must paradoxically write of moments where I believe that "structure" sways toward a dismantling and reconfiguration of itself with the very same (precise and systemic) language that one aims through this typing to shake (from the ground) up.

TSA 6: The kitchen

Ibu Bibi is in the kitchen. I enter the room without her realizing and say hello. Ibu Bibi is surprised and caught off-guard. She suddenly swerves around to face me and begins to imitate my hello over and over again in a high-pitched voice: "Hello, hello, hello, hello!" jerking her body back and forth. Ibu Bibi has what is known to us all in this Jakarta household as a peculiar relationship with language: a culturally specific nervous condition known as the "startle syndrome" *latah*.[42] This is an echophenomenon where a person, when addressed in a moment of surprise or duress, uncontrollably imitates and exaggerates (sonically and gesturally) the language of those around them. An interesting theoretical bridging of the politics of postcolonial communicability under dictatorship, censorship and revolution, with the incoherencies of an aphasic realm, latah is a (mis)performance of iterability that is produced in response to the very "moment" one is made subject to language. This speaks to Agamben's claim that "[p]olitics is the sphere of pure means, that is, of the absolute and complete gesturality of human beings."[43] Latah is the paralinguistic compulsion to take on and make singular the sounds and signs of others.

Latah's spasmodic jerks of the body and incoherencies of repeated signs mirror both the revolutionary dancer that begins this chapter and Sutardji's poetic exclamations. I would argue that latah marks the moment one is made subject to language and thus the other, a moment we experience so frequently, it is rendered invisible. Yet latah makes this moment apparent by repeatedly re-enacting and recording it, where "the gesture is the exhibition of a mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such."[44] Latah is both the embracement and the rejection of language's binding effects. It shows what it is to be-in-language as a means without end. It also renders visible the pressure of citation (in relation to social constructs surrounding gender, sexuality, race, class, hierarchy, etc.) and the paralanguage inherent to each repetition. It reveals how citation and theatricality are bound up together.

The dancer, poet, aphasic and the latah show us that being-in-language is not merely about language as an instrument of communication. As Johnson writes, the Austinian performative utterance is only operative if the action is performed by the person uttering it, i.e. "I bet" rather than "he bets."[45] For Johnson, this notion of the performative utterance as a self-referential speech act "is tantamount to a radical transformation of the notion of the referent, since, instead of pointing to an external object, language would then refer only to its own referring to

itself in the act of referring, and the signifying chain would end in an infinitely self-duplicating loop. [. . .] The performative utterance is thus the *mise en abyme* of reference itself."[46] I would argue that, in the case of latah, the field of communicability from which the performative rears its head undoes the doing of the performative because the mise en abyme here is communicability itself as *mise-en-scène*, as surround as well as singularity where the performance of language manifests as both duplicating and annihilating loop.

For, as Johnson emphasizes, even Austin's disavowal of theatrical speech acts as not "serious" performatives is undone by his own language

> because the very word he uses to name "mere doing," the very name he gives to that from which he excludes theatricality, is none other than the word that most commonly *names* theatricality: the word *perform*. As if this were not ironic enough, exactly the same split can be found in Austin's other favorite word: *act*.[47]

All the different theatrical and paralinguistic acts this text visits perform these splits, tracing and highlighting how the referent moves away, divides itself from language the moment it comes near it. Communicability is made up of infinitely myriad performances of language because "whatever else we may be doing, we are at any rate being 'done in' by our own words."[48] And yet, throughout this chapter, I have sought to expand on the experiences of "being done in" by words by focusing on the doing of language which acknowledges language's materiality. For to lose language or to be subject to a language as explicit, political project is to know "that there exists a medium in which communication takes place, and that what is communicated in this medium is not one thing or another but, first of all, communicability itself."[49] Thus, in latah, we have the coming together of communicability, theatricality, discourse, gesture, sound, aphasia and the performative revolution of the word "beating," as Kamau Brathwaite puts it, "its genesis genesis genesis genesis/ out of the stammering world."[50]

All the different theatrical speech and sound acts this chapter has visited perform echoes and reverberations of language's generative forces and stammers. Circling back to the youth publicly raging against the Indonesian state in the imaginative manner that begins this chapter—in a nation where status has been historically upheld by promoting order via the codification and control of language and expression—is to see a minor deterritorializing dance, an awareness that politics is the gesturing of communicability. The lone dancing body's improvised negotiation with protocol in the public sphere of the nation's capital courageously moved, and still moves in my mind, against the status quo of Suharto's New Order era. Beckoning through a choreography of spontaneous visibility, bending and breaking custom in different acts, the dancer's, the judge's, the poet's, the aphasic's and Ibu Bibi's dissonances emphasize the entanglement of the many and the one, the pedagogic and the performative, and the performances of co-mingling intelligibility and unintelligibility. Doing things with words. Doing things to words. Doing things without. I'll sign out here, sounding out, dancing out: tsa tsa tsa.

Notes

1 Paralanguage is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the non-lexical component of communication by speech, for example, intonation, hesitation, noises, gesture, and facial expression." *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Paralanguage."
2 For the prevalent use of acronyms, abbreviations, and blend words in Indonesian, see Soenjono Dardjowidjojo, "Acronymic Patterns in Indonesian," *South-East Asian Linguistic Studies* 3, no. 3 (1979): 143–60; Henri Chambert-Loir, "Those Who Speak *Prokem*," *Indonesia*, no. 37 (1984): 105–17; Dédé Oetomo, "The *Bahasa Indonesia* of the Middle Class," *Prisma* 50, September 1990, 68–79; Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "Youth Language, *Gaul* Sociability, and the New Indonesian Middle Class," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 17, no. 2 (2007): 184–203.
3 Brian Massumi, "Prelude," in *Always More than One: Individuation's Dance*, by Erin Manning (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2013), ix.
4 See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).
5 Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. V. Binetti and C. Casarino (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 50.
6 Ibid., 58, original emphasis.
7 "Kami poetera dan poeteri Indonesia mengakoe bertoempah-darah jang satoe, tanah Indonesia/ Kami poetera dan poeteri Indonesia mengakoe berbangsa jang satoe, bangsa Indonesia/ Kami poetera dan poeteri Indonesia mendjoendjoeng bahasa persatoean, bahasa Indonesia." Keith Foulcher, "Sumpah Pemuda: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood," *Asian Studies Review* 24, no. 3 (2000): 380.
8 Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. trans. D. Heller-Roazen (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 43.
9 The word "Indonesia" was coined by the British ethnologist George S. W. Earl in 1850 and was not adopted for political expression by the people of the archipelago until 1917. See Russell Jones, "Earl, Logan, and 'Indonesia,'" *Archipel* 6, no. 1 (1973): 93–118.
10 Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 151.
11 James T. Siegel, "The 'I' of a Lingua Franca," in *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 17.
12 Robert Englebretson, *Searching for Structure: The Problem of Complementation in Colloquial Indonesian Conversation* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2003), 11.
13 "kali ini aku datang ke Legian/ untuk membasuh kelelahan/ dan merabuki akar-akar percintaan/geliat tubuh dipermainkan ombak/ geliat kita melepaskan diri/ dari rumah tua kita masing-masing/ dan di pantai Legian senja itu/ kita diapit matahari dan bulan/ dalam keutuhan yang tak berbagidan di pantai Legian senja itu." Putu Oka Sukanta, "Legian," in *Perjalanan Penyair Sajak-sajak Kegelisahan Hidup* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1999), 19, my translation.
14 I am grateful to Professor I Nyoman Darma Putra for bringing to my attention his article that reports on this curious usage of poetry during the trial: "Dengan Puisi, Vonis Sidang Bom Bali Lebih Anggun" *Kompas*, 21 September 2003.
15 John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., ed. J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà (1962; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 6–7. Page references are to the 1975 edition.
16 Ibid., 22.
17 See Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 307–29.
18 Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. L. S. Roudiez, trans. T. Gora et al. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1980), 79.

19 Ibid.
20 For Kristeva, all poetic discourse is dramatization and she develops her theory on semiotics through an understanding of poetic language gleaned from Mikhail Bakhtin's claim in "Discourse in the Novel" that a unitary monoglossic language is marked by its heteroglossic and socially distinguishing interactions. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981), 269–422.
21 Barbara Johnson, "Poetry and Performative Language: Mallarmé and Austin," in *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 60–66.
22 Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, "Wound," in *Black Soup*, ed. and translated by H. Aveling (Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore, 1993), 31.
23 Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, "Q," in *Secrets Need Words: Indonesian Poetry, 1965–1998*, ed. and trans. H. Aveling (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2001), 100.
24 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. D. Polan (1986; repr. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 22.
25 For a fascinating philosophical missive on these mysterious Koranic letters, see Giorgio Agamben's essay "Bartleby, or On Contingency," in *Potentialities*, 243–71.
26 Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 27.
27 Sutardji, *O Amuk Kapak* (Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1981), 13–14.
28 Massumi, *Parables*, 7.
29 Gregory Bateson, "Cybernetic Explanation," in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1987), 418.
30 "aku mau daging di padang aku mau burung terbang aku mau buah yang lapang tiktaktiktaktiktaktiktakiktak seksolong senyum laju bahtera laju mau kau memakai mesinkawin stainless steel tahan goyang ditanggung sedap mengeliat sendiri bebas dari penat? Tiktaktiktaktiktaktiktaktiktak no no no no no no no no no no zzzzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzz no." Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, from "Marriage Machine," in *Secrets Need Words*, 98–99.
31 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, xv.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 21.
34 Ibid., 28.
35 See Agamben, "The Idea of Language," in *Potentialities*, 39–47.
36 Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, trans. I. Bertoletti et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 76, my emphases.
37 Ibid., 87.
38 Ibid., 55.
39 Ibid., 90.
40 Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd ed., trans. J. E. Maraniss (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1997), 11.
41 Virno, *Grammar of Multitude*, 76, original emphasis.
42 See Mirte J. Bakker et al., "Latah: An Indonesian Startle Syndrome," *Movement Disorders* 28, no. 3 (2013): 370–79.
43 Agamben, *Means without End*, 59.
44 Ibid., 57.
45 Johnson, "Poetry and Performative Language," 56.
46 Ibid., 57.
47 Ibid., 65, original emphasis.

48 Ibid., 66.
49 Daniel Heller-Roazen, "Editor's Introduction: 'To Read What Was Never Written,'" in Agamben, *Potentialities*, 23.
50 Kamau Brathwaite, quoted in Nathaniel Mackey, *Discrepant Engagement: Dissonance, Cross-Culturality and Experimental Writing* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 274.

Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio. *Means without End: Notes on Politics*. Translated by V. Binetti and C. Casarino. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

———. *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Edited and translated, by D. Heller-Roazen. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Austin, John L. *How to Do Things with Words*. 1962. 2nd ed. Edited by J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Aveling, Harry, ed. trans. *Secrets Need Words: Indonesian Poetry, 1965–1998*. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2001.

Bachri, Sutardji Calzoum. "Marriage Machine." In *Secrets Need Words: Indonesian Poetry, 1965–1998*, edited and translated by H. Aveling, 98–99. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2001.

———. *O Amuk Kapak* [O Amok Axe]. Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1981.

———. "Q." In *Secrets Need Words: Indonesian Poetry, 1965–1998*, edited and translated by H. Aveling, 100. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2001.

———. "Wound." In *Black Soup (Working Paper No. 1, Academic Session 1992/93)*, edited and translated by H. Aveling, 31. Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore, 1993.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. "Discourse in the Novel." In *The Dialogic Imagination*, edited by M. Holquist, translated by C. Emerson and M. Holquist, 269–422. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Bakker, Mirte J., J. Gert van Dijk, Astuti Pramono, Sri Sutarni and Marina A. J. Tijssen. "Latah: An Indonesian Startle Syndrome." *Movement Disorders* 28, no. 3 (2013): 370–79.

Bateson, Gregory. "Cybernetic Explanation." In *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*, 407–18. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1987.

Benítez-Rojo, Antonio. *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. 2nd ed. Translated by J. E. Maraniss. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1997.

Chambert-Loir, Henri. "Those Who Speak *Prokem*." *Indonesia*, no. 37 (1984): 105–17.

Dardjowidjojo, Soenjono. "Acronymic Patterns in Indonesian." *South-East Asian Linguistic Studies* 3, no. 3 (1979): 143–60.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by D. Polan. 1986. Reprint. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by A. Bass, 307–29. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Englebretson, Robert. *Searching for Structure: The Problem of Complementation in Colloquial Indonesian Conversation*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2003.

Foulcher, Keith. "Sumpah Pemuda: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood." *Asian Studies Review* 24, no. 3 (2000): 377–410.

Hurston, Zora N. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937. Reprint, Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Heller-Roazen, Daniel. "Editor's Introduction: 'To Read What Was Never Written.'" In *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, by G. Agamben, edited and translated by D. Heller-Roazen, 1–23. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Johnson, Barbara. "Poetry and Performative Language: Mallarmé and Austin." In *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading*, edited by B. Johnson, 52–66. Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Jones, Russell. "Earl, Logan, and 'Indonesia.'" *Archipel* 6, no. 1 (1973): 93–118.

Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Edited by L. S. Roudiez. Translated by T. Gora, A. Jardine and L. S. Rodriguez. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Mackey, Nathaniel. *Discrepant Engagement: Dissonance, Cross-Culturality and Experimental Writing*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Manning, Erin. *Always More than One: Individuation's Dance*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2013.

Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2002.

———. "Prelude." In *Always More than One: Individuation's Dance*. by Erin Manning, ix–xxiv. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2013.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Oetomo, Dédé. "The *Bahasa Indonesia* of the Middle Class." *Prisma* 50, (September 1990), 68–79.

Putra, I Nyoman Darma. "Dengan Puisi, Vonis Sidang Bom Bali Lebih Anggun" [With Poetry Bali Bomb Verdict More Refined]. *Kompas*, 21 September 2003.

Siegel, James T. "The 'I' of a Lingua Franca." In *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 13–37. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Smith-Hefner, Nancy J. "Youth Language, *Gaul* Sociability, and the New Indonesian Middle Class." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 17, no. 2 (2007): 184–203.

Sukanta, Putu Oka. "Legian." In *Perjalanan Penyair Sajak-sajak Kegelisahan Hidup* [The Poet's Journey through the Verses of Life's Anxieties], 19. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1999.

Virno, Paolo. *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. Translated by I. Bertoletti, J. Cascaito and A. Casson. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

4 Speech politics

Performing political scripts

Ananda Breed

Speech politics associated with the re-invented *gacaca* courts, used between 2005 and 2012 to judge crimes related to the 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi, were adapted from larger political and international scripts: discourses related to forgiveness derived from Judeo-Christian politics; reconciliation from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC); and justice from both national and international court structures. The re-invented gacaca courts were given authenticity through the indigenous gacaca system—commonly defined from the Rwandan language of Kinyarwanda as "judgment in the grass." The stated aim of the re-invented gacaca courts to administer both justice and reconciliation between their national implementation in 2005 and their culmination in 2012 delivered numerous iterations of these objectives that may have veered from the original writing of the gacaca laws (first formulated in 2001). The indigenous form of gacaca focused primarily on mediation between aggrieved parties, which rarely occurred within the re-invented gacaca courts in which 1,958,634 cases were tried in over 14,000 courts between 2005 and 2012.

I use the notion of "speech politics" from William B. Worthen's consideration of how the written text or script and performance influence and inform each other as an evolving practice.[1] I make the argument that performances of fictional gacaca plays, for example by Kalisa Rugano and several grassroots theater associations (that used theater to "rehearse" gacaca), were influential in certain areas: Here, the critical gap between the written text or script and the performance of gacaca is made visible as the theatrical frame becomes a space to critically relate some of these larger narratives to local contexts. Jeffrey C. Alexander states:

> The languages actors speak are multiple, and the words and phrases that come out of their mouths are singular, but they are speech acts, not languages in the semiotic sense. Every speech is a play upon the variations of a background structure, the collective representations that define the symbolic references for every speech act.[2]

I will provide examples of how the gacaca laws served as a written text or script to elicit speech acts and artistic as well as juridical performances. Further, I will

explore how the rehearsals for gacaca through theater and the performances of the re-invented gacaca courts were aligned and re-written through a kind of improvisatory reconstruction of text and performance. According to John Langshaw Austin, a command is warranted authority based on the context in which it is used.[3] Thus, the context of the gacaca courts creates the authority for the *Inyangamugayo* (meaning "persons of integrity" in Kinyarwanda, who served as local-level judges) to adjudicate cases. In this case, it is the context that shapes the utterance. However, for John Searle, an act is normal or parasitic solely based on the author's intention.[4] When and how does the utterance within the legal context or the intentionality of the utterance create different manifestations of meaning? I would make the argument that the legal utterances in post-genocide Rwanda are shaped by the context of gacaca law and that the intentionality of the utterance is controlled by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) to manifest the new Rwandan identity, or "Rwandanicity." Performance has meaningful effects. Although on a micro level there has been critique regarding the limitations of gacaca courts to achieve the noted aims of justice and reconciliation, the intentionality of the utterance within the context of gacaca might not have been to achieve those aims, as on a macro level the RPF has performed victor's justice through the nationwide implementation of justice that did not address RPF war crimes and inscribed "Hutu" as synonymous with the guilt of genocidal crimes.

This essay will look critically at the varied permutations of gacaca law and subsequent performances of gacaca staged both artistically and juridically. I will address moments of intervention when theatrical or performative mechanisms have been used as sites of resistance by adapting but not violating the conventions of gacaca. I proceed to analyze the re-invented gacaca courts as a social performance, and then to examine examples of alternative performances and resistant acts within the larger speech politics of post-genocide Rwanda.

Speech politics

The indigenous gacaca system was formerly used to mediate petty crimes related to cattle theft or property crimes and has little to do with the modern function of addressing crimes of genocide. In the rare occurrence when gacaca was used for aggrieved parties to address violent crimes, there was the literal acting out of violence with a machete on a banana plant. In this way, the anger toward another that might be enacted with physical revenge was taken out physically on an object. In this essay, I address how what has emerged through human rights law as "international indigenism" to protect the lands and identities of indigenous peoples toward activism based on self-determination can also be used by the state as a kind of political, economic and cultural incursion. Ronald Niezen notes that the term "indigenous peoples" was "first invented through human rights reforms, then adapted, internalized, personalized and collectively transformed by 'indigenous peoples' themselves, with conviction and occasionally strident passion."[5] The notion of gacaca as indigenous to Rwanda signals the re-invented mediation system turned transitional justice system as a "Rwandan solution to a Rwandan

problem," thus warding off international criticism by claiming responsibility for the horrors of the genocide and addressing its repercussions. While a commendable act, the overarching focus on sovereignty can deter attention away from the complex inter-ethnic and inter-regional issues within Rwanda that can be played out within the gacaca courts. Likewise, the focus on gacaca as an indigenous local mediation system obscures analysis from what has been widely reported as a state-driven and authoritarian justice system. Thus, the often purist notion of indigeneity can elide the underlying power dynamics at play.

The local and indigenous is often at odds with the international and globalized. While international powers played a large part via their participation (or lack thereof) in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, through the collusion of the French through Opération Turquoise and the inaction of the US government and the United Nations (UN troops withdrew at the height of the genocide), international powers continue to effect politics in Rwanda through the impact and influence of donor aid.[6] Additionally, the rhetoric used in the speech politics of Rwanda, including the tropes "Justice" and "Reconciliation," are influenced by Judeo-Christian politics and the concept of *ubuntu* from the TRC in South Africa.[7] These tropes that become norms of official discourse get rehearsed, acted out and subverted in different and unexpected ways. I will deconstruct some of these social performances through subsequent performances of gacaca rehearsals (actual staged and fictive gacaca plays) that prepared individuals for the gacaca courts, noting how the fictive and the real inform one another in reference to Worthen's concept of "speech politics" as an evolving practice.

Gacaca as a social performance

Jeffrey C. Alexander provides a performance framework to address the varied relations of power and conditions for social performances. Alexander claims that every social performance combines some or all of the following six components: actor, collective representations, means of symbolic productions, mise-en-scène, social power and audience. I will use this framework to explore how gacaca courts could be framed as examples of social performance, since the structure of gacaca was inherently scripted, rehearsed and performed to create Rwandanicity. Brigadier General Frank K. Rusagara, a journalist from the Rwandan newspaper the *New Times*, states:

> The concept and institution of the *gacaca* justice system comes through as one of the most enduring in Rwanda, not only in conflict management through restorative justice, but in serving as a lubricant to the ideology of Rwandanicity that ensured unity and cohesion in the society since the pre-colonial times. By definition, Rwandanicity was an idea and a philosophy that guided the people's conduct and perceptions. As an ideology, therefore, it is what the people of Rwanda understood themselves to be, what they knew about themselves, and how they defined and related to each other and their country as a united people. Thus, other than giving identity, Rwandanicity is also the medium in which Rwandans got their worldview.[8]

The military title of the journalist is worth noting based on the historic function of the military to coordinate *Ingando* solidarity camps for the indoctrination of RPF ideology. Rusagara was former defense advisor at the Rwanda High Commission in London and former head of the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF). "Ingando" comes from the Kinyarwanda verb *kuganda*, which refers to "halting normal activities to reflect on, and find[ing] solutions to, national challenges."[9] According to the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), the Ingando was used in precolonial times to prepare for war under the guidance of the *mwami* (king). Similar to the precolonial emphasis on unification through a militarized notion of the nation, following the 1994 genocide, the Ingando was initially revived as a vehicle to re-integrate ex-FAR (Rwandan Army Forces) soldiers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Over time, it was redefined as a broader vehicle for civic education to encompass returned refugees, university students and various community groups. Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf provide a robust account of how and why the current ruling political party, the RPF, has pursued a policy of reconstruction and development through an authoritarian military regime that has enforced varied programs—transitional justice, agricultural reform, villagization, civic education and remapping and renaming regional territories to "remake" Rwanda. Straus and Waldorf state: "[I]t also seeks to alter social identities, cultural norms, and individual behavior."[10] Military links between how the ideology of Rwandanicity becomes institutionalized through Ingando indoctrination campaigns and the reimagining of gacaca from precolonial times are an important correlation to understand. Similarly, the arts have been used as a functional tool for the establishment of society as part of the construction of Rwandanicity for both Ingando and gacaca, and it is crucial to understand how this was done.[11] Theater was used as a vehicle for the sensitization and mobilization of gacaca, to educate and to rehearse the population for the courts (as many had never seen nor heard of gacaca prior to its implementation in 2005). In regard to the integration of the arts within Rwandan society, the NURC stresses the role of the arts for socialization or transformation, stating: "[i]n pre-colonial Rwanda art did not only 'mean' it also 'functioned' [. . .] some of this art reinforced the values of the society, and socialized the young into the culture of the people."[12]

I will use Alexander's framework to encode gacaca as a social performance, providing examples of how gacaca adheres (or does not adhere) to the form. The sections in italics come directly from Alexander's own writing, with my own observations below.

> *1. Actor. This could be an individual, a group, an organization, and may reference any level from casual and unstructured flow to class, gender, and national conflicts, such regional identities as Europe, or processes in the global civil sphere. Actors can be skillful or not, lifelike or wooden, imaginative or dull.*[13]

The actors of gacaca courts could be deemed to include every Rwandan citizen, since the participation and attendance of citizens was mandated by law.

Actors could be positioned along varied social and legal structures, including the roles of perpetrator and survivor. Alexander notes the agonistic component of social performances, "the better the script, the more it is agonistic."[14] Nigel Eltringham interprets the government's use of the terms "perpetrator" and "victim" as synonymous with Hutu as perpetrator and Tutsi as victim.[15] Citing Eltringham, Lars Waldorf emphasizes the impact of accusations on the unification of Rwanda, stating: "[o]verall, gacaca imposed collective guilt by generating accusations of genocide against perhaps one million Hutu—a quarter of the adult Hutu population."[16] Thus, gacaca has reinscribed the ethnic labeling of the past (Hutu-Tutsi), using new labels (genocidaire-victim).[17]

Within the structure of the gacaca courts, actors include government security, gacaca officials, occasional trauma counselors, and observers and researchers from international organizations and academic institutions. Attendees often include representatives from associations such as AVEGA-Agahozo (the Association of Genocide Widows of Rwanda), or varied grassroots associations that have used the arts to bring members of their communities together.[18] Subsidiary organizations can be highly structured and linked to the government, such as the NURC and the National Service of Gacaca Courts (SNJG), to administer gacaca laws and jurisdictions alongside international monitoring organizations, including Penal Reform International (PRI) and Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF). The actors involve local-, provincial-, national- and international-level players.

> *2. Collective representations. The languages actors speak are multiple, and the words and phrases that come out of their mouths are singular, but they are speech acts, not languages in the semiotic sense. Every speech is a play upon the variations of a background structure, the collective representations that define the symbolic references for every speech act.*[19]

The gacaca is performed in strict adherence to gacaca laws and the functioning of gacaca courts. According to Organic Law No 16/2004 of 19/6/2004, the accused must provide a confession in order to be considered for release as stated in Article 54:

> Apologies shall be made publicly to the victims in case they are still alive and to the Rwandan Society. To be accepted as confessions, guilt[y] plea, repentance and apologies, the defendant must: 1) give a detailed description of the confessed offence, how he or she carried it out and where, when he or she committed it, witnesses to the facts, persons victimized and where he or she threw their dead bodies and damage caused; 2) reveal the co-authors, accomplices and any other information useful to the exercise of the public action; 3) apologise for the offences that he or she has committed.[20]

How well prisoners performed their acts of contrition won them freedom or subjected them to further time in prison.[21] In terms of how "[e]very speech is a play upon the variations of a background structure, the collective representations that define the symbolic references for every speech act," the gacaca builds upon

Judeo-Christian ideologies related to forgiveness and contrition as a construction of sovereignty enacted on an individual as part of juridical procedures for crimes against humanity. Within the gacaca proceedings, the confession must be presented as part of the juridical requirement.

> *3. Means of symbolic production. In order to communicate such foregrounded representations, actors need real material things, which are themselves, of course, meaningfully defined. For the messages of an actor to be projected, they need a stage, whether this is a place in the sand, a tree or a high spot of ground, a newspaper, television transmission, video cam, or website. Performers also need props, which can be a parrot beak, full costume regalia, background music, spotlight, or the semi-automatic rifle cradled casually in one's arms.*[22]

The judges wear a sash with the title "Inyangamugayo" across their chests, with the colors of the Rwandan flag: green, yellow and blue. Inyangamugayo carry the paper booklets of gacaca laws in their hands as props, which they refer back to throughout the court proceedings and often lift into the air as if indicating power through the handling (and knowledge) of the contents. According to Peterson Tumwebaze, the performance of knowledge and power is additionally a performance of their literacy levels, which stands nationally at 69.7 percent.[23] The stage has been referred to in the name gacaca itself, referring to a grassy place. Gacaca can be conducted in the grass, and usually underneath the shade of a tree, but can also be located in community buildings, government buildings or structures designed with corrugated metal and plastic tarp to provide shelter. Security guards are costumed in burgundy uniforms and carry automatic rifles, located near or outside any entrances/exits with an overview of the space. The prisoners wear flamingo-pink uniforms. The secretary, one of seven Inyangamugayo, transcribes court proceedings. As many citizens are illiterate, both the accusers and the accused place their thumbprints on documentation to confirm accuracy (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

> *4. Mise-en-scène. Literally "putting into the scene," this French phrase has come to represent what directors do. It is the arranging and the doing, of actors' movements in time and space. It is the tone of voice, the direction of the glance, the gestures of the body, the direction and intensity of the spot lighting.*[24]

If we are to regard the state in the person of President Paul Kagame as the prime director, then the arranging of actors' movements is based on the enforcement of power. Perpetrators are released from prison after admitting guilt and are brought to the gacaca in government vehicles. The arrival of the prisoners is a part of the mise-en-scène, followed by the entrance of the Inyangamugayo into the courtroom setting (whether that be a grassy field or government building). In several gacaca courts that I attended, the Inyangamugayo enter the "stage area" in single file, and the community actors or attendees stand. The accused is called to the desk of the presiding Inyangamugayo, and the primary discourse is between

Figure 4.1 Gacaca in progress, Eastern Province (2005).
Courtesy: Ananda Breed.

Figure 4.2 Gacaca in progress, Eastern Province (2005).
Courtesy: Ananda Breed.

the president of the Inyangamugayo of each court and the accused. The accused customarily bows his or her head in an act of contrition and holds his or her arms behind his or her back. The president carries an authoritarian persona, often displaying aggravation or a sharp tone of voice when the accused denies charges or appeals the case.

> *5. Social power. This dimension of social performance, often invisible, is critical in making the elements of performance available, or not. It can be defined as resources, capacities, and hierarchies, but it involves also the power to project hermeneutical interpretations of performance from outside political and economic power narrowly defined.*[25]

Gacaca was manipulated for individual and social purposes, following the mandate to speed up sentences in 2007 and the ineffectiveness of both national and international organizations to monitor and control the fairness of justice. Astrid Jamar states:

> Regardless of warnings, the Organic Law No 10/2007 of 01/03/2007 added a total of 2215 Benches and reduced the number of judges required to achieve this goal. An ASF [Avocats Sans Frontières] analytical report affirms that the acceleration of trials impacted seriously on the fairness of justice.[26]

The inability of the government and gacaca monitoring agencies to manage fairness within the courts potentially sets the stage for an aftermath of structural violence due to reparations, financial instability for those serving community service or prison sentences, and limited financial support for survivors. I have commented on the space between the frameworks of gacaca law and what actually occurs within the gacaca courts, as well as on the potential disintegration of law through law itself (as noted above). Here, I borrow from the work of Stephen Humphreys to portray gacaca as an instrument for the state of exception in post-genocide Rwanda. Humphreys, citing Giorgio Agamben, states:

> [The state of exception] is today codified in international law through the notion of derogation. When faced with a public emergency that 'threatens the life of the nation,' international human rights treaties—and many constitutions—permit states to suspend the protection of certain basic rights. [. . .] In practice, the derogation model 'creates a space between fundamental rights and the rule of law,' wherein states can remain lawful while transgressing individual rights [. . .].[27]

In this way, the genocide and the perilous condition of Rwanda post-genocide created a state of exception, in which individual and social agendas can be manipulated through gacaca, both within and outside the law. During numerous gacaca court sessions that I attended between 2005 and 2010, I observed how the ability of Inyangamugayo to adjudicate cases effectively was largely reflected in

apparently predetermined judgments, often transgressing individual rights. The president of the gacaca often questioned the accused under presumption of guilt and summoned testimonies of support. Inyangamugayo are given four days of training in total, and their lack of competency to use evidence, to cross-examine and to adjudicate gacaca effectively might have been exacerbated by their traumatization or re-traumatization from the weekly witnessing of testimonies related to the genocide. Humphreys states:

> The application of law by judges is, like speech, an enunciative act that applies the general to the particular. But just as speech acts can fail to connect with actual phenomena, circulating instead in the abstract self-referentiality of *langue*, similarly, law can be applied without explicit recognition of any reality outside its own abstract realm.[28]

The social structures within which genocide was enacted and gacaca was implemented were not adequately addressed through gacaca laws. Social constructs, like the original use of gacaca for community mediation of low-level crimes, take into account social power and local power discourses. However, the re-invention of gacaca for genocide crimes does not take into account the difference between national performatives concerning justice and reconciliation, and what is really happening on the ground; thus, law is "applied without explicit recognition of any reality outside its own abstract realm" and subject to manipulation.

> *6. Audience. All of the above become significant only insofar as they allow or prevent meanings from being successfully projected to an audience. Audiences are placed at different removes from actors, and they can be more [or less] homogenous or divided.*[29]

Rwanda relies heavily on international aid (indicating international audiences), and thus, much of its rhetoric repeats international slogans such as justice and reconciliation as tropes, but there are inherent differences between how Rwanda performs for the international community and how power and resources are negotiated within Rwanda.[30] In terms of international audiences, there are donor communities such as the European Union, who support the overall budget in Rwanda by providing over 58 percent of Rwanda's official development assistance (ODA). Filip Reyntjens notes the significant power of the RPF to silence any outside contestation as a systemic defense tactic that relies on "genocide currency" to have successfully shut down human rights organizations, enforced a one-party dictatorial government, and effectively ignored recommendations provided by gacaca monitoring agencies, including PRI and ASF. Thus, foreign investment in justice and reconciliation may actually be used toward the Rwandan Patriot Front's version of justice and reconciliation that may not align with international standards of human rights. Reyntjens writes:

> On 9 February, Reuters correspondent Christian Jennings was expelled, apparently for having written two days earlier that, during a press conference,

> (then Vice-President) Kagame had asserted that 'Rwanda has the right to divert a part of international aid to contribute to the internal war against Hutu extremists.'[31]

However, the alignment of the RPF with Western powers (e.g. through inclusion in the Commonwealth) has been an important tactic to hold and maintain power in Rwanda. Thus, performances such as gacaca are tightly controlled and curated by the RPF for international audiences. Although I have framed the gacaca as a social performance, it is difficult for performances to actually manifest the new Rwandan identity without suppressing underlying ethnic and political identities.

The arrest of Rwandan musician Kizito Mihigo illustrates some of the nuances regarding how the collective guilt of the Hutu, constructed through the re-invented gacaca courts, is enforced and performed on a national level. Although Kizito Mihigo is a genocide survivor and is well known in Rwanda for his reconciliation songs and support for the RPF, his loyalty to the President and presidential party was severely questioned due to his text communications with a South Africa-based opposition group, the Rwanda National Congress (RNC). The co-founder of the RNC, Patrick Karega, was found strangled on 1 January 2014 in South Africa. Mihigo was given a ten-year prison sentence for allegedly planning an assassination attempt against Rwandan president Paul Kagame. The timing of the accusation was linked to the public performance of Mihigo, which challenged the Rwandan government's public transcript that every Hutu must apologize for their ethnic forefathers' actions. In a music video, Mihigo performs a song at a site known for RPF war crimes. RPF war crimes were not allowed within the gacaca court proceedings and were rarely heard in the ordinary courts. Thus, these crimes remain largely unrecognized on a national and international scale. During the music video, Mihigo calls for humanity and acknowledges the loss of Hutu brothers and sisters as well. This open challenge regarding the controversial commemorative period that marks the anniversary of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi was punished as political dissidence, although Mihigo noted that the message was based on his religious beliefs. Mihigo's speech acts called into question the RPF's public transcript regarding how the genocide is to be historicized and remembered, and were therefore not tolerated by the RPF. In response to the controversial video, legal structures were used to try to officiate or put into context the utterances, but I would argue that Mihigo's performance re-used and re-performed notions of reconciliation (as he was a prime symbol of reconciliation in Rwanda) to call into question human rights abuses committed by the RPF. Jonathan W. Rosen notes in his article "Dissident 'Choirboy': Rwandan Gospel Star on Trial":

> The melancholy ballad, which tells of "lives brutally taken but not qualified as genocide," is an unmistakable challenge to the image of Kagame's RPF as saviors who pacified the country. Despite putting a stop to the genocide—the 100-day mass murder of up to a million Tutsi and moderate

> Hutu orchestrated by extremists in the former government—Kagame's troops have been implicated by multiple UN investigations in the killing of tens of thousands of civilians during the genocide period in Rwanda and in subsequent invasions of neighboring Congo. As the Rwanda scholar Gérard Prunier has written, the violence inflicted by the RPF in the genocide's aftermath, largely though not exclusively against Hutu, was not merely a case of "uncontrolled revenge killings," as RPF defenders often argue, "but rather a policy of political control through terror." [. . .] Today, statements related to the genocide that differ from the official narrative can result in prosecution. Although authorities insist such laws are necessary to prevent the return of dangerous identity-based strife, critics say they prohibit some Rwandans from openly remembering lost family members and have been abused to stifle political dissent.[32]

In relation to Worthen's consideration of how the written text or script and performance influence and inform the other as an evolving practice,[33] Mihigo integrates the language introduced and implemented by the RPF to evolve the practice and performance of reconciliation, using similar visual symbols and rhetoric toward re-writing and re-performing notions of reconciliation outside the RPF's gacaca and national commemorative activities. The location for Mihigo's music video for *Igisobanuro cy'urupfu* (A Song of Suffering) was in Kibeho, where thousands of Hutu were killed at a camp for internally displaced persons in 1995.[34] In the next section, I will illustrate how theater was used to inscribe the RPF's implementation of gacaca, but also how theatrical performances or rehearsals for gacaca demonstrated potential challenges to the noted aims of justice and reconciliation.

Gacaca drama: *Urubanza Rwa Gasaruhanda Alias Kigomeke*

The performance of the gacaca drama *Urubanza Rwa Gasaruhanda Alias Kigomeke* [The Trial of Gasaruhanda Alias Kigomeke] on 13 July 2005 began with the community of the Rulindo district sitting on a hill.[35] A large wooden desk was placed in the middle of a clearing; the audience was seated on a slope facing the performance area. Several benches were placed facing the Inyangamugayo's table, with one bench directly in front and two on either side, creating an open square formation.

The actor playing the role of the district coordinator addressed the audience directly, stating the objectives of gacaca and the community's responsibility to tell the truth about what they had witnessed during the genocide. There was a group of approximately fifty community members. The gacaca drama had been presented before. The reaction of the attendees was of mild interest. Eight Inyangamugayo entered in single file (initially nine Inyangamugayo were required for court proceedings; later, it was reduced to seven). They wore sashes of the same color and design as the national flag and with the word "Inyangamugayo" across

their chests. The Inyangamugayo actors consisted of two women and six men. These actors were untrained actors from the local community. Straton Nsanzabaganwa, the former director of Culture in the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture in Rwanda, likened the use of theater in post-genocide Rwanda to a traditional purity ritual called *kugangahura* in which people cleanse themselves of a bad event. Grassroots associations used theater as a kind of kugangahura. According to the NURC, by 2005, over 300 associations in Rwanda developed from a grassroots level. However, local initiatives have been integrated into the jurisdiction of the NURC, thus potentially shifting the direction of narratives from individual acts of reconciliation to a top-down model managed by the central government.

When the actors reached the Inyangamugayo's table, the audience was asked to stand for a moment of silence for those who had died during the genocide. After this moment of silence, the secretary of the court stood up to read the case file for Alias Kigomeke. The actor playing the accused was called to the table.

One witness from the audience (an actor who was planted in the crowd) stated that she saw Kigomeke killing the victim Bugingo, but Kigomeke denied all charges. Several other actors in the audience testified as witnesses that they saw Kigomeke kill Bugingo, but Kigomeke denied each accusation, stating that the reason the witnesses testified against him was to get his land.

The Inyangamugayo took a recess to deliberate. Although in actual time the verdict could be delayed a few hours, until the following week or until additional evidence was gathered, in this dramatized version, the Inyangamugayo returned after a few seconds. They referred to several articles in the gacaca handbook of Organic Law No 16/2004 of 19/6/2004. The verdict was read, sentencing Kigomeke to twenty-six years in prison because he did not confess to his crimes and because he had looted. Kigomeke was informed that he had fifteen days to appeal the decision. The play concluded with the Inyangamugayo exiting in the same manner as they had entered.

These grassroots plays were a rehearsal for the actual gacaca courts. What I want to highlight here is that although the noted performance of *Urubanza Rwa Gasaruhanda Alias Kigomeke* in 2005 was prior to the implementation of any form of compensation for genocidal crimes, it foregrounded the eventual use of gacaca courts for personal and political objectives. In other words, the gacaca play performed in the district of Rulindo highlighted the "parasitic" status of juridical speech acts. The theatrical speech acts that were uttered by the actors during the performance of the play brought into focus the rule of citationality.

Rehearsing gacaca (2005)

The gacaca courts included theatrical performances or rehearsals as part of a nationwide sensitization and education campaign before the implementation of formal, binding gacaca proceedings. Once gacaca officially became law, there were several implementation phases prior to the actual court proceedings, from

sensitization and mobilization to data collection to court hearings. Radio, television and theater were used to spread the message regarding the upcoming gacaca courts. During the sensitization phase from 2001 to 2002, there was little national awareness of the gacaca courts. In an interview with me on 11 January 2005 in Kigali, Johnston Busingye, who was then the secretary general of the Ministry of Justice, asserted:

> Gacaca was something new. Not only new in Rwanda but new in the world. We did not have a lot of experience from other parts of the world, did not have books to borrow from Europe, from Africa, from Asia, to see what to do. So, the government thought, "Okay, this is a very good thing. Maybe rooted in our own culture. Our culture proves that it kept Rwanda peaceful a long, long time, centuries and centuries when there was no classical justice to talk about. So why don't we try it?" When the government adopted a decision to try it, it also said, "Let's be very careful, let's put up a control to begin with. Let's start a pilot gacaca, set it up all over the country, to be geographically spread out." Gauge: "Is the system answering the problem? Are people receptive? Do they support it? Will it lead to more and more unity and reconciliation? Will it lead to justice? Will the victims agree or not agree?"[36]

The sensitization phase was designed in part to promote the idea of gacaca as a Rwandan response to a Rwandan problem. Busingye stated:

> We wanted to allow this genocide—the whole of this genocide issue—to appear like it is a Rwandese problem, created by us, and therefore to be solved by us. Those who were killing were not paid by anybody, they just went from their house and went to kill. Others should also start from their house and start to sort it out, and this is the message that we have been drumming.[37]

The re-invention of gacaca was promoted as a legacy of a precolonial utopian past. But Peter Uvin questions the role of gacaca as a traditional process: "Why not assume that the 'gacaca' appellation is there just to lend a sense of history and legitimacy, an invention of tradition."[38] Indeed, mass media and theater in particular had been widely used to educate the nation concerning gacaca procedures and goals. A report on gacaca issued by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) states: "The authorities use large public gatherings to inform and discuss various issues with the people, for example, the gacaca or the new constitution. In addition, information videos and even drama, theatre, art and comics have been used."[39]

A gacaca play directed by Rwandan playwright Kalisa Rugano, funded by the Rwandan Ministry of Justice and Johns Hopkins University, was created for this purpose. It evoked the past, performing the history of the use of gacaca in precolonial times, inscribed with legendary status. It was a communal mechanism that few remembered; it was therefore the retelling, similar to the use of legends,

that informed the public to the role of gacaca in precolonial Rwanda and its role in the vision of Rwandanicity in the present. In an interview with me on 11 July 2005 in Kigali, Rugano mentioned that the play went on national tour from 1999 to 2001 to educate the population and to help them rehearse for the upcoming implementation of the courts. It illustrated the gacaca laws through the performance of what a gacaca would look like, the roles of the Inyangamugayo, the community as witnesses and the apology of the accused.

Here, I transition from the initial example of a gacaca play staged in Rulindo to an actual gacaca court proceeding that demonstrates how the previous theatrical foregrounding of incrimination for property and land acquisition may have served as a kind of script for the gacaca proceeding itself. In this way, local-level discourses and enactments influenced the staging of gacaca as *ikinimicu* (Kinyarwanda term for "theater").

Gacaca as ikinimicu (2010)

The next case study analyzes court proceedings and varied narratives that emerged within the Gacaca Court of Appeal, Nyarugenge District, of Francois Mbarute, which I attended from 14 to 17 April 2010. Previous court proceedings included Mbarute's initial sentence for category-two offenses to fifteen years imprisonment in 2008, which was appealed and the sentence was transferred to category-one offenses. In Rwanda, gacaca sorted perpetrators into three categories: Category One criminals were the planners/leaders of the genocide and rapists; Category Two criminals were those who killed during the genocide; and Category Three criminals were those who committed property crimes. Sentences for Category One and Category Two crimes ranged from twenty-five years to life imprisonment, whereas Category Three crimes obliged fiscal reparation.

Mbarute was sentenced to life imprisonment, both at sector and district levels. Mbarute was accused of genocidal crimes related to the killing of fifteen people. He had originally been nominated for hero status for saving over ninety-three people during the genocide. I will use this case study to explore how gacaca served as a "fictional frame" particularly toward the end of the gacaca process in 2010. Applying Erving Goffman's notion of "framing," it is crucial to examine both *what* is being framed within the construction of post-violence identity formation (national and individual) and *how* it is being performed or enacted.[40] Due to the social dynamics at play, court cases were increasingly identified by gacaca monitoring agencies as being manipulated following the speeding up of courts in 2007. Thus, it is important to identify at what point cases were filed and how varied social, political and economic imperatives may have affected the lodging of case files and subsequent judgments.[41] Speech acts—political, juridical, theatrical—influence, affect and comment on each other, creating a meshwork of interests and effects. Through several interviews that I conducted with attendees and gacaca administrators, the case illustrates the multi-layered politics in Rwanda and how gacaca can be used for revenge and incrimination.[42] According to a gacaca

coordinator, witnesses were advised *not* to provide supporting testimonies for the accused as they would often find themselves incriminated or to have a case filed against them.

In this case, the concept of the "fictional frame" is illustrated through the examination of discharging witnesses who were incriminated during the process of the trial, thus highlighting the fact that the defendant "was already framed as guilty" and anyone who might identify with him was likewise placed under suspicion as an accomplice. Witnesses were often asked detailed questions by the Inyangamugayo (in random sequence) about time of day, timeline of activities, physicality of observations and description of events. One observer who had attended each of the court trials of Mbarute stated to me:

> Think back to events sixteen years ago. Can you remember what happened with the detail in which the defendant and witnesses are being questioned? Then, listen to the accusers. They have their stories pre-scripted in full detail, including exact time of day. They are the ones who are lying. For those that can't quite remember, or may get some details wrong, those are the ones telling the truth.[43]

He stated that Mbarute had documents to fight his case, such as land dispute papers against one of the accusers, but that the Inyangamugayo would not acknowledge the documentation. Another gacaca researcher stated: "During the last couple of years, gacaca has been used as a political device versus for justice."[44]

The wife of Yusuf (someone killed during the genocide) stated that the proceeding was like ikinimicu. Here, I provide a verbatim record of interactions between the Inyangamugayo, the defendant and the witnesses to further illustrate the function of gacaca as a "fictional frame." I attended the trial of Mbarute from 14 to 16 April 2014. During the proceedings, I noted the dialogue, staging and interactions as if I were recording a staged script. The excerpts below come from these scripts:

PRESIDENT (P): Did you know the individuals whom Mbarute was charged with killing?

WITNESS ONE (W1): No.

P: You made previous statements that Mbarute was amongst the gang that killed Yusuf. Why are you changing your statement?

W1: I didn't make that statement previously.

P: Who was training? Who was being trained?

W1: Mbarute notified me that they were planning to kill my wife, so I went past where they were conducting the training. Mbarute was standing near the militia, but I cannot confirm that he was training with the militia.

P: Treat the courtroom as the trainees. How was Mbarute holding his body?

W1: The defendant was far away and I could not see any detail.

P: If you were able to see the accused, then you must have been standing on the side of the trainees and thus, Mbarute must have been facing the militia as a trainer.

W1: I am telling you what I know. I cannot lie.

MBARUTE: The training was conducted in the valley while I was a bystander. The person leading the training was a lieutenant.

In this exchange, the President frames Mbarute as a trainer for the militia. The testimony is questioned, although previous documents may have been falsely recorded. An attendee notes that several community members had made the claim that Mbarute used grenades and guns, to which Mbarute replied: "This woman lies. For anyone who lives in the sector, they know her lies are commonplace." The next witness provides a statement against the accused, that he had observed Mbarute at the Red Cross where Hutu and Tutsi were separated:

WITNESS TWO (W2): I witnessed the accused at the Red Cross registering names.

PRESIDENT (P): Were the persons mixed who were being registered?

W2: They were mixed between Hutu and Tutsi. Mbarute registered their identity cards. He arrived in a white car, parked in front, and entered the Red Cross with another individual. Mbarute asked for identity cards.

MBARUTE: I didn't enter the Red Cross. Why have you made that statement? (The witness does not respond).

W2: He separated Hutu from Tutsi. He took these individuals by foot and they have never returned.

In this exchange, the case is made against Mbarute that he is working alongside the militia. Up to this point, there are no charges that actually claim Mbarute has killed any individuals. Statements infer that Mbarute may have been linked to training militia or registering identity cards, but no statements related to actually validating that Mbarute killed. In fact, the original witness claimed that Mbarute warned him about the planned attack of his wife, thus using Mbarute's role to warn and potentially to protect. The next witness provided testimony on behalf of Mbarute. However, during the course of the proceeding, a case file is made against him:

PRESIDENT (P): Mbarute was amongst a group of militia that went to kill Yusuf. Did you know that?

WITNESS THREE (W3): No, I didn't know that.

P: How did you come to be in ownership of a gun, and how were the Tutsi who were in hiding with you killed and buried?

W3: Mbarute had put me in charge of guarding the Tutsi, to protect them. We were discovered and the Tutsi were killed. I was not killed because I had an identity card that said I was Hutu and with the former political party. I was commanded to put down my gun and that is when the Tutsi were killed.

SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: How did you get the gun? Why did you let the others die if you were supposed to be protecting them?

P: Have you been put in prison for this?

At this point, Mbarute approaches the bench with a letter from the president of gacaca from one of the previous courts, who declares that the current witness is an Inyangamugayo or a person of integrity. The president puts the letter to one side and continues to interrogate the witness.

PRESIDENT (P): Why didn't you defend the Tutsi?
SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR (S): The declaration of character from the previous court must be false if the witness had a gun.
P: How did you get a gun?
WITNESS THREE (W3): I was a soldier.
S: If he had a gun, then he is responsible for the killing.
P: Who asked you to surrender?
W3: Those that came from the market. They had lots of guns.
S: If the witness didn't protect the Tutsi whom he was given by Mbarute to protect, then he must have killed them.
MBARUTE: When I arrived, he was kneeling. I had come to protect, but they were dead.
S: You must have killed together. Who did you kill with?
W3: No one.
S: Why didn't the previous court make a case against this man?

The proceedings continued to question how the gun was passed between Mbarute and the witness. During the progression of the trial, the witness was cross-examined and eventually declared as being a conspirator with the accused. Individual proclamations from the attendees questioned how the witness could have survived as "one who is hunted" (Tutsi). The secretary read out the court transcript and then the witness was asked to sign. It was evident that no witness was safe from incrimination.

Article 95 of Organic Law No. 40/2000 originally protected bystanders who provided testimony of genocide crimes:

> Testimony made on offences of the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity committed between 1 October 1990 and 31 December 1994 can never serve as a basis to take proceedings against its author charging him with the offence of failure to render assistance.[45]

However, Article 95 was deleted from the subsequent Organic Law No. 16/2004, exposing bystanders who testified to potentially be charged as accomplices for not rendering assistance. Thus, the scripting of the court proceedings, both through the trial procedures and the testimonies given by defendants and witnesses, can be easily manipulated to either protect or frame individuals, depending on how narratives are crafted.

Mbarute owned several properties that were to be auctioned off as reparation and distributed among those who filed against the accused. In this way, although the court might have looked like it was following court procedures, I would

postulate that the final judgment of the case was predetermined. The courtroom itself was an example of ikinimicu.

Conclusion

What are the ramifications of gacaca, following gacaca? At the closing ceremony of gacaca in 2012, President Paul Kagame stated:

> Equally, the value and effectiveness of gacaca will be measured against the record of other courts, principally the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The ICTR has tried about sixty cases, cost 1.7 billion dollars and left justice wanting. Yet, at significantly less cost, the gacaca process has had the highest impact in terms of cases handled, and has delivered justice and reconciliation at a much higher scale.[46]

He further stated: "It has been a period when we sought to reunite our nation, inspire confidence in the administration of justice and hold each other accountable for our actions."[47]

Speech politics often aimed to legitimize policy (as evidenced by Kagame's closing ceremony speech). The proposed objectives of reconciliation and justice through the local-level courts were staged as a transitional justice model that originated from an indigenous mediation system but may not have been administered or performed at a local level to achieve these objectives. Derrida's claim that any iteration becomes a sign through its repeatability and Austin's claim that any iteration is subject to its context work in tandem when applying their arguments to the context of the gacaca courts in post-genocide Rwanda. In regard to Austin, the context within which the genocide unfolded was particular to geographic and demographic conditions; likewise, the evolution of the gacaca in each region.[48] Since the context of genocide and post-genocide reconstruction altered within different regions, the iterations of justice and reconciliation created different kinds of signs through its repeatability in varied contexts and regions. For instance, in an area where there are few Tutsi survivors, the notion of justice might be different than in an area where there are a number of Tutsi survivors and Tutsi returnees. The iteration takes on a different kind of sign through its repeatability by different individuals, within different contexts. Any sign can take on a number of meanings.

In the cases that I have presented, of gacaca as a juridical act that has been rehearsed through theater and the theatricality of gacaca itself as a kind of ikinimicu, brings forth the argument that one is not necessarily more authentic than the other. The grassroots play in Rulindo staged the imprisonment of an individual for genocidal crimes in order to gain monetary compensation. In this case, the play or representation of fears related to how gacaca might be used for monetary gain may have staged the circumstances through which gacaca eventually evolved—as a tool that could be manipulated for monetary compensation. In court, the ritualistic mechanisms through which gacaca was

administered (the mise-en-scène of gacaca) were highly theatrical and may have served to function as a script through which alternative meanings and functions were administered, apart from justice and reconciliation. In some cases, the courts may have administered injustice and conflict, versus justice and reconciliation. Theatrical speech acts are, as Derrida says, "the determined modification of a general citationality."[49] The performance in the Rulindo district highlighted—even before it happened—the necessarily "parasitic" status of all juridical speech acts (which makes "exceptional" or "anomal" or "perverted" or "non-serious" citations possible, or even calls them forth).

Here, I refer to the initial example of the gacaca play in Rulindo. Although many of the gacaca plays devised by grassroots associations mirrored the government's rendition of gacaca to demonstrate the rules and procedures, alongside the noted aims of justice and reconciliation, the performance in Rulindo illustrates resistance to that narrative through the prediction of corruption. Although I had attended the Rulindo performance with a government official, there was no censorship or condemnation of the play. At that time, the play was a fictional enactment of false charges being made for the acquisition of property, yet we can see the correlation between the theatrical rehearsal for gacaca and the real trial of Mbarute. The real and the fictional blur between gacaca and ikinimicu.

Mihigo utilizes the place of Kibeho (a site of RPF war crimes) and the RPF utilizes the place of gacaca (judgment in the grass) as a "background structure" in Alexander's sense.[50] In this way, place has its own kind of citationality that becomes enacted through collective representations that define the symbolic references for every speech act. Gacaca laws elicit speech acts, but using Worthen's notion of speech politics, place and the rehearsals of gacaca also affect the enactment of gacaca laws and vice versa—one informs the other. There are multiple and uneven processes and systems of power that affect the gacaca proceedings and otherwise.[51]

In reference to speech politics and the use of larger political and international scripts, Mihigo was eventually charged with laws against "terrorism" versus based on genocide denial. Grant states:

> The Mihigo case brought into sharp relief the extent of the state's 'reach' and suggested that it had developed a new method to prosecute its 'enemies.' If early critics of the RPF were charged with divisionism and/or genocide ideology, they were now slapped with terrorism charges. We can see the RPF employing a particularly powerful global discourse to silence its opponents.[52]

Global discourses and laws related to terrorism are used for further government control and overwrite the previously noted speech politics of forgiveness derived from Judeo-Christian politics, reconciliation from the South African TRC and justice from both national and international court structures. International speech politics affect the local and the ongoing struggle over how the state controls speech acts in post-genocide Rwanda.

Notes

1 See William B. Worthen, *Print and the Poetics of Modern Drama* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
2 Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Performance and Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 83.
3 See John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., ed. J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà (1962; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
4 See John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).
5 Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 11.
6 Johan Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39. The French government was instrumental in fueling the killing by providing weapons and military support to the Hutu Republic through Opération Turquoise, which was intended to serve as a peacekeeping mission.
7 "Ubuntu" is a Xhosa term widely used during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa as a principle of transitional justice. The Interim Constitution no. 200 of 1993 stated:

> The adoption of this Constitution lays the secure foundation for the people of South Africa to transcend the divisions and strife of the past, which generated gross violations of human rights, the transgression of humanitarian principles in violent conflicts and a legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge. These can now be addressed on the basis that there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu (the African philosophy of humanism) but not for victimization.

See Claire Moon, *Narrating Political Reconciliation: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Plymouth: Lexington, 2008), 29.
8 Frank K. Rusagara, "Gacaca: Rwanda's Truth and Reconciliation Authority," *New Times*, 16 May 2005, last accessed 22 March 2018. Available at: http://allafrica.com/stories/200505170174.html.
9 See the website of the National Unity and Reconciliation Committee of the Republic of Rwanda, www.nurc.gov.rw, last accessed 10 October 2011.
10 Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf, "Introduction: Seeing Like a Post-Conflict State," in *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*, ed. S. Straus and L. Waldorf (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 4.
11 During Ingando camps, songs and dances are used for the recitation and embodiment of lessons based on the history of Rwanda and development aims.
12 "Organic Law No 16/2004 of 19/6/2004: Article 54," Available at: *ecoi.net*, last accessed 28 March 2018, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1352329/1504_1217831773_organic-law-establishing-the-organisation-competence-and-functioning-of-gacaca-courts.pdf.
13 Alexander, *Performance and Power*, 83.
14 Ibid., 85.
15 See Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto, 2004), 72–99.
16 Lars Waldorf, "'Like Jews Waiting for Jesus': Posthumous Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda," in *Localizing Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities after Mass Violence*, ed. R. Shaw, L. Waldorf, and P. Hazan (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 200.
17 See ibid.; Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, 72–99.
18 For more information about grassroots organizations, see Ananda Breed, "Performing the Nation: Theatre in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *The Drama Review* 52, no. 1 (T197) (Spring 2008): 32–50.

19 Alexander, *Performance and Power*, 84.
20 "Organic Law No 16/2004 of 19/6/2004," Available at: *ecoi.net*, last accessed 28 March 2018, www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1352329/1504_1217831773_organic-law-establishing-the-organisation-competence-and-functioning-of-gacaca-courts.pdf.
21 About the roles that prisoners performed in prison and the bartering of crimes for reduced sentences, see Carina Tertsakian, *Le Château: The Lives of Prisoners in Rwanda* (London: Arves, 2008).
22 Alexander, *Performance and Power*, 83–84.
23 Peterson Tumwebaze, "Illiteracy Rate Decreases," *New Times*, 14 May 2012, last accessed 28 March 2018, www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/52782.
24 Alexander, *Performance and Power*, 84.
25 Ibid.
26 Astrid Jamar, "Deterioration of Aid Coordination in Gacaca Implementation: Dealing with the Past for a Better Future?" in *Rwanda Fast Forward: Social, Economic, Military and Reconciliation Prospects*, ed. M. Campioni and P. Noack (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 85.
27 Giorgio Agamben, quoted in Stephen Humphreys, "Legalizing Lawlessness: On Giorgio Agamben's State of Exception," *The European Journal of International Law* 17, no. 3 (2006): 678.
28 Ibid., 682.
29 Alexander, *Performance and Power*, 84.
30 Filip Reyntjens notes: "Over the post-1994 period, it [Rwanda] has relied on international aid for about 25 percent of its GDP and over 50 percent of its budget." See Filip Reyntjens, "Constructing the Truth, Dealing with Dissent, Domesticating the World: Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (January 2011): 18.
31 Ibid., 4.
32 Jonathan W. Rosen, "Dissident 'Choirboy': Rwandan Gospel Star on Trial," *Al Jazeera*, 11 December 2014, last accessed 29 March 2018, http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/12/11/rwanda-gospel-singerontrial.html.
33 See Worthen, *Print and Poetics*.
34 For more information about Kizito Mihigo, see Andrea Grant, "Living under 'Quiet Insecurity': Religion and Popular Culture in Post-Genocide Rwanda" (PhD diss., St Hugh's College, 2014).
35 I visited seven communities that used theater as part of the gacaca campaign between July and December 2005. Of those communities, the Rulindo district of the Rusagara sector staged the performance of a gacaca court proceeding in their production *Urubanza Rwa Gasaruhanda Alias Kigomeke* (The Trial of Gasaruhanda Alias Kigomeke). Illiteracy is high in the region, a factor that enhances the utility of theater to illustrate the procedure of the gacaca. In an interview conducted by me on 13 July 2005, the gacaca district coordinator of Rulindo stated that Rusagara was one of the 1,500 pilot gacaca sectors and observed that

> theater has had a good effect on sensitization and participation in this area. Many people come to watch. We have had a very big number of guilty pleas here as a response to the play, a large percentage of confessions.

36 Johnston Busingye, in discussion with the author, Kigali, 11 January 2005.
37 Ibid.
38 Peter Uvin, "The Introduction of a Modernized Gacaca for Judging Suspects of Participation in the Genocide and the Massacres of 1994 in Rwanda: A Discussion Paper Prepared for the Belgian Secretary of State for Development Cooperation," unpublished manuscript, 7.
39 The Norwegian Helsinki Committee, "Prosecuting Genocide in Rwanda: The Gacaca System and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda—Report II/2002,"

Available at: *University of Essex*, last accessed 4 April 2018, www1.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/themes/education/thegacacasystemrwanda.pdf.

40 Erving Goffman used the term "framing" to describe a process of creating meaning via analysis of the self and society by setting parameters for observation. Goffman maintains that the social organization of events determines what is being constructed or framed. See Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York, NY: Harper Colophon, 1974).

41 For case study analysis of several gacaca court proceedings as analyzed through the Gacaca Narratives Project, see Ananda Breed, "Discordant Narratives in *Rwanda Fast Forward: Social, Economic, Military and Reconciliation Prospects*," 29–44.

42 In the case of my fieldwork in Rwanda during a time period when public speech acts were often inherently linked to incrimination, the methodology of one-to-one interviews was crucial to gathering hidden transcripts or narratives that may not have aligned with the government's public transcript.

43 Interview with attendee of Gacaca Court of Appeal, Nyarugenge District, Kigali, 14 April 2010.

44 Ibid.

45 For more information about court proceedings and the analysis of gacaca in regards to "scripting," see Breed, "Discordant Narratives," 36–37.

46 Paul Kagame, "Speech at the Official Closing of Gacaca Courts," *Paul Kagame*, 19 June 2012, last accessed 4 April 2018, http://paulkagame.com/?p=1355.

47 Ibid.

48 For the regional specificity of how the genocide occurred, see Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1999). Additionally, regarding how locality affected gacaca proceedings from region to region, see Phil Clark, *The Gacaca Courts and Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice Without Lawyers* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

49 Jacques Derrida, *Limited, Inc.* Ed. Gerald Graff. Trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Samuel Weber (Evanstan: Northwestern University Presa, 2000): 17.

50 Alexander, *Performance and Power*, 83.

51 Asef Bayat, "From 'Dangerous Classes' to 'Quiet Rebels': Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South," *International Sociology* 15, no. 3 (September 2000): 544.

52 Grant, "Living under 'Quiet Insecurity,'" 320.

Bibliography

Alexander, Jeffrey C. *Performance and Power*. Cambridge: Polity, 2011.

Austin, John L. *How to Do Things with Words*. 1962. 2nd ed. Edited by J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Bayat, Asef. "From 'Dangerous Classes' to 'Quiet Rebels': Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South." *International Sociology* 15, no. 3 (September 2000): 533–57.

Breed, Ananda. "Discordant Narratives in Rwanda's Gacaca Courts." In *Rwanda Fast Forward: Social, Economic, Military and Reconciliation Prospects*, edited by M. Campioni and P. Noack, 29–44. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

———. *Performing the Nation: Genocide, Justice, Reconciliation*. Chicago, IL: Seagull, 2014.

———. "Performing the Nation: Theatre in Post-Genocide Rwanda." *The Drama Review* 52, no. 1 (T197) (Spring 2008): 32–50.

Clark, Phil. *The Gacaca Courts and Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without Lawyers*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Derrida, Jacques. "On Forgiveness." In *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, translated by M. Dooley and M. Hughes, 27–60. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2001.

Des Forges, Alison. *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1999.

Eltringham, Nigel. *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda*. London: Pluto, 2004.

Grant, Andrea. "Living under 'Quiet Insecurity': Religion and Popular Culture in Post-Genocide Rwanda." PhD diss., St Hugh's College, 2014.

Goffman, Erving. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon, 1974.

Humphreys, Stephen. "Legalizing Lawlessness: On Giorgio Agamben's State of Exception." *The European Journal of International Law* 17, no. 3 (2006): 677–87.

Jamar, Astrid. "Deterioration of Aid Coordination in Gacaca Implementation: Dealing with the Past for a Better Future?" In *Rwanda Fast Forward: Social, Economic, Military and Reconciliation Prospects*, edited by M. Campioni and P. Noack, 76–95. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Kagame, Paul. "Speech at the Official Closing of Gacaca Courts." *Paul Kagame*, 19 June 2012. Last accessed 4 April 2018. http://paulkagame.com/?p=1355.

Moon, Claire. *Narrating Political Reconciliation: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Plymouth: Lexington, 2008.

Niezen, Ronald. *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

"Organic Law No 16/2004 of 19/6/2004." Available at: *ecoi.net*. Last accessed 28 March 2018. www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1352329/1504_1217831773_organic-law-establishing-the-organisation-competence-and-functioning-of-gacaca-courts.pdf.

Pottier, Johan. *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Reyntjens, Filip. "Constructing the Truth, Dealing with Dissent, Domesticating the World: Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda." *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (January 2011): 1–34.

Rosen, Jonathan W. "Dissident 'Choirboy': Rwandan Gospel Star on Trial." *Al Jazeera*, 11 December 2014. Last accessed 29 March 2018. http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/12/11/rwanda-gospel-singerontrial.html.

Rusagara, Frank K. "Gacaca: Rwanda's Truth and Reconciliation Authority." *New Times*, 16 May 2005. Last accessed 22 March 2018. Available at: http://allafrica.com/stories/200505170174.html.

Searle, John R. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

Straus, Scott, and Lars Waldorf. "Introduction: Seeing Like a Post-Conflict State." In *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*, edited by S. Straus and L. Waldorf, 3–24. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011.

Tertsakian, Carina. *Le Château: The Lives of Prisoners in Rwanda*. London: Arves, 2008.

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee. "Prosecuting Genocide in Rwanda: The Gacaca System and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda—Report II/2002." Available at: *University of Essex*. Last accessed 4 April 2018. www1.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/themes/education/thegacacasystemrwanda.pdf.

Tumwebaze, Peterson. "Illiteracy Rate Decreases." *New Times*, 14 May 2012. Last accessed 28 March 2018. www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/52782.

Uvin, Peter. "The Introduction of a Modernized Gacaca for Judging Suspects of Participation in the Genocide and the Massacres of 1994 in Rwanda: A Discussion Paper Prepared for the Belgian Secretary of State for Development Cooperation." Unpublished manuscript.

Waldorf, Lars. "'Like Jews Waiting for Jesus': Posthumous Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda." In *Localizing Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities after Mass Violence*, edited by R. Shaw, L. Waldorf, and P. Hazan, 183–204. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Worthen, William B. *Print and the Poetics of Modern Drama*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Part II

Translations

5 Cultural interweaving and translation

Three iconic moments in Indian theater, 1859–1979[1]

Aparna Dharwadker

Cultural interweaving and theater translation

In *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures* (2014), the inaugural volume of essays by a group of scholars and artists affiliated with the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" in Berlin, an important common goal is to understand intercultural and postcolonial relationships in theater and performance in historically informed and political but non-deterministic terms. In her manifesto-like introduction to the volume, Erika Fischer-Lichte describes the contact of cultures through theater as "a perpetual instrument and vehicle for change and renewal," and the period since the mid-nineteenth century as an especially active phase in "transfers of theatre from one culture to another."[2] However, in her view, the two most influential (but antithetical) postwar models of cultural exchange—the forms of interculturalism promoted in the 1970s and 1980s by practitioner-theorists such as Richard Schechner, Ariane Mnouchkine and Peter Brook, and the oppositional discourses of postcolonial theory—are unsatisfactory in ethical as well as political terms, although both discourses paradoxically connect the aesthetic closely to the ethical and the political. Vocal critics of postwar Euro-American interculturalism argue that the movement has failed to dislodge the orientalist-imperialist presumptions governing Western appropriations of non-Western artistic practices during the colonial period and has therefore created only new forms of hegemony during a time of ostensible decolonization in the later twentieth century. Conversely, the decolonizing mindset and counter-discursive energies of postcolonialism have limited the possibilities of productive cultural exchange through performance. Fischer-Lichte claims that as theoretical constructs, interculturalism and postcolonial theory are inclined to be anti-utopian, whereas the processes of interweaving performance cultures, or IPCs, "provide an experimental framework for experiencing the utopian potential of culturally diverse and globalized societies by realizing an aesthetic which gives shape to unprecedented collaborative policies in society."[3] IPC also celebrates the movement "within and between cultures" as "a state of in-between-ness that will change spaces, disciplines, and the subject […] in a way that exceeds what is currently imaginable."[4]

The need to move beyond existing categories of thought and action is reinforced by several other contributors to the volume. Khalid Amine calls for a "'double resistance' [to] all different 'Occidents' and 'Orients' that produced us as postcolonial subjects,"[5] and stresses the need to "re-[think] difference and identity without recourse to essentialist absolutes and 'isms.'"[6] Rustom Bharucha questions premature dismissals of the postcolonial as a spent force, and cautions that the idealistic strain in the concept of interweaving does not necessarily eliminate the "fraught dynamics" of intercultural exchange, but he does see the concept as a valuable intervention in the existing terms of intercultural discourse.[7] Referring to the December 2011 special issue of *Theatre Journal* that was co-edited by Ric Knowles and Penny Farfan and focused on interculturalism, Brian Singleton notes that "[a] change in terminology aside, what Fischer-Lichte and the contributors to the Farfan-Knowles collection both aspire to do is to focus positively on cultural exchange in which performance unleashes its transformative potential."[8] IPC gradually takes shape in these arguments as preeminently a program for the present and the future: it offers participants experiences *beyond* postcolonialism, *beyond* racism and *beyond* the "pervasive binary concepts of Self versus Other, East versus West, North versus South, own versus foreign and the aesthetic […] versus the political and ethical."[9]

I want to suggest that the revisionary arguments about theater and culture offered in *Interweaving Performance Cultures* are relevant to other, largely neglected forms of collaboration in which performance also "unleashes its transformative potential," but in relation to cultural processes that belong to the colonial(ist) *past* and the postcolonial *present*, rather than to the *post-postcolonial* future imagined by IPC. The translation and transculturation of English, European and subsequently world drama into more than a dozen modern Indian languages, beginning around 1850 and continuous since that date, represent a monumental process of cultural interpenetration for which the concept of "cultural interweaving" seems more appropriate than the theoretical constructs through which we habitually approach colonial and postcolonial literary-cultural production. For three decades, leading theorists of "colonialism and the postcolonial condition" have drawn on the work of Gramsci, Foucault, Lacan and Derrida, among others, to formulate the influential concepts of hegemony, dominance, subalternity, aphasia, ambivalence, hybridity, mimicry and counter-discourse. These are powerful political and philosophical constructs, but their Eurocentric frames of reference and totalizing tendencies cannot successfully encompass the modern urban culture of writing, print and performance that appeared across the full spectrum of Indian languages during the nineteenth century and continues to represent an extended literary-cultural-historical encounter between India, the West and the world. The spheres of colonial and postcolonial translation, for example, are not subaltern, merely imitative or artistically second-rate, but nor are they primarily oppositional, deconstructive, or counter-discursive. Rather, translation has served for two hundred years as the medium through which the irreducibly complex system of India's multilingual literacy engages with the world's cultural forms. More specifically, the plurality and interconnectedness of languages have

been instrumental in determining the historical conditions under which drama acquires its multiple modes of existence (oral, textual and performative) and the primary vehicle of linguistic-cultural exchange is translation.

The central role of translation in creating the Indian theatrical modern derives from its multidirectionality. From the vantage point of the present, the philological and cultural connections can be analyzed into the following chronologically overlapping strands: (i) the translation of classical Sanskrit plays into the modern European languages; (ii) the translation of classical Sanskrit plays into the modern Indian languages; (iii) the translation of Shakespeare into the modern Indian languages; (iv) the translation of other English, European, American and world drama into the modern Indian languages; and (v) the translation of modern plays from one Indian language to another, including English, which is now both an Indian and a Western language. Each of these strands represents a distinctive intervention in the burgeoning field of theater and needs brief explanation. The simultaneous translation of Sanskrit drama into the modern European as well as Indian languages by European and Indian translators (scholars, poets, playwrights, philologists and enthusiasts) was a singular event in colonial and postcolonial literary-cultural history, because it involved a uniquely triangulated transhistorical exchange: it made a redemptive cultural past available to both colonizer and colonized (although for very different cultural ends) and inserted "tradition" instrumentally into "modernity," so that the nineteenth-century urban Indian intelligentsia could use the forms of the past as the basis for a national renaissance in the present. The migration of Sanskrit source texts into European target languages over more than two centuries—circa 1789 to the present—also represents the only substantial intercultural passage of *Indian* drama into *Western* mediums, with the translated works belonging exclusively to the classical period. In the opposite direction, a much more inclusive intercultural movement resulted in the large-scale carrying across, first of Shakespeare (ca. 1850–1920) and then of other European, American and world drama onto the urban Indian stage and into the medium of print (1920 to the present), positioning the Indian languages comprehensively as *recipient media* for Euro-American and world theater from all periods. Since the 1960s, the influx of foreign drama has continued, while the brisk translation and circulation of old and new Indian plays among theatrically active languages has given "regional" works both transregional and national currency, and has become the most reliable artistic index of a "new national" canon of published plays and notable performances. In modern Indian theater, the forms of conjunction and reciprocity have thus operated at both intercultural and intracultural levels, connecting classical India to modern India and modern Europe, all of world theater to the Indian languages, and the Indian languages to each other, with translation serving as the primary bridge between the regional, the national and the international.

In this extensive network of connections, there is a fundamental theoretical distinction to be made between two forms of exchange: interlingual translation, and intercultural or transcultural appropriation. The most common Indian terms for interlingual translation are *bhashantar* or *bhashantaran* (literally, the "difference" or

"change" of *language*) and *anuvad* (repetition or emulation) or *bhashanuvad* (translation from one language to another). A third etymologically fascinating term, common in the nineteenth century and still used occasionally, is *ultha* (translation, version) from the Hindi *ulathna* ("to be stirred up, as the ocean by storms") and *ulatha* (capsizing, a somersault). This terminology is appropriate for describing one major range of relationships between Sanskrit, the modern Indian languages and European/world languages (in different permutations), because at the core of this type of translation is the principle of equivalence between the "verbal signs" of the original and receiving languages. Because "languages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express,"[10] the process of translation can produce what Roman Jakobson describes as "two equivalent messages in two different codes."[11] From the beginning of the modern period, however, the "translation" of Western and world drama into *Indian* languages has consisted mainly in a form of transculturation for which the general Indian terms are *rupantar* or *rupantaran* (the "difference" or "change" of *form*; "changed or new form, transformation; version, rendering, adaptation") and *anuyojan* (the remaking of ancient narratives or unfamiliar forms of expression through a new artistic consciousness). Applied specifically to drama and theater (*natya*), the terms change to *natyarupantar*, *natyantara* and *natyantaran*. This alternative terminology denotes a search for equivalence in cultural *as well as* linguistic signs, and a meticulous "translation of difference" so that a play embodies the cultural system as well as the language of its receiving audience. Equivalence has to be sought, moreover, not only at linguistic-cultural but also experiential and existential levels. The original works and their "adaptations" can therefore be conceived of as "transcultural intertexts," which not only establish the priority of the source text but also highlight the linguistic and performative resources of the target language/culture and allow the adapters considerable freedom.

Postcolonial theory approaches these forms of transcultural intertextuality mainly as examples of the ex-colonial periphery "writing back" to the ex-imperial center, but there are at least three important reasons why the counter-discursive model is inadequate to the field of translation in modern Indian theater. First, the practice of transculturation began *during the colonial period itself* with the large-scale appropriation of Shakespeare and has grown immeasurably since independence as the canon not only of Western but of world drama has found its way onto the Indian stage and into the print culture of all the major Indian languages, including English. Second, the languages of the vast majority of source texts are European, but the target languages are indigenous and non-Europhone, so that even during the colonial period, translation resisted the hegemonic control of the colonial state and, in postcolonial India, English remains firmly secondary to the indigenous languages as the target language for foreign drama, although it is an increasingly important medium for the translation of Indian plays. Third, the translated text is not the sign of an ambivalent hybridity but of cultural ambidexterity, which Vinay Dharwadker defines as "an equal or commensurate facility in two or more cultural systems concurrently."[12] The European source texts generate not perplexity or

servility but excitement, resourcefulness, playfulness, innovation and opportunism. In fact, the drive to translate, "rewrite" and appropriate earlier works is almost as compelling and pervasive in modern Indian theater as the impulse toward original composition. Translation practices assume so many different forms and fulfill such diverse textual and performative functions that no homogenizing theory of adversarial or subaltern cultural relations can represent them adequately.

Theater and translation in modern India

The need to develop more nuanced critical approaches to translational relationships is reinforced most powerfully by the monumental scale of the bibliographic imprint created by multidirectional translation activities. For the period from 1800 to 2000, the Online Catalog of the Library of Congress lists almost 4,000 records pertaining to translations of the eight principal Sanskrit playwrights (Kalidasa, Bhasa, Shudraka, Bhavabhuti, Shri Harsha, Vishakhadutt, Krishna Mishra and Mahendra Vikram Varman) into languages such as English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian, and about 1,800 records pertaining to translations of the same playwrights into the Indian languages, notably Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada and Gujarati. Shakespeare entered the colonial Indian classroom in the 1840s, became the iconic English counterpart to the Sanskrit *mahakavi* (supreme poet) Kalidasa in the national cultural imaginary and for many decades was virtually the only European playwright translated for publication and performance. Approached universally as dramatic and theatrical touchstones, his plays in translation ran the full gamut from lowbrow commercial-popular to highbrow literary and even reformist agendas, and from faithful interlingual versions to boldly transcultural experiments. In 1995, the number of published Indian-language translations of Shakespeare stood at 434, again with Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil and Kannada as the leading target languages. After 1920, the translation of other foreign drama into Indian languages also moved well beyond Shakespeare and the exigencies of competitive commercial production and now represents an ever-expanding field of published texts and significant performances.

The example of Hindi, the Indian language containing the largest body of world drama in modern translation, shows that the sphere of translation has expanded backward to include the classical Greek playwrights (Aristophanes, Sophocles, Euripides) and forward to include many early modern and middle-modern authors, such as Calderón, Ben Jonson, Molière, Racine, Rostand, Beaumarchais, Goldoni, Giraudoux, Sheridan, Lessing and Büchner. The core energy in translation, however, is focused on the major modern(ist) figures of northern and western Europe—Ibsen, Chekhov, Gogol, Gorki, Strindberg, Wilde, Shaw, Maeterlinck, Pirandello, Galsworthy, Brecht, Lorca, Anouilh, Sartre, Camus, Dürrenmatt, Beckett, Ionesco, Wesker and Dario Fo, among others. The interest in American drama has remained mainly limited to Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, with an occasional play by William Saroyan varying the sequence of classics by the older trifecta.

The value placed on translation is fully reflected in the succession of major authors in various languages who have taken on the task of bringing Western plays to Indian readers and viewers. Major colonial-era translators of Shakespeare included Bhartendu Harishchandra, the "father" of modern Hindi literature, who adapted *The Merchant of Venice* as *Durlabh bandhu* (Invaluable Friend); the social reformer Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, who made a didactic adaptation of *Hamlet* into Marathi under the title *Wikara vilasita* (The Malformations of Opulence) in 1882; G. B. Deval, whose *Jhunjharrao natak* (Marathi, 1890) was a sensational stage musical version of *Othello*; and the Tamil playwright Pammal Sambandha Mudaliar, who produced literary versions of *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Cymbeline* between 1910 and 1914. Since the 1940s, Shakespeare has been enmeshed in the post-independence literary-artistic renaissance in even more complex ways. Leading poets such as Harivansh Rai Bachchan and Raghuvir Sahay (Hindi), Vinda Karandikar and V. V. Shirwadkar (Marathi), Masti Venkatesha Iyengar (Kannada) and Firaq Gorakhpuri (Urdu) have translated or adapted Shakespeare's major tragedies, comedies and romances. These and other versions have been brought to the stage by leading directors like Utpal Dutt, Ebrahim Alkazi, K. V. Subbanna, Alyque Padamsee and the East German director Fritz Bennewitz, best known for his collaborative productions of Bertolt Brecht in India. Performance acquires perhaps its greatest level of complexity when the Shakespearean adaptation incorporates a major indigenous form or presentational style, as in B. V. Karanth's Yakshagana version of *Macbeth* (translated by Sahay as *Barnam vana*), Sadanam Balakrishnan's Kathakali *King Lear* and *Othello*, and Habib Tanvir's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Kamdev ka apna, vasant ritu ka sapna*, 1993) in the Chhattisgarhi folk style.[13]

Inevitably, there are some fault lines in this expansive terrain. First, the historical relationships that translation has created between modern Indian theater and Western as well as world theater are radically asymmetrical. Since the 1870s, the drama of Europe, America and now other parts of the world has found its way into the print and performance cultures of the Indian languages, but there has been virtually no reciprocal translation of Indian plays into *foreign* languages by foreign translators. The only original Indian play from the colonial period that had been translated into English, Dutch, Spanish, French and Polish by the early 1940s was Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office*, first published in Bengali in 1914, the year after Tagore received the Nobel Prize. As a European language, English is therefore important as the medium *from* which first Shakespeare and then playwrights such as Ibsen, Shaw and Galsworthy are translated and absorbed into the Indian languages. But translators from around the world continue to be disinterested in translating modern Indian plays into English and other languages, and only a few contemporary works have appeared in languages such as French, German and Spanish, mainly to make specific productions possible.

Second, the geographical range of Indian translations of foreign drama remains circumscribed to an extent that suggests a continuing (neocolonial) preoccupation with certain parts of the West and a failure of the imagination in relation to the rest. Nearly seven decades after independence, the vast majority

of published and performed translations involve authors from Europe and North America, with Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekhov, Brecht and Gogol continuing to shore up the national repertoire. It is safe to say that on any given day, there are more Western plays in translation on urban Indian stages of all kinds than Indian plays from any period. The great momentum behind translation has therefore left large regions of the world virtually untouched, among them Japan, China, Canada, Australia, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Africa.

Third, and perhaps most important, large-scale translation activity in and for the theater does not produce a corresponding body of translation theory, or even much significant self-reflection. The title page of a play always specifies whether it is an interlingual translation (*bhashantar* or *anuvad*) or an intercultural adaptation (*rupantar* or *anuyojan*) and there has been some discussion among recent translators about the ethics of appropriation. But beyond this, there is little effort to explain the complex relationship between foreign and Indian languages or source and target texts, or to spell out even the basic principles of translation. Introductory and editorial material is often hagiographic in tone, preoccupied with a particular playwright's "immortal fame" rather than with the translator's approach or method. Situating the original author in very generalized historical and biographical contexts so that he or she becomes familiar to readers in the Indian language takes precedence over analysis, criticism and interpretation. A few European plays are translated directly from the original language of composition, but the majority are re-translated from an English or even Hindi version. The practice of "indirect translation" is by no means limited to Indian translators; what renders it problematic is the lack of transparency, comment and self-reflection on the part of the translators. There are also far too many published translations with no framing critical material at all.

The theory, history and criticism of theater translation in India, therefore, await systematic discussion, like theater translation in general, which Susan Bassnett described in 1998 as "the most problematic and neglected area of translation studies research."[14] In the introduction to *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation* (2000), Terry Hale and Carole-Anne Upton reiterated that "[t]heatre translation has largely fallen between the two young disciplines of theatre studies and translation studies, in much the same way as it often seems to fall between the portfolios of literature and drama […]."[15] The problem is reciprocal: translation theorists show no particular awareness of the richness of the theatrical tradition and practicing theater translators seem to be largely unaware of translation theory. Critical approaches to theater translation appear to have entered a qualitatively different phase, however, because of new theoretical emphases on the relation of translation to culture. Bassnett and André Lefevere define one important position when they contend that translation "constructs" cultures in the domain of cultural capital "by negotiating the passage of texts between them, or rather, by devising strategies through which texts from one culture can penetrate the textual and conceptual grids of another culture, and function in that other culture."[16] This makes translation "one of the most obvious, comprehensive, and easy to study 'laboratory situations' for the study of cultural interaction."[17]

The Introduction to *Theatre Translation in Performance* (2013) defines a second crucial shift and brings the specific debate over theater's rightful place in translation studies into the present. The co-editors argue that "[t]heatre has become the overall model for what cultural studies have defined as [a] 'performative turn,'" prompting critics to discard both hermeneutic and semiotic approaches in favor of an "aesthetics of performativity."[18] Moreover, the concept of "cultural translation" posits translation not as a procedure for the interlingual transfer of texts but as a figure for contemporary life, which includes the movement of people around the globe and the ways in which they negotiate existential change and cultural difference. The "performative turn" in cultural studies, and the "cultural turn" in translation studies thus offer a suggestive meeting ground for approaches to translation, performance and culture.

This rethinking of translation as an activity and metaphor is an appropriate context for the three iconic but dissimilar moments of cultural exchange in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indian theater that I take up in the remainder of this chapter. The first event is the appearance in 1859 of *Sermista*, Michael Madhusudan Dutt's English translation of his own Bengali play, *Sharmishtha*, which had been published in Calcutta the previous year. Dutt had also produced an English translation of Shri Harsha's Sanskrit play *Ratnavali* in 1858, but *Sharmishtha* was his first full-length original play, based on the well-known episode of King Yayati in the first book (*Adiparvan*) of the classical Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata*. Although Dutt was dealing with his own play rather than the work of another Indian or foreign author, the *Sharmishtha-Sermista* pairing represented a seminal moment in urban theatrical modernity, because it brought together an unexpected range of heterogeneous cultural elements—a very influential classical epic source, a fascination with Sanskrit drama mediated by European orientalism, a desire to shape the cultural present, bilingual authorship and the relationship between English and Bengali as vital languages belonging, respectively, to the colonizer and the colonized. In comparison, the two twentieth-century events were more conventional acts of translation in which major Indian writers took on canonical English playwrights. In 1930, Munshi Premchand, the preeminent novelist in Hindi and Urdu during the first half of the twentieth century, published translations of three plays by the English playwright John Galsworthy that had originally appeared between 1906 and 1910—*The Silver Box* (as *Chandi ki dibiya*), *Strife* (as *Hartal*) and *Justice* (as *Nyaya*). While colonial relations would conventionally position Premchand and Galsworthy on opposite sides of the political spectrum, the translational relation was enabled by the internationalism of the Progressive Writers movement, which created convincing affinities between a deeply socialist Indian-language writer and his politically liberal but socially privileged British counterpart. Half a century later, Raghuvir Sahay's prose-and-verse translation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (titled *Barnam vana*) was a self-consciously experimental version of a work that had already been translated or adapted more than thirty times in nine Indian languages. Commissioned in 1979 for an ambitious production by the National School of Drama Repertory Company (New Delhi), the play was directed by B. V. Karanth—an outstanding figure in post-independence

theater who was also the school's Director at that time—and remains a notable intervention in the array of postcolonial Shakespeares.

The relationships between the source and target texts in these examples are not uniform but diverse. There seems to be no comparative discussion in English of the *Sharmishtha-Sermista* textual complex by a scholar or critic who commands both languages (I do not read Bengali) and so Dutt's methods as a translator remain open to speculation. The interlingual translations by Premchand retained the source texts' original setting and character names and they exemplify what recent critics have called "drama translation" or the source-oriented approach, which emphasizes the text and the reader. Sahay's interlingual rendering also retained Shakespeare's setting and character names but, as mentioned earlier, Karanth fused the text seamlessly with the presentational style of the Yakshagana folk form of Karnataka, inserting the transcultural specifically at the level of performance. The collaboration was therefore significant as both text and performance but engaged the viewer in a radically different way from the reader. It belongs more appropriately to the category of "theatre translation" or the "target-oriented" approach, which emphasizes performance and the audience. Both these translators chose "foreignization" over "domestication," reflecting a preference for the interlingual over the intercultural, or *bhashantar* over *rupantar*. In a fascinating move that is both contrapuntal and complementary, the Indian narrative of *Sermista* was "defamiliarized" in translation through the use of Western linguistic and structural elements. Placed together, the three moments of translation also register the passage of time and the change in Indo-European cultural relations. Dutt's work is enmeshed in nineteenth-century orientalism and a resurgent Indian cultural nationalism, whereas the Premchand-Sahay-Karanth ventures involve twentieth-century Indian theater's aesthetic, political and material relations to canonical English drama, and hence translation's ambivalent relation to current theories of counter-discourse, hegemonic interculturalism and the more utopian "cultural interweaving."

Sanskrit, Bengali, English: The matrix of colonial translation

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824–73) was the first modern Indian author with a recognizable body of dramatic work in two languages—Bengali and English—and his pioneering full-length plays, *Sharmishtha* and *Sermista*, connected with the cultures of both print and amateur performance in mid-nineteenth-century Calcutta. Dutt wrote *Sharmishtha* in a few weeks during 1858 in order to offer a worthwhile Bengali play for performance at the Belgatchia Villa Theatre in north Calcutta, which was patronized by the Rajas (princes) of Paikpara. "The genius of the drama," he felt, "ha[d] not yet received even a moderate degree of development in this country," and the objective in *Sharmishtha* was to create not merely a "dramatic poem" but a stageable play.[19] When the Bengali version premiered at the Belgatchia in September 1859, an Indian reviewer for the *Hindu Patriot* praised its authentic period atmosphere and felt that the scenic

arrangements, costumes, etc., had accomplished Dutt's purpose to "pictur[e] forth with marvellous accuracy the Indian life, habitudes and usages of that distant age."[20] In the preface to the English translation, Dutt described the original play as "the first attempt in the Bengali language to produce a classical and regular Drama," of the kind that could contribute to "our rising national Theatre."[21] There is no record of the English version ever being performed, although the Bengali version was revived by Girish Chandra Ghosh at the Bagbazar Amateur Theatre in 1867 and by Saratchandra Ghosh at the Bengal Theatre in 1873. More broadly, in Dutt's playwriting career, *Sharmishtha* began an active phase that resulted in two more full-length plays on epic-historical subjects and two farces set in contemporary Calcutta, all of them published by 1861 but performed between 1865 and 1867 in various amateur theaters.[22] In 1862, Dutt left Calcutta to study law in England and his only other play *Maya-Kanan* (The Forest of Illusion) was written a few months before his death in 1873.

As a bilingual poet, playwright, essayist and intellectual, Dutt belongs to that phase of colonial modernity in which Indian enthusiasm for new European influences was strongly mediated by the orientalist recovery of the Indian past. The so-called "golden age" of classical Sanskrit offered Indian authors a cultural system of their "own" that was equal in complexity and prestige to the new foreign models, and created atypical affinities between the modern and the premodern or the non-modern across the full range of literary and performative genres. As Sudipta Kaviraj notes, "In Madhusudan, as in many of his contemporaries, we find the potent and unprecedented combination of elements from Sanskrit and English that marks the serious advent of modern literature."[23] Authors use "elements from both aesthetic alphabets" to produce "new forms that were irreducible to either."[24] Dutt's *Sharmishtha* is a showpiece of this duality in that it attempts to create Western-style drama in Bengali with classical myth and Sanskrit dramaturgy as the building blocks, and English as a new second medium for disseminating the hybrid product nationally and internationally. As Dutt's references to the "genius of the drama" and the model of a "classical and regular Drama" also make clear, his goal is nothing less than to restore this genre to the premier status it had in classical Indian culture. His formal training in Sanskrit and Persian, the two imperial languages preceding English, creates a singular palimpsest in which the past becomes visible as the highest form of cultural capital, and propels the nationalist project of regeneration that becomes the Bengal and subsequently the Indian Renaissance.

In the *Adiparvan* of the *Mahabharata*, the section titled "Yayati" is just over 400 verses long and offers a powerful mythic narrative of transgressive love and counter-Oedipal aggression on the part of the father. Yayati is a "mighty" and "invincible" descendent of the Kurus who marries Devayani, the daughter of the famous sage Shukracharya, but falls in love with her friend and nemesis, the Asura princess Sharmishtha. Shukracharya punishes Yayati by cursing him with premature old age but relents to add the proviso that the king can retain his youth if someone else assumes the curse. The epic does not question or criticize Yayati's motives when he demands that one of his sons should make the sacrifice,

because he himself is "not yet sated of youth."[25] On the contrary, Yayati curses his four older sons for refusing the challenge, because "the strict do not deem him a son who is contrary to his father," and blesses his youngest son Puru for accepting it. After a thousand years, Yayati assumes his old age again and gives the kingdom to Puru, because "like a true son, Puru did my pleasure."[26]

Dutt follows this story line very closely in the "modern" Western structure he gives to the play, with five acts and a total of thirteen scenes. The English dialogue borrows in equal measure from the idiom and syntax of Elizabethan blank verse, eighteenth-century poetic diction and the declamatory style of orientalist versions of Sanskrit drama that had begun with Sir William Jones's translation of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* in 1789 and continued in H. H. Wilson's *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus* in 1827. The result is mawkish, as when Sharmishtha asks if she has "not like a bedlamite mixed worm-wood and gall with the honied draught Destiny gave me to drink," or when the sea is described as the "Vasty deep."[27] As lovers, Yayati and Devayani, and later Yayati and Sharmishtha, are clearly modeled on Dushyanta and Shakuntala in Kalidasa's play, with no attention to emotional plausibility or consistency. The Vidushaka is part Sanskrit jester, part Shakespearean court fool, and his pursuit of the Nati (actress) is an all too obvious grasping at comic relief. The loyal servants Purnika and Devika are symmetrical types from Sanskrit drama. This, as Chatterjee notes, is the balancing act of being "Bengali/Indian and English/Western at the same stroke," of connecting to a high-cultural indigenous past while "following the modernist principles of European culture as reflected in the theories and praxis of European theatre."[28]

Dutt's decision to gloss over the moral and ethical issues raised by the actions of all the principal characters is another revealing move. The two women are equally ardent in their wooing of Yayati and equally successful. Yayati discovers Sharmishtha's passion for him at the end of Act III, and at the beginning of Act IV, we learn that she has borne him three children, including Puru. Dutt rationalizes Yayati's dalliance, which he knows is morally unacceptable to his audience, with the statement that he "wishes to paint the manners of the age in which Yayati is said to have flourished, as he finds them described in the Mahabharata and other old works."[29] When Devayani discovers the liaison and urges her father to curse Yayati, his first response is that Kshatriya kings are allowed to have more than one wife. At the end of the play, the women reconcile with exaggerated gestures of love and forgiveness. Most importantly, Dutt's play follows the *Mahabharata* exactly in the handling of Yayati's peremptory relationship with his sons. Those who refuse his demand are regarded as undutiful; the one who accepts represents the filial ideal. The play ends with Shukracharya's benediction and prayer for Sharmishtha's everlasting glory.

Sermista is thus ethically problematic and stylistically awkward, but the historical significance of the paired plays is precisely that they are *plays*—five-act structures based on the *Mahabharata*, and the first major modern examples in both Bengali and English of an intertextual relationship with the epic, which becomes theatrically vital in India over the next century and more. Within the vast

interconnected tradition of oral, written, printed and performative genres for which the *Mahabharata* functions as the ur-source at any given historical moment, urban literary drama represents a sub-tradition that serves a distinctive purpose both in relation to anticolonial nationalism and postcolonial counternationalism. The colonial tradition contains Subramania Bharati's *Panchali sabatham* (Tamil: Panchali's Vow, 1912); Tagore's *Chitra* (Bengali, 1914); Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar's *Draupadi* (Marathi, 1928); and, most notably, Khadilkar's *Kichaka vadha* (Marathi: The Slaying of Kichaka), the *Mahabharata* play that became the most sensational example of theatrical anticolonialism and colonial censorship in 1907.[30] In this special sense, whatever the differences of treatment and purpose in their respective plays, Dutt, Bharati, Tagore and Khadilkar are key figures in the tradition that makes possible unparalleled post-independence works of cultural self-reflection based on the *Mahabharata*: Dharamvir Bharati's *Andha Yug* (Hindi: Blind Epoch, 1954); Adya Rangacharya's *Kelu janamejaya* (Kannada: Listen Janamejaya, 1960); and Girish Karnad's *Yayati* (Kannada, 1961) and *Agni mattu male* (Kannada: The Fire and the Rain, 1994). This interweaving is interregional rather than intercultural, but as the locus of exchange involving multiple languages, it is no less significant.[31]

The *Sharmishtha-Sermista* pairing is also the first significant instance in modern Indian theater of active bilingualism that involves an Indian language and *English*—a relationship that is fundamental to Dutt's literary career but surprisingly uncommon in a theater culture that is otherwise pervasively multilingual. The forms of sustained bi- or polylingualism in Indian writing usually encompass two or more indigenous languages, such as Hindi and Urdu in the case of Premchand. Since independence, a number of major playwrights, among them Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Mahesh Elkunchwar and G. P. Deshpande, have also written their plays exclusively in a regional Indian language but produced some or most of their criticism in English. Dutt, in comparison, is one of the very few Indian authors whose writing in multiple genres—poems, plays, essays, letters—oscillates continuously between a major regional language and English.

The status of the two languages in Dutt's oeuvre, however, is unstable and the levels of success are radically unequal. He had begun to publish poems in Bengali and English around the time of his conversion to the Anglican Church in 1843, and in 1849 he attempted to launch his anglophone career with two ambitious poems—*The Captive Ladie: An Indian Tale* (after Byron) and *Visions of the Past* (after Milton). During the same year, he wrote a "verse-drama" titled *Razia, the Empress of Inde*, also in English, and later translated it into Bengali, without generating any interest in either version among readers. His first work for the Belgatchia Theatre was the English translation (mentioned earlier) of Shri Harsha's *Ratnavali*, and *Sermista* was presumably intended for performance on the same stage. Dutt failed to achieve this goal but, in 1861, produced an anonymous English translation of Dinabandhu Mitra's play *Nil-darpan* (The Indigo Mirror, 1860) and set off a political firestorm that led to the prosecution of the Reverend James Long, the Anglican cleric who had published the translation. The original Bengali text

of the play had not invited censorship—it was Dutt's English version that created controversy, because it exposed the colonial government's harsh agrarian policies in Bengal to a liberal British audience, both in India and at home. In addition, Dutt produced letters and essays in English, proclaimed himself an anglophile, lived in England and France from 1862 to 1867 and distanced himself clearly from Indian traditionalism.

Yet his significance as a modern writer rests on the poems and plays in Bengali, not English, and the subjects of these Bengali works invoke the premodern Indian past rather than the Westernized modern present. The simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from English, England and the West in general is a classic example of ambivalence on the part of Dutt-the-colonial-subject, while in Bengali his outstanding trait is an endless inventiveness. In 1858 and 1860, *Sharmishtha* and *Tilottama sambhab kabya* (The Birth of Tilottama) were, respectively, the first play and the first long poem in any modern Indian language to employ blank verse. In 1861, *Meghnad-badh kabya* (The Slaying of Meghnad) launched the Homeric epic poem in Bengali but with the Sanskrit *Ramayana* as the narrative source. *Brajangana kabya* (The Women of Braj, 1861) was a lyric cycle on the Radha-Krishna theme and *Birangana kabya* (Valiant Women, 1862) was a sequence of twenty-one epistles modeled on Ovid's *Heroides*. Dutt's last poetic sequence, *Chaturdashpadi kabitabali* (A Poetic Sequence of Sonnets, 1865), brought the Shakespearean and Petrarchan sonnet forms to Bengali and his two farces were the first modern satirical plays in the language. In comparison with these pioneering accomplishments, the awkward and uneven texture of *Sermista* and *Nil-darpan* as translated works is symptomatic of their historical moment, as well as the lifelong turbulence of the Indian/English duality in Dutt's authorial life. But he emerges nonetheless as the crucial precursor figure for Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) and his only real counterpart in post-independence theater is Girish Karnad (1938—2019), who has created a qualitatively different oeuvre in Kannada and English.

English, Hindi and the late colonial progressive agenda

Munshi Premchand's Hindi translations of three plays by John Galsworthy are an intriguing departure from prose fiction, the genre that had dominated his literary output in both Urdu and Hindi for three decades. He had translated only one European play before this—Maurice Maeterlinck's *Sightless*, rendered into Urdu as *Shabetar* in 1919. A short essay published in the Urdu monthly *Zamana* in March 1920 indicates that Premchand fully expected the *general* readership not to appreciate this somber, spirit-infested allegory about six blind men and six blind women but was disappointed that even magazine and book editors failed to consider the play seriously, and hence ignored it. "I am irked by the ignorance of the Urdu literati," he notes; "Should I think that India's sensitive inhabitants cannot respond adequately to a spiritualism that even Europe's materialist public has been able to enjoy?"[32] Following this somewhat disheartening encounter with symbolist theater, Premchand's translations during the early 1920s remained

firmly within the sphere of prose fiction, which included George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, translated as *Sukhdas* in 1920; Anatole France's historical novel *Thaïs*, translated as *Ahankar* (Egotism) in 1923; and twenty short stories by Tolstoy, also published in 1923. In rendering Eliot and Tolstoy, Premchand followed the well-established principles of *rupantaran*, or transcultural adaptation, and fully Indianized the originals. *Ahankar,* in contrast, was an interlingual *anuvad*, or *bhashantaran,* not from the original French but from an English version that retained the novel's second-century Egyptian setting and most of the historical character names. The title page of *Ahankar* describes the original author as the *sarvashreshtha upanyas lekhak* (supreme novelist) in France and the translator as *upanyas samrat shreeyut Premchand* (the esteemed Premchand, emperor of the novel), celebrating the meeting through translation of two outstanding figures in contemporary fiction.

The appearance of three interlingual translations of plays by a single author—Galsworthy—within a single year—1930—is therefore a notable event in Premchand's literary life, but more than this, it seems to mark a turning point in the broader sphere of colonial translation. It is not the conjunction of major European and Indian talents per se that is new to Indian theater in the modern urban context; I have mentioned earlier some notable colonial and postcolonial versions of Shakespeare and the prominent presence of well-known Indian writers among translators of Western drama. Premchand's translations are unusual because they bring a major *living* playwright to Hindi *readers*, when for fifty years, translations and adaptations of Shakespeare had fueled the popular commercial stage. The Galsworthy translations thus mark the beginning of the move beyond both Shakespeare and popular performance; more broadly, with George Eliot, Maeterlinck, Tolstoy, France and Galsworthy as his original authors, Premchand's translations from 1919 to 1930 represent perhaps the most ambitious engagement with *contemporary* European writing on the part of any Indian writer of his generation.

The translations, moreover, are not intended primarily for the stage, although they do not exclude the possibility of performance. Rather, they are careful textual constructs produced by an author immersed to an unprecedented and frenetic extent in the print cultures of both Hindi and Urdu, and hence also participate fully in Premchand's bilingual authorial life. Even before the plays had been published in Hindi as individual volumes from the Prayag-based Hindustani Academy, Premchand was evidently using them as the basis for Urdu translations, perhaps to be published first in the magazine *Zamana*, edited by his lifelong friend Munshi Daya Narayan Nigam, and later by the Academy. His letter of 28 February 1929 to Nigam states that he has begun translating *Justice* from Hindi into Urdu but would like Nigam to "do the others himself," because the work is slow and interferes with other ongoing commitments. "I will finish *Justice* somehow, but I'm resigning from the other two. I can do much more profitable work in the same time."[33] On 23 May 1929, he writes to say that *Justice* has been "cleaned up" and *The Silver Box* is almost complete.[34] But nearly two years later, a letter of 24 March 1931 records that he is still working on the translation of *Justice* and plans to go on to *Strife*—and now he wants Nigam to tackle *The*

Silver Box on his own.[35] On 11 September 1931, he expresses anxiety over the rumor that the Hindustani Academy has begun to turn away from translations and hopes that this attitude does not extend to Urdu translations, because all their hard work would then go to waste.[36] The most plaintive comment on translation into Urdu appears in a letter of 30 September 1933:

> I had sent off the translations of two plays, *Silver Box* and *Justice*. I had to work extremely hard on these translations. On one hand was the thought that no Sanskrit words should come in. Alongside that was the need to avoid unfamiliar Farsi terms. I had to ponder over each sentence for hours. If even then Doctor Saheb [presumably the editor at the press] doesn't like it, then there's nothing I can do […]. *Strife* is still with me. I have finished it and am looking it over.[37]

This correspondence, I would suggest, reveals the specifically *writerly* and professional face, or phase, of colonial translation, in which issues of time, labor, compensation, urgent financial need, creative inclination, competing obligations and persistent frustrations add up to a situation where translating a major English playwright is no more and no less important than a host of other commitments to editors, publishers and readers, and the resulting works of drama remain firmly within the domain of print. A comment by the Hindi author Jainendra Kumar places the matter in yet another perspective by revealing what a younger contemporary felt about this particular commitment on Premchand's part. Kumar's letter of 4 December 1930 states:

> I don't know who said that you have started translating Galsworthy for the Academy. Is this true? If you ask me, and if you don't get angry, I'll say that Galsworthy will find plenty of translators, but if Premchand is doing this work, it's a misfortune for Hindi. I tasted Galsworthy's stuff in the Delhi Jail and, once I've got past the strange allure of foreignness and a foreign language, can I consider Galsworthy superior to Premchand for even a moment? You can write stories, you can write novels like *Rangabhoomi*, but my request is that you not do Hindi literature the injustice of depriving it of Premchand by getting caught up in translations of Galsworthy.[38]

Whatever the merits of this judgment, it places the competing claims of English and Hindi, England and India, colonizer and colonized in a startling new light and reinforces Premchand's identity as iconic professional-author-turned-translator at work.

Premchand is typical of his precursors and contemporaries, however, in not putting forward anything resembling a systematic *theory* of translation. In the very short preface to *Sukhdas*, he glosses over the complexities of transculturation with the self-deprecating comment that his work does not claim to be a translation of *Silas Marner*—it is "merely a *rupantar*," a shadow lacking all ornament, a colorless outline. He also makes drastic statements to the effect that all traces of English

life had to be erased from the novel and a great deal had to be "turned upside-down," but then offers no further explanation.[39] Premchand's dissatisfaction with his method in *Silas Marner* was undoubtedly responsible for the seemingly uncompromising stance he adopted later against the idea that "translations should be given a native form before publication—the names should all be Hindu, only the basic narrative structure should belong to the original work."[40] In the preface to *Ahankar,* he declares that he is

> vehemently opposed to this position. Literature incorporates so many elements in addition to its basic subject. There are references in it to historical, social, geographical and other concerns, as and when appropriate […]. The significance of books in other languages is not limited to their literariness. We also gain from them the knowledge of a culture's thoughts and practices, habits and rituals. That is why I have not tried to "make this book my own."[41]

This polemic about fidelity to cultural codes does not, however, prevent Premchand from brushing aside his disconnection from the original French work—a form of expediency that has been the norm rather than the exception in translations of non-anglophone European writing for nearly a century now. "It is pointless to say anything about language," he declares.

> This is a translation of a translation and that too of a work in a language as supremely accomplished as French. In addition, the translator is a creature who is not well-versed in this task […]. The only reason we have translated this work is that it seemed beautiful to us in every respect and we have no hesitation in saying that we have not seen anything in English literature that is more beautiful.[42]

The Galsworthy translations of 1930 draw on this prior experience in various ways. They are interlingual versions that retain the English settings, character names and dialogue content, so that the sociopolitical world and socialist message of the originals are carried across intact into Hindi. There are also no prefaces to any of the plays, presumably because Premchand felt that he had nothing more to say about the process of translation.

Premchand's commentary on Galsworthy himself is quite scanty as well. There is no mention of him in the essay titled "Contemporary European Drama," which appeared in the Hindi monthly *Sahitya samalochak* in April 1925 and contained enthusiastic praise of Ibsen, Shaw and the French playwright Eugène Brieux for their realistic, didactic, sociopolitically engaged theater. Indeed, in the thousand or more pages of literary journalism that Premchand produced from 1903 until the month before his death in October 1936, there are only two comments on Galsworthy that could be described as substantive. In a short essay-cum-obituary titled "Nobel-Prize Recipient John Galsworthy," published in the Hindi weekly *Jagaran* in April 1933, Premchand provides a thumbnail biography

and an overview of the author's career, singling out *The Silver Box* and Part 1 of *The Forsyte Saga*, titled "The Man of Property," for special praise. Galsworthy's novels, he suggests, provide an almost "cinematic" record of the social turmoil and intellectual ferment in England over a forty-year period, but the twenty-five plays represent a singular achievement as well because of the doubling of genre:

> It would be very difficult for you to find an ambidextrous author who practices the two literary forms of drama and fiction with equal facility, but Galsworthy has written both with great perfection. There is no one to equal his skill with dialogue. Among modern English playwrights, Noël Coward is the only one who can compete with Galsworthy in the creation of dialogue. The flow of Galsworthy's language [also] has great restraint and balance.[43]

The second set of comments appears in a May 1935 essay titled "Contemporary English Drama," which offers a synoptic history of early modern and modern Anglo-European drama and commends English theater for fully embracing seminal European figures such as Ibsen, Maeterlinck and Strindberg. Shaw appears again in this analysis as the master satirist who has forced even a nation "as blindly self-centered as England" to pay attention to his critique of English arrogance, pretended civility and affectation. Galsworthy is less flamboyant in comparison but equally important, because his superbly artistic use of the "principles of socialism" lays bare the problematic nature of society and forces a response from the reader. Premchand mentions here that the Hindustani Academy in Prayag has published three Galsworthy plays in translation but, for some reason, does not identify himself as the translator. In his brief comments on the plays, he describes *Chandi ki dibiya* as a work that "shows how justice can be murdered by the power of wealth." *Nyaya* is about a character who embezzles money out of feelings of sympathy and generosity toward a woman, goes to prison to pay for his crime but eventually commits suicide, because society continues to punish him and makes his rehabilitation impossible. *Hartal* presents "an extremely poignant picture of the mentalities of industrialists and labourers." Premchand clearly admires the plays for the directness with which they portray the destructive effects of class and gender hierarchies on individual lives in a society based on *laissez-faire* principles. He acknowledges Galsworthy's dramatic corpus as a whole but feels that "these three are enough to earn him everlasting fame."[44] Aside from passing references in a few other essays, this is the sum of Premchand's commentary on the Western playwright with whom he was most extensively engaged through the activity of translation.

The meaning of this engagement does not lie in generalizations about hegemony and subalternity but in the multidimensional effects of what I would describe as Premchand's "cosmo-modernism"—an intellectually capacious, artistically informed and politically radical understanding of history, society and literature that exceeds the binarism of center-periphery and master-subject relations under colonialism. The basis of human society, he argues, has been materialist ever since the time of the cavemen, but the widespread *understanding* of material

relations is the mark of modernity in both politics and literature. The early modern period centralized human experience, but Shakespeare's plays, for instance, did not aim to reform society, nor did they contain "a criticism of real life."[45] Premchand regards the French revolution as the decisive historical event that demystified systems of oppression and focused acute attention on differences of class. It also separated literature concerned with human life from literature concerned with the lives of human beings in society. A century and a half after that event, from the late colonial vantage point, Premchand regards capitalism and what he calls *mahajani sabhyata*, or "moneylender civilization," as having reached the kind of extreme point that makes a world-historical transformation both necessary and inevitable. In a short piece titled "Congress and Socialism," he argues that "conservatism has no place in the world now. The twentieth century is the century of socialism, which may possibly take the form of communism later."[46] In another piece, titled "Nationalism and Internationalism," he asserts that there will be no redemption for human society so long as there are individual rights over property and property remains the basis of social organization.[47]

Literature is a fundamental part of this revolutionary spirit because the modern writer is, by definition, ranged against inequality, injustice and systems of oppression. As Premchand notes in his Presidential Address at the inaugural meeting of the Progressive Writers Association in April 1936, the name of the Association "sounds wrong to me. A writer or artist is naturally progressive. Were this not his nature, he would probably not be an artist."[48] It is because of this understanding of the writer's role that Premchand's unqualified opposition to imperialism, colonialism, fascism and capitalism can coexist without contradiction with an equally unqualified reverence for major modern Anglo-European authors, from Ibsen and Tolstoy to Shaw and Galsworthy. Circulating these authors in the Indian literary sphere is part of his program for turning Indian writing away from escapist fantasy and romantic-erotic navel-gazing toward a confrontation with what he calls real life.

I have to return briefly to Premchand's essays on "Contemporary European Drama" and "Contemporary English Drama" to highlight the special place he assigns to "the new drama" in modern consciousness. He suggests in the first essay that the "ideology of utilitarianism," which he supports, has affected every branch of European literature, but its effect on drama is greater than that on any other body of writing. This makes drama, and especially twentieth-century English drama, an especially impressive part of modern literature, because "plays are the most effective means of bringing ideas before the general public, and it was on the stage that the effect of authors' reformist inclinations was felt most strongly."[49] In his comments on Shaw, Ibsen, Brieux, Galsworthy and others, Premchand stresses constantly that the drama of ideas creates pleasure in the discerning audience and didacticism is not incompatible with entertainment. But pleasure and entertainment *without* ideas, or only for their own sake, are retrograde. The translations of Maeterlinck and Galsworthy thus take on a different kind of instrumentality when we consider that they are among the first works of the European new drama inserted through the resources of translation and

print-textuality into the performance-centered and entertainment-heavy sphere of urban Indian commercial theater.

English, Hindi and postcolonial Shakespeare

Fifty years later, the Sahay-Karanth collaboration constitutes a qualitatively different postcolonial event, bringing together Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a major Hindi poet, a highly accomplished innovative director and the full artistic and material resources of the National School of Drama, the country's leading institution of training in the theater arts. The lowbrow commercial theater that Premchand was critiquing implicitly in his translations-for-reading had ceased to exist after independence, undone by competition with talking films and a concerted twenty-year critique from Left-activist, bourgeois-nationalist and modernist positions. The 1979 production of *Barnam vana* represented the resulting culture of patronage in its highest form—the National School of Drama Repertory Company could claim to be the only continuously functioning professional theater company in Delhi, because it was fully underwritten by the national government and not subject to market pressures of any kind. When Raghuvir Sahay was commissioned to translate the text of *Macbeth* for this production, he knew that in performance, B. V. Karanth would systematically translate his chosen "order of words" into the presentational style of the Yakshagana folk form. The translator was closely involved with the rehearsal process over several months, and made the verbal modifications that were dramaturgically necessary.

Due to limitations of space, I can comment only briefly on the translation as it appears on the page and as I experienced it through performance in December 1979. The outstanding feature of Sahay's published preface is its brevity—less than one printed page—to explain his translation methods for an arch-canonical source text that numerous Indian translators had engaged with earlier. Hindi is an unaccented language, so replicating the metrical-aural qualities of Shakespearean blank verse was not an option. Sahay notes that his primary goal was to capture the poetic resonance of Elizabethan dialogue in *theatrical* enunciation, because of which he chose a rhythmic and variable rather than strictly metrical principle of versification. In general, he followed the verse-and-prose arrangements of the original, but occasionally found it more "effective" to render verse as prose. Sahay also notes his alertness to the degrees of simplicity and complexity in the language of the original play, but professes not to follow Shakespeare when the latter becomes unnecessarily convoluted. The specifically national Scottish-English political contexts are excluded from the translation and the witches are detached from the religious terminology of contemporaneous discourses on witchcraft. Sahay concludes by stressing that he has retained all the original Shakespearean names and made no attempt to "indigenize" the play.[50]

The translation is unquestionably a major work of poetic drama, capable of capturing and sustaining the original play's atmosphere of escalating moral-ethical, psychological and political crises. However, the preface does not prepare the reader for three features that fundamentally shape the poetic affect of the

Hindi text. First, Sahay's syntactic and rhythmic units are conspicuously shorter than Shakespeare's, ranging mainly between five and seven syllables, though occasionally going up to twelve syllables. The dialogue therefore has a jagged, staccato quality quite at variance with speech rhythms in either English or Hindi. Second, this effect is exacerbated by a consistent inversion of syntax that moves the dialogue further from natural speech. Two examples from Act 1 will have to suffice. Here are Duncan's opening lines:

> What bloody man is that? He can report,
> As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
> The newest state.[51]

A re-translation of Sahay's wording which preserves the inverted syntactic order of his poetic sentence would read as follows:

> Who is this? Blood-spattered body's battered state his says
> That he acquainted is the new revolt's pace with.

Rendered into linear syntax, the lines would be:

> Who is this? The battered state of his blood-spattered body says
> that he is acquainted with the new pace of the revolt.

My second example is from Macbeth's soliloquy at the beginning of Act 1, Scene 7, in which he confronts the full implications of regicide for the first time:

> This even-handed justice
> Commends th' ingredience of our poisoned chalice
> To our own lips.[52]

With its syntax retained, Sahay's version reads:

> Circumspect justice's hand
> Our poisoned wine's taking up glass
> Places it against lips our own (only).

A linear version would read:

> The hand of circumspect justice
> Takes up the glass of our poisoned wine
> And places it against our own lips.

Aside from the issues the translation raises about semantic equivalences with Shakespeare's original, Sahay's inversions have the effect of erasing the distinctive intonations of character. Since all the major male characters speak more or

less in this way, they all sound more or less alike. Lady Macbeth seems to be the only character who retains a different quality of speech, mainly because of the abrasiveness and bluntness of her expressions.

The third aspect of the text of *Barnam Vana* has to do with a choice all Hindi translators face, between an elevated Sanskritized diction and a more colloquial register that accommodates words from Urdu, which are, in turn, derived from Arabic and Persian. Sahay mixes both kinds of diction for all the major characters, once again flattening individual cadences. The exceptions are the witches, who speak the Braj dialect of Hindi still prevalent in parts of rural Uttar Pradesh, and the drunken porter whose language is urban but consistently colloquial.

How much of this tangle with language, syntax and characterization was relevant to my spectatorial experience of *Barnam vana* in 1979? Following the principle that translation in the theater is a substantively different experience from the text on the page, I would say, very little. Through advance publicity, the production-as-cultural event was already enveloped in the mystique of Sahay's poetry, Karanth's dramaturgy and the high expectations generated by the NSD Repertory actors. Performances took place on the open-air stage of the Meghdoot Theatre, designed on the grounds of the national performing arts academy by NSD's legendary former director Ebrahim Alkazi, and made utterly distinctive by a magnificent banyan tree canopying almost the entire acting space. The presence of the tree gave special resonance to the arboreal reference to Birnam Wood in Sahay's title and later to the wood's "movement" to Dunsinane. Once the play began, the spectator's eye and ear were completely absorbed by the Yakshagana elements of costuming, stylized movement, stylized dialogue delivery and the brilliant instrumental and vocal stage music composed by Karanth. Uttara Baokar's performance of Lady Macbeth as a beautiful, relentless instigator who disintegrates into madness and suicide was considered one of her strongest. There was a certain mawkishness about the juxtaposition of Yakshagana elements with the Shakespearean names for places and characters, but the audience understood and accepted the incongruity as an essential part of the experiment. In post-independence Indian theater history, the 1979 production of *Barnam vana* has become a leading example of the non-coercive intercultural aesthetic which employs the conventions of indigenous forms such as Kathakali, Tamasha and Nautanki to present major world playwrights on the Indian stage. In addition to the particular brand of cultural interweaving they represent, these works are examples of the vast potential difference between the hermeneutics and semiotics of the text and the "aesthetics of performativity."

Coda: Re-figuring post/colonial translation

I have maintained throughout this chapter that the activity of modern translation is an intrinsic component of India's culture of multilingual literacy and hence fully embedded in colonial and postcolonial contexts, but its scale, scope and variety cannot be contained within reductive categories such as colonialist hegemony, subaltern capitulation or postcolonial counter-discursivity. The

iconic moments of intercultural and intracultural exchanges I have analyzed represent a uniquely complex conjuncture of history, politics, culture, language, authorship, textuality, performance and reception, and the perceived "inequalities" and "gaps" in the translational relationships have to be placed in perspective. For example, the Anglo-European valorization of Sanskrit during the long nineteenth century admittedly drove a deep wedge between India's fabled Indo-European classical past and its debased, insufficiently modern colonial present. But the philological labor, disciplinary innovation and literary energy that went into "translating the orient," even with reference to the specific genre of drama, cannot be dismissed merely as acts of European appropriation that enforced in yet another form the unequal power relations of colonialism.[53] The colonizer-colonized binary was also neither essential nor decisive in the process of translation: nations such as Germany, Italy and Russia, which had no direct political links with colonial India, were drawn more or less extensively into the orientalist enterprise and helped to create a premier role for Sanskrit in the emerging body of world literature.[54] The Indian intelligentsia's immersion in the Sanskrit literary system, of course, was perhaps the most powerful sign of shared cultural goals among rulers and subjects on the very ground of colonialism. In a different direction, the voluminous and largely one-sided translation of European drama into the modern Indian languages could be taken as a confirmation of the derivative and subservient nature of India's theater culture. But from another standpoint, the activities of drama and theater translation could be seen as distinctive, expanding strains within print and performance cultures that have grown exponentially since the mid-nineteenth century. The third process—of intracultural, interlingual translation between the Indian languages—is equally far-reaching in its implications. It suggests that as a multilingual literary culture, India is most closely analogous not to individual nations in other areas of the world but to an interconnected continental region such as Europe, in which primarily monoglot national literatures interact continuously with each other to constitute a composite literary zone.

Because two of the three moments of translation I have discussed involve interlingual versions of canonical European plays by Indian-language authors (colonial and postcolonial), it is especially important to revisit the model of counter-discursive practices that have been so influential in postcolonial theory since the 1990s. The argument that colonial/postcolonial authors manipulate textuality to "write back" against a (present or absent) imperial center places a politically attractive emphasis on opposition and resistance, but it also privileges Europhone writing, relegates the non-Western writer to the periphery and offers mainly a reactive and deterministic relation to empire. The fields of translation and transculturation in India's non-Europhone modern languages reveal, on the contrary, that the translators' primary concern is not with the subversion of European canonicity but with literary-cultural contexts, readers and viewers in their target language. This explains why transcultural appropriation (*rupantar*) has the same visibility as interlingual translation (*bhashantar*) in the

array of intercultural practices in Indian languages. A large number of authors express universalist-humanist reverence for the European source text and see its arrival in their own literary culture through interlingual translation as a momentous event (Jainendra Kumar's skepticism about Galsworthy is a refreshing reversal of this position). Other authors use the source text opportunistically or pragmatically to create a scrupulously indigenized structure that reproduces the narrative and experiential arc of the original but erases all signs of "foreignness." In an even more interesting variation, major authors often "write through" the structure of the canonical work to critique not the Western imperium but the malformations of the postcolonial nation-state. The many forms of translation in modern India thus have to be recognized as exercises in high- or lowbrow authorship on the part of individuals whose decisive connection is to their own sociopolitical environment and to the cultures of writing, print and performance in one or more languages, regionally and nationally.

Separated by more than two generations, the three figures I have discussed in this chapter bear out the relevance of these reconfigured critical emphases. Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Premchand are not abject or subaltern colonial subjects but fully formed, ambitious, prolific, articulate authors clearly aware of their literary-historical and political positioning within a polyglot nation-space. Dutt negotiates four languages in the course of his education and authorship—Bengali, Sanskrit, Persian and English—and practices at least four major genres with distinction—poems, plays, essays and letters. Premchand is trilingual in Hindi, Urdu and English (although his relationship with English is substantially different from Dutt's) and generates a massive corpus of novels, short stories, plays, translations, essays, letters, literary journalism and political commentary that has now been gathered into twenty substantial volumes. Proprietary authorship, multilingualism, print-textuality, culture criticism and the cultivation of urban readers and viewers are only some of the historically unprecedented modernizing processes that are intrinsic to the careers of Dutt and Premchand. In both cases, colonialism offers an expansion and complication rather than narrowing of literary-cultural horizons without erasing the sense of political difference, and translation serves in these circumstances as the explicit locus of cultural interchange.

In comparison, the postcolonial positioning of Karanth as a theater professional reflects (for better and for worse) a new kind of artistic confidence created by the cultural machinery of the nation-state and the role of the state as patron of the arts. To this privileged position, Karanth brings a superbly modulated ability to translate indigenous presentational styles into non-propagandist, aesthetically integrated urban performance forms. In his turn, Sahay, as an author and translator, represents a modernist self-possession that is deeply skeptical of the nation-state but fully engaged with the literary-cultural spheres. Most vitally, Sahay and Karanth together point to the emergence of metropolitan centers within the new national space that decisively displace the colonialist hierarchies of dominant and subaltern, center and periphery.

Notes

1 Some passages in this chapter appeared earlier in the General Introduction to *A Poetics of Modernity: Indian Theatre Theory, 1850 to the Present*, ed. Aparna Dharwadker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). They are reprinted with permission from Oxford University Press, India.
2 Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Introduction: Interweaving Performance Cultures—Rethinking 'Intercultural Theatre': Toward an Experience and Theory of Performance beyond Postcolonialism," in *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, ed. E. Fischer-Lichte, T. Jost and S. I. Jain (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 2.
3 Ibid., 11.
4 Ibid., 12.
5 Khalid Amine, "Postcolonial Modernity: Theatre in Morocco and the Interweaving Loop," in *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, 29.
6 Khalid Amine, "Double Critique: Disrupting Monolithic Thrusts," in *International Research Center for Advanced Studies "Interweaving Performance Cultures": Fellows 2012/2013*, brochure ed. C. Weiler (Berlin: 2012), 8; Fischer-Lichte, "Introduction," 14.
7 Rustom Bharucha, "Hauntings of the Intercultural: Enigmas and Lessons on the Borders of Failure," in *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, 180.
8 Brian Singleton, "Performing Orientalist, Intercultural, and Globalized Modernities: The Case of *Les Naufragés du Fol Espoir* by the Théâtre Du Soleil," in *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, 86.
9 Fischer-Lichte, "Introduction," 15.
10 Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. R. Schulte and J. Biguenet (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 74.
11 Roman Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, 146.
12 Vinay Dharwadker, "Print Culture and Literary Markets in Colonial India," in *Language Machines: Technologies of Literary and Cultural Production*, ed. J. Masten, P. Stallybrass and N. J. Vickers (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1997), 123.
13 In addition to these landmark versions of Shakespeare, in Hindi the notable translator-author pairings include Jainendra Kumar and Maurice Maeterlinck (1927, pub. 1934); Premchand and John Galsworthy (ca. 1930); Rajendra Yadav and Chekhov (1958); Kamleshwar and Brecht (1970); J. N. Kaushal and Euripides (1966), Büchner (1973), Ibsen (1982), Arthur Miller (1987), Saroyan (1988) and Beaumarchais (1994); Raghuvir Sahay and three Hungarian playwrights (1983) as well as Lorca (1985); Safdar Hashmi and Gorky (1989); and Firaq Gorakhpuri and Ernst Toller (1997). In Marathi, Acharya Atre translated Molière; P. L. Deshpande adapted Gogol, Sophocles and Somerset Maugham; Vijay Tendulkar and Vyankatesh Madgulkar adapted Tennessee Williams; V. V. Shirwadkar translated Maeterlinck, Oscar Wilde and Tolstoy; Shriram Lagoo translated Ugo Betti; and Maya Pandit translated Dario Fo. Notable translations in other languages include Habib Tanvir's Molière (Urdu, 1960), Adya Rangacharya's Ibsen and Pirandello (Kannada, 1971), P. Lankesh's Sophocles (Kannada, 1972), Kumar Roy's Anouilh (Bengali, 1984), and Surjit Patar's Lorca and Giraudoux (Punjabi, 1991 and 1995). Brecht is the playwright with the strongest list of Indian translators, including Khanolkar, Madgulkar, and P. L. Deshpande in Marathi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, Habib Tanvir in Chhattisgarhi, and K. V. Subbanna in Kannada.
14 Susan Bassnett, "Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre," in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 90.

15 Terry Hale and Carole-Anne Upton, "Introduction," in *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation*, ed. C. Upton (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000), 12.
16 André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, "Introduction: Where Are We in Translation Studies?" in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, 7.
17 Ibid., 6.
18 Silvia Bigliazzi, Peter Kofler and Paola Ambrosi, "Introduction," in *Theatre Translation in Performance*, ed. S. Bigliazzi, P. Kofler and P. Ambrosi (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 1.
19 Michael Madhusudan Dutt, *Madhusudan rachanabali* [The Complete Works of Madhusudan], ed. K. Gupta (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1982), 571.
20 Quoted in Sudipto Chatterjee, *The Colonial Staged: Theatre in Colonial Calcutta* (Calcutta: Seagull, 2007), 107.
21 Michael Madhusudan Dutt, *Sermista: A Drama in Five Acts* (Calcutta: C. Bose, 1859), ix.
22 In chronological order of publication, Dutt's original and translated plays are: *Ratnavali: A Drama in Four Acts* (English, 1858); *Sharmishtha natak* (Bengali, 1858); *Sermista: A Drama in Five Acts* (English, 1859); *Ekei ki bale sabhyata?* (Bengali: Is This What You Call Civilization?, 1860); *Buro saliker ghare ron* (Bengali: The Old Fool's Fads, 1860); *Padmabati natak* (Bengali, 1860); *Krishnakumari natak* (Bengali, 1861); and *Mayakanan* (Bengali: The Forest of Illusion, 1873).
23 Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. S. Pollock (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 534.
24 Ibid., 558.
25 J. A. B. van Buitenen, trans., ed., *The Mahabharata: Book 1, The Book of the Beginning* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 191.
26 Ibid., 194.
27 Dutt, *Sermista*, 8.
28 Chatterjee, *The Colonial Staged*, 107.
29 Dutt, *Sermista*, 49.
30 For a comprehensive discussion of *Kichaka vadha* and its reception, see Rakesh H. Solomon, "Culture, Imperialism, and Nationalist Resistance: Performance in Colonial India," *Theatre Journal* 46, no. 3 (October 1994): 323–37.
31 For a discussion of the *Mahabharata* as a seminal narrative source for modern Indian theater and performance, see Aparna B. Dharwadker, "Myth, Ambivalence, and Evil," ch. 6 in *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005), 165–217.
32 Munshi Premchand, *Premchand rachanavali* [The Complete Works of Premchand], vol. 7, ed. R. Ananda (Delhi: Janavani Prakashan, 1996), 202. All translations from the Hindi are mine.
33 Munshi Premchand, *Chitthi patri* [Letters], ed. A. Rai and M. Gopal, vol. 1 (Allahabad: Hamsa Prakashan, 1962), 171.
34 Ibid., 1:173–174.
35 Ibid., 1:184.
36 Ibid., 1:188.
37 Ibid., 1:205–206; I do not read the Urdu script and have therefore not commented on Premchand's Urdu versions of his Hindi translations of the three Galsworthy plays.
38 Ibid., 2:12.
39 Premchand, *Premchand rachanavali*, 9:433.
40 Ibid., 9:440.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 7:402.
44 Ibid., 9:177.

45 Ibid., 9:175.
46 Ibid., 8:450.
47 Ibid., 8:478.
48 Ibid., 7:504.
49 Ibid., 7:308.
50 Raghuvir Sahay, "Barnam vana," in *Raghuvir sahay rachanavali* [The Complete Works of Raghuvir Sahay], ed. S. Sharma, vol. 6 (New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashana, 2000), 15–77.
51 William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, ed. B. A. Mowat and P. Werstine (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 9: 1.2.1–3.
52 Ibid., 39: 1.7.10–12.
53 Tejaswini Niranjana's *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (1992) was an influential formulation of the position that "translation reinforces hegemonic versions of the colonized, helping them acquire the status of what Edward Said calls representations, or objects without history" (3). However, as Niranjana's discussion of William Jones indicates, she is concerned neither with the *creative activity* of translation in its historical aspect nor with the *works* translated, but with discursive representations of India-as-object by the colonial translator. Her post-structuralist "deconstruction," therefore, leaves the actual work of translation untouched. Niranjana also deals with European translations of Indian works but not with Indian translations of European/Western works. In both these respects, the approach in *Siting Translation* is tangential to the moments of post/colonial translation analyzed in my essay.
54 Among the best-known examples of the pan-European appeal of Sanskrit is Goethe's admiration for Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*, which he read in Georg Forster's German translation in 1791 (a mere two years after William Jones's pioneering English translation) and described as "a very great influence on my whole life." Goethe's poetic comment on the play is romantic in spirit and unrestrained in its praise:

> Wouldst thou the blossoms of spring, as well as the fruits of autumn,/ Wouldst thou what charms and delights, wouldst thou what plenteously feeds,/ Wouldst thou include both heaven and earth in one designation,/ All that is needed is done, when I *Sakuntala* name.

Quoted in Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 135.

Bibliography

Amine, Khalid. "Double Critique: Disrupting Monolithic Thrusts." In *International Research Center for Advanced Studies "Interweaving Performance Cultures": Fellows 2012/2013*. Brochure edited by C. Weiler, 6–15. Berlin: 2012.

———. "Postcolonial Modernity: Theatre in Morocco and the Interweaving Loop." In *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, edited by E. Fischer-Lichte, T. Jost and S. I. Jain, 25–41. New York, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.

Bassnett, Susan. "Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre." In *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, edited by S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, 90–108. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." Translated by H. Zohn. In *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, edited by R. Schulte and J. Biguenet, 71–82. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Bharucha, Rustom. "Hauntings of the Intercultural: Enigmas and Lessons on the Borders of Failure." In *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, edited by E. Fischer-Lichte, T. Jost and S. I. Jain, 179–200. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.

Bigliazzi, Silvia, Peter Kofler and Paola Ambrosi. "Introduction." In *Theatre Translation in Performance*, edited by S. Bigliazzi, P. Kofler and P. Ambrosi, 1–26. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.

Chatterjee, Sudipto. *The Colonial Staged: Theatre in Colonial Calcutta*. Calcutta: Seagull, 2007.

Dharwadker, Aparna B. "Myth, Ambivalence, and Evil." Ch. 6 in *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947*, 165–217. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005.

Dharwadker, Vinay. "Print Culture and Literary Markets in Colonial India." In *Language Machines: Technologies of Literary and Cultural Production*, edited by J. Masten, P. Stallybrass and N. J. Vickers, 108–33. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1997.

Dutt, Michael Madhusudan. *Madhusudan rachanabali* [The Complete Works of Madhusudan]. Edited by K. Gupta. Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1982.

———. *Sermista: A Drama in Five Acts*. Calcutta: C. Bose, 1859.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. "Introduction: Interweaving Performance Cultures—Rethinking 'Intercultural Theatre': Toward an Experience and Theory of Performance beyond Postcolonialism." In *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, edited by E. Fischer-Lichte, T. Jost and S. I. Jain, 1–21. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.

———. *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997.

Hale, Terry, and Carole-Anne Upton. "Introduction." In *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation*, edited by C. Upton, 1–16. Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000.

Jakobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." In *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, edited by R. Schulte and J. Biguenet, 144–51. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Kaviraj, Sudipta. "The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal." In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, edited by S. Pollock, 503–66. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Lefevere, André, and Susan Bassnett. "Introduction: Where Are We in Translation Studies?" In *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, edited by S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, 1–11. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

Niranjana, Tejaswini. *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

Premchand, Munshi. *Chitthi patri* [Letters]. Edited by A. Rai and M. Gopal. 2 vols. Allahabad: Hamsa Prakashan, 1962.

———. *Premchand rachanavali* [The Complete Works of Premchand]. Edited by R. Ananda, with an introduction and foreword by R. V. Sharma. 20 vols. Delhi: Janavani Prakashan, 1996.

Sahay, Raghuvir. "Barnam vana." In *Raghuvir sahay rachanavali* [The Complete Works of Raghuvir Sahay]. Edited by S. Sharma. 6 vols. New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashana, 2000.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Edited by B. A. Mowat and P. Werstine. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2009.

Singleton, Brian. "Performing Orientalist, Intercultural, and Globalized Modernities: The Case of *Les Naufragés du Fol Espoir* by the Théâtre Du Soleil." In *The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism*, edited by E. Fischer-Lichte, T. Jost and S. I. Jain, 77–94. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.

Solomon, Rakesh H. "Culture, Imperialism, and Nationalist Resistance: Performance in Colonial India." *Theatre Journal* 46, no. 3 (October 1994): 323–37.

Van Buitenen, J. A. B., trans., ed. *The Mahabharata: Book 1, The Book of the Beginning.* Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1973.

6 The translational politics of surtitling

Lola Arias's *Campo minado/ Minefield*

Jean Graham-Jones

In a current monographic project exploring the possibilities for and limitations of translating for the contemporary stage, I push beyond the now standard approaches to theatrical translation to open up traditionally employed linguistic and cultural categories. I do so by incorporating into the translation process itself considerations of dramaturgical logic, actor training and performance styles, choreography and gesture, and performance aesthetics and reception. Translation is neither unidirectional nor transcendent, and the translator is never simply a transporter. I propose that instead we might consider our artistic and scholarly theatrical work as "translational." I employ the qualifier not only as a way of acknowledging, with Walter Benjamin,[1] the always present and always fluid relationality in translation but also as a means of expanding the category of translation itself to consider not only the linguistic and cultural text—the play-script, if you will—but also other challenges we face when translating, translocating and adapting a play to a different performance environment.

Translation's multiple cultural constraints and constructs must be considered in relation to one another as part of the translation process itself. Translational encounters in the theater bring together different artists and audiences, different bodies, languages, cultures and expectations; and these encounters often take our aesthetic and performance considerations in multiple directions and modes. By way of illustration, I examine here one specific translational mode: the use of supertitles in performances of Argentine theater artist Lola Arias's *Campo minado/Minefield*. After first providing a brief overview of recent Argentine texts and productions that have faced related translational challenges, I consider Arias's multilingual production and its multiply sited reception. The incorporation of supertitles into the performance itself bears significant consequences, especially regarding the politics of translatability and untranslatability. With the increasingly creative use of supertitles in the theater, it is imperative that we ask, what gets translated? What does not? Why? What are the ramifications of the use of translational technologies such as supertitles?

Certain challenges arise when we heed translation theorist Emily Apter's provocative call to dig into a text's inherent linguistic and cultural "untranslatability" as a resistantly productive exercise.[2] When speaking of the limits of translatability, we might first place the untranslatable in conversation with the

over- and the under-translated in performance. Argentine theater artist Claudio Tolcachir's global sensation, *The Coleman Family's Omission* (*Coleman*), offers an example of potential "over-translatability." Concluding its fifteenth season on tour and in its hometown Buenos Aires, the production has traveled to over twenty countries and been published in French, Greek, Italian and my own English co-translation.[3] Audience identification appears to have transcended national cultural difference: Tolcachir himself recounts the experience of being asked by one local spectator after a Dublin performance if an Irish family had inspired his play.[4] This "*Coleman*, c'est nous" phenomenon leads me to consider the possibility of a work's deceptive "over-translatability" courting universalization and thus obscuring the localized condition and politics present in a play such as *Coleman* and its own radically dysfunctional Buenos Aires-based family.

Similar considerations of the "local" raise concerns about the translational limitations of "American realism" to my own projects of translating Argentine plays that clearly exhibit a very local literary and performance style for which there is no easy US equivalent. A case in point is the River Plate "grotesco criollo," a tragicomic genre, aesthetic and acting style that developed in the 1920s to stage the failed dreams of the region's many immigrants and that still informs local playwriting, acting and directing. As a director, I have found myself leading US casts in intensive performance workshops to jostle actors away from their Strasbergian/Adlerian-influenced training. Performance styles such as the "creole grotesque" have often remained unproductively under-translated, as in the case of several productions of Rafael Spregelburd's plays in English translation. Elsewhere, I have written in detail about my experiences translating Spregelburd's plays and seeing his work in others' translations.[5] Here, I will merely posit that until recently English-language productions have under-translated Spregelburd. The resulting texts have cut massive portions of the original scripts, thereby unraveling the plays' complex structural machinery, as directors and actors have erroneously assumed that a local performance style can replace the hybridic balancing act—farce and realism, if you will—demanded of Spregelburd's actors. Assuming that the banal cannot coexist with the transcendental, they display a reductivist preference for one over the other in actual production.

In contrast to the over- or the under-translated, the untranslatable can function as a remarkably productive performance strategy. One such case is the 2015 play, *Dínamo* (*Dynamo*), co-created by Tolcachir with two of his Timbre 4 company collaborators, Lautaro Perotti and Melisa Hermida. There, the character Hárima, whom we infer to be a refugee from a never-identified country, speaks in an untranslated language created by the actress Paula Ransenberg. Reinvented during every performance, Hárima's words remain inaccessible even to the three playwright-directors, the other two actresses and the audience; and her untranslatability is acknowledged in production video clips, where English-language subtitles are provided for all dialogue except hers. Here, the untranslatable functions as a means of resisting easy compartmentalization of the unknown "other" as it forces spectators and performers to embrace intonation and gesturality rather than language.

Translatability and untranslatability are central to the staging of Lola Arias's recent *Campo minado/Minefield* (*Campo*), in which three British and three Argentine ex-combatants reconstruct onstage their memories of the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands War. Even though supertitles are used consistently throughout the production to translate the Spanish and English dialogues, the play ends with Sukrim Rai, a Gurkha soldier in the British forces, reading an unidentified text in untranslated Nepali.

Campo is one of what Argentine theater artist Lola Arias terms "re-enactments" of local (auto)biographies. Mixing live and videotaped performances with filmed scenes, personal and public archival materials, and translated Spanish and English supertitles, *Campo* does not purport to stage what really happened in the Malvinas/Falklands War but, as Arias's webpage states, "reunites Argentine and British veterans from the Falklands/Malvinas war to explore what is left of it in their heads 34 years later."[6] Not only do these memory re-enactments afford the six veterans an opportunity to reconsider the conflict's historical, political, cultural and personal consequences, they also provide their audiences with an occasion on which to contemplate how they, too, perform, narrate and ultimately comprehend war's enduring effects. I thus incorporate into my analysis here my own experiences of attending the production alongside both British and Argentine spectators. Translation played a decisive role in my own and other spectators' responses, as we will see.

Campo premiered in May 2016 in the United Kingdom at the Brighton Festival, and then played at London's Royal Court Theatre in June as part of LIFT, the international festival that commissioned the work; and in November and December of that same year, it traveled to Buenos Aires's Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM). It subsequently toured to other Latin American and European venues and returned to the Royal Court in November 2017.[7] I saw the production in both London and Buenos Aires. A critical success in London, the production's relatively short run (only ten performances) was met with a respectable box-office response and a return invitation. In Buenos Aires, the reaction was overwhelming, even for a city accustomed to having its many theaters always near full. The four weekly performances, presented from 10 November to 4 December, sold out quickly. One reason was UNSAM's decision not to charge admission, made as a public university wishing to showcase its new performance space and to demonstrate its support of the arts at a time when Argentine universities, especially their arts and humanities programs, were under siege by the national government. Another reason for the audience response was proximity, both political and geographical; as Arias stated in an interview taped by the Royal Court, unlike the UK, "in Argentina everyone [still] talks about the Falklands/Malvinas War."[8] Both times I attended the show in Buenos Aires, dozens were turned away, and the 400-seat theater overflowed, with spectators sitting on the floor, in the aisles and on the side lines. There were repeat viewers: Malvinas veterans, family members of the Argentine actors, their co-workers and friends. Spectatorial genealogies were created over the course of the run. At the second performance I attended, I happened to sit next to a friend of the Argentine performer Marcelo Vallejo, whose image graced

her t-shirt. (Marcelo would sport a similarly designed t-shirt for the curtain call.) When I asked her if she had seen the show before, she answered, "No, pero la viví con Marcelo" (No, but I lived it with Marcelo), and then went into some detail about how difficult the rehearsal experience had been for him. Indeed, Marcelo's story compels: enlisted, not conscripted as were so many young Argentines, he is the show's patriot and, for me, its most present, unaffected performer, frankly recounting his post-conflict fall into deep depression and substance abuse. Only after hospitalization was he able to emerge, transformed today into an "Iron Man" triathlete. Marcelo's friend told me of the many times he almost quit the show, as the emotional toll of revisiting and re-enacting became almost too much to bear. After the performance began, I could feel her beside me, responding to every one of Marcelo's moments. Afterward, I saw her in deep sobbing embrace with Marcelo, who consoled her for a very long time.

I recount this personal experience, because it gives some insight into the remarkable affective responses I witnessed—and experienced myself—in Buenos Aires. Older audience members swayed in unison and sang along with the Argentine actors' samba, many people audibly drew in their breath and cried, and, on both nights I attended, spectators swarmed the stage, shaking hands, embracing and taking selfies with the performers. The need to connect was palpable and did not seem to favor one nation over the other.

I was able to attend only one performance in London, but my experience there was notably different. The Court's mainstage is a proscenium theater, and its physical separation of stage and orchestra contrasted with the huge UNSAM converted galpón-gymnasium, whose bleacher-style seating fed directly out onto the performance area and facilitated the post-performance audience "invasion" of the stage (and also allowed the actors to run up the steps into the audience on opening night—something to which director Arias quickly put a stop). Separated physically from the performance space, the British spectators surrounding me in the mezzanine were attentive and later told me—yes, I asked—that they had learned a lot. As one spectator said, "[t]he war was very far away from us. We didn't know that all those things were going on." My admittedly anecdotal and limited survey collected responses of guilt about such ignorance and shame over Thatcher's and the nation's "gotcha" attitude at the time. My British interlocutors also shared their anger at the injustices and traumas experienced by soldiers on both sides.

Despite these perhaps nationally and culturally divergent affective responses, *Campo* has striven to keep its six performers' multiple experiences equally present. Title cards are held by the actors themselves as they make their introductions, physically but not linguistically or nationally queued (Figure 6.1). As María M. Delgado writes,

> [the] production seeks to find a balanced way of telling the story across both sides, recognizing the differences that separate the men as well as locating the shared ground over which the men bond—loss, grief, trauma and music. This is theatre as living history but a history where memory is featured as a minefield to be navigated and negotiated.[9]

Figure 6.1 The performers' self-introduction in *Campo minado/Minefield*. Photo by Eugenia Kais.

Given the dual nationalities of the performers and their initial audiences, a key factor in re-enacting memories of the island conflict is language. Whether addressing the audience or one another, the performers speak in their respective languages of English or Spanish. (And even though several actors proudly told me of their growing competence in the second language, they do not switch languages in performance.) There are dialogues in which one actor speaks in one language and is answered in another. To provide linguistic comprehension and continuity, effective use of supertitles is made to translate each into the other language. The translations of spoken dialogue and documentation are projected against a V-shaped film-set configuration that encloses two sides of the set-apart stage. Translated dialogue and documentation are projected separately, but scene titles are projected simultaneously in both languages. Like the projections of other texts such as personal diaries and public documents, the translated supertitles become an intrinsic aesthetic element and not merely supplementary translation projected above or off to the side of the set to be read or ignored (Figure 6.2).

Campo thus affords us an opportunity to reconsider the critical roles translation can play in affective performance and spectatorship. Super- or surtitling is today a common feature of the international festival circuits, but it is also a growing practice of localized productions wishing to reflect the linguistic variety of resident cultures. (One provocative case in point is Berlin's Gorki Theater, where Arias

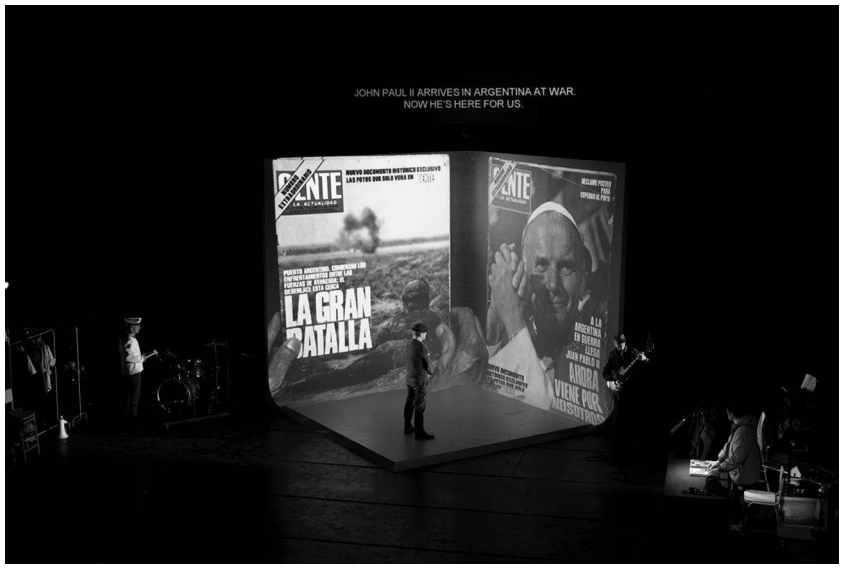


Figure 6.2 The Pope's visit in *Campo minado/Minefield*. Photo by Eugenia Kais.

has also created commissioned work and where immigrant performers speak in their first languages while supertitle translations are rendered in both German and, increasingly, English. While we might interpret the presence of English as an enticement to Berlin's tourist culture, this supertitling practice also seems an acknowledgment—for better or worse—of English's growing presence as global *lingua franca*.) Such a pivotal linguistic role notwithstanding, surtitling remains a neglected area of consideration in theatrical, performance and visual cultural studies. As German theater titler Yvonne Griesel notes, surtitling is a "translation hybrid" that "may be fully described neither by interpreting nor by translating."[10] Indeed, *Campo*'s surtitles function intermedially and interpretively, visually translating the two spoken languages, but their projection onto the screens (and not above or off to the side of the performing area) further complicates their translation hybridity by weaving them into the theatrical mise-en-scène itself (Figure 6.3). In doing so, they come to constitute part of what Helena Buffery calls the "heteroglossic stage": "a form of translational landscape, in which the words of others are represented, adapted or strategically expropriated, [. . .]."[11] Buffery goes on to lament theater studies' tendency to separate "questions of translatability and intercultural spectatorship,"[12] and she suggests that we pay closer "attention to the glimpses of cultural exchange [. . .], through attention to the embodied reception of actors and audience."[13] *Campo*'s titles do not present either spectator or actor with the typical surtitling experience: far from being a play whose single language is translated directly into the "local" language, the two languages function heteroglossically and are placed side by side in written and spoken media. Monolingual spectators are linguistically privy to only a portion of any dialogue

between the British and the Argentine performers, with the cognitively disruptive experience of listening to one side of a conversation while reading the other in translation. Once-monolingual actors clearly now understand dialogue in a language they themselves may not yet speak fluently and, as they continue performing on tour, find themselves re-enacting their own previously limited linguistic competency.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the production's commitment to spoken and supertitled bilinguality, its moments of untranslated performance are all the more striking. Popular music appears to function as a common language in the play: a survivor of the Argentine cruiser Belgrano's sinking by the British,

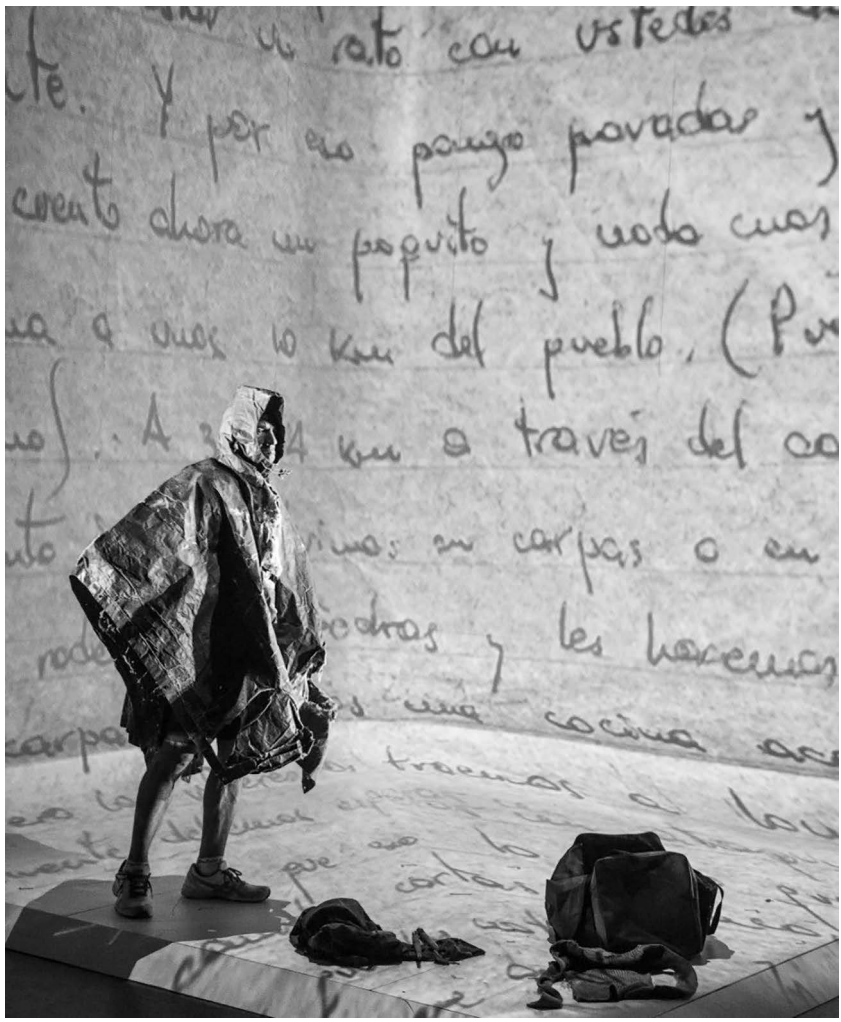


Figure 6.3 Marcelo Vallejo in poncho in *Campo minado/Minefield*.
Photo by Tristam Kenton.

Rubén Otero now plays drums in a Beatles tribute band in Buenos Aires, and the other performers join him onstage in various songs including a rousing version of "Get Back," whose lyrics apparently required no Spanish surtitling. It would seem that the Beatles—remembering that their songs, like all other English-language music, were outlawed by the Argentine military regime during the conflict—have created a bridge between the two previously enemy sides and thus transcend political, cultural, militaristic and linguistic difference. Nevertheless, one of the British ex-combatants does not join in singing the Beatles tunes. Sukrim Rai is proud of being a Gurkha, one of the 300 Nepalis selected for UK military service out of some 50,000 aspirants (Figure 6.4). The son and grandson of Gurkha or Gorkhali soldiers, he was also among the 598 Gurkhas who arrived back in the United Kingdom at the end of the 1982 conflict. Toward the end of the performance, Sukrim's many post-conflict jobs around the world are recounted and include a stint as a security guard in South African diamond mines. Gurkha combatants, a vestige of British colonialism who fought in both world wars (and several others), would not receive UK citizenship until 2004.

Sukrim's peripatetic experiences and then-non-national status (he is now a British citizen) contrasted with the identities of the other veterans, Argentine and British. Significant linguistic difference also undergirded two key moments in the production. While Sukrim does not sing along to the Beatles tunes, he contributes his own song to which we listen as we watch him dance with his *khukuri*—the iconic knife of the Gurkha fighters and much dreaded by the Argentine soldiers, who had heard the unsubstantiated rumors of Nepalese assassins cutting off Argentine heads and eating Argentine ears. The Nepali lyrics are not translated. Perhaps even more affectingly, Sukrim, during the production's final scene, reads an unidentified document in once again untranslated Nepali. While the Beatles song suggests a mass cultural translatability requiring no translation, the two Nepali texts left resolutely untranslated into English or Spanish stand as a testament to cultural untranslatability.

There are some provocative political stakes at work in these moments of what Emily Apter terms "the singularity of untranslatable alterity."[14] The untranslated Nepali might suggest a lack of agency on Sukrim's part. However, the production presents other instances of untranslatability where it is clear that all the performers themselves have refused to translate, present or interpret certain events for the audience: Gabriel Sagastume, a self-described "soldado mediocre" (mediocre soldier) and now a retired lawyer, tells the audience, "hay cosas que pasaron en la guerra que quedaron enterradas en las islas" (there are things that happened in the war that stayed buried on the islands), and declines to provide more details. David Jackson, today a psychologist specializing in working with other veterans, wonders where the British dead are in the play. Marcelo Vallejo warns us that his projected diary includes dark secrets that he will not share with us. And the performers let us know that certain events were not re-enacted, because no actor was willing to play the victim. Thus, while the surtitles so effectively incorporated into *Campo*'s production might suggest a linguistically and

Figure 6.4 Sukrim Rai in *Campo minado/Minefield* (2016).
Photo by Tristam Kenton.

politically balanced and complete memory re-enactment project, as spectators we must acknowledge that not all memories can, should or will be re-enacted. Such moments of refusal and secrecy confound the spectator's affective attempts at empathy and understanding.

Sukrim's untranslatability and his untranslatable alterity possess a political dimension that troubles any presumed lack of agency on his part. The presence of Nepali as a minority language disrupts the flow of the two Western languages, jolting even the bilingual Spanish-English spectator by obscuring familiarity through difference (in a reversal of Lawrence Venuti's critique of English-language translators as too eager to erase difference). Sukrim's physical presence and linguistic-cultural untranslatability disturb the Malvinas/Falklands binational archive.[15] If, with Apter, we understand the untranslatable "not as pure difference in opposition to the always translatable [. . .] but as a linguistic form of creative failure with homeopathic uses,"[16] Sukrim's performance is not merely an excluded or exclusionary act of non-translation but rather a biting reminder to audiences that national conflict is not reductively two-sided, that the Malvinas/Falklands conflict was not merely a binational war and that coloniality of power remains trans-Atlantic and still at work in modern national conflicts.

I return to my earlier questions. With the increasingly creative use of supertitles in the theater, it is imperative that we ask, what or who gets translated? Who or what does not? Why? What roles does visual translation play in the affective

processes of performance and spectatorship? What are the ramifications of the use of translational technologies such as supertitles? What are the effects and affects produced by translatability and untranslatability? *Campo minado/Minefield* provides us with a rich performance landscape across which to contemplate such questions. They are questions that theater artists and audiences working among multiple cultures—including monolingual productions supertitled for international festivals—would be well advised to consider more carefully. Surtitling can do so much more and so much less than transporting an unknown language to an assumed monolingual audience.

Notes

1 Scholar of Japanese literature Jonathan E. Abel builds on Walter Benjamin's frequently cited idea of translation's "unavoidable relationality" to the so-called "source text." Abel asserts that

> translations do share something with the translated, but this sharing is not [. . .] the erasing of one by another, the domineering of one over another [. . .]. This sharing is the being-in-common, the standing-in-relation between two texts.

Jonathan E. Abel, "Translation as Community: The Opacity of Modernizations of *Genji monogatari*," in *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, ed. S. Bermann and M. Wood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 155. I am also mindful of Homi Bhabha's earlier usage of the translational in conjunction with the transnational to speak of culture displacement and instability; see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 173. Elsewhere, I develop my own theory of a "radical relationality;" see Jean Graham-Jones, "Daniel Veronese's 'Proyecto Chéjov': Translation in Performance as Radical Relationality," in *Adapting Chekhov: The Text and Its Mutations*, ed. J. D. Clayton and Y. Meerzon (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 203–16.

2 Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London and New York, NY: Verso, 2013), 2.

3 To date, *Coleman* has traveled to Bolivia, Bosnia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, the United States and Uruguay. It has been subtitled in eight different languages. See "La omisión de la familia Coleman," *TIMBRe4*, last accessed 23 March 2018, www.timbre4.com/compania/18-la-omision-de-la-familia-coleman.html. Elisa Legon and I translated the play into English as *The Coleman Family's Omission* in *Timbre 4: Two Plays by Claudio Tolcachir*, ed. J. Graham-Jones (New York, NY: Martin E. Segal Theatre Center/TCG, 2010).

4 See Ana Caruso, "Tolcachir: On Top of the World," *Buenos Aires Herald*, 29 May 2010, last accessed 13 October 2017, www.buenosairesherald.com/BreakingNews/View/34834.

5 See my assessments of previous English-language translations and productions of Spregelburd's plays, as well as my own strategies for translating two of his plays, *El pánico* [Panic] and *Spam*, for US productions: "Anticipated Failure, or Translating Rafael Spregelburd's Plays into English," in "Translator + Translated: New Work from Latin America," special issue, *Symposium* 68, no. 3 (2014): 135–46; and "Apocalypse and Amnesia, or Adrift in Our Own Garbage: Rafael Spregelburd's *Spam*," *Theater* 45, no. 1 (2015): 33–41.

6 "MINEFIELD 2016," *Lola Arias*, last accessed 23 March 2018, http://lolaarias.com/proyectos/campo-minado.

7 At the time of my writing the production was still on tour. Among the myriad critical essays that have been published on *Campo minado/Minefield*, and excluding those critical texts cited elsewhere in this chapter, see Jordana Blejmar, "Autofictions of Postwar: Fostering Empathy in Lola Arias' *Minefield/Campo minado*," *Latin American Theatre Review* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 103–23; and Cecilia Sosa, "*CAMPO MINADO/ MINEFIELD*: War, Affect and Vulnerability – A Spectacle of Intimate Power," *Theatre Research International* 42, no. 2 (2017): 179–89.
8 "Lola Arias on Minefield," YouTube video, 2:11, posted by "royalcourttheatre," 4 May 2016, last accessed 23 March 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKx-mWIEcss.
9 María M. Delgado, "Ways of Remembering Las Malvinas/The Falklands" in *Lola Arias: Re-Enacting Life*, ed. J. Graham-Jones (Aberystwyth: Performance Research Books, forthcoming).
10 Yvonne Griesel, "Surtitling: Surtitles an Other Hybrid on a Hybrid Stage," *TRANS: Revista de Traductología*, no. 13 (2009): 123.
11 Helena Buffery, "Negotiating the Translation Zone: Invisible Borders and Other Landscapes on the Contemporary 'Heteroglossic' Stage," *Translation Studies* 6, no. 2 (2013): 151.
12 Ibid., 161.
13 Ibid., 162.
14 Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 91.
15 Dimitris Papanikolaou, "Archive Trouble," *Cultural Anthropology*, 26 October 2011, last accessed 23 March 2018, www.culanth.org/fieldsights/247-archive-trouble. In this posted essay, Modern Greek scholar Papanikolaou writes that the ongoing Greek crisis presents an archive-disruptive opportunity:

> What I am trying to argue though is that this type of undermining now has the potential to become a dominant political and cultural critique, a full-blown genealogical attack that takes the current state not as a symptom of things that went wrong in the past, but as the very point from which the past should be reviewed, revisited, re-collated, reassembled and reassessed, both in political and in identitarian terms.

16 Apter, *Against World Literature*, 21.

Bibliography

Abel, Jonathan E. "Translation as Community: The Opacity of Modernizations of *Genji monogatari*." In *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, edited by S. Bermann and M. Wood, 146–58. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Apter, Emily. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London and New York, NY: Verso, 2013.

———. *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Arias, Lola. "MINEFIELD 2016." *Lola Arias*. Last accessed 23 March 2018. http://lolaarias.com/proyectos/campo-minado.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1994.

Blejmar, Jordana. "Autofictions of Postwar: Fostering Empathy in Lola Arias' *Minefield/ Campo minado*." *Latin American Theatre Review* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 103–23.

Buffery, Helena. "Negotiating the Translation Zone: Invisible Borders and Other Landscapes on the Contemporary 'Heteroglossic' Stage." *Translation Studies* 6, no. 2 (2013): 150–65.

Caruso, Ana. "Tolcachir: On Top of the World." *Buenos Aires Herald*, 29 May 2010. Last accessed 13 October 2017. www.buenosairesherald.com/BreakingNews/View/34834.

Delgado, María M. "Ways of Remembering Las Malvinas/The Falklands." In *Lola Arias: Re-Enacting Life*, edited by J. Graham-Jones. Aberystwyth: Performance Research Books, forthcoming.

Graham-Jones, Jean. "Anticipated Failure, or Translating Rafael Spregelburd's Plays into English." In "Translator + Translated: New Work from Latin America," special issue, *Symposium* 68, no. 3 (2014): 135–46.

———. "Apocalypse and Amnesia, or Adrift in Our Own Garbage: Rafael Spregelburd's *Spam*." *Theater* 45, no. 1 (2015): 33–41.

———. "Daniel Veronese's 'Proyecto Chéjov': Translation in Performance as Radical Relationality." In *Adapting Chekhov: The Text and Its Mutations*, edited by J. D. Clayton and Y. Meerzon, 203–16. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.

Griesel, Yvonne. "Surtitling: Surtitles an Other Hybrid on a Hybrid Stage." *TRANS: Revista de Traductología*, no. 13 (2009): 119–27.

"Lola Arias on Minefield." YouTube video. 2:11. Posted by "royalcourttheatre," 4 May 2016. Last accessed 23 March 2018. www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKx-mWIEcss.

Papanikolaou, Dimitris. "Archive Trouble." *Cultural Anthropology*, 26 October 2011. Last accessed 23 March 2018. www.culanth.org/fieldsights/247-archive-trouble.

Sosa, Cecilia. "*CAMPO MINADO/MINEFIELD*: War, Affect and Vulnerability – A Spectacle of Intimate Power." *Theatre Research International* 42, no. 2 (2017): 179–89.

Spregelburd, Rafael. "Panic." In *BAiT: Buenos Aires in Translation: 4 Plays from Argentina*, translated and edited by J. Graham-Jones, 149–281. New York, NY: Martin E. Segal Theatre Center/TCG, 2007.

Spregelburd, Rafael, and Zypce. *Spam: A Sprechoper.* Translated by J. Graham-Jones. *Theater* 45, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 43–93.

TIMBRe4. "La omisión de la familia Coleman." Last accessed 23 March 2018. www.timbre4.com/compania/18-la-omision-de-la-familia-coleman.html.

Tolcachir, Claudio. "The Coleman Family's Omission." In *Timbre 4: Two Plays by Claudio Tolcachir*, translated by E. Legon and J. Graham-Jones, 2–102, edited by J. Graham-Jones. New York, NY: Martin E. Segal Theatre Center/TCG, 2010.

7 Staging an alternative theatrical modernity

From modern literary drama to theatrical speech acts in Malayalam

B. Ananthakrishnan

New drama and theater beyond colonial stereotypes

When the first translation of a play by Henrik Ibsen into Malayalam was created in 1936, the Malayalam language did not have a long history of playwriting. The first Malayalam drama emerged in 1882 with the translation of Kalidasa's play *Shakuntalam* by Kerala Varma Valiyakoithampuran.[1] Considered one of the masterpieces of Sanskrit literature, *Shakuntalam* enjoyed a wide circulation among the Sanskrit literary elite, having been translated into English by Sir William Jones in 1789 and into German by Georg Forster in 1791. Yet it was translated into other Indian languages only in the nineteenth century.

The absence of written dramas in Malayalam, however, is not an indicator of a lacking performance culture in the region. *Attakatha*[2] can be seen as an earlier form of literature in Malayalam with a close affinity to drama, as it was written for kathakali, a performance form that emerged in the seventeenth century.[3] Even before attakatha, a series of dramas (such as *Genoa*, *Karlman* and *Napolean*) emerged among Christians in interaction with the Portuguese. However, "[t]hese dramas were popular among the local Christians but they could not make any impact on the people as a whole. Nor could they exert any influence on the dramatic literature of Malayalam or on the stage," as G. Sreedharan explains.[4] Other forms of folk and traditional performances used orally transmitted stories, which were not considered dramatic texts due to their verbal fluidity and their non-conformity with the notions of modern drama along with their collective ownership and circulation in rural areas.

Fifty-four years after the emergence of the first Malayalam play, Ibsen's *Ghosts* was translated into Malayalam as *Prethangal*.

> Malayalam, the mother tongue of nearly thirty million Malayalis, ninety per cent of whom live in Kerala State in the south-west corner of India, belongs to the Dravidian family of languages. Like the speakers, the language also has been receptive to influences from abroad and tolerant of elements added from outside. Malayalam literature too reflects this spirit of accommodation and has over the centuries developed a tradition which, even while rooted in the locality, is truly universal in taste.[5]

Interestingly, since the beginning of the twentieth century, Ibsen's dramatic texts have been translated, adapted and appropriated in all the major languages of South India.[6] Yet Ibsen's strong presence in the South Indian languages is not evenly distributed in terms of its context, choice of plays and circulation. Multiple reasons pertaining to the specific local context played a crucial role in bringing Ibsen to these languages.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, literary activists and writers in South India were looking for new expressive models in literature that differed from the colonial stereotypes. The modern dramatic literature that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in the South Indian languages—and this is applicable to almost all Indian languages[7]—were dominated by the conventional literary paradigms either following the Sanskrit formula[8] or the Victorian model. Literary demands governed the dramatic structure and the language patterns of the plays; in many cases, the plays were written according to refined literary values. The other cluster of plays prevalent during this period was steeped in melodramatic language and expression, a practice that characterized the popular theater of the time. They were seen as inferior texts by the elite literature exponents and modernists due to the influence of the popular commercial theaters that surfaced as an offshoot of the dominant Parsi theater tradition from Bombay in the middle of the nineteenth century, initiated by the Parsi business community.[9]

The nationalist movement that was gaining momentum during that period created an atmosphere averse to the colonial models in drama, which became magnified in the social sphere. I would like to argue in this chapter that this politically charged setting shaped and bled into all the manifestations of Ibsen in Malayalam, whether it was anti-colonial and nationalist or, later, communist in nature. Intellectuals, especially cultural activists, were constantly on the lookout for non-colonial, non-English models that had emerged in other parts of Europe as an alternative to the implanted paradigms of modernity in literature and the arts. This politically motivated interest in other, non-English literary and theatrical modernities of Europe inspired them to redirect the local literatures from the familiar colonial angle to more complex and new terrains. As E. V. Ramakrishnan explains: "The period between the 1930s and the 1950s in India witnessed momentous events in the political field as part of the nationalist freedom struggle and these events impacted the cultural productions from theatre to painting and literature."[10] The nationalist fervor with its concomitant quest to generate forms of expression rooted in logic and precision, coupled with subject matters that reflect the contemporary aspirations and realities of the people, and the intent to counter the dominant populist notion of performance led to the rise of modern Indian theater—a site of contestation even in its nascent stage. As Rakesh H. Solomon sums it up:

> [M]odern Indian dramatic formations—first in Calcutta, soon afterwards in Bombay, and later in Madras—had their genesis in developments dating back to the earliest phase of the Indian-British encounter during the second

> half of the eighteenth century. Because of this birth and nurture at the colonial intersections of British and Indian cultures, the modern Indian theatre embodied collisions as well as strategic collusions between different cultural traditions. Given the realities of the colonial project and of the patriotic resistance to it, the modern Indian theatre also became a potent site of contestation between imperialist and nationalist ideas, ideologies and agendas.[11]

While Ibsen was celebrating his career as a playwright in Europe, none of the South Indian languages could boast of their own written plays. In most cases, the first original plays in an Indian language were written during the 1870s or 1880s. Yet, even then, imitation seems to have been the guiding principle for writing plays. This led to a series of replicas in the Indian languages of the Shakespearean or Sanskrit model via the mode of adaptation or translation. The *sangeet nataka* (musical drama) tradition, the most prominent strand of performance in every South Indian language during this time, features a local appropriation of Parsi theater culture. The theater practiced by the sangeet nataka companies received steady patronage from the masses, serving as a frame of reference for the people and shaping the popular perception and notion of what theater is. The elite literary modernists neither recognized the playwrights of these sangeet natakas as writers nor accepted this form of theater as a "respectable" genre. Yet many of these elite playwrights, mostly poets or novelists, lacked literacy in the performative and theatrical aspects of the play.

In consequence, the disconnect between theater and drama as two distinct genres of expression—between what was being performed on stages, the actual *theatrical speech acts* in Malayalam, on the one hand, and the dramatic literature in transformation on the other—only grew wider at this juncture in spite of their ideational links and common underlying principles. Thus, from the beginning, *modern drama and theater practice functioned as two separate and conflicting domains in the languages of South India*. Dramatic writing, meanwhile, underwent a series of transitions, leading to the indiscriminate writing of vapid comedies and tragedies in these languages. It is pertinent to quote Adya Rangacharya describing a similar scenario in the Hindi language:

> The first modern Indian dramatist who consciously gave a new mission to the theatre was Bhartendu Harishchandra, the Hindi dramatist of the second half of 19th century. He declared that there were no dramas as such in his language; poetry, songs, dances and even dialogues by themselves did not make a drama, according to Bhartendu.[12]

Readers were frustrated by the low standard of comedies and melodramas, while enthusiasts equipped with a significant knowledge in the European trends beyond the colonial models through English translations were prepared to change the cultural status quo. Ibsen's plays were, by that time, available in English, translated by William Archer (1856–1924), the British drama critic who introduced Ibsen to the English-speaking world and via whom the majority of the

world accessed Ibsen. The introduction of Ibsen as a playwright in India, especially in the south, has to be seen in this cultural context, which is intertwined with a budding nationalism and the new consciousness of culture against the backdrop of modernity. As E. V. Ramakrishnan explains:

> The writers responded to the massive sociopolitical changes that swept across India in the wake of anti-imperialist resistance movements by radicalizing the role of literature in society and interrogating prevalent modes of representation. Translation played a significant part in this process of radicalization of literary sensibility.[13]

The emergence of Ibsen epitomizes this process of radicalization of literary sensibility in Malayalam, as in the other South Indian languages. Since no such effort has been made yet, this chapter will focus on the Malayalam language to survey the diverse manifestations of Ibsen both in dramatic literature and in theater productions of the twentieth century, demonstrating how Ibsen and his works—through a decades-long process of translation, adaptation and appropriation that was in all of its phases fueled by political concerns—contributed to the shaping, first, of *dramatic* and, later, also of *theatrical* speech acts in Malayalam. In a broader context, my article aims at opening up the potential for further research on the reception, consumption and appropriation of Ibsen as well as on his role in the process of modernity in the context of Kerala.

Shaping a literary modernity in Malayalam

A. Balakrishna Pillai (1889–1960) and A. K. Gopalapillai (1904–77),[14] who were at the forefront of shaping a literary modernity in Malayalam outside of the colonial purview, jointly translated Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881) into Malayalam as *Prethangal* in the year 1936.[15] A. Balakrishna Pillai wrote a long introduction to the translation, projecting seven major differences between Ibsen and his predecessors. The introduction delineating Ibsen's craft and skill has to be seen against the backdrop of the above-narrated context prevailing in the Indian playwriting and theater scene. The same context might have prompted A. Balakrishna Pillai to provide such an orientation to his contemporary audience in order to get into the works of Ibsen.[16] Here are—in summary and in my translation—Pillai's seven differences between Ibsen and his predecessors:

1. The subject of today's drama is not set in a distant time and place. There is no room for historical fiction and stories, which take place in faraway locations. The subjects of today's dramas center on events currently unfolding in our lives. By contrast, the old dramas dealt with historical incidents, unusual murders, looting, war and other turbulent events.
2. As day-to-day life has become the subject of drama, ideology and ideas are directly or indirectly discussed. The earlier portrayal of physical events and of the characters' external features is now replaced by the complex inner lives of characters and their unraveling in the plays.

3 The new ideas contest the validity of tradition and institutions. Old plays treated the traditional values and systems as sacred and unchangeable. Gender and class issues, largely ignored by the earlier dramatists, are prominent in the new plays.
4 The old plays were dynamic and the present one is static. Modern drama differs from its predecessor in that it avoids events and concentrates on ideas. The centrality of physical combat is replaced by psychological behavior.
5 To reveal this psychological complexity and conflicts between the characters, modern drama initiated the use of symbols and metaphorical language instead of ordinary words.
6 As psychological behavior became dominant in modern drama, playwrights introduced abstract and absolute characters based on their nature, features and traits.
7 There are significant differences between the craft of the old and the new plays.[17]

Here, A. Balakrishna Pillai argues that all of these narrated features are seen in the plays of Ibsen, which was a revolutionary transition in written drama. The twenty-nine-page introduction discusses the new craft and techniques introduced by Ibsen, and the shifts that resulted in terms of the themes, plots and ideas vis-à-vis the customary framework of playwriting. He outlines the different periods of Ibsen's career and includes brief analyses of the plays, with relevant quotations from William Archer, in order to elucidate Ibsen's brilliance. Finally, he asserts that he does not deem *Ghosts* to be Ibsen's best play but that he chose it to be translated first because of its structural integrity and dramatic intensity achieved through the method of retrospective plotting.[18]

The point of A. Balakrishna Pillai's opening synopsis was to provide the Malayalam reader with a comprehensive introduction to a non-English European playwright, as he believed that the prevailing sensibilities required such an expository aid. The introduction accentuates Balakrishna Pillai's critical position toward the Malayalam literary field, finding in Ibsen a model to exemplify the idea of change and progressive modernity. Therefore, E. V. Ramakrishnan is right to emphasize that

> Pillai's interest in the European avant-garde was prompted by the need to critique the Malayalam literary field. Central to his project was the creation of a new social imaginary, which enables writers to critique the practices of a society and create a modern secular literary discourse.[19]

The advent of a progressive literary movement caused ruptures to prevalent artistic expressions, the so-called "prestige styles," which—as the progressives argued—legitimized and glorified the present social order: "The patterns of contestation of the prevailing 'prestige styles' initiated by A.Balakrishna Pillai's critical articles became an organized form of revolt with the arrival of the progressive literary movement in Malayalam," as Ramakrishnan explains.[20]

Yet it is intriguing that Balakrishna Pillai did not prioritize the two Ibsen plays known for their progressive and reformist ideas, *A Doll's House* (1879) and *An Enemy of the People* (1882), mirroring translation choices in many other languages:

> Though he had to depend on the translations by William Archer, he wished that *Ghosts* and *Rosmersholm* should come first in Malayalam. […] These plays have more structural integrity and dramatic expressiveness than *An Enemy of the People* and *A Doll's House*. This demonstrates A. Balakrishna Pillai's outlook to consider Ibsen far beyond a realistic playwright.[21]

Each language has shown different strategies based on the politics and perceptive traits of different regions/languages in terms of identifying and prioritizing the plays for translation and adaptation. The structural integrity and dramatic expressiveness of Ibsen embedded in *Ghosts* motivated A. Balakrishna Pillai to translate the play into Malayalam with a conviction that it is essential for the Malayalam literary context, unlike many other Indian languages. His motivation in the introduction of *Ghosts* to Malayalam is threefold: first, to make it clear to the reader that this play is no longer just mere entertainment but a serious drama that could greatly appeal and potentially provide a unique experience to the audience; second, to manifest the formal excellence of the work; and, third, to present a work that reflects the reality of that time. Pillai showcases *Ghosts* as a work of literature demonstrating an essential integrity between form and content—what he calls "formal excellence"—in that the form is highly innovative and relevant to the lives portrayed in it. K. Ayyappa Paniker explains that Pillai's

> controversial theory about *Roopabhadrata*—formal excellence—showed that he was not evaluating a work of art solely on the basis of the proclaimed aims of a writer. But he saw the artist fundamentally as a spokesman of his age. This established his position as the chief architect of the theory of progressive literature in the 1940s.[22]

Ghost's translation has to be seen as an extrapolation of his theoretical perspective, explaining why he favored it over *An Enemy of the People* or *The Doll's House*, which are more deductive in nature. The translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* occupies a seminal space in the larger *political* framework of the literature and theater of Kerala within the reformist project in the field of culture backed up with nationalism and the notion of progressiveness.

From modern drama to theatrical speech acts in five steps

> Among the well-known European playwrights, the one who has had the greatest impact on modern Malayalam drama is the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen.
>
> —K. M. George[23]

The presence of Ibsen's plays in the Malayalam language can be felt through a multitude of manifestations, which can be classified in five categories:

1 Literal translations;
2 Adaptations;
3 Independent dramatic works that assimilate the approach, structure and craft of Ibsen's plays, based on their thematic/ideological essence;
4 Performance genre transfers, firmly associated with left political ideology;
5 New dramaturgical approaches.

In addition to these five categories, one more cluster could be added here consisting of works on Ibsen, discussing his biography, his worldview and his body of work, as well as major theoretical debates on it. It is obvious that once a writer and his work cast a strong spell on a specific cultural scene, this would go hand in hand with efforts to produce knowledge on him in the local language. Ibsen received unprecedented acclaim in the field of Malayalam literature, which indeed led to the production of supplementary resources to make him more accessible to his readers. Many articles can be found on him in several Malayalam periodicals and anthologies, and there are three major books exclusively discussing the works of Ibsen: Sankara G. Pillai's *Ibsente Nataka Sankalpam* (1990, The Dramatic Concept of Ibsen), Kattumadam Narayanan's *Ibsen* (1987) and P. J. Thomas's *Ibsente Lokam* (2007, Ibsen's World). These books give a comprehensive understanding of Ibsen's life and work as a playwright and poet along with theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Another work to be mentioned here is Mampuzha Kumaran's book about the development of dramatic literature titled *Molieril ninnum Ibsenilekku* (1997, From Molière to Ibsen).

On 1. Literal translations

The Malayalam translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* as *Prethangal* was followed by *The Wild Duck* as *Kattu Tharavu* (trans. Kovoor, 1947), *The Pillars of Society* as *Samudayathinte Nedumthoonukal* (trans. Varyar, 1954), *A Doll's House* as *Pavayude Veedu* (trans. Kovoor, 1954), another translation of *Ghosts* as *Bhootham* (trans. C. J. Thomas, 1956), *The Vikings at Helgeland* as *Veerayodhakkal Helgelindil* (trans. Meenakshiamma, 1962), *The Master Builder* as *Rajashilpi* (trans. Nair, 1966), *An Enemy of the People* as *Janadrohi* (trans. Nair, 1984), *The Lady from the Sea* as *Sagarakanyaka* (trans. Nair, 1980), *John Gabriel Borkman* (trans. P. J. Thomas, 1988), *When We Dead Awaken* as *Mruthathmakkal Unarumpol* (trans. Nair, 1992), *A Doll's House* as *Kooduvitta Kili* (trans. Kodungallur, 1992), *Ghosts* as *Bhoothangal* (trans. Albee, 1993) and *The Master Builder* as *Shreshtashilpi* (trans. P. C. Nair, 2002). This list comprises direct translations from the English without changes made to the names of the characters, the setting or to any other aspect of the English versions of the plays.

During the second half of the twentieth century, these translations of Ibsen's plays into Malayalam were part of many undergraduate and postgraduate curricula in Kerala. Because of them, Ibsen's works acquired a highly prominent space in the academic frameworks of Kerala as well as in literary circles. This

might have prompted the many publications on Ibsen—which I shortly introduced above—in the context of the progressive political environment of Kerala.

On 2. Adaptations

There were two adaptations of Ibsen's plays—*Rosmersholm* as *Mullakkal Bhavanam* (trans. C. Narayana Pillai, 1937) and *An Enemy of the People* as *Janadrohi* (trans. Gopinathan T. N. Nair, 1952). These two adaptations, K. M. George argues, "gave an opportunity for those unfamiliar with Western plays to understand the significance of constructing a play around a problem. Therefore, they are important incidents in the history of the Malayalam drama."[24]

C. Narayana Pillai adapted *Rosmersholm* and its psychological and political conflicts to the Malayalam context and called it *Mullakkal Bhavanam*. It literally means Mullakkal House, following the common practice in Kerala to give your home a name. This is similar to *Rosmersholm*, the manor of the major character, Rosmer, in the original play. The playwright set the play within a middle-class domestic environment of Kerala, reorganizing the relationships according to the established practices of the local family system. Padmanabha Pillai is the Rosmer character, who has lost his wife, Janaki Amma, much before the beginning of the play. Bhanumathi Amma, Janaki Amma's sister, takes the place of Rebecca West, and Damodaran Pillai, Janaki Amma's uncle, that of Prof. Kroll, Rosmer's brother-in-law in the original play. *Mullakkal Bhavanam* is a seat of orthodoxy and traditional values and morality. In contrast, Bhanaumathi Amma represents modernity and radical thinking. She is not afraid to express her own opinions about the world and falls in love with Padmanabha Pillai with the intention of transforming his conservative outlook, which she manages to do in the play. In the end, Padmanabha Pillai becomes a supporter of the nationalist movement and the struggle against the caste system. The playwright thus replaced the Norwegian political context with the social conditions prevalent in India, especially the fervor of the Indian nationalist struggle, and used the social grievances of Kerala as a pivot for the play to revolve around. He located the play very specifically close to the city of Ernakulum. All the major characters and the central context of the original play have Malayalam equivalents.

The play *Janadrohi* demonstrates the intricacies of water and the involvement of the whole community with a river in the region of Kerala, which is different from the Norwegian context in the play *An Enemy of the People*. In villages, the local river plays a major role in everyone's lives. People use it for their bath, and there are designated spots for this on both banks up to the river's destination. The doctor informs the people of the contamination of the water because of a poisonous discharge from a factory. In *Janadrohi*, the same idea from the original work is used, albeit with a major cultural shift that adapts it to the cultural context of Kerala.[25]

On 3. Independent dramatic works

Despite the dominance of Ibsen and his works, especially through translations and discussions in several literary and cultural forums, we can trace a direct

reflection of Ibsen's craft, themes and dramatic expressiveness in an original play written by N. Krishna Pillai entitled *Bhagnabhavanam* (1942, Broken House). Written in Malayalam and featuring an in-depth cultural familiarity with the local lives, *Bhagnabhavanam* rigorously follows Ibsen's structural and thematic patterns. Krishna Pillai has acknowledged Ibsen as his model and source of inspiration for the linear dramatic structure and centrality of middle-class predicaments rooted in the orthodox family system. As he himself explains:

> The intention was to write plays on serious and original subjects with convincing characters, themes, temporal placement and locations, as well as realistic and carefully constructed dialogue, all leading to a final resolution in a dense and suspenseful manner. […] [I]nspiration to this exercise was the ignorant playwrights of my time and their works and the successful works of Ibsen in this direction.[26]

Pillai leaned on Ibsen's focused and well-crafted structure as a guiding principle. He further explains:

> [The] earlier style of weaving the plot with two or more threads affects the dramatic intensity. So I prefer a single linear plot, reducing the number of acts to avoid structural corpulence, minimizing the dramatic situations and making them dramatically expressive with intensive conflict, reducing the number of characters according to the sturdy and compact plot structure, avoiding long statements and descriptive dialogues including soliloquies, which are artificial in nature—I followed these methods with a desire and confidence to achieve the target mentioned earlier.[27]

The theme and its gradual unraveling are thus similar to that of Ibsen's method of retrospective realism.[28] While A. Balakrishna Pillai identified the idea of structural integrity and dramatic expressiveness as the salient features in Ibsen's work, Krishna Pillai replicated it in his first play, which was inextricably embedded in the local culture because of its language and sociocultural references.

N. Krishna Pillai published his second play in 1944. *Kanyaka* (Virgin) has been described as "the lone problem play available in Malayalam."[29] Its main character, Devaki Kutty, mirrors Nora's political stance in the context of Kerala, interwoven with familial obligations and commitments imposed on her that can be found in any lower-middle-class Nair family. The unmarried Devaki Kutty, well-educated and employed as a government official, is constantly exploited by her family and expected to financially support her parents and other family members. Except for her, everybody is married and enjoying a life of luxury and joy thanks to her income. Exasperated by the incessant attempts of her family members to extract material benefits from her, Devaki Kutty leaves home to begin a new life with her office attendant.

The character of Devaki Kutty echoes Nora in *A Doll's House*, but Krishna Pillai transplanted his play into his own cultural context, maintaining Nora's spirit and her final determination. While N. Krishna Pillai acknowledges his debt to Ibsen

for his dramatic writings, he distilled the essence of Ibsen's dramatic ideas and applied them to the familiar family relationships he observed around him that were prevalent in many lower-middle-class families in Kerala, steering clear of the European family structure. Similarly, the later plays of N. Krishna Pillai also reveal the degree of inspiration the author drew from Ibsen in terms of structure and craft. The play *Balabalam* (1945, Trial of Strength) features another character similar to Nora, who abandons her husband and thus is liberated from her mother-in-law. N. Krishna Pillai's effort echoed Ibsen's ideological motif. As Katherine E. Kelly puts it, "Ibsen's story of troubled middle-class domesticity coincided with social and legal efforts to reform marriage, divorce and sexuality, especially to benefit women."[30] All the plays of N. Krishna Pillai are set within the confines of the lower-middle-class families of Kerala, where the characters are entrenched in rigid family systems and relentlessly struggle to break free from these restrictive orthodoxies. N. Krishna Pillai meticulously maintained this structure employed so effectively by Ibsen.

The plays written by N. Krishna Pillai, in turn, inspired many new playwrights because of their simple structure and linearity in terms of plot. Gradually, the Ibsenist style of playwriting established itself as the common trend in Malayalam. The celebrated playwright Thoppil Bhasi (1924–92), who had written *You Made Me a Communist* in 1956, acknowledged his creative obligation to N. Krishna Pillai's plays and their influence as a model for his own playwriting. The same model became popular in commercial theater, too, and continues until today.

Unfortunately, however, N. Krishna Pillai's plays have so far not been prominently staged. In other words, until now, they have largely failed to cross the gap between drama and theater practice as two distinct genres of expression that they had helped to create and to move from the page to the stage in order to become genuine and, thus, effective *theatrical speech acts* on a wider scale in Kerala. Soon after their creation, these plays were performed a few times in Trivandrum and in some other cities, but these performances did not attract large audiences and failed to reach more than a small group of people who were enthusiastic about making changes in the field of art and performance. The plays were also frequently produced in amateur theater circles. Yet their recognition has largely remained limited to the field of literature, perhaps due to the commonly held view that plays of this sort were written as closet dramas—to be read and enjoyed in solitude. On the occasion of N. Krishna Pillai's seventieth birthday celebrations in 1986, the Kerala People's Arts Club (KPAC, an outfit of the Indian People's Theatre Association, ITPA), a theater company run by the Communist Party of India, commissioned the play *Bhagnabhavanam* (1942) as a gesture of respect toward him. Unfortunately, the production failed to attract the masses and was shut down immediately, as the play could not accommodate expected popular ingredients such as songs and comedy, which are essential for commercial success. Although N. Krishna Pillai's plays and the translated plays of Ibsen were rarely brought to the stage, Ibsen's plays continue to be translated well into the twenty-first century. Yet many of these plays are relegated to textbooks as recommended reading for graduate and postgraduate students in languages and literature.

On 4. Performance genre transfers

It is interesting that in 1986, the play *Ghosts*[31] was staged as a narrative performance, adapted in the form of *kathaprasangam*, a popular performing art widely consumed in Kerala especially during the temple festivals and communist party's public meetings.[32]

Katha means "story" and *prasangam* means "oration" or "telling the story." Though the literal meaning of the conjunctive "kathaprasangam" is storytelling, the form consists of a blend of orchestrated music, songs and fictional narration through a dramatic enactment by a lone performer supported by musicians placed around him. Kathaprasangam is the transformed modern version of the traditional narrative form *harikatha*. In harikatha, the performer narrates devotional stories in temples mixed with recitals accompanied by music. Harikatha was limited to sacred contexts in and around temples during festivals or religious occasions. Storytelling has a long association with temples; it developed as a form of art during ancient times. *Pathakam*,[33] a popular storytelling narrative form in temples, is the predecessor of harikatha. Pathakam was usually performed by a single individual, who narrated the story interspersed with songs and a number of anecdotes, which he enacted to some degree. The performer was accompanied by musicians. Pathakams were conducted during temple festivals and were meant for larger audiences attending the festivals.[34] In continuation of these storytelling practices in the temple courtyards but with a more elaborate system of presentation, harikatha emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to the Tamil influence. As H. K. Ranganath explains:

> *Harikatha* is the legend of Hari or Vishnu, the Supreme Lord. *Kathakar*, the performer, interprets episodes from the eventful life of Hari as narrated in the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*. But while on the storyline, the *Kathakar* with his songs and sayings, humour and satire, acting and gesture, freely comments on contemporary issues, and the behaviour of man. In this sense, he has remained "contemporary" in relation to the society at any point of time.[35]

Harikatha had a vibrant presence across South India, with regional variations and a strong affiliation with Tamil culture: "*Harikatha* used the Tamil idioms and Tamil songs, and the narratives often continued for several days, which was called *harikatha kalakshepam*."[36] Kathaprasangam evolved from this tradition with a secular approach by artists belonging to the progressive and leftist movements. It replaced the traditional accompaniments with new musical instruments such as harmonium, tabla, clarinet, etc. In the performance, the *kathikan*—singer/narrator—tells the story through songs and narrations. Usually, the performer himself selects the story and writes the script as well as the songs. Every year, the performer devises a new story and travels across the state to perform. Temples and churches—depending on the nature of the story—and other public venues stage the performance, which is usually held at night.

V. Sambasivan (1929–96) was one of the most popular proponents of this politically engaged performance genre. He introduced many world classics such as *Othello* and *Macbeth* to the form, as well as works by renowned writers such as Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy alongside works from Indian literature. V. Sambasivan used the available translations of *Ghosts* in Malayalam to create an original adaptation of the play for his kathaprasangam of 1986. He maintained the English title rather than using the available Malayalam translations, *Prethangal* or *Bhootham*, which have the same meaning as the original. He conceived the play without altering its original fictional environment or the characters' names, except for making a significant change to the end. He narrated the story via the dramatic situations embedded in the play. Songs were written based on the events unfolding in the play in order to maintain the intensity and tempo. He performed the story upon request until his death.

In 1986 and 1987, in particular, *Ghosts* was very popular among the masses. Sambasivan would perform it every day at more than one venue, especially during temple festivals where the audience would typically consist of at least two thousand spectators. The duration of a kathaprasangam performance is between two and two and half hours depending on the performer's improvisation. The kathikan controls the performance and, in accordance with his improvisations, the accompanying musicians support him throughout the performance. On some occasions, the performer will interact with them in a conversation connected to the story. But the musicians will never actively intervene in the performance unless the performer explicitly solicits their involvement beyond playing their instruments. Besides his improvisational techniques in and around the story or his comments on the prevailing political situation in the country, the performer strictly follows a linear structure of the play in his narration. The compactness of the dramatic structure allowed Sambasivan to indulge in a more detailed narration of the characters and the features of European life before returning to the dramatic progression of the play. Since the audiences were mostly from remote rural villages, he would begin his performance by talking about Norway, its geographical features and people, and briefly introducing Ibsen, his works and life.

As mentioned above, Sambasivan changed the ending of the story by adding one scene. The focal attention of the audience is drawn to an emotionally poignant situation in which Pastor Manders arrives at the location of the burning orphanage, removes his cassock and throws it into the fire to denounce his priesthood. This major change in the ending was, of course, meant as a comment on the church. As a member of the left progressive movement, Sambasivan's kathaprasangam performances—or here I should emphasize: his *theatrical speech acts*—used to address the struggle between leftist politics and religious outfits, which constantly surfaced in Kerala's political sphere. Another reason for why Sambasivan may have decided to change the ending could have been his realization that the audience would be lacking that acute sense of the landscape of Norway and would thus fail to understand Oswald's final yearning for the sun. Later, because of its wide popularity, a church-run music production company entered into an agreement with Sambasivan for the commercial release of the audiocassette of

Ghosts. However, after the recording of Sambasivan's tremendously popular kathaprasangam performance was complete, the church intervened and discontinued the project, as it was seen as detrimental to the church. (Vasantha Kumar, Sambasivan's son, shared this information with the author in 2008.)

In 1998, Vasantha Kumar adapted *A Doll's House* for kathaprasangam. After a couple of performances, the performer realized that there was a sense of dismay among the audience concerning Nora's final exit in which she abandons her children and husband. He reworked the script to accommodate another narrative format in which Ibsen appears as a character who then unravels Nora's story. Yet even after this change and unlike *Ghosts*, Vasantha Kumar's narrative theatrical speech acts received a very lukewarm response from the audience—perhaps due to issues related to the prevailing system of patriarchy in Kerala.

On 5. New theatrical experiments

The end of the twentieth century revealed the beginning of a paradigm shift in the reception toward Ibsen's plays, peeling off their label of literature and placing them instead in the terrain of theatrical modernity. Earlier, Ibsen was not an influential figure in Kerala's theater scene and his work failed to generate new theatrical models in conjunction with its literary success, as the translations, adaptations and appropriations from the beginning of twentieth century and later were part of a literary modernity, without a similar experimental phase taking place in the theater.

By the end of the twentieth and the beginning of twenty-first century, the presence of Ibsen entered the realm of theatrical modernity, whereby Ibsen's texts came to be seen as material for theatrical productions. Moreover, this renewed interest was not restricted to the texts that had been celebrated earlier. The reception of Ibsen within this theatrical modernity ignored the canonized texts of Ibsen, such as *A Doll's House, Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People*. Instead, directors explored the theatrical potential of other plays that were not familiar through translations. This theatrical context created a new existence for Ibsen's plays in the process of performance production, leading to a surge in theatrical speech acts through new dramaturgies. These new directors engaged dramaturges to work on their productions according to their interpretations and visual manifestations, which in the Indian context is almost unheard of. Plays such as *Peer Gynt* and *The Lady from the Sea* have received theatrical attention beyond their literary relevance by contesting the supremacy of the text alone and processing the text through a new materiality, which could inspire fresh insights into the play and transcend conventional receptions. No other playwright besides Ibsen has enjoyed that level of dramaturgical attention in India in the twenty-first century. It is complementary to the Indian theatrical context, too, as the traditional framework of author, director, actor and audience has been challenged in these efforts, thus influencing the performance-making process in general.

Trends to challenge the authority of Ibsen's text in an interpretative effort through theatrical means began with the production of *Ghosts* by Jose Chiramel

(1953–2006) as part of his undergraduate studies at the School of Drama at the University of Calicut in Thrissur in 1982. He devised a triangular space with one vertex projected into the audience. In another corner, he placed a gigantic cross—made from bamboo and covered in old newspapers. The director adapted the play to the format of trial and penitence, mainly between Mrs. Alving and Manders and by using the most prominent parts of the dialogue. Manders, Regina and Oswald also tried Mrs. Alving, who then repents. Finally, ghosts appear out of the gigantic cross, piercing the newspapers and dragging the screaming Oswald up to its top. This is the director's version of the last scene of the play in which Oswald screams for the sun, the idea being to critique the church and the corrupt mechanisms of charity.

Jose Chiramel's production, with a duration of forty-five minutes, must be seen as the first effort to evolve a dramaturgical approach from an Ibsen play in Malayalam. Here, the director encountered the text in order to generate an unfamiliar visual structure against the established perceptions of the text-performance alignment, in which the text remains a dictatorial authority for the performance. This trend of dramaturgically exploring new possibilities for interpretation, visuality, materiality and appropriations from tradition became ubiquitous for all Ibsen productions in Malayalam in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

While there have been diverse manifestations of Ibsen in the Malayalam language, a more complex picture emerges in the context of given theatrical and cultural practices of the period. It is interesting to note that the majority of the responses to Ibsen did not address theatrical aspects in relation to the production of Ibsen's plays. In the introduction to the translation of *Ghosts*, A. Balakrishna Pillai speaks about the paradigm shift initiated by Ibsen through his playwriting. The playwright N. Krishna Pillai talks about how Ibsen inspired him in terms of his compact themes and related structure. Yet both of them concentrated on the plays written during the second phase of his career as a playwright: "They couldn't see the tranquility of poetic expression and the level beyond realism inherent in Ibsen's plays […]. The writers were unable to find the total image of Ibsen or the complexity of characters in his plays."[37] Even though many of the writers and translators focused exclusively on their literary quality, they only looked at the plays belonging to the period of social revolt or realism.

According to Sankara G. Pillai, Malayalam drama had only existed for fifty-four years in 1936.[38] Later, many translations and original plays were written in Malayalam, but the translation of *Ghosts* in 1936 created a paradigm shift in the field of Malayalam drama, resulting in multiple transformations in terms of structure and themes. N. Krishna Pillai's *Bhagnabhavanam*, *Kanyaka* and *Balabalam* exemplify this. While other translated plays remained as texts from an alien context and functioned as a model for modern playwriting, N. Krishna Pillai's plays became dramatic transactions through acculturation, as Susan Bassnett writes: "Acculturation, it can be argued, brings a text more completely into the target

system, since that text is effectively aimed at readers with no knowledge of any other system."[39] N. Krishna Pillai's ambition was to synthesize his text through an acculturation process with the social system available to him and his readers.

Ibsen's emergence and established presence in Malayalam are intertwined with nationalism, modernity and progressive writing backed by the political left. This context necessitated reinventing Malayalam drama. Ibsen's dramatic structure and his themes deriving from a social reformist approach speak to the fervor of the "progressives" and are thus justifiable in the political context of Kerala or within the wider sphere of colonial rule in India. As was the case in many other languages in colonial India, the quest for the "new" was a prominent reason for epitomizing Ibsen in Malayalam drama. Further, Ibsen and Ibsenism have been transmitted through diverse transactions as they could accommodate the resistance of the public in certain contexts, especially toward the established paradigms in dramatic writing. Specifically, Ibsen functioned as a canonical figure in Malayalam who could repudiate the orthodoxy predominant in society as well as in the field of playwriting, osmotically synthesizing them. This is most evidently reflected in the form of plays written by N. Krishna Pillai.

Translations of Ibsen's plays also functioned as a testimony to the possibilities for encountering the abovementioned two orthodoxies. Introducing world literature to the local language has to be seen as an effort to open the windows of modernity to different, non-English literary contexts, thus resisting the colonial influence and helping to shape a nationalist outlook. The attempt was aimed at breaking the provinciality of the local literature. It is necessary to see the translations of Ibsen into Malayalam in conjunction with the progressive movement in literature during the first half of the twentieth century. A. Balakrishna Pillai's introduction and the translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* exemplify this process, alongside the later translations of his plays and knowledge production on his life and work, a process that is still ongoing today.

Notes

1 See K. Ayyappa Paniker, *A Short History of Malayalam Literature* (Kerala: Information and Public Relations Department, Kerala State, 2006), 7.
2 *Attam* means performance, and *katha* means story in Malayalam.
3 Paniker, *Short History*, 37.
4 G. Sreedharan, "The Drama in Malayalam," *Indian Literature* 18, no. 1 (January–March 1975): 69.
5 Paniker, *Short History*, 11.
6 Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam are the major languages spoken in South India in the following five states: Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, respectively.
7 See Adya Rangacharya, *The Indian Theatre*, 2nd ed. (1969; New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1980), 101. Page references are to the 1980 edition.
8 Sanskrit plays follow a certain formulaic dramatic structure, maintaining the classical unities of acts and dramatic devices coupled with a highly archaic language written in verse. The maintenance of a high literary quality has been seen as an essential requirement in Sanskrit drama.

9 See Kathryn Hansen, "Languages on Stage: Linguistic Pluralism and Community Formation in the Nineteenth-Century Parsi Theatre," *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 2 (2003): 381.
10 E. V. Ramakrishnan, "Radicalising Literature: The Role of Translation in the Creation of a Literary Public Sphere in Kerala," *The EFL Journal* 3, no. 1 (2012): 1–2.
11 Rakesh H. Solomon, "Culture, Imperialism, and Nationalist Resistance: Performance in Colonial India," *Theatre Journal* 46, no. 3 (1994): 323–324.
12 Rangacharya, *Indian Theatre*, 103.
13 Ramakrishnan, "Radicalising Literature," 2.
14 Very little is known of A. K. Gopalapillai's life, as his participation in translating *Ghosts* with A. Balakrishna Pillai is the only literary work he carried out during his lifetime.
15 See Sankara G. Pillai, *Malayala Nataka Sahithya Charithram*, 2nd ed. (1980; Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1987), 67, all subsequent translations are mine. Page references are to the 1987 edition.
16 See A. Balakrishna Pillai and A. K. Gopala Pillai, *Prethangal*, 2nd ed. (1936; Thiruvananthapuram: Narayanan Nair, 1954). Page references are to the 1954 edition.
17 Ibid., xix–xx.
18 See ibid., xxv. Through retrospective plotting, the playwright illuminates issues haunting the present by revealing past events:

> In the retrospective technique there is no single scene of exposition; rather, the exposition is woven through the fabric of the entire play […]. Ibsen's own *Ghosts* is perhaps one of the best known and purest examples of this form.
>
> Charles A. Hallett, "The Retrospective Technique and Its Implications for Tragedy," *Comparative Drama* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 4

19 Ramakrishnan, "Radicalising Literature," 8.
20 Ibid., 9.
21 Pillai, *Malayala Nataka*, 70.
22 Paniker, *Short History*, 91.
23 K. M. George, *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature* (1971; repr. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1998), 155. Page references are to the 1998 edition.
24 Ibid., 154.
25 Here, I want to mention a third Ibsen adaptation, in spite of the fact that it was *not* created for theater: P. A. Warier retold the story of *A Doll's House* as *Pava Veedu* (1983) in a narrative form. It was published as part of a world's classics series with the objective to introduce renowned literary works to a general audience irrespective of their original genre.
26 Krishna N. Pillai, *Kairaliyude Katha* (Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1958), 225, my translation.
27 Ibid., 256.
28

> Ibsen's method of retrospective realism—a narrative device by which he opens the action at a moment close to crisis (the discovery of Nora's crime) but includes in its forward movement references to past events that invisibly shaped the conflict (the "crime" against Nora).
>
> Katherine E. Kelly, "Pandemic and Performance: Ibsen and the Outbreak of Modernism," *South Central Review* 25, no. 1 (2008): 14–15

29 Pillai, *Malayala Nataka*, 85.
30 Kelly, "Pandemic and Performance," 15.
31 For an audio recording of V. Sambasivan's *Ghosts* see: "V SAMBASIVAN -THE GHOSTS," YouTube video, 13:19, posted by "rajiv lal," 29 November 2019, last accessed 19 December 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=miE67bunREs.

32 "*Kathaprasangam* is one of the most popular forms in central and southern Kerala, and at present spreading into northern Kerala also." Aymanam Krishna Kaimal, "Traditional Performing Art Forms," in *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala Literature, Art, Architecture, Music, Theatre, Cinema*, ed. P. J. Cherian and B. Rajeevan (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Gazetteers Department, 1999), 121.
33 Pathakam is a narrative form with brilliant techniques of narration performed mainly in the temples of Kerala by the Chakyar community, which is traditionally authorized to perform in temples.
34 See Kaimal, "Traditional Performing Art Forms," 122.
35 H. K. Ranganath, "Katha-Kirtan," *India International Centre Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (June 1983): 199.
36 Kaimal, "Traditional Performing Art Forms," 122. *Harikatha kalakshepam* literally means "to pass the time with a harikatha performance."
37 Pillai, *Malayala Nataka*, 85.
38 Ibid., 14.
39 Susan Bassnett, "Bringing the News Back Home: Strategies of Acculturation and Foreignisation," *Language & Intercultural Communication* 5, no. 2 (2005): 121.

Bibliography

Albee, P. V. *Bhoothangal* [Ghosts]. Aluva: Khani Books, 1993.

Bassnett, Susan. "Bringing the News Back Home: Strategies of Acculturation and Foreignisation." *Language & Intercultural Communication* 5, no. 2 (2005): 120–30.

George, K. M. *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature*. 1971. Reprint, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1998.

Hallett, Charles A. "The Retrospective Technique and Its Implications for Tragedy." *Comparative Drama* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 3–22.

Hansen, Kathryn. "Languages on Stage: Linguistic Pluralism and Community Formation in the Nineteenth-Century Parsi Theatre." *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 2 (2003): 381–405.

Kaimal, Aymanam Krishna. "Traditional Performing Art Forms." In *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala Literature, Art, Architecture, Music, Theatre, Cinema*, edited by P. J. Cherian and B. Rajeevan, 99–124. Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Gazetteers Department, 1999.

Kelly, Katherine E. "Pandemic and Performance: Ibsen and the Outbreak of Modernism." *South Central Review* 25, no. 1 (2008): 12–35.

Kodungalloor, Gopi. *Kooduvitta Kili* [Bird which Left the Nest]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1992.

Kovoor, E. M. *Kattu Tharavu* [Wild Duck]. Thrissur: Mangalodayam, 1947.

———. *Pavayude Veedu* [House of Doll]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1954.

Kumaran, Mampuzha. *Molieril ninnum Ibsenilekku* [From Moliere to Ibsen]. Thrissur: Sahithya Akademi, 1997.

Meenakshiamma, Konniyoor. *Veerayodhakkal Helgelindil* [Viking of the Helgoland]. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1962.

Nair, Gopinathan T. N. *Janadrohi* [Tormentor of the People]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1951.

Nair, P. C. *Shreshtashilpi* [Master Builder]. Thrissur: Sulabha, 2002.

Nair, Ramachandran K. *Janashathru* [Enemy of the People]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1984.

———. *Mruthathmakkal Unarumpol* [When We Dead Awaken]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1992.

———. *Rajashilpi* [Master Builder]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1966.
———. *Sagarakanyaka* [Lady from the Sea]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1980.
Narayanan, Kattumadam. *Ibsen*. Thrissur: Current, 1987.
Paniker, K. Ayyappa. *A Short History of Malayalam Literature*. Kerala: Information and Public Relations Department, Kerala State, 2006.
Pillai, A. Balakrishna, and Pillai A. K. Gopala. 1936. *Prethangal* [Ghosts]. 2nd ed. Thiruvananthapuram: Narayanan Nair, 1954.
Pillai, N. Krishna. *Balabalam* [Trial of Strength]. Thiruvananthapuram: Prabodhini, 1945.
———. *Bhagnabhavanam* [Broken House]. Thiruvananthapuram: Sreevilas, 1942.
———. *Kairaliyude Katha* [Story of Kerala]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1958.
———. *Kanyaka* [Virgin]. Thiruvananthapuram: S R, 1943.
Pillai, Narayana C. *Mullakkal Bhavanam*. Thiruvananthapuram: Kamalalaya, 1937.
Pillai, Sankara G. *Ibsente Nataka Sankalpam* [Dramatic Concept of Ibsen]. 1987. Reprint, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1990.
———. *Malayala Nataka Sahithya Charithram* [History of Malayalam Drama]. 1980. 2nd ed. Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1987.
Ramakrishnan, E. V. "Radicalising Literature: The Role of Translation in the Creation of a Literary Public Sphere in Kerala." *The EFL Journal* 3, no. 1 (2012): 1–13.
Rangacharya, Adya. *The Indian Theatre*. 1969. 2nd ed. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1980.
Ranganath, H. K. "Katha-Kirtan." *India International Centre Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (June 1983): 199–205.
Sreedharan, G. "The Drama in Malayalam." *Indian Literature* 18, no. 1 (January–March 1975): 69–74.
Solomon, Rakesh H. "Culture, Imperialism, and Nationalist Resistance: Performance in Colonial India." *Theatre Journal* 46, no. 3 (1994): 323–47.
Thomas, C. J. *Bhootham* [Ghost]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1956.
Thomas, P. J. *Ibsente Lokam* [World of Ibsen]. Kozhikkode: Mathrubhoomi Books, 2007.
———. *John Gabriel Borkman*. Thrissur: National Book Stall, 1988.
"V SAMBASIVAN -THE GHOSTS." YouTube video. 13:19. Posted by "rajiv lal." 29 November 2019. Last accessed 19 December 2019. www.youtube.com/watch?v=miE67bunREs.
Varyar, M. I. *Samudayathinte Nedumthoonukal* [Pillars of Society]. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1954.
Wariar, P. A. *Pava Veedu* [House of the Doll]. Kottayam: DC Books, 1983.

8 The task of theatrical translation

Second-hand speech acts in contemporary performances

Adam Czirak

Translated by Balazs Rapcsak

The theater productions of the last decades have predominantly been interpreted by using methods that focused on meaning production beyond the textual level. The analytical paradigms that emerged in the wake of the performative, acoustic, spatial or social turns ignored the effects created by the textual dramaturgy—as did the descriptive categories of "postdramatic theater," "post-spectacular theater" or a "theater of the Real." It was Hans-Thies Lehmann who, in his *Postdramatic Theatre*, came to the conclusion that, after Brecht, textual coherence in drama went through a radical disintegration. Lehmann then described the text as acoustic "material," as poetic interruption and as rhythmic sound. He explicitly claimed that the dramaturgy of postdramatic theater is "not text-oriented."[1]

Since the year 2000, I argue, we have been witnessing the proliferation of textual dramaturgies in theater and performance, which, nevertheless, also reflect the erosion of dramatic theater. That is to say, they belong to the paradigm of postdramatic theater. This practice, however, does not use language as sensuous material but, instead, probes into the political dimension of speech and foregrounds the following questions: *who speaks, and on whose behalf, with whose voice and who bears responsibility?* We could describe this practice as a dramaturgy of "second-hand theatrical speech acts," as a procedure of retelling based on *recursivity* and *quotation*. This procedure, however, deploys these common postmodern strategies in such a radical way that what becomes the focus of attention is not so much the content of narration as the translation effort apparent in the act of retelling. I would like to explore these immaterial tensions of *trans*ferred and *trans*lated voices by analyzing the dramatic procedures in a selection of recent theater productions. The following three examples share a similar concept. Instead of slipping into roles, the performers appear in scenes of retelling that question the very possibility of an intact representation of the other. In a first step, I look at Nature Theater of Oklahoma's production of *Romeo and Juliet* (premiered 2008) to describe the textual logic characteristic of second-hand theatrical speech acts. In my analysis, I draw on the history of quotational speech on the stage and on Walter Benjamin's theory of translation. In a second step, I discuss Forced Entertainment's production *Speak Bitterness* (premiered 1994) to shed light on the aesthetic effects of speaking on behalf of others and to inquire

into how second-hand speech acts affect the reception process of the spectator. In the third and final part, I turn my attention to Nicolas Stemann's controversial production of Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Schutzbefohlenen*, translated as *Charges (The Supplicants)*, which premiered in 2014, and channel my arguments into a thesis about second-hand speech acts on the stage and the resulting politics of representation.

The textual logic of second-hand theatrical speech acts

On entering the hall of Berlin's Hebbel Theater on 28 June 2013, you were confronted with a dual situation on the stage. In their production of *Romeo and Juliet*, Nature Theater of Oklahoma presented a stylized environment of a touring company on the otherwise naked stage. Yet the setting was not the only element in inverted commas—so were the monologues, performed by Anne Gridley and Robert M. Johanson over a ninety-minute period, which, from time to time, briefly summarized the plot of Shakespeare's eponymous play. Instead of Shakespeare, however, the actors quoted Americans who were asked to spontaneously retell—in phone conversations—the supposedly simple plot of Shakespeare's play, from beginning to end. Without making any changes to these transcripts, the production used the eight summaries of this supposedly simple subject, which, however, turned out to be full of complexities. The actors recited the telephone monologues, including their significant moments of confusion, their slips, their fillers and their unintended contradictions, which grew louder and louder (Figure 8.1).

Even a cursory glance at the history of theater shows how strongly stage action has been influenced by various quotation practices. While from a Hegelian perspective we could describe theater as an art form based on dialogic communication, references from beyond the scene are in fact central to the Western history of dramaturgy. Messengers, envoys or raisonneurs, who get a chance to speak in theater, always do this, as the German philosopher Sybille Krämer explains, "with someone else's voice."[2] And so ever since antiquity, the personification of quotations plays a key role in theater. Before I go into detail about *Romeo and Juliet*, I would like to make a brief digression on the history of quotation in theater. The Western history of theater begins, so to speak, with the embodiment of the quotation on the stage through the character of the messenger. The introduction of the second actor by Aeschylus was aimed not at creating a dialogue partner, but at establishing an envoy whose function was to pass on a message from the reality that lay beyond the stage. It is worth noting that the messenger cannot be involved in a dialogue. As Lehmann insists, "[t]ragedy does not emerge from a will to dialogue and drama," but from a "new form of discourse whose 'dramatic' beginning is the messenger's report."[3]

The polyphony of a theatrical performance cannot be confined to the ephemeral voices produced acoustically by the actors in the here and now of the performance. Those who are only present through quotations or paraphrase get a chance to speak on the stage, too, irrespective of their absence. And what's more, as the classicist Ruth Scodel pointed out, there is a paradox in the character of the messenger: the indirectness of his report suggests greater authenticity than

Figure 8.1 Anne Gridley and Robert M. Johanson in Nature Theater of Oklahoma's *Romeo and Juliet* (2008).

the "immediacy" of the utterances delivered by the characters on the stage.[4] The messenger's credibility results from his status as an eyewitness. He lets the stage characters and the audience participate in an event situated outside of the spatio-temporal framework of the performance.[5]

Thus, the break with the dialogical structure had been coded in drama from its very genesis. In the liturgical dramas of the Middle Ages, God's word became a prominent dramaturgical authority. Only the modern drama succeeded in emancipating itself from the tradition of mediated theatrical speech acts by privileging the dialogue and getting rid of the messenger as well as the quotation. As Peter Szondi states in his now famous *Theorie des modernen Dramas* (1956; *Theory of the Modern Drama*, 1983):

> [T]he Drama is primary. It is not a (secondary) representation of something else (primary); it presents itself, is itself. Its action, like each of its lines, is "original," it is accomplished as it occurs. The Drama has no more room for quotation than it does for variation. Such quotation would imply that the Drama referred to whatever was quoted. [. . .] Furthermore, it would be necessary to assume a "quoter" or "varier" on whom the Drama would depend.[6]

The relatively short period of the classical drama seems almost like an exception to the rule that the presence of the stage action should be interwoven with recursive speech. In the epic theater, at the latest, quotation returns to the stage. Brecht rehabilitates the witness report and turns it into the dramaturgical foundation of modern theater, with the result that it is not the event itself but the report on it that forms the subject of the performance:

> It is comparatively easy to set up a basic model for epic theater. [. . .] [A]n eyewitness demonstrating to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place. The bystanders may not have observed what happened [. . .]; the point is that the demonstrator acts the behaviour of driver or victim or both in such a way that the bystanders are able to form an opinion about the accident.[7]

In Brecht, such representational speech and action are both linguistically marked and expressed through a demonstrative manner of speaking freed from all artificiality. While in classical drama the words of the actors were original, not repeating anything that came before and not addressing the audience directly, the characters' utterances in Brecht's epic theater are effective precisely because they refer to things that happened in the past and because they make an appeal to the audience.

Since the 1950s and 1960s, quotation has developed into the central aesthetic device of postmodern art. The engagement with popular phenomena and the removal of the boundaries between elite and mass culture means that the hermetically closed dramatic forms open up and the causally constructed narrative threads

disintegrate, while close connections to everyday culture are being produced. As the theater studies scholar Barbara Gronau noted in her discussion of dramatic texts by René Pollesch, Elfriede Jelinek and Kathrin Röggla, and performances directed by Frank Castorf, in contemporary theater, the role of the messenger is replaced by the practice of quotation. The messenger is replaced by implicit speech or by the play with translational procedures. This can be achieved, for example, by using video images. In today's theater, as Gronau argues, the intrusion of the "outside world" does not require additional *dramatis personae*. Instead, it is expressed by the structure of the performance itself.[8] And yet, to what extent the recursion to what lies beyond the play can lead to confusion of the inside and the outside, of speaking and of what is being said, of the speech act and the signifier, can be recognized precisely in the techniques of "second-hand theatrical speech acts."

The main difference between the quotation technique of *Romeo and Juliet* and that of ancient Greek theater or epic theater lies in the unreliability of the messengers who, in the telephone monologues, cannot give us first-hand accounts and thus feel overwhelmed by the task. In other words, they reveal that their statements have become uncontrollable. For the re-narrations performed in *Romeo and Juliet* are just as vulnerable to the memory lapses of the narrators as they are to the rampant inter-textual references permeating the summaries both intentionally and unintentionally. The main reference is the musical *West Side Story*, which transposed the love story to 1950s New York and made the conflict between Americans and Puerto Ricans the new cultural context for the dramaturgical constellations of Shakespeare's play. But the confusion is also the result of other film adaptations whose influence on our cultural memory should not be underestimated. Just think of the Hollywood movie *Romeo + Juliet*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, which updates the material for eyes trained by pop and TV aesthetics, and effectively overwrites memories of the play. All these historically and culturally diverse influences on our memories of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* are interwoven in the stage monologues which attest to the latent power of illusion cinema and other spectacles to rewrite the originals and are often responsible for distorting recollections of the Shakespearean play. Thus, the dramaturgy does not really aim at repeating Shakespeare's play. It is much more a polyphonic assemblage of retellings revising each other while exhibiting obvious contradictions: "Was there a duel?" "Did the two of them drink poison or was it only a potion?" These are rhetorical questions that keep revealing uncertainties and corrections. Or at a different point: "Is that good enough? Am I close to it?" Questions that disrupt the discourse of narration and deny precisely what they seem to suggest. For they entangle the grammatical and rhetorical codes of language in a relationship charged with tension. The semantic level of a closed question to be answered with yes or no ("Am I close to it?") is drowned out by a figurative meaning that, instead of suggesting a question, is an expression of doubt.

Most declamations start with the question concerning the place of the events: "Where the hell are they in? Florence or Messina?" Somebody asks: "Did it happen in Montague?" Invented heroes and made-up narrative twists are also

mentioned. In addition to the polyphony, it is also worth noting how speech alternates between the perspectives of different characters, as well as between intra-diegetic and extra-diegetic positions of commentary. The following quote demonstrates in an exemplary way how strongly the entire dramaturgy of the production is determined by "second-hand theatrical speech acts": "So, and then one took the poison and the other one was like 'oh no,' was too late, you know. Is that anything remotely like that?" In this statement, the speaker, who is first positioned outside the narrative and tries to speak in an objective manner ("So, and then one took the poison"), switches to one of the protagonists and breaks into a sentimental sigh ("oh no"), then reassumes the perspective of the commentating narrator which directly addresses the recipient ("was too late, you know"), only to finally deny the whole narrative logic that has been constructed by stepping out of the fictional system: "Is that anything remotely like that?" This example shows how re-narration can get out of hand. For the act of narration, as is so often the case, becomes uncontrollable if the speaker is not a witness as well.

We are dealing with a whole range of metalepses here, as the narrator keeps entering the fiction. Breaching the classical narrative pact, they take the position of a protagonist. With the dramatic appeal "Oh no!" they seem to attempt to bring the recipient closer to the events. But at the same time, they break with the convention that the witness report should be neutral and violate the coherence of the narrative structure. In this quote, we see permanent changes of the scene between the narrative situation and the narrative, which, from a phenomenological perspective, have no ramifications for what happens on the stage—neither in the performance, nor in the scenic design. Only the linguistic tensions, disruptions and discontinuities allow us to infer that the narrator, even if only for moments, enters the scene and speaks on behalf of a protagonist.

In short, Nature Theater of Oklahoma displays an authorship unprecedented on the stages of Western theater: it is uncontrollable, unclear, contradictory, inconsistent and continually revising itself. Thus, in this production, the apparently easy task of re-narrating *Romeo and Juliet* becomes the doom of dramaturgical consistency and any certainty based on the aesthetics of reception. For the monologues destabilize all horizons of analysis, be they secured by semiology, phenomenology or performance theory, while also torpedoing our own knowledge of the dramatic story. Ultimately, the confusion threatens to spread over to the audience who leave the theater with a disparate jumble of texts that interfere with our own memories of reading the play.

But what happens with the relationship between the original and the repetition in the scenes of second-hand narration? I would like to pursue this question by taking up Walter Benjamin's ideas about translation, a concept that offers compelling arguments for the non-human, even inaccessible nature of language. Benjamin unmasks translation, and thus the act of speaking on behalf of others, as an activity that has to be located beyond human intentionality, and his theory has important consequences for the understanding of contemporary theater productions.

Let me issue a warning first. We are dealing with an essay here that practices what it preaches. The inaccessibility of linguistic coherence is not only its

subject—the text also enacts this principle and thus eludes complete understanding. To put it differently, Benjamin's text has challenged its interpreters to such an extent that one of them, namely Paul de Man, was forced to make the following confession: "Whenever I go back to this text, I think I have it more or less, then I read it again, and again I don't understand it."[9] One of the striking contradictions of Benjamin's position is the insistence on the simultaneous necessity and impossibility of translation. In order for us to be able to think of an original, we need renderings, illustrations, even repetitions of this original, even if the repetition can never be identical with the original. There is no original without the copy. The first one logically implies the second one, which, in turn, serves as the foundation for the supposed ontological status of the original. Benjamin's argument suggests that the "afterlife [Fortleben]"[10] of the original is dependent on its "transformation [Wandlung]" and "renewal [Erneuerung]."[11] It is, as it were, contingent on its translations.

Benjamin describes translation, which aims at creating a similarity with its original, as impossible. The title of his essay points to the same thing: the task of the translator is an impossible task (Aufgabe) which, while necessary, entails failure, capitulation and defeat, even giving up (auf-geben). This paradoxical theory of translation is underpinned by Benjamin's conception of language which detects irreconcilable conflicts inherent to language use as such. Benjamin sets up the hypothesis that what is meant and the way it is meant never converge, because the modality of saying is not completely at the disposal of the speaker. Human language is anything but an ideal, all-powerful system, which, according to Benjamin, could only be concretized in God's word. In Paradise, that is before the Fall of Man, language did not only name things, but it also created them, which meant the identity between word and thing, signifier and signified. In Paradise, as it were, translation succeeded without leaving a remnant.[12] Languages after the Fall, however, are naming and analytical; they employ God's word without its power. And what follows from this loss of the generative power of language is that there is a discrepancy between what is meant and what is said, and that no name ever overlaps with what is meant.[13] The sign and the referent break apart, so that, as Nikolaus Müller-Schöll has aptly put it, every speaker "always communicates more or less than he or she wants to communicate."[14]

Against the background of Benjamin's observations, we can say that Nature Theater of Oklahoma works with a shift in focus and directs the attention away from what is being narrated to the way it is narrated; in short, to the constant translation efforts which, while jeopardizing the retelling of the story, are precisely what make this retelling possible in the first place. So the dramaturgical program of the production is directed toward repeating spontaneous re-narrations of the play instead of Shakespeare's "original," thereby exposing mechanisms of language which here no longer serve to communicate a story, as perhaps in the original. For it is only in the translation that we see that the subject is not in command of his or her own statements and his or her own speech acts cannot be fully controlled. As Benjamin stresses, the translation is successful if it refuses to simulate an illusory semantic coherence in the original and if it is willing to "lead [the reader] directly to incomprehensibility."[15]

Similar to the retellings of and follow-ups to the fate of Romeo and Juliet on a great number of fan fiction sites, the monologues of Nature Theater of Oklahoma show that the original is not a closed whole and never was, but, as Paul de Man writes, must be seen as "a piece of ordinary language."[16] It is just as "prosaic"[17] and incomplete as its retellings. The repetition reveals that the text taken to be original does not have a more authentic relation to (extra-linguistic) reality than its translations. However, the undermined primacy of the original only becomes obvious in its repetitions and translations. Benjamin writes: "whereas content and language form a certain unity in the original, like fruit and its skin, the language of the translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds."[18] Or in de Man's words: "the impossibility of translation is due to disruptions which are there in the original, but which the original managed to hide."[19] What I mean to elucidate by using Benjamin's arguments is that second-hand speech acts, and thus the majority of our language situations in which we speak with someone else's voice, operate in the same way as translations, as a fragmented entity that does not allow one to distinguish the translation from the original in the translation.

The aesthetic effects of representational speech

Nature Theater of Oklahoma's *Romeo and Juliet*, along with many other examples, draws attention to certain performative dynamics whose aesthetic effects on the audience are generated by a specific set of speech configurations, rhetorical tensions and semantic ambiguities. In the spectrum of postmodern tools that criticize illusion and manipulation by breaking the fourth wall or performing self-harm, this unique narrative mode of translation appears as a device aimed at addressing the politics of representation. These devices draw attention to utterances whose ambiguity, semantic surplus or their slip into unintelligibility is rooted *not* in their acoustic materiality but in the immaterial dimensions of the performativity of language. The works of Forced Entertainment are further examples of how performative effects located beyond the visual and phenomenological dimensions can become relevant for the reception of theater (Figure 8.2).

In *Speak Bitterness*, a durational performance that became the breakthrough for the British performance collective, seven actors stepped up to a long table and read out confessions of strangers from a huge stack of paper. The performative quality of second-hand speech acts came from the contingency of the textual fragments, recited one after the other, but having very little in common in terms of content and style:

> We said "fuck the system" but we didn't mean it. We slipped through customs at Nairobi International, without even being seen. We confessed to never having had an original idea. We got drunk on half a pint. We cut Jonny's little finger and we sent it to his dear old mum in the post. We said "marry me" to the wrong person.

Figure 8.2 Scene from Forced Entertainment's *Speak Bitterness* (1994).
Photo by Hugo Glendinning.

"The piece," says the director Tim Etchells, "is an attempt to confess to everything—a vast catalogue of wrong-doings that includes murder, fraud, genocide, eating the last biscuit in the tin, not washing up properly, hiding the TV remote control, and buggery."[20] The confessions, performed literally (but anony mized) and in an almost apathetic—second-hand—way, form a spectrum of extremities ranging from everyday, trivial transgressions known to us all, to false admissions of guilt to the police or responsibility for war crime. Thus, the statements, articulated by the actors in a quite prosaic way, keep oscillating between horror and comedic effect. The result of this alternation between banal and fatal misconduct is that the laughter keeps getting stuck in the viewer's throat, since we never know if the play is going to turn into "comedy" or "tragedy" in the next moment. Performing second-hand theatrical speech acts, the actors of Forced Entertainment opt for a detached form of speaking that is not limited to accentuating the phenomenality of the voice, nor does it consist simply in transmitting a meaning. What we actually experience is an acoustic mediation of meaning that addresses the listener's imagination in a way that is both meaningful and sensuous, and which repeatedly shocks the listener through the modulation of vocal intonations and narrative twists. It is this form of speaking that turns us into viewers by making us listen.

In *Speak Bitterness*, second-hand penance is clearly subject to contingency and thus to the capriciousness of linguistic irony, whose origin lies in *commedia dell'arte*, but which becomes uncontrollable in Forced Entertainment. In the passage in

which Benjamin speaks about translation, he detects a feature of human language and, with reference to the German romanticist Friedrich Schlegel, characterizes it as ironic. In contrast to most theorists of irony,[21] Schlegel holds that irony is not an artistic device that helps us to distinguish between what is said and what is meant and allows us to identify authorial intention. The reduction of irony to a trick suggests that the rhetorical effects of language are controllable, and that irony can always be interpreted in the way the author intended it. In his essay "Über die Unverständlichkeit" (On Incomprehensibility), however, Schlegel talks precisely about an irony that is unmeasurable and dangerous. The origin of his concept of irony lies in the *buffo*, the *commedia dell'arte* character that has a comedic role and represents "the disruption of narrative illusion."[22] He is "the aparté, the aside to the audience, by means of which the illusion of the fiction is broken (what we call in German *aus der Rolle fallen*, to drop out of your role)."[23] In rhetoric, there is a technical term to describe such disruptions: a parabasis appears when the syntax of a sentence and the expectations that it creates are suddenly disrupted and the reader gets confronted with something unexpected. For Schlegel, however, irony is not just a disruption. It is, and this is crucial, not just an interruption, but the "permanent parabasis."[24] Language is full of pitfalls and obstacles that will not allow irony to be switched on and off safely,[25] which undermines the distinction between "authentic" and "inauthentic" speaker identities. The performative effects of irony cannot be suspended. Its inaccessible, destructive force consists precisely in the fact that we recognize it too late—if at all: "suppose everything stayed quiet for a long time, we could not trust irony at all," Schlegel writes.[26]

If we apply this conception of irony to the confession fragments of Forced Entertainment, or to the telephone monologues of Nature Theater of Oklahoma, we will see that the sentences are overgrown with syntactic breaks, perspective changes and rhetorical questions that keep shifting speaker positions, settings and the production of meaning.

As so often is the case, Forced Entertainment engages in exploring linguistic conventions inseparable from the political dimension of human activity. The group chooses the strategy of a non-authentic, second-hand narrative form, which leads to confused audience reactions, for it is just as difficult to distinguish between true and false, empirical and fictional statements, as it is to decide the question whether a given quotation is an empty apology or a responsible confession. This series of undecidable questions comes from a dramaturgical strategy which Tim Etchells, the director of the group, describes as follows:

> There is a little documentary strand to these works. But in the theatre work 'proper,' a strong recurring tactic of ours is to defer authorship. [. . .] We [are] more interested in the kind of 'writing' that one does either improvising or in condensing or ripping off stuff that's already written.[27]

The second-hand confessions are conveyed in the here and now of the performance, transmitted to the audience as theatrical speech acts. The stage, however,

becomes a setting for something that did not and does not happen here and now and to those present. Thus, regardless of the actors on the stage and their voices, the participation is chiefly determined by spectral experiences, by a radical one-sidedness and the inability to influence the proceedings. The feeling of contingency that emerges is not so much the result of the unpredictability of the interactions between the actors and the audience as of the uncontrollability of the linguistic tensions, that is the cognitive, performative, grammatical and rhetorical incongruence of the speech. The textual dramaturgy is based on translational procedures in which no one can guarantee the referential framework any more or vouch for the original contexts of the statements and their motivations. The stage is transformed into a resonance chamber of confessions from the past disconnected from their narrative contexts. These are monologue fragments that could be described as "texts of heightened expressiveness" that "undermine their own coherence," to quote Ralph Pordzik.[28] Thus, second-hand theatrical speech acts shatter the unity of representation that dramatic theater—with its belief in the primacy of an original—tried to simulate.

Second-hand theatrical speech acts and their politics of representation

Why is it that today's dramaturgical interest is directed at the character of the translator and not only at the poet or the witness? What kind of assumptions about the politics of representation are linked to the strategy of second-hand theatrical speech acts when we consider that translations, in Benjamin's sense, always foreground their mistakes, their failure and their shift in meaning? To try to answer this question, I would like to make a final observation about a production of Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Schutzbefohlenen*, directed by Nicolas Stemann.

Against the background of the refugee crisis of recent years, the production acquires increased political significance. Jelinek's reaction to the relentless consequences of Austrian and European asylum policies is a non-dramatic theater text in which asylum seekers have their say—at second hand—and raise their voices through Jelinek's translation, projection and her acting as a fictional proxy. Here, too, the theater text is organized into a polyphonic linking of complaints, objections and pleas, which can no longer be ascribed to any dramatic character.

Jelinek's text, which takes a flow of voices and unites them in the perspective of the first-person plural, often sounds like a choir in Stemann's production, alternating between white actors and people with immigrant background, and thus undermining the singular speaker position. The difficulty that plagues the evening concerns the question of realization on the stage. Which actors should one choose to perform Jelinek's invention and translation of the voices of asylum seekers? Political correctness became the sole criterion for judging the production, which is evident from the divergent opinions of critics who thought that having the white stars of the Thalia Theater deputized for the asylum seekers was a questionable choice, and who also dismissed the participation of actors with the so-called migration background as instrumentalization or as a hollow

"demonstration of authenticity." While at the textual level Jelinek uses the rhetorical figure of prosopopoeia to give a face to the drowned asylum seekers by using fictional speech, Stemann, the director, deals with a question pertaining to the politics of representation: how can the dead victims be embodied on the stage? His solution to this aporia is to break the illusion of unambiguous referentiality in the bodily representation too, that is to say, to extend the rhetoricity of meaning production to the domain of the visual as well. Double and triple masking and face painting display the procedure of translation in the act of representation and invalidate identity attributions.

The point I would like to make is that a theater of representation becomes political only when it displays the duality inherent in the representation of the other. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak suggests, we must differentiate between the two modalities of representation—as "portrayal" and as "proxy." While representation as portrayal becomes obvious in an economic context and means a kind of "depiction" or "speaking about," representation as proxy always implies authorization, a "speaking on behalf of" in a certain political context.[29] If we apply this distinction to our example, Stemann's production seems to declare on different levels that the representation of marginalized, sometimes voiceless or even drowned asylum seekers is impossible and necessary at the same time, that is to say, it is dependent on a translation that can never succeed completely. Not only does the question of the anthropomorphization of the speaking dead turn out to be an insurmountable challenge of representation. The problem of the rhetorical tensions appearing in the translation of political voices seems even more obviously impossible to overcome. The reason why this second aspect of representation, namely the political aspect of acting as proxy for someone else, proves to be especially challenging for phenomenological approaches in theater studies is quite obvious. Mimetic illusion is not possible any more and there are no all-knowing narrators vouching for what is said. Instead, Jelinek and Stemann explore the possibilities of textual and visual representation in the form of translations that open up the space for spectral voices excluded from the consolidated order of representation. To put it in the words of Günther Heeg, they "keep distance from the delusive promises of embodiment in the mode of presence."[30]

Forms of second-hand theatrical speech acts unsettle the politics of clear attributions and intact proxies. While they make us aware of the responsibility implied in speaking with someone else's voice, they never let us forget that second-hand speech acts put us at the mercy of language, and the aim of intentional speech, and the task of translation, will always, inevitably, be missed.

Conclusion

From a naive perspective, theater could be described as a place where we can be someone else, and where we *always* speak with someone else's voice. This view, however, falsely suggests that the theater of role-playing and the classical mimetic metamorphosis is about representation. The idea of dramatic theater, still

prevalent today, does not follow the logic of "representation as proxy," but propagates a closed order of "representation as portrayal." Only the theater of the messenger, of detached, non-self-identical speech, which both in antiquity and in Brecht's epic theater renounces ontological classifications and the notion of intact representations, begins to problematize the political question of the responsibility of theatrical speech acts. In other words, only the theater of quotation takes account of the fact that one is never fully the author of what is said, and one is never a fully responsible and conscious speaker.

What I have tried to describe in this chapter, however, is a form of theater in which quotations are second-hand and result from a process of translation. Instead of eyewitnesses, messengers and demonstrators, Nature Theater of Oklahoma, Forced Entertainment, and Elfriede Jelinek and Nicolas Stemann's production feature translators that show the absurdity of the romantic notion of self-identical speech and, what is more, the phantasm of intact quotation. Actors who deliver second-hand reports seem to be ideal vehicles for critiquing the idea of controlled and successful quotation in contemporary theater. For they are no longer in the position to vouch for what they say and are given an impossible task when asked to make coherent a speech that only exists in fragments and has to be compiled from scraps of memories and different accounts in the first place.

It is well known that in postdramatic theater, the visual and bodily representation of the other is realized in a way that rejects the call to authenticity and psychologization. At the same time, the analysis of the textual level has until now been guided by the notion that in postdramatic theater the uncontrollability of speech acts is usually expressed through the poetization, rhythmization or alienation of the acoustic material. A closer look at the modalities of second-hand theatrical speech acts, however, reveals that a large number of the theater and performance productions of the last decades are characterized by textual-dramaturgical strategies whose performative effect is less the result of an extreme use of the voice or an atmospheric, sensual-material excess than of rhetorical figurations and their aporias. It is precisely the fact that theatrical speech acts produce a semantic excess that does not belong to the acoustic, bodily and atmospheric realms but arise from the immaterial dimensions of linguistic performativity, that allows us to ask serious questions about theatrical representation: who speaks, and on whose behalf, with whose voice, and who bears responsibility?

Notes

1 Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. K. Jürs-Munby (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 146. Lehmann argues that

> [i]n postdramatic theatre, breath, rhythm and the present actuality of the body's visceral presence take precedence over the logos. [. . .] Instead of a linguistic representation of facts, there is a "position" of tones, words, sentences, sounds that are hardly controlled by a "meaning" but instead by the scenic composition, by a visual, not text-oriented dramaturgy.
>
> Ibid., 145–146.

2 Sybille Krämer, *Medium, Bote, Übertragung: Kleine Metaphysik der Medialität* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2008), 39, translation by B. Rapcsak.
3 Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Theater und Mythos: Die Konstitution des Subjekts im Diskurs der antiken Tragödie* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1991), 44–45, translation by B. Rapcsak.
4 Cf. Alexander Schwinghammer, "Botenberichte/Bildmaschinen/Weltengemurmel: Zwischen Bilderflüssen und technischen Medien," in *Politik des Wissens und der Bilder*, vol. 1 of *Welt – Bild – Theater*, ed. K. Röttger (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2010), 248, translation by B. Rapcsak.
5 Ibid.
6 Peter Szondi, "Theory of the Modern Drama, Parts I–II," trans. M. Hays, *boundary 2* 11, no. 3, *The Criticism of Peter Szondi* (Spring 1983): 196.
7 Bertolt Brecht, "The Street Scene: A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre," in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. J. Willett (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), 121.
8 Barbara Gronau, lecture at the opening of the "Stückemarkt" of the Theatertreffen 2009, Haus der Berliner Festspiele, Berlin, 7 May 2009, translation by B. Rapcsak.
9 Paul de Man, "'Conclusions': Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator,'" in *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 103.
10 Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 1, *1913–1926*, ed. M. Bullock and M. W. Jennings (Harvard, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 254.
11 Ibid., 256.
12 Cf. Nikolaus Müller-Schöll, *Das Theater des "Konstruktiven Defaitismus": Lektüren zur Theorie eines Theaters der A-Identität bei Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht und Heiner Müller* Frankfurt/M and Basel: Stroemfeld, 2002), 87, translation by B. Rapcsak.
13 Ibid., 86.
14 Ibid., 96.
15 Benjamin, "Task of Translator," 260.
16 de Man, "'Conclusions,'" 98.
17 Ibid.
18 Benjamin, "Task of Translator," 258.
19 de Man, "'Conclusions,'" 98.
20 Tim Etchells, "A Text on 20 Years with 66 Footnotes/Ein Text über 20 Jahre mit 66 Fußnoten," in *"Not Even a Game Anymore": The Theatre of Forced Entertainment/Das Theater von Forced Entertainment*, ed. J. Helmer and F. Malzacher (Berlin: Alexander, 2004), 272.
21 See Jens Roselt, *Die Ironie des Theaters* (Wien: Passagen, 1999).
22 Paul de Man, "The Concept of Irony," in *Aesthetic Ideology*, ed. A. Warminski (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 178.
23 Ibid.
24 Friedrich Schlegel, "Zur Philosophie (Fragment 668)," in *Philosophische Lehrjahre I (1796–1806)*, vol. 18 of *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. E. Behler (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1963), 85.
25 Cf. Vera Kérchy, *Színház és dekonstrukció: A Paul de Man-i retorikaelmélet színházelméleti kihívásai* (Szeged: JATE, 2014), 85.
26 Friedrich Schlegel, "Über die Unverständlichkeit," in *Kritische Schriften*, ed. W. Rasch (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1971), 538, translation by B. Rapcsak.
27 Etchells, quoted in Helmer and Malzacher, *"Not Even a Game Anymore,"* 93, 46.
28 Ralph Pordzik, "Wenn die Ironie wild wird, oder: *lesen lernen*: Strukturen parasitärer Ironie in Christian Krachts 'Imperium,'" *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 23, no. 3 (2013): 576, translation by B. Rapcsak.
29 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. P. Williams and L. Chrisman (New York, NY and Sydney: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 71.

30 Günther Heeg, "Reenacting History: Das Theater der Wiederholung," in *Reenacting History: Theater und Geschichte*, ed. G. Heeg et al. (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2014), 23, translation by B. Rapcsak.

Bibliography

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 1, *1913–1926*, edited by M. Bullock and M. W. Jennings, 253–63. Harvard, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

Brecht, Bertolt. "The Street Scene: A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre." In *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, edited and translated by J. Willett, 121–29. London: Eyre Methuen, 1974.

de Man, Paul. "'Conclusions': Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator.'" In *The Resistance to Theory*, 73–105. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

———. "The Concept of Irony." In *Aesthetic Ideology*, edited by A. Warminski, 163–84. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Etchells, Tim. "A Text on 20 Years with 66 Footnotes/Ein Text über 20 Jahre mit 66 Fußnoten." In *"Not Even a Game Anymore": The Theatre of Forced Entertainment/Das Theater von Forced Entertainment*, edited by J. Helmer and F. Malzacher, 269–90. Berlin: Alexander, 2004.

Gronau, Barbara. Lecture at the opening of the "Stückemarkt" of the Theatertreffen 2009, Haus der Berliner Festspiele, Berlin, 7 May 2009.

Heeg, Günther. "Reenacting History: Das Theater der Wiederholung" [Reenacting History: The Theater of Repetition]. In *Reenacting History: Theater und Geschichte* [Reenacting History: Theater and History], edited by G. Heeg, M. Braun, L. Krüger and H. Schäfer, 10–28. Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2014.

Helmer, Judith, and Florian Malzacher, eds. *"Not Even a Game Anymore": The Theatre of Forced Entertainment / Das Theater von Forced Entertainment*. Berlin: Alexander, 2004.

Kérchy, Vera. *Színház és dekonstrukció: A Paul de Man-i retorikaelmélet színházelméleti kihívásai* [Theater and Deconstruction: The Theatre-Theoretical Challenges of Paul de Man's Theory of Rhetorics]. Szeged: JATE, 2014.

Krämer, Sybille. *Medium, Bote, Übertragung: Kleine Metaphysik der Medialität* [Medium, Messenger, Transfer: A Minor Metaphysics of Mediality]. Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2008.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. Translated by K. Jürs-Munby. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.

———. *Theater und Mythos: Die Konstitution des Subjekts im Diskurs der antiken Tragödie* [Theater and Myth: The Constitution of the Subject in the Discourse of the Ancient Tragedy]. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1991.

Müller-Schöll, Nikolaus. *Das Theater des "Konstruktiven Defaitismus": Lektüren zur Theorie eines Theaters der A-Identität bei Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht und Heiner Müller* [The Theater of "Constructive Defeatism": Readings on the Theory of a Theater of A-Identity in Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht and Heiner Müller]. Frankfurt/M and Basel: Stroemfeld, 2002.

Pordzik, Ralph. "Wenn die Ironie wild wird, oder: *lesen lernen*: Strukturen parasitärer Ironie in Christian Krachts 'Imperium'" [When Irony Becomes Wild, or: *Lerning How to Read*: Structures of Parasitic Irony in Christian Kracht's "Imperium"]. *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* [Journal for German Philology] 23, no. 3 (2013): 574–91.

Roselt, Jens. *Die Ironie des Theaters* [The Irony of Theater]. Wien: Passagen, 1999.

Schlegel, Friedrich. "Über die Unverständlichkeit" [On Incomprehensibility]. In *Kritische Schriften* [Critical Writings], edited by W. Rasch, 530–42. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1971.

———. "Zur Philosophie (Fragment 668)" [On Philosophy (Fragment 668)]. In *Philosophische Lehrjahre I (1796–1806)* [Philosophical Years of Apprenticeship I (1796–1806)], vol. 18 of *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* [Critical Friedrich-Schlegel-Edition], edited by E. Behler, 85. Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1963.

Schwinghammer, Alexander. "Botenberichte/Bildmaschinen/Weltengemurmel: Zwischen Bilderflüssen und technischen Medien" [Messenger's Reports/Imagemachines/World-Mumble: Between a Stream of Images and Technical Media]. In *Politik des Wissens und der Bilder* [Politics of Knowledge and of Images], vol. 1 of *Welt – Bild – Theater* [World – Image – Theater], edited by K. Röttger, 245–56. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2010.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by P. Williams and L. Chrisman, 66–111. New York, NY and Sydney: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.

Szondi, Peter: "Theory of the Modern Drama, Parts I–II." Translated by M. Hays. *boundary 2* 11, no. 3, *The Criticism of Peter Szondi* (Spring 1983): 191–230.

Part III
Embodiments

9 Transmitting voice pedagogy

Interweaving Korean *p'ansori* and contemporary modes of Anglo-American voice training

Tara McAllister-Viel

What is needed when creating an intercultural approach to training actors' voices? Specifically, what key principles should be considered when interweaving Anglo-American mainstream voice pedagogy and a South Korean traditional vocal art form, *p'ansori*?[1] From 2000 to 2005, I trained actors' voices at the Korean National University of Arts (KNUA), School of Drama (Seoul, South Korea), within the Master of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts acting conservatoires. The educational directive at KNUA was to integrate "both external and indigenous methods and traditions."[2] In terms of voice training, the students were required to study, "[Kristin] Linklater voice technique, Alexander movement, Asian martial arts [. . .] and traditional Korean singing."[3] During my time at KNUA, this meant that the students studied two years of adapted p'ansori training while simultaneously training with me in adapted Anglo-American voice techniques.[4] In order to better understand my students' experiences training in p'ansori, I undertook four years of private study with Human Cultural Treasures Han Nongsŏn and Sŏng Uhyang.[5] This context offered me the opportunity to create an intercultural/interdisciplinary approach to training actors' voices.

Although my approach is specific to a particular cultural context and certain modes of training, it emerges from a larger context of intercultural practice that has been evolving throughout the twentieth century.[6] Early in intercultural discussions, Erika Fischer-Lichte asked if the specificity of intercultural projects and cultural contexts emerged independently or whether they collectively represent a "phenomenon both fruitful and meaningful?"[7] Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert addressed Fischer-Lichte's question by suggesting that "intercultural" performance practice could not be understood as an individual "one-off." By choosing to discuss a "site-specific study of intercultural projects" instead of engaging with what Lo and Gilbert call the "big picture," interculturalism "privileg[es] content specificity," creating a "false dichotomy between praxis and theory."[8]

Was my experience at KNUA developing an intercultural approach to training actors' voices a "one-off" or part of a "bigger picture?" If my experiences are understood as a case study from which one could extrapolate larger key considerations, then is there an identifiable structure, approach or working method that can be employed to inform current practice? How might one theorize the

transmission of vocal embodied practice, and how technical and expressive components of the voice are literally brought into the body/voice during training?

While intercultural discourse has predominately examined intercultural exchange in performance within specific performance projects, the focus here is on pedagogy. Of the discussions that address intercultural actor training, the body in physical or movement training receives most of the attention with very little research in the specific area of voice training. At the time when I began developing my approach, there were very few models of intercultural voice praxis to follow. My approach began by simply trying to solve certain curriculum "problems." Through this process, I began to (re)consider the most fundamental principles and practices of Anglo-American voice pedagogy.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to detail the complicated ways I adapted and integrated Anglo-American voice training for actors—specifically a branch of training I call the "free" or "natural" approach—and p'ansori into an intercultural approach to voice training at KNUA. Instead, I offer here one of the fundamental "problems" I encountered: the way the body/voice is trained to produce sound in each tradition sets up a particular way of thinking and talking about voice and sound. Inherent within training exercises is a set of assumptions about the voice and its potential that becomes the foundation for the training. When the practice and the principles that underpin the practice are understood together, they offer a kind of philosophy of the voice. Taking Anglo-American voice praxis out of its cultural context and placing it in a critical comparison with South Korean p'ansori puts in sharp relief these assumptions. Such a critical comparative analysis was part of the necessary preparatory work for interweaving these traditions into an intercultural praxis. The conjunction of practical and theoretical knowledge through a "practice-as-research" methodological approach offers another way of thinking about intercultural praxis as a process of embodiment. Ultimately, what I hope to offer is "strategic way[s] of rethinking the local and context-specific through the global, and vice versa,"[9] and suggest alternative ways of thinking, talking about and training the actor's voice.

The educational and cultural context of KNUA

The KNUA is a government-sponsored university founded in 1993 with the opening of its first school, the School of Music. The School of Drama opened in 1994. Between 1995 and 1998, four more schools opened. With the opening of the final school, the School of Korean Traditional Arts, the Korean government mandated that actors-in-training at the School of Drama should add two years of traditional Korean singing, primarily p'ansori, to their required drama training.[10] The government's mandate was not originally implemented to design an intercultural voice pedagogy but was envisioned as part of a larger government scheme to preserve a unique traditional Korean vocal art that was in danger of extinction until government intervention in the early 1960s.[11]

Including it in the actor training program at KNUA emerges from a larger tradition of integrating p'ansori and Western theater aesthetics over the past one hundred years—from *ch'anggŭk* theater in the 1900s to the Korean avant-garde in the 1960s

and 1970s to today's Korean postmodern performers. The KNUA 2000 prospectus offers a political as well as an educational understanding of the government initiative:

> The launch of the Korean National University of Arts has also served as a much-needed catalyst to recapture, after many years of heavy Western influence at the expense of traditional Korean artistry, a contemporary national culture and Korean artistic "voice" composed of both external and indigenous methods and traditions.[12]

The KNUA curriculum was designed not simply to train the literal voice of the actor, but as an institutional vehicle for "voicing" Korean "contemporary national culture."

Because my students studied adapted p'ansori and Anglo-American voice trainings in back-to-back classes, they often brought into my voice classes embodied skills developing from their p'ansori classes. They also brought another way of thinking and talking about the voice. In this way, p'ansori and Anglo-American voice were mixing in both strategically coordinated ways (i.e. KNUA's directive) and coincidental happenings (i.e. timetabling of back-to-back classes). Together, this contributed to, what I call, environments of transference. One can think of intercultural training in this context as a series of relationships in which skill sets are encountered in different environments:

- inside the body of the learner;
- outside of the individual learner and between bodies of multiple learners (i.e. peer teaching) and/or between the bodies of learners and the body of the instructor in the training studio (i.e. instructor-led teaching or student-centered approaches);
- outside of any one given studio and between multiple studios which train students in different disciplines or traditions within the larger school building;
- between schools (in this case, the School of Drama and the School of Korean Traditional Arts) and their strategic curriculum interactions within the directive of the university (KNUA);
- outside of KNUA within the larger political context of government policy-making which shaped the school's directive and/or the profession which shapes vocational training choices, readying the students for employment expectations.

In order to better understand what embodied practices my students were bringing into my classroom, I initially interviewed and observed p'ansori classes in the School of Traditional Arts. In a personal interview, Master Teacher Chung Hoi Suk, who teaches at the Korean National University of Arts, School of Traditional Arts, asserted that the unique sound of p'ansori begins with the training:

> Basically, it is . . . the training . . . to have a louder voice because, in older times, we didn't have microphones. We performed p'ansori in the marketplace, so we needed to have a big voice. That's why we train our voices this

> way. Still, one out of ten succeeded in training their voices. Nine others fail training their voice. Those who fail the training play instruments or do other things. Now when I go to a doctor, the doctor says I have wrinkles on my vocal folds . . . um . . . nodes. It is a very unique training method, but it is not scientifically proved . . . "this is good or not good." It is true that we have to train our throat . . . or our "voices" to express a very dramatic voice. Also, we can make a very pretty sound, but we still need to express a very extreme sound. It is also good for p'ansori singers to train in nature. That's why they train themselves down by the waterfall. You have to penetrate the sound of the waterfall.[13]

Traditionally, the *sŏngŭm*, which can be translated as both "sound" and "voice," would have been trained long term in outdoor settings with an aim to "penetrate" a waterfall or some other natural obstacle, known as *sankongbu* or "mountain study." In sankongbu, the intention seems to be to lose one's voice through extended use at extreme volumes and, in some documented cases, to rupture the vocal folds in an effort to compete with the natural obstacle.[14] Marshall Pihl quotes Pak Hon-bong in Pak's work *Changak taegang* detailing the process:

> First, for many days and months, scale the voice vertically from low to high, at the same time expand it horizontally. In time the voice turns hoarse and gets lost, until it becomes hardly audible even to a person standing next to you. Keep scaling your voice for years, even through occasional bleeding from the vocal cords, until at last, the voice returns, reinforced and expressive and will endure singing for many hours at a time . . . the voice has entered the realm of mystery at last.[15]

For Pak, this process leads to a voice that is "reinforced and expressive." For many of my colleagues in Anglo-American voice training, this process would be considered "vocal abuse," or damage to the vocal folds.

Traditionally, losing and regaining the voice creates what Korean artists describe as "big" or "thick" voices. Indeed, this process could leave the vocal folds "thicker" (i.e. remain in thick-fold action), since the elasticity of the folds may be affected and thus would have difficulty physically elongating, become "thinner," so to speak (i.e. thin-fold action), when producing certain upper-range pitches. As a result, the speaker tends to speak predominately in the bottom third of their pitch range, in both their on-stage and off-stage voices. Also, vocal nodules, polyps or scar tissue prevent the vocal folds from coming together to make complete physical contact, which allows breath to escape during phonation. The combination of a lower spoken pitch range with a breathy quality is usually identified as a "husky" voice. This husky quality in the voice is also identified as a p'ansori performance aesthetic, *surisŏng* (literally, "husky voice/sound").

In addition, intra-abdominal support through "*dahnjeon* breathing"[16] creates intense sub-glottic pressure. This combined with vocal folds that struggle to create thin-fold action when trying to reach upper pitches result in a voice that

sounds as though it is struggling. The large pitch breaks that result when the performer travels from lower to upper pitches are useful in creating sorrowful sounds (e.g. *sesŏng*, translated as "thin sound/voice," or *kwigoksong*, translated as "grieving ghost tone").

Today, many p'ansori trainees usually study in the mountains for a month (August) during their school summer holiday. The majority of the training time for today's trainees is not spent training in the mountains but in the p'ansori studio. Of course, the difference in outdoor and indoor training environments has an effect on vocal training, but the extent to which this can be measured is undeterminable. Phonetician Moon Seung-Jae of Ajou University suggests that the vocal effects/affects of mountain training do not necessarily need to take place in the mountains.[17] However, the basic training aims still apply.[18]

P'ansori training and performance methods have been used for generations, and although the vocal product may differ slightly from one performer to the next, based on artistic license or the performer's school of training, the basic principles of breath and sound production are transferred from master to trainee using mimetic training techniques.[19]

In the p'ansori studios and classrooms in which I have studied and observed,[20] most p'ansori students brought audio recording devices to their lessons in order to record and playback the lesson during independent practice, with the aim to imitate their teacher's voice exactly. Students may have a copy of the story/song text but generally do not have written music to help them adhere to a traditional vocal performance. P'ansori practitioner and Human Cultural Treasure Ahn Sukson[21] explains: "We have a written script. We have five notes to a scale and Western music has seven notes to a scale, so later people wrote the music in Western scale, but I don't think it's very good. P'ansori is a kind of theater sound; to show the situation vividly, we don't use the written music. We just teach the scene; how to express the scene vividly to the audience."[22]

Because my KNUA students only studied two years of p'ansori, which had been adapted to actor training, they never developed the unique sŏngŭm of p'ansori. Yet many still desired the "thick" voice of the sŏngŭm because of what it had come to represent to them. The "thick" voice is sometimes characterized as the "voice of Korea" because the sound of struggle symbolizes the historic struggles of the Korean people and complicated understandings of nationhood. Sometimes, p'ansori is marketed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as the "Korean blues." Like the American "blues" sound, which is linked to particular types of emotions, the sŏngŭm is well suited for the performance representation of *han*.[23]

The "free/natural" voice approach within the KNUA curriculum

When I began teaching at KNUA, it was the only school offering separate voice classes to train actors. According to the 2000 prospectus, "[t]he Korean system of higher education has usually included arts education among its courses of study.

However, the study of the arts has always been predominantly theoretical and little, if any, practical training has been offered."[24] As a result, "young people who desire their careers as artists/practitioners have been forced to seek such training in the United States and Europe."[25] The Korean government created KNUA, in part, to address "the need for a high-quality, professional oriented conservatory system similar to those found overseas."[26] I was asked to develop a systemized voice training curriculum based on the voice curriculum found at leading US and UK institutions. Also, at that time, all of the acting faculty had trained in the US and Europe, and they used their overseas educational experiences to aid in the design of the new KNUA training curriculum.

In this way, the role of voice pedagogy was conceptualized as a component part of larger vocational actor training. The voice exercises in the studio do not always have direct application to performance but often are part of a larger structure to develop the voice for other demands, such as building a character or speaking different kinds of playtexts. Unlike p'ansori vocal training in which the student learns a story/song directly from the master teacher, which, with long-term practice, transfers from studio to stage, many of the Anglo-American voice exercises I taught in my class would primarily be used in the studio.

The particular Anglo-American voice approaches were chosen in part because they were internationally recognized. The founders of these approaches—Linklater, Cicely Berry and Patsy Rodenburg—have taught overseas extensively and are well-known from their popular mainstream training books and their positions at well-recognized institutions: Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre UK and Columbia University New York, respectively.

Berry and Linklater were among the first trainers to break with the 1950s "voice beautiful" approach, which relied on mimetic training practices. Instead, Berry and Linklater, and later others such as Rodenburg, offered what they called a "freer" or more "natural" voice that developed the student's "own characteristics" and "individual manner."[27] Unlike the p'ansori studio in which the transmission of practice is recorded and played back in order to achieve exact duplication, the "free" or "natural" approach trains toward individual interpretation of text. Linklater wrote:

> Interpretation of the text must not be imposed from the outside; it must be released from within. [. . .] It is only laziness on the part of a teacher or a director to take the shortcut of telling an actor how to say a line rather than sharing the understanding of the line. Such teaching or direction demeans the actor's intelligence, saps confidence and diminishes *individual* creativity.[28]

However, either by vocal modeling or a more conscious effort by the learner to fulfill teacher expectations, a certain amount of mimetic training is likely to occur. Through positive and negative reinforcement, the teacher is reconditioning the student's vocal behavior. Notions of "individualism" in this context do not point to the influence of behavior modification when learning the "freeing"

process, or how cultural and discipline-specific expectations shape the final "individual" performance.

The "natural/free" voice approach is characterized by the following key principles and practices:

- The natural/free approach begins from the premise that the voice is intimately connected to the self of the actor.[29] "Self" is understood through Cartesian body/mind dualism.[30] Experiences that affect the self, physically or psychologically, also affect the voice.
- Negative environmental and sociocultural experiences negatively affect the voice, creating "blocks," or excessive muscular contraction, called "tension."[31]
- Within the writings of voice praxis, phrases such as "living in the world," the "condition of life" and "humanity all over the planet" suggest that every culture affects the voice in the same way and anyone entering the training studio must first begin by "deconstructing"[32] or "break[ing] down physical and vocal habits."[33]
- Once the student becomes aware of their bad habits and the "tension" they create, trainers use their voice exercises to "release" the muscular contraction, first by inhibiting the bad habit through a process of introspection and analysis, and then substituting the new, correct habit.[34]
- This process is an "individual" one. The natural/free voice approach rejects mimetic training in favor of cultivating the student's "own characteristics."

Comparative study between p'ansori and "natural/free voice" training: Examining the fundamental differences

The role of "tension" or muscular contraction in producing sound

The way the body is conceptualized in both traditions becomes part of the foundation for training the voice. The "natural/free voice" approach, like other Western vocal arts pedagogies, tends to teach vocal function by dividing the body into systems—resonation system, articulation system, etc. Manuel García's discovery of using mirrors to examine the vocal folds during function (1885) greatly influenced voice training practice. Today, most mainstream voice training programs study vocal anatomy, the application of Western scientific principles attempting to understand the voice through the sum of its parts.[35] Eliot Deutsch notes that a traditional way of understanding the body in the West is through "container" metaphors, or dividing the body into parts in order to understand it through its various components.[36] In their first books, Linklater and Rodenburg use the "container" metaphor of a house to compartmentalize the body.[37] In this way, the "natural/free" voice approach conceptualizes the body as a home for the voice.

Deutsch's argument exemplifies the way in which the discourse surrounding the body in Western thought struggles between the concept of the body as physical matter with the concept of self and personhood. In terms of training the body, Deutsch argues, "who I am involves very much what I am able to do and in what manner or way." Thus, "body-appropriation"—what Deutsch describes as "the bringing of the physical conditions of ones' individual being into the matrix of one's personal identity and self-image"—is the process of achieving identity. For Deutsch, the body is understood through this achievement.[38] In responding to Deutsch, Roger Ames writes: "By contrast, the notion of body in the [classical] Chinese tradition tends to be couched in 'process' rather than substance language." He continues: "the body is a 'process' rather than a 'thing,' something 'done' rather than something one 'has.'"[39]

One can identify typical Western concepts of the body, embedded in most voice training exercises, at the most basic level of muscular physiology. The "natural/free voice" approach acknowledges muscle contraction in oppositional relationships, dividing muscle contraction into two groups: "unnecessary" and "necessary"[40] or "useless" and "healthy and appropriate."[41] At times during the training, exercises use "tension" in contrast with muscular release in order to position "release" as better. In one "foundation exercise," Rodenburg instructs, "[f]inally apply rigid tension overall to the entire body, almost as if you have been given an electric shock. The release after this feels wonderful. Now you will really begin to understand something about relaxation and the impediment of tension."[42] Because the "natural/free" voice assumes the body begins training with unnecessary "tension" (excess muscular contraction), the majority of the training focuses on "release" exercises.

In contrast, p'ansori trains the body/voice using a muscular contract/release cycle. Lee Byong Won explains that:

> A common aesthetic feature of much [Korean] musical performance is the continuous alteration of tension and release as building elements of the music. This alternation may be present not only in the sonic design of the music, but also in the conditions by which the sound is produced, such as performance postures and some characteristic organological gestures.[43]

What Lee describes as the "continuous alternation of tension and release as building elements" of the "sonic design" could be exemplified by the p'ansori technique *minun/dangkinun* (literally, "pushing/pulling" sound). This sound is achieved, in part, by unifying the functions of contraction and release into a cycle. In this way, the "characteristic organological structures" under which the p'ansori sŏngŭm is produced exist in a world of polarities, not a dualistic world in which one rids the body of tension through release exercises. Ames explains this notion of polarity:

> Polarism, on the other hand, has been a major principle of explanation in the initial formulation and evolution of classical Chinese metaphysics. By "polarism," I am referring to a symbiosis: the unity of two organismic processes which require each other as a necessary condition for being what they are.[44]

What I understand to be "the conditions by which the sound is produced" in the performer's body in achieving a particular aesthetic, an *eum-yang*-based aesthetic, is part of the muscular support of the breath/sound. Sung-sook Y. Chung's unpublished PhD thesis, "The Impact of Yin and Yang Ideology in the Art of Korean *P'ansori* Tradition," details ways in which eum-yang influences p'ansori training and performance. In my own p'ansori lessons, the muscular contract/release cycle in the lower dahnjeon developed during training can be felt in the body as muscular support for the breath/sound as it travels through the performer's body, out of the body and across a distance to the listener.

Eum-yang (Korean), or *yin-yang* (Chinese), is a fundamental principle throughout Korea and Asia. Eum-yang is a relative pair, an interdependent relationship, sometimes described as bright/dark or masculine/feminine: the *yang* principle is "bright" or "masculine" and the *eum* principle is "dark" or "feminine." This principle permeates Korean ideology, society and culture: the symbol of eum-yang graces the Korean flag, *Taeguk-ki*, and exists in the composition of the Korean language (e.g. 아 is considered a "bright" vowel sound, and 어 is considered a "dark" vowel sound), traditional medicine (e.g. yang energy flows down the back of the body and eum energy flows up the front of the body) and the composition of music and art.

Part of this tension/release cycle in the vocal training of the p'ansori performer is perhaps most vividly expressed in sankongbu. Chung's description of "penetrat[ing] the sound of the waterfall"[45] is not the same as the "release the call" exercise, which Kristin Linklater describes as follows:

> Set up a simple scenario in your mind's eye . . . You see your friend. What you see fills you with the need to call to him or her. You release the call. You relax, breathe, and wait for the reaction. Throughout the scene your body is acted on: first by the outside stimulus, then by the desire to communicate. There should therefore be no need to push or strain in order to call.[46]

Linklater's description of "the need to call" implies an internal, physical and perhaps psychological motivation which initiates action. This is a key principle of the "natural/free" voice approach. Berry wrote: "Words came about because of the physical needs to express a situation,"[47] and Rodenburg titled her second book "The Need for Words," in which she described her approach to language and text through exercises that develop a "need" or purpose for action.[48] A second consideration is the emphasis on "no need to push or strain." Contemporary voice training is influenced by Western medical science which is concerned with the vocal health of the student,[49] or an idea of what is good for the body/voice.

Sankongbu is a good example of the pedagogical difference between Korean p'ansori and the "natural/free" approach's treatment of the body in voice training. The sŏngŭm, although acquired through a particularly forceful use of the folds, is not vocal fold "damage" in the way voice training understands "damage" as misuse limiting the voice. Focus on "unnecessary" muscular contraction, or excessive "tension," leads to an emphasis on vocal health. The Voice and Speech Trainers' Association's professional journal, *Voice and Speech Review*, devoted an entire issue to conversations of "vocally violent" gestures and concerns with vocal health.[50]

For a contemporary Western definition of "vocal violence," one might refer to an article published in the *Journal of Voice: Official Journal of the Voice Foundation* entitled "Vocal Violence in Actors: An Investigation into Its Acoustic Consequences and the Effects of Hygienic Laryngeal Release Training":

> Actors, in rehearsal and performance, frequently engage in emotionally charged behaviors, often producing voice accompanied by extreme physical exertions (as in a staged fight), or sudden emotional outbursts, such as screaming, shouting, grunting, groaning, and sobbing. These vocally violent behaviors appear to involve extremes in pitch and loudness, increases of muscular tension in the circumlaryngeal area, and explosions of air across partially closed vocal folds. Such behaviors are generally accepted to be vocally abusive, and may contribute to vocal fold mucosal injury and voice mutation.[51]

P'ansori vocalists do not scream or sob on stage as an actor might in the genre of realism because they do not embody character using the conventions of "naturalism." But the p'ansori artist, like the realistic actor, must engage in "emotionally charged behaviors." Both types of performers must represent characters on stage in heightened emotional states. When representing characters in a heightened emotional state, the p'ansori artist, like the realistic actor, engages in "vocally violent behaviors" which involve "extremes in pitch and loudness, increases of muscular tension in the circumlaryngeal area, (possibly) explosions of air across partially closed vocal folds." And like the realistic actor, the p'ansori artist's vocally violent behavior may "contribute to vocal fold mucosal injury and voice mutation," especially since the p'ansori vocalist engages in these behaviors more frequently and for longer performance periods than most realistic actors. The article continues:

> Although the professional voice literature is replete with references to vocal "abuse and misuse," there is little objective information defining what constitutes "abusive" sounds, how they are made, and what frequency, intensity, and duration of abuse produces perceptible changes in voice or laryngeal tissue.[52]

If vocal abuse cannot be quantified scientifically, then perhaps part of what Anglo-American voice trainers term "vocal abuse" is based on discipline-specific voice/sound expectations and cultural understandings based on appreciated vocal aesthetics.

The role of breath in producing sound

The role of self within praxis helps determine how breath is conceptualized and trained. Modern voice pedagogy emerges from a tradition of understanding the self of the actor through a Western biomedical model,[53] which I suggest is viewed through the lens of Cartesian philosophy. By conceiving of the act of breathing as

the act of creating a thought,[54] training is able to construct one kind of relationship between thought/mind and breath/body. Body/mind dualism is realized on a muscular level, specifically, the action of the diaphragm during involuntary/voluntary lung function. Involuntary breath, understood as "unconscious response,"[55] is associated with the actor's self as biological matter of the body. Mind, or the will of the actor, understood as "conscious motor control,"[56] is associated with the voluntary act of breathing and is conceptualized as representing the thoughts and emotions of the actor/character.

Berry conceptualized the breath in training as follows: "How we breathe is how we think; or rather, in acting terms, how the character breathes is how the character thinks."[57] During training, the actor is taught to become aware, or conscious, of the involuntary breath so that this action can serve as the model for training the voluntary breath. The impulse to speak is associated with the kinesthetic feeling of the body's preparation to supply breath as fuel for voicing.[58] Through this process, both actor and audience can realize immaterial thought as playable action. Conscious awareness of the breath and conscious motor control are essential parts of training through this conceptual model.

In p'ansori training, breathing from the lower dahnjeon is considered essential. Sometimes, "dahnjeon" is translated into English as "center," or "energy center."[59] Dahnjeon is a part of an Eastern understanding of the body integral to Eastern medicinal praxis and fundamental to the way the body functions. There are three internal and four external dahnjeons. The "lower dahnjeon"—also referred to as *dantien* or *tan-den* (Japanese), or *nabhi mula* (Sanskrit meaning "the root of the navel")[60]—is located two inches below the navel and two inches inside the body. The "middle dahnjeon" is located two inches inside the body behind the sternum, and the "upper dahnjeon" is located roughly between and just above the eyes within the forehead (also referred to in some Asian practices as the "mind's eye," the "inner eye" or "third eye"). There are four external dahnjeons, one located in the palm of each hand where the center fingernail touches the palm while fisting (*jangshim* in Korean), and one located on the bottom of each foot, just below the ball when the foot is flexed (*yongchun* in Korean).[61]

In dahnjeon breathing, the contract/release cycle is linked to an inhalation/exhalation cycle producing a particular kind of sound. Dahnjeons are also energy centers generating *ki* (energy). The breath in Asian praxis developed from classical Chinese metaphysics and it does not remain conceptually or literally at the diaphragm. The breath circulates through dahnjeons via meridian channels (*kyung lack* in Korean) traveling down the back of the body (yang energy) and up the front of the body (eum energy) in a cyclical process, alternating between eum-yang polarities in the body.

The way that breath can move around the body is not necessarily a metaphor but a physical reality of the manifestation of breath into ki (energy). In Korean, there are three types of ki: *Won-ki* is "inherited energy" the fetus receives from its mother in the uterus, before breath as lung function is possible; *Jong-ki* is "acquired energy" from nourishment, such as eating and breathing oxygen; and the third type is *Jin-ki*, "cultivated energy" through training processes such as p'ansori.

It is this "cultivated energy" along with the tremendous intra-abdominal support (muscular contraction) that helps give the sŏngŭm its unique sound.

In Asian practice, the training of the breath may begin with the physical awareness of the body breathing but after long-term practice, the practitioner experiences an "energy flow" independent of the physical process of breathing.[62] The practitioner's sense of the physical body and self as identity (ego-identification) is obliterated in order to "commune" or "form one body" with that which is outside of the self. For a speaker, this way of working with the breath has the potential to increase the connection with the listener. Um Hae-kyung equates Victor Turner's *comunitas*[63] with her understanding of *pan* in p'ansori as the "integration and interaction between performers and audience members" creating the "communicative performance space of *pan*."[64] P'ansori practitioner/scholar Chan Park suggests that *p'an* is the "flow" of the performance between the performer and audience resulting in an authentic experience.[65] The cultivation and use of ki through the breath is fundamental to creating this feeling of connectedness with others and to generating focus and shift awareness.

Unification of ki/mind/breath must be achieved in order to execute a task well.[66] This means that, for many Asian modes of training, one does not train the breath only but simultaneously trains ki and mind. Mind is essential to the process of training of the voice. P'an Park wrote that "[v]oice is acoustic reflection of the mind."[67] She described the function of *sori*—translated as sound/voice within a sung voice form; also translated as song(s)—in p'ansori via Son (Zen) master Wolgwang, teacher to p'ansori master Song Hungnok in the Paegun Mountain: "Sori is the sound of all creations in the universe. It is the acoustic reflection of joy, sorrow, love, pleasure; of the four pains, birth, aging, illness, and death. It is the sound of the ocean that unifies into one salty tub all water *flows*. [. . .] Sori exists outside sori."[68]

Breathing from the lower dahnjeon is fundamental to realizing the way sound/voice, as the acoustic reflection of mind, is understood as existing outside of itself, as being a part of everything. Translating from the Confucian *Book of Rites*, Park wrote:

> Music rises as the mind is moved. First, the mind moves as it is touched by things external. The mind, touched, moves and it creates sound. Sound is distinguished in clear turbid, slow and fast, high and low, and these qualities interact with one another, creating changes. The changes create melody, called *um*.[69]

Mind can be understood as a manifestation of breath. In the "natural/free" approach, the breath, when "touched" or initiated, reacts to a situation or responds internally to a thought or emotion. Once touched, breath passes through the vocal folds and realizes thought/mind through sound/speech. This is an application of breath as fuel for speech via a biomedical model. In the above *Book of Rites* passage, there is a sense that the breath is not simply moving or passing through the vocal folds to generate vibrations understood as "sound"; instead, the notion

of sound itself is a combination of the physical manifestation of breath, energy, body, mind and consciousness that interacts with the world.

If one thought of the body as dahnjeon energy centers, then training would locate in these specific physical areas. The function of dahnjeons and the way energy circulates within the body would make it difficult to compartmentalize the body. Using a Western biomedical model makes interweaving a discussion of dahnjeon centers and ki energy difficult. Exercises are based on human anatomy and physiology, and insist on a basic similarity between bodies across cultures. Rodenburg wrote: "One of the delights of being a voice teacher is that I can teach in any language—from Japanese to Italian to Dutch to Hindi to Russian to Portuguese—anywhere in the world. The anatomical principles of the voice are the same in each place, the main body of sound the same. Only speech principles tend to differ just like musical principles."[70] Teaching from anatomical "principles" assumes voice exercises are culturally transferable. Anatomy is the "essential" category effacing cultural relativism.

Concepts of the breath are dependent on cultural and discipline-specific concepts of the body. Breath is not a universally understood physiological process able to be reduced to lung function (object-body). Also, breath understood subjectively (subject-body) is equally problematic, in part because the "lived body" is heavily influenced by the sociocultural understandings of self and the place of body as self within praxis. The body is not a stable site for learning; I find, however, the fluidity within this instability creatively useful, because it gives me room to negotiate different conceptual models of training.

The role of sound in training

In the "natural/free" voice approach, the performance aesthetic is to send the sound outside of the performer's body and not contain the sound within the body. This is one reason why actors are trained to place the sound forward in the mask of the face. Rodenburg advises: "Sound, like a word, must be placed as far forward in the mouth as possible in order to leave us and have an affect."[71] During one articulation exercise in which Berry works on the voiced bi-labial plosive /b/, she instructs: "This is one of the best ways to get the sound forward and sense the resonance in the mouth."[72] She goes on to conceptualize how the physiology of lip function carries meaning: "The involvement of the lips in speaking [. . .] is directly related to the sense of sharing what you have to say. Immobility of the lips actually gives the impression of reluctance to speak: it is like a curtain hiding the words."[73] Forward placement is understood as a good platform from which the sound can alight and travel over a distance, but also communicates sociocultural meaning.

When placing the sound in the mouth, the "natural/free" voice releases any jaw tension (muscular contraction) that might encourage the sound to "pull back in" to the body instead of being brought forward and traveling outside of the body. So, the sound of a free voice is characterized, in part, by "allowing the sound out."[74]

The "natural/free" voice approach conceptualizes sound in a linear communicative relationship. The speaker is the departure point for the sound, which travels in an "arch" to "land" on the listener.[75] The words "project"[76] and "projection"[77] or the phrase "projecting the voice" are often used to help the actor travel the sound over a distance. In this way, the voice is understood as a kind of projectile, and a popular exercise often used in voice training is to ask the student to toss a ball or some other projectile to a waiting listener while speaking text, so that the act of throwing the ball and the support needed in the body is transferred to muscularly supporting the voice. Also, the quality of the toss can be embodied as a vocal gesture. Berry wrote:

> Another valuable exercise for finding firm, unforced tone is to literally throw vowels. Imagine you have a ball in your hand which you are going to throw to a particular place—be quite clear about the aim. As you release the ball you will release sound by singing a vowel. "AY" and "I" are good vowels to take as they are so open. Imagine a ball in your hand, lift your arm and as you do so breathe in. Throw the ball to the place chosen; as you throw release the sound and throw the vowel, letting it follow the imaginary ball so sustaining the sound until you have reached your object.[78]

This exercise trains the actor to think of herself as the departure point for sound, conceptualize sound as linear and directional, and produce a sound that is "unforced." Linklater offers a preparatory exercise for the lips that also conceptualizes sound as a ball. She instructs:

> Push your lips forward into the pouting position. Picture vibration as a tiny ball you can hold in your pouting lips. Allow sound, and play with the feeling of vibration on your lips, squeezing it and releasing it a little and squeezing it again ("oo-uh" on a very small scale). You are now going to use your lips as a sling shot to throw the sound forward and off your face.[79]

Unlike the "natural/free" approach, which teaches that the body is the departure point for the sound, the p'ansori "pushing/pulling" sound sends the sound away from the body and then brings it back into the body. This is a particularly useful technique during lamentations, but this technique is also employed in comedic scenes and with regular frequency by elongating the voiced semi-vowel /l/ and voiced nasals /m/ and /n/. Other p'ansori techniques are also designed to contain the sound within the body: *pisong* (literally, "nasal sound"), *chigan mok* (literally, *chi*: "tooth" "between the teeth sound"), *hyo dadin mok* (literally, *hyo*: "tongue" "curling sound").

Containing the sound within the body, especially during lamentation, helps create the sounds of struggle, drawing empathy from the listener. When the sound is contained inside, the listener must draw toward the performer, creating an intimate relationship between the listening audience and performer. When the voice is trained to send sound outside the body to travel to the listener, the focus

is on traveling the distance between performer and audience. The way sound is conceptualized during training and passed from teacher to student through embodied technique sets up different kinds of relationships with the audience; this becomes the foundation for creating relationships during performance.

Forward placement may suit, as a preparatory gesture, to speaking English, but this concept of sound and its role in preparing speech becomes difficult to adapt to Korean language. Embedded within *hangul*, the Korean alphabet, are significant cultural understandings of sound that frame the ways my students approached their understanding of sound when training with me. There are several theories about the development of hangul, but the one I would like to examine for the purposes of this chapter suggests that hangul was not only a visual representation of vernacular sounds but a visual reminder of the positioning of the vocal organs during articulation.[80] According to Hong Yang-ho (1724), "the symbols used in the *onmun* are pictographic representations of the mouth at the time of articulation."[81] Also, the design of the Korean language with particular focus on the phonemes has embedded understandings of eum-yang as bright and dark sounds. Speaking Korean is the act of experiencing the physical embodiment of the eum-yang principle.

Finally, hangul represents the sound of the Korean people. King Sejong, who invented the script in 1443 from which modern hangul is formed, wrote in *Hunmin Chong'um* (1446, Correct Sounds for Teaching the People):

> The sounds of the language of our country differ from [those of] China: and [Chinese] characters do not correspond with the need. Therefore, the common people using the vernacular are unable to express their feelings completely. So, having compassion, we have devised a new system with twenty-eight letters. It is our wish that they be used, since they are easy for everybody to learn and apply [. . .].[82]

Sound is political; it helps define identity and is deeply connected to one's worldview. Hangul was created not only as an accessible written form for mass education but also to differentiate Koreans from their neighbors, build nationalism and express their unique identity. In contrast to Rodenburg's suggestion that she can teach anywhere in the world because the "main body of sound is the same," Berry, commenting on her experiences teaching Korean students in Seoul, wrote: "And this poses questions about how much the sound pattern is intrinsic to the nature of the culture and to what extent the sound pattern influences the way we think."[83]

Conclusion

Body, breath, sound and voice can be understood as ideas emerging from worldviews that provide the foundation for the practical training of the voice within different traditions. When weaving different traditions into an intercultural approach to voice training, "interculturalism" can be understood as an embodied

process. The body/voice is not an understood universal but must be addressed in cultural context. Creating an environment of transference by learning different traditions side-by-side helps students to transfer skill sets from one tradition to another within the site of their body/voice and within the studio between bodies/voices. The process of interweaving the "natural/free" voice approach and Korean p'ansori became the process of investigating the most fundamental understanding of what is a voice. What I hope to offer here is one possibility in theorizing what a voice might be within a given context for the purposes of training actors.

Notes

1 A traditional Korean vocal art form that tells a story using *ch'ang* (sung) passages, *aniri* (spoken) passages and *pallim* (gestures). The single *p'ansori* performer is accompanied by a drummer playing a *puk*, or double-barreled drum. The performer stands in the center of a playing mat, or *pan* (performance area), with the accompanist sitting to the performer's left, also on the playing mat. Most critics believe that the origin of the word "p'ansori" comes from "*pan*" (performance or playing area) combined with the traditional Korean name for sound or voice, "*sori*." So literally translated, "p'ansori" could be understood as a playing area for the voice. During the telling, the performer vocally embodies multiple characters and interacts directly with the accompanist and audience. The accompanist and audience interact with the performer during the telling by shouting out *ch'uimsae* (specific calls of encouragement), such as "*ulshigo!*" (no direct translation), or "*chotta!*" (good!).
2 KNUA prospectus (2000), 8.
3 KNUA, School of Drama prospectus (2004).
4 To the Linklater method, I also added Cicely Berry and Patsy Rodenburg in order to compliment the training and focus it on a larger set of principles which I call the "natural" or "free" voice approach.
5 Human Cultural Asset or 인간문화재 "*in'gan munhwajae*" (lit. 인간 [human] 문화재 [cultural asset]). Also referred to as Human Cultural Treasure. The title bestowed on master p'ansori teachers by the Korean government through the Office for Cultural Asset Management as part of the Korean government's traditional Korean arts support scheme.
6 See brief historical surveys of intercultural writings, theory and practice in Erika Fischer-Lichte, Josephine Riley and Michael Gissenwehrer, eds., *The Dramatic Touch of Difference: Theatre, Own and Foreign* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1990); Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Dasgupta, eds., *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ* (New York, NY: PAJ, 1991); Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, eds., *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Graham Ley, *From Mimesis to Interculturalism: Readings of Theatrical Theory Before and After "Modernism"* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999); Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, trans. L. Kruger (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1992); Patrice Pavis, ed., *The Intercultural Performance Reader* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1996); and Phillip B. Zarrilli et al., *Theatre Histories: An Introduction* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).
7 Fischer-Lichte et al., *Dramatic Touch of Difference*, 12.
8 Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert, "Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis," *The Drama Review* 46, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 37.
9 Ibid., 48–49.
10 KNUA prospectus (2004).

11 Man-yŏng Hahn, *Kugak: Studies in Korean Traditional Music*, ed. and trans. I. Paek and K. Howard (Seoul: Tamgu Dang Publishing in cooperation with Korea Research Foundation, 1990), 36; Hae-kyung Um, *Korean Musical Drama:* P'ansori *and the Making of Tradition in Modernity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 53.
12 KNUA prospectus (2000), 8.
13 Chung Hoi Suk, in discussion with the author, Seoul, Korea, March 2000.
14 Marshall R. Pihl, *The Korean Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 105.
15 Chan E. Park-Miller, "*P'ansori* Performed: From the Strawmat to the Proscenium and Back" (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 1995), 70.
16 *Dahnjeon* (단전) is a Korean term sometimes translated as "energy centers." In Korean medicinal praxis, there are three internal and four external dahnjeons. Dahnjeon breathing in p'ansori focuses on the lower, internal dahnjeon located two inches below the navel and two inches inside the body. I will return to a discussion of dahnjeon breathing later in the chapter.
17 Moon states: "I believe that the sound quality of p'ansori is basically due to the permanent change (or, damage, should we call it?) which is, in turn, caused by an extensive and prolonged training. 'Mountain training' doesn't have to be 'mountain' training. It doesn't matter where, but the mountains probably offered the least distraction with nobody to bother with the training." E-mail interview with the author, 23 January 2003.
18 I will return to the discussion of *sankongbu* later in the chapter when I address the topic of muscular contract/release cycles.
19 Park-Miller, "*P'ansori* Performed," 263.
20 This includes Han Nongsŏn's private studio, Sŏng Uhyang's private studio and p'ansori classrooms at KNUA under Master teachers Pak Yun Cho, Ahn Sukson and Chung Hoi Suk.
21 Ahn Sukson was awarded National Living Treasure status in 1997 and was Artistic Director of the National Ch'anggŭk Company.
22 Ahn Sukson, personal interview with the author, April 2000.
23 *Han* is sometimes translated as "grief" but contains complex understandings of layered emotions, passed through the collective consciousness of the Korean people and taught from one generation to the next through informal, social vocal training (e.g. real displays of grief) or formal performer training (e.g. extra-daily representations of grief developed specifically to fulfill the aesthetic expectations of a performance mode).
24 KNUA prospectus (2000), 8.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 See Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor* (New York, NY: Collier, 1973), 16; Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language* (New York, NY: Drama Book Publishers, 1976), 185; Patsy Rodenburg, *The Right to Speak: Working with the Voice* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 118.
28 Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*, 185, my emphasis.
29 See Berry, *Voice and the Actor*; David Carey and Rebecca Clark Carey, *Vocal Arts Workbook and DVD: A Practical Course for Achieving Clarity and Expression with Your Voice* (London: Meuthen Drama, 2008), vi; Barbara Houseman, *Finding Your Voice: A Complete Voice Training Manual for Actors* (London: Nick Hern, 2002), xiv; Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language* (New York, NY: Drama Book Publishers, 2006), 8; Michael McCallion, *The Voice Book: For Actors, Public Speakers and Everyone Who Wants to Make the Most of Their Voice* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988); Rodenburg, *Right to Speak*, 4.
30 See Tara McAllister-Viel, "(Re)considering the Role of Breath in Training Actors' Voices," *Theatre Topics* 19, no. 2 (2009): 165–80.

31 See Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976), 1; Berry, *Voice and the Actor*, 7–8; Arthur Lessac, "From beyond Wildness to Body Wisdom, Vocal Life, and Healthful Functioning: A Joyous Struggle for Our Discipline's Future," in *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors*, ed. M. Hampton and B. Acker (New York, NY and London: Applause, 1997), 17; Rodenburg, *Right to Speak*, 8; McCallion, *Voice Book*, 4.
32 Catherine Fitzmaurice, "Breathing Is Meaning," in *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors*, 249.
33 Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976), 202.
34 Ibid., 19; Rodenburg, *Right to Speak*, 173.
35 Jacqueline Martin, *Voice in Modern Theatre* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 37.
36 See Eliot Deutsch, "The Concept of the Body," in *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. T. P. Kasulis, with R. T. Ames and W. Dissanayake (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 6–8.
37 See Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976), 112; Rodenburg, *Right to Speak*, 115, 119.
38 Ibid., 9–10.
39 Roger T. Ames, "The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy," in *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. T. P. Kasulis, with R. T. Ames and W. Dissanayake (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 164–168.
40 See Berry, *Voice and the Actor*, 22; see also Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976), 24.
41 Rodenburg, *Right to Speak*, 120.
42 Ibid., 177.
43 Byong Won Lee, "Tension and Release as Physical and Auditory Signs of Affect in Korean Music," abstract of paper presented at the Association for Korean Music Research Panel: Meaning and Emotion in Korean Music, Austin, TX, 17–21 November 1999.
44 Ames, "The Meaning of Body," 159.
45 Chung Hoi Suk, in discussion with the author, Seoul, Korea, March 2000.
46 Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976), 92.
47 Berry, *Voice and the Actor*, 16.
48 Patsy Rodenburg, *The Need for Words: Voice and the Text*. London: Methuen, 1993.
49 See Jane Boston, "Introduction to the Sixth Edition," in *Voice and Speech in Theatre*, by J. Clifford Turner, 6th ed., ed. J. Boston (London: Methuen Drama, 2007), xii–xiii; also, Christina Shewell, *Voice Work: Art and Science in Changing Voices* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
50 Rocco Dal Vera, ed., *The Voice in Violence: Essays on Voice and Speech* (New York, NY: Applause, 2001).
51 Nelson Roy, Karen S. Ryker and Diane M. Bless, "Vocal Violence in Actors: An Investigation into Its Acoustic Consequences and the Effects of Hygienic Laryngeal Release Training," *Journal of Voice* 14, no. 2 (2000): 215.
52 Ibid.
53 Boston, "Introduction," xii–xiii; see also Martin, *Voice in Modern Theatre*, 37.
54 Cicely Berry, *The Actor and the Text* (1987; New York, NY: Applause, 1992), 26; Carey and Carey, *Vocal Arts Workbook*, 39; Fitzmaurice, "Breathing Is Meaning," 247–248; Michael Morgan, *Constructing the Holistic Actor: Fitzmaurice Voicework, Actor Voice Training* (Saarbrücken: Dr. Müller, 2008), 86.
55 Fitzmaurice, "Breathing Is Meaning," 248.
56 Ibid.
57 Berry, *Actor and Text*, 26.
58 For Linklater's "vacuuming the lungs" exercise, which develops the student's awareness of the diaphragmatic recoil, see *Freeing Natural Voice* (1976), 128–129.
59 Robert L. Benedetti, *The Actor at Work* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 28–29.

60 Difference in the spelling of "dahnjeon" into English has been influenced by the Korean government's adoption of a new spelling system in July 2000. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCT) introduced the MOCT Hangeul Romanization System to replace the formerly used McCune-Reischauer system. Also, different spellings in English are adapted from other languages using various other spelling approaches.
61 My understandings of "dahnjeon" are based in Korean practices. Yuasa Yasuo provides other understandings of "dantien" (Chinese) or "tan-den" (Japanese) meditative and self-cultivation practices; see Yasuo Yuasa, *The Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy*, trans. S. Nagatomo and M. S. Hull (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 79.
62 Mark J. Nearman, "Kakyo: A Mirror of the Flower. Part One," *Monumenta Nipponica* 37, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 347.
63 Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York, NY: De Gruyter, 1969), 96.
64 Hae-kyung Um, "New *P'ansori* in Twenty-First-Century Korea: Creative Dialects of Tradition and Modernity," *Asian Theatre Journal* 25, no. 1 (2008): 41.
65 Chan Park, "'Authentic Audience' in *P'ansori*, a Korean Storytelling Tradition," *Journal of American Folklore*, no. 449 (Summer 2000): 272–273.
66 Yuasa, *Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy*, 76.
67 Chan E. Park, *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Singing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 189.
68 Ibid., 62, my emphasis.
69 Ibid., 189.
70 Rodenburg, *Right to Speak*, 268.
71 Ibid., 211.
72 Berry, *Actor and Text*, 58–59.
73 Ibid.
74 Patsy Rodenburg, *A Voice of Your Own* (New York, NY: Applause, 1994), DVD.
75 Ibid.
76 Berry, *Actor and Text*, 139.
77 Rodenburg, *Right to Speak*, 223.
78 Berry, *Actor and Text*, 41.
79 Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976), 157.
80 James Hoyt, *Soaring Phoenixes and Prancing Dragons: A Historical Survey of Korean Classical Literature*, Korean Studies Series no. 20 (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2000), 157. In 1941, new historical evidence was uncovered in the form of a *hanmun* text discovered in North Kyongsang province, which spells out the pictographic cosmological nature of the symbol-shapes in no uncertain terms, and it is now clear that of the older writings, Hong Yang-ho was on the right track.
81 Ibid., 156.
82 Ibid., 161.
83 Cicely Berry, *Text in Action* (London: Virgin, 2001), 59. Berry taught my postgraduate students and myself in a week-long voice intensive as part of the Seoul International Theatre Festival, September 2001.

Bibliography

Ames, Roger T. "The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy." In *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, edited by T. P. Kasulis, with R. T. Ames and W. Dissanayake, 157–78. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993.

Benedetti, Robert L. *The Actor at Work.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Berry, Cicely. *Text in Action.* London: Virgin, 2001.

———. *The Actor and the Text.* 1987. New York, NY: Applause, 1992.

———. *Voice and the Actor.* New York, NY: Collier, 1973.

Boston, Jane. "Introduction to the Sixth Edition." In *Voice and Speech in Theatre.* By J. Clifford Turner. 6th ed., edited by J. Boston. London: Methuen Drama, 2007, vii–xv.

Carey, David, and Rebecca Clark Carey. *Vocal Arts Workbook and DVD: A Practical Course for Achieving Clarity and Expression with Your Voice.* London: Meuthen Drama, 2008.

Chung, Sung-Sook Y. "The Impact of Yin and Yang Ideology in the Art of Korean *P'ansori* Tradition: An Analytical Study Based on the Late Mme. Pak Nok-Ju Version of P'ansori Hungbo-ga." PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, CA, 1998.

Dal Vera, Rocco, ed. *The Voice in Violence: Essays on Voice and Speech.* New York, NY: Applause, 2001.

Deutsch, Eliot. "The Concept of the Body." In *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, edited by T. P. Kasulis, with R. T. Ames and W. Dissanayake, 5–20. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika, Josephine Riley and Michael Gissenwehrer, eds. *The Dramatic Touch of Difference: Theatre, Own and Foreign.* Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1990.

Fitzmaurice, Catherine. "Breathing Is Meaning." In *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors*, edited by M. Hampton and B. Acker, 247–54. New York, NY and London: Applause, 1997.

Hahn, Man-yŏng. *Kugak: Studies in Korean Traditional Music*, edited and translated by I. Paek and K. Howard. Seoul: Tamgu Dang Publishing in cooperation with Korea Research Foundation, 1990.

Houseman, Barbara. *Finding Your Voice: A Complete Voice Training Manual for Actors.* London: Nick Hern, 2002.

Hoyt, James. *Soaring Phoenixes and Prancing Dragons: A Historical Survey of Korean Classical Literature.* Korean Studies Series no. 20. Seoul: Jimoondang, 2000.

Lee, Byong Won. "Tension and Release as Physical and Auditory Signs of Affect in Korean Music." Abstract of paper presented at the Association for Korean Music Research Panel: Meaning and Emotion in Korean Music. Austin, TX, 17–21 November 1999.

Lessac, Arthur. "From beyond Wildness to Body Wisdom, Vocal Life, and Healthful Functioning: A Joyous Struggle for Our Discipline's Future." In *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors*, edited by M. Hampton and B. Acker, 13–24. New York, NY and London: Applause, 1997.

Ley, Graham. *From Mimesis to Interculturalism: Readings of Theatrical Theory before and after "Modernism."* Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999.

Linklater, Kristin. *Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language.* New York, NY: Drama Book Publishers, 1976.

———. *Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language.* New York, NY: Drama Book Publishers, 2006.

Lo, Jacqueline, and Helen Gilbert. "Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis." *The Drama Review* 46, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 31–53.

Marranca, Bonnie, and Gautam Dasgupta, eds. *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ.* New York, NY: PAJ, 1991.

Martin, Jacqueline. *Voice in Modern Theatre.* London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1991.

McAllister-Viel, Tara. "(Re)considering the Role of Breath in Training Actors' Voices." *Theatre Topics* 19, no. 2 (2009): 165–80.

McCallion, Michael. *The Voice Book: For Actors, Public Speakers and Everyone Who Wants to Make the Most of Their Voice.* London: Faber and Faber, 1988.

Morgan, Michael. *Constructing the Holistic Actor: Fitzmaurice Voicework, Actor Voice Training.* Saarbrücken: Dr. Müller, 2008.

Nearman, Mark J. "Kakyo: A Mirror of the Flower. Part One." *Monumenta Nipponica* 37, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 343–74.

Park-Miller, Chan E. "*P'ansori* Performed: From the Strawmat to the Proscenium and Back." PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 1995.

Park, Chan. "'Authentic Audience' in P'ansori, a Korean Storytelling Tradition." *Journal of American Folklore*, no. 449 (Summer 2000): 270–86.

Park, Chan E. *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Singing.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

Pavis, Patrice, ed. *The Intercultural Performance Reader.* London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1996.

———. *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture.* Translated by Loren Kruger. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1992.

Pihl, Marshall R. *The Korean Singer of Tales.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Rodenburg, Patsy. *A Voice of Your Own*. New York, NY: Applause, 1994. DVD.

———. *The Need for Words: Voice and the Text.* London: Methuen, 1993.

——— *The Right to Speak: Working with the Voice.* London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1992.

Roy, Nelson, Karen S. Ryker and Diane M. Bless. "Vocal Violence in Actors: An Investigation into Its Acoustic Consequences and the Effects of Hygienic Laryngeal Release Training." *Journal of Voice* 14, no. 2 (2000): 215–30.

Schechner, Richard, and Willa Appel, eds. *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Shewell, Christina. *Voice Work: Art and Science in Changing Voices*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure.* New York, NY: De Gruyter, 1969.

Um, Hae-kyung. *Korean Musical Drama:* P'ansori *and the Making of Tradition in Modernity*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

———. "New *P'ansori* in Twenty-first-century Korea: Creative Dialects of Tradition and Modernity." *Asian Theatre Journal* 25, no. 1 (2008): 24–57.

Yuasa, Yasuo. *The Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy*. Translated by S. Nagatomo and M. S. Hull. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993.

Zarrilli, Phillip B., Bruce McConachie, Gary Jay Williams and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei. *Theatre Histories: An Introduction*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.

10 The female voice in Egyptian theater

Between traditions of muting and the new waves of revolution

Nora Amin

A brief history of the shaming of the female Egyptian performer

Since its very inception, Egyptian theater has been associated with a deep sense of shame, because it belongs to the sphere of entertainment, which the Egyptian value system and code of morality consider indecent. This sphere of entertainment also included oriental dance, one-man/woman shows, song and music, and, above all, the culture of nightclubs, which reigned in Rod al-Farag and Emad Eddin (downtown Cairo). It was from this sphere that the performers hailed who, in the 1920s and 1930s, contributed to the development of Egyptian theater.[1] Among them were a large number of female performers, mainly oriental dancers—and sometimes singers—who turned to acting. In order to understand the journey of Egyptian theater and its evolution, it is necessary to acknowledge its roots and the huge role played by female Egyptian performers, who came from oriental dance and night club culture yet quickly adapted to acting and fervently enriched the acting scene, whether on stage or on the screen. These women also became prominent producers of theater and film, and either founded prestigious theater companies, which they headed as artistic directors, or they became film producers and lead actresses. Among them were Aziza Amir (1901–52), Assia Dagher (1901–86) and Fatma Rouchdi (1908–96).[2]

Yet their reputation as dancers followed them to the stage. Egyptian society, with a considerable level of social hypocrisy, generally dealt with female performers as semi-prostitutes at best. In a patriarchal system, where women do not own their bodies, where they are supposed to fit with the image of the religious mother, the obedient wife or the puppet daughter, it was impossible to recognize these women who aimed to shape their own identities, femininities and careers. They were clearly dangerous to the common morality, outcasts asking to be punished. This punishment always came in the form of exclusion and shaming. The women performers were aware that their choice would alter the course of their lives and that they would never be re-admitted to the social system of "decent women" and "decent families."

Yet the fascination with the beauty and sensuality of the female performers was never diminished by this exclusion and social discrimination. The spectators

practiced the double role of enjoying their spectatorship and the entertainment offered to them, while projecting back to the female performer a judgment of shame. In this double role, the average Egyptian spectator found the right balance between satisfying his/her fascination with beauty and sensuality, while safeguarding their so-called "morality." Through this strictly judgmental social behavior, the spectators washed off their guilt of the pleasure they derived from the entertainment. For spectatorship is not oriented toward a performance alone but also—and always—toward the society in which the performance is embedded and hence toward oneself as well.

I would like to argue that the key to the pleasure was, in fact, the shaming. More specifically, the fascination with the female performer, her beauty, body, femininity, talent and charisma, lay at the heart of the paradox related to all the performing arts in Egypt. Through his fascination, the spectator risked becoming inferior to his object of desire, indirectly empowering the female performer by acknowledging her victory against the status quo and the ruling patriarchal system. Whether this victory was deserved or not, it destabilized social and gender norms, leading the male spectator to use his position as judge and guardian of morality to deprive the female of her integrity and honor.

The issue of honor is of utmost importance here, as Egyptian society cherishes it greatly but only when it is connected to chastity. Virginity is still the most significant measure of the unmarried woman's decency. In the later stages of her life, a married woman is supposed to preserve her chastity by negating her sexuality except within the privacy of the bedroom with her husband—or not at all if she is widowed. Divorced women who do not remarry are considered chastity's "lost cause," not far from the female performer.

In this context, a female dancer was clearly breaking the norm, celebrating and exhibiting her sexuality through her performance. There is no way to distill beauty from sexuality or sensuality, for what is beauty if not that alluring energy attracting one to the body and soul of another human being? If the female performer gave up her sexuality and sensuality—which all women and men are born with—and thus relinquished her femininity, how would she dance? In the journeys of the female performers and producers of Egyptian theater of the 1920s and 1930s, many women moved away from oriental dance strictly to acting. This shift was supposed to be perceived as—among other things—a step toward the moral code of society, one that would eventually reduce the shame as much as the female performer was willing to move away from her physicality and sexual visibility. The logic was that an actress refraining from wearing the oriental dance costume, from dancing and openly displaying her femininity, would be much more welcome in this social system than an oriental dancer. Yet the image of the actress remained that of an indecent woman.

Over several decades, the reputation of Egyptian stage women was caught in this social dichotomy of the decent/indecent woman, despite the pioneering work of the female producers and heads of theater companies. In fact, the argument is often put forward that those women merely reinforced this conservative and patriarchal image by reproducing it or at least by not offering an

alternative.[3] The rebellion within their personal lives to become artists did not automatically lead to a subversion of society at large via performance. Their performances were not as critical as they themselves were.

The female roles presented on the Egyptian stage generally adhered to the traditional figures: the religious mother, the obedient wife, the pleasant daughter, the loyal fiancée, the strict mother-in-law, the greedy wife, the funny aunt, the jealous wife, the kind maid, the poor mother, the righteous mother, etc. This, of course, meant keeping many characters and images of Egyptian women off the stage—silenced, muted and "unauthorized." In reality, there were women supporting their families financially; raising their children alone; working and making a successful career instead of remaining in the shadow of a husband; seeking higher education and excelling in the arts and sciences; or joining in the political struggle to free their country from foreign domination or local oppression. Above all, the female characters on the Egyptian stage lacked a believably human psychology. Instead, clichés and stereotypes ruled for decades, which included the archaic stock character of the seductress, who betrays and destroys families—the Medusa who dares to recognize her sexuality and is preprogrammed to do evil.[4] The whole story was more or less predictable, and the final judgment was predetermined even before a sin was committed. The logical aim of such a mental construction of female characters was to make a statement: there is but one way for women not to follow the devil, which is to obey their father, husband or brother. A woman on her own, pursuing her "whims," or another woman, or nobody at all but creating her own path, was necessarily "bad"—theater here played its moralistic role to the extreme.

The Egyptian spectators largely identified the character with the actress, and vice versa. They believed that the actress would behave in the same manner as the character she was portraying. This made it very difficult for actresses to shift from the "good woman" character to the "bad woman" character. The credits of the play would easily give away the plot and who was portraying whom. Having said that, the actresses playing the "good woman" were not regarded as truly virtuous—they were only considered slightly less evil than those playing the "bad woman."

Voice and body

There is no live performance without the body. There is no bodiless performer. Performance is physical, and performative acts rely on the body as the dominant tool. Yet the "body" is not one thing: in some cultures, bare skin is a necessary part of bodily presence; in others, bare skin is forbidden, while the body is still present whether partially or totally covered. The meaning of the body also differs from one culture to another. In the Arabic language, the word for "body" (*gassed* جسد) always has sexual connotations, while the less frequent synonym *badan* (بدن) refers more to the body as an asexual human vehicle, and *gessm* (جسم) signifies any "body," including non-human ones, such as "metal bodies."

In theater, the body of the performer is not just the mere physical body in its materiality; it is also an embodiment of many things. The body of a performer

employs its physicality, sensuality and sexuality to incorporate feelings, ideas, sensations and relations. The theatrical body acquires a unique corporality, one that is embedded in the organicity of the connection between body, mind and emotion. Therefore, the performative body of an actress would be different than her personal body offstage. Although the materiality of both is the same, the usage, dynamics and connectivity are totally different. The performative body is one that mainly aims to communicate a specific content in a specific system of representation and communication. It is a body that offers itself to the gaze of the other, a body that goes beyond its history to perform other histories and narratives. It is a body able to transform, to deceive and to convince. It is a body capable of taking over the space, of ruling over the spectators' emotions by losing its original identity. The interesting paradox here is that this operation grants an incredible sense of empowerment to the performer, which does not necessarily translate into social acknowledgment but results in genuine self-esteem and personal growth.

The voyeurism of the spectators is met by the exhibitionism of the female performer. A tacit agreement is made: the spectator will possess the actress with his eyes, and the actress will accept it and will aim to please. This agreement is not at all far from the old equation—described previously—of desiring the female while shaming her as a strategy to remove the guilt of fascination from the spectator and to manipulate the power of the performer. In that case, the female performer becomes an accomplice in her own oppression and exclusion.

The rule is precise: shaming the femininity that rebels against the value system. This shaming is practiced via theatrical tools as well. The craft of acting, manipulated through common morals, also functions to restore and extend the traditional image of the woman. Movement and voice are the strongest components of the acting craft that preserve the traditional image by molding the female presence into the necessary stereotypes.

Watching hundreds of Egyptian plays over the last forty years,[5] one can easily find a common style of movement, gestures and voice in all the actresses. Generally, the movement is very composed, polished and tame. All bodies seem to have been tailored by the same machine, geared toward elegance and grace. They largely represent the upper social class, where physical education imposes an almost robotic behavior. Gestures mainly involve the hands; they are repetitive and signal the same common meanings. There is no space for freedom here, no room to liberate the hidden body, the true movement that releases the inner self and power of the female. The actress must therefore rely heavily on her vocal performance. Her voice becomes her most important tool for acting, while her body is stigmatized between the game of voyeurism/exhibitionism and the "morally tailored" movement.

Her voice is split between the enunciation of the text that she is delivering and the quality of the feminine tempo, tonality, timbre and pitch she is using. In those situations, the choices that come to an actress are naturally shaped by what she hears. The history of what she has been hearing becomes her only resource for choosing the voice of her character. Yet the focus is placed on the enunciation of

the words, as if it were independent from the voice. She must make an extra effort to memorize the text, learn the pauses, the pace and the escalations, but it is not encouraged to find the voice of the character, the timbre and how she breathes. For the female performer, these elements are not within the scope of her choice, as if they never were part of the acting craft. In this sense, the audience becomes used to seeing the same actress in different roles but with the same voice and enunciation. Moreover, the natural connection between body and voice is lost because the vocal apparatus and the voice consciousness have been disconnected from their organic relation to the body, an organicity that is crucial to the acting craft, as Julia Varley describes it in her *Stones of Water*.[6] The actress' body is split between the physical and the vocal, and this division weakens the performer's power as well as her ability to connect with the audience. Between the division of body and voice, the voyeurism/exhibitionism game, the history of shaming the female and the prescribed female roles, the female performer has very little space to "be" on stage; she has much less possibility of re-inventing herself and the female character she plays beyond the tradition of muting.

Until the 1990s, Egyptian theater was not that focused on movement and visuals. It was a largely textual theater, obsessed with words and mobilizing all possible artistic devices to that end.[7] The female voice onstage was restricted to three predesigned paths: the thin, childish voice of the innocent woman (which the actress has to train hard to maintain because it is totally alien to a mature voice); the bass voice of the respectable mother, sad wife or any woman experiencing misery (also a very unusual voice in real life because it requires a unique vocal anatomy that only some iconic actresses possess, such as Dawlat Abyad and Amina Rizk); and the snaky voice of the seductress (generally easier to do with the help of systematic breathing in order to emit air while enunciating as a stereotypical marker of seduction). This restrictive foundation of the traditional female voice continued until the 1990s.

The 1990s: A turning point

In the early 1990s, student movements at the universities were becoming more organized. Student unions were controlled by national security and their leadership divided between religious groups and left-wing students. It was a microcosm of Egyptian society. There was one clear university platform for liberal thought at the beginning of the 1990s: theater. The stage became a powerful space of opposition and resistance; the students/artists revived a concept of theater as a place for militancy. The concepts, texts, acting styles and directing launched a new culture of performance where the protest outside the faculty building informed the actor's presence and connection to the audience.[8] There was no place for social hypocrisy or for slogans of the regime. The stage was a space to voice survival versus the imposed fundamentalist face, which had turned into street terrorism for the larger part of the 1990s.

It was also in the 1990s that many forms of independent art were born, forms that took place outside the state's institutions and defied a commercial concept

of profit. They were collectives of young artists who defined art as a form of activism, emphasizing the public role of the arts in order to criticize the status quo and stand as opposition to the culture of authority, oppression and manipulation. All these collectives came from university theater. It was one generation that decided—with a political consciousness—to use theater for bringing about change. In this generation, independent theater was born over twenty-five years ago, the movement which struggled to create the third path beyond state theater and commercial cabaret. Several prominent companies were founded back then and continue working even today, among them (without specific order): the Movement Troupe, the Caravan Theater Troupe, Almesaharaty, the Light Theater Group, Lekaa' Theater Company, the Alternative Theater Company, Theater Atelier and Alshazya wal'ekterab. It was the path that followed the evolution of the concept of citizenship and the rights to dignity, equality, freedom and justice. It led to the birth of a new theatrical female voice, the voice of the previously muted body, the voice of the female rebel. The independent theater movement opened up ample space for the body, for movement, visuals and scenography. The expansion of theatrical elements and tools went hand in hand with the creation of a new theatrical language in which the artist produces knowledge and invents aesthetics out of the box and in clear opposition to tradition. These new endeavors were explicitly politically driven. The roles and positions of the female performers were clearly set in the context of confrontation. It was a turning point where female directors emerged, created their own independent theater companies and adapted contemporary world plays with the aim of representing a new liberal voice of the Egyptian woman. Of that generation, the works of Abeer Ali, Effat Yehia, Caroline Khalil, Rasha Elgammal and Abeer Lotfy remain very visible; they were succeeded by the next generation of theater-makers and dancers post-2000, represented by Azza Elhoseiny, Dalia Basiouny, Sherin Elansary, Manal Ibrahim, Reham Abdelrazek, Reem Hegab, Mirette Michel, Karima Mansour, Dalia Elabd, Sherin Hegazy and myself, among others.[9]

We can see parallels between the new female leadership that rose in the 1990s and the 1920s initiatives of pioneering female performers and producers; the big difference lies in the fact that the 1990s generation shunned social hypocrisy and took a clear stance to oppose the status quo—be it the reigning value system, political regime or patriarchal power.

From 1993 to 2005, the image of the Egyptian woman on stage began to shift alongside that of the female performer. A whole wave of female performers gave birth to a new acting craft, one based on research, experimentation, integrity, transparency and strong empathic communication with the audience. Anybody could easily see the transformation—especially as it was part of a long and slow transformation of Egyptian society as a whole.

Being part of this movement—first as a dancer and then as an actress, theater director and playwright—I witnessed the liberation of the female voice firsthand; I experienced what it means to find your voice, use and re-shape it. The comparison is easy: in the past, the voices and bodies of the female performers were caged, manipulated, altered and muted. Now there is an extended moment

of liberation on social and political levels, and theater is also enjoying the repercussions of this liberation, and contributing to it.

The revolution of 25 January 2011

The revolution of 25 January 2011 did not happen overnight[10]; it evolved over a period of at least fifteen years until it culminated in a revolution. The gathering of millions of people on the streets for eighteen days until the removal of Hosni Mubarak (b. 1928) was the final act of opposition and resistance, not the first. When the people gathered in the squares and streets, they reclaimed the public sphere, re-appropriated the land and freed Egypt from the regime that had hijacked it. Egypt was being returned to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians were no longer slaves of the regime; they were now free citizens holding full ownership of their state.

Part of the crucial steps of that evolution was 5 September 2005. A fire broke out at a state-owned theater venue in Upper Egypt (the theater venue of the cultural palaces organism in the governorate of Beni Suef) and fifty theater artists were killed (among them Mosen Moselhi, Hazem Shehata, Medhat Abobakr and Moemen Abdo). Many others were gravely injured. A report later concluded that it was a clear failure of the state to apply fire regulations and to later rescue the artists who were left to die from their wounds. The performing arts scene once again emerged as a protest movement against the failure of the Egyptian regime and in defense of the lives and dignity of Egyptians. It was called "the movement of 5 September" in Arabic, and it led to many similar protest movements.[11] In this sense, the art scene was not only an intellectual stimulator for change but a trigger for protest and revolution.

Between 2005 and 2011, the performing arts scene was transforming into an arena for political activism and cultural transformation. One unforgettable feature of this period that left its mark on the female voice on stage was the screams of the female performers in the protests demanding the right to dignity and justice for the Egyptian citizen and artist. Those screams would grow with the renewed screams of 2011 and stipulate a new identity for the female performer where her voice is the voice of revolution and there is no shaming, no division between body and voice, and no traditional oppressive image.

The first phase of my work toward a liberated theatrical female voice was very long and complicated. It started in 2007 with *Resurrection*, a solo performance dedicated to the fire of 5 September 2005. Among the people who were killed there was Saleh Saad, the father of my daughter who was eleven years old at the time of the incident. Saleh was a theater director, theater professor and writer. In 2007, I decided to create a living memorial for all those who died that night, also as an attempt to overcome the trauma of Saleh's death. The theatrical act had become a strong tool for cultural and political activism to make a public statement regarding the negligence of the state and the corruption in the sectors of culture, health and interior affairs. All those sectors played a role in the killing of this group of artists. Yet, performance had also acquired—for me—a dimension

of healing and transformation after a workshop I had conducted in Sudan (South East to the Blue Nile). In this combination of activism/militancy and healing, the performance became a ritual, a re-enactment of the fire and Saleh's slow death. It was quite a challenge to perform the process of burning the body and dying. This was my aim. The tortured body had never appeared on the Egyptian stage before, although torture was a common phenomenon in the daily lives of Egyptians. Bringing this scene of torture and deformation to life turned the spectators into direct witnesses of the crime; it took them to that theater venue during the fire. Yet it was during that process of creation that I got the chance to mold a new image of female physicality on stage, which later led to the emergence of a liberated voice resounding from that liberated body. In that sense, *Resurrection* was an ongoing laboratory that guided me in shaping later theater productions.

I had assigned a new function to my theatrical body: to become Saleh. I worked on erasing any projections of gender and prioritizing the inner struggle and pain. Focusing on the hurt and the burns from the fire on the body shifted the spectators' attention away from the gendered appearance of my physical body, and while the fire scene unfolded and the choreography staged the deformation and mutilation of the limbs, joints and facial skin, the spectators could only "see" a "tortured body."

I employed all my physical and sensational memories to embody him, to bring him into my body, to empty my body of my own history and replace it with his experience of torture until death.

A soundtrack composed by the main musician of my company, Lamusica Independent Theatre Group (LITG), accompanied the performance. The soundtrack mostly consisted of the sound of fire. With that engulfing sound, and with only a single unit of red light, the ritual was complete.

The performance succeeded in creating a re-enactment of the fire and death. The spectators became witnesses of what they had not witnessed before. The stage became a platform for a strong public statement against unnecessary, reckless death and for human dignity and survival. Moreover, the bond created with the spectators during the performances provided a powerful base for collective action outside the theater venue. All the venues that hosted the performance did so with the intention of presenting a political act. This political act had to go through my body and blood because, in my bonding with Saleh, I could find the strength to endure the embodiment of his death and the silence surrounding it.

In 2014, the performance's focus shifted from his death and torture to a new section where I—as a performer—become a character and step out of Saleh's body to bid him farewell and to embrace a new life in which I can once again find happiness and live my femininity. The events that led to this transformation are related to a near-death experience, a natural disaster that could have led to another fire and which my company witnessed on 5 September 2013 (the date of 5 September coincides with the memory of the fire). The new bond between the members of the company to rescue the spectators and to save us made me relive an equivalent of Saleh's death event. It was a nightmare yet a blessing to experience the collective will for survival in the face of death. It was the last sign of

the old trauma leaving me: experiencing a new trauma and surviving it. *Resurrection* thus transformed to integrate life into the ritual of death and survival, and to announce the possibility and the right to live and celebrate one's own femininity.

In the scene of the fire, I can still experience the core experiment of the performance: creating a non-gendered body of torture. I regard this experiment as a challenge to the history of female images in Egyptian theater; I go through a process of erasing my own feminine traits only as a claim to power and to assert a new starting point for defining "feminine." In my assumption, the spectators always see my body in its anatomical form, yet this time they could see beyond that and beyond inherited images and projections. The voyeurism/exhibitionism transforms into a bond where we connect over our shared survival. The division of body/voice is replaced by the holistic presence of the performer and the unity of presence and body as a whole. The engulfing screams and the loud, torn breathing belong to that moment of torture; they constitute my newly born voice as a female, my own voice without any distortion. They also communicate an essential "voice"—the voice of life. In the femininity of this essential voice, there is no room for shaming or degrading; there is only a space for human dignity that redefines what it means to be female onstage. At the end, there is no loss of gender, only a recreation of what it means. In this sense, *Resurrection* is not only a political act for those killed in oppressive systems; it is also a political act to rebel against a history of female mutilation—physical and symbolic.

The performance ends with me letting my hair down, taking off the death costume and dancing using the vocabulary of oriental dance; then water pours over my body, washing off the pain and completing the ritual of a new birth and a resurrection.

Models of theater productions

The two productions discussed in this final section—*An Enemy of the People* and *House of Light*—resulted from my growing interest in Henrik Ibsen's work as the translator, dramaturge, director and producer of the LITG. Starting in 2009 with *Nora's Doors*, a dance theater production inspired by Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, the LITG's Ibsen trilogy marked another step toward the interpretation and adaptation of Ibsen's work in the light of the political transformations in post-revolutionary Egypt.

An Enemy of the People: A Political Musical Drama *(2012)*

An Enemy of the People, for which I was dramaturge and director, was first produced with the support of the Norwegian Embassy in Cairo. With regard to our topic, the most interesting element of this production is how the character of Katherine Stockmann was transformed from an almost silent woman in Ibsen's original text into a revolutionary figure. While Ibsen in his time did champion revolutionary causes, e.g. ballot-box voting and liberal democracy, the anti-corruption movement or the fight to abolish unethical alliances between businessmen, religious

institutions and the media, he remained quite reserved when it came to some of the roles of women in his writing. Katherine Stockmann, the wife of the rebel Dr. Thomas Stockmann, is always afraid and silent; she is protective toward her husband and children. The impression you get is that she would have preferred it if her husband would refrain from revealing the corruption in order not to destabilize their false shared life. On several occasions, Katherine behaves exactly like the traditional Egyptian female character onstage, but in the context of a revolutionary process in Egypt, it was impossible to keep Katherine as Ibsen wrote her. The new dramaturgy begins with her looking exactly as in the original text—silent and afraid. Then, the character transforms. This transformation is due, on the one hand, to her interaction with the surrounding events and dynamics and, on the other, to her growing understanding of the cause that her husband is defending. For her, it becomes a matter of life and death when she sees her beloved husband attacked; she turns into a lioness and suddenly appears as the lead character, while Thomas is weakened and shaken. At the end of the public meeting, the couple is physically attacked and Thomas is proclaimed a public enemy; an intense moment of collective aggression ends with an extraordinary scream.

This final scream here comes from Katherine Stockmann, who rebels against her almost muted voice in the original text when she embodies the struggle of Egyptian women against violence and violation, exactly as she embodies the revolution in general. She becomes another voice of resistance when she—later—delivers a monologue that she will not leave the country, she will not raise her children as refugees in a foreign country, she will remain and fight until the end. By this, she creates a counterpoint to her husband who has decided to leave. Yet he stays and continues to fight by her side. Our Egyptian Katherine gives voice and a face to all the Egyptian women who were silenced by the Muslim Brotherhood as part of the latter's plan to take them back to the age of slavery. In the performances, the spectators very often cry during the scene showing the physical aggression of the public meeting. They cry and scream with the performers because they have become one within the performance space, and face the collective trauma by performing it. It is an experience where the personal and the collective are intertwined with the theatrical and the public. The accompanying rock/metal music plays a vital role in guiding everybody to a moment of transcendence that is very rarely practiced in theater, and that we only know from the tradition of Zar and exorcism.[12] It is—in the performance—a moment of extreme openness, channeling and infiltration, of transgression and momentary healing.

Comparing Katherine's scream to the previous screams by women on the Egyptian stage, it is very easy to see the differences: the previous screams were composed; they were a vocal phenomenon. They were the screams of weak and inferior women. In the Egyptian *Enemy of the People*, the scream was raw, primitive and organic. It was a wild, liberated scream, a historical scream by a woman who had experienced decades of aggression and violation, and a political scream bonding with the women who were gang-raped in Tahrir Square in November 2012. It was a scream of the powerful, not of the weak and the pathetic, which inspired resistance and confrontation, a scream not of a victimized woman but

of a free Katherine who is able to protect her loved ones and fight for herself and her family, a scream of revolution, of life in its entirety.

The topic of "speaking as embodiment" finds the perfect territory in this context. Katherine Stockmann's scream, followed by her monologue proclaiming her decision to remain in her homeland, embodies the new Egyptian woman and female performer. Due to the nature and dynamic of the scream, Katherine's physicality breaks all the codes of tailored and polished female movements and gestures. Her body is in fighting mode; her scream shatters the false frame containing her thus far and she can finally hold Thomas in a long embrace of passion, protection and survival. The embrace, too, challenges Egyptian traditions of stage performance, wherein touching is barely allowed. Not only is this an enduring embrace, but it is also initiated by the woman—which makes a huge difference. The spectators perceive this embrace as a culmination of the struggle, as another embodiment of the scream and as defiance of all the aggression and torture.

Here, the figure of Katherine Stockmann moves very far from the original text—she embodies the new Egyptian heroine in revolutionary or even "post-revolutionary" times. The spectators accompany the performers as they shift from the traditional image—the "obedient wife" and the "muted woman"—toward the image of the female rebel and leader. The culture of protest interweaves with a newly born culture of performance to produce a female stage figure that challenges both the political system and the theatrical tradition.

House of Light *(2014)*

Based on Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, this production completed LITG's Ibsen trilogy. After *Nora's Doors* and *An Enemy of the People*, *House of Light* was conceived to criticize the new alliance between the military, religious institutions and liberal/secular forces. While the lead character, Johannes Rosmer, seeks to find his intellectual independence and personal freedom from all forms of belief and doctrine, he becomes easy prey for the so-called seculars, as well as for the church that he deserted after having been a priest for a long time. He also cannot shake off his father's and family's military background. He is shocked by the kinds of alliances made between those who pretend to be enemies. He meets the love of his life, Rebecca West, nurse to his wife before the latter committed suicide. Ibsen shows the figure of the female lead character as being condemned by the society she lives in on several fronts. Rebecca—clearly the only honest character and the one who genuinely cares about Johannes—is first condemned for being an illegitimate child. Her mother is considered a prostitute because her daughter was born out of wedlock, and so Rebecca is branded for life. Then, Rebecca is condemned once more for having loved Johannes while his wife was still alive and then again for her indirect influence over the mentally unstable and ultimately suicidal wife. Finally, she is criticized for hiding the situation and staying on with Johannes without being married, although it is mentioned several times that their love is platonic.

Why is Rebecca so fiercely condemned by the society she lives in, the only character capable of love and of sacrifice? Why is she shamed repeatedly by them, while she is the only character who confesses the truth at the end? For

me, as the dramaturge and director of *House of Light*, this excessive societal condemnation and shaming of Rebecca West—uncovered so uncompromisingly in Ibsen's play—were highly significant, because they address, even mirror, the Egyptian audience's customary love/hate relationship with female actresses (and characters). Therefore, the above accusations were still there in my dramaturgy, but the new version of the play stressed the possibility of transformation, so that Rebecca became fully credible and trustworthy. It was clear that she had pushed the wife to commit suicide by indirectly informing her that her husband was in love with her, and that she must clear the way for him to start a new life. As divorce was not an option, the wife had to die. Yet Rebecca deserved credit because she had the courage to admit to it all. This courage was very controversial in the eyes of the Egyptian spectators; it put into focus the issue of forgiveness and tolerance, one that was crucial in the aftermath of the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood's regime. Rebecca's past brought to the forefront many historical issues related to the shaming of the female: illegal sex (sex outside of marriage); the children resulting from it and the shame imposed on them throughout their lives; virginity as a proof of chastity and decency, with Rebecca, of course, deemed to have lost her virginity following in the footsteps of her mother and as a genetic flaw. In short, the entire history of female shaming was projected onto Rebecca. We struggled immensely to refashion this character into a heroine in the Egyptian *House of Light*. While all the shame that bourgeois society, as portrayed in Ibsen's play, had projected onto Rebecca was no longer valid or relevant in European societies, it was still *our* struggle in Egypt and on the Egyptian stage in the year 2014.

The production was musical, composed in the manner of a recitative. The speech was regulated by the music; the enunciation, tempo, timbre and pitch were composed for the actors and musicians. The live music—created by Tamer Essam, Ahmed Montasser and Bassem Abuarab along with myself—was the only support for Rebecca's character, who was played by me, which meant taking on the challenge of extending the shame of the character to myself as an actress and director. It brought me back to the old concept of identifying the character with the actress and vice versa. I struggled to affirm the presence of Rebecca and her right to love and live beyond the encompassing shame. Gradually, Johannes moved into the shadow and Rebecca became the new center of the play. Her journey was the truly rebellious one, and the spectators' feelings of shame toward her and toward myself was a huge step forward in making the conflict and the history of shaming as concrete and tangible as possible.

It was very significant to see the collective consciousness rushing to once again adopt a false morality and recycle old prejudices—after a real revolution had taken place. It proved that the process of transforming consciousness and mental structures is very slow, and that political activism is able to remove a regime, but it does not necessarily invalidate the value system attached to it. Rebecca presented a real challenge to the social hypocrisy and dominant value system. In her fervent monologues and confessions, she questioned authority and condemned this inhuman society and desire for power, which feeds on and grows out of the shaming and crushing of those who are different. She broke through the common schizophrenic

behavior of society, questioned our ostensible belief in difference and exposed how fragile all our principles are. As she spoke at length, accompanied only by the music—played by musicians who partly condemned her and me for playing her with such heroic fervor—Rebecca became the voice of a shamed body, a voice that spoke loudly and fiercely for the first time in decades. She broke the strict tradition of articulation and enunciation while perfectly delivering the Arabic text. She breathed through her body, and her breath became her voice as she spoke the words with her whole body and not just her vocal apparatus. She spoke from her throat, from her gut, she spat out consonants and exhaled vowels in an outburst of anger and despair, and her breath was a prominent aspect of her vocal score. Her voice was neither thin nor thick or snaky. It was an unusual bass voice with a high pitch that employed all the reserves of air in the body and created inner vibrations, which, in turn, induced trembling in my physical presence and gestures. This was "her voice," the voice of the naked body without any embellishment or hypocrisy. She filled the space with the voice of truth (Figures 10.1–10.4).

Figure 10.1 House of Light (2014).
Photo by Mohamed Samy Negm.

Figure 10.2 An Enemy of the People (2012).
Photo by Bassam El-Zoghby.

Figure 10.3 Resurrection (2007).
Photo by Bisho Ibra.

Figure 10.4 Nora's Doors (2009).
Photo by Mohamed Samy Negm.

Notes

1 See Nehad Selaiha, *The Egyptian Theater: New Directions* (Cairo: Maṭābi' al-Hayah al-'Āmmah lil-Kiṭāb, 2003).
2 See Nehad Selaiha, *Al-Mār'aa bayn al-fann wal I'shk wal zawāg* (Cairo: Al-Ain, 2008); Aly Abo-Shady, *The Events of the Egyptian Cinema in 100 Years (1985–1994)* (Cairo: The Supreme Council of Culture, 1997).
3 See Nora Amin, "Shaming Age: The Unspoken Truth of Dance in Egypt," *Performance Research* 24, no. 3 (September 2019).
4 See Youssef Wahby, "Niss'āa Yastahekō al-izder'āa," *Ahl El-Fan*, 1948.
5 See Naguib Mahfouz, *The Beginning and the End*, trans. R. Awad, ed. M. R. Smith (New York, NY: Anchor, 1989).
6 Julia Varley, *Notes from an Odin Actress: Stones of Water* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2011).
7 See Nehad Selaiha, *Egyptian Theatre: A Diary, 1990–1992* (Cairo: Maṭābi' al-Hayah al-'Āmmah, 1993); *Al-Mār'aa*.
8 See ibid.
9 See Nora Amin, "Celebrating Shame," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 21 March 2017; "Necessary Questions: On Representation and Role of Women in Egypt's Theatre," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 27 March 2019, last accessed 23 July 2019, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/35/328952/Arts--Culture/Stage--Street/Necessary-questions-On-representation-and-role-of-.aspx.
10 Wikipedia, s.v. "Egyptian Revolution of 2011," last accessed 18 July 2019, 16:30, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_revolution_of_2011.
11 See Manar Shorbagy, "Understanding Kefaya: The New Politics in Egypt," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 39–60.

12 See Nicholas Mangialardi, "The Zar: Staging an Egyptian Exorcism," *Folklife*, 1 February 2017, last accessed 18 July 2019, https://folklife.si.edu/talkstory/the-zar-staging-an-egyptian-exorcism.

Bibliography

Abo-Shady, Aly. *The Events of the Egyptian Cinema in 100 Years (1985–1994)*. Cairo: The Supreme Council of Culture, 1997.

Amin, Nora. "Celebrating Shame." *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 21 March 2017.

———. "Necessary Questions: On Representation and Role of Women in Egypt's Theatre." *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 27 March 2019. Last accessed 23 July 2019. http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/35/328952/Arts--Culture/Stage--Street/Necessary-questions-On-representation-and-role-of-.aspx.

———. "Shaming Age: The Unspoken Truth of Dance in Egypt," *Performance Research* 24, no. 3 (September 2019), 74–80.

———. *The Egyptian Contemporary Theatre: The Art of Claiming Our Right*. Sharjah: Arab Theatre Institute, 2019.

Mahfouz, Naguib. *The Beginning and the End*. Translated by R. Awad, edited by M. R. Smith. New York, NY: Anchor, 1989.

Mangialardi, Nicholas. "The Zar: Staging an Egyptian Exorcism." *Folklife*, 1 February 2017. Last accessed 18 July 2019. https://folklife.si.edu/talkstory/the-zar-staging-an-egyptian-exorcism.

Selaiha, Nehad. *Al-Mạ̄r'aa bayn al-fann wal I'shk wal zaw̱āg* [The Woman between Art, Passion and Marriage]. Cairo: Al-Ain, 2008.

———. *Egyptian Theatre: A Diary, 1990–1992*. Cairo: Maṭ ābi' al-Hayah al-'Ām̄mah, 1993.

———. *The Egyptian Theater: New Directions*. Cairo: Maṭ ābi' al-Hayah al-'Ām̄mah lil-Kiṭ āb, 2003.

Shorbagy, Manar. "Understanding Kefaya: The New Politics in Egypt." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 39–60.

Varley, Julia. *Notes from an Odin Actress: Stones of Water*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.

Wahby, Youssef. "Niss̱'āa Yastahekõ al-izder̤'āa" [Women Who Deserve Contempt]. *Ahl El-Fan*, 1948.

11 Words that dance/ words that fight

Locating speech acts in hip-hop theater

Ramona Mosse

On a darkened stage that offers little-to-no spatial depth, two black actors front the audience for a deadpan satirical dialogue. One exaggeratedly dangles his limbs—his version of keeping his cool—while the other sounds out the rhythmic bass to a rap song: *boom-chicka-boom-chicka-boom*. Their ensuing conversation circles around their life plans, both conforming to racially stereotyped and blatantly racist versions of life as an African-American, inner-city youth. While Desmond is keen to "rob people and shoot them and also sell drugs," Omar initially tries to avoid a life of crime in order to "win this rap competition and get a recording contract." Desmond's response is pragmatic—the one is contingent on the other:

DESMOND: But how are you going to get to the rap competition? You don't have a car or even money to buy a bus fare.
OMAR: That's a good point.
DESMOND: You can get the money by selling these drugs.
OMAR: I don't wanna sell drugs.
DESMOND: Sell these drugs.
OMAR: No.
DESMOND: You better sell these drugs. Don't you wanna be a rap star?
OMAR: Okay. But just this once.
DESMOND: Great.[1]

The visual lack of depth on stage is mirrored in the further development of the storyline. Omar's initial acquiescence leads to a seemingly inevitable outcome: a shoot-out, a drug-bust, imprisonment and eventually a recording contract for the rising rap star. Omar can now usefully draw on his criminalized life experiences for his rap lyrics.

Described as a "fiendishly funny piece of neominstrelsy" by *Time Out New York*,[2] Omar's journey to hip-hop stardom is part of Korean-American playwright Young Jean Lee's multifaceted play *The Shipment* (2008). In it, Lee deals as much with the question of *how* to stage African-American racial identity as with *who* may be entitled to speak for a particular racial group. As race turns into a performance rather than a destiny, Lee ultimately asks about the performativity of race in a parallel gesture to Judith Butler's gender performativity. Race and

gender become a matter of physical conditioning through language and social convention rather than a biological determination. In the context of the play, rap and tokens of hip-hop culture, expressed in Omar's rise from poverty through addiction and crime to bling-bling, remain intentionally two-dimensional—they are signs of an inverted portrayal, in which the performers unmask hidden prejudices by performing them back to their audiences. Through its unmasking of the conventionalities around the discourses about hip-hop, *The Shipment* offers an interesting entry-point into a focused discussion of hip-hop culture and its engagement specifically with theater and theatrical speech acts. The play's question about who speaks for whom and what kind of speech act might be possible is as much at the heart of the play as at the heart of the genre of hip-hop theater that I would like to engage with in this article. The story of Omar and Desmond also points to a commonplace about the kind of speech act that rap employs: it apparently slips into a form of hate speech, riven with sexism, homophobia and incantations of violence. Yet, the following discussion of hip-hop theater shows that the case might be more complicated. Lee's easily recognizable stereotyping already highlights a fundamental tension at the heart of hip-hop culture: it is a culture at odds with the by now globalized capitalization of its artistic expression and its roots in a more locally based politics of giving a voice to the post-civil rights African-American generation. Hip-hop theater, the focus of this article, is a response to just this tension between capitalism and aesthetic innovation at its cultural core. With its performative acts that hover between self-presentation, protest, oral storytelling and adaptation of the theatrical canon, hip-hop theater offers a rich case study for an alternative reading of speech acts in the theater and their potential efficacy.

The politics and performativity of hip-hop theater

Hip-hop theater enters the broader frame of hip-hop culture late, when hip-hop has already firmly established itself as a global phenomenon. It is by no means part of hip-hop's more local origins with its dance parties in the South Bronx of the 1970s and the rise of DJs, MCs and b-boys and b-girls around such seminal figures as DJ Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa. With its four elements of DJ-ing, MC-ing, breakdancing and graffiti, hip-hop culture includes the full scope of visual, aural, poetic and physical elements that speak to the theatrical event but exist outside the theater as an institution. The term "hip-hop theater" enters the vocabulary after the rise of rap music from a counter-cultural into a pop-cultural phenomenon that has become a highly marketable and economically successful product of the music industry. Coined in 2000 by the artist Eisa Davis in the hip-hop magazine *The Source*, the term hip-hop theater aimed at reasserting the radical and alternative nature of hip-hop's cultural and political aesthetics. In a later article, she explains her need for creating it as follows: "I like the name 'hip-hop theatre' because when it's ascriptive, voluntary, and utilized by a self-described hip-hop generation that speaks through theatre, we are *found* in translation. Here it is, finally: a form that describes and comprises our 'multiness.'"[3]

Multiplicity and variability of expression are grounded in the strong sense of being part of a counterculture. Davis's ideas were shared by a broad range of artists at the time. In 2000, Brooklyn-based hip-hop artist Danny Hoch founded the Hip-Hop Theater Festival in New York City.[4] The festival, now renamed as Hi-Arts and housed at El Barrio's Art Space 109, had a mission to "support Hip-Hop as a vibrant urban art and culture movement by nurturing the creation of innovative work within the Hip-Hop aesthetic" in order to "creat[e] a lasting and positive impact on urban communities."[5] The impetus behind the festival, then, was to use the venue and institution of the theater as an alternative space beyond the multimillion-dollar business of the rap music industry, entrenched in replicating the stereotypes already encountered in Lee's satirical take in order to sell. The move into the theater is an attempt to return hip-hop to a liminal space within which its fundamental posture of resistance and dissent can be invigorated. At the same time, it also opens up the institution that is theater to address new audiences. New voices that speak and new audiences that find their space in the auditorium—both of these go hand in hand. As Hip-Hop Theater Festival founder Danny Hoch put it in his "Manifesto for the Hip-Hop Arts Movement":

> Unfortunately, hip-hop, bad or good, is almost always relegated to a marginalized gray area, a penalty box, if you will, where it is denied the status of art; it is seen as radical political thought, a really bad manifestation of pop culture, or, with some luck, novelty entertainment.[6]

Combining hip-hop specifically with theater makes just this claim to its artistic status rather than its marketability—that is particularly true in the American context where theater as an institution has more of a marginal cultural relevance and remains poignantly in the shadow of the film industry. In one of his spoken-word performances on *Def Poetry Jam*—which both ran on Broadway and aired on the television channel HBO—Hoch emphasizes further the ways in which the social and aesthetic aspects of hip-hop culture intertwine. Mirroring the written form of the manifesto, his solo performance comes in the form of a PSA—a Public Service Announcement. In it, Hoch stands poised at a lectern, surrounded by an audience that spurs on his funny, irreverent and polemical poem. More importantly, he defines hip-hop through a radical distinction from rap. Hip-hop turns into a form of political agency in contrast to rap, a capitalist entertainment industry. The key themes that ring through in Hoch's performance are political engagement, a necessary interweaving of cultures and a sense of resistance and rebellion:

> Hip-hop is not rap. Hip-hop is not what you see on TV, buy in the store, or hear on the radio. [. . .] You are not hip-hop if the clothes on your back cost more than the monthly salary of the people that made your clothes, motherfucker. [. . .] Hip-hop is the truth as told by kidnapped Africans with Japanese technology on stolen land [. . .]. Hip-hop is education, hip-hop is law, hip-hop is healthcare, hip-hop is protest.[7]

Protest is the ground on which hip-hop bases itself, and as Hoch describes it, hip-hop is a cultural movement that extends beyond a particular form of musical expression. According to Hoch, hip-hop functions as an event-based and participatory counterculture that is distinct from, if not opposed to, rap—a commercial genre of music that is essentially consumer-based. Rather than protest, rap has turned to empty boasting and exaggerated gangsterism, and, at its worst, misogyny and the glorification of violence. Rap splits from hip-hop culture when it forsakes a political commitment to the disenfranchised and the marginalized. Hip-hop and rap share in global reach, but rap has also embraced global capitalism in what amounts to an act of bad faith, according to Hoch. In contrast, he describes hip-hop as keenly aware of its origins that reach back to the slave ships that came from Africa to the American continent, thus implicitly critical of the workings of global capital with its own contemporary versions of exploitation and enslavement. Hoch's version of hip-hop offers up its speech acts as giving political agency to the disenfranchised.

Hoch's choice of the PSA and the manifesto form, respectively, highlights the combination of theatrical and performative powers at play in the aesthetics of hip-hop generally, also mirrored in the genre of the manifesto at large. In his book on the genre of the manifesto, Martin Puchner has argued eloquently for the intertwining of aesthetics and politics through this medium and foregrounded the linking of performativity and theatricality as fundamental to the genre itself. In his closing words, Puchner underlines the necessity to think the performative and theatrical together and to "inhabit this paradox and demand a manifesto that would be, at one and the same time, a means to an end and an end in itself [. . .] in a kind of balancing act or dance, suspended between past and future."[8] It will be my contention in what follows that one form that such a dance might take is in the break in the middle of a song, the loop that repeats and the spinning body of the b-boy in the cypher. Indeed, it may be that what Puchner points to here—the paradoxical intertwining of performativity and theatricality—lies at the core of much of contemporary performance practice.

In all events, the hip-hop theaters I seek to analyze live from the peculiar tension between the performative and theatrical powers they enlist. The performative as the "means to an end" encapsulates the strong political streak of the kind of committed hip-hop that Hoch envisioned in his "PSA," seeking to give voice to underrepresented minorities. The theatrical, in turn, as an "end in itself" speaks to Hoch's demand to acknowledge the seriousness of hip-hop culture's aesthetic dimension. Both performativity and theatricality here are forms of reflexivity that mirror the complex mechanisms of language and bodies at play. The tension between them is already invoked by the title of this collection, *Theatrical Speech Acts*, which implies that performative and theatrical gestures are not so much at odds with each other as the ground upon which much of contemporary aesthetic innovation plays itself out. This article, then, cannot provide an exhaustive exploration of the global phenomenon that hip-hop culture has become or its varied African, Caribbean and African-American histories. Scholars such as Tricia Rose (*Black Noise*) or Jeff Chang (*Can't Stop Won't Stop*) have done much of

this work and so have the individual artists, educators and activists that continue to shape the hip-hop theater community in particular (such as Rha Goddess, Lemon Andersen, Rennie Harris, Sarah Jones, Roberta Uno or Will Power). Instead, I can offer a sideway glance from the wings, so to speak. By focusing on a specific production in the context of the Hip-Hop Theater Festival in New York, I trace how hip-hop theater aesthetics might contribute to the making of theatrical speech acts.

The role of the theater in speech act theory has been a complicated one from the beginning. John L. Austin, who founded speech act theory in the 1950s, explored the ways in which speech may not just motivate actions but instead amount itself to an action. Austin focused on conventional situations in society (most famously the wedding ceremony). Through his distinction of what he then termed "performative" instances of language use, he partook in paving the way for the far-reaching hold that language philosophy would have as the foundation of philosophical thinking up to the present moment, foreshadowed also in Heidegger and Nietzsche's philosophies. Despite the emphasis on ceremony and conventional situations, Austin was suspicious of the theater as one of the important sites of ceremonial and conventional actions. He (in)famously talked about the "parasitic" nature of theatrical language, which undermines the performative utterance, making it "*in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage."[9] Performativity as effectiveness and doing is opposed to theatricality, which occurs in something of a linguistic vacuum according to Austin. In fact, Austin's terminology clearly marks the apparent deficiency (it being "hollow or void")[10] of the non-standard situation that the theater creates.[11]

Likewise, Judith Butler, who can be credited for reframing speech act theory into the realm of embodiment in order to understand performativity as a social and political practice, has been only very marginally interested in the theatrical situation. Yet, in a keynote at the Theater, Performance, Philosophy Conference 2014, Butler foregrounded the relationship of theater and performance studies as one of mutual "overlaps" rather than divides. She stressed the importance of "kinds of theater that allegorize the very distinction between theater and performance,"[12] which, in turn, might imply a fluid conception of what and where a stage might be. Butler's insistence here on not just seeing the theatrical situation as an exception but instead on highlighting the contiguities between theater and performance is significant. Precisely, such theaters of self-reflexivity are at stake in hip-hop theater, which, in Hoch's Manifesto, becomes both social movement and aesthetic practice. In her book *Excitable Speech*, Butler also focuses on another kind of intermingling between embodiment and language when analyzing how language itself carries a potential for violence and injury.[13] Bodies and words, then, are never opposites in Butler's conception but enframe one another. It is also in *Excitable Speech* that Butler herself offers an alternative reading to the equation of gangsta rap with hate speech. Here, Butler undoes the argument of gangsta rap inciting violence in its audiences by stressing that this line of argumentation distracts from a deeper analysis of race and poverty in the US.[14] Butler here theorizes the nature of hate speech and language that

injures, not as instances of exception but rather as utterances that draw attention to a more systemic shortfall in the wider political system that does not prevent the iteration of injurious speech but rather continues to authorize it.

Similarly, Tricia Rose has analyzed the media coverage of rap and argues that there is a distinct ideological bias in the presentation of "rap fans a(s) the youngest representatives of a black presence whose cultural difference is perceived as an internal threat to America's cultural development."[15] In other words, rap is always presented as the problem itself rather than the expression of a more systemic political and social inequality. The apparent misogyny, homophobia and glorification of violence in gangsta rap have been repeatedly cited by critics of hip-hop culture; Butler's and Rose's reframings reveal the greater complexity of the situation. Likewise, the discussion shows that more often than not, rap lyrics are read as exclusively political statements without considering questions of aesthetic playfulness and irony. In the following, the tension between disparate political and artistic selves comes to the fore.

Beyond the real and into the theatrical

Hip-hop's discourse is grounded in a fascination with its own rough-edged realism. This fascination goes hand in hand with presenting it as a platform that gives voice to those that are without adequate political and social representation. This conceptualization runs counter to the parameters of theater, which has voices switch, alter and multiply. Theater threatens a destabilization of the idea of authenticity and maybe also of hip-hop's performativity and hence political relevance. Yet the particular performativity of hip-hop theater is grounded in the role it affords to music; it is first and foremost a form of music theater. The role of music is particularly relevant, because it offers a bridge between linguistic practices and acts of embodiment at play. The movement from linguistics to embodiment also marks out the development of speech act theory more generally in its initial, purely linguistic iteration by Austin and their reconfiguration in the theories of Butler.[16] Recent scholarship on a variety of music theaters has emphasized the performativity of the corporeal dimensions of song and dance.[17] Often, the corporeality of song has been connected to the voice itself, particularly as it moves beyond being a mere tool for linguistic expression, maybe most strikingly in operatic arias. Voice turns into another site of performance, at which physicality and symbolism cross over, as Doris Kolesch has explored in her work on the performative nature of voice.[18] Strikingly, rap and spoken-word poetry—the songs at the center of hip-hop—operate differently because here voice does not soar beyond language, but instead strong rhythmicalization underlines a distinctly poetic quality. Rap lyrics and spoken-word poetry intermingle in hip-hop theater as rhyming, rhythm and acts of oral storytelling intertwine. Embodiment and language combine in the pounding of the bass that makes one feel the words as much as one might be listening to them. The performativity of the word lies in the rhythm in which it is spoken.

If the urgency to establish and work with the idea of hip-hop theater emerged in the late 1990s, as the examples of Eisa Davis and Danny Hoch show, then it

was a direct response to the immense transition that hip-hop culture had undergone from the late 1970s onward. No longer a fringe block party in the South Bronx, live event was replaced by recorded products of rap music. Interestingly, the move into economic success and the mainstream also provoked a call for authenticity, or "keeping it real" from the artists themselves. Focused on the performance of self, rap music seemed to imply a necessary performativity of its words and stories that catapulted rap outside of the "parasitic" vacuum of the theatrical situation that Austin had remarked upon. Instead, its words supposedly carried the currency of the real. Obviously, such a claim is both ideological and impossible. It expresses, more than anything else, rap's struggle with its own rise and success within an increasingly globalized commodity culture. If the stories rap told were at their roots an attempt to give voice to a disenfranchised minority that lacked a political forum, then the insistence on authenticity was part of a struggle for maintaining relevance once the frame of margin and center had shifted.

In this context, the work of one of the most successful rap stars of the last two decades, Eminem (born Marshall Bruce Mathers III), in undermining such discourses of authenticity is particularly interesting. In "Reconsidering Rap's 'I'" Katja Lee points out the fluidity with which Eminem moves between different personas (Slim Shady, Marshall Mathers) that render the concept of a stable and authentic self null and void:

> In his self-conscious play with identity and his forthright discussion of the show, the business, and the performance of rap, Eminem's music works to lay bare the constructed nature of both identity and authenticity. Indeed, there is nothing authentic about a rapper's identity, for it is designed to be sold.[19]

According to Lee, Eminem unmasks the autobiographical time and again as an act rather than a return to the roots and theatricalizes his claims to a particular identity. In his song "The Real Slim Shady," which came out as a single in 2000 (the same year that the Hip-Hop Theater Festival was born in New York), Eminem stages this fluidity of selves as a breakdown between the realities of performer and audience by using the lyrics to ask the audience to rise to the occasion and make it their turn to become Slim Shady.[20] Slim Shady's identity ultimately circulates and is always in a process of shifting—its instability turns "the real" into a farce. Eminem's playfulness here is indicative of a turn in hip-hop culture that emphasizes the role of myth-making in the telling and writing of alternative histories marginal to the institutionalized voices.[21]

Eminem's shifts between alter egos point to a theatricalization of US rap culture that counters the authenticity discourse and runs parallel to the impetus for building a hip-hop theater arts scene in the early 2000s. This parallelism between the commercial and the alternative scenes of hip-hop culture also implies a more cautious reading of the "hip-hop versus rap" polemic, implicit in much of the discourse of hip-hop theater activists. Understanding rap as fundamentally theatrical puts a twist on any simplistic version of the discourse on authenticity, which itself might be seen as another iteration of the philosophical

debates on naïve realism. In her work on gangsta rap, Annette J. Saddik similarly calls for reconceptualizing hip-hop as a postmodern continuation of the African-American theatrical tradition with gangsta rap as "arguably the most 'theatrical' style of rap in terms of black masculine performativity."[22] Both Saddik's and Lee's work on commercial rap stars such as Ice Cube, Tupac and Eminem conceives of the entire spectrum of hip-hop culture as grounded in the sphere of theater. Drawing the link between these artists from the commercial scene and the efforts of the theatrical fringe also bears relevance, because it shows that the harsh distinction between rap as commercial and hip-hop as marginalized and politically committed that Davis or Hoch had championed does not ultimately hold up; instead, one finds perpetual moments of cross-fertilization between the two. Marc Bamuthi Joseph's theater offers one such example.

Words as music: Marc Bamuthi Joseph's *the break/s*

Oakland-based hip-hop artist Marc Bamuthi Joseph trained as a dancer and also started as a performer of spoken-word poetry (including a 1999 National Poetry Slam Championship) before beginning to write, develop and direct monologue-based evening-length hip-hop theater pieces. He also teaches hip-hop and spoken-word poetry, and is Chief of Program and Pedagogy at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. His performance work such as *Word Becomes Flesh* (2003), *Scourge* (2007) and *the break/s* (2008) has been associated with or co-presented by the Hip-Hop Theater Festival and toured nationally and internationally. *The break/s* stands in the center of this analysis, because it is a performance that sets out to be a meta-commentary on the status of hip-hop culture as a whole. It is a performance piece that perpetually moves between referencing the commercial and the alternative aspects that make up the idea of hip-hop. In the piece, Joseph goes on a quest to define hip-hop culture with all its tensions and contradictions and explore its relevance and place in the twenty-first century.

The title *the break/s* denotes the most fundamental musical gesture out of which hip-hop as an aesthetic form arises: it is the break in a song to insert other musical elements or one's own voice. The moment the beat breaks, it is transformed, inversed and made disparate, while its historical location and significance becomes challenged and re-inscribed into an alternative context. Breaking off and breaking in, breaking apart—all those are permutations of the fundamental aesthetic strategy that Joseph uses to create a collage of movement, storytelling and music. In the press materials for the show, the 75-minute production is described as "a multimedia excursion across planet hip-hop" in which "Joseph performs in call-and-response with turntablist DJ Excess, and beat boxer and percussionist Tommy Shepherd (aka Soulati)."[23] Inspired by Jeff Chang's influential history of hip-hop culture *Can't Stop Won't Stop* (2005), Joseph takes on the diverse history and aesthetic expression of hip-hop culture and inserts himself and his audience into the break. The DJs scratching on the pre-existing track becomes a symbol for the intervention into and interruption of pre-existing discourses.

Joseph's stage is a cypher, an outsized turntable, on which the performance itself will very literally cycle through, joining auditorium and performance space into a continuous unit. The sound and visuals of a scratching record are the opening with which the performance begins and Joseph himself is the record needle with his body writhing along the floor: his body turns into a sound-making machine. Throughout the performance, the acts of sampling and scratching inform his physical movement score, as developed by choreographer Stacey Printz: his body is invisibly pulled forward and backward much like the LP that is being scratched by a DJ; he twists and turns, governed by the beat. Screens, upon which initially a turntable is projected, delimit the back of the stage, while his percussionist Soulati is positioned stage-right and DJ Excess stage-left. Historically, the use of both also marks the passageway from drum to technology and reemphasizes that Joseph's journey is not only one through space, traversing Africa, Europe and Asia, but also one through time and different musical styles. The subtitle of the piece, "the break/s: a mixtape for stage," calls up another piece of music technology, the boom box and tape-player that are also iconic elements in the development of hip-hop culture, since they were crude tools that made everyone into a music maker, mixing their personal tapes.

The screens further function as a mirroring device for the audience. Here, videotaped interview material is screened to allow other members of the hip-hop community to enter the conversation and to multiply viewpoints. At the same time, it is another instance of sampling and playback, since in the video the responses pick up on questions posed by the percussionist Soulati to the audience in a kind of communal warm-up to the performance. The questions range from "what is the role of women in hip-hop?" to "if Jazz was the broom that Africans jumped over to become Americans, then hip-hop is . . .?"[24] By returning to these questions throughout the performance, the audience recalls their own initial participation in the performance and becomes part of the call-and-response cycle that bounces back between Joseph, DJ Excess, Soulati and the various video sequences. At the same time, these questions mark out *the break/s* as a meta-performance that continually investigates the stakes of its own aesthetic positioning.

"This story begins in the middle, halfway across the planet. I think that I'm awake."[25] This opening turns into a set phrasing that allows Joseph to string together his various acts of storytelling that take him across the globe from Europe to Japan, then to Africa and the Caribbean and back to the US. By beginning in *medias res*, Joseph evokes both the musical break and the structure of the epic. It marks his piece as a collective effort that reiterates the necessity of audience involvement to share and recognize themselves in the stories and rhythms presented. Time and place are out of sync, so that the narrative "I" seems suspended in mid-air between dreaming and waking. Physically, Joseph oscillates between a relaxed body posture that encounters the audience as if in personal conversation, only to jump into expressive moments of miming to highlight his story. These stories then are interrupted by a number of dance pieces that foreground the aesthetic of sampling and scratching itself. Joseph draws on a variety

of standard b-boying dance moves (from simple TopRock footwork to more advanced freeze positions of the whole body in mid-air)[26] but amends and reinfuses them with his own personal style. As much as Joseph's consciousness seems split in his travels around the globe ("I think that I'm awake")[27], so is his physical expression and movement one of alternating flow and rupture—marking a break in the performer's identity. Joseph highlights these shifts through the different physical styles that he inhabits with his body alone. Other performers, such as Reggie Watts, another hip-hop theater artist who is part of the same festival circuit, employ advanced sound technology to mark such subversions of a stable identity.[28] By recording, repeating and multiplying his own voice on the soundboard, Watts creates entire music pieces. From one voice to many voices, from one self to many selves—on Watts's stage, technology itself is a key protagonist. This strategy ultimately reflects the extent to which technology is in fact responsible for the making of hip-hop. Technology is what enables the sampling and looping of different pre-existing beats and songs that can then be recalled, played back and amended by the DJ. Joseph, in contrast, internalizes the mechanics of music technology into his physical score and mimes the machines that create the hip-hop beats.

One of the first story sequences of *the break/s* has Joseph taking the audience to a performance art festival in Paris, where he encounters but fails to respond to a South African performer's festival contribution. Her highly abstract and cryptic performance in a "fray pink tutu," kissing the audience through saranwrap, clashes with Joseph's images of South Africa's apartheid history. First and foremost, this is funny and has the audience breaking out in laughter, as they identify with Joseph's staged bewilderment. The comedy is fueled by a curious complexity about the concept of marginality itself:

> The triangle of perspectives is crazy: I am looking at this African woman for some sense of root; she is looking at European performance [. . .], and Europeans have always been looking at me, ever since my name was Langston, Satchmo, Josephine. Since the days when they bred me. I am the descendant of an experiment in psyche and body.[29]

This performance about performance turns into a clever distancing move, in which Joseph positions himself on the margins of the performance industry and simultaneously as one of its most desirable subjects when evoking the history of black performers that excelled in majority cultures, such as Josephine Baker or Louis Armstrong. As Joseph exclaims: "I have managed to convince the whole performing arts machine that I am both high art and hip-hop."[30] With his satirical take, Joseph distances hip-hop theater from performance art as the form that most directly engages with performativity. Strikingly, Joseph's story is about an ultimate failure in the performative act. The fray pink tutu performance can neither follow through on a promise to remake or subvert the identity of the South African performer or the audiences present. It merely hovers limply in a sphere of abstraction. It is a failure that in variation will be repeated throughout the performance: in his acts of storytelling, performing race undercuts the possibility

of racial belonging. Instead, we are offered a "triangle of perspectives" that perpetually repositions Joseph as he travels around the world and through the stories he tells. The particular triangle of Europe-Africa-America evokes Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic*, in which he argues for a hybrid sense of black identity, founded in the slave trade network between these three continents. The disparateness of this history replaces any stable sense of origin to African-American identity according to Gilroy. In this context, he points to hip-hop's aesthetic make-up specifically—the appropriation and reframing of the musical tradition—as expressive of such a hybrid history.[31] The sense of an "experiment in psyche and body" also recalls W. E. B. Dubois's double consciousness as the fundamental experience of Black American identity: "looking at one's self through the eyes of others"[32] and thereby caught in a moment of self-alienation that denies the individual a state of full self-consciousness. Joseph offers up his own version of Dubois. His stories replace a stable sense of racial belonging by a perpetual sense of racial repositioning, dependent on the given context. Double consciousness turns into a term that applies to identity politics per se, be they black or white.

On stage, however, the performance sequence does not simply end with an act of storytelling. Joseph's Parisian encounter also echoes in the dance piece that follows, which conjures up one of the pivotal moments in the history of hip-hop culture: Run DMC's 1986 cover version of the Aerosmith rock hit "Walk This Way" (1975). The Run DMC music video that flickers briefly across Joseph's screens stages the coming together of rock music and hip-hop and the acknowledgment of the musical industry of hip-hop as a viable musical form. For in the music video, Aerosmith and Run DMC perform initially in competition with each other in two different music studios until the wall between them is very literally broken down and they perform together.[33] Much like Joseph, who is "high art and hip-hop," Run DMC stands here for the path that hip-hop took from the fringes into the center of American musical culture. Joseph also references the movement sequences and footwork of Run DMC and Aerosmith as he breakdances across the stage. His own physical ruptures mark the non-sequential logic of looping and repetition rather than linearity, much like he rewinds and fast-forwards in his performance through different parts of music and personal history. The bodywork that Joseph engages in does not only mime action; it also evokes a whole progression of music technology, which becomes a metaphor and inspiration for the choreographed body rather than taking a more prominent and direct function in the performance itself.

In one of his essays on hip-hop aesthetics, Joseph states: "if you are a child of hip-hop, the simple truth is that in the beginning was the word, and the word was spoken in body language."[34] Language and the body are not positioned as antagonistic to one another within the sphere of the performance, as is sometimes the case in the tradition of performance art with its emphasis on experiencing the body beyond language and its awareness of the conditioning mechanisms that language entails. Instead, there exists a peculiar fusion of bodies and words in the hip-hop theater aesthetic. Joseph explained his work process in an interview

that took place on the sidelines of the 2009 Under the Radar Festival, where he was performing *the break/s*:

> I think it almost always begins with written text for me . . . I journal in verse, short bursts of verse. So, that is the foundation. I am verse-based, not text-based, if that makes sense. Verse for me is an embodied art . . . I would add another dimension to that, which is to say that beyond the verse and the sonic expression to convey meaning, the body is another mechanism by which the full meaning is conveyed. So, when I write, I think about the musicality of the body in space and how gesture informs meaning.[35]

Joseph creates a performance that is no longer governed by the parameters of drama and its textuality but nevertheless continues to emphasize the creative potential and foundational importance of language to his work on the stage. "Body language" and "embodied art" take on a different significance here, because they are no longer about liberating the body and its expression from the *doxa* of language—rather, linguistics and physicality are fused in a shared relationship, in which body and language are in need of one another. The body partakes in expressing meaning; such a fusion becomes possible through rhythm. Verse, which Joseph champions in his process, allows language to become embodied in the foregrounding of its inherent rhythmicality. Rhythm as the most basic element of music is the core tool through which *the break/s*—and hip-hop performance more generally—operates. The break that is the starting point for hip-hop performance generally can only be felt, experienced and iterated once we as audience or performers have grasped the rhythm that is being broken into at that particular moment. By making the poetic "I" the operative element of his performances, Joseph's hip-hop theater does not have music supersede the sphere of language but rather emphasizes its creative potential. Here, the hip-hop audience member stands in contrast to the opera-goer, who awaits those moments of the evening most fervently in which voice and music exceed the linguistic sphere, as Carlo Zuccarini describes in his analysis of the operatic listening experience.[36] In hip-hop, language does not recede into the background; instead, music and language support each other as equal elements in the playing field. That is to say, music and language conjoin in hip-hop performance in order to enhance the possibility of not just an empathic communion with the audience, as Zuccarini describes, but also an active communication with the auditorium. Stage and auditorium form a circle much like Joseph's use of video interviews in order to symbolically place audience members on the stage. Jill Dolan has identified hip-hop performance examples—most prominently the *Def Poetry Jam* performances—as "utopian performatives."[37] They are defined by their ability to project alternatives to our social, political and aesthetic lives onto the audience, thus creating a sense of shared community across differences. As Dolan formulates it, *Def Poetry Jam* is an act of "midwifery, eagerly illuminating how radical democracy might feel."[38] Such a utopian dimension echoes in Joseph's framing of his artistic

work when he speaks of "education as a viable art form, I just happen to rhyme while I teach."[39] Dolan and Joseph, both in their ways, return us to the field of rhetoric and Cicero's classical goals for the orator of "docere, delectare, movere"; they return us to the performativity of speech.

Hip-hop's theatrical speech acts

The proximity between politics and aesthetics apparent in Joseph's *the break/s* makes hip-hop theater so particularly pertinent a case for the question of the nature of theatrical speech acts. So, what are the speech acts that hip-hop theater is capable of? We encountered the equation of rap (as a part of hip-hop culture) with injurious speech. Countering this argumentation, hip-hop has also been described as offering a political identity to those without adequate political representation. Finally, I have contended that in addition, hip-hop theater might offer yet another variety of performativity related to its self-reflective aesthetic structures. While Austin's total bracketing of theater as an apparently powerless sphere has not proven to last, the concept of performativity *does* alter, depending on its context, inside and outside the theatrical sphere. In the political context, exemplified by Butler's argument in *Excitable Speech*, speech acts point beyond the powers of the individual speaker to the systemic nature of performativity. In order to have any effectiveness, speech acts by default evoke the history of their usage. In other words, performativity is about the conditioning that the individual undergoes in their use of language. Vice versa, performativity in the theater as employed by Jill Dolan or Erika Fischer-Lichte[40] has more enabling connotations and most prominently highlights the affective powers the performance has on its audience, potentially even beyond the context of the performance itself. In this context, Fischer-Lichte identifies the performer-audience interaction as ultimately uncontrollable, so that any community created does not become a collective with a shared meaning but instead remains varied and both intellectually and emotionally ungovernable. Ultimately, Fischer-Lichte's definition of performativity allows for an affective connection between audience and performers, based on the experience of theater as a liminal space rather than on a particular meaning conveyed. In both cases, the performative situation implies the impossibility of a fixed and stable meaning; in the case of Fischer-Lichte's theatrical performatives, this is achieved by moving the focus of performance beyond the sphere of language and onto the body.

Hip-hop theater offers an alternative by refocusing the attention back to the word. Joseph's embodied verse and Hoch's impassioned PSA: both point to the centrality of the word as the dominant vehicle of performance. Words do not give way to bodies so much; rather, they themselves become embodied, and they are also the motor that brings movement to the bodies on stage. Hoch speaks himself into feverish urgency; Joseph's poetry has the power to catapult his dancing body across the stage. Words touch, challenge and intoxicate both performers and audiences alike on the hip-hop stage. *Boom-chicka-boom-chicka-boom*—we started out with the two cardboard characters Omar and Desmond that Lee

had stripped of any three-dimensionality for the sake of satire. In contrast, the aesthetic strategies of hip-hop culture from Eminem to Joseph posited a theatricalized multiplication of voices and selves that seemed postmodern in its destabilization of selfhood. Yet, while the speaker moves through a theatricalized series of voices, perspectives and models—i.e. the performativity of any given identity—the speech itself in hip-hop theater does not shy away from embracing the possibility of meaning, communication and commitment. There lies a peculiar tension between the acknowledgment of the complexity and fluidity of our contemporary situation combined with such a commitment to the power of words. Fueled by the rhythm in which they are spoken, words themselves—their sound, their poetry, their feel—become the protagonists of Joseph's version of hip-hop theater.[41] His intense physical work and the shifting musical scores of his "mixtape for stage" serve to place his words center stage and function to enhance both their materiality and meaning. Joseph ends his performance with an invocation: "I'm an American at the edge. Don't push me 'cause I'm close . . . I'm trying . . .."[42] The edge he speaks about here points to the liminality that every performance entails, as Victor Turner has taught us in *From Ritual to Theatre*. But Joseph's closing words also point to the fine line he treads between the performativity of language that makes fluid the concept of self-identity and the theatricality of the words that move him. The power of poetry involved in such an aesthetic gesture requires a much clearer positioning. Passion requires an origin and a destination. Joseph's example of hip-hop theater inserts a break into our conceptualization of speech acts by offering a performance in which performativity and theatricality can co-exist in the same space, thus achieving a postmodern performativity of identity *and* a theatrical play with words that aims at the commitment to and the possibility of forging unified meaning. Or, as Omar would say: *chicka-chicka-boom-boom-boom*.

Notes

1 Young J. Lee, *The Shipment*, videotaped performance, 90 min, 18 November 2009, last accessed 30 January 2017, www.ontheboards.tv/performance/theater/the-shipment#.VjODRemVtUQ.
2 David Cote, "The Shipment," *Time Out New York*, 22 January 2009, last accessed 30 January 2017, www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/the-shipment.
3 Eisa Davis, "Found in Translation: The Emergence of Hip-Hop Theatre," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, ed. J. Chang (New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006), 73.
4 Other hip-hop theater festivals beyond the US context include "Breakin' Convention" at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, UK (since 2004) and "Hip Hop goes Theatre" at the Republic Salzburg in Salzburg, Austria (since 2008). In addition, more commercially based musicals such as *In the Heights* or *Into the Hoods* have been developed that either employ elements of or fully embrace hip-hop culture.
5 "Mission Statement," *Hip-Hop Theatre, Dance, Music, and Art-Website*, last accessed 31 August 2015, www.hi-artsnyc.org/about/; "HI-ARTS," *Tumblr*, last accessed 8 February 2017, http://hiphoptheaterfest.tumblr.com.
6 Danny Hoch, "Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic: A Manifesto for the Hip-Hop Arts Movement," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, 349–50.

7 "Danny Hoch – PSA on Def Jam Poetry," YouTube video, 3:44, posted by "SpokenPoetryTV," 19 May 2013, last accessed 31 January 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUnCkrWOqe8.
8 Martin Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 262.
9 John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., ed. J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 22.
10 Jacques Derrida has provided one of the most famous and in-depth readings of this passage in Austin's lectures on speech act theory. In "Signature Event Context," Derrida undercuts Austin's distinction between full and parasitic performative utterances by pointing out that the citationality of the utterance is crucial to its performative force: "a successful performative is necessarily an 'impure' performative." (17) Citationality is therefore inherent to all languages, whether on- or off-stage. While Derrida denies an absolute difference between ordinary situations and situations in the theater, he does also admit that theater, poetry and literature may claim a different degree of citationality (see 18). Overall, the theatrical situation is not Derrida's main focus here and still leaves room for further exploration. See Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Limited Inc.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1977), 1–24.
11 Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 104.
12 Judith Butler, "When Gesture Becomes Event," keynote speech, Theater Performance Philosophy Conference, Sorbonne University, Paris, 27 June 2014.
13 See Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1997).
14 Ibid., 39.
15 Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 130.
16 See also Uwe Wirth, ed., *Performanz: Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2002), 10.
17 See Dominic Symonds and Millie Taylor ed., *Gestures of Music Theater: The Performativity of Song and Dance* (Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.
18 See Doris Kolesch and Sybille Krämer, "Stimmen im Konzert der Disziplinen: Zur Einführung in diesen Band," in *Stimme: Annäherung an ein Phänomen*, ed. D. Kolesch and S. Krämer (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2006), 12.
19 Katja Lee, "Reconsidering Rap's 'I': Eminem's Autobiographical Postures and the Construction of Identity Authenticity," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 38, no. 3 (2008): 353.
20 Katja Lee, "Reconsidering Rap's 'I'," 364–5. For Eminem's song, see also: "Eminem – The Real Slim Shady (Edited)," YouTube video, 4:27, posted by "EminemVEVO," 15 September 2010, last accessed 6 February 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJO5HU_7_1w.
21 See The Black Dot, *Hip Hop Decoded: From Its Ancient Origin to Its Modern Day Matrix* (New York, NY: MOME, 2005).
22 Annette J. Saddik, "Rap's Unruly Body: The Postmodern Performance of Black Male Identity on the American Stage," *TDR: The Drama Review* 47, no. 4 (T180) (Winter 2003): 112.
23 "Marc Bamuthi Joseph and /peh-LO-tah/," *Mapp International Productions*, last accessed 3 February 2017, www.mappinternational.org/projects/view/62.
24 Marc B. Joseph, *The Break/s: A Mixtape for Stage*, Under the Radar Festival, The Public Theater, New York City, 11 January 2009.
25 Ibid.
26 Thanks to the general appeal of breakdancing in youth culture, YouTube offers a large variety of instructional videos that set out to teach a wide range of breakdancing moves and are in themselves an interesting object of study.

27 Joseph, *The Break/s*.
28 Reggie Watts's performance piece *Transition*, which premiered in Portland in 2008 and has toured widely since, is an example of such hip-hop sound art. The videotaped version of the performance is available here: "Transition @ The under the radar festival '09," Vimeo video, 58:01, posted by "Luke Norby," 17 August 2009, last accessed 6 February 2017, https://vimeo.com/6149529.
29 Joseph, *The Break/s*.
30 Ibid.
31 See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), 107.
32 W. E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1903), 2.
33 "RUN-DMC – Walk This Way," YouTube video, 4:03, posted by "RUNDMCVEVO," 25 October 2009, last accessed 6 February 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B_UYYPb-Gk.
34 Marc B. Joseph, "(Yet Another) Letter to a Young Poet," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, 12.
35 Marc B. Joseph, in discussion with the author, Under the Radar Festival, New York City, 11 January 2009.
36 Carlo Zuccarini, "The (Un)Pleasure of Song: On the Enjoyment of Listening to Opera," in Symonds and Taylor, *Gestures of Music Theater*, 26.
37 Jill Dolan, *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 5.
38 Ibid., 103.
39 "ACT Theatre: 'The Break/s' & Marc Bamuthi Joseph," YouTube video, 2:57, posted by "ACT Theatre," 17 April 2009, last accessed 6 February 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F3XIgp54Vc.
40 See Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. S. I. Jain (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2008).
41 It is maybe not surprising that a sizable number of hip-hop theater artists engage with and draw on other verse drama and the poetic tradition more generally as a fundamental source of inspiration but also as available for appropriation. Examples range from Will Power's *The Seven* (an adaptation of *Seven Against Thebes*) and Baba Brinkman's *The Canterbury Tales Remixed* to entire theater company efforts, such as The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company, based in the UK, www.hiphopshakespeare.com/site/about/.
42 Joseph, *The Break/s*.

Bibliography

"ACT Theatre: 'The Break/s' & Marc Bamuthi Joseph." YouTube video. 2:57. Posted by "ACT Theatre." 17 April 2009. Last accessed 6 February 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F3XIgp54Vc.

Austin, John L. *How to Do Things with Words*. 2nd ed. Edited by J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà. 1962; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975. Page references are to the 1975 edition.

Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1997.

———. "When Gesture Becomes Event." Keynote Speech, Theater Performance Philosophy Conference, Sorbonne University, Paris, 27 June 2014.

Chang, Jeff. ed. *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*. New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006.

Cote, David. "The Shipment." *Time Out New York*. 22 January 2009. Last accessed 30 January 2017. www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/the-shipment.

"Danny Hoch – PSA on Def Jam Poetry." YouTube video. 3:44. Posted by "SpokenPoetryTV." 19 May 2013. Last accessed 31 January 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUnCkrWOqe8.

Davis, Eisa. "Found in Translation: The Emergence of Hip-Hop Theatre." In *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, edited by J. Chang, 70–77. New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006.

Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." In *Limited Inc*., 1–24. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1977.

Dolan, Jill. *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Dubois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1903.

"Eminem – The Real Slim Shady (Edited)," YouTube video, 4:27, posted by "EminemVEVO," 15 September 2010, last accessed 6 February 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJO5HU_7_1w.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Translated by S. I. Jain. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2008.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso, 1993.

"HI-ARTS." Tumblr. Last accessed 8 February 2017. http://hiphoptheaterfest.tumblr.com.

Hoch, Danny. "Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic: A Manifesto for the Hip-Hop Arts Movement." In *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, edited by J. Chang, 349–64. New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006.

Joseph, Marc B. "(Yet Another) Letter to a Young Poet." In *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetic of Hip-Hop*, edited by J. Chang, 11–17. New York, NY: BasicCivitas, 2006.

Kolesch, Doris, and Sybille Krämer. "Stimmen im Konzert der Disziplinen: Zur Einführung in diesen Band" [Voices in the Concert of Disciplines: An Introduction]. In *Stimme: Annäherung an ein Phänomen* [Voice: Approaching a Phenomenon], edited by D. Kolesch and S. Krämer, 7–15. Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2006.

Lee, Katja. "Reconsidering Rap's 'I': Eminem's Autobiographical Postures and the Construction of Identity Authenticity." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 38, no. 3 (2008): 351–73.

Lee, Young J. *The Shipment*. Videotaped performance. 90 min. 18 November 2009. Last accessed 30 January 2017. www.ontheboards.tv/performance/theater/the-shipment#.VjODRemVtUQ.

"Marc Bamuthi Joseph and /peh-LO-tah/." *Mapp International Productions*. Last accessed 3 February 2017. www.mappinternational.org/projects/view/62.

"Mission Statement." *Hip-Hop Theatre, Dance, Music, and Art-Website*. Last accessed 31 August 2015. www.hi-artsnyc.org/about/.

Puchner, Martin. *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes*. Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Hanover, NH and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994.

"RUN-DMC – Walk This Way." YouTube video. 4:03. Posted by "RUNDMCVEVO" 25 October 2009. Last accessed 6 February 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B_UYYPb-Gk.

Saddik, Annette J. "Rap's Unruly Body: The Postmodern Performance of Black Male Identity on the American Stage." *TDR: The Drama Review* 47, no. 4 (T180) (Winter 2003): 110–27.

Symonds, Dominic, and Millie Taylor, ed. *Gestures of Music Theater: The Performativity of Song and Dance*. Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

The Black Dot. *Hip Hop Decoded: From Its Ancient Origin to Its Modern Day Matrix*. New York, NY: MOME, 2005.

"Transition @ The under the radar festival '09." Vimeo video. 58:01. Posted by "Luke Norby." 17 August 2009. Last accessed 6 February 2017. https://vimeo.com/6149529.

Wirth, Uwe, ed. *Performanz: Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften* [Performativity: Between Language Philosophy and Cultural Studies]. Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2002.

Zuccarini, Carlo. "The (Un)Pleasure of Song: On the Enjoyment of Listening to Opera." In *Gestures of Music Theater: The Performativity of Song and Dance*, edited by D. Symonds and M. Taylor, 22–36. Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Epilogue

Restoration as re-creation

The performative role of the word in the context of Thai culture

Chetana Nagavajara

The preeminence and ubiquity of orality

I seek leave to begin on a personal note. I am even tempted to go along with Johann Gottfried Herder's theory on the origin of language that poetry is older than prose. Apart from simple everyday usage, I awoke, very early indeed in life, to the poetic mode of communication by hearing my grandmother sing out aloud to herself folk and classical songs to while away her time since she had been forced to retire from her business as a result of a devastating fire that consumed the commercial center of Bangkok where she owned an imported goods store. (Some relatives even opined that her literary and musical effusions were attributable to mental instability caused by that irreparable material loss, for she had not bothered to take out an insurance.) These conjectures did not stand in the way of my becoming her sole audience as we were the only two members of the family who had plenty of time, I, being of preschool age, and she, being unemployed.

Thus, with an audience of one, my grandmother switched over from singer of songs to singer of tales. Her repertoire was immense: folktales, classical epics, romances and verse dramas were all at her command. She had an extraordinary memory, which, after all, was characteristic of her generation. Moreover, she had an advantage over many of her contemporaries who could neither read nor write. Being literate, she could augment her repertoire through reading, now that both classical and popular literature could be bought in book form, thanks to the introduction of the printing press by American missionaries several decades earlier. My grandmother could recite or sing in verse for hours on end, and sitting on her lap, I could imbibe the literary legacy of my country intuitively and imperceptibly through oral culture. I might add that my grandmother also went "on tour" occasionally. When she visited relatives in the provinces, the local people would come to her with requests to recite stories for them. (The formal training in literary studies at the university level that force upon young students big tomes of literary works to be read in a very limited space of time was not really to my taste, and whenever a choice was available, I usually opted for a poetry course in which "less is more.") It goes without saying that grandmother and grandson took a shared pleasure in oral communication, which was, in essence, a "performance." Though it was mostly text-based, whereby the text was reenacted,

the deficiencies that might have arisen out of these reenactments in the form of memory lapses had their positive side, too. The world of orality thrives on "improvisation," and my grandmother could adroitly fill those gaps with its help: she had not gone over completely from oral to written culture, as our subsequent generations have done.

This kind of informal education—and it is an education that has, alas, disappeared from our contemporary society—is an irreplaceable "education of the imagination." Naturally, the child has to stretch his imagination as far as he can in order to keep up with some of the experiences recounted by the narrator, which are as yet unfamiliar to him in real life. This is definitely a foundation for an inquisitive mind, and the whole process takes place in the domain of language. From a tender age, a child learns to appreciate the power of language that can carry a variety of human experiences and emotions. Language can create imaginative worlds that know no bounds. Growing up in such an environment, he will soon become sensitive to the potential of linguistic usage both in communicative and aesthetic terms, and if his subsequent education is solid enough in the way of character formation, he will know how to use his linguistic abilities constructively. I cannot help thinking that Gustave Flaubert treats the world of the imagination unfairly in his epoch-making *Madame Bovary*: maybe everything goes astray because Emma has not been lucky enough to be brought up by a grandmother! In the beginning was the word, and the word must at all times be manipulated wisely.

Allow me to go back to the world of orality, and again I shall have to rely on my personal experience. My father took over from my grandmother in introducing me to folk theater and other kinds of folk entertainments that constituted the main ingredients of a temple fair. A distinguished American musician, who has settled in Thailand and completely mastered Thai classical music, and the Thai language as well, maintains that a temple fair in Thailand is unique because folk entertainments of multifarious kinds are performed concurrently in the open air on the same temple grounds, and when stages are pitched next to each other, the logical conclusion would be that it is extremely difficult to concentrate on any one particular performance. The Thai do not seem to be overly worried about such competing forces; you stick to one performance at a time, say, a verse repartee called *Lamtad*, while next door a folk theater called *Likay* is taking place. If you like, you can break off your attendance of one performance and switch to the adjacent one, or even further afar, for example, an open-air screening of a film! Orality could mean people doing and saying different things at the same time within the framework of staged performances that are not viewed as mutual disturbances. I know a renowned and award-winning novelist and poet who can sit down anywhere and start writing, only to break off for lunch or for a meeting with friends, then find a refuge somewhere and start writing again without losing the thread of the storyline. I grew up in such an environment and had to acquaint myself with the unctuous stillness of Western libraries and archives, which I do respect.

Thai folk entertainments are the bedrock of the art of improvisation. In the verse repartee mentioned above, a male singer and a female counterpart

(sometimes a married couple in real life) position themselves as opponents and do their best to outdo each other in terms of wit and argumentation, carried through with a verbal virtuosity that is all the more astounding as it is entirely improvised. A folk singer does the same on any given subject: I experienced a lady singer from the province of Suphan Buri, who, on the day of her being awarded the honor of National Artist, accepted the challenge of improvising on the theme of the (first) Gulf War—a task which she acquitted with great poetic aplomb, even though she was illiterate and her source of information was television. The folk theater that I regularly attended as a child relied on no written text, and before each performance, the director and his players would get together to discuss the scenario for that particular evening. It came to pass that, at certain moments, a player would get stuck and fail to find the appropriate end rhyme. A member of the audience, consisting mostly of street vendors from a nearby market, would never hesitate to shout out a suggestion, which the actor may or may not accept. This simply is an indicator that, in this poetic community, the improvisational ability of the performers and the spectators was probably on a par, an ideal situation that the dramatist Bertolt Brecht yearned for but never quite achieved. The said theater was always full of initiative: it even went so far as to offer its own version of the written court drama *Inao*, generally acknowledged as the summit of verse drama, from which it drew only the plot, while the actual performance was improvised afresh by the actors. Was this impertinence on the part of a lowly group of players who had no respect for the royal composition of King Rama II? Nothing of the sort! They were making a profession of faith in the human spirit, which I have earlier described in the following terms:

> Much of our great "literature" is improvised, never recorded, is appreciated and assimilated by the living public. It can even be collective work, a repartee between participants, or between performers and spectators, a testimony of true conviviality. Such a tradition is still alive in our society. It leaves its heritage not always in the form of written text, for it does not recognize the sole supremacy of the text. It transfers its riches through human experience and contact, each generation seeking to perpetuate what it has inherited and to add to it something of its own. It is thus self-perpetuating and self-renewing. It never regrets its losses: the words that have been spoken have been spoken; they are not to be recovered; they are not regretted. Embedded in this tradition is the extreme confidence in the creative power of man which is not the exclusive property of any particular moment in history, or any particular generation.[1]

If orality was the mode of practice of some "illiterates," we may have to rethink the entire gamut of notions related to "literacy" and "illiteracy." In our media-dominated age, particularly sustained by technology-driven social media, little attention is being paid to the linguistic quality of our speech. By looking back a few decades, we shall soon realize that we were at one time a quality-conscious society

that was able to look back as well as ahead. There has often been a temptation to think in terms of "high" and "low" and to place "written" above "oral" culture. I know that I have come out in a big way in favor of "orality," but my apologia is in no way wishful thinking, for it is based on facts, albeit facts that may not be all too familiar to our contemporary society.

The self-assertive beginnings of written culture

Every school manual of Thai literature regards the *Stone Inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng*, dated 1285 AD, as the first literary work in the Thai language. It is never explained to the Thai youth why this inscription is considered literature. In our present-day documentary categorization, it would more appropriately qualify as a historical work. I have elsewhere tried to explain the importance of literature "in Thai life,"[2] and how such a work of great national import, which normally fills a Thai citizen with a sense of pride so awe-inspiring as to turn every reading into an aesthetic experience, would rightfully be elevated to the rank of a literary masterpiece. As we shall see later, the *Stone Inscription* depicts a golden age that should serve as the model of a very happy society, which subsequent epochs should emulate. But the fact remains that the *Stone Inscription* had no uninterrupted history and was discovered as late as 1833 by the future King Rama IV of the present dynasty, who spent many years as a monk under the reign of his half-brother, Rama III, and who, after having ascended the throne, made public the existence and the content of his historic find.

And there's the rub. A number of skeptics propounded the theory that the *Stone Inscription* was a fictitious concoction by Rama IV himself, who wanted to demonstrate to the world, and especially to the Western colonial powers, that they were dealing with a nation already more civilized in many respects in the thirteenth century than their European counterparts.[3] The controversy raged for a few years, and it was the epigraphists, historians and historical linguists (with their vast and profound knowledge of the age and mastery of concrete contemporaneous evidences) who could silence the opposite camp, which was trying too hard to bring down this monument of written culture to the level of fantasy fiction tinged with chauvinism. If it is to be taken as literature, it is definitely literature of a different kind.

I have up to now deliberately refrained from discussing the form and content of the *Stone Inscription*, as I think that the impact it has had on the Thai people during the past two centuries merits special attention. As for its significance in the way of linguistic form, it is best to refer to the relevant section of the fourth and last side of the stele: "Formerly these Thai letters did not exist. In 1205 saka, a year of goat, King Ramkhamhaeng set his mind and his heart on devising these Thai letters. So these Thai letters exist because that lord devised them."[4]

Nobody would be so naïve as to conclude that, before 1285 AD, the Thai were not literate in the sense of being able to read and write. Although no evidence existed prior to this date of any Thai script, of course learned men and monks read Buddha's teachings in Pali, known as the *Tripitaka*, in the old Khmer script,

and the use of this Khmer script as adopted by the Thai has survived until the recent past as the conveyer of Buddhist Dharma. The invention of the Thai script by King Ramkhamhaeng was unmistakably a self-assertive act on behalf of the Thai people, who had now founded a prosperous kingdom that should possess its own communicative instrument. Linguists have shown that the system devised by King Ramkhamhaeng was comprehensive enough to respond to the potential of the Thai language with its abundant vowel and consonant sounds plus tonal gradations. The *Stone Inscription* itself does not offer a "manual" for the use of the new script, being content to demonstrate that this new alphabet can serve to narrate a glorious story of the people in the Kingdom of Sukhothai.[5]

It is beyond any doubt that the *Stone Inscription* aims to erect a monument to the achievements of the king and his kingdom, the choice of stone as the carrier of the message itself bearing testimony to a striving for permanency. Strangely enough, it begins as an autobiographical account, with the king telling the story of his love for his parents and his loyalty to his brother whom he succeeded to the throne after a few decades. The narrative then almost imperceptibly passes into a third-person account of what happens. Nature is on his side, for the fertile land enables his people to prosper, and with his liberal rule in which taxation is minimal, trade flourishes. A man imbued with historical consciousness, he pays heed to pre-Buddhistic traditional beliefs as well, while doing his utmost to support Buddhism, he himself being a devout Buddhist. There is one trait in his character that should not be overlooked: his scholarly admiration for learned Buddhist monks, with the Supreme Patriarch occupying a very prominent position, and described as "the sage who has studied the scriptures from beginning to end, who is wiser than any other monk in the kingdom, [. . .]."[6] (A Thai of today cannot help remark how things have changed for the worse in the meantime!) The State—or more precisely, the king—and the Buddhist order happily cooperate in encouraging good citizenship among the people. There is one telling example of this harmonious relationship: Buddhist monks and the king took turns in ascending the pulpit—or more precisely, the stone seat—the priests preaching the Dharma, while the king discussed the affairs of the state with his officials. Justice is well administered, and a petitioner can have direct access to His Majesty by striking a bell at the (palace) gate; the king "hears the call, he goes and questions the man, examines the case, and decides justly for him."[7] Paternalism is the chief characteristic of his rule (emulated even by our present-day constitutional monarch). A good ruler is one who is imbued with the spirit of Buddhism. "He was the teacher who taught all the Thai to understand merit and the Dharma rightly."[8] But how to reconcile his Buddhistic humaneness with the task of founding a great kingdom which cannot dispense with expansionist ambitions and military exploits? The *Stone Inscription* is adept at dealing with this—i.e. with brevity. "He was able to subdue a throng of enemies who possessed broad kingdoms and many elephants."[9] Then comes a list of towns that belong to the Kingdom of Sukhothai, and a map of an immense territory is thus conjured up in the mind of the reader. One rather personal note at the beginning of the *Stone Inscription* takes care of how a Buddhist conqueror should behave. "When he captures enemy

warriors, he does not kill them or beat them."[10] This humane practice predates the Geneva Convention by many centuries, and let us not forget what European warriors and crusaders were practicing in the thirteenth century!

All these noble deeds are recounted in the kind of language that is simple and to the point, yet not devoid of literary qualities. The manipulation of the alliterative prose poetry, known in Thai as *rai*, is masterly. Rhythmic vitality and internal rhymes naturally facilitate memorization, and we must not forget that the *Stone Inscription* was born in an age in which oral traditions were strong and pervasive. A fair number of proverbial expressions and maxims have been absorbed by the Thai language and are still familiar today. Every Thai knows the sentence, "there is fish in the water and rice in the fields." Some even use it to attract tourists! Or a statement in favor of the free market: "whoever wants to trade in elephants, does so; whoever wants to trade in horses, does so; whoever wants to trade in silver or gold, does so."[11] On the side of morality, phrases such as "to understand merit and the Dharma rightly," as already quoted above, were taken up in subsequent written historical and literary works. The *Stone Inscription* of King Ramkhamhaeng is definitely a treasure house of worldly and spiritual wisdom.

The irony of history is that when the Kingdom of Sukhothai lost its hegemony to the Kingdom of Ayutthaya in the fourteenth century and eventually ceased to exist in the sixteenth century, this *Stone Inscription* was left amidst the ruins of the old capital and never had a chance to serve as a model to the new rulers. Written culture cut off from orality thus led to no re-creation, and not even reflections thereon. The 400-year history of Ayutthaya is, of course, marked by greatness as well as baseness, but it was certainly a materially flourishing cultural and commercial center known far and wide, as may be witnessed from extant European records. On the negative side, Ayutthaya history is replete with regicides and fratricides. A look at the Ramkhamhaeng *Stone Inscription* might have given pause to those fanatical power mongers. The brilliant young Prince Ramkhamhaeng served his brother well until the latter died in 1279. Clearly, usurpation was far from his mind. His reign lasted twenty years, and he achieved so much that some learned historians might detect a self-congratulatory note therein.

The *Stone Inscription* proves the power of the word and its performative potential. The narrative is not merely descriptive; it appeals to one's noble instincts. Linguists and philosophers of language should have ample material to debate how to pigeonhole it—under the category of locutionary or illocutionary or perlocutionary?[12] There is certainly more to it than those classifications.

From zero hour to renaissance or turning crisis into opportunity

Tens of thousands of foreign tourists who on a daily basis throng the gem of Thai architecture, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok, probably are not aware that we had to start afresh from zero hour after the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, as everything had gone up in flames at the hands of the Burmese

conquerors. The temple was constructed within decades after the catastrophe, when the new capital, first built in Thonburi, was moved to Bangkok on the other side of the Chao Phraya River. How did our ancestors work so fast and so well against all these odds? The answer is fairly simple: things may perish in terms of their materiality, but their spirit lives on. Those who survived happened to be those skilled and knowledgeable in the various branches of creativity. Take King Taksin, for example, who during his short reign of fifteen years, known as the Thonburi period in Thai history, found time to devote himself to the arts while driving off the Burmese in a series of bloody battles and uniting, by force, the various factions of rulers into a nation. King Taksin himself rewrote chapters of the Thai dramatic version of the Indian epic, the *Ramayana*, known in Thai as *Ramakien*, commissioning extremely refined illustrated books of Buddhist cosmology known as the *Traiphum*, and restoring the Buddhist scripture from Pali originals. Even at this early stage of the restorative efforts, it can be seen that the codification of cultural heritage was given high priority. The importance of the word was fully recognized.

The first king of the Chakri dynasty enjoyed a long reign (1782–1809) marked by initiatives on many fronts. Let us not forget that all the cultural projects undertaken by Rama I took place, while the Burmese threat still loomed. Lacking strength in numbers, it was solely through strategic prowess that the Thai army crushed the Burmese invaders once and for all in the Battle of Tha Din Daeng in 1785, leaving the rest for the British to attend to. (Cynics have observed that the Thai army has never fought and won a significant battle since that date.) One characteristic that earns Rama I and his aides much admiration from his people is that they commanded great skills in warfare, but possessed, at the same time, cultural sophistication, remarkable scholarship and artistic sensibility. (And again, cynics have been pointing their fingers at our present-day military!) He and his contemporaries grew up and received their education in the Ayutthaya era; they served in its bureaucracy and were conscious and appreciative of its cultural riches. The fall of the kingdom gave them pause to weigh out the pros and cons of Ayutthayan life and culture. One thing was certain: among the great achievements of Ayutthaya, they considered its letters the pillar of intellectual and spiritual heritage.

The restoration of Ayutthayan literature during the early part of the Bangkok period deserves serious consideration. That literary heritage has depth and breadth; it draws on local traditions as well as foreign inspirations. The Thai of Ayutthaya resisted chauvinism and allowed themselves to be enlightened by Indic, Chinese, Khmer and European intellectual and cultural wealth. In spite of the fact that some works might have been lost for good, as they belonged to the written tradition, what was passed on to posterity in the Bangkok era shows an immense variety, ranging from learned texts to folksy libertine ditties. It is at this point that the process of restoration as retold by scholars of the court a century after the founding of the new capital becomes debatable.[13] It has often been told that in the destruction of the capital of Ayutthaya, almost all written records were lost. Common sense would tell you that there must have existed several or numerous

copies of those significant works, which were kept at monasteries or learned households in provinces outside Ayutthaya and were not ravaged by the Burmese. The story goes that most Ayutthaya works were reconstructed from memory, which may be true in most cases, especially those that were meant for performance or recitation. But some texts were extremely erudite and certainly could not have been memorized entirely by the survivors from Ayutthaya. The accidental tribute paid to the virtue of orality was perhaps meant to celebrate the resourceful and imaginative literary restorers of the Bangkok era, who did not rely solely on their memory but were also able to fill in the gaps with their own re-compositions (as my grandmother did in her own small way). In other words, "restoration" and "re-creation" went hand in hand, and many of the literary restorers must have been poets of merit. Be that as it may, it is hard to believe that the restoration of those learned works—which require knowledge of Sanskrit, Pali and ancient Khmer as well as northern, northeastern and southern local Thai languages in order to be read—could have been achieved without prior written texts of some kind, which had survived the incendiary vandalism of the Burmese warriors. I am thinking of such works as *Maha Chat Kamluang*, *Thawathosamat* and *Yuan Phai* (all from the fifteenth century). It is known that restoration was carried out by teams of literati and poets who would test out their proposed versions by way of recitation. In this way, we have to admit that ultimate quality control took place in the framework of orality. The works had to be *performed*, one way or the other.

One other trait of Thai culture needs also to be brought into consideration. As Buddhists, we are not concerned with the notion of origin. Thai traditional musicians know this very well, for a musical composition in the context of Thai culture needs not consist of entirely original inventions, the usual practice being an extension, reduction, imitation, elaboration, extrapolation or transformation of existing melodies, whose origins are mostly unknown. The merit of the composer of a new work lies in his ability to reinvent. The same may apply to literature (and that is why, in modern times, we often have problems with copyright). The pundits of early Rattanakosin (the official name of Bangkok) did not view the loss inflicted by the Burmese as irreparable. In a way, a new impetus to create did emerge, at first in the form of restoration, but it soon became pervasive, and these survivors from Ayutthaya fervently engaged in various forms of creativity. With the kind of leadership that Rama I could give to his people, their restorative initiatives also embraced such fields as law (compilation of the Law of the Three Seals) and Buddhism (review of the Buddhist scripture), again acts of codification confirming the importance of written culture. His Majesty himself chaired a committee to compose the full version of *Ramakien*, which he, in the final part of the epilogue, strangely enough, deconstructed as a worldly act of retelling "a story filled with superstition," fit only for the celebratory inauguration of the new capital, and not to be taken seriously by devout Buddhists, who should heed the precept of the impermanence of all things! But this voluminous work, still used today for the performance of masked drama and shadow play, testifies to the fact that the passage from literary restoration to autonomous creation was a fairly rapid one.

Our brand of renaissance thus did not take the form of a rediscovery of ancient civilizations as in the West but was a mere act of forging continuity with our immediate past. But once it took flight, this creative urge blossomed into a great artistic culture. Rama II (1767–1824), son of Rama I, was born a commoner in the district of Amphawa, a fertile land near the mouth of the Mae Klong River, where the inhabitants engaged (and still do) in cultivating orchards and where the various arts flourished and enriched each other (I have illustrated my theory of the Thai "mutual illumination of the arts" with the example of Amphawa.)[14] Strange though it may seem, Thailand's greatest musicians have continuously, for the past two centuries, hailed from this community, and Rama II himself was the embodiment of such mutual illumination, being a distinguished poet, composer, musician, choreographer and sculptor at the same time. The royal court, presided over by a commoner-king, enjoyed the best of both worlds, namely folk as well as royal traditions. But it was as a poet that he will always be remembered. Rama II continued the restorative task begun by his father, putting down in writing folk dramas with their raucous manners and coarse language, while at the same time composing a very refined verse drama, *Inao*, that the *Académie thaïlandaise* ranks as the summit of its genre. Having grown up in Amphawa, he knew how to maintain a "horizontal relationship" between the people and the court, and the greatest achievement of the entire restorative effort was the recomposition of the folk epic in the genre of *Sepha*, destined for recitation, called *Khun Chang Khun Phaen*, an all-embracing panorama of Thai life and culture that obliterates the schism between courtly and popular literature. (Rama II himself contributed four chapters.) Remarkable truthfulness is one of its virtues, and contrary to the humane treatment of captives as depicted in the *Stone Inscription* of King Ramkhamhaeng, Thai soldiers in this realistic tale from Ayutthaya behave in a callous manner, looting and raping, the latter evil act being described via a circumlocution in the following terms: "Many soldiers found a wife, old or young according to fate. While waiting to return to Ayutthaya, they enjoyed themselves the whole time."[15] In the printed version of 1917, edited by the distinguished scholar Prince Damrong, a half-brother of King Rama V, which is also meant to serve the purpose of educating his fellow countrymen, the readiness to allow a description of such reprehensible conduct to escape expurgation was very much a concession to the supremacy of literature. Although the Prince did try his best to cleanse most works from the Ayutthaya period of "immoralities," he could not afford to be too radical, or else there would have been little left to serve as "a criticism of life," as Matthew Arnold would have it.

I have concentrated on the restorative side of early Bangkok literature and have not had the opportunity to address the emergence of new literary trends within the context of the rising bourgeois culture, as demonstrated by Nidhi Eoseewong in his "Bourgeois Culture and Early Bangkok Literature."[16] All in all, it can be said that the fervent restorative effort went so well that the third King of the Rattanakosin era, Rama III (1787–1851), in less than a century after the "zero hour" of 1767, was so confident of the strengths of his country's cultural and intellectual heritage as to be ready to take stock of what had been achieved,

and to codify it. As a result, the mammoth project of the *Stone Inscriptions of Wat Pho* was undertaken between 1831 and 1841, which has since been adopted by UNESCO as part of the "Memory of the World." As we have seen so far, memory, restoration, reinvention and innovation did conspire to buttress the sense of cohesion that helped us survive the threats of colonialism. Rama III's belief in the wealth of knowledge and wisdom hitherto accumulated by the Thai people from multifarious sources was accompanied by a quest for permanence. However, being a devout Buddhist, he knew full well the limitations of all human endeavors. For want of something better, why not commit what you have to stone and let "the word" carry the message? Furthermore, why not turn this treasure house of knowledge and wisdom over to the "public domain," accessible to all—with a hidden condition that those who would benefit from it had to be literate? One can surmise that the rate of literacy must have shot up as a consequence of these stone inscriptions.

The available statistics related to the extant inscriptions are revelatory with regard to the priorities of the king and his government: History of Wat Pho's Construction and Restoration Records (12 plates); Buddhism (350 plates); Literature (276 plates); List of Ecclesiastical Positions, Places and Ethnic Groups (124 plates); Moral Teachings (65 plates) and Health: Medical Prescriptions and Massage Manuals (608 plates); Royal Customs (36 plates).[17] Clearly, the physical well-being of the people receives much attention, and their moral health is taken care of by Buddhism and other oriental traditions (expressed via didactic verses). On the aesthetic side, literature figures prominently. (My contention in the lecture "Literature in Thai Life," mentioned above, is here statistically substantiated!) I should mention that a great number of the inscriptions are written in verse so as to facilitate memorization. For example, under the category "Moral Teachings," the *Stone Inscriptions of Wat Pho* contain verse translations of the collection of Pali proverbs, *Lokaniti*, either re-edited or re-composed by the virtuosic poet Prince Dechadisorn, which are so well done that they have imprinted themselves on the memory of Thai schoolchildren. I vividly remember one, which has, from childhood to advanced age, accompanied me and acted as a voice of conscience:

> Iron rust is born from within its own substance.
> It eats up the iron until it completely corrodes.
> Sin originates from one who commits evil deeds,
> Which will revert to punishing that sinful person.

When the stone speaks, one cannot remain insensitive to its weighty philosophic message.

From stone to mobile phone: A comic relief

Let us imagine how an inquisitive learner during the reign of Rama III had to make a demanding physical effort (including the use of a ladder) to get near

the relevant stone slab in order to copy down its content and have it recopied for further distribution to relatives and friends. Inhabitants of the cyber world can pass on their messages in no time. In the article "On the Power, Powerlessness and Omnipotence of Language: From Oral Culture through Written Culture to Media Domination,"[18] I polemicized against the overuse of the mobile phone that, according to me, had robbed contemporary society of the warmth of human contact. In the original German version, I uttered a battle cry adapted from a famous revolutionary pamphlet of the nineteenth-century German writer Georg Büchner, "Friede den Kneipen! Krieg den Handys!" (Peace to the pubs! War against the mobiles!), which was found sensational enough to be worth a quotation in the popular German magazine *Der Spiegel*.[19] Upon further reflection, I may have given in to a bias. A little incident in the Thai social media has prompted me to rethink the whole issue about the relationship between the real and the cyber worlds.

A schoolgirl aged fifteen parked her motorcycle in front of a minimart in the southern province of Stun. In the front basket, she left two pieces of barbecued chicken plus a small portion of glutinous rice that she intended to take home for lunch. When she came out, the whole package had disappeared. Out of sheer frustration, she recorded her complaint in the form of a selfie and sent it to a few friends. Those friends put it up on YouTube, from where it was picked up by a famous TV anchorman who rebroadcast her clip: the girl became, in a matter of a few days, a national celebrity, and from the day of the clip's appearance on YouTube, namely on 11 November 2014, up to 8 April 2015, as many as 2,622,353 viewings had taken place. Does this point to the small-mindedness of our contemporary society? Thirteen years ago, I would have concurred, but now I am beginning to have second thoughts.

The clip is a powerful "performance." Though the girl's prime objective was to share her anger and frustration with a few friends only, the clip possesses a more universal appeal. She presents her case in a strangely engaging manner. At first, she tries to be rational, stating that there could only be three causes for the loss; first, it could have been stolen by a cat; second, by a dog; and third, by a human being. Her conclusion is that it must have been a human being, in which case she asks whether the person feels ashamed of his petty theft. If such a pitiable person were to present himself to her, she would be ready to buy him a lunch of barbecued chicken and stuff it into his mouth, suggesting that the person should feel doubly ashamed of the evil act. She ends with self-consolation; she still has money to go and buy the same food again; therefore, money is not the issue: what she cannot get over is the pettiness of the theft.

The content as retold by me features nothing so special as to have won the girl the sympathy of millions of people. It is the singularity of her "performance" that captures the attention of viewers. She is a southerner speaking in Central Thai instead of the southern dialect, and the deviations in terms of accent and intonation catch one's attention. A Brechtian *Verfremdung* is at work here, supported by a certain degree of detachment on the part of the audience, who is involved but not too involved, in line with the theory of the comic by the French

philosopher Henri Bergson.[20] The way she uses the word "barbecued chicken" in Thai by leaving out one syllable makes it sound a little funny. From a dramatic viewpoint, she repeats a number of times that she is angry, but the way she conducts herself and her husky voice does not fully support her claim. But the high point of the comic effect is achieved by her use of a swear word with which she punctuates every second sentence, and which in this particular context does not sound rude at all but vaguely humorous.

In a matter of hours, would-be culprits came out on social media to confess their crime and ask her for forgiveness. We all knew they were fake. The girl herself, after a few days, posted a second selfie apologizing for having used rude language. No hard feelings remained, but the clip continues to be viewed. The politically frustrated Thai society has had a good laugh. The young girl has given us, unintentionally, comic relief.

The whole affair is not devoid of seriousness. The plaintiff of today has no King Ramkhamhaeng to redress an injustice for him/her. Why not seek help from, or at least engage the sympathy of, an anonymous public inhabiting the real world, which can be directly addressed through social media? Crossing from the private to the public sphere appropriately and judiciously by way of verbal communication is an art that we shall all have to master. I am not offering a recant but merely trying to see the other side of the coin.

Epilogue: Where words fail, tanks take over

What we may have learned from the barbecued chicken episode is that, unintentionally, the fifteen-year-old girl was reminding the unknown culprit of the all too familiar Buddhist precept of *hiri ottappa*, meaning "shame of doing evil." Transferred to the political arena at the national level, the latest mass political demonstrations, lasting as long as six months, from 29 November 2013 to 22 May 2014, can throw light on a number of issues related to the performative role of the word as to what it can and cannot do. As a critical observer and occasionally as a participant in the political rallies—and I am admitting that in matters that affect the life and death of a nation, it is impossible to maintain complete neutrality—I was aware that words could move people to action (but only up to a certain point). More often than not, the rhetoric of a political rally does not aim at enlightening the participants so as to make them think and act rationally: words are used to work people up emotionally to a rebellious course of action.

The leaders of the 2013–14 demonstrations were trying to outdo their predecessors of 2006 in lending credibility and nobility to their efforts. In other words, they were reinventing the former campaign, as the target remained the same group of politicians, though the context may have changed. (I have analyzed the events of 2006 in my paper "On the Power . . ." referenced earlier.) Even the title they took for their movement was meant to be so self-explanatory as to sound clumsy, the original caption in Thai being almost as long as, or even longer than, the famous railway station in Wales! It reads: "The People's Committee for the Reform of Thailand into a Full Democracy with a Constitutional Monarch as

Its Head." The American- and British-trained among the leaders were smart enough to offer their own authorized English version as "The People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC)." What could not be achieved in parliament in terms of the true spirit of democracy was to be achieved on the streets of Bangkok, and the PDRC made no bones about the expediency of engaging the support of the educated Bangkokians to usher in a structural reform that would benefit the entire nation. It must have come as a surprise to them as the demonstrations went on that people from all walks of life in Bangkok itself and from certain provinces, especially those in the South, were willing to join them. At the peak of the rallies, on 9 December 2013, a crowd of five million people, according to the estimates based on satellite images provided by the BBC and CNN, descended on the streets of Bangkok. Were the words of the PDRC leaders so persuasive and so powerful as to be able to attract such a record-breaking crowd? The responsive chord was, in my opinion, the deeply structured Buddhist consciousness that *hiri ottappa* had to be restored in order to save the country from perdition. The message to the government from the PDRC supporters to make room for reform was at first an appeal; it soon became a threat, but a threat from a group of Gandhian protesters professing the principle of *ahimsa* could not sap the confidence of an elected government, however corrupt it may have been.

The government drawn from the same political party that ruled the country in 2006 won a landslide victory in 2013, as it had always been able to secure the loyalty of the rural poor. These people had genuine grievances that had been neglected for centuries, and they were thankful for the attention and assistance granted by the government. Certain forms of assistance simply resembled free gifts, and the last and biggest gift was the infamous rice scheme funded by public money, which prescribed buying paddy rice from farmers at a one hundred percent higher rate than the market price, thus ruining the entire rice market mechanisms. Worse still, all forms of corruption happened along the way, and subsequent governmental agencies as well as special commissions estimated that the loss incurred was in the region of 700,000,000,000 Baht (or 20,000,000,000 Euro). Some rural poor, who did not benefit from the scheme, have since begun to awake to the truth, but the majority continued and continues to uncritically accept such populist actions. Honesty or, for that matter, morality has been relegated to the vocabulary of the privileged in Thai society. The ethical bias characteristic of the *Stone Inscriptions of Wat Pho*, which had been incorporated into the school curriculum, did not seem to have a long-lasting effect. When dire wants and despair undermined all ethical considerations, these people only cared for their survival. The "Red Shirts" government enabled them for the first time in their life to afford certain goods, such as refrigerators, mini-trucks, motorcycles and, above all, mobile phones. Come the next election, they will vote for these saviors. The self-exiled former prime minister (who jumped bail while his two-year jail sentence on account of abuse of power was being considered by the Court of Appeals) made a remark, memorable for his overweening self-confidence and his contempt for human dignity: "If we send an electricity pole as our candidate, it will win in any election."

The metaphor of poisoned language portends an even more dismal political future. The process of brainwashing has been very sophisticated, carried out by various media, especially local radio stations. I was watching a Red Shirts rally on television, which, at first, did not appear to be overly belligerent, though mendacity was rampant. Suddenly, the news came in that a rocket had fallen on the PDRC rally and that there had been fatal casualties; the crowd burst into unbridled jubilation. Even one of its leaders found it too much and tried to contain their emotional outburst. Propaganda thrives on words, and, in this case, words can degrade human beings instead of uplifting them. King Ramkhamhaeng with his devout Buddhist rule and King Rama III who wanted to make good and wise citizens out of his subjects have been completely forgotten. Indeed, as the didactic poem quoted above emphasizes, "Iron rust is born from within its own substance."

At this point, I would like to return to the PDRC rallies. On the side of the demonstrators, linguistic communication dominated. Almost thirty years ago, I gave a lecture entitled "Spoken Drama and the Spirit of Democracy," which was published and widely read, especially by theater people and theatergoers.[21] In it, I paint an ideal picture as to how the theater and parliament can enrich each other and cite, as an example, how the legacy of a great dramatist such as Shakespeare can enhance the parliamentary speech. In Thailand, spoken theater has definitely advanced, not only in terms of dramatic art but also in the inculcation of a critical spirit—and perhaps also a democratic spirit—while our parliament stagnated into a shambles of greedy interest groups, and the level of their pitiable speeches reflected their moral laxity. The PDRC rallies tried to reconstitute the political speech as a conveyance of public spirit and moral integrity. While the "entertainment function" (as I already mentioned in connection with the 2006 demonstrations) went on, the "central stage" became an "open university" where speakers from various professions had a chance to enlighten a live public (as well as those who watched television broadcasts). University teachers adapted well, for they had to learn how to speak to a very "general" public, and most of them were highly communicative. Issues related to government policies and actions were discussed rationally, supported by concrete evidence and theoretical acuity. I did enjoy those lectures on comparative economics and comparative politics, one of the latter positing how Thailand could learn from Argentina. People with practical experience could be very instructive. The former president of the Thai Rice Traders Association, an elderly gentleman, gave his audience a very thorough and realistic analysis of the government's rice scheme that made everybody understand what had gone wrong. After six months, I knew that I had accumulated a wealth of transdisciplinary knowledge that had spared me the toil and trouble of reading one hundred scholarly monographs! The value of those offerings by the "open university" far outgrew the purpose of the anti-government protest. When words carry knowledge and wisdom, they can benefit those with an open mind.

The government would not listen. Its response was of a legal nature. A fair number of speakers, including university professors, were charged with sedition and are now still defending their cases in court. As for the leaders of the PDRC, they face even more serious charges. They were former MPs who had given up their seats in

parliament in order to take to the streets. The case of the leader of the group is of particular interest. He was deputy prime minister in the previous government, and knew how to put his vast political experience at the service of the movement. He too became a record-breaker, for every evening at around 8 p.m., he would get up on the central stage and deliver a one-hour speech. It was amazing how he could find new material every day. Naturally, he professed a commitment to peace and promised not to resort to violence of any kind. He wanted to be unemotional and rational, but on a number of occasions, he broke down in tears, because his fellow demonstrators or even innocent onlookers had been killed by machine guns, rockets and bombs. Toward the end of the rallies, shortly before the military stepped in, rockets were fired into the demonstration site at night almost on a daily basis, and there were casualties. People knew who instigated these acts of terrorism. Words did not suffice anymore.

The whole political enterprise cost a fortune, and fund-raising was the lifeblood of the movement. The protest leaders would walk miles and miles to various quarters in Bangkok, and the figures of the donations were astronomical. The money was used well, including for paying substantial sums to the families of those who had been murdered and, in a farsighted move, funding scholarships to guarantee the education of the children of the deceased.

I shall end with a story that I find touching. One day during the demonstrations, an elderly lady walked meekly to the PDRC leaders who were sitting in a circle on the street to have their lunch, handed over a brown paper bag to them, then walked away without saying a word. When the brown bag was opened, the content turned out to be a bundle of cash totaling 1,000,000 Baht. Here, silence was worth more than words—either literally or metaphorically. The end was to come soon.

The military tried to mediate and pleaded with the government to resign so as to pave the way for reform. The latter would not budge, maintaining that it had been democratically elected by the people. A coup d'état was not a satisfactory solution, but innocent people were dying every day and the country was on the brink of civil war. Should we let the country be ruled by electricity poles?

When words failed, tanks took over.

Is this a tragic ending or a tragic beginning? From the paternalism of King Ramkhamhaeng to the orderly rule by a military junta, we do not seem to have learned much from history. My story must, of necessity, end with a whimper, and not with a big bang.[22]

Notes

1 Chetana Nagavajara, "Literary Study and Higher Education" (1982), in *Comparative Literature from a Thai Perspective: Collected Articles 1978–1992* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1996), 32–33.

2 See Chetana Nagavajara, "Literature in Thai Life: Reflections of a Native" (1994), in *Fervently Mediating: Criticism from a Thai Perspective: Collected Articles 1982–2004* (Bangkok: Chomanad, 2004), 141–94.

3 See James R. Chamberlain, ed., *The Ramkhamhaeng Controversy: Collected Papers* (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1991), 53–159.
4 Prasert na Nagara and A. B. Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies* (Bangkok: The Historical Society, 1992), 279. I have taken the liberty of changing some spellings to conform to the Royal Institute's system of transliteration. For the sake of convenience, references to the passages in the *Stone Inscription* will be made according to the system whereby the Roman number denotes the side of the stele and the Arabic number the lines. The alternation between the present tense and the past tense is explained by the editors/translators to the effect that certain parts of the *Stone Inscription* were written in the early years of the reign (hence the present tense), while others were recorded in the final years of the reign or later after the King's death (hence the past tense). The passage quoted above is referred to as IV/8–11. Subsequent readings of the *Stone Inscription* have since been made; the latest, most recognized version is Winai Pongsripian, "Ekasan Lamdhab Thi 1: Charuek Phokhun Ramkhamhaeng," in *100 Ekasan Samkhan: Saphasara Phrawatisat Thai*, 2nd rev. ed., ed. W. Pongsripian, P. Saksiphanit and K. Wichai (Bangkok: Thailand Research Fund, 2011), 5–38. The new reading does not depart substantively from the one quoted above, and no English translation is provided.
5 A manual on the new writing system plus a grammar (to emulate the Sanskrit grammar of Panini) might have existed, probably not in the form of a stone inscription but in handwritten book form, which has not survived.
6 II/29–30.
7 I/35–II/1.
8 IV/12–14.
9 IV/16–17.
10 I/31.
11 I/18–19; I/ 20–21.
12 The categories devised by J. L. Austin can have implications for the study of the performing arts, as demonstrated by Erika Fischer-Lichte in her monograph, *Performati-vität: Eine Einführung*, 2nd ed. (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), 37–44.
13 See Chetana Nagavajara, "Literary Historiography and Socio-Cultural Transformation: The Case of Thailand" (1985), in *Comparative Literature from a Thai Perspective: Collected Articles 1978–1992* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1996), 44–50.
14 I have elaborated the concept of "Amphawa Culture" to represent the ways in which the various arts emerge from a community-based environment that is classless. See Chetana Nagavajara, *Silp Song Thang* (Bangkok: Khombang, 2003), 74–78, 107–111.
15 Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, ed. trans., *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen: Siam's Great Folk Epic of Love and War*, 2 vols. (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2010), 204.
16 See Nidhi Eoseewong, "Bourgeois Culture and Early Bangkok Literature" (1982) in *Pen and Sail: Literature and History in Early Bangkok*, ed. C. Baker and B. Anderson (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2005), 3–151.
17 "Memory of the World Register: The Epigraphic Archives of Wat Pho (Thailand), Ref N° 2010–16," last accessed 27 April 2017, Available at: www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/mow/nomination_forms/Thailand%20Epigraphic.pdf.
18 Chetana Nagavajara, "On the Power, Powerlessness and Omnipotence of Language: From Oral Culture through Written Culture to Media Domination," in *Bridging Cultural Divides: Collected Essays and Reviews 2006–2014* (Nakhon Pathom: Faculty of Arts, 2014), 39–50. The article was originally published in German in 2006.
19 Mathias Schreiber, "Deutsch for sale," *Der Spiegel*, 2 October 2006, last accessed 28 April 2017, www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-49067625.html.
20 Henri Bergson, *Le Rire: Essai sur la signification du comique* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1900).
21 See Chetana Nagavajara, "Lakhonphud Kab Winyan Phrachathipatai" (1990), in *Khrun Khid Phinit Nuek* (Bangkok: Praphansan, 1997), 108–25.

22 UPDATE (25 July 2019): The first version of this text was written in April 2015. Since then, a lot of water has gone under the bridge, so to speak, but I do not think that the main thesis of this Epilogue requires any amendment. The lesson learned then is still valid. The military *junta*, which came into power on 23 May 2014, unfortunately only succeeded partially in delivering its promises to the people who had acquiesced in its undemocratic intervention. Yet credit must be given to its efforts to bring corrupt politicians and government officials to justice, resulting, for example, in jail sentences for two former prime ministers, who, of course, jumped bail and managed to flee the country. Otherwise, the junta is better known for its verbal gymnastics than for its constructive actions, and it cannot be said here that "action speaks louder than words." The junta leader, now appointed prime minister under the new and not altogether democratic constitution, is heading a coalition government with a slim majority.

Thai history tends to confirm that the performative role of the word can become effective only if it is buttressed by moral rectitude and commitment to the common good. Most Thai citizens are at present extremely concerned that history might repeat itself.

Bibliography

Baker, Chris, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, ed. trans. *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen: Siam's Great Folk Epic of Love and War*. 2 vols. Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2010.

Bergson, Henri. *Le Rire: Essai sur la signification du comique* [Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic]. Paris: Félix Alcan 1900.

Chamberlain, James R., ed. *The Ramkhamhaeng Controversy: Collected Papers*. Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1991.

Eoseewong, Nidhi. "Bourgeois Culture and Early Bangkok Literature" (1982). In *Pen and Sail: Literature and History in Early Bangkok*, edited by C. Baker and B. Anderson. Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2005.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Performativität: Eine Einführung* [Performativity: An Introduction], 2nd ed. Bielefeld: transcript, 2013.

"Memory of the World Register: The Epigraphic Archives of Wat Pho (Thailand), Ref N° 2010–16." Last accessed 27 April 2017. Available at: www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/mow/nomination_forms/Thailand%20Epigraphic.pdf.

Nagavajara, Chetana. "Lakhonphud Kab Winyan Phrachathipatai" [Spoken Drama and the Spirit of Democracy] (1990). In *Khrun Khid Phinit Nuek* [Reflections], 108–25. Bangkok: Praphansan, 1997.

———. "Literary Historiography and Socio-Cultural Transformation: The Case of Thailand" (1985). In *Comparative Literature from a Thai Perspective: Collected Articles 1978–1992*, 41–60. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1996.

———. "Literary Study and Higher Education" (1982). In *Comparative Literature from a Thai Perspective: Collected Articles 1978–1992*, 17–37. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1996.

———. "Literature in Thai Life: Reflections of a Native" (1994). In *Fervently Mediating: Criticism from a Thai Perspective: Collected Articles 1982–2004*, 141–94. Bangkok: Chomanad, 2004.

———. "On the Power, Powerlessness and Omnipotence of Language: From Oral Culture through Written Culture to Media Domination." In *Bridging Cultural Divides: Collected Essays and Reviews 2006–2014*, 39–50. Nakhon Pathom: Faculty of Arts, 2014.

———. *Silp Song Thang* [The Arts Point the Way]. Bangkok: Khombang, 2003.

Pongsripian, Winai. "Ekasan Lamdhab Thi 1: Charuek Phokhun Ramkhamhaeng" [Document No. 1: King Ramkhamhaeng Inscription]." In *100 Ekasan Samkhan: Saphasara Phrawatisat Thai* [100 Important Documents: Diverse Aspects of Thai History], 2nd rev. ed., edited by W. Pongsripian, P. Saksiphanit and K. Wichai, 5–38. Bangkok: Thailand Research Fund, 2011.

Prasert na Nagara and A. B. Griswold. *Epigraphic and Historical Studies*. Bangkok: The Historical Society, 1992.

Schreiber, Mathias. "Deutsch for sale." *Der Spiegel*, 2 October 2006. Last accessed 28 April 2017. www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-49067625.html.

Index

Note: *Italic* page numbers refer to figures and page numbers followed by "n" denote endnotes.