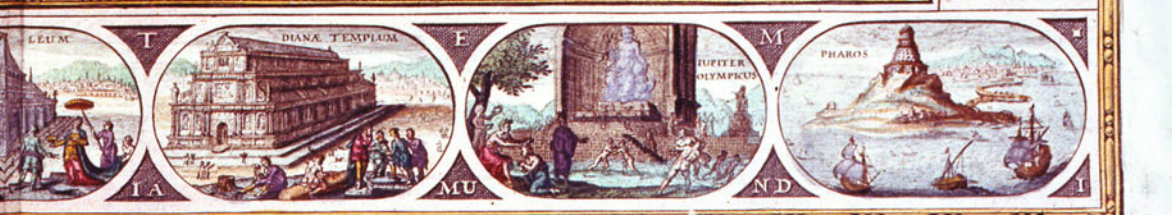


# MAPPING GLOBAL THEATRE HISTORIES

Mark Pizzato

QUATUOR ANNI TEMPESTATES



# Mapping Global Theatre Histories

Mark Pizzato

# Mapping Global Theatre Histories

palgrave  
macmillan

Mark Pizzato  
Department of Theatre  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
Charlotte, NC, USA

ISBN 978-3-030-12726-8      ISBN 978-3-030-12727-5 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12727-5>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019930707

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature  
Switzerland AG 2019

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: Lebrecht Music & Arts/Alamy Stock Photo: World Map by Willem Blaeu, “Nova totius terrarum orbis geographica ac hydrographica tabula,” 1645. Engraved by Joshua van den Enden and included in Blaeu’s *Atlas Novus*.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*To my mother  
Udel Marie Hammack Pizzato,  
present in my inner theatre  
for a half-century,  
as my ideal of goodness  
(with fear of loss);*

*to my father,  
John Frank Pizzato,  
present in my outer theatre, too,  
with beliefs, morals, and love  
directing my history;*

*and to Amanda (Aihua) Zhou  
who gives both theatres  
new beauty, drama,  
and laughter*

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to all at Palgrave Macmillan who encouraged and shaped this project, especially Nicola Cattini, Tomas Rene, Vicky Bates, and the anonymous readers of the proposal. Thanks to the colleagues who gave me insights, including Dean Adams, Allison Amidei, Bruce Auerbach, Hala Baki, Thomas Burch, Carlos Cruz, Kaja Dunn, David Fillmore, Andrew Hartley, Jorge Huerta, Rick Kemp, Chuyun Oh, Kaustavi Sarkar, Dylan Savage, Joanne Tompkins, Robin Witt, Amanda Zhou, and members of the “Pedagogy of Extraordinary Bodies” working group at the American Society for Theatre Research conference in fall 2017. Thanks also to Chuyun Oh and Kaustavi Sarkar for help with illustrations here. And thanks to the authors and editors of Wikipedia, who have made many details of theatre history quickly accessible online, with further references given as well.

Thanks to the colleagues who responded to my e-mail query in summer 2017 about a potential theatre history textbook, especially Sarah Bay-Cheng, Cheryl Black, Sara Ellen Brady, David Carlyon, Teresa Durbin-Ames, Susan Kattwinkel, Maiya Murphy, John O’Connor, Felicia Ruff, Shannon Blake Skelton, and Nathan Thomas. Thanks to the artists I have met, who gave me insights about their work. These included Kazimierz Braun (who directed me in *The Card Index* at the University of Notre Dame in 1982, welcomed my visit to his theatre in Poland, and co-wrote a play with me that he staged at Swarthmore College in 1986), Herbert Blau (my dissertation mentor, 1988–1992), Ola Rotimi (who lectured in one of my classes), William Sun (who discussed playwriting with me and introduced me to others), Richard Schechner (who discussed *rasas* with me), and Goran

**viii      Acknowledgments**

Stefanovski and Caridad Svich (who spoke with me recently). Also, thanks to my students at the University of St. Thomas (1992–1997) and University of North Carolina at Charlotte (1997–2019), who helped develop my theatre history courses, more and more globally, through their inner theatres.

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Theatricality in Deep History and the Human Brain</b>	1
	A. Initial Questions, Terms, and Goals	1
	B. Culture's Cave and the Brain's Inner Theatre (from Plato to Neuroscience)	4
	C. Deep-Historical, Bio-Cultural Identity Needs	10
	D. Tragic Flaws in Being Human	18
	References	29
<b>2</b>	<b>From Prehistoric to Ancient Theatricality</b>	33
	A. Prehistoric Cave, Figurine, and "Temple" Performances	33
	B. African San (Bushman) Hunter-Gatherers	38
	C. Ancient Egypt with TIMELINE	39
	D. Middle Eastern Ritual Dramas	41
	References	42
<b>3</b>	<b>Greco-Roman Beginnings of "Theatre"</b> <b>(as <i>Theatron/Theatrum</i>)</b>	43
	A. Minoan, Mycenaean, and Ancient Greece with TIMELINE	43
	B. Ancient Rome with TIMELINE	58
	References	70
<b>4</b>	<b>Traditional Forms of Asian Theatre</b>	71
	A. India with TIMELINE	71
	B. China with TIMELINE	80
	C. Korea with TIMELINE	87



D.	Japan with TIMELINE	89
E.	Indonesian Traditions on the Islands of Java and Bali	94
F.	Cambodian Traditions	97
	References	97
<b>5</b>	<b>Medieval Europe and Premodern Africa, Australia, and the Americas</b>	99
A.	Early Middle Ages in Western Europe (400s–900s) with TIMELINE	99
B.	High Middle Ages in Western Europe (1000s–1200s) with TIMELINE	101
C.	Late Middle Ages in Europe (1300s–1500s) with TIMELINE	105
D.	Premodern Africa with TIMELINE (300s BCE–1600s CE)	111
E.	Australian Aboriginal Performances	115
F.	North American Indigenous Performances Before Colonization	116
G.	Mexican and Central American Indigenous Performances	117
H.	South American Indigenous Performances	118
	References	120
<b>6</b>	<b>Early Modern Developments in Italy and France (1400s–1600s)</b>	121
A.	Renaissance Europe, TIMELINE	121
B.	Italy’s Renaissance Ideals (1400s–1600s)	122
C.	France’s Neoclassical Tensions (1500s–1600s)	128
	References	131
<b>7</b>	<b>Early Modern Mixtures in England, Spain, and the New World (1500s–1600s)</b>	133
A.	England’s Renaissance and Religious Conflicts, TIMELINE	133
B.	English Renaissance Theatre	135
C.	The Iberian “Reconquest” and American Conquests, TIMELINE	143
D.	Spanish Golden Age Theatre	144
E.	Aztec Mesoamerica and New Spain	148
	References	151

<b>8</b>	<b>Restoration and Baroque Revolutions (1600s–1700s)</b>	153
A.	England’s Commonwealth and Restoration Periods (1642–1700), TIMELINE	153
B.	English Restoration Theatre (1660–1700)	154
C.	The Age of Reason Across Europe and the US (mid-1600s–1700s), TIMELINE	158
D.	Baroque Exuberance and Enlightened Restraints	160
	References	166
<b>9</b>	<b>Romanticism, Melodrama, and Minstrelsy (1800s)</b>	167
A.	Nineteenth-Century Events, TIMELINE	167
B.	Romanticism, Riots, and New Forms	169
C.	Popular Melodramas with New Technologies and “Total” Artists	174
D.	Blackface Minstrelsy, <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> , and “Wild West” Shows	177
	References	180
<b>10</b>	<b>Modern Realisms and Anti-Realisms (Late 1800s to Early 1900s)</b>	181
A.	Turn of the Century, TIMELINE	181
B.	Psychological Realism	184
C.	Socialist Realism and Propaganda	187
D.	Naturalism	188
E.	Neo-Romanticism and Symbolism (as Anti-Realist Styles)	189
F.	Dada	192
G.	Expressionism and Related Developments in African-American Theatre	193
H.	Futurism	195
I.	Surrealism	196
J.	Other Movements and Artists of the Early 1900s	197
	References	200
<b>11</b>	<b>Mid-Twentieth Century, Euro-American Innovations</b>	201
A.	Major Events of the Late 1930s–1950s, TIMELINE	201
B.	Artaud’s “Theatre of Cruelty”	202
C.	Brecht’s Epic Theatre and Alienation Effects	203
D.	Existentialist and Absurdist Drama	205
E.	American Realisms	208

F.	Other Developments in US Theatre, along with Radio and Film	211
	References	215
<b>12</b>	<b>Postmodern Theatre in the United States (1950s–2010s)</b>	217
A.	Major American Events of the 1950s–70s, TIMELINE	217
B.	American Avant-Gardists	220
C.	Musical Innovations	229
D.	Major American Events of the 1980s–2010s, TIMELINE	230
E.	American Millennial Theatre	234
F.	Millennial Musicals	236
G.	African-American Theatre Since Mid-Century	237
H.	Arab-American Theatre Artists	241
I.	Asian-American Theatre	242
J.	Latinx Theatre	244
K.	Native American Theatre	248
L.	Feminist Theatre Artists	249
M.	Queer (LGBT+) Theatres and Artists	252
	References	254
<b>13</b>	<b>Postmodern Theatre in Europe (1950s–2010s)</b>	255
A.	Major European Events of the Last Half Century, TIMELINE	255
B.	British and Irish Theatre	258
C.	Continental Theatre	264
	References	270
<b>14</b>	<b>Global, Postcolonial Theatre</b>	271
A.	Colonial and Postcolonial Events of the Last Half Millennium, TIMELINE	271
B.	African Theatre in Anglophone Countries	280
C.	Caribbean and Latin American Theatre	290
D.	Canadian Theatre	297
E.	Indigenous Theatre in Canada, Australia, and the South Pacific	299
F.	Australian and Asian-Pacific Theatre in Recent Decades	302
G.	Middle Eastern Theatre	311
	References	319
	<b>Further References and Suggested Readings</b>	321

# List of Figures

Fig. 1.1	Left side of human brain, with major lobes, by Henry Vandyke Carter (illustrator), in <i>Anatomy of the Human Body</i> , by Henry Gray, 1918	6
Fig. 3.1	Map of Greece and Crete (US CIA's <i>World Factbook</i> )	46
Fig. 3.2	Lysicrates monument, celebrating his win as <i>choregos</i> , 335–34 BCE, on the road to the Theatre of Dionysus, Athens (photo: Mark Pizzato)	50
Fig. 3.3	Theatre of Dionysus, Athens, with a semicircular orchestra in the later Roman redesign (photo: Mark Pizzato)	51
Fig. 3.4	Ancient Greek theatre at Epidaurus (photo: Mark Pizzato)	55
Fig. 3.5	Ancient Greek theatre and Temple of Apollo (with the Athenian Treasury behind it) at Delphi (photo: Mark Pizzato)	56
Fig. 3.6	<i>Proedria</i> in the Theatre of Dionysus, Athens (photo: Mark Pizzato)	56
Fig. 3.7	Ancient Roman theatre remains at Orange, France, with <i>scaenae frons</i> (photo: Mark Pizzato)	63
Fig. 3.8	Ancient Roman arena (amphitheatre) at Arles, France (photo: Mark Pizzato)	64
Fig. 3.9	Underground passageways of the Pozzuoli arena (photo: Mark Pizzato)	65
Fig. 3.10	Stage floor of the Pozzuoli arena with modern grates over the traps (photo: Mark Pizzato)	65
Fig. 4.1	Map of Asia (US CIA's <i>World Factbook</i> )	72
Fig. 4.2	<i>Odissi</i> performance of <i>shringara</i> (love) <i>rasa</i> , with a <i>gavaksha</i> (grilled window) hand <i>mudra</i> as the heroine, Nayika, looks through the window in anticipation and longing (performed by Kaustavi Sarkar, photo by Debojyoti Dhar)	79

Fig. 4.3	Mask showing Chinese Opera makeup (photo: Mark Pizzato)	84
Fig. 4.4	Beijing Opera star Tan Xinpei with flag-costume in the film, <i>Dingjunshan</i> , 1905	85
Fig. 4.5	Chinese puppet theatre, Qibao, Shanghai (photo: Mark Pizzato)	86
Fig. 4.6	Backstage of Chinese puppet theatre, Qibao, Shanghai (photo: Mark Pizzato)	87
Fig. 4.7	<i>Talchum</i> characters, Scholar ( <i>Seonbi</i> ) on left and Shaman/Bride ( <i>Gaksi</i> ) on right, from <i>Byeolsingut Talnori</i> at the Andong Maskdance Festival, Hahoe Folk Village, South Korea (photo courtesy of Kim Eun-Jeong)	89
Fig. 4.8	Indonesian, <i>wayang kulit</i> puppet, Sita from the <i>Ramayana</i> (photo: Mark Pizzato)	95
Fig. 4.9	<i>Wayang golek</i> puppet (photo: Mark Pizzato)	96
Fig. 5.1	Reims Cathedral of Our Lady, exterior (photo: Mark Pizzato)	104
Fig. 5.2	Reims Cathedral, interior with side columns—where mansions were probably positioned as spectators stood near, without chairs in the nave (photo: Mark Pizzato)	105
Fig. 6.1	Serlio's plan for angled wings to create a vanishing point perspective (photo: Mark Pizzato)	125
Fig. 6.2	Serlio's tragic scene, showing an Italian Renaissance city with classical statues (photo: Mark Pizzato)	126
Fig. 6.3	Serlio's pastoral scene (photo: Mark Pizzato)	127
Fig. 6.4	Teatro Olimpico's <i>Oedipus</i> set, with central street-corridor (photo: Mark Pizzato)	128
Fig. 7.1	The recently rebuilt (1997) Globe Theatre in London (photo: Mark Pizzato)	140
Fig. 7.2	The Globe's yard, stage, tiring house, "heavens," and galleries (photo: Mark Pizzato)	141
Fig. 7.3	Almagro <i>corral</i> , stage side with rolled up awning above (photo: Mark Pizzato)	146
Fig. 7.4	Almagro <i>corral</i> , back wall and balcony areas (photo: Mark Pizzato)	147
Fig. 7.5	Aztec god-actor being costumed, in Sahagún's <i>Florentine Codex</i> , <i>Book II</i> , 1577 (photo: Mark Pizzato)	148
Fig. 7.6	Heart sacrifice, in Sahagún's <i>Florentine Codex</i> (photo: Mark Pizzato)	149
Fig. 7.7	Ruler with a priest as Xipe Totec, wearing the god-actor's skin (with extra hands and feet), in Sahagún's <i>Florentine Codex</i> (photo: Mark Pizzato)	150
Fig. 14.1	Map of Africa (US CIA's <i>World Factbook</i> )	281
Fig. 14.2	Map of South America (US CIA's <i>World Factbook</i> )	290

# List of Tables

Table 1.1	Brain hemisphere functions (based on McGilchrist—with inner theatre elements added in <b>bold</b> )	7
Table 1.2	Inner theatre elements (applying the neuroscience of Baars, Lieberman, McGilchrist, and Newberg)	9
Table 1.3	Moral foundations theory with binary frameworks [plus added elements in brackets] adapted from Haidt, <i>Righteous Mind</i> (125), plus Haidt and Joseph, “Intuitive Ethics”	25
Table 1.4	Transformations of animal drives to human emotions and cultural values (with positive and negative aspects)	26
Table 10.1	Anti-realist styles and movements (1890s–1930s)	190
Table 14.1	Types of African Theatre and their characteristics, from Nigerian playwright Ola Rotimi (personal communication)	283



# 1

## Theatricality in Deep History and the Human Brain

### A. Initial Questions, Terms, and Goals

1. Why study theatre history today—when information about the past is readily available on the Web and we are often more concerned about the present and future in our current “postmodern” era? It is important for artists to know the history of their art form. But are there other ways to benefit, too, from a deep yet global sense of theatricality and its many histories (or her-stories)?
2. We all engage in *creative play* as children, gaining a fuller sense of self (or possible selves) through imaginary interactions with others, sometimes with big people watching, providing a larger symbolic framework. Peers, parents, and other adults also model the roles we take, offering implicit scripts and explicit directions, along with costumes, props, and settings for meaningful identities. This play-acting as children and later in life involves our family, neighborhood, schools, and other communities, yet also television, movies, and interactive online media—expanding the arenas of our self and other awareness. It may also involve “deep play,” which performance theorist Richard Schechner explains as mischief, rebellion, games, and gambling with serious risks. Degrees of joyful or deep play continue from our youth into adulthood through formal theatre, sports, and videogames, on various stages with boundaries and rules.
3. Such theatric(k)s extend the animal drives of cooperation and competition from the nurturing, hierarchical, ego-creative, and traumatic

spaces of childhood to related arenas of adulthood. The art of theatre reflects this in a safe, entertaining, yet often challenging space, which draws on plays and traditions of the past, along with current cultural conflicts. Thus, *theatricality*—exemplified by the art of theatre—is key to our lives as human beings, as malleable animals with remnant instincts and moral rules, struggling to know who we are and what to do, while seeking a bigger meaning to it all.

4. We also have an “inner theatre” that produces various *dreams* each time we sleep, some of which we remember, from subconscious yet real energies within us. When we are actively involved in the art of theatre, onstage, backstage, or in the audience, we share a formal sense of play, in a *collective* dreamlike space. So, studying theatre history can help us understand the *conventions* of theatrical play in the past, affecting our practices today, and give us glimpses of the shared dreams and nightmares of our ancestors—or of their allies and rivals in other parts of the world. This relates to the larger sense of *theatricality* in religious, political, and military theatres, as well as the “presentation of self in everyday life,” involving backstage and onstage aspects (as sociologist Erving Goffman put it), in various cultures around the globe, across many generations.

**[How does your experience of theatre as an art form relate to performances in everyday life and your “inner theatre” thus externalized?]**

5. Each generation, including yours, defines what it values from the past, revising its history. So you are part of that project, now and in the future: choosing what to *learn* from theatre’s past, how to *reflect* on it, and where to *apply* it, through your inner and outer theatres of memories, dreams, everyday life, and art. This book offers a “treasure map” of global theatricality, sketched from its deepest history to initial extensions in screen media and current postcolonial developments. TIMELINES show the theatricality of geopolitics, with war, terrorism, and major cultural developments. Numbered paragraphs outline various theatre histories, for your further exploration online and in the library. Questions **in bold** suggest how you might reflect on present parallels, *making your own map* of global theatre histories, regarding the world around you and the theatre inside your brain.
6. Our understanding of theatricality in history comes through the art of theatre (from the ancient Greek *theatron* or “seeing place”), especially its Afro-Eurasian traditions, starting with ancient Egypt, Greece, and India. But theatricality extends globally and much further back in time, to the beginnings of humanity in our animal–human ancestry



(in Africa), through the evolving awareness of Self, performing with others for a transcendent Other. This awareness extends to our current screen devices with mass media, social networks, and virtual realities. Thus, *theatricality* has a specific meaning in this book, related to the broader notion of “performativity” in the field of performance studies. Theatricality is performance plus the awareness of audience, of role-playing and being seen or being in the role of watcher. It occurs even when you are alone with your dreams and imaginings, or when you hear the voice of yourself speaking to yourself, yet involving memories of others as absorbed personalities, and projections of an identity framework, in your *inner theatre*.

7. Try it now. Listen to that inner voice in your head, departing from these words—as you become the performer and audience of your thoughts. That is an aspect of the “theatre of the mind.” In this introduction, we will also consider the “theatre of the brain,” with specific neural functions akin to elements of external theatre today.
8. Through the traditional elements and developments of *theatre*, we can see its heritage as an art form: what we might use from the past or change. And yet, by also considering the prehistory, inner theatre elements, and current extensions of *theatricality*, we might view the lures and errors of the past being repeated in the present—with choices for the future. Thus, global theatre history acts as an uncanny *mirror*, revealing our repressive blind spots and stereotypical projections in wider arenas of theatricality today.
9. In common speech, the terms “theatrical” and “dramatic,” regarding everyday life, often suggest hyperactive pretense or false posturing, with stressful demands on others, as in the “kabuki theatre” of politics or “too much drama” at home. “Theatricality” can connote silliness and superficiality, as too pretentious and emotional. In written English, its earliest recorded use was in 1837, yet it has been used in so many ways since then as to become almost “empty of meaning,” according to some theatre scholars (Davis and Postlewait 1–2). It also relates to a longer history of “antitheatrical prejudice,” with insights and fears, from the ancient Greek philosopher Plato to various religious and secular censorings of theatrical activity as dangerous to society (Barish). And yet, it has come to mean an *awareness* of spectatorship and performance elements, through modern and postmodern “theatricalist” styles, against the realist paradigm of verisimilitude with a “fourth wall” at the edge of the stage.

10. Recognizing yet deepening such associations, this introduction investigates the significance of global theatricality in its “deep history” (Smail), regarding the animal-to-human evolution of our brains, bodies, and cultures. The next chapter then focuses on our ancestors’ early emergence of Self and Other awareness, of role-playing and being seen, with inner-theatre projections in prehistoric cave, temple, and domestic images. These artifacts offer evidence of collective meaning-making performances about nurturing yet deadly forces of nature and potential afterlife realms.
11. Reflect on how these *primal* elements of theatricality relate to your own life and to the *hyper-theatricality* of politics, mass media, and social networking today. Also, apply such connections to the mapping of various forms of theatre across cultures and time periods in the chapters ahead. Thus, you will engage your inner theatre with new perspectives on the theatricality of life: from bio-cultural identity needs to reflective stage/screen simulations, in changing social frameworks, from the *globe* of your brain to the world around you. Perhaps you will glimpse the playing out of your life story through such inner and outer, global contexts.

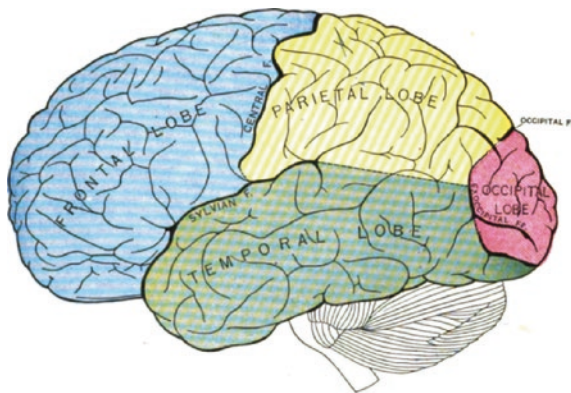
## B. Culture’s Cave and the Brain’s Inner Theatre (from Plato to Neuroscience)

1. In Plato’s *Republic* (380 BCE), the ancient Greek philosopher offers an allegory, through a dialog between his older brother Glaucon and his teacher Socrates, about people chained for their entire lives in a cave, facing a wall where they see a shadow play, not knowing any other reality. One such prisoner is released and forced to see the firelight and figures, behind the prisoners, which produces their shadow-life on the cave wall. Squinting and resisting this insight, the freed prisoner is then dragged out of the cave, resisting even more the pain of the sunlight. Eventually, he sees the truth outside the cave, as Platonic ideas, whose shadows are within it. He tries to save others in the cave, yet they resist like he did.
2. This allegory of the cave relates to Plato’s critique of theatre and other art forms as removed from the truth, even further than objects in reality, which are already just copies of ideal forms. Yet Plato’s student, Aristotle, suggested in his *Poetics* (335 BCE) a theory of “catharsis”

(from *katharizo*, “to wash”) as the purifying of emotions, such as pity and fear, through the structure of tragedy, as fictional representation.

3. A similar but more systematic theory emerged in ancient India, through Bharata Muni and others, in the *Natya-Shastra* (meaning “Dance-Theatre Teaching or Scripture”) and later commentaries. It involved eight emotions refined through plays and performances, as *rasas* (flavors) tasted by spectators, at a resonant distance. A ninth *rasa* was added a thousand years later by Abhinavagupta: peace (*shanta*), as mindful awareness, refining spectators toward enlightenment, in communion with others and union with the divine.
4. Through neuroscience today, we might say that such *rasa*-catharsis involves “cognitive reappraisal” (Beauregard) with spectators activating their *inner character*, in the lateral prefrontal cortex (LPFC, on both sides of the forehead), to taste their resonant emotions as refined feelings, giving them choices in how to act in daily life, rather than being driven impulsively like the characters onstage. Thus, what Plato and Aristotle experienced in the ancient Greek *theatron*, like Bharata Muni, Abhinavagupta, and others in their cultures, led to various theories of theatricality in later periods, related to current neuroscience. Even the term “theory,” like “theatre,” comes from *théa* (view), as a way of seeing and interpreting evidence, in science and art.
5. Today, many screen devices engage us with shadow plays and virtual networks, addictively trapping us like prisoners in Plato’s cave. But when structured with tragic or tragicomic insights, stage and screen representations can free us, to some degree, from emotional blind spots, stereotypical projections, and illusory attachments. Such passionate yet ironic, perspective altering, and *rasa*-cathartic experiences challenge our ego and group identifications. So we may want to avoid the cognitive reappraisal like Plato’s resistant prisoners.
6. Indeed, much of mass media entertainment is “escapist” today, offering fantasies that enchain us, with vicarious thrills and godlike powers of surveillance and survival in virtual realms, to hide from the painful sunlight of our mortal and social vulnerabilities. We are drawn into many caves, with shadow-play screens competing for our eyes, interactions, and investments of time and money. Such high-tech caves also perform the “data mining” of our desires, divining where voters, consumers, and inner theatres are trending as a godlike mass audience. With so many *screen caves* today, what is our reality? How can psychology, neuroscience, and theatre help us to glimpse the bigger picture in the sunlight?

7. Over a century ago, Sigmund Freud noticed that his patients' memories, especially of childhood, were like "screens" with incidental details and fantasies displacing painful traumas, which then appeared in other repetitive ways, through verbal or bodily symptoms. Current neuroscience confirms that *all memories* are, to some degree, *fictional* reconstructions, changing each time an event is remembered, as neural circuits draw on traces of related experiences to stage the present consciousness of what was. We have about 87 billion neurons and 100 trillion connections in each of our heads, but over 90% of brain activity is "unconscious." Those circuits cooperate and compete for what is "staged" as *conscious* percept or concept at a given moment, according to cognitive scientist Bernard Baars, who uses theatre metaphors in his "Global Workspace Theory."
8. Percepts arrive a fraction of a second before a concept applies, as the gathering of sense data by "bottom-up" networks meets the focused attention of "top-down" networks (Austin). These top-down and bottom-up networks also relate to the left and right hemispheres of the brain's neocortex, with 10–14 billion neurons in the frontal and parietal lobes (Fig. 1.1) separated by a physical gap, yet joined below that by the corpus callosum. The left hemisphere's expectations, rules, and more verbal, analytical concepts often filter the right's contextual, more visual, mimetic sensations, except when new ideas and images arise in the circuits between them (Table 1.1). So, I call the left neocortex a "scriptwriter/critic" and the right a "mime-improviser/scene-designer." Likewise, neuroscientist Michael Gazzaniga calls the left hemisphere



**Fig. 1.1** Left side of human brain, with major lobes, by Henry Vandyke Carter (illustrator), in *Anatomy of the Human Body*, by Henry Gray, 1918

**Table 1.1** Brain hemisphere functions (based on McGilchrist—with inner theatre elements added in **bold**)

Left cortex ( <b>scriptwriter/critic</b> )	Right cortex ( <b>mime-improviser/scene-designer</b> )
<i>predator (focused, objectifying, tool-using)</i>	<i>prey or mate (broad awareness, life/death/sex-oriented)</i>
belief, competitiveness, conscious agency	care, cooperation, unconscious socio-environmental influences
abstract/analytical thinking [inhibiting →]	emotional/sensory intuition (ties to limbic/subcortical <b>stagehands</b> )
familiar, rule-based, orthodox ideas	“anomaly-detector” and Devil’s Advocate awareness of new
examining parts in a linear, categorical way	comprehending the whole in a cyclical, contextual way
sequential, cause and effect, literal language	deductive, parallel, paradoxical, and poetic associations
manipulation of known, static, isolated, general	care of individual, evolving, interconnected, incarnate beings
self-referential (thing/machine-oriented)	other-engaged (toward living-world), empathic
self-certainty, yet toward virtual, unrealistic	responsibility, shame, and guilt, but more realistic
optimistic, yet with projection and anger	melancholic, yet sensitive to tears and alert to change
denotation (with confabulation to repress)	connotation, appreciating ambiguous meanings, ironic humor
affinity to major keys and basic rhythms	minor keys, complex syncopation, and harmonic progression
concerned with social or willed emotions	primary-process, bonding, and unconscious emotions
focused attention, <i>grasping (right hand)</i>	sustained attention, <i>exploratory (left-side facial expressions)</i>
<i>looks at other’s mouth (detached from body)</i>	<i>looks at eyes during conversations</i>
identifies simple, easily categorized shapes	identifies complex, varied figures
produces schematic representations	produces depth in time/space (Self-image and theory of other’s mind)
more dopamine (pleasure) networks	more noradrenaline (excitatory) networks
parasympathetic (quiescent) nervous system ties	sympathetic (arousal) nervous system ties
schizophrenia, MPD, ASD, anorexia, BPD disorders	depression with anxiety disorders
<i>independent</i> self-regard, over-estimating abilities	<i>interdependent</i> self-critical, in social web, valuing harmony

the “interpreter”—with such left and right cortical differences found in 90% of people, including 60% of left-handers. (The left sensorimotor cortex is connected with the right side of the body and the right cortex with the left side.) We can thus apply Freud’s insight about “screen memories” to all percepts and concepts of the past, present, and future. The inner-theatre *staging* of consciousness focuses awareness like a “spotlight” (Baars). It often represses what is too painful or distracting, yet also retains such subconscious, *backstage* impressions, desires, and projections.

9. A generation after Freud, psychiatrist Jacques Lacan described the “mirror stage” of early childhood, between 6 and 18 months, when the baby notices itself in a mirror and performs for others’ reactions. The baby gains an imaginary sense of Self in the symbolic framework of rules and languages around it, which it learns more and more as it develops in later stages of life. Thus, according to current neuroscience, each of us bears a unique neural network from specific life experiences. Billions of neurons are “pruned” in the natural cell death (apoptosis) of unused areas and connections strengthened through increasing axon ties in circuits that are utilized. This refines our brain’s “wiring,” especially from childhood until our mid-twenties, when the frontal lobes mature, but also throughout our lives.
10. Numerous interactions with other people consolidate the circuits that become our mirrored sense of self: an “actor” with potential “characters” in various everyday scenes, through memories, fantasies, and dreams. One’s *inner actor*, performing characters in ordinary life, draws on others’ desires, which modeled and mirrored it earlier, in experience traces that can only be partly reconstructed as conscious memories. Yet the subconscious memory traces continue to influence percepts and concepts in each staging of the present, like an *inner audience* in the darkness, cheering for what appears in the “spotlight” of consciousness (Baars), through temporal lobes at the sides of your head, with their long-term, emotional memory, expectation, and intuition networks. (Although the spotlight is a modern device, theatre has always involved the audience focusing its attention, to make the present moment of performance appear.)
11. You also bear an *inner director*, with a sense of others’ minds that you theorize as ideal spectators, internalized as a superego. This “Theory of Mind” network about others’ perspectives has a hub in the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex (DMPFC), in your forehead, between your eyes. It is active, too, as a “default” system when the brain automatically shifts toward social interests while not focused on analytical tasks (Lieberman). This relates also to the *inner stage/production manager*,

as I call it, a network that monitors one's behaviors as proper or not, with its hub in the ventro-medial PFC (below the DMPFC). The *inner actor* of my self-knowledge has its hub in the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC), between the DMPFC and VMPFC. The *inner character*, when I appear in a mirror, is most active in the LPFC on the sides of my head, as if the mask of Self attaches there. The right lower (ventro-) LPFC is also a key area for controlling impulses and changing left-cortical beliefs with new perspectives, like an *inner sound/light operator*.

12. These frontal networks connect with the *inner costume (body-image) definer/designer* in the parietal lobes behind them, with a bodily sense of self and other in space. They are also tied to many backstage operators, or *inner stagehands*, in various limbic and subcortical areas, involving bottom-up drives and emotion systems, through feedback loops with the neocortex (Pizzato, *Beast-People*). Use Table 1.2, with its summary of inner theatre elements, to consider how your brain interacts with the theatre histories mapped in this book, through the experiences in your life. Which conflicts are shown in theatres of the past, in their geopolitical contexts (in the TIMELINES), expressing inner and outer, individual and collective networks, with insights for ours today?

**Table 1.2** Inner theatre elements (applying the neuroscience of Baars, Lieberman, McGilchrist, and Newberg)

Neural network hub	Function	Inner theatre element
left cortex	abstract rules, verbal thought, and objective focusing	<i>scriptwriter/critic</i>
right cortex	contextual, visuo-spatial, and subjective openness	<i>mime-improviser/ scene-designer</i>
left and right parietal lobes	bodily sense of self and other in space	<i>costume (body-image) definer and designer</i>
temporal lobes and insula	memory, intuition, and meaning-making	<i>audience</i>
medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC)	inner knowledge of self, yet influenced by others	<i>actor</i>
dorsomedial prefrontal cortex (DMPFC)	"mentalizing" theories of others' minds	<i>director</i>
ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VMPFC)	monitoring one's own behaviors	<i>stage/production manager</i>
lateral prefrontal cortex (LPFC)	viewing/imagining one's appearance (in a mirror)	<i>character/mask (persona)</i>
right ventrolateral prefrontal cortex (rVLPFC)	control of impulses and actions	<i>sound/light operator</i>
limbic system and brainstem	primary emotions and survival/reproduction drives	<i>stagehands</i>

13. The staging of consciousness inside our heads and the presentation of self in everyday life are connected, as inner and outer theatres. They become illuminated by the art of theatre, reflecting other forms of theatricality across history. Yet how do the inner mirroring networks of our human brains relate to the *biological* evolution of our ancestors, from earlier mammals and primates? How did that evolution lead to the *cultural* development of shadow-screen caves, from deep history to recent technologies, with the Web now shaping our mirror-stage “selfies” and superegos, as collective theatres of consciousness that trap or free us?

## C. Deep-Historical, Bio-Cultural Identity Needs

1. Biological evolution involves *natural selection*. This means that random mutations in the genes produce creative options that are better for survival and reproduction in a given yet changing environment. *Sexual selection* also shapes each generation, through mating preferences in bodies and behaviors, such as the “costly signaling” of the peacock’s tail or the bowerbird’s courtship ritual of decorating a twig enclosure. With the complex theatricality of humans, appearance and performance in everyday life can lead to sexual selection for parenting each generation—with social ideals of attractiveness in arranged marriages, romantic love, or other forms of partnership. Thus, *social selection* becomes a powerful factor in our past inheritance and future legacies, as it may also be for many animal species (Roughgarden), yet with a symbolic difference in the inner and outer theatres of human reflectiveness.
2. With humans, evolution has four dimensions: (1) *genetic*, in the DNA code, (2) *epigenetic*, with chemical markers on the genes passed to offspring, (3) *social*, akin to but vastly more complex than in other primates, and (4) *symbolic*, with our changing cultural environments (Jablonka and Lamb). The symbolic dimension of human bio-cultural evolution creates tremendous achievements, through language, morality, art, and technology. Yet its power to bind people into mass ideologies also has a dark side. Groups become more conservative or progressive in their cultural changes—and come into conflict, projecting stereotypes and finding scapegoats to purify themselves. Nostalgia for a nation’s or ethnic group’s imagined greatness may create a progressive conservatism that demeans others, with a “Social Darwinism” that prioritizes fitness



for dominant cultural attributes, even to the point of eugenics or genocide. However, studying theatre history can reveal such dangers in group performances, with the tragic flaws of inner theatres networking together, from prior stages to today's playful, yet hyper-theatrical, mass, and social media.

3. Like other mammals, human offspring play. They are *rehearsing* survival skills, but in social and symbolic dimensions. *Dreams* may likewise be social skill rehearsals with symbolic elements, especially as “threat simulations” (Valli and Revonsuo). They are personal, *cathartic refinements* of daily experiences, desires, and emotions, consolidating memories through fantasies—akin to the art of theatre. Various *theatrical media*, developing historically from stages and screens to the Web today, share conscious dream worlds *collectively*, involving unconscious elements, identity needs, light and dark play, and changing cultural frameworks.
4. Cooperative and competitive group environments shape our childhood play, nightly dreaming, and various other forms of outer and inner theatres. We each contend for current significance and long-term value, through survival and reproduction drives that extend from biology to culture. These involve *bottom-up*, bodily, and emotional needs. Yet they also involve *top-down*, social, and symbolic demands—in a particular cultural framework, such as a game's arena and rules, or a theatre's setting and script. This gives us a sense of *identity* with others if we perform well. For we need more than just genetic survival and reproduction. We play, dream, and perform in daily life to become significant as an actor and character in different situations, with long-term influences, for a sense of purpose and meaning.
5. Some people even sacrifice their biological survival or potential to have offspring, sublimating those drives into *cultural ideals*, as when dying for one's country or choosing to have a career instead of children. A key chemical for such social and symbolic sublimations is the neuropeptide *oxytocin*. It acts as both a transmitter between brain cells and a hormone signaling between the brain and body—in the pleasure of *bonding* with loved ones or group members. But it also strengthens *antipathy* toward outsiders, encouraging cooperation within and competition between groups. Thus, our evolution from mammals and primates (with similar neuropeptides) gives us powerful, biochemical “stagehands” for our inner and outer theatres.

6. We also have remnant structures in our brains from early animal ancestors. Our deepest hindbrain areas, including the brainstem and cerebellum, show a kinship with *fish*. Our emotional limbic system (at the core of the brain) and temporal lobes (at the sides of the head, also with memory gateways) show a kinship with other *mammals*. Our parietal and occipital lobes (at the rear of the head) relate to our *primate* ancestors, coordinating the self/other and visual maze of living in trees. But these inner stagehands and audience circuits have been radically transformed, especially through ties to human prefrontal areas: the inner director, stage manager, actor, character, and operator networks.
7. Emotions, like yawns and laughter, are contagious—with inner stagehands signaling *between brains*. Such shared behaviors and feelings may be inherited from our mammal ancestors with strong social ties, as shown by herd animals, canines, and primates today. Human “emotional contagion” involves *automatic mimicry* through synchronized facial expressions, postures, gestures, and vocalizations, with or without a verbal, cognitive component (Hatfield et al.). These everyday theatrical interactions are crucial to the oxytocin-based bonds that form in couples and groups—against outsiders—as the stagehands in our brains signal, mostly unconsciously, to others’ inner theatres, through “neural resonance” (Prochazkova and Kret 101). Thus, human brains add to the mammalian and primate inheritance of emotional contagion: highly complex social networks and symbolic meanings. This occurs today through physical presence and screen media, especially with Facebook and Twitter, whose “massive-scale” networks affect users’ moods positively and negatively (Kramer et al.).
8. Technologies of inner/outer theatricality have multiplied from deep history to today: in person, onscreen, and online. We can alter others’ feelings in everyday life by performing positive moods, as an acting choice of cheerfulness and gratitude. However, negative feelings may also circulate, especially against stereotypical others, through the popular mode of “melodrama” onstage and onscreen, often with stirring melodies. Across many specific genres, melodrama features admirable heroes against evil villains, stopping their threats or getting violent vengeance. This was defined onstage in the 1700s–1800s and onscreen more recently, from movies and television to the shaming frenzies of social media. But this *melodramatic mode* can be found as far back as ancient Egyptian ritual theatre, with repeated battles between the gods Horus and Set, personifying good and evil, order and chaos, ruler and rebel. Look for such melodramatic *binaries* (and their comical

caricatures) throughout the periods outlined here. Consider the temptation toward similar stereotypes today, with projections onto leaders, scapegoats, and groups.

**[Whom do we idolize and demonize, through our melodramatic mass and social media, like plays in the past? Who benefits and who suffers, even when idealized?]**

9. Such *theatrical contagion*, whether in melodramatic, tragic, comical, or farcical modes, involves “mirror neurons” that we inherit from our primate ancestors. Discovered in macaque monkeys a few decades ago, mirror neurons activate *both* when the primate *makes* a goal-directed movement, such as picking up a peanut, *and sees* someone else (animal or human) make the same motion. Auditory mirror neurons activate with sounds for behaviors that are performed or heard. Canonical neurons are also involved in such self/other simulations, activated by typical objects for certain actions. Such neurons are located in the human premotor cortex, which directs bodily movement and produces verbal language in the left cortex. Our mirror neuron system is also connected with emotional contagion through deeper limbic areas, such as fear and disgust in the temporal lobes (amygdala and insula), with automatic mimicry evoked by facial expressions (van der Gaag et al.). Thus, our inner theatre, akin to a monkey’s, yet with a higher degree of reflective awareness, automatically *simulates* another person’s behaviors and feelings, sending signals *to perform them*. Other brain networks usually block the outer imitative movements and vocalizations, except in the disorders of echopraxia and echolalia. But internal mimicry is still involved, forming a basis for emotional contagion and interpersonal empathy.
10. The more *salient* the observed behavior (the more valuable to survival/reproduction in a biological or cultural sense), the more it may be simulated by the inner theatre, especially if it relates to personal experiences. Brain mapping studies with dancers watching dance videos or musicians listening to music (or even looking at sheet music) show more activation in their mirror neuron areas with a dance style they also perform or music they have played (Hyman). Thus, when we watch and listen to a performance, each of us brings a deeply animal–human, yet personal history to that vicarious experience. Through emotional contagion and mirror neuron systems, our subconscious stagehands mimic—while more conscious, inner theatre elements resonate with or critically recognize—the feelings, actions, characters, and story onstage or onscreen.

11. Experiments show that our body-image and social projections are surprisingly *malleable*, as we mirror one another theatrically. If you put your hand under a table, with a rubber hand above it, and watch someone stroke that fake hand while yours is stroked in the same way unseen, you will probably start to feel that the rubber hand is your hand—even though you know it is not. If the experimenter then bends back the rubber fingers, or hits them with a hammer, your sweat levels will spontaneously increase, showing automatic bodily arousal in your *sympathetic nervous system*, perhaps with facial and vocal reactions, as if it were your hand (Armel and Ramachandran). Thus, actors onstage and onscreen can become extensions of our bodies, emotions, and identities—through the bottom-up neural circuits of our inner theatre, to the degree that the scriptwriter/critic (left cortex), *filtering* the mime-improviser/scene-designer (right cortex), allows that resonant connection.
12. Indeed, scientists have found that the right frontal and temporal lobes (with the inner audience of memory circuits) are activated by such “rubber hand illusions” (Tsakiris et al.). Similar tests with monkeys discovered that mirror neurons in the premotor cortex are also involved (Armel and Ramachandran), simulating the observed actions as vicarious experiences. Further experiments with humans find that looking down at one’s body, while wearing a head-mounted video display that shows a manikin instead, produces identification with the manikin in just one minute, even without touch—and a startle response when a knife is plunged into the manikin (Petkova and Ehrsson). Such “body-swapping” experiments show how taking on the point of view (POV) of a character onstage through the play’s dramatic focus, or onscreen with POV shots, might encourage viewers to feel their own bodies at risk in the show’s violence, as well as in other types of physical contact between characters, simulated in the spectator’s inner theatre.
13. “Enfacement” experiments with a viewer feeling her face touched, while she sees a face onscreen being touched in the same way, also produces strong identification, with feelings of similarity, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (Tajadura-Jiménez et al.). Yet such self/other merging of faces increases with the *beauty* of the face being viewed (van Leeuwen et al.), idealizing one’s inner character. Fear and happiness can also be evoked in the viewer with faceless, full-body *poses* of those emotions in photographs, triggering mirror neuron, emotional contagion (de Gelder et al.), as with Delsarte’s nineteenth-century acting

method or the stereotyped gestures of stage and screen melodrama. However, *racism decreased*, on implicit bias tests, in subjects who experienced a strong identification with a rubber hand of a different color than their own (Farmer et al.). Our unconscious social projections can be altered by mirror neuron, emotional contagion, and body-swapping identifications, evoked onstage or onscreen, if they go *against* our stereotyped expectations.

14. *Melodrama* often confirms stereotypes of good versus evil, evoking fear, rage, and revenge against objectified villains, in the vigilante violence of our screen media and videogames, which bleed into real life. But *tragicomic* twists of empathy and irony can change the viewer's perspective, with emotional resonance tasted at a distance, according to the theories of Aristotle, Bharata Muni, Abhinavagupta, and Bertolt Brecht. This relates to the reinterpreting and reimagining of aversive, sad, and erotic images (photos or videos), through mindful detachment, with "cognitive reappraisal" experiments finding the LPFC inner character activated, along with the medial PFC director, actor, and stage manager (Beauregard 176–80, 199–200). *In the chapters ahead*, notice how both possibilities develop, of tragicomic *rasa*-catharsis and melodramatic catharsis-backfire, from ancient to postmodern plays, through artistic practices, metaphysical or humanist frameworks, and political theatrics. Such developments might even become pieces of an *uncanny mirror*, reflecting the blind spots of today's inner theatres and social mass media caves.
15. Bio-cultural identity needs start with bodily *survival* drives. But they soon involve the pleasures of maternal *nurturing*, and yet traumatic pain in, or fears of losing such comforting, holding, and playful spaces in our childhood. We thus *cooperate and compete* with others (with peers and adults) for attention to our bodily, emotional, and social needs. Eventually, we are drawn into larger arenas of play, identity, and story—separating from maternal and childhood spaces, as imaginary ego realms, toward symbolic Self/Other frameworks, especially through abstract words and rules. But right-cortical, mime-improviser/scene-designer, *imaginary* networks are still involved in the further developments of Self, through left-cortical, scriptwriter/critic, *symbolic* circuits and their ties to other people.
16. These inner and outer, neural and social networks also involve deeper animal drives of limbic-audience and subcortical-stagehand, memory and emotion circuits, signaling from each person's past, between present brains. Such *real* drives and their edgy eruptions can cause symptomatic disturbances in daily life, at thresholds of the abject,

semiotic *chora*, a womblike “space of becoming” inside the mind, in language, and in the rituals of collective performance, also related to traditional female roles (Kristeva). And yet, these liminal or “liminoid” edges (Turner) may provide new revelations, especially with tragicomic insights, onstage or onscreen. Look for such transformative developments in the periods mapped by this book—especially regarding female, darker skinned, or underclass characters and artists, abjected by the dominant patriarchal culture, yet with inner theatres producing new views that are eventually valued.

17. Theatre often explores identity crises in characters’ lives, reflecting clashes in *cultural frameworks*, from the ancient Greek Oedipus and Indian Shakuntala to medieval English Everyman and Renaissance Hamlet, to Romantic heroes with conflicts of passion versus honor, to melodramatic, realist, anti-realist, absurdist, postmodern, and post-colonial egos. Yet plays and other records of performance practices from the past, especially those long ago, were preserved because they were valued by people in power—and by subsequent artists and historians who saw their relation to later stages. Likewise, each of our lives develops through stages of identity, with inner and group conflicts, performing possible selves for others in power, hoping to be *valued*. As you consider the various periods of theatre history, look for specific identity crises and clashing cultural frameworks that relate to your life today, especially what your generation might learn from the past, while acting in the present and building the future.
18. A significant step in our inner theatre development occurs at about 18 months of age (at the end of Lacan’s mirror stage) when babies turn from self-directed actions to “other-directed symbolic play,” such as putting a cup to a doll’s lips. After age two and a half, the child becomes aware of social norms, as well as others’ observations and judgments of its actions as good or bad, involving pride or shame. At age three to four, further “self-conscious evaluative emotions” develop, such as guilt and more complex embarrassment. And around age four, the child’s episodic memory begins to create a life story of past, present, and future (Feinberg 56–65).
19. Until age seven, the child also uses *denial* as a defense mechanism to protect its developing sense of Self. But then after age seven, with an increasing ability to “mentalize” (imagine others’ perspectives), unwanted emotions and thoughts become not only denied in one’s Self, but also *projected* onto others. An imaginary friend or enemy may also be created by the child, as playmate or monster, located in

a toy or projected as an invisible presence. Thus, key elements of the social, imaginary/symbolic brain develop early in childhood, with its metacognitive skills of self-reflection and other-perception, yet also its melodramatic stereotyping of good and evil, with an ego rejecting the bad in one's Self, and avoiding guilt, by projecting it on others. Notice this melodramatic tendency, on a collective scale, in the geopolitical rivalries and conquests listed in the TIMELINES of chapters ahead. Also notice the theories, artists, and plays that tried to expose such melodramatic dangers with tragic complexities and comic exaggerations.

20. Our ancestors developed highly reflective, hyper-theatrical brains, especially through the social and symbolic dimensions of evolution, producing great achievements, from agriculture, temples, cities, and wheeled vehicles to modern science, skyscrapers, online worlds, and spaceships. But humans have also caused much suffering through warrior cultures and conquering empires arising from agricultural settlements, with ritual sacrifices to dead leaders and unifying gods, ethnic genocides, slave labor, and weapons of mass destruction. The TIMELINES of this book map the treasures and tragedies of such historical developments, as do the numbered paragraphs that follow. Pick what interests you to research further, *creating your own map* for learning, reflecting on, and applying the details of theatre's histories, through the globe of your brain.
21. We play many interactive *roles* in daily life, improvising yet discerning a *script* in retrospect, through our inner theatres. The nurturing support of parents becomes internalized, as inner *chora* and mirrors, with the continuing oxytocin pleasures of group and pair bonding, through peers and romantic partners, as we perform more independent, symbolic identities, involving judgment and rivalry. Thus, each of us seeks a personal meaning to our lives, building memories through connections with other people into a specific, bio-cultural *story*. Likewise, we seek collective meaning through group identifications with and against certain people in the past, through theatrical reflections in *history*. With a big-brain wildness beyond instinctual limits, we are still evolving cultural ideals as inner/outer frameworks to restrain and extend our remnant animal drives. Your study of theatre history *plays a part* in that evolution of social, symbolic norms—with each generation's reaction to the goals and errors of the past changing their legacies, for better or worse, in the future.

## D. Tragic Flaws in Being Human

1. The subcortical/limbic, right-cortical, and left-cortical networks of our inner theatre reflect not only our animal to mammal and primate evolution, but also the cultural developments of our ancestors, with tremendous achievements and yet tragic flaws. Our two-legged, tool-making, hominin relative, *Homo erectus*, developed a “mimetic” culture about two million years ago, with a “kinematic” imagination. This involved gestures and tones for communication, with this “birth of the actor” relating to mime and “pretend play” today (Donald 263–73). Such mimetic expression and prosody, including facial recognition in a mirror and emotional sounds in verbal language, are centered in the right cortex (Keenan; Bryan), relating also to musical theatre. The *mimetic dimension* continues to be a key element of our inner and interactive theatres today, through the right-cortical, holistic, contextual mime-improviser/scene-designer. But humans have extended it in prodigious, hyper-theatrical ways, especially through recent technologies: from stage to screen to immersive virtual worlds with empowering insights, yet seductive dangers, as in Plato’s fabled cave.
2. About a half million years ago, our direct ancestor, *Homo sapiens*, developed a “mythic” culture, with oral language and narrative thought (Donald). This initiated our heritage of storytelling and character-impersonation, building on mimetic skills, from deep history into the recorded traditions mapped in the chapters ahead. The mythic stage in human evolution involved fundamental changes in the vocal tract and brain, with an “invasion” of the left cortex by *verbal* language networks, replacing spatial self-other perception, which became more specialized in the right cortex (LeDoux 303, 318). These related areas on each side of the brain include mirror neuron systems (Lametti and Mattar), with those on the right also active for prosody in language and making new metaphors through poetic imagery (Cardillo et al.).
3. With the development of mythic culture, distinctive *binary, causal, and abstractive* networks evolved in the left cortex (Newberg et al.). Struggling to survive and reproduce as hunter-gatherers a half million years ago, our ancestors identified nurturing or threatening forces in nature, regarding personalities they loved or feared who had died—as good or evil causing, spiritual characters in a cosmic theatre. This again involved the balancing act between left and right cortical networks. A “Devil’s Advocate” in the right cortex offers alternative, *holistic*



views, or erupts with *mischievous* impulses, against the dominant, *orthodox* rules and narrative filters of the left cortex (Ramachandran and Blakeslee 135–47; Feinberg). Thus, the right-cortical mime-improviser/scene-designer and left-cortical scriptwriter/critic compete, as well as cooperate, through the *mimetic and mythic dimensions* of culture, from deep history to our mass theatrical media today.

4. A further stage in human evolution, “theoretic” culture, started about 40,000 years ago, with Ice Age cave paintings and mobile figurines, continuing throughout the history of art and technology to the present. This involved the “externalization of memory ... [using] symbolic devices to store and retrieve cultural knowledge” (Donald 262). It also demonstrated a new inner theatre with the brain’s “cognitive fluidity” between previously distinct networks for natural history (knowledge of the environment), social intelligence (communication), and technical intelligence (with artifacts made from mental templates), involving “symbolic meanings” in art (Mithen 163–65).
5. Yet, externalized memory fields can become a dangerous “Trojan Horse,” through the brain’s cognitive fluidity, “a device that invades the innermost spaces of the mind. It can play our cognitive instrument, directing our minds toward predetermined end states along a set course” (Donald 316). Like the huge wooden horse with hidden soldiers, offered as a gift by archaic Greeks to get inside the Trojan walls, theatricality in art and technology may slip inside a person’s mind or group’s ideology.
6. This may involve challenging, *rasa*-cathartic, perspective-altering insights, as with the plays treasured by theatre artists and historians. But theatre’s past and our current hyper-theatrical media also include polarizing stereotypes of good versus evil, with vengeful, self and other sacrifices, which *chain* us, as in Plato’s cave. They also *train* us with lustful, violent desires, even when we leave such virtual spaces of *entertainment* (“that which holds between”) and enter the theatres of everyday life, with neural circuits rewired.
7. Neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman finds a “Trojan horse self” in what I call the *inner actor* network, with a hub in the MPFC, which soaks up social influences, “without us realizing where these foundational world-views came from” (235). Lieberman’s studies mapped the MPFC of college students while giving them health messages about using sunscreen or quitting smoking. MPFC activation predicted their later performance of such advised behaviors, better than their reported “beliefs and intentions”

of what they would do (197–200). Thus, positive marketing, or propaganda, changed their inner theatre into the future, “in a way that drives behavior but, at the same time, in a way they are unaware of.” How much is our *inner actor*, the private network of self, *directed* by others’ influences, especially through theatrical media?

8. In humans, the animal drives of survival and reproduction have extended, with our greater awareness of death’s inevitability, toward material and spiritual *greed* for transcendent power. Trojan Horses of religious, political, and artistic memory (and marketing) fields have slipped into many minds, evoking sacrificial ideals, from ancient gods and empires to modern goods and media. A group’s mythic history can demand *sacrifices* for a greater sense of belonging and meaning in one’s life, serving the group leader (alive or divinized) and focusing resentments on certain *scapegoats*, as past villains or current threats. This melodramatizing temptation occurs throughout history, often with tragic results—and currently with fears about immigrants as criminals and terrorists. So it is crucial for your generation to view the mimetic, mythic, and theoretic dimensions of theatricality, in history and today, with critical eyes. As you read the pages ahead, look for achievements to embrace and perpetuate, with great plays, insightful styles, and engaging techniques. But also consider the errors of the past, especially when they repeat. Must they?
9. In his *Poetics*, where Aristotle suggests an ancient theory of catharsis, he describes the hero as being of admirable qualities, yet with a *tragic flaw*: an error in judgment (*hamartia*, missed aim) that causes suffering for himself and others. Aristotle refers to Sophocles’s *Oedipus the King*, from a century before, with the problem-solving, society-saving courage and yet excessive *hubris* of the hero to discover the killer of the previous king, while initially scapegoating his apparent rivals. This increases the sympathy and fear in spectators, as the hero’s flaw and its catastrophic consequences are gradually revealed toward the play’s climax. With increased cathartic awareness, viewers might change their impulse to idolize flawed leaders and to repeat such sacrificial errors. **[Which leaders today are idolized, and yet make errors, like Oedipus, ironically related to the abilities and achievements for which they are admired?]**
10. The repeated errors of leaders and groups in human history point to a common tragic flaw: our fundamentally insecure egos. We are normally born at about half the corresponding development of other apes (Cozolino 21). We should be in the womb for 18–24 months to have

their newborn coordination and physical maturity. Such a *normal prematurity* of birth, in our two-legged, big-brained species, created a different significance to the emotionally contagious, mirror neuron, touching, and holding interactions of babies with parents, which involve right-cortical, mimetic “attunement” (191–96). It created a greater dependence on *multiple* caretakers, leading to strong mimetic and mythic bonds in our cultural connections (Hrdy). Thus, each of us is thrust into a *theatre of caretakers* who are sometimes nurturing in positive ways and sometimes not—with further traumatizing conflicts in the home and elsewhere.

11. Along with prematurity of birth, humans evolved extended youthfulness (neoteny). We look like young apes, even as adults, with round heads and flat faces (de Waal, *Our* 240). Unlike other primates, our faces are mostly bare of hair, with red lips and big eyes that have white instead of brown sclera, enabling our emotional expressions and interest-pointing gazes to become more theatrical through our ancestors’ mimetic communications (Tomasello et al.). We have thus extended primate playfulness into our adult lives, through various stage and screen media, especially in recent periods of history.
12. Experiments have shown that children will imitate adult actions more precisely than young chimps, who emulate the goal, but skip unnecessary steps. This instinctual *over-imitation* in children, ritually repeating all the details of adult behaviors, creates a “ratchet effect” (like gears) in learning social tools and rules, increasing the spread of distinctive cultural influences to the next generation (Tomasello). This enables conservation as well as rapid change in human social theatres. For example, the San Bushmen in southern Africa (considered further in the next chapter) have conserved and refined their traditional techniques for hunting and gathering food in a natural environment for thousands of years. They are not “primitive” but advanced in adapting to the Kalahari Desert where, for 10 months of the year, there is no surface water available (Davis 21).
13. There was a radical change in many cultures around the world, however, when they started developing agriculture about 11,000–5,000 years ago. They created new social environments with fixed settlements, religious hierarchies, and progressive technologies, often in conflict with other territorial groups. Especially in the last 400 years, Euro-American (Western) cultures have stressed ego *independence*, through imaginary and symbolic role models, rapidly creating new worlds and notions of “freedom,” reflected in changing theatrical styles.

Other cultures have continued to stress *interdependence* and social “harmony,” through responsibilities to family and ancestors, maintaining traditional theatre practices over hundreds of years. These often involve gods and spiritual forces, as considered in the pages ahead on Asian and indigenous performances.

14. From primal animal-spirit visions to “big gods” (Norenzayan) to current mass media idols, humans extend their *hollow yet inflated egos*, with real-life consequences in political, war, and terrorist theatres. Idealizing the egos around us, from parents and peers to politicians and celebrities, helps shore up our own ego defenses of denial and projection. But it also creates public pressures on “stars” to perform in divine ways. They sometimes betray their believers with scandalous failings and then are enthusiastically denigrated, as with the recent fall of former media heroes due to sexual misconduct. Yet our idolized leaders may also hide their tragic flaws and vulnerabilities by directing melodramatic blame on others, as scapegoats to be bullied.
15. Humans are great cooperators, evolving from small hunter-gatherer bands to cities with millions of people. Yet our over-imitation and cultural absorption as children, along with playful mischief and rebellion, lead to our hyper-theatrical awareness of mortality, social identity, and story performing as adults—through competition within and between our brains’ inner-theatre networks. *Mimetic desires* for being like others we admire, and having what they have, or being desired like them, may turn into *rivalry* against them (Girard). With our oxytocin bonding pleasures, groups and their leaders become stronger through such rivalry, especially with a perceived threat from a villain or injury to be avenged.
16. The hero-victim-villain formula of *melodrama* emerges in families, school fights, gang violence, political debates, destructive wars, and terrorism. Often this involves the binary, causal, abstractive (good versus evil, patriarchal), myth-making networks of our left-cortical scriptwriter/critic. But notice in the pages ahead how historical developments in geopolitics, as well as theatrical practices and plays, also reflect a *tragicomic awareness* of such mimetic rivalry flaws. This may involve more right-cortical, holistic, contextual, mime-improviser/scene-designer networks, within and between brains, offering alternative, Devil’s Advocate views that are not seen as purely evil. Yet sub-cortical, emotional-drive stagehand and temporal-lobe, memorial audience networks are also involved in the creative achievements and

- destructive flaws of being a big-brained, prematurely born, ratchet-effective, group-bonding, hyper-theatrical human.
17. The human theatre of everyday life vastly extends the mimetic rivalry of other apes, through our inflated, yet vulnerable, ego and group identities. This involves not just survival and reproduction as vital drives, but also *territoriality* and *hierarchy*. Chimpanzees in the wild patrol the edge of their group's territory. If they find a lone chimp, even a former member and kin, they might kill, tear apart, and eat the outsider (Wrangham and Peterson 5–18). Chimp groups also cross borders to raid other groups, killing rival males and females with infants, or taking females to breed (Boehm 345). Within their group, chimps sometimes become extremely violent, with a drive for fairness turning into vengeance and with male coalitions dethroning the alpha leader (de Waal, *Our*; Whyte). Yet chimps reconcile after fights, even with kisses, and show not only *reciprocal* altruism (such as grooming another chimp to get some food shared later in return), but also *empathetic* altruism (bringing an old female some water from mouth to mouth) through perspective taking and targeted helping (de Waal, *Age, Primates*; and “Putting”). Bonobos, a related species, have female-dominated hierarchies with multiple sexual encounters in and between groups, rather than violent male rivalries, perhaps showing another potential from our common ancestor six million years ago.
  18. In humans, with much larger groups than other apes, mimetic rivalry can lead to the “social drama” of a breach, rising to a crisis, and then a redress with splitting or reintegration (Turner). Splits within and conflicts between groups may produce repeated acts of such social drama, with “reciprocal violence” between factions, as each side asserts its notion of fairness by attacking the other in revenge for losses suffered (Girard). But the destructive potential of endless reciprocal violence, involving righteous rage on both sides, may be redirected toward a “scapegoat” inside or outside the group, whose family and friends are not powerful enough to seek vengeance in return.
  19. Such scapegoating also relates to the ancient Greek notion of *katharsis*, with the actor onstage performing a tragic character, purifying the audience through fictional scapegoating. The Greek term *katharsis* is akin to *katharma*, the object taken from a sick body to represent spiritual evil in a healing rite. Thus, the stage actor as *katharma* is also a *pharmakos* (poisonous scapegoat), becoming *pharmakon* (poison yet cure), in a creative, fictional reflection of shamanic rites, providing tragicomic insights with the character's abjection (Girard 286–90).

20. The objectifying of characters onstage, especially as melodramatic villains or farcical fools, reveals a danger in the popular appetite for such poisons (and their pharmacies) in theatre history. Ancient Rome exemplified this, with criminals (including Christians) put to death in the arena, eaten alive by wild animals, as entertainment for others' voyeuristic, sadistic pleasures. Such poisonous objectifying becomes even more addictive today, with the "easy violence" of movies, television dramas, and videogames, accessible *daily* on many public and private screens, which also display fear-mongering news media, home accident videos with laugh tracks, and algorithm-built hate groups. Thus, the desire to "blow off steam," by venting emotions through such theatres, can produce cathartic backfire, poisoning instead of curing social discourse and behavior, by objectifying scapegoats onscreen and in real life—even to the point of purging them to purify one's national or racial identity (Pizzato, *Inner* 238–42). This may involve group myths about being treated unfairly, but with the potential to be "great again," through powerful leaders.

**[How are certain people scapegoated today, like and unlike a character as *katharma* and *pharmakos* in ancient Greek theatre or a criminal executed in the Roman games, and who benefits?]**

21. The expectation of *fairness* with food rewards has been found in various animals: wolves, coyotes, dogs, ravens, and monkeys (Brosnan). The "Moral Foundations Theory" of psychologist Jonathan Haidt points to such animal drives, especially in apes, as the basis for moral emotions and ideals in humans: supporting fairness through anger, guilt, and gratitude; minimizing suffering through compassion; being loyal to group bonds through pride and rage at others; respecting hierarchy through fear; and maintaining cleanliness through disgust (or purification rites). Haidt also defines the moral ideal of "liberty" in his list of six ethical principles, researching how they are valued across the political spectrum. So I have added the animal drive of "fighting for freedom" through rage, in my chart of Haidt's foundations (Table 1.3).
22. Haidt's online research with tens of thousands of survey participants (at [YourMorals.org](http://YourMorals.org)) finds that *libertarians* prioritize freedom, *liberals* value freedom, fairness, and care, and *conservatives* emphasize all six moral foundations, including loyalty, authority, and sanctity. But each political faction defines freedom (liberty) in different ways (see [www.MoralFoundations.org](http://www.MoralFoundations.org)).

**Table 1.3** Moral foundations theory with binary frameworks [plus added elements in brackets] adapted from Haidt, *Righteous Mind* (125), plus Haidt and Joseph, “Intuitive Ethics”

Ape [or animal] observations	Human emotions	Moral binary (good/evil)
[fighting for freedom]	[rage]	liberty/oppression
supporting fairness	anger, gratitude, guilt	fairness/cheating
minimizing suffering	compassion	care/harm
being loyal to group bonds	group pride, rage at traitors	loyalty/betrayal
respecting hierarchical authorities	respect, fear [& awe]	authority/subversion
maintaining cleanliness	disgust [& awe]	sanctity/degradation

23. This also relates to the work of linguist George Lakoff, who finds that liberals use metaphors of government as “Nurturing Parent” while conservatives use a “Strict Father” model, with different emotions involved—akin to right-cortical nurturing and left-cortical judgmental networks. Such animal and family foundations for *morality* transform into diverse frameworks with religious and secular ethics across the globe, based in group-sustaining drives of territorial safety and hierarchical order.
24. Notice the different *moral frameworks* in theatre history, referring back to the chart here. These involve *changing* theatrical ideals of an inter- or in-dependent self, regarding the Other of prehistoric animal–human spirits, ancient gods, an almighty medieval God, Renaissance Humanism, Enlightenment Deism, Romantic passion versus honor, modern realist and anti-realist abstractions, absurdist emptiness, and postmodern diversities with a mass media audience gaining godlike powers.  
**[Which moral ideals do you value onstage, onscreen, and in everyday life—related to those in Haidt’s theory with corresponding animal emotions?]**
25. The animal–human drives of survival, reproduction, territoriality, alliance/hierarchy, nurturing, and play also involve, from primates to humans: grooming (or gossip about social fitness) and avoidance of loss through transcendent meaning or purpose. Even before today’s online social media, the research of psychologist Robin Dunbar found that over 60% of human speech was used for *gossip*. (More recent studies say 80–90%.) He theorized that verbal gossip evolved from manual *grooming* in our early ancestors, who built alliances, like current

primates, by picking and eating insects off one another's hairs and then exchanged such favors for further benefits, such as food sharing and sexual activity.

26. As our big-brained, mostly hairless ancestors evolved, with premature-birth vulnerabilities, such group connections became even more vital. They were facilitated by mimetic gestures, as well as touch, and then by the mythic dimensions of symbolic abstractions, which gave *transcendent* meaning to social gossip about "us" versus "them." Eventually, the art of theatre *displayed* what people gossiped about, giving more godlike (yet illusory) power to spectators, as voyeurs of intimate intrigues onstage. In the chapters ahead, explore how such developments are reflected in the mimetic desires and rivalries of plays in each period, involving group alliances and hierarchical conflicts through gossip and scapegoating—in *social or cosmic* dimensions, with religious and secular performances. Use Table 1.4 to consider how

**Table 1.4** Transformations of animal drives to human emotions and cultural values (with positive and negative aspects)

Animal drives	Primal emotions	Cultural extensions	Social emotions and goals	Religious ideals
seeking beyond loss	hope/grief	imagine past/future	long-term meaning	holy purpose
<b>primate</b> grooming	trust/alienation	communal gossip	mimetic likes/dislikes (fitness)	good/evil
playfulness	humor/rebellion	sports, art, and media	creative freedom and fantasies	spiritual powers
alliance and hierarchy	fairness/rivalry	laws and rulers	loyalty and awe or envy	morality
<b>mammalian</b> care	empathy/control	self-sacrifice	kinship and reciprocal altruism	charity
territoriality	security/rage	border trade/war	nostalgia/defensiveness	sacred spaces
reproduction	love/lust	cooperative legacies	pride/greed	missions, rites, and believers
survival	desire/fear	ego with conflicts	joy/anxiety	afterlife reward/punishment

from Competition & Cooperation in human evolution:

bipedal, bigger cortex, premature birth, multi-parenting, extended youth, abstract language, & self-awareness

with pleasure/pain signals of arousal/quiescent systems extending toward ecstasy, as holy or addictive



plays, styles, and periods that interest you also reveal animal drives, primal emotions (perhaps shared with animals as “moral foundations”), human cultural extensions, social emotions, and religious values. See how these relate to the secular meta-fictions of our current mass media marketplace and social media gossiping (Harari). Are we sacrificing ourselves to *new gods*, through theatrical voyeurism, exhibitionism, fetishism, and degrees of sadomasochism—on our life stages and proliferating screens, as a “society of the spectacle” (Debord)?

27. Every cultural framework demands some form of *sacrifice* for each person to belong within its moral system, even when a group rebels with subversive play, creating immoral rites and rules of membership, against a bigger frame. In modern Western cultures, we each learn as a child to sacrifice playful pleasures (which also tempt us later) by wearing clothes in certain ways, using utensils to eat particular foods, depositing our waste products correctly, and performing other proper behaviors for those watching. We each gain social rewards by learning to perform the way that the Other desires. We continue to sacrifice pleasures (or indulge in them, which also involves sacrifices), as our identities develop in widening arenas of daily performances, especially regarding gender, race/ethnicity, class, and age.

**[Which sacrifices do you make in conforming to or rebelling against certain identities today, like and unlike those in theatre history?]**

28. Such rites of *moral and clean acting*, with perverse and abject alternatives, vary across cultures. And yet, the art of theatre, throughout its history around the world, explores the *cracks* in moral frameworks, whether social or metaphysical, by focusing on *crises* within and between characters. So use theatre history, along with the plays you encounter, to see how the tragicomic flaws in being human become *social constructs* with compelling emotions, yet cruel sacrifices, which might be *changed*. What can you discover in mapping the past, from our deep history to specific simulations and their cultural frameworks? How does that offer new views of what you experience onstage or on the many screens in your life? Are those screens Platonic caves *trapping* you, with addictive, shadowy attachments, or *openings* to transcendent pleasures and truths that are worth their sacrificial demands—like the cave, outdoor, and built theatres of our ancestors?
29. The mapping of theatricality in this book does not claim to be complete. But it draws on a consensus found in textbooks, encyclopedias, specific studies, and online sources cited in the references (with credit also due to Wikipedia’s many authors). Until recent audio-video documentation,

historical records of theatre mostly represented people *in power*, yet with hints of others, too. This is akin to the staging of consciousness by the brain's inner theatre with alternative feelings, images, and ideas at the edges of the stage. What can you glimpse at the edges of the historical record that is mapped here, in the creases of its geopolitical theatres of race, class, gender, and age ideals, which may be changing today?

30. Theatre emerged, in various places and times, through *ritual efficacy* (repeated actions for desired effects), often regarding departed ancestors and divine spirits, believed to be watching and sometimes intervening. Yet theatre also developed through *secular entertainment* for popular audiences, involving social and political dimensions of the Other. Notice in various periods, theories, and plays how *the edge of the stage* is drawn, between performers and watchers, framing ritual participation in transcendent realms or different aspects of belief, engagement, perversity, and critical distance with the “what if” onstage. Look for marginalized groups appearing at the stage edge, too. For example, in ancient Egyptian drama, how did spectators participate at various sites along the Nile River, with offerings to the pharaoh? How did audiences in ancient Greece, arrayed along the hillside above the orchestra and stage, join the chorus and actors vicariously, in a place sometimes used for democratic meetings, yet in the context of a religious festival, with a statue of the theatre god also watching (and men playing women's roles)? In medieval Europe, how were viewers connecting with good and evil figures, in comic and serious scenes, with plays that mixed different time periods, in churches, in public squares (sometimes with raucous “devils”), or on wagons and platforms, involving a cosmic framework? From early modern to postmodern plays, with various styles and staging methods, how were spectators *positioned* in relation to the hero—as godlike, ghostly, choral, or alienated watchers, inside or outside the protagonist's head?
31. In its ritual, art, and entertainment forms, *theatricality shares and heals* the hole in being human. But it *may also worsen* the hollow ego of a big-brained, prematurely born, perpetually alienated, unfinished yet playful animal. This tragic flaw of theatricality, as cure yet poison, arises from our self-sacrificing, mimetic rivalry, and group scapegoating drives—in ordinary life and our hyper-theatrical politics. So, as you explore historical developments in tragedy, comedy, melodrama, and farce (while reading specific plays), consider the potential for emotional engagement and distancing insights. But also watch for the *stereotyping* of subjects as objects, in the cathartic backfire of moral righteousness, with *projections* from the brain's inner theatre.

32. Through mirror neurons, emotional contagion, and memory-marketing fields, the Trojan Horses of theatricality may confirm implicit biases, invoke righteous stereotypes, and produce scapegoating attitudes in real life. However, theatricality in history can also act like the Fool in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, entertaining yet challenging those in power, from rulers in the past to the mass audience today. Or it can be used as a safety valve by those in power (or by the audience), to release the pressure of collective concerns, without actual change. As you explore the deep and recorded histories of theatricality, *remap* them through your generation's current concerns. Find uncanny reflections in the pages ahead, and in related plays, to become aware of the Platonic caves around you—in the complex sense of *rasa*-catharsis as clarifying, not just purging emotions. And thus, play the role of a wiser fool, in your inner and outer theatres of everyday life, questioning the sacrifices made to those in power through instinctual drives, cultural norms, addictive pleasures, and habits of thought.

**[How do specific stage and screen performances, from past to present, heal or worsen our hyper-theatricality, with cathartic awareness or backfire?]**

## References

- Armel, K. Carrie, and V. S. Ramachandran. "Projecting Sensations to External Objects." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B* 270 (2003): 1499–1506.
- Austin, James H. *Selfless Insight*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.
- Baars, Bernard. *In the Theater of Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Barish, Jonas. *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.
- Beauregard, Mario, ed. *Consciousness, Emotional Self-Regulation, and the Brain*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004.
- Boehm, Christopher. "Egalitarian Behavior and the Evolution of Political Intelligence." *Machiavellian Intelligence II*. Ed. Andrew Whiten and Richard W. Byrne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 341–64.
- Brosnan, Sarah F. "Nonhuman Species' Reactions to Inequity and Their Implications for Fairness." *Social Justice Research* 19.2 (2006): 153–85.
- Bryan, Karen L. "Language Prosody and the Right Hemisphere." *Aphasiology* 3.4 (1989): 285–99.
- Cardillo, Eileen R., Christine E. Watson, Gwenda L. Schmidt, Alexander Kranjec, and Anjan Chatterjee. "From Novel to Familiar." *Neuroimage* 59.4 (2012): 3212–21.
- Cozolino, Louis J. *The Neuroscience of Human Relationships*. New York: Norton, 2006.
- Davis, Tracy C., and Thomas Postlewait, eds. *Theatricality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

- Davis, Wade. *The Wayfinders*. Toronto: House of Anansi, 2009.
- Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. 1967. New York: Zone Books, 1994.
- de Gelder, Beatrice, Josh Snyder, Doug Greve, George Gerard, and Nouchine Hadjikhani. "Fear Fosters Flight." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 101.47 (2004): 16701–6.
- de Waal, Frans. *The Age of Empathy*. New York: Random, 2009.
- . *Our Inner Ape*. New York: Penguin, 2005.
- . *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- . "Putting the Altruism Back Into Altruism." *Annual Review of Psychology* 59 (2008): 279–99.
- Donald, Merlin. *A Mind so Rare*. New York: Norton, 2001.
- Dunbar, Robin. *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Ehrsson, H. Henrik. "The Concept of Body Ownership and Its Relation to Multisensory Integration." *The New Handbook of Multisensory Processing*. Ed. Barry E. Stein. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012, 775–92.
- Farmer, Harry, Ana Tajadura-Jiménez, and Manos Tsakiris. "Beyond the Colour of My Skin." *Consciousness and Cognition* 21 (2012): 1242–56.
- Feinberg, Todd E. *From Axons to Identity*. New York: Norton, 2009.
- Gazzaniga, Michael S. *The Ethical Brain*. New York: Dana, 2005.
- Girard, Rene. *Violence and the Sacred*. 1972. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Penguin, 1956.
- Haidt, Jonathan. *The Righteous Mind*. New York: Random, 2013.
- Haidt, Jonathan, and Craig Joseph. "Intuitive Ethics: How Innately Prepared Intuitions Generate Culturally Variable Virtues." *Daedalus* 133.4 (2004): 55–66.
- Harari, Yuval. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. New York: Harper, 2015.
- Hatfield, Elaine, John T. Cacioppo, and Richard L. Rapson. *Emotional Contagion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Hrdy, Susan Blaffer. *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Hyman, Ira. "Listening to Music and Watching Dance Using Mirror Neurons." *Psychology Today*. 9 August 2012.
- Jablonka, Eva, and Marion J. Lamb. *Evolution in Four Dimensions*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.
- Keenan, Julian Paul. *The Face in the Mirror*. New York: Harper, 2003.
- Kramer, Adam D., Jamie E. Guillory, and Jeffrey T. Hancock. "Experimental Evidence of Massive-Scale Emotional Contagion Through Social Networks." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111.24 (17 June 2014): 8788–90.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, 2006.
- Lakoff, George. *Moral Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

- Lametti, Daniel R., and Andrew A. G. Mattar. "Mirror Neurons and the Lateralization of Human Language." *Journal of Neuroscience* 26.25 (2006): 6666–67.
- LeDoux, Joseph. *The Synaptic Self*. New York: Penguin, 2003.
- Lieberman, Matthew. *Social*. New York: Random, 2013.
- McGilchrist, Iain. *The Master and His Emissary*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Mithen, Steven. *A Prehistory of the Mind*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1996.
- Newberg, Andrew, Eugene d'Aquili, and Vince Rause. *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief*. New York: Ballantine, 2002.
- Norenzayan, Ara. *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Petkova, Valeria I., and H. Henrik Ehrsson. "If I Were You: Perceptual Illusion of Body Swapping." *PLoS One* 3.12 (December 2008): 1–9.
- Pizzato, Mark. *Beast-People Onscreen and in Your Brain*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2016.
- . *Inner Theatres of Good and Evil*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011.
- Prochazkova, Eliska, and Mariska E. Kret. "Connecting Minds and Sharing Emotions Through Mimicry." *Neuroscience and Behavioral Reviews* 80 (2017): 90–114.
- Ramachandran, V. S., and Sandra Blakeslee. *Phantoms in the Brain*. New York: Morrow, 1998.
- Roughgarden, Joan. *Evolution's Rainbow*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Smail, Daniel Lord. *On Deep History and the Brain*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Tajadura-Jiménez, Ana, Matthew R. Longob, Rosie Colemana, and Manos Tsakiris. "The Person in the Mirror." *Conscious Cognition* 21.4 (December 2012): 1725–38.
- Tomasello, Michael. *A Natural History of Human Morality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Tomasello, Michael, Brian Hare, Hagen Lehmann, and Josep Call. "Reliance on Head Versus Eyes in the Gaze Following of Great Apes and Human Infants." *Journal of Human Evolution* 52 (2007): 314–20.
- Tsakiris, Manos, Maike D. Hesse, Christian Boy, Patrick Haggard, and Gereon R. Fink. "Neural Structures of Body Ownership." *Cerebral Cortex* 17 (October 2007): 2235–44.
- Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre*. New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1982.
- Valli, Katja, and Antti Revonsuo. "The Threat Simulation Theory in Light of New Empirical Evidence." *American Journal of Psychology* 122.1 (2009): 17–38.
- van der Gaag, Christiaan, Ruud B. Minderaa, and Christian Keysers. "Facial Expressions." *Social Neuroscience* 2.3–4 (2007): 179–222.
- van Leeuwen, M. L., H. Veling, R. B. van Baaren, and A. Dijksterhuis. "The Influence of Facial Attractiveness on Imitation." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45 (2009): 1295–98.
- Whyte, Chelsea. "Chimps Beat Up, Murder, and Then Cannibalize Their Former Tyrant." *New Scientist*. 30 January 2017. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2119677-chimps-beat-up-murder-and-then-cannibalise-their-former-tyrant/>.
- Wrangham, Richard, and Dale Peterson. *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.



# 2

## From Prehistoric to Ancient Theatricality

### A. Prehistoric Cave, Figurine, and “Temple” Performances

1. The earliest theatrical spaces were probably created in caves during the Upper Paleolithic (Ice Age) Period. On the rock walls in dozens of French and Spanish caves, 36,000–11,000 years ago, figures were drawn with black charcoal. Some were also made with red or yellow ocher (a stone ground to a powder and mixed with saliva), along with etchings, painted handprints, and geometric designs. A few figures also appear in Indonesia from 40,000 years ago. There are designs and handprints in Spain made by Neanderthals, too, from 64,000 years ago.
2. Most figures are Ice Age animals, floating without landscapes. There are also a few with human bodies and animal heads. The walls with art are often very deep inside the caves, through narrow gaps and crawl spaces, indicating a rite of passage as painful ordeal, perhaps for shamanic apprentices to experience a secret, sacred space. But some are in larger chambers accessible to a group, maybe for theatrical storytelling. A few are high up on walls or ceilings, requiring scaffolding to create. Many of the images overlap, sometimes suggesting movement. Some overlapping images were created thousands of years apart. There is also evidence of musical performances with natural stalactites, giving various resonant tones when struck in the echoing chambers, plus carved bone flutes, found in other caves of the same period.

3. Paleolithic cave art demonstrates a new theoretic development of the brain's inner theatre, building on earlier, mimetic, and mythic developments: a *direct sharing* of mental imagery (Donald). Artists depicted large or dangerous animals on cave walls, seen at a distance in the environment outside: woolly mammoths, aurochs (wild cattle), giant elk with huge antlers, rhinoceroses, bison, horses, ibex, and sometimes lions, hyenas, and owls. Yet humans also distinguished themselves from those animals in making such art. Their inner staging of consciousness connected in new ways with other human brains through performances involving cave passageways and chambers, with layered stalagmite forms, pointed stalactites, and rock wall surfaces that humans changed.
4. Ice Age hunter-gatherers, drawn into the mysteries of the earth, went deep into dangerous caves that sometimes held bears and lions. They discovered what appeared naturally there, as frightening or attractive, and created artworks that communicated with others, evoking transcendent, shared ideals. In the darkness, early artists experienced sensory deprivation and probably "Altered States of Consciousness" (ASC) with inner-theatre visions as mental *projections* on the walls in flickering firelight—and recorded them with scratches, charcoal, and paint, to share with others (Lewis-Williams).
5. Such ASC can be produced in human brains today with darkness and flashing lights in the lab. In these experiments, inner-theatre images are evoked as typical hallucinations: (1) geometric shapes like the abstract signs in caves, (2) through a vortex experience like the narrow passageways that attracted prehistoric humans, (3) to floating icons of daily life today, like the Paleolithic images of wild animals, and then (4) fantastic hybrids like the animal-human figures on some cave walls (Lewis-Williams).
6. Paleolithic *handprints*, made by touching the cave wall with paint on the hand or by blowing paint over the hand while it was on the wall, also show a ritual merging of human flesh and rock, with the hand disappearing into the wall in the latter technique. Thus, the cave wall might have been perceived as a "membrane" to another, transcendent realm. Anthropologist David Lewis-Williams also relates Paleolithic cave art to the rock art of San Bushmen in southern Africa, depicting their continued practice of shamanic healing through dancing into trances and thus traveling in the spirit realm with animal guides.

**[With photos that you find online or with the documentary film, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, what do you see in prehistoric cave art and its spaces, in relation to today's stage and screen theatres?]**

7. Small, carved objects have also been found across Eurasia, from the Upper Paleolithic period, including a “lion-person” (with lion head on a human body) and various female “Venus” figurines (usually faceless, often with exaggerated breasts, hips, belly, and buttocks). These show the inner theatres of Ice Age people producing external objects that hybridized and stylized their perceptions of animals and one another—as mobile dolls or idols depicting the Other.
8. About 11,000 years ago (9000 BCE), prior to the development of agriculture, early Neolithic (Pre-Pottery Age) “temples” were created at Göbekli Tepe, in what is now southern Turkey, near the border of Syria. Although most of the archeological site is not yet excavated, geophysical surveys show about 20 stone circles (like the later Stonehenge) with over 200 pillars. The excavated, T-shaped megaliths are as tall as 7 meters (23 feet). Some appear to be abstract human figures carved with arms, hands, fingers, a decorated belt, and loincloth (Dietrich et al. 679). Many also have spider, scorpion, snake, duck, lion, fox, boar, and vulture carvings. Each stone, weighing 10–20 tons, was quarried and transported from a hill 100–500 meters away (330–1640 feet), then raised into position at the site. This would have required at least 500 people, along with supportive food, shelter, and social networks.
9. There is no evidence of long-term settlement at the site. People traveled to it from semipermanent abodes 100–200 kilometers away (60–120 miles). They left burned bones of aurochs (wild cattle), gazelle, and wild ass, plus limestone barrels that held barley or wheat beer, suggesting cultic feasts (Dietrich et al. 690). A carved stone cup, found nearby, shows men dancing with a turtle-like figure between them, perhaps in an Altered State of Consciousness while communing with that animal spirit (Turchin 10). However, the “temples” were burned and buried about 10,000 years ago and only unearthed recently, starting in 1994.
10. Göbekli Tepe shows a crucial step from Paleolithic cave theatres to Neolithic custom-built performance spaces. It suggests some sense of a *cosmic theatre* with transcendent Others, involving forces of nature and life/death, for which a huge, collective, human effort was organized. This transition, from “horizontal shamanism” in natural environments to “vertical shamanism” in human-made places, probably involved hierarchical projections of the divine and a “priesthood” directing many people in coordinated theatrical rites (Lewis-Williams and Pearce).



11. In 2017, fragments of three human skulls with cut marks were found at Göbekli Tepe. These suggest, along with the vulture figures on the megaliths, excarnation (cutting flesh from bones) as a funeral rite, as in the “bird offerings” (or “sky burials”) still practiced today by Iranian Zoroastrians and Tibetan Buddhists. Secondary burial of bones after the body decays or skull decoration for revered ancestors might also be indicated—along with the global shamanic idea of psychic dismemberment and rebirth (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 118).
12. At Jericho, in the West Bank (Palestinian Territory within Israel), *decorated skulls* have been found from 9000 to 8000 years ago, after the development of agriculture in that area. Plaster was used to remodel the faces of the dead, with shells set into the eye sockets. These skulls may have come from revered ancestors and been used in ritual performances, representing shamanic “seers” between the realms of daily life, dreams, and death—involving inner theatre memories tied to collective beliefs in natural and supernatural frameworks.
13. Such decorated skulls have also been found at 'Ain Ghazal (in today's Amman, Jordan) from about the same time period. Full human figures were found, too, made of lime plaster and as tall as one meter (about half life-size), with wide-open eyes distinctly drawn on their faces, plus animal figurines, especially cattle. This evidence shows a developing theatrical awareness of “seeing” and “being seen,” in relation to the living and dead, the animal and human, with rites connecting such realms, through agricultural settlements and vertical shamanism.
14. At Çatalhöyük in southern Turkey, Neolithic buildings were created in 18 layers 9500–7600 years ago, suggesting ritual areas within domestic structures. Set into the walls where people lived are ram and bull skulls, including horns remolded with plaster, full female figures with molded breasts (some with vulture beaks, fox teeth, or a weasel skull inserted), and murals involving handprints with geometric designs. There is also a wall painting of a hunting dance with lines between humans and powerful animals, showing vultures with human legs next to legless and headless human torsos. All of these were replastered and repainted many times.
15. Such Neolithic (Old Stone Age) figures in domestic rooms, along with red-painted niches cut into walls, apparently to receive objects, reflect the caves where earlier, Paleolithic humans painted images and left objects. These cave and home theatres apparently involved visions and

offerings through the rock wall as a membrane to the spirit realm of animal guides and deceased ancestors. The molded breasts with animal beaks or teeth at Çatalhöyük also suggest life and death passions of nurturing and danger, eating or being eaten (Lewis-Williams and Pearce)—although some archeologists interpret them as animal heads (Meskell 60).

16. Under the floors and in some courtyards of Çatalhöyük and 'Ain Ghazal homes, like at the edges of rock shelters where Paleolithic people lived, skeletons have been found. This shows the significance of such spaces and their artworks for interactive performances between the living and the dead (Lewis-Williams and Pearce). A “cult building” at Çatalhöyük had 66 human skulls buried in the floor, plus the remains of over 400 skeletons. Thus, the inner theatres of Neolithic humans were expressed in the walls and floors where they lived—with collective performances engaging the Other in their brains, projected toward transcendent forces in nature and the afterlife.
17. On the Mediterranean island of Malta, near Italy, large stone “temples” were built, starting over 5000 years ago—in several periods, from 3600 to 2500 BCE—along with underground burial chambers (hypogea). The temples had several oval chambers with corbeled or timbered roofs, possibly covered with dirt, making them cave-like, but with doorways made of three large stones. These hut-shaped temples were built prior to Stonehenge in England and the pyramids of Egypt (Ching et al. 46). In one of them, at Hagar Qim, the rising sun of the summer solstice enters an inner chamber through a precise hole in the temple wall (Skeates 210).
18. Neolithic Maltese temples held small drum-shaped altars and clay, bone, or stone figures in human forms from 50 cm to 2 meters tall (20 inches to 6.5 feet). About half of the figures are female with wide hips and fleshy bodies, many wearing skirts and elaborate hair strands or headdresses. The repetition of similar images, along with altars, evidence of fire, and animal bones, suggests a ritual context (Malone), perhaps with sacrificial performances for the iconic maternal Other. **[Which elements of Göbekli Tepe, Çatalhöyük, and Maltese temples or domestic structures do you see as most akin to earlier cave art spaces—or to theatrical media today? How do the decorated skulls at 'Ain Ghazal, or the home burials there and at Çatalhöyük, relate to current images of and relations with the dead, as expressions of the brain's inner audience of memory traces?]**

## B. African San (Bushman) Hunter-Gatherers

1. In southern Africa, the San people (or “Bushmen” as they prefer to be called) probably have the oldest continuous culture in the world, extending back tens of thousands of years. Indeed, it may extend back before the initial migration out of Africa, about 60,000 years ago, of other humans who eventually populated the globe: “the San were the first people in what became the family tree of humanity” (Davis 8, 20). Today, Bushman trance-dances cultivate the life force of love through shaking, touching, and sometimes carrying one another, while experiencing an inner “boiling” from the belly up the spine, with mystical visions and synesthesia experiences, such as hearing touch, tasting sights, or smelling disease (Keeney, *Bushman and Ropes*).
2. About once a week, for many hours around a nighttime fire, women sit in a tight choral circle, singing and clapping, while children play and men dance around them. Wearing cocoon rattles on their ankles and carrying an animal-tail whisk (to brush away mystical arrows), plus a staff to help them with stomach cramps, the men dance around the women’s circle, sometimes going inside toward the fire. Eventually, they fall into trances, related also to their dreams, connecting with departed ancestors. Women have their own dances with drums. Sometimes, the male and female dances are combined.
3. Bushmen travel mystically toward their ancestral spirits, through the songs and dances of specific animals. They *become animals* in their minds through *thuru* (shape-shifting), when returning to “First Creation,” prior to the names and stable forms in Second Creation. They experience “arrows” and “nails” (or thorns) of power in their bellies and “ropes” of light in vertical and horizontal colors, which they climb to the Big God or to other villages, also showing them where to find a specific animal to hunt.
4. Bushmen are sometimes in conflict with a *Trickster* aspect of god, which came into being through Second Creation and human language, or with bad spirits of the dead who have stolen their arrows. Thus, they heal others in the tribe through trance, by cleaning or pulling out dirty arrows, or retrieving them from evil spirits.

**[How are San Bushman trance-dances like and unlike religious rituals or popular music events today? How are their goals of traveling mystically, dealing with Trickster, and cleaning spiritual arrows like/unlike the Western sense of theatre and catharsis?]**

5. Such ecstatic experiences in Western culture, with prayer, “speaking in tongues,” reverie in a warm bath, or a runner’s high, are theorized by neuroscientists as involving a “spillover effect” between arousal and quiescent (sympathetic and parasympathetic) nervous systems in the body. These systems are usually in opposition, but can peak on either side and activate the other. Thus, arousal and calmness combine in a transcendent state of altered consciousness (Newberg et al.; Newberg and Waldman).
6. San Bushman rock and cave art (some of it dating back 20,000 years) depicts such transcendent experiences of shamanic performers, sometimes wearing ankle rattles like today’s trance-dancers. It also shows their visions, which may be akin to prehistoric cave rites with animal, human, and animal-human forms of *shape-shifters* (Lewis-Williams).
7. Bushmen perform other rituals, too, often involving their most powerful spirit animal, the eland. In a hunting ritual, men teach boys how to track and shoot an eland with arrows. In an Eland Bull Dance, men and women imitate the antelope’s mating behaviors for a girls’ puberty ritual. In a marriage ritual, a groom gives the fat from an eland’s heart to the parents of his new wife and she is anointed with eland fat.

**[Which performers today become shape-shifting healers, like yet unlike Bushman shamans—and how? Do viewers also experience a mix of quiescence and arousal while watching them?]**

## C. Ancient Egypt with TIMELINE

- 3150 BCE, Upper and Lower Egypt were unified and then ruled by various dynasties
- 2649–2150, Old Kingdom (and then an intermediate period)
- 2030–1640, Middle Kingdom (and then an intermediate period)
- 1550–1070, New Kingdom (and then an intermediate period)
- 712–332, Late Period
- 332–30, Alexander the Great and the Ptolemaic Dynasty
- 30 BCE, Rome conquered Egypt after Queen Cleopatra’s alignment with Marcus Antonius failed to defeat other Roman forces and they each committed suicide

1. An account of the Wepwawet (or Wep-waut) procession, out of and returning to the Temple of Osiris in Abydos, Egypt, was left on a stone stele by Ikhnofret, the pharaoh's treasurer, who organized it in the 1800s BCE. It involved the dressing and carrying of a statue of the god Osiris and scenes of his death and rebirth—perhaps performed for a public audience, annually for about 2000 years, from circa 2500 to 550 BCE. It also involved scenes of Osiris's son, Horus, getting revenge against his evil uncle, Set, while Ikhnofret identified with the hero: "I masterminded the procession ...; I repulsed the attackers of the neshmet-barque and slew the enemies of Osiris" (Wilkinson).
2. The Ramesseum drama, written on papyrus, shows dialog, mythic narrative, and stage directions. Its 48 scenes, with repeated rituals and symbols, were possibly performed along the banks of the Nile for over 200 years (1900s–1700s BCE), with people at each site bringing offerings to the pharaoh—in a ceremony of his new or renewed rule, starting with the seasonal opening of the Nile River for navigation and trade (Kernodle 27). The pharaoh played the role of the falcon-headed god Horus. His father's mummy represented the death and fertility god Osiris, father of Horus. Other court members and priests played gods in the plot: Set (a god of desert sandstorms, raging seas, and civil chaos, rival to his brother Osiris and nephew Horus), Thoth (the scribe god with an ibis or baboon head), Isis (mother of Horus and wife/sister of Osiris), Nephthys (wife/sister of Set), and Geb (earth god and father of Osiris).
3. In many of the short, Ramesseum papyrus scenes, Horus conquers Set, who earlier in the myth had fought and dismembered Osiris—and then fought Horus also, taking one of his eyes. Horus vanquishes his enemy symbolically with the mummy, a fragrant tree bough, or a "djed" pillar placed on Set in various scenes. A ram, goat, and goose are also killed (decapitated) as offerings. In another scene, Geb referees a punching match, showing the battle of Horus and Set. Offerings are brought to the pharaoh as Horus in different scenes, such as bread loaves, red carnelian beads, a scepter, plumes, and black and green eye salve—all representing his lost "Eye of Power"—plus two maces, symbolizing Set's testicles, and a thighbone, taken from him in battle. But along with these demonstrations of the pharaoh's patriarchal (left-cortical) power over desert storms and potential rebellions, Horus pours milk, "the sweet influence of this mine Eye," as the nurturing (right-cortical) benefit of his hierarchical rule (Gaster 338).

**[How do the mythic roles, props, and conflicts in the Ramesseum drama, expressing political elements and neural networks, relate to outer and inner theatricalities today?]**

4. The “Triumph of Horus” was performed annually at Edfou with Horus battling Set-as-hippopotamus for the kingship of Egypt (1200s BCE). It was staged inside a temple, on and around a sacred lake, for a large public audience as well as the priests and gods (Nielsen).
5. A few, full-headed, jackal masks have survived from ancient Egypt, suggesting how actors (or priests) performed as Anubis, the funeral god, and other animal–human deities. Related images are also shown in the Hunefer papyrus as “Book of the Dead” (c. 1275). Jackal-headed Anubis leads the dead Hunefer to the scales of afterlife judgment. Ibis-headed Thoth records Hunefer’s heart being lighter than the feather of Truth, Maat, showing goodness for paradise. Falcon-headed Horus then leads Hunefer to Osiris on his throne, with the winged Eye of Power above. The animal heads on human forms are also akin to prehistoric cave images, created tens of thousands of years earlier.

**[What does such evidence reveal about the identity needs and social values of ancient Egyptians, with good versus evil power struggles and afterlife judgments, like yet unlike ours?]**

## D. Middle Eastern Ritual Dramas

1. On the island of Cyprus from the late second millennium BCE, and in later Phoenician colonies around the Mediterranean, masks have been found. So have statuettes of human figures wearing animal or human masks (Nielsen).
2. In Anatolia (today’s Turkey), clay tablets from the 1400s to 1200s BCE offer evidence of temple festivals involving ritual dramas with Hittite officials and priests playing the roles of animals, human hunters, and gods. There were also mock battles between the Hittites carrying bronze weapons and their adversaries carrying reeds—plus acrobats, jugglers, and processions with cult images, journeying between sanctuaries (Nielsen).
3. Temple dramas were performed in ancient Sumer and Akkadia (today’s Iraq), around 1000 BCE, showing a sacred marriage (*hieros gamos*) of the king and fertility goddess at the New Year festival, with monologs, dialogs, and choral refrains. Such Mesopotamian ritual dramas also involved death and rebirth scenes of young gods or gods battling monsters, which influenced ancient Greek myths (Nielsen).

**[How do ancient Middle Eastern ritual dramas relate to Paleolithic cave art, Neolithic performance spaces, Bushman trance dances, or ancient Egyptian dramas—as well as later developments of theatricality, including today’s?]**

## References

- Ching, Francis D. K., Mark M. Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash. *A Global History of Architecture*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007.
- Davis, Wade. *The Wayfinders*. Toronto: House of Anansi, 2009.
- Dietrich, Oliver, Manfred Heun, Jens Notroff, Klaus Schmidt, and Martin Zarnkow. "The Role of Cult and Feasting in the Emergence of Neolithic Communities." *Antiquity* 86 (2012): 674–95.
- Donald, Merlin. *A Mind So Rare*. New York: Norton, 2001.
- Gaster, Theodor H., ed. *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East*. Rev. Ed. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961.
- Keeney, Bradford. *The Bushman Way of Tracking God*. New York: Atria, 2010.
- , ed. *Ropes to God: Experiencing the Bushman Spiritual Universe*. Philadelphia: Ringing Rock, 2003.
- Kernodle, George R. *The Theatre in History*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1989.
- Lewis-Williams, David. *The Mind in the Cave*. London: Thames, 2002.
- Lewis-Williams, David, and David Pearce. *Inside the Neolithic Mind*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005.
- Malone, Caroline. "God or Goddess: The Temple Art of Ancient Malta." *Ancient Goddesses*. Ed. Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, 148–63.
- Meskel, Lynn. "Twin Peaks: The Archaeologies of Çatalhöyük." *Ancient Goddesses*. Ed. Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, 46–62.
- Newberg, Andrew, Eugene d'Aquili, and Vince Rause. *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief*. New York: Ballantine, 2002.
- Newberg, Andrew, and Mark Robert Waldman. *Why We Believe What We Believe*. New York: Free Press, 2006.
- Nielsen, Inge. *Cultic Theatres and Ritual Drama*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2002.
- Skeates, Robin. "Making Sense of the Maltese Temple Period." *Time and Mind* 1.2 (2008): 207–38.
- Turchin, Peter. *Ultrasociety*. Chaplin, CT: Beresta Books, 2016.
- Wilkinson, Toby, ed. and trans. *Writings from Ancient Egypt*. New York: Penguin, 2016.



# 3

## Greco-Roman Beginnings of “Theatre” (as *Theatron/Theatrum*)

### A. Minoan, Mycenaean, and Ancient Greece with TIMELINE

- 2600–1100 BCE, Minoan Civilization on the Greek islands
- 1600–1100, Mycenaean Greece on the mainland
- 1100–800, Greek Dark Ages
- 700s–510, Greek **Archaic Period**
- 687, an annual election of the *Archon* (ruler) was established in Athens, with any citizen eligible and Creon as the first
- in the 500s, Athens spread its colonies around the eastern Mediterranean
- 510, Spartan troops helped the Athenians overthrow their tyrant, Hippias
- 510–323, **Classical Period** (or “Golden Age”)
- 507, Cleisthenes became Archon and increased the power of the people’s assembly over the aristocrats
- 501, the City Dionysia added satyr plays (at the end of each trilogy of tragedies)
- 490, the Athenians and their allies beat the much larger Persian Army at Marathon, ending the First Persian Invasion, with the runner Pheidippides delivering the news to Athens (hence the term “marathon” today)
- 487, the City Dionysia added a contest for comedies on a single day
- 484, Aeschylus (who fought the Persians at Marathon) won first place for his tetralogy, for the first of many times, in the City Dionysia contest



- 480, the Spartan “300” made a valiant, impossible stand at Thermopylae, allowing allies to escape, during the Second Persian Invasion, led by Xerxes, and the vastly outnumbered Athenian fleet trapped the Persian ships, destroying many in the Strait of Salamis (also forming the basis for Aeschylus’s tragedy about Xerxes, *The Persians*)
- 479, the Greeks won further battles, on land and sea, at Plataea and Mycale, ending the Second Persian Invasion
- 478, the Athenians instituted the Delian League of city-states around the Aegean Sea, while continuing to attack the Persians and expand their own empire
- 449, a prize started being awarded for the best actor at the City Dionysia
- 443–39, the playwright Sophocles acted as a tax collector and military general in Athen’s control over other city-states in the Delian League
- 432, the Parthenon was completed under the rule of Pericles, as a temple to Athena at the top of the Acropolis in Athens, above the Theatre of Dionysus
- 431, the Peloponnesian War began, with democratic Athens and its Delian allies fighting oligarchic Sparta and its Peloponnesian League for 26 years, resulting in widespread poverty for many Greek cities
- 416, during the Peloponnesian War, Athens invaded the island of Melos, besieged its city, and demanded that its starving citizens join them in the war against Sparta, but they refused, so the Athenians executed the men and turned the women and children into slaves, then put 500 of their own colonists on the island (as mentioned by Aristophanes in his comedy, *The Birds*, two years later)
- 415, on the night before the Athenian fleet was to sail for Sicily to battle Syracuse, all of Athen’s *hermai* (square stone columns with a male head and genitals, honoring Hermes and warding off evil) were vandalized, a sacrilegious act, blamed on Syracusan or Spartan sympathizers—and then on the Athenian leader, Alcibiades, who was condemned to death, but fled to Sparta and joined their side against Athens (advising Sparta to build a bigger navy)
- 411, Aristophanes’s *Lysistrata* provided a comical commentary on the foolishness of war during the Peloponnesian War
- 409, Alcibiades, who was accused of seducing a Spartan king’s wife and fled to Persia, then returned to Athens with oligarchs taking control there (ending its democracy) and led its navy in beating the Spartan fleet and fighting the Persian fleet
- 406, the playwright Euripides died, possibly while in voluntary exile in Macedon (Macedonia) due to criticism of his work in Athens, with his exploration of characters’ inner conflicts and women’s rebellious desires

- 405–04, Lysander, the new leader of the Spartan (Persian-financed) fleet, beat the Athenians—ending the Peloponnesian War with Athens losing its navy, its protective city walls, and its overseas territories
- 399, the Greek philosopher Socrates was condemned to death for corrupting the youth and drank hemlock to fulfill the court's decision
- 371, Athens, allied with its old enemy Thebes, beat Sparta at Leuctra, ending Spartan dominance in the region—then Athens and Thebes formed rival leagues
- 347, Plato died, after founding his Academy (school of philosophy) in Athens and writing dialogs involving Socrates, thus preserving his teacher's ideas, although he criticized writing as harmful to oral debate and storytelling—and the arts as misrepresenting the ideal realm of ideas
- 342, Aristotle, a student of Plato, began tutoring young Alexander, Prince of Macedon (Macedonia)
- 336, Alexander became King of Macedon at age 20—when his father was assassinated, two years after beating Athens, Thebes, and other Greek city-states in the Battle of Chaeronea
- 333–27, Alexander the Great, continuing his father's expansion plans, beat Thebes and then persuaded Athens and other Greek city-states to join him, with 30,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry, in conquering Egypt (where he established the city of Alexandria in 331), the Persian Empire, and Western India, spreading Greek culture to those lands—with Greco-Buddhist art developing over the next nine centuries, often depicting Heracles as Vajrapani, the Buddha's guardian
- 323, Alexander died abroad and then his generals fought for control of various territories he conquered, splitting up his empire
- 323–30 BCE, **Hellenistic Period**, with the centers of Greek culture shifting to Alexandria (Egypt) and Antioch (Seleucid Syria)
- 316, Menander, writer of Greek "New Comedy," won the prize in Athens
- 307, Epicurus established his philosophical school
- 305, Ptolemy, a former Macedonian-Greek bodyguard of Alexander, became the new Egyptian pharaoh, starting the Ptolemaic Dynasty, which ended with Cleopatra (losing power to Rome in 30 BCE)
- 300, Euclid wrote *The Elements*, with mathematical proofs and geometrical discoveries



Fig. 3.1 Map of Greece and Crete (US CIA's *World Factbook*)

1. Archeological evidence from the remains of Minoan palaces, at Phaistos and Knossos on the island of Crete (Fig. 3.1), shows wide-stepped structures as possible audience areas in *cultic theatres* (Nielsen). Frescoes on the palace walls depict segregated male and female spectators, with aristocrats sitting on stools and a chorus of women or men (in different frescoes).
2. On Mycenaean gems and fresco fragments, there is evidence of *ritual dramas* with chorus members wearing animal masks and dancing (Nielsen).
3. In the 700s BCE, at the start of the **Archaic Period**, sanctuaries honoring female gods were more plentiful and prominent than those honoring male gods, with the exception of Apollo. But evidence also indicates that Apollo's worshippers usurped the cult sites, giving him attributes

of local female gods, including that of "nurturer" (*kourotrophos*). As patriarchal leaders in each city-state (*polis*), through competition with others, grew stronger as protectors and rulers, women were excluded from roles outside the home (except in Sparta) and male gods became increasingly prominent. One exception to this was Athena, the patron goddess of Athens and half-sister to Apollo, yet she also had patriarchal attributes, as a war goddess (Voyatzis 146–47).

4. Those deities' roles in *The Oresteia*, a trilogy of plays by Aeschylus in 458 BCE, in the later **Classical Period**, reflect such shifts in social power from feminine to masculine—with nurturing or judgmental gods (involving the right-cortical improviser/designer and left-cortical scriptwriter/critic). After killing his mother and her lover in Mycenae, as a duty-bound vengeance against them for killing his father, Agamemnon, Orestes seeks sanctuary at Apollo's shrine in Delphi. Orestes is fleeing his mother's Furies, the fanged, snake-haired, Gorgon-like goddesses of guilt and reciprocal vengeance (with abject passions of subcortical brain networks as trickster stagehands). Apollo *nurtures* Orestes, reassuring him about the rightness of his cause, and puts the Furies temporarily to sleep. Yet Apollo also sends Orestes to Athens, where Athena sets up a court of human citizens with herself as *judge*. Apollo defends Orestes in the trial and Athena casts the deciding vote on Orestes's side with a split jury. She states that, although a goddess, she "prefer[s] the male in all respects," having been born directly from her father Zeus's head (lines 736–37). She also negotiates a compromise with the female Furies (Erinyes), getting them to accept her judgment, with a cave-shrine in Athens, plus future offerings, if they give up their fury, becoming the Gentle Ones (Eumenides). And yet, the bacchae in Euripides's play of that name (405 BCE), as wild women possessed by the theatre god Dionysus, show the power of the abject feminine *chora* to erupt from the Furies' cave, for good or ill, when repressed by society or the brain's inner theatre.

**[How does *The Oresteia* reflect the social theatre of its time or ours, extending various aspects of the brain's inner theatre?]**

5. From the Archaic to the Classical Periods, Athens developed trial by jury, direct democratic rule, and the art of theatre. Its trials had very large juries of 501 or more men. Democratic decisions involved about 6000 male citizens meeting in the Theatre of Dionysus or on the Pnyx hill to debate and vote. Yet most Athenians still owned slaves, averaging three to four per household in the 500s–400s BCE.

**[Today, how is Euro-American culture still spreading globally with ideals of trial by jury, democracy, and theatre, but also aspects of slavery—akin to ancient Greece?]**

6. The Rural Dionysia, a winter festival in Eleutherae, involved a procession honoring Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility, whose references go back to thirteenth-century Mycenaean Greece and possibly to “Zagreus” in the earlier Minoan culture. The people of Eleutherae offered a statue of Dionysus to Athens, wanting to join their city, but it was rejected. Then a plague infected the genitals of Athenian men. They changed their minds and accepted the gift, starting the City (or Great) Dionysia as an annual spring festival in Athens to honor the god.
7. In the 530s BCE, the City Dionysia, with its tribal contest of dithyrambic choruses, added a trans-tribal contest for the best new *tragedies*. This term came from the Greek words for “goat” (*tragos*) and “song” (*ode*). This might relate to a goat sacrificed at the festival or the goat-like *satyrs* who were mythic followers of Dionysus, or the young men with new beards who danced in the chorus (King 12–13). Initially, each tragedy had one actor, along with a chorus. The separate contest of dithyrambs continued with each tribe presenting two choruses, one with 50 men and one with 50 boys, competing at the City Dionysia festival.
8. All tragic actors and choruses were male. But male and female “mimes” performed by the 300s, as traveling players and festival entertainers, in *spoken* sketches. These included *phylax* satires (or *phylakes*, as depicted on vases from southern Italy), along with juggling, acrobatics, and wordless dances.
9. The tragic actor was known as the *hypokrites*, meaning “under” (the mask) “interpreter” or “answerer.” He performed in dialog with the chorus. Its members sang and danced, probably playing a hand-held lyre (a stringed instrument), double flute, drums, horns, and bells.
10. According to Aristotle and others, Thespis (source of our term “thespian”), a singer of dithyrambic hymns to Dionysus, became the first *hypokrites* by stepping out of the chorus and impersonating a character. When the legislator Solon saw Thespis perform, he asked him if he was not ashamed to tell so many lies. Solon also said that if such lying were to become honored and commended, it would soon spread to politics (Nagler 3).

**[Where does a chorus appear, along with actors as answerers, in theatre today or in our mass and social media—and how does that involve a tribal or general contest, like in ancient Greece?]**

11. By the 400s, the City Dionysia included a set of four plays by each playwright, on each of three days: three tragedies and one satyr play (mythic satire) as a tetralogy, in a contest between the three writers. Satyr plays may have derived from an early form of ritual drama in ancient Greece prior to the development of tragedy and comedy from dithyrambic hymns (Nielsen).
12. Eventually, a day for comedies was added, first at the related Lenaia festival. They were overtly political in the 400s (Old Comedies) and about romantic relationships in the 300s (New Comedies). Between the scenes of Old Comedy, there was a *parabasis*, when the chorus spoke directly to the audience about things different from the play. But that was lost in New Comedy as the role of the chorus was reduced to just singing songs.

**[How are ancient Greek tragedies, satyr plays, and comedies like and unlike modern European operas and recent musicals, onstage and onscreen?]**

13. The *archon* (government ruler) organized the festival, assigning a *choregos* (wealthy citizen) as sponsor/producer of each writer's plays. The *choregos* sometimes created a stone memorial if his playwright won the contest (Fig. 3.2).
14. By the 200s, actors, chorus members, and playwrights became professionalized in a guild, the Artists of Dionysus. Then the government paid for the play festivals with an *agonhetes* (official) in charge of the production.
15. The City Dionysia started with a procession (*pompe*) of phalloi and the wooden statue of Dionysus, which was placed in the Theatre of Dionysus (Fig. 3.3), at the foot of the Acropolis, below a temple to Athena. Pig's blood was sprinkled at the edge of the performance space to purify it and a bull burned in the Temple of Dionysus behind the theatre as a sacrifice. After the initial *pompe* procession, plus animal sacrifices, there was a feast for all citizens and a drunken, ecstatic *komos* procession. The next day, the playwrights announced the titles of their plays, with their sponsors (*choregoi*) and unmasked actors, at the *proagon* (pre-contest), a term also used for the initial slapstick dialog between the chorus and characters in comedies.

**[Which gods (or forces of human nature and culture) are watching or desiring our theatrical media today, including film, television, video games, news, and social media—akin to the statue and spirit of Dionysus in his theatre and festival?]**



**Fig. 3.2** Lysicrates monument, celebrating his win as *choregos*, 335–34 BCE, on the road to the Theatre of Dionysus, Athens (photo: Mark Pizzato)

16. The Odeon of Pericles in Athens, adjacent to the Theatre of Dionysus, was a square, roofed, many-columned, performance space (4000 square meters), holding about 3000 people, used for music and choral rehearsals—and for the proagon of the City Dionysia.
17. The plays initially included a 50-member chorus (like the dithyramb), then 12 (with the playwright Aeschylus), 15 (with Sophocles), or 24 (with comedies). The chorus probably involved young men (*ephebes*)



**Fig. 3.3** Theatre of Dionysus, Athens, with a semicircular orchestra in the later Roman redesign (photo: Mark Pizzato)

trained to march in the military, singing and dancing. The tradition of one speaking actor changed to two (with Aeschylus), and then to three (with Sophocles), often including the playwright.

18. Aeschylus (525–456 BCE) added the second speaking actor and reduced the size of the chorus, while writing over 70 plays. Only 7 of his tragedies remain, often involving gods interacting with humans, including one complete trilogy, *The Oresteia* (458), which includes *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, and *The Eumenides* (summarized above).
19. Sophocles (496–06 BCE) added the third speaking actor and wrote over 120 plays, but only 7 of his complete tragedies survive. They often explore psychological conflicts of the hero against fate or other forms of authority, as in *Oedipus the King* (c. 429) and *Antigone* (c. 441). Sophocles acted in his early plays and became the most celebrated Athenian playwright, winning 24 of the 30 contests he entered. Also, soon after the *Antigone* performance, Sophocles was one of ten Athenian generals who beat the island state of Samos, forcing it to return to the Delian League.



20. In *Oedipus the King*, the hero becomes a detective, seeking to find the killer of the previous king in order to save his city, Thebes, from a plague. But he discovers that his fate, which he tried to avoid after being warned by an oracle, drove him into that role and it also involved marrying his mother and having children with her. He and his wife/mother, Jocasta, respond with tragic self-sacrifices.
21. In *Antigone*, the daughter of Oedipus rebels against her uncle, King Creon, by twice burying the body of her slain brother (killed by her other brother), as a family duty expected by the gods, although it is forbidden because he was an enemy to Creon. As punishment, Antigone is walled up in a cave to die and she then hangs herself. Creon's son, who loves her, commits suicide in response, as does the queen to his death, leaving the king to mourn his errors in judgment. Thus, there are several tragic figures in this play, struggling with fate, duty, passion, and authority, in different forms.
22. Euripides (480–06 BCE) wrote 92 plays, with 17 tragedies and a satyr play (*Cyclops*) surviving today. They offer intense twists in mythic stories and characters, sometimes with sensational violence taking place offstage, as in *Medea* (431) and *The Bacchae* (405). The latter was written during Euripides's exile in Macedonia, north of Greece, in the last few years of his life, and first performed in Athens a year after his death.
23. In *Medea*, the granddaughter of the Sun (Helios) feels betrayed when her husband, Jason, takes a new wife, the princess of Corinth. In the backstory to the tragedy, Medea had helped him to take the Golden Fleece from her father in Colchis (east of Greece on the Black Sea), causing the death of her brother in their escape. She also helped Jason to escape from his uncle and they have taken refuge in Corinth. Medea gets revenge on Jason through magic garments, as a gift to the princess, killing her and her father. Medea also kills her two sons to harm Jason further (in a possible addition to the myth by Euripides) and flies away with their bodies on a dragon-led chariot, as their father mourns.
24. In *The Bacchae*, the theatre god Dionysus returns to Thebes, where he was born to a human mother, Semele. She was destroyed by his father Zeus, king of the gods, through the disbelief of her sisters—who shamed her into proving her relationship with Zeus by making him appear as lightning, which killed her. Dionysus gets revenge on his aunts, on King Pentheus (son of Semele's sister, Agave), and on the entire city. He first appears in disguise, with his worshipers, as a priest of his cult from the East. He also has local worshipers, including the former king, Cadmus,

and blind prophet, Tiresias. King Pentheus tries to repress the worship of Dionysus, which involves women as bacchae (or maenads) leaving their families and suckling wild animals in the woods, or tearing them apart (*sparagmos*) and eating them raw (*omophagia*). But Dionysus breaks out of prison and lures Pentheus into wearing a fawn-skin disguise as one of the worshippers, to spy on the wild women offstage—where he is caught and torn apart by them. His mother (perhaps played by the actor who had played him) brings his head onstage, claiming it is the head of a lion she caught, until she is brought out of her trance by Cadmus and sees the tragic reality.

25. When *The Bacchae* premiered in Athens, in the Theatre of Dionysus, it won first prize, during a festival honoring that god, with his temple behind the stage and his statue in the theatre. It also related to ritual performances in the mystery cult of Dionysus, god of wine, with a drunken *ekstasis* ("out-standing" ecstasy), as inside-out Altered State of Consciousness, and *enthousiasmos* ("in-god" enthusiasm).
26. Aristophanes (448–380 BCE) wrote 40 plays and 18 survive, exemplifying what ancient scholars called "Old Comedy" with their political parodies, as in *The Clouds* (423), *Lysistrata* (411), and *The Frogs* (405).
27. *The Clouds* parodies the goddesses of philosophy as a chorus of "Clouds," along with Socrates, who first appears aloft in a basket, as head of "The Thinkery," a school for silly inventions and lazy young men. However, this caricature of Socrates contributed to his subsequent trial and death for corrupting the youth, according to his student, Plato.
28. *Lysistrata* shows women from various city-states going on a sex strike (and taking over the treasury in Athens) to stop men from making war. It was first performed just after the Athenians lost a big battle during the Peloponnesian War.
29. In *The Frogs*, Dionysus travels to the underworld (Hades), costumed as his heroic half-brother Heracles, who had been there before, which causes comic confusion. On the way, Dionysus debates with a chorus of frogs whose croaking annoys him. Eventually, he judges a contest between the dead Aeschylus and Euripides about who was the better tragedian, as they mockingly quote each other's plays. Dionysus declares Aeschylus the winner and takes him to the surface to improve the theatre in Athens.
30. Menander (342–291 BCE) wrote what scholars categorized as "New Comedy," involving urban and domestic scenes with romantic plots about young people and servants in conflict with their elders, along

with a reduced role for the chorus—all of which influenced the development of Roman comedy. Menander wrote *The Grouch* (*Dyskolos*, 317–16), the only complete New Comedy that survives from ancient Greece.

**[Which types of plays do you value in our current theatrical media and why: mythic stories about divine figures (as in Aeschylus's *Oresteia*), psychological mysteries (as with Sophocles's *Oedipus* plays), violent action (as in Euripides, where it is heard or described), political satire (as with Aristophanes), or romantic comedy (as with Menander)?]**

31. Typically, Greek plays had a *prologos* (prolog by one character), *parodos* (ode sung and danced by the chorus as they entered the orchestra), then various scenes as episodes with alternating choral odes, which had counter-movements of *strophes* and *antistrophes*, and an *exodus* (final exit ode).

32. Aristotle (384–22 BCE), who was a tutor to the young Alexander the Great in Macedonia for three years, describes in *The Poetics* (c. 335 BCE) six elements of tragic drama, in descending order of importance: plot, character, idea, diction, song, and spectacle.

**[Are these the main elements today, not just of tragedy, but also of other genres, with spectacle and song as the least important?]**

33. Aristotle's *Poetics* gives us further terms to define plays and their effects: *mimesis* (imitation of action), sympathy and fear (emotions aroused in the audience through the *mimesis* onstage), *hamartia* (tragic flaw or judgment error in the hero, from “missed aim” as when shooting an arrow), and *hubris* (excessive pride as an example of *hamartia*). Aristotle also mentions *catharsis* as the purification or “cleansing” of emotions in spectators, through their sympathy with the hero as admirable, yet fear during the plot twists and recognition scenes, revealing his fatal errors, toward the conflict's climax and final catastrophe.

34. Plato, Aristotle's teacher, wrote an earlier criticism of “*mimesis*” in poetry and visual art (in *The Republic*, Book 10), as being an imitation of an imitation of the ideal (Form), with an artist *describing or painting* a bed that a carpenter *made* from an *idea* of it. This suggests that theatre is a further degree removed from the truth, with poetry and paintings onstage.

**[Does theatre bring us closer to the truth, through a purification of emotions, or delude us with imitations? Which forms of theatre, how and when?]**

35. Outdoor *wooden* theatres were built on hillsides in the 400s (during the Classical Age) in Greek city-states and early colonies. Then in the 300s (during the late Classical and Hellenistic Ages), *stone* theatres replaced them and were built in further lands conquered by Alexander the Great. Ruins of those stone theatres exist today from Sicily and mainland Italy to Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus.
36. The most significant stone theatre ruin is in Athens, at the foot of the Acropolis hill (which has the Parthenon on top): the Theatre of Dionysus where the festival performances were located near a temple to the god. But that stone theatre was later redesigned in the Roman style, with a semicircular orchestra, and another Roman theatre was built nearby (the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, 161 CE).
37. In Epidaurus, a stone theatre was built with the fully circular, Greek orchestra, near a shrine to the god of healing, Asclepius. Today, that theatre has an almost complete Greek *theatron*, with acoustics aided by its hillside shape, and holds about 14,000 people (Fig. 3.4). A smaller theatre exists at Delphi, with the ruins of Apollo's temple behind it, where the female oracle gave prophecies—a key element in *The Oresteia* and *Oedipus the King* (Fig. 3.5). There is also an Athenian Treasury, which held offerings from that city.



Fig. 3.4 Ancient Greek theatre at Epidaurus (photo: Mark Pizzato)



**Fig. 3.5** Ancient Greek theatre and Temple of Apollo (with the Athenian Treasury behind it) at Delphi (photo: Mark Pizzato)



**Fig. 3.6** *Proedria* in the Theatre of Dionysus, Athens (photo: Mark Pizzato)

38. The major structural elements of the Greek theatre were the *logeion* (stage), orchestra (for the chorus to sing and dance), *theatron* ("seeing place" or auditorium with curved benches), *skene* (scene house), *paraskenia* (side buildings), *parodoi* or *eisodoi* (entry/exit-ways between the *logeion* and *theatron*), *thymele* (altar with a platform in the orchestra, perhaps for the chorus leader), and *proedria* (front row of seats with backs for the elite, Fig. 3.6).

**[How do these areas relate to ancient plays, such as *The Oresteia*, and today's expectations? How does "theatre" involve "theory"—with both terms originating from the Greek *théa*, "a view"?)**

39. By the time of the stone theatres in the 300s, there was a *raised* stage with *thyromata* (arched doorways) in the *skene* and in its upper level (*episkenion*).
40. Key performance elements were the *pinake* (painted flat), *periaktoi* (changeable scenery with three pinakes joined), *mechane* (crane to fly actors), *ekkyklema* (wagon for rolling out dead bodies), *persona* (full-head mask), *phallus* (exaggerated for comedy), *kothornoi* (high-heel boots in the 300s), and *onkos* (headdress on top of the mask, also in the 300s).

**[How are these performance elements like and unlike today's, onstage and onscreen? How does *persona* as mask relate to "personality" today and the inner theatre elements of "actor" and "character" as neural networks?]**

41. Women did not perform in the formal play contests, just as "mimes" in informal, sometimes spoken sketches. But there is evidence for women in the *theatron*. Plato denounced tragedy as a rhetoric addressed to "boys, women and men, slaves and free citizens, without distinction." In his comedy, *The Frogs*, Aristophanes presents Aeschylus as mocking Euripides for his abandoned sluts onstage, which caused women in the audience to hang themselves. And the ancient Roman text, *Life of Aeschylus*, reports that the Chorus of Furies in *The Eumenides* was so monstrous that pregnant women watching them suffered miscarriages (Kitto 233).
42. Spectators paid a fee to watch the plays, two obols, about a day's wage for a laborer. But the Greek leader, Pericles, established a Theoric Fund in the 400s to help poor citizens attend.
43. In the 1870s, Friedrich Nietzsche defined the "birth of tragedy" through opposite yet interdependent elements: the ancient Dionysian chorus in the orchestra, as a wildly passionate "womb" of music, producing the ordered, dreamlike, Apollonian mask of the tragic actor onstage, as ideal classical beauty.

**[How does Nietzsche's view of Dionysian wildness fueling Apollonian beauty apply today?]**

## B. Ancient Rome with TIMELINE

- 753 BCE, the city of Rome was founded
- 753–509, the **Roman Kingdom** developed, greatly influenced by Etruscans to the north, who ruled the city of Rome in the 500s
- 667, the city of Byzantium (later capital of the Eastern Roman Empire) was founded by Megarian Greek colonists
- 509–27, the **Roman Republic** was governed by aristocratic “patricians” in the Senate, who elected “consuls” to rule over the lower-class “plebeians” and slaves (but the patricians depended on the plebeians as infantrymen when their territory was invaded)
- 501, facing a potential Sabine invasion, the Senate gave absolute power to a temporary dictator, who was obliged to step down after it was over or at the end of six months
- 471, the Plebeian Council was reorganized by tribes, giving the commoners more independence from their patrician patrons, with the right to pass laws, elect judges, and try cases—though their laws were subject to vetoes from the Senate
- 447, the Tribal Assembly was established, with each of the 35 tribes having a vote
- 445, marriage between patricians and plebeians was legalized
- 351, the first plebeian dictator (again only temporary) was elected by the Senate
- 340–38, Romans won the Second Latin War, absorbing nearby territories
- 218–201, Romans won the Second Punic War against Syracuse and Carthage, along the north coast of Africa and parts of today’s Spain (“Punic” with reference to the Latin term for the Phoenicians, ancestors of the Carthaginians)
- 146, during the Third Punic War, Rome burned Carthage and enslaved its survivors, further expanding its territories around the Mediterranean Sea
- 73–71, the Third Servile War was started by 70 slave-gladiators who escaped from their school and were joined in two years by 120,000 men, women, and children, roaming the countryside and raiding towns, led by the former gladiator, Spartacus, but they were defeated by several Roman legions and then 6000 survivors were crucified along the Appian Way, a major road leading in and out of Rome, as a warning to others
- 63, Pompey conquered Jerusalem and entered the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Second Temple

- 58–50, Roman legions, led by Julius Caesar, conquered Gaul (today's France and Belgium)
- 49, Julius Caesar was ordered by the Senate to relinquish command of his army, because he wanted reforms supported by the common people, yet he crossed the Rubicon River illegally and advanced toward Rome, so his rival, Pompey, fled
- 45, after four years of warfare between Caesar's and Pompey's armies at various sites around the Mediterranean, Pompey was killed in Egypt, but Caesar continued pursuing his sons
- 44, Julius Caesar was assassinated in the curia (assembly hall) adjacent to the Theatre of Pompey by a conspiracy of senators
- 31–30, the forces of Marcus Antonius (friend of Caesar), then allied with Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, were defeated by Octavian and he committed suicide, as did she
- 27, Augustus (Octavian) became the first Emperor, or *Princeps Senatus* (First Man of the Senate), expanding Rome's territories in Hispania, Germania, and Africa
- 27 BCE–476 CE, the **Roman Empire** developed, with dictators governing
- 64 CE, the Great Fire of Rome led to the first persecution of Christians because Nero made them the scapegoats
- 70, putting down a Jewish revolt, the Romans under the command of Titus sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Temple (and Titus later became emperor)
- 79, the Vesuvius volcano erupted, burying Pompeii and Herculaneum, yet preserving them for later discoveries
- 80, the Flavian Amphitheatre (Colosseum) was completed in the center of Rome after eight years of building, funded by war spoils from Jerusalem and using 100,000 Jews brought to Rome as slaves
- 128, under Emperor Hadrian, the rebuilt Pantheon (temple to multiple gods) was dedicated to Agrippa, its original builder
- 132–35, the Jewish followers of Simon bar Kokhba, believing him to be the promised Messiah, started a revolution against the Romans, but it was put down at the cost of 10,000 Roman soldiers and 600,000 Jewish civilians, including bar Kokhba
- 180, Emperor (and Stoic philosopher) Marcus Aurelius died, marking the end of the Pax Romana, an era of relatively peaceful Roman expansion and good rulers
- 192, Emperor Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius, after rejecting his father's Stoicism and killing many as threats—while seeing himself as the demigod Hercules—was assassinated in his bath by his wrestling partner,



Narcissus, one month after shooting hundreds of animals and fighting as a gladiator in the Plebian Games

- 222, Emperor Elagabalus, after ruling for four years as a teenager, was assassinated by his own Praetorian Guard (elite bodyguards), like his father, the emperor Caracalla before him
  - 286, Mediolanum (Milan) replaced Rome as the capital
  - 303, Emperor Diocletian issued his first edict against Christians, stripping them of political rights and destroying their worship places and holy books—which led to further edicts, also from the next emperor, Galerius (305–11), resulting in approximately 20,000 Christian martyrs, executed in arenas as entertainment or otherwise, for refusing to sacrifice to Roman gods, especially in the eastern parts of the empire
  - 313, Emperor Constantine made Christianity legal and eventually converted to it
  - 325, Constantine summoned the Council of Nicaea, which produced a collective Nicene Creed (statement of beliefs) for all Roman Christians
  - 330, Byzantium, renamed as Constantinople by Constantine, was dedicated as the new capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (which then became known as “Byzantium”)
  - 361–63, Justinian II tried to return the Roman Empire to Neoplatonic pagan worship
  - 379–95, Theodosius, the last ruler of both western and eastern empires, made Orthodox Nicene Christianity the official state religion and allowed the destruction of Greek temples
  - 402, Ravenna became the capital of the Western Roman Empire
  - 410, Rome was sacked by the Visigoths led by King Alaric
  - 476, the Western Empire collapsed but the Eastern Roman Empire continued until Constantinople was conquered by the Muslim Turks in 1453
1. Atellan farce, with masked improvisations from Campania, a region to the south of Rome, became popular with its stock characters (the braggart, the greedy blockhead, the clever hunchback, and the stupid old man), developing from local sources.
  2. Roman tragedy borrowed from Greek models and romantic comedy from Greek “New Comedy,” all with masks.  
**[How are these forms of ancient Roman performances related to ours today—and the identity needs of our inner theatres?]**
  3. By 240 BCE, the Ludi Romani, a 12-day September festival in honor of Jupiter (the Greek Zeus, king of the gods), added four days of

tragedies and comedies in the Circus Maximus, a chariot racetrack and building. It was free like other festivals, with costs paid by the state or wealthy citizens.

4. Roman "mime" (*fabula riciniata*) involved male and female actors without masks, sometimes nude, performing short comic sketches, through speech and gesture. Plots came from Atellan farce, but with urban settings, singing, dancing, juggling, acrobatics, and dog tricks. Mime appeared on bare stages or in home theatres of the wealthy, eventually surpassing tragedy in popularity.

**[How do today's "home theatres" with television screens and laptops involve similar yet different entertainments from live performances in ancient Rome?]**

5. By 173 BCE, mime was a key feature of the Ludi Florales, an April to May fertility festival in honor of the goddess of love, Venus (the Greek Aphrodite).
6. Mime actors sometimes performed live sex acts—especially as commanded by Emperor Elagabalus (a.k.a. Heliogabalus, the name of a Syrian sun god he worshiped as high priest), who reigned in 218–22 CE, when he was 14–18.
7. Roman "pantomime" (meaning a dancer who acts all the roles) developed during the first century BCE with a single *silent* dancer, musicians, and a chorus chanting the narrative of a mythic, historical, erotic, or comical story.
8. Plautus (meaning "Flatfoot," 254–184 BCE), who first worked as a stage carpenter and actor, wrote 130 romantic comedies after 205 BCE, 20 of which survive, such as *Amphitryon* and *The Menaechmi* (dates unknown). *Amphitryon* shows the king of the gods, Jupiter, disguised as a Roman general, so that he can sleep with the general's wife, while the god Mercury, disguised as a servant, beats up the real servant to stop him from bringing news of the real general's arrival. *The Menaechmi* is about twin brothers with the same name who are mistaken for each other by other people, with comic confusion. (It later inspired Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* and Goldoni's *The Venetian Twins*.) Plautus's plays were akin to Greek New Comedy without a chorus, yet probably with sung dialog, and often with slapstick farce, involving clever servants outwitting their masters.
9. Terence (Publius Terentius Afer, 195/85–159 BCE) was a slave from the north coast of Africa (as "Afer" denotes). But he was educated by his master and freed, eventually writing six plays, all of which survive. *Phormio* (161 BCE) features a "parasite" or trickster servant who makes

money by helping two young men get the wives they desire. Terence's plays have conversational language and verbal humor, often with double plots, showing characters in similar romantic situations but with different reactions.

10. Seneca (4 BCE–65 CE) was a Stoic philosopher and playwright, who believed in the values of moderation and calmness. Yet he was also an epicure, enjoying wealth and many pleasures, especially as an advisor to Emperor Nero (from 54 to 62 CE). Then he fell out of favor with the emperor and was ordered to commit suicide. At least eight of his tragedies survive (with two more attributed to him), based on Greek myths, such as *Thyestes*, and they sometimes show extreme violence, along with a chorus and supernatural figures. They may have been “closet dramas,” meant just for reading, or they may have been performed in Seneca's lifetime. *Thyestes* involves rival brothers, with Atreus (father of Agamemnon) losing his wife to Thyestes and then pretending to forgive him, offering a banquet where he serves him his sons to eat before telling him of this revenge.

**[How do movies, television shows, and video games today with supernatural characters reflect stoicism, yet epicurean materialism and disgusting violence, akin to Seneca's tragedies, or other values like/unlike the comedies of Plautus or Terence?]**

11. Horace (65–8 BCE), the son of a freed slave, argued in his *Art of Poetry* that theatre should both instruct and entertain, for “profit and pleasure.” He stated that tragedy and comedy should be distinct genres, with plays in five acts and a maximum of three speaking characters onstage. All characters should perform according to decorum (appropriate to their class), along with a moral chorus, and no gods should appear unless necessary to resolve the plot (as a *deus ex machina*). These prescriptions influenced later Renaissance playwrights, who used Aristotle and Horace to develop neoclassical ideals.

**[Considering Horace's argument, which do you value more in our current media—moral instruction, challenging ideas, or pleasurable entertainment—and how might these ideals conflict? How do other rules from Horace apply today?]**

12. In the city of Rome, temporary wooden theatres (*theatra*) were used until the Theatre of Pompey was built, from 61 to 55 BCE, as the first permanent theatre building (not set on a hillside) and probably the largest ever. It had a temple of Venus at the top of the auditorium (with her statue watching) and a garden with surrounding colonnade behind the stage. It was also connected to further temples and a “curia”

(assembly) building where the Senate sometimes met and where Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BCE. Pompey was a rival to Julius Caesar (a successful military general) and built his theatre to gain popularity, although there was a ban on such buildings in the sacred area of Rome. So he built it on the edge of that area and declared it was not a theatre, but a temple of Venus with "the steps of a theatre," where plays and gladiator shows were performed.

**[How are performances today made for a popular audience and yet tied to an ideal Other watching and to real-life political dramas?]**

13. Key structural elements of the Roman *theatrum* (Fig. 3.7) included a *pulpitum* (stage), *scaena* (scene house), and *scaenae frons* (permanent façade of the scaena, often with columns, arches, and statues on multiple levels and stage-level doorways, representing a city street and houses). They also included the *auleum* (front curtain with telescoped poles raising it, which the Greeks did not have), *siparium* (back curtain), *periaktoi* (as scenery), and semicircular orchestra. For the audience, there was the *cavea* (auditorium with tiered sections and marble benches), *velarium* (awning) over it, and *vomitoria* (entry and exit tunnels).



**Fig. 3.7** Ancient Roman theatre remains at Orange, France, with scaenae frons (photo: Mark Pizzato)

[How are today's theatre conventions, including the curtain over the screen in many movie theatres, related to the ancient Roman development of—and additions to—previous Greek theatre elements? How are the ancient structures related to inner theatre elements of the brain?]

14. Arenas were built across the Roman Empire as “amphitheatres” (*amphitheatra*), meaning “both viewing-areas,” as two theatres joined together to form a central performance area surrounded by the audience (Fig. 3.8).
15. The largest arena, the Flavian Colosseum, was completed in the city of Rome in 80 CE and held 50,000–80,000 spectators, with its ruins still existing today. So do the remains of a smaller arena in Pozzuoli (Puteoli), near Naples. Visitors can see the underground architecture (Fig. 3.9) with cells, passageways, and openings to the arena floor above—where wild beasts, criminals, and gladiators were lifted up, with rope elevators and elaborate scenery, to appear on the sandy floor of the amphitheatre (Fig. 3.10).
16. Some arena games offered huge spectacles, with entire habitats appearing or disappearing through the arena floor. Ancient sources describe, for example, a forest with perfumed rain; a wooden mountain with real plants, a stream flowing, and wild goats; or a cage in the shape of a ship that broke open to release hundreds of animals (Coleman 52).



Fig. 3.8 Ancient Roman arena (amphitheatre) at Arles, France (photo: Mark Pizzato)



Fig. 3.9 Underground passageways of the Pozzuoli arena (photo: Mark Pizzato)



Fig. 3.10 Stage floor of the Pozzuoli arena with modern grates over the traps (photo: Mark Pizzato)

17. In the morning, arenas typically offered animal hunts (*venationes*) with exotic beasts, including lions, bears, tigers, elephants, giraffes, and deer. 9000 animals were killed in the 100-day grand opening of the Colosseum. The *venator* (hunter) also performed tricks with the animals, such as putting an arm in a lion's mouth, riding a camel while pulled by lions, or making an elephant walk a tightrope (according to Seneca).
18. At noon, arenas presented executions by crucifixion, burning at the stake, or by beasts (*damnatio ad bestias*), such as lions, bears, or bulls. Such victims included many Christians, who were condemned as traitors for not believing in the Roman gods, but prayed and sang hymns as they were sacrificed. Sometimes, condemned criminals were dressed as mythic figures and suffered their torments, such as Atys being castrated or Hercules burned alive (Tertullian).
19. In the afternoon, arenas offered *individual* gladiator fights and sometimes *group reenactments* of historical victories. By the beginning of the Empire, gladiator games might involve hundreds or thousands of captured warriors, trained slaves, condemned criminals, and exotic animals. For example, under Emperor Claudius in 52 CE, a *naumachia* (staged sea battle) on the Fucine Lake started with a silver image of the god Triton, who rose from the lake and blew a trumpet. Then 19,000 war captives and condemned criminals fought as "Sicilians" against "Rhodians" (Coleman 71).

**[How were gladiator fights and other arena events like/unlike our current media spectacles?]**

20. The playwright Seneca stated his moral disgust at the mass audience lusting for blood, animal-like, at the midday executions: "In the morning men are thrown before lions and bears, at noon they are thrown before the spectators." But he also expressed Stoic admiration for brave gladiators—and for the condemned who chose to commit suicide in their cells or on the way to execution (choking on a sponge or putting one's head between the cartwheel spokes), showing that they were free of the fear of death (Wistrand 16–20).
21. Gladiators became popular stars, both despised and idolized as figures of vulgarity, sexuality, and former warrior ideals. They evoked nostalgia for earlier centuries when Roman wars were fought by citizens, rather than by mercenaries from conquered lands. A clay baby-bottle even had a gladiator's image on it, preserved by the volcanic eruption in Pompeii (Hopkins, *Death* 7). Gladiators were slaves but could earn their freedom (with prize money) and become rich if successful in many fights. Citizens in debt also sold themselves into gladiatorial slavery, to save the family's honor.

**[How are the sacrifices demanded by our current media spectacles of "selfies," sports, news, screen games, and fictions akin to—or distinct from—the ways that animals and humans were offered to the crowds and emperors in ancient Rome, or to Venus in her temple atop the Theatre of Pompey?]**

22. The first recorded gladiator battle, in 264 BCE, was staged at the public funeral of an aristocrat, with three pairs of fighters. Ritual elements continued in the gladiator games, as honorable reenactments of the past, appeasing the spirits of the dead, believed to sometimes threaten the living (Pizzato). For example, stagehands dressed as *larvae*, the dissatisfied spirits of the dead, gave new gladiators a ritual beating in the arena prior to the fight (Barton 19).
23. Individual fights usually had a referee with a *rudis*, a wooden wand as symbol of authority, used to separate the gladiators. Fights to the death were *not* the norm, but a special event, with the loser's death rehearsed in advance, as part of the gladiator's training (Auguet 51, 59). Special fights between female gladiators were staged, too.
24. Arena contests had musical accompaniments (with trumpets and water organ) and wooden balls for prizes thrown to spectators (*missilia*). Stagehands, dressed as the gods Mercury and Pluto (or Charon, Etruscan ferryman of the underworld), tested the dead or finished them off, with a red-hot iron and hammer, and then dragged the bodies away. There were also clowns (*paegniarii*, meaning "of play") who pretended to duel, wearing padding but no armor, between the gladiator fights.

**[Which of these elements are similar to theatre and sporting events today, although usually without the loss of life?]**

25. As spectators in the *cavea*, senators and knights were dressed in purple-bordered togas and had special seats near the emperor's or local ruler's gilded box. Other citizens, seated further away from the arena floor, wore white togas—and women or poor men wore gray cloth—together forming a mass political audience, gossiping and performing in relation to their rulers and the "editor" (producer of the games). The arena became a parliament where citizens could support their leaders or complain en masse (Hopkins, "Murderous"). Sometimes, riots broke out between groups, such as the bloody battle between Pompeian and Nuceria spectators in the amphitheatre at Pompeii in 59 CE (Barton 63).
26. At least eight emperors appeared as gladiators in the arena (including Commodus, as shown in the movie, *Gladiator*), along with many senators and knights. Commodus exemplified the godlike persona that many emperors cultivated, claiming that he was the reincarnation



of Hercules. There were sculptures made of him as Hercules wearing a lion-skin and holding a club. Commodus appeared often in the Colosseum to act as the mythic Hercules, by shooting ostriches, giraffes, elephants, panthers, and lions (reportedly 100 in one day) with a bow and arrow. He also fought as a gladiator, sometimes slaying disabled citizens with missing limbs.

27. Commodus appeared as a *secutor* (“chaser”) in the arena, wearing a smooth helmet with full-metal visor over the face, and a padded arm guard, while carrying a large shield and short sword (*gladius*). This type of gladiator was based on the elite, heavy-armed infantry of the Roman Legion.
28. The typical opponent of the *secutor* was the *retiarius*, with light armor, a net, and a trident (three-pointed spear). The bare face and net of the *retiarius* made him an effeminate figure and the lowest class of gladiator.
29. The *murmillo* was similar to the *secutor* in appearance, but with a stylized fish (related to his name) as helmet crest. He usually fought against the *thraex*, based on the Thracian soldier with a short, curved dagger and small, rectangular or round shield, or the *hoplomachus*, based on the Greek soldier.
30. Some of the early gladiators were prisoners of war, who wore their native equipment. This led to the costume and props of certain classes of slave-gladiators, and influenced their pairings.
31. The equipment of the *gallus* mimicked the soldiers of Gaul (France). But when its territory was fully conquered and the Gauls became integrated into Roman society, that gladiator type was changed to the *murmillo*. Likewise, the *samnite* gladiator, one of the earliest types (with a plumed helmet), was replaced by the *secutor* and *murmillo* after Samnium (in Campania) was conquered and its citizens became important members of the Roman Empire.
32. The *dimachaerus* fought with two swords (the meaning of the name). The *laquearius* used a lasso in one hand and a sword in the other. The *cestus* was a boxer who wore metal on his hands, sometimes with spikes or blades. The *equus* fought on horseback, against other *equites*, wearing a brimmed helmet with two feathers, a breastplate, and thigh guards, while carrying a round shield and sword or spear. The *essedarius* was a charioteer, probably modeled after British enemies, since the name came from the Latin word for a Celtic war-chariot.
33. Chariot and horse races were also staged in the “circus” (circular race-track), such as the Circus Maximus in Rome, which held over 150,000 spectators. Chariots drawn by four horses raced on long tracks with tight turns at each end. If charioteers fell off, they could be dragged

or trampled. Thus, the popular audience enjoyed a double drama: who would win the race and who might fall to a horrible death.

34. Sea battles (*naumachiae*) were also held on artificial lakes, or possibly in water-sealed arenas and theatre orchestras.
35. Roman actors, like gladiators, were often "slaves." But if successful, they could become free and wealthy celebrities. The head of the acting troupe, the *dominus*, was usually the lead actor, who bought the plays, hired musicians, and obtained costumes, including linen head masks worn by actors as stock characters. Actors were generally considered untrustworthy, so they were not allowed to serve in the army, to run for government office, or to vote (Easterling and Hall 380).
36. During the Empire, plays lost many of their viewers to the increasingly popular arena games. Even earlier, Terence complained in the second prolog to his comedy, *Hecyra* (*The Mother-in-Law*, 165 BCE), that wild spectators disrupted its initial performances, screaming and fighting for seats, on a rumor that gladiator fights would appear in the same place (Augoustakis and Traill).

**[How do we value stage actors, action-movie performers, or athletes today, like/unlike actors and gladiators in ancient Rome?]**

37. As Christianity grew in the Roman Empire, theatre was condemned by various Church Fathers. Clement of Alexandria (150–210 CE) criticized such shows as a false rival to Christ in the theatre of the universe. Tertullian (160–230) attacked theatre, especially the Theatre of Pompey, as the dwelling place of the Roman gods, Venus (beauty) and Liber (wine, fertility, and freedom), producing sinful behaviors. Augustine (354–430) viewed theatre as a deadly poison, recalling his youthful enjoyment of surface emotions through plays (Schnusenberg).
38. After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, ancient playscripts were studied and preserved in the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire. But public theatre was suppressed and religious plays were not created there as in the West—because of an emphasis on sacred icons, beyond human reality, in Eastern Orthodox Christian churches. Pantomimes with their sexual gestures and songs, along with public dancing and cross-dressing, were repeatedly banned as pagan customs. Mimes (popular verbal sketches) were also attacked by the Church as satanic for their female nudity and parodies of Christian baptism (Easterling and Hall 312–16).

**[Which kinds of theatre are considered dangerous or sinful to some people today, as in Christian Byzantium?]**

## References

- Aeschylus. *The Oresteia of Aeschylus: Eumenides*. Trans. Robin Bond, 2014. <https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/10502/3%20-%20The%20Oresteia%20of%20Aeschylus%20-%20Eumenides.pdf;sequence=2>.
- Augoustakis, Antony, and Ariana Traill, eds. *A Companion to Terence*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.
- Auguet, Roland. *Cruelty and Civilization: The Roman Games*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Barton, Carlin A. *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Coleman, K. M. "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments." *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 44–73.
- Easterling, Pat, and Edith Hall, eds. *Greek and Roman Actors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Hopkins, Keith. *Death and Renewal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- . "Murderous Games: Gladiatorial Contests in Ancient Rome." *History Today* 33.6 (June 1983). [www.historytoday.com/keith-hopkins/murderous-games-gladiatorial-contests-ancient-rome](http://www.historytoday.com/keith-hopkins/murderous-games-gladiatorial-contests-ancient-rome).
- King, Kimball. *Western Drama Through the Ages*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007.
- Kitto, H. D. F. *The Greeks*. 1951. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- Nagler, A. M. *A Source Book in Theatrical History*. New York: Dover, 1959.
- Nielsen, Inge. *Cultic Theatres and Ritual Drama*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2002.
- Pizzato, Mark. *Theatres of Human Sacrifice*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005.
- Schnusenberg, Christine Catharina. *The Relationship Between the Church and the Theatre*. Lanham and New York: University Press of America, 1988.
- Seneca. "Moral Letters to Lucilius/Letter 7." Trans. Richard Mott Gummere. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Moral\\_letters\\_to\\_Lucilius/Letter\\_7](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Moral_letters_to_Lucilius/Letter_7).
- Tertullian. *Apology*. Trans. T. R. Glover. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931.
- Voyatzis, Mary E. "From Athena to Zeus." *Ancient Goddesses*. Ed. Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, 133–47.
- Wistrand, Magnus. *Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome*. Göteborg: University of Göteborg Press, 1992.



# 4

## Traditional Forms of Asian Theatre

See Fig. 4.1.

### A. India with TIMELINE

- c. 5000 BCE, earliest evidence of religious practices in the Indus Valley
- c. 5000–1500, Indus Valley (Harappan) Civilization
- c. 3300, Harappan burial practices
- c. 2800, Harappan cremation rather than burial
- c. 1500–1000, migration of nomadic Aryans into the Indus and Ganges valleys
- c. 1500–500, Vedic Period and Gandhara Civilization
- c. 700, Aryan beliefs were codified into the Upanishads as the core of Hinduism, but the Charvaka philosophy also developed, focusing on pure materialist pleasure and critical of any spiritual beliefs
- 530, Persia conquered the Indus Valley
- c. 500, the *Ramayana* epic was composed by the sage Valmiki
- c. 400s, life of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama
- 327–25, Alexander the Great invaded India and then retreated to Babylon, Persia (today's Iran), which he had previously conquered, yet Hellenistic art influenced India afterward



Fig. 4.1 Map of Asia (US CIA's World Factbook)

- 320–298, the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta conquered northern and central India, but then abdicated the throne to his son and converted to Jainism, becoming an ascetic and starving himself to death
- 200s, start of the **Classical Period**

- 268–32, reign of the third Mauryan emperor, Ashoka, who converted to Buddhism
- 200–80, Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek descendants of the army of Alexander the Great, who lived to the northwest of India (in today's Afghanistan and Pakistan), conquered and ruled parts of India
- c. 200 BCE–600 CE, 30 Buddhist cave-shrines were carved in Ajanta, eventually showing Gupta designs
- first century CE, Mahayana Buddhism developed (differently from Theravada) with the belief in bodhisattvas, as beings who reached nirvana but chose to return to the cycle of embodied lives through compassion, to help others reach enlightenment
- 320–550, the Gupta Dynasty ruled most of India, creating a “golden age” of art, philosophy, mathematics, science (Ayurveda medicine), and architecture, with Hindu rulers who were tolerant toward Jainism and Buddhism
- 650, start of the **Medieval Period**
- 712, Muslim invasions began in northern India
- 848–1279, the Chola Dynasty ruled in southern India, with many Hindu temples built and artworks created, such as bronze images of Shiva (the god of transformation) performing the dance of destruction and creation
- 1000s–1200s, Afghan and Turkish Muslims invaded northern India, destroying the 700-year-old Buddhist university and library at Nalanda (c. 1190), the university at Vikramashila (c. 1200), and many monasteries, shrines, images, and sacred texts, while killing monks and nuns—thus marking the final decline of Buddhism in India, except in the Himalayas and southern India
- 1206s, the Delhi Sultanate controlled most of India with Islamic rulers for 320 years
- 1500s, start of the **Early Modern Period**
- 1526–40, the Islamic, Indo-Persian, Mughal Empire ruled most of India and parts of Afghanistan
- 1540–55, the Islamic, Afghan, Sur Empire ruled northern India
- 1555, the Mughal Empire ruled most of India again, for the next 300 years
- 1757–1858, the British East India Company (a private company with stockholders) ruled parts of India with its own army and judges, starting the **Colonial Period**
- 1858–1947, the British Raj ruled India (after the Indian Rebellion of 1857)

- 1876, the Dramatic Performances Act gave police the power to stop a show and arrest actors if it was scandalous, immoral, or might inspire anti-government sentiments
  - 1947–present, **Contemporary Period** (after India’s independence from Britain and then the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh as separate Islamic countries)
1. Over 3000 years ago, the Aryans from Central Asia brought to India a system of four main castes (priests, rulers/warriors, artisans/merchants/farmers, and laborers), plus “untouchables” as outcasts. This caste system was outlawed in 1950, but continues to influence Indian society.
  2. From Hinduism, also brought by the Aryans, came sacred texts in the ancient Sanskrit language: the Vedas, Upanishads, and epic poems *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. They tell the stories of many gods, focusing on Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver (who also appears as Krishna and Rama), and Shiva the Destroyer/Transformer. These stories involve ideas of cyclic reincarnation (*samsara*), karmic fate, reality as an every-changing illusion through divine play (*maya lila*), and the goal of liberation (*moksha*) from that illusory cycle, which influenced traditional Indian theatre.
  3. Buddhism started in India in the 400s BCE with a Shakya clan prince, Siddhartha Gautama, who discovered a “Middle Way” to truth, between asceticism and pleasure, through “non-attachment” as a cure to suffering. Buddhism promised liberation (enlightenment as *nirvana*, being “blown out”) from karmic reincarnation. It spread across Asia, influencing theatre in various countries.
  4. According to legend, the Indian king, Ashoka, after witnessing the carnage of his campaign against the Kalinga, with over 100,000 deaths, converted to Buddhism in 263 BCE. He sent Buddhist monks to Sri Lanka and Central Asia, while building 84,000 stupas with relics of the bones of the historical Buddha. He also erected pillars across India (some still standing) with ethical edicts that included religious tolerance, a ban on animal sacrifices, and protections for certain species.
  5. The *Natya-Shastra* (or *Natyasastra*, “dance-drama scripture”), a manual from about 2000 years ago, by Bharata Muni and others, describes various elements of ancient Sanskrit theatre as a mythic gift from the god Brahma to Bharata and his 100 sons as the first actors. It defines the playhouse “like a mountain cavern” and its stage with four poles around it: white, red, yellow, and blue, symbolizing each caste. The

*Natya-Shastra* also describes gestures, gaits, prosody, meter, diction, intonation, temperaments, color-coded makeup, and costumes. It defines four performance styles—verbal, grand, graceful, and energetic (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 97). And it categorizes eight *rasas* as the “flavors” of emotions (*bhavas*), resonating within the viewer empathetically, yet tasted at a detached distance.

6. A ninth *rasa*, “peace” (*shantam*), was added a 1000 years later by the commentator Abhinavagupta, who explored the “mental state” of the viewer, in tasting *rasas* (Pollock 19). Indian theatre helps spectators toward liberation (*moksha*) of the self (*atman*) by purifying the mind’s awareness of emotions, akin to the Buddhist sense of enlightenment. Abhinavagupta describes *shanta-rasa* as the purest experience of other *rasas*, like a string passing through the other eight as jewels in a necklace. Such mindful attentiveness aims at union with the divine (*Brahman*) through communion with other humans (*tanmayibhavana*), in calmness beyond sensual attachments.
7. Abhinavagupta regards the performer as an instrument for conveying *rasas*, not needing to feel the character’s emotions—with the Sanskrit term for “actor,” *patra*, meaning “carrier-pot” (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 98). But this also depends on the viewer being in “the right frame of mind ... with all senses undistracted and capable of critical observation” (Virtanen 67). *Rasa* theory thus involves arousal yet quiescence, empathy yet distance, like Aristotelian catharsis, as a “cure by opposites,” which is a technique in both ancient Greek and Indian medicine (Sen 92–97), although current interpreters differ on how similar the traditions are.
8. The nine *bhavas/rasas* (with their traditional, *Natya-Shastra* colors) are love/romance (green), joy/laughter (white), anger/fury (red), sorrow/compassion (gray or dove-colored), disgust/aversion (blue), fear/horror (black), courage/heroism (orange or wheat brown), awe/wonder (yellow), and peace/bliss (Schwartz 15). They are evoked in spectators’ minds (inner theatres) by the Indian dance-drama’s plot, characters, and poetry—through codified facial expressions, movements, and hand gestures (*mudras*), which developed from sacred rituals as a mimetic sign language that can be read by connoisseur viewers.
9. *Rasa* arises from the invocation of a primary emotion (*Sthyayi Bhava*) through its “Determinants” (*Vibhava*, causes in the story or in life), “Consequents” (*Anubhava*, aspects of performance), and 33 “Transitory States” (*Vyabhichari Bhava*) such as intoxication, stupor, sleep, sickness, insanity, impatience, despair, arrogance, agitation, shame, weariness, envy, weakness, anxiety, distraction, contentment, recollection,



apprehension, discouragement, cruelty, and death (Maillard 33–34; Richmond 81).

**[Today, which types of stage and screen fantasies, or virtual-reality worlds, evoke emotions (*bhavas*) not just as immersive experiences, but also as changing flavors (*rasas*), toward new perspectives and mindful awareness, perhaps with the ninth *rasa* of “peace”?]**

10. *The Little Clay Cart*, attributed to Shūdraka, who lived sometime between the third century BCE and fifth CE, is unlike other ancient Sanskrit dramas in featuring common people with noble spirits. Written in ten acts, its main plot shows the romance of a young Brahmin, Chārudata, and a virtuous courtesan, Vasantasenā, while she is pursued by a violent rival, Samsthānaka, with thieves, gamblers, and peasants involved also. Chārudata loses his wealth and is almost executed for the murder of Vasantasenā. But she survives being strangled by Samsthānaka and then joins Chārudata, his wife, and son as one family.
11. *The Recognition of Shakuntalā*, written by Kalidasa about 1600 years ago, exemplifies Sanskrit romantic drama, with its idealization, yet questioning of the noble hero and his love object, in a story drawn from the *Mahabharata*. It shows King Dushyanta falling in love with Shakuntalā when he first sees her, at her adoptive father’s ashram. He is even envious of a bee that bothers her eyes. They consummate their union offstage, but he fails to recognize her later, due to a curse from a visiting sage, whom she offended, and the loss of a ring the king gave her. Rejected by the king, the pregnant Shakuntalā ascends to a celestial ashram, her mother’s realm as a nymph (*apsara*). When the ring is returned to him, the king realizes his loss and longs for her, even creating a painting of her, while abjectly envying the painted bee. But the task of fighting demons (*asuras*) revives him. He rides in the fire god Agni’s chariot to the celestial ashram. There, he recognizes his son by divine signs (a pet lion cub, webbed fingers, and dangerous amulet) and is reunited with Shakuntalā.
12. The lead actor, *sudtradhara* (“he who draws the strings”), was often the production manager of the Sanskrit drama troupe. In *Shakuntalā*, he introduces the play, along with the lead actress, encouraging viewers to experience the story with theatrical eyes.
13. Sanskrit performances began with a *puja* ritual to bring blessings from cosmic forces through the burning (and smell) of incense.
14. In the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, a series of Islamic rulers limited the practice of Hindu Sanskrit theatre. But various forms developed in

different regions, with *kutiyattam* (“combined-play”) having the most direct lineage to ancient performances. They involve makeup with symbolic colors and elaborate costumes. They have little or no scenery, with props mostly mimed and with the sign language of hand *mudras* and codified facial expressions evoking imagery and *rasas* in the minds of spectators.

15. *Kutiyattam* or *koodiyattam*, with a tradition over 1000 years old in Kerala (southern India), is usually performed in Hindu temple theatres (*kootampalās*). Such a theatre has a square stage, usually with four pillars and a roof over it, plus a bronze oil lamp signifying divine presence. Men are seated on one side and women on the other—with men as the only actor-dancers, in colorful makeup and costumes, until about 50 years ago.
16. The performance also involves a curtain, pot-shaped copper drums and a smaller drum, metal cymbals (played by women), an oboe, and a conch shell. The script is recited by the actor-dancer with gestures and then repeated just in gestures, with further elaborations of the Sanskrit play. A full production may take 5–35 nights to perform.
17. The *kutiyattam* performer elaborates a single line of a Sanskrit play for up to an hour, with social and political analogies, emotional associations, and background stories. Each character appears onstage for several nights, played by a solo actor-dancer, giving different perspectives on the play, or the *vidushaka* (jester) appears and translates the Sanskrit text into local Malayalam, relating it to current events. Then the play itself is performed on the final night with several actor-dancers (Mee).
18. When entering the performance area, actors traditionally touch the stage with their right hand and then touch that hand to their eyes and forehead, honoring the sacredness of the place and asking the gods for blessing. While onstage, actors perform in the direction of the temple deity’s statue.
19. *Krishnanattam*, another form of dance-drama in Kerala, performed in the Guruvayur Temple, shows the life story of Krishna, an incarnation of the god Vishnu, as a devotional performance.
20. *Kathakali* developed from *kutiyattam* and *krishnanattam*, emerging in seventeenth-century Kerala, with elements from the *Natya-Shastra*. It involves martial arts and athletics, with male actor-dancers and a separate vocalist (unlike the earlier related forms), plus a square stool onstage and canopy over it. Weapons are sometimes used in violent scenes, but most props are mimed by performers, who wear colorful

costumes and makeup. Faces are green with red lips for noble warriors, gods, and sages; red for evil characters; yellow for monks, mendicants, and women; and black for forest dwellers and hunters, or (with patches of red) for demonesses and other treacherous characters. Masks are used for animal faces (Zarrilli).

21. *Ottan thullal* originated in Kerala in the eighteenth century, using principles from the *Natya-Shastra*. It involves a solo male performer with a green face, red lips, and black eyes, plus a colorful skirt, dancing and singing in the local Malayalam, with a chorus repeating each sentence and giving musical accompaniment. It is traditionally performed on a bare stage *outside* the temple in daylight, during a festival, with social criticism in fast-paced humorous lyrics.
22. *Odissi*, from the eastern state of Odisha, is traditionally performed by women (*Maharis*) *inside* the temple and based on the *Natya-Shastra* (where it is mentioned as *Odramagadhi*). It involves poses and *mudras* matching sculptures on the temple, as one of the oldest Indian forms (Fig. 4.2). It includes myths, devotions, and poetry about the gods, such as Vishnu and Shiva, through an invocation, pure dance, expressive dance, drama, and climax of spiritual release (*moksha*). *Odissi* also involves young boys (*Gotipuas*) dressed as girls outside the temple, performing acrobatics at festivals.
23. *Bharatanatyam* (“Bharata’s dance”) is performed in the southernmost area of India, Tamil Nadu. Traditionally, it involves a solo female performer inside a Hindu temple, along with musicians and a singer, in a ritual, storytelling dance that follows the *Natya-Shastra* in movements, *mudras*, and facial expressions.
24. *Bhavai*, in the western state of Gujarat, satirizes people of all classes, in ordinary social life and myths. Yet it is a ritual offering to the goddess Amba Mata (Mother of the Universe). Originating in the 1300s, it is performed by men playing both male and female roles, in an open area of a village, at night by torchlight.
25. *Rāmlilā* festival plays in northern India have a tradition of more than 400 years, with various styles. They show the victory of Rāma (an incarnation of the god Vishnu) over the demon king Rāvana in the *Ramayana*, with singers chanting the text, actors honored like gods, and the cycle of episodes occurring over a number of days on platforms in open areas—in some cases up to 31 days, as at Rāmnagar, with episodes on various stages across the city.



**Fig. 4.2** Odissi performance of *shringara* (love) *rasa*, with a *gavaksha* (grilled window) hand *mudra* as the heroine, *Nayika*, looks through the window in anticipation and longing (performed by Kaustavi Sarkar, photo by Debojyoti Dhar)

26. The *Rāsililā* festival also occurs in northern India, devoted to Krishna (another incarnation of Vishnu) on his birthday, with songs and depictions of his childhood and then his romance with Radha.
27. Various puppet theatres appear across India, with string, glove, rod, and shadow puppets. For example, *Kathputli* of Rajasthan in northwestern India is performed by a traveling puppeteer (*sudtradhara*, “string puller”), narrator-singer, and musicians playing a shrill bamboo reed, a drum, cymbals, and harmonium. Its marionettes are about two-feet tall, made

of wood and cloth, with large noses and eyes, in skirts without legs. They perform stories of local kings, with swordplay, horseback-riding, juggling, tumbling, dancing, and snake-charming, plus other animals and a character who flips from male to female with a second head under the skirt, in a tradition possibly over 1000 years old (Brandon 93).

**[How are distinct elements in traditional Indian theatre related to current inner and outer theatres, from stage to screen, Bollywood to Hollywood?]**

## B. China with TIMELINE

- c. 1600–1046 BCE, Shang Dynasty—with oracle writings on turtle shells and ox shoulder bones, plus other archeological remains of palaces, temples, war weapons, and animal and human sacrifices
- c. 1046–256, Zhou (pronounced “Jo”) Dynasty—with bronze artwork and clerical Chinese script in almost modern form, but ending with the Warring States Period (475–221), and yet Confucianism developing then with rituals to order society
- 221–206, Qin (pronounced “Chin”) Dynasty—with the first Chinese Empire and Legalism dominating Confucianism and other philosophies, making the emperor’s rule supreme for order and stability, as shown with the start of the Great Wall project and the army of thousands of life-size terracotta soldiers, chariots, horses, officials, acrobats, and musicians buried with the emperor, while people also practiced divination with spirit mediums
- 206 BCE–220 CE, Han Dynasty—with the Silk Road developing across Asia, Buddhism arriving in China, and Daoism becoming increasingly important, as China’s population reached 50–60 million, as big as the Roman Empire, while families made animal sacrifices to gods and ancestors in temples, believing that burning such offerings sent them to the spirit realm and each person had a spirit-soul (*hun*) and body-soul (*po*), reunited after death through ritual
- 266–420, Jin Dynasty—with porcelain artwork, often involving animal and Buddhist figures, as Daoism developed medical practices and Buddhism offered philosophical ideas for ending suffering
- 420–589, Northern and Southern Dynasties—with the Han Chinese increasing their domination over other indigenous cultures

- 581–618, Sui Dynasty—with Daoism and Buddhism being favored by rulers and the Confucian system of civil service exams introduced
  - 618–907, Tang Dynasty—with China expanding and esoteric Buddhism arriving
  - 907–960, Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period—with China divided
  - 960–1279, Song Dynasty—with China reunified, Neo-Confucianism (a more rational and secular form) becoming dominant, the first permanent navy established, the earliest military use of gunpowder, and the first national banknotes issued
  - 1271–1368, Yuan Dynasty—with Kublai Khan and the Mongols ruling, Confucianism and Daoism discouraged, Buddhism favored, and increasing contact with the West
  - 1368–1644, Ming Dynasty—with Confucianism reinstated and Zheng He making expeditions in 1405–33 on four-decked ships (four times bigger than Columbus’s), with hundreds of soldiers, to southeastern, southern, and western Asia, plus eastern Africa
  - 1644–1912, Qing Dynasty—with the Manchus ruling and European influence growing, yet the Boxer Rebellion against both at the turn of the twentieth century, inspired by Chinese Opera and martial arts, until eight countries intervened for trade reasons
  - 1912–present—with post-dynastic, nationalist, and communist rulers
1. In the Shang Period (c. 1600–1046 BCE), female (*wu*) and male (*xi*, pronounced “shi”) shamans performed ritual dances for hunting, warfare, and exorcisms of palaces, gravesites, and persons, accompanied by drums and flutes.
  2. During the Zhou Dynasty (c. 1046–256), court entertainments developed, including Jester Ming, a very tall man who mimicked others. *Chu Ci* poetry, from the Warring States Period (475–221), mentions shamanistic songs and dances with mime, costumes, makeup, and props.
  3. In the Qin (221–206) and Han (206 BCE–220 CE), pantomimes were performed at court.
  4. During the Han, “wrestling theatre” appeared with characters, costumes, a plot, and acrobatic fighting. There was also *Baixi* (“One Hundred Games”) with deity, demon, and animal impersonations, dances, acrobatics, and sword, dagger, and spear tricks.
  5. In the Jin (266–420) and later periods, *gewu xiaoxi* (small plays of dance and song) developed with a simple plot, stock characters (female hero, evil villain, and country bumpkin), improvisation, and slapstick.

6. The Tang Period (618–907) included the Pear Garden theatre academy, located in a palace garden and created by Emperor Ming Huang. Also, the “adjutant play” (*canjun*) developed, as a social satire with two or more performers. Buddhist monks created morality tales with verses, colloquial language, and picture rolls or panels as illustrations.
7. The Song Period (960–1279) involved popular entertainments in “red light” (prostitution and entertainment) districts. There were mimes, dances, acrobatics, animal circuses, magic shows, and fortune tellers. *Nanxi* opera (“southern drama”) developed with 20–50 scenes of coarse language, spoken dialog, and verses set to soft, lingering, popular music. *Zaju* (“variety show”) musicals also developed with two to four acts having four to five characters, quick music, and happy endings, while focusing on one star singing per act. Typical roles were the *dan* (female), *sheng* (male), *jing* (painted face), and *chou* (clown).
8. In the Yuan Period (1271–1368), operas had more literary complexity and poetry. With the Mongols ruling, many Chinese scholars, no longer employed by the government, turned to theatre to make a living—although under heavy censorship, with old stories gaining new meanings.
9. Both actors and actresses played across gender. Some troupes were led by women. Performers used elaborate costumes, stylized makeup, and a bare stage with little scenery.
10. Guan Hanqing (1241–1320) was a prolific playwright of the Yuan period. His play, *The Injustice Done to Dou E*, shows the sufferings of Dou E and her mother-in-law, after she is sold as a child bride, due to her father’s debts. Her husband dies and the two women are bullied by a series of men. One of them, trying to kill her mother-in-law, to get Dou E for his wife, poisons some soup, but this kills his own father instead. Dou E is framed for the murder. She is tortured, confesses to protect her mother-in-law, and is wrongly executed. But she appears three years later as a ghost to her father, by then a senior government official. He reopens the case, bringing justice at last.
11. During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), *kun* operas (*kunqu*) developed with plaintive music, flowing melodies, supple notes on the bamboo flute, and continual dancing.
12. Ming playwright Tang Xianzu (1550–1616) became famous for the dream scenes in his tragicomic *kun* operas, such as *The Peony Pavilion* (*Mūdān ting*, 1598), which has 55 scenes, taking about 22 hours to perform. Set at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty, it shows the daughter of an important official, Du Liniang, falling asleep in a garden and dreaming of a young scholar, Liu Mengmei, whom she falls in love with,

- but does not meet in real life. Then she dies, but appears in his dream, while he sleeps in the same garden. At her urging, he wakes and exhumes her body, bringing her back to life. He is then imprisoned as a grave robber. But he escapes torture when news arrives that he topped the list in the imperial court examination results and is pardoned by the emperor.
13. Li Yu (Li Liweng, 1610–80), supporting a large family with 40 wives, organized a theatre company, toured it, and wrote popular comedies. He theorized that each play should focus on one main character, with an inciting incident, as its “central brain” (Fei 79). His play, *The Fragrant Companion* (*Lián Xiāng Bàn*, 1651), focuses on a scholar’s wife, Cui Jianyu, who is attracted to the fragrance of Cao Yu, daughter of Lord Cao, while burning joss-paper offerings in a temple. The two women fall in love, vowing to become man and wife in the next life. In the meantime, Cui Jianyu convinces her husband to ask for Cao Yu as a second wife. He does but her father refuses. Yet they eventually get permission from the king and the women can then live together.
  14. In the Qing Period (1644–1912), various local types of Chinese Opera developed, including *jingju* (opera of the capital) or “Beijing/Peking Opera,” a fusion of earlier forms with everyday love stories (*wen* plays) or military, historical stories (*wu* plays). Mixed companies were popular before, in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, with some actresses becoming courtesans. But in the Qing era, until the 1920s, all Chinese Opera performers, musicians, and spectators were male and some actors became homosexual courtesans (Lim and Chunjiang).
  15. In 1690, the 40-scene *Peach Blossom Fan*, by Kong Shangren, became a *kun* opera favorite, showing the romance of a scholar and courtesan, set against a mid-1640s Beijing rebellion, which caused the emperor’s suicide and ended the previous Ming Dynasty. When forced to marry a governor, the courtesan hits her head against a pillar to commit suicide and drops of her blood fall on a fan the scholar gave her. She survives and they eventually reunite, but as a Daoist nun and priest.
  16. Beijing Opera, like other types of Chinese Opera, continues today with stylized movement in curves and pantomime gestures, men sometimes playing female (*dan*) roles, songs performed with high voices, and music punctuating the action with a small orchestra of gongs, cymbals, drums, stringed instruments, and a clapper—on a mostly bare stage. It also involves color-coded makeup: purple as noble, black as bold or just, blue as stubborn, astute, or fierce, red as loyal or brave, green as impulsive, yellow as ambitious or sly, and white as evil and treacherous (Fig. 4.3).





Fig. 4.3 Mask showing Chinese Opera makeup (photo: Mark Pizzato)

17. The *wenchou* (clown in romantic *wen* plays) focuses on mime and the *wuchou* (clown in historical *wu* plays) specializes in acrobatic martial arts, but both derive from clowns in the Tang adjutant play. They do not sing and they use colloquial language while wearing white makeup around the eyes and nose.
18. Conventionally, Chinese Opera has a square stage with an embroidered curtain, musicians onstage, audience to the south, performers entering from the east and exiting to the west, and few props or scenery. But there is often a chair and table onstage, which can represent many things, such as a city wall, mountain, or bed. Also, a painted cloth may be brought onstage temporarily to show new scenery or flags waved to show a storm.

19. Chinese Opera costumes sometimes have “water sleeves” (*shuixiu*), extending emotional gestures, or a headdress with two, very long, pheasant plumes, also extending movements. Martial flags are sometimes attached to the back of *sheng* costumes.
20. Acting skills involve being accurate, being beautiful, and having a lingering charm. Special skills are also needed, with years of training, in using a fan to represent certain objects, or a whip to show horse-back-riding, or an artificial beard for various moods.



**Fig. 4.4** Beijing Opera star Tan Xinpei with flag-costume in the film, *Dingjunshan*, 1905



Fig. 4.5 Chinese puppet theatre, Qibao, Shanghai (photo: Mark Pizzato)

21. Beijing Opera has appeared in many movies, starting with the first Chinese film, Ren Jingfeng's *Dingjunshan* in 1905 (Fig. 4.4). Current companies sometimes adapt Western classics, such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Strindberg's *Miss Julie*.
22. Chinese shadow puppetry may have started in the Han Dynasty 2000 years ago, but certainly by the Song 1000 years ago. It involves colorful, translucent figures with jointed sticks and more than one puppeteer controlling them, behind a lighted screen (Figs. 4.5 and 4.6). The puppets sometimes represent spirits in religious festivals with shamans or Buddhist priests.

**[How do the historical details of Chinese Opera and puppetry compare with European opera, American musical theatre, music videos, or movie and video game fantasy realms with soundtracks?]**



Fig. 4.6 Backstage of Chinese puppet theatre, Qibao, Shanghai (photo: Mark Pizzato)

### C. Korea with TIMELINE

- 108 BCE, the Chinese Han Dynasty took control of the 1000-year-old Gojoseon (Ancient Joseon) Kingdom of the northern Korean peninsula
- 37 BCE–562 CE, the Three Kingdoms Period (Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla)—with Buddhism arriving from China in 372 CE
- 668–926 CE, the North-South States Period (with Balhae in the north and Silla in the south)

- 892–935, the Later Three Kingdoms Period
  - 918–1392, the Goryeo Kingdom (or Koryo, source of the term “Korea”)
  - 1392–1897, Joseon Kingdom
  - 1897–1910, Korean Empire (after the First Sino-Japanese War was partly fought in Korea, 1894–95)
  - 1904, Japan conquered Korea and six years later started ruling it as a colony
  - 1945–48, after World War II ended, foreign military governments ruled Korea with the USSR in the north and USA in the south
  - 1948, North and South Korea were formed, with separate governments, communist and capitalist
1. *Talchum* (or *kamyonguk*) is a traditional Korean dance-drama, with masks, dancing, singing, and acting. It is widely performed at village festivals, showing connections to the Northern Shamanistic Belt, involving Siberia, Central Asia, and Scandinavia. It was also performed at court during the Goryeo Period.
  2. *Beolsingut talnori* (or *pyolsin kut-nori*), meaning “special ritual play for the god,” was the earliest form of *talchum* (Lee). It originated in the middle of the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) from earlier folk rituals: shamanic trance-dances as exorcisms, involving the battle of old and new, with sacred marriage and resurrection motifs. It is still performed in winter, at the Hahoe Folk Village, to appease the goddess Seonangsin. It has six to eight episodes, involving (1) a female shaman (Gaksi), as village goddess, dancing on a man’s shoulders, (2) lions fighting and simulating sex, (3) a butcher sacrificing a bull and selling its heart and testicles, (4) an old woman singing sadly at her loom about loneliness, (5) a lecherous Buddhist monk meeting a flirtatious girl and becoming aroused when she urinates, (6) a nobleman and scholar competing for the same girl by boasting of their breeding and knowledge, while she flirts by killing their lice, (7) a wedding ceremony of the scholar (Seonbi) and bride (Gaksi), and (8) the wedding night (Fig. 4.7).
  3. Traditionally, men perform all *talchum* roles, wearing stylized wooden masks. Today, women also perform. Popular characters include the female shaman, wanton monk, prostitute, leper, vain nobleman, clever servant, animals, and supernatural beings, plus parodies of upper class or religious figures, such as corrupt aristocrats.
  4. Korean dance is centered in the breath, as source of spiritual energy, expressed from the chest with feet grounded and arms extending in



**Fig. 4.7** *Talchum* characters, Scholar (*Seonbi*) on left and Shaman/Bride (*Gaksi*) on right, from *Byeolsingut Talnori* at the Andong Maskdance Festival, Hahoe Folk Village, South Korea (photo courtesy of Kim Eun-Jeong)

elegant linear poses, also involving deep emotions, connecting with and entertaining the spirits (at the moment of *shinmyon*).

5. *Talchum* is usually performed in an open area of the village. Masks are kept in temples or burned at the festival's end to exorcise spiritual and social demons.

**[If you watch a video of *talchum/kamyonguk*, how is it like and unlike your previous experiences of theatre? In our current performance media, which faces are caricatured—and how are they satirized or “burned”—akin to this tradition? Which demons do we exorcise, religiously or metaphorically?]**

## D. Japan with TIMELINE

- 660 BCE, legendary Emperor Jimmu (descendent of the Shinto sun goddess Amaterasu and storm god Susanoo) began his rule, after the “Age of the Gods”
- 300 BCE–300 CE, Yayoi Period with extensive rice cultivation in paddy fields
- 300–538 CE, Kofun Period with burial mounds for the ruling class
- 538–710, Asuka Period with Buddhism and Confucianism introduced from Korea and China, and then Buddhism favored by the Soga clan in the court of Japanese Emperor Kinmei, leading to religious warfare

- against the Mononobe clan, which favored Shinto, as the indigenous nature religion, but lost (552–87)
- 710–794, Nara Period with completion of *Kojiki* myths about the origin of the Japanese islands and its *kami* (gods and nature spirits), establishing the emperor’s family as descended from Shinto gods
  - 794–1185, Heian Period with the capital moved to Kyoto and *The Tale of Genji* written (c. 1008) by court lady Murasaki Shikibu, a novel about the romantic adventures of Prince Genji, his love affair with his stepmother, the son she bears eventually becoming emperor, and a girl Genji meets at age 10 (Murasaki), adopts, raises, and then marries
  - 1185–1333, Kamakura Period with a military *shogun* becoming more powerful than the aristocratic emperor, as feudal ruler over the samurai clans of nobles and warriors
  - 1336–1573, Muromachi Period with the Ashikaga shogunate (supporting the development of *noh* theatre) and *daimyos* as feudal lords owning vast lands under the shogun, plus trade with the Portuguese, starting in 1543, including Japanese slaves (until banned in 1571)
  - 1573–1603, Azuchi-Momoyama Period with a religious debate between and then tolerance for different sects of Buddhism
  - 1603–1868, Edo Period with the Tokugawa shogunate (in today’s Tokyo) and 300 regional daimyos, supporting the development of *kabuki* and *bunraku* theatre—and with Japan closing itself from trade with Western countries (1633–1853), until US ships used “gunboat diplomacy”
  - 1868–1912, Meiji Period, which restored the emperor’s rule
  - 1912–26, Taishō Period with power shifting toward the democratic legislature (National Diet) and then success in winning World War I with European allies and expansion into China
  - 1926–89, Shōwa Period with Emperor Hirohito and Japan turning toward totalitarianism and nationalism—occupying Manchuria in 1931, invading China in 1937, invading Thailand and bombing Hawaii (Pearl Harbor) in 1941, but losing World War II in 1945 with the firebombing of Tokyo and atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and then being occupied by Allied powers until 1952, yet gradually developing an independent, democratic, capitalist state, with an “economic miracle” in the 1960s, becoming the world’s second largest economy after the US
  - 1989–2019, Heisei Period with the new emperor Akihito and the bursting of an asset price bubble (plus an aging population), producing Japan’s Lost Decade in the 1990s with economic stagnation, which continued into the new millennium—and with Akihito’s retirement leading to his son, Naruhito, becoming emperor in the Reiwa Period

1. *Noh* (meaning “skill” or “talent”) was created by Kan’ami (1333–84) and his son Zeami (c. 1363–1443), during the Ashikaga shogunate, from the earlier *dengaku* (a popular mime-dance, which developed from rice-planting, fertility, and spirit-possession rites) and *sarugaku* (comic, acrobatic “monkey music”). It started as a meditative, Shinto-oriented, Zen-Buddhist-influenced, court theatre, with its comedic *kyogen* play as interlude and offshoot.
2. *Noh* movements became slower over the centuries, with plays taking longer to perform.
3. *Noh* roles include the *shite* (supernatural character with mask), *shite-tsure* (his/her companion), *waki* (priest narrator), *waki-tsure* (his companion), *kyogen* (fool), chorus of eight chanters sitting stage left (giving both narration and characters’ voices at times), and four musicians in back. All performers are male with some cross-gender acting in masks (in *shite* and *shite-tsure* roles). The *noh* mask, made of cypress, can change expression at various angles.
4. Recalling its original outdoor performances, indoor *noh* has a pavilion roof over the stage, with four pillars, akin to a sacred Shinto shrine, under the theatre’s ceiling. The stage has sounding jars underneath, two front-of-stage sighting poles for the masked actor, and a pine painted between the two rear-of-stage poles, as permanent scenic background. The audience sits on two sides, at the front of the stage and near a handrail bridge (*hashigakari*) to the offstage mirror room. Three pine trees along the bridge symbolize heaven, earth, and humans—a bridge where spirits may appear.
5. *Noh* theatre has minimal, symbolic scenery and props, with the performer’s fan sometimes representing a sword, jug, flute, brush, or spoon. The stagehand (*kuroko*), dressed in black, sometimes brings or takes away props during the action and may stay onstage as if invisible.
6. *Noh* plays are usually performed in a program of five, with one from each of these categories: god play, warrior ghost play, “wig play” with a female lead, miscellaneous play, and final demon play. They often involve supernatural characters and nonlinear time, as in *Aoi no Ue* (*Lady Aoi*, based on a story from *The Tale of Genji*), *Dojoji* (which uses an unusual scenic element, a large bell), and *Matsukaze*.
7. *Matsukaze*, written by Kan’ami and revised by Zeami, shows a Buddhist priest (*waki*) traveling to Suma Bay and noticing a memorial on a pine tree. He asks a villager (*kyogen*) about it and is told the story of two fisher-girls, very poor sisters who died after falling in love with a court poet, Yukihiro, who was in exile there and wrote poems about



them, then returned to the capital and died later. (That character, who does not appear, is based on a ninth-century poet and the play quotes his poetry, also using passages and parallels from *The Tale of Genji*.) The priest prays for the sisters, falls asleep, and meets their ghosts in a dream. Using their fans, they mime gathering seawater to be turned into salt, the work they did while alive. They see the moon, a symbol of Buddhist enlightenment, reflected in their pails of seawater. Later, one of the sisters, Matsukaze (Pine Wind), shows her continued, sinful attachment to the poet, hearing his poetry in the wind and seeing him in a pine, while dancing with the hat and cloak he left them. Her sister, Murasame (Autumn Rain), warns her that he is not there, but also becomes attached to the illusion again. The priest wakes, with the wind still “pining,” yet the autumn rain gone—suggesting that Matsukaze remains in ghostly suffering, attached to her lost love, but Murasame is gone, as more enlightened.

8. Zeami developed a theory of *yugen* as the invisible, transcendent beauty felt through *nob*, which can lead to sudden Zen-Buddhist enlightenment for spectators, through the actor’s *hana* (flowering) of bone, flesh, and skin (talent, skill, and ease).
9. *Kabuki* started during the Edo Period, first with Okuni (1572–c. 1603), a Shinto priestess in Kyoto, and then with groups of women performing male and female roles in comic plays about ordinary life. But they became known for prostitution, in red-light district theatres of the new capital, Edo (today’s Tokyo). Women’s *kabuki* was banned in 1629, but boys performing *kabuki* also became prostitutes. By the mid-1600s, only adult and adolescent males were allowed to perform it, as actors and musicians, with the male *onnagata* playing female roles. Prostitution continued as part of *kabuki*, for both male and female customers. Early *kabuki* theatres had performances all day, with teahouses and shops nearby.
10. Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1725) wrote plays performed as *bunraku* (puppet theatre) and *kabuki*, including *Love Suicides at Sonezaki* (1703) about a young merchant, Tokubei, who refuses a marriage arranged by his family in Osaka because he loves a courtesan, Ohatsu. Then he loses the dowry given his family when scammed by a friend who said he needed a loan. After being beaten up and shamed, Tokubei commits suicide with Ohatsu at the Sonezaki shrine, cutting her throat and his. This inspired similar plays and copycat suicides until such plays were banned in 1723.

11. Danjuro (1660–1704), a famous kabuki actor and founder of a long father-son line of actors, invented the *mie* pose with crossed eyes and was famous for the fierce *aragoto* style of movement, with martial arts *kata* (moves).
12. The traditional *kabuki* stage has a bridge (*hanamichi* or “flower path”) through the audience. The wide main stage includes a revolve mechanism, added in the eighteenth century, prior to its use in Europe, plus lifts and trapdoors. In the nineteenth century, wires were added for flying above the stage.
13. *Kabuki* has sudden dramatic revelations, including onstage costume changes with the help of stagehands dressed in black, flipping a layer of clothing on the actor. Costumes have strong colors for joyful or foolish emotions, subdued colors for serious. Makeup is color-coded with sharp facial lines: red for passion and righteousness, blue or black for villainy and jealousy, green for nobility, and purple for nobility. The orchestra involves a *shamisen* lute and clappers. Actors are all male.

**[Why are political activities in Washington, DC, sometimes called “kabuki theatre”?]**

14. *Ningyō jōruri* (puppet narrative) became known in the West as *bunraku* (a famous company), after developing in the seventeenth century as a serious, adult, puppet theatre, sharing scripts with *kabuki*. The puppets are two-thirds life size with three puppeteers for each major character, one for each minor. Puppeteers are visible, yet dressed in black. They must train 10 years at each position: first at feet and legs, then left arm, and then right arm and head (with only the top puppeteer unmasked). Usually, there is one chanter doing all the voices, seated next to the stage, by the *shamisen* player.
15. *Bunraku* scripts are of two main types: historical (*jidaimono*) and domestic (*sewamono*), with conflicts in the latter between duty (*giri*) and passion (*ninjo*), sometimes involving suicide. *Bunraku* uses a painted scenic background like *kabuki*, but focuses more on the text (*jōruri*), chanter, and delicate puppet movements, while *kabuki* stresses bold acting and spectacular effects.

**[How is *noh*, *kabuki*, or *bunraku* like and unlike Western rituals, movies, or animations—regarding spirits evoked, rhythms, movement, music, plots, characters, masks/makeup, costumes, or scenery?]**

## E. Indonesian Traditions on the Islands of Java and Bali

1. *Wayang topeng* is a solo dance-drama, with the performer giving up his identity to the spirit of the mask he wears and some masks kept in temples. Court and village performances started over 1000 years ago.
2. *Wayang kulit*, meaning “shadow/spirit skin,” involves a single puppeteer-narrator (*dalang*) improvising on a given plot (*lakon*), with two-dimensional puppets, two to three feet tall, shown against a screen by firelight. Performances run all night, for 9–10 hours. The flat puppets are made of buffalo hide on sticks of horn, with moveable joints at the shoulders and elbows (Fig. 4.8). Puppets are painted because they can be viewed from the *dalang*’s side of the cloth screen or through the screen as shadows. A complete set involves 300–400 characters, refined or coarse, categorized as Rama-type or Bima-type (key Hindu gods), aggressive, comic, or evil. Shows are performed annually at local founders’ graves, to please their spirits, or in the village center—a tradition of 1100 years on Java and longer on Bali.
3. Performances begin with an invocation to the Hindu gods Ganesha (elephant-headed spirit of beginnings, luck, and obstacle removal) and Saraswati (goddess of wisdom and the arts). The shadow-puppet image of a *kayon* (tree) starts the show as *axis mundi* or ladder between worlds. Shaken by the *dalang*, it shows his shamanic travel upward to the gods and downward to meet demons—with such communication as crucial for communal welfare. Then two clown characters appear, as husband and wife puppets, commenting on village affairs.
4. The ritual origins of *wayang kulit* continue today, with ceremonies tied to life cycles, such as birth, marriage, and death, planting and harvesting. It also relates to current exorcism rites, as when a new house is cleansed of evil spirits. Plots are often based on a rite of passage: first a call, then a test (with the world imbalanced due to a demon or evil king), and then a divine blessing. The community values the *dalang* (puppeteer) as a shamanic healer, as well as artist. But recently, *wayang kulit* has stressed comic scenes and pop tunes, to compete with television and videos, losing some of its traditional characteristics.
5. *Wayang golek* is a three-dimensional puppet drama with a single puppeteer-narrator (*dalang*) and singers—invented by a Javanese Muslim ruler in the sixteenth century (Fig. 4.9).



**Fig. 4.8** Indonesian, *wayang kulit* puppet, Sita from the *Ramayana* (photo: Mark Pizzato)

6. All three of these *wayang* forms involve a gamelan gong-chime orchestra, with stories from the Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, plus local tales and clowns speaking the local language (with *wayang* meaning “shadow” or “imagination”). During the Hindu-Buddhist Period (800s–1500s, prior to the arrival of Islam), Indian stories influenced the development of *wayang*. But local ancestral spirits were also involved, such as the Javanese hermaphroditic jester, Semar, and animistic spirits, thought to inhabit carvings, puppets, and gongs. Islam also influenced the development of Javanese shadow theatre with more stylized puppets and Muslim stories or changes to the Hindu stories (but Bali remained Hindu).
7. In the Balinese *Barong* dance, Rangda, a witch queen (whose name means “widow”) and her *leyaks* (demons who suck the blood of unborn



Fig. 4.9 Wayang golek puppet (photo: Mark Pizzato)

and newborn children) fight the Barong (a lion-faced guardian spirit), which are played by men in sacred masks and costumes. Other men, possessed by Rangda yet protected by the Barong, point their swords against their chests and bend them, unharmed, in this ritual battle of evil versus good.

**[How is *wayang topeng*, *golek*, or *kulit* similar to and different from Western stand-up comedy, three-dimensional puppetry, or movie animation? How does the shadow-play side of the screen in *wayang***

***kulit*, or spirit possession in the *Barong* dance, relate to our culture's virtual-reality video games and mass-media violence?]**

8. Other traditional Indonesian forms include: *menora* (a male-performed, Thai-influenced dance-drama), *mak yong* (a dance-drama performed by women, except for the clown role), *kuda kepang* (a hobby-horse trance-dance), *dikir barat* (a call and response performance with poetry sung to music), *boria* (a comic sketch), *randai* (a martial arts dance-drama from Sumatra), and *main puteri* (a Malay healing rite with trance and drama).

## F. Cambodian Traditions

1. From the sixth to fourteenth centuries, the Khmer Empire of Cambodia extended over much of Southeast Asia, developing an elaborate artistic tradition, especially at court. Political power declined after that, yet the arts continued—until the communist Khmer Rouge took power, led by Pol Pot, in 1975–79, when an estimated 80–90% of the country's artists were killed.
2. Traditional Cambodian dance-dramas are based on the Hindu epic story, *Ramayana*, but add further episodes, accompanied by the *pinpeat* percussive ensemble with bamboo and metal xylophones, gongs, drums, an oboe-like instrument (*sralai*), and cymbals.
3. Cambodian shadow puppets are up to one-meter (three-feet) tall, each one manipulated by a puppeteer using long sticks, with voices from a narrator and the *pinpeat* ensemble.

**[Why would traditional dance-actors, puppeteers, and other artists be a threat to a modern communist government?]**

## References

- Bharata-Muni. *The Nāṭyaśāstra*. 2 vols. Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1950.
- Brandon, James R., ed. *The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Fei, Faye Chunfang. *Chinese Theories of Theater and Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- Lee, Mee-Won. *Kamyonguk: The Evolution of Korean Mask-Dance Drama*. Master of Arts Thesis, Department of Drama. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1979.
- Lim, S. K., and Chunjiang Fu. *Origins of Chinese Opera*. Singapore: Asiapac, 2016.

- Maillard, Chantal. "The Aesthetic Pleasure of Tragedy in Western and Indian Thought." *The Pursuit of Comparative Aesthetics*. Ed. Mazhar Hussain and Robert Wilkinson. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2006, 29–38.
- Mee, Erin B. "But Is It Theatre?" *Theater Historiography*. Ed. Henry Bial and Scott Magelssen. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010, 99–109.
- Meyer-Dinkgräfe, Daniel. *Theatre and Consciousness*. Bristol: Intellect, 2005.
- Pollock, Sheldon, ed. *A Rasa Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Richmond, Farley P. "Characteristics of Sanskrit Theatre and Drama." *Indian Theatre*. Ed. Farley P. Richmond, Darius I. Swann, and Phillip B. Zarrilli. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, 33–86.
- Schwartz, Susan L. *Rasa*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Sen, Ramendra Kumar. "A Comparative Study of Greek and Indian Poetics and Aesthetics." *The Pursuit of Comparative Aesthetics: An Interface Between East and West*. Ed. Mazhar Hussain and Robert Wilkinson. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2006, 85–112.
- Virtanen, Keijo. "The Concept of Purification in the Greek and Indian Theories of Drama." *The Pursuit of Comparative Aesthetics*. Ed. Mazhar Hussain and Robert Wilkinson. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2006, 55–84.
- Zarrilli, Phillip B. *Kathakali Dance-Drama*. London: Routledge, 2000.



# 5

## Medieval Europe and Premodern Africa, Australia, and the Americas

### A. Early Middle Ages in Western Europe (400s–900s) with TIMELINE

- 476, the last emperor of ancient Rome was deposed by Odoacer, who became King of Italy, but Eastern Roman emperors continued in Byzantium, centered in Constantinople (today's Istanbul), while Western Europe became controlled by local rulers in a feudal system of kings, lords, vassals, and serfs
- 527–65, Byzantine Emperor Justinian the Great briefly retook Rome from the Ostrogoths, created the Code of Civil Law (still a basis for law today in many countries), and built Hagia Sophia in Constantinople—while his wife, Empress Theodora, a former mime actress and prostitute, but Christian convert, ruled alongside him with her own court, entourage, and royal seat
- 568–774, the Kingdom of the Lombards was established in Italy
- 597, Augustine of Canterbury was sent from Rome to England and began Christianizing the Anglo-Saxons
- 622, Muhammad and his followers moved from Mecca to Medina (in Arabia), and this became the starting point of the Islamic calendar, building on the Judeo-Christian tradition in Europe, with worship of the same God (as Allah) yet rival claims to holy territories
- 711, the Umayyad Caliphate conquered southern Spain and established the Emirate of Cordoba, starting the Muslim (“Moorish”) rule over much of Spain, as al-Andalus, which continued for seven centuries



- 716, the iconoclastic movement (against religious images) in Byzantium, supported by Emperor Leo III, was opposed by the Western Roman Pope Gregory II
  - 732, the Moors were blocked by the Franks from conquering more territory in Europe
  - 751, the Carolingian Empire began, with Pepin the Short, and eventually extended from France to Germany and Italy
  - 800, Charlemagne (Charles the Great), King of the Franks and Lombards, was crowned “Emperor of the Romans” (*Imperator Romanorum*) by Pope Leo III and extended the Carolingian Empire
  - 871, Alfred the Great became the first king of a united England
  - 962, Otto the Great, King of the Germans, was crowned “Holy Roman Emperor”
1. Christianity continued as a system for cooperation and competition, through monasteries and local churches. By the 900s, liturgical tropes of ritually sung, biblical stories were performed by monks around the altar in monastery chapels. An example is the *Quem Quaeritis?* (“Whom seek you?” in Latin, the church language) about three women visiting Jesus’s tomb and meeting an angel who says that phrase, telling them He is risen—with the monks playing female (as well as angel) roles.
  2. In the 900s, the *Regularis Concordia* of Bishop Aethelwold in Winchester, England, authorized Benedictine monks to act out the *Quem Quaeritis?* around the church altar on the night before Easter, with symbolic props, clerical vestments, and mannerisms in *imitation* of the biblical characters:

When the third lesson of the matins is chanted, let four brethren dress themselves; of whom let one, wearing an alb, enter as if to take part in the service; and let him without being observed approach the place of the sepulcher, where, holding a palm in his hand, let him sit quietly. While the third responsory is being sung, let the remaining three brethren follow, all of them wearing copes and carrying censers filled with incense. Then slowly, in the manner of seeking something, let them move toward the place of the sepulcher. These things are to be performed in imitation of the Angel seated in the tomb, and of the women coming with spices to anoint the body of Jesus. (qtd. in Nagler)

3. In the 960s, the Saxon nun Hrotswitha (935–1002), a canoness in Gandersheim Abbey (in today’s Germany), wrote plays in Latin about third- and fourth-century saints, inspired by the comedies of Terence. These were probably “closet dramas,” meant just for reading, but they may have been staged in her abbey.
4. In a letter to “learned patrons,” Hrotswitha asked permission for her plays to be read by others, showing her precarious position as a female playwright.
5. Hrotswitha’s *Dulcitus*, about three virgin martyrs, is an early example of a “miracle play” (a category developed by later historians) about saints whose holiness creates supernatural events. In *Dulcitus*, three sisters refuse Emperor Diocletian’s command to renounce their Christian faith, worship Roman gods, and marry Roman nobles. Governor Dulcitus locks them away, but tries to visit them at night. Instead, he embraces the dirty pots and pans in the kitchen, appearing then onstage as an “Ethiopian,” the sisters say, “as black as his soul ... possessed by the devil,” and this scares his soldiers (44–45). Later, he orders that the sisters be stripped in public, but their cloths cannot be torn off. Count Sisinnius takes over and orders that two sisters be burned, and their spirits leave, but their bodies and clothes remain whole. The third sister, shot with an arrow, also dies a martyr.

**[Which identity needs (with primal emotions, such as seeking, sorrow, lust, fear, and play) are reflected in the *Quem Quaeritis* performance and Hrotswitha’s scripts, like and unlike today’s needs and social values?]**

## **B. High Middle Ages in Western Europe (1000s–1200s) with TIMELINE**

- circa 1001, Leif Erikson “discovered” America, along the northeast coast of what is now Canada
- 1054, an East–West Schism occurred between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches
- 1066, William the Conqueror invaded England, starting the Norman rule over Anglo-Saxons
- 1095–96, the First Crusade retook Jerusalem from the Muslims and founded the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem, rebuilding the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

- 1118, the Knights Templar were established to protect Jerusalem and pilgrims going there
- 1139, the Second Lateran Council and Pope Innocent II declared clerical marriages invalid, demanding celibacy of all priests and nuns, and excommunicated (sent to Hell) anyone who attacked clerics
- 1179, the Third Lateran Council condemned simony (the selling of Church roles)
- 1184–1230s, Episcopal and Papal Inquisitions tried, tortured, and executed heretics, sometimes by burning them at the stake
- 1187, Islamic ruler Saladin recaptured Jerusalem
- 1204, Constantinople was sacked by the Fourth Crusade, en route to Jerusalem, leading to the decline of Byzantium
- 1208, Pope Innocent III started the 20-year Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars in France—a rival Christian group who believed that their spirits were angels, created by the good New-Testament God, but they were trapped in material bodies, created by the evil Old-Testament God, and were condemned to reincarnate after death unless they abstained from meat and sex, becoming baptized in the Holy Spirit
- 1210, Pope Innocent III ordered that priests (in Poland) must not act in plays inside churches because it was undignified
- 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council proclaimed that Jews and Muslims must wear identifying clothing, so that Christians will not marry them unknowingly
- 1215–97, the Magna Carta developed through several drafts, wars, and new versions signed, between English kings and barons, limiting feudal payments to the crown and the imprisonment of barons, while also protecting church rights
- 1234, Pope Gregory IX declared that pious plays were permitted if they touched the consciences of spectators and aroused their devotion to God
- 1258, in the “year without a summer,” a vast famine developed across Europe (and the world), with a pestilence in England, aggravated by severe cooling of the climate, after the eruption of an Indonesian volcano the year before
- 1264, Pope Urban IV decreed that plays were allowed during the Corpus Christi Festival
- 1272–73, the Ninth Crusade occurred, the last major one in the Holy Land
- 1290, Jews were expelled from England by King Edward I (a ban that continued for 367 years)
- 1298, Marco Polo published (hand-copied) accounts of his travels to China

1. With slavery discouraged by Christianity, bonded labor in most of Europe shifted to serfdom, with serfs or *villeins* (villains) bound to the land they farmed and controlled by the lord of the manor. They were subject to being sold with it, yet they had his protection and more rights than slaves.
2. Romanesque churches, still existing today, were built in Mainz (1009), Speyer (1061), Worms (1181), and Trier (1270). Early Gothic churches were built in St. Denis (1144), Santiago de Compostela (1211), and Reims (1275). Episodic, multi-day, biblical, “mystery plays” or “cycle plays” (from the Creation to the Last Judgment, including “passion plays” about the death of Jesus) were performed in local, vernacular languages, rather than the sacred Latin. They appeared inside such churches with mansions (sets) placed between the columns and sometimes outside (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2).
3. In the 1100s, the Anglo-Norman *Play of Adam* (*Jeu d’Adam*) exemplified a transition from indoor to outdoor performances, with Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise at the church door, at the top of the steps, in a “prominent, high place” (*loco eminentiori*). Devils put chains and shackles on the necks of Adam and Eve, dancing in “great jubilation” and pulling them toward a Hell-mouth in the church square. They banged pots and kettles, while running around the square. The script with these stage directions in Latin is the earliest known of its kind, written by an anonymous priest, yet with dialog in a vernacular, Old French dialect (Kobialka; Nagler).

**[How are Paradise and Hell realms depicted onstage or onscreen today, with angel and devil characters, and with humans between them, like/unlike 1000 years ago?]**

4. In England, men (clergymen or townsmen) and boys performed all the roles in religious dramas, but women also performed on the continent.
5. Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), a German Benedictine abbess and mystic, who wrote theological, medicinal, and biological texts, also wrote *Ordo Virtutum* (*Order of the Virtues*, 1151) as a musical drama in Latin. It is the earliest known allegorical “morality play.” It shows a conflict over the human Soul (Anima) between the Virtues and Devil, while the Patriarchs and Prophets watch and sing, as a male chorus, along with a female chorus of Souls, with characters having such names.

**[How are allegories about metaphysical and moral issues shown today?]**



Fig. 5.1 Reims Cathedral of Our Lady, exterior (photo: Mark Pizzato)

6. Secular plays developed, probably starting in France with Adam de la Halle's *The Play of Greenwood* (1276). Also, his *Play of Robin and Marion* (1282) might be considered the earliest secular musical. It was a pastoral drama, mixing folk song with dialog, about a wandering poet-knight flirting with a coy, witty shepherdess, who remains loyal to her shepherd-boyfriend.
7. Other entertainments developed, too, such as May Day games with a phallic maypole, French *soities* (short allegorical satires), interludes (sketches performed at court or in "great houses" of nobility during



**Fig. 5.2** Reims Cathedral, interior with side columns—where mansions were probably positioned as spectators stood near, without chairs in the nave (photo: Mark Pizzato)

banquets or between the acts of other works), and street pageants with pantomimed tableaux, especially for visiting rulers. Performers included wandering minstrels, mimes, jugglers, and rope dancers.

8. The Feast of Fools was a liturgical drama, at the celebration of Jesus's Circumcision (January 1), which allowed lower clergy to parody their superiors (Harris). Although condemned by many Church authorities, such as the thirteenth-century English bishop, Robert Grosseteste, it persisted for centuries. A peasant or sub-deacon was appointed as "Lord of Misrule" in England, or "Abbot of Unreason" in Scotland, to oversee the Feast of Fools, which also involved drunkenness and partying.

### **C. Late Middle Ages in Europe (1300s–1500s) with TIMELINE**

- 1307, the Knights Templar, viewed as a threat after the Crusades and owning French debt, were persecuted as heretics, with many burned at the stake
- 1309–76, seven Catholic Popes, all French, resided in Avignon instead of Rome, with rival popes (antipopes) continuing there, after Gregory XI moved back to Rome

- 1310, Dante published (hand-written) copies of his *Divine Comedy*
- 1337–1453, the Hundred Years' War was fought between England and France about claims of rival dynasties to the French throne (after the Norman conquest of England in 1066)
- 1347–53, the Black Death (Bubonic Plague) killed about half of Europe's population (20–40% in the first year) and inspired images of dancing skeletons as the “Dance Macabre,” with attacks on Jews as scapegoats, and then plagues returned in various places each year until 1671
- 1382–95, John Wycliffe and his followers, known as Lollards, called for reform in the Catholic Church while translating the Bible into English, with copies spreading widely in England, but banned in 1409
- 1391, Jews were massacred in Spain and thousands were forced to convert to Christianity
- 1415, Jan Hus, a Czech reformer inspired by Wycliffe's Bible to promote such vernacular translations, was executed as a heretic in Bohemia (in today's Czech Republic)
- 1420–31, Hussites (Hus's followers) won five successive wars in the papal crusade against them, leading to negotiated reforms and the Protestant Moravian Church
- 1431, after leading the French forces in battles that turned the tide against the English in the 100 Years' War, Joan of Arc was burned at the stake at age 19, through a trial led by a French, but pro-English bishop (with that verdict overturned by the Catholic Church in 1456)
- 1453, Constantinople fell to the Islamic Turks and became the capital of the Ottoman Empire
- 1478, the Spanish Inquisition was authorized by Pope Sixtus IV at the request of Catholic rulers Ferdinand and Isabella
- 1543, religious plays that challenged Protestant authority in England were banned (though temporarily reinstated under the rule of Catholic Queen Mary)
- 1548, performances of biblical plays were banned in Paris
- 1576, the Wakefield Cycle of biblical plays, although still performed in England, was altered to fit Protestant ideals—excising any “counterfeiting” of the Majesty of God, the sacrament of baptism, and the “Lord's Supper,” as well as references to the pope
- 1581, the English (Protestant) Queen Elizabeth banned the performance of all biblical plays, a ban that lasted for over 300 years

1. During the Late Middle Ages, serfdom declined in Western Europe but increased in Central and Eastern Europe, continuing into the nineteenth century.
2. Gothic churches with higher towers were built in Vienna (1300s), Freiburg (1330), Florence (1436), Strasbourg (1439), Toledo (1493), Munich (1524), Seville (1528), and Metz (1550), competing for religious pilgrims as tourists to sites with relics that promised spiritual benefits and physical cures.
3. A religious confraternity or trade guild produced each short “mystery” play in the biblical cycle of a multi-day pageant, such as the shipwrights for *Noah’s Ark* or the bakers for *The Last Supper*, with a “pageant master” overseeing it all and a “secrets master” for the special effects. Performances eventually used platform stages at various sites around the town and processional wagons along the streets with a mobile audience.
4. Pageant wagons were sometimes double level, “a high scafolde with two rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon four wheeles. In the lower they [the actors] apparelled them selves, and in the higher rowme they played, beinge all open on the tope,” according to Archdeacon Robert Rogers in the late 1500s (qtd. in Nagler 49). But some wagons were probably single-level platforms with scenic elements, like parade floats today.
5. Costumes mixed historical, anachronistic, and fantastic elements, such as God dressed as the pope or emperor, ancient soldiers with medieval armor, and evil Jews or devils with horns, claws, tails, and scales.
6. “Secrets” (special effects) involved trapdoors and halos, ropes for flying characters and scenery, flame-blowing dragons, spouting fountains, and squirting blood from bags hidden under costumes and pierced. Also included were smells from burning bones and entrails, fake hangings, blade-retracting swords, blood-dipped whips, real animals (sometimes killed), and barrels of water from a rooftop for Noah’s flood.
7. The York Cycle was a biblical (mystery or pageant play) series, in Middle English, performed at various sites in York, England, from the mid-1300s, during the annual Corpus Christi Festival. This was a popular time for such plays *across Europe*, with processions involving the consecrated Host (from Latin *hostia*, “victim”)—a thin circle of bread as the



“Body of Christ,” usually in a jewel-covered monstrance with a glass case and metal stand, paraded through the streets, along with wagons for the plays.

8. With the English Reformation, establishing the authority of King Henry VIII over the Church of England, the Corpus Christi Festival ended in 1458. But the York mystery plays continued to be performed—without scenes involving the Virgin Mary as Mother of Jesus—until fully suppressed in 1569. It is one of four English cycles with complete scripts surviving, along with the Chester, Towneley/Wakefield, and N-Town mystery plays.
9. The York Cycle starts with *The Creation and Fall of Lucifer*, showing God’s creation of the world and his angels to “mirror” his power, with Lucifer as the brightest of them (Cawley 4). But Lucifer rises too high (or sits on God’s throne in the Wakefield Cycle) and then falls from heaven, along with other angels aligned with him, becoming devils. In the fifth play of the York Cycle, Lucifer becomes Satan. He is envious of humans, who are favored by God beyond other animals with the “skill” of reason. Satan takes the form of a “worm” (dragon or serpent) and tempts Eve (played by a man) in the Garden of Eden to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which God had forbidden because, according to Satan, it would make humans like gods. (As typical of medieval religious drama, the author is unknown, but was probably a clergyman.)
10. The York Cycle includes the mystery play, *Abraham and Isaac*, about God’s demand that a father kill his son and the son’s growing awareness that his father will kill him—although God then allows a ram to be substituted for the sacrifice, foreshadowing the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, as Son of God, later in the cycle.
11. It also includes *Joseph’s Trouble About Mary*, a comedy about a husband’s conflict with his wife (acted by a young man). When Mary becomes pregnant and Joseph knows the child is not his, she tells him the father is God. He has trouble believing her until an angel appears and confirms it.
12. In 1437, the actor playing Judas in one of the mystery play pageants almost died at his hanging. In another, the actor playing Jesus almost died during the crucifixion.
13. A pageant master (akin to the modern stage/production manager) is possibly shown in the *Martyrdom of St. Apollonia*, a painting by Jean Fouquet, in 1445, apparently of a miracle play.

14. The *Play of the Sacrament* (from Croxton, England, 1460s) exemplifies a farcical, anti-Semitic miracle play. It shows the communion bread, or “Host,” being tested by Jews. One of them loses an arm, with blood spurting out, when his hand sticks to the Host and his friends nail it to a post and pull too hard. They also try boiling the Host in oil but blood flows out of the vat. Then Jesus appears from an oven where the Jews put the Host, telling them to convert to Christianity and restoring the arm the Jew had lost.
15. A vernacular (not in Latin), morality play, *The Castle of Perseverance* (c. 1425), has a drawing in its manuscript showing the audience around the stage. It features Humanum Genus (Mankind) ignoring his Good Angel and following his Bad Angel toward the World’s servants, Lust and Folly, who dress him in fancy clothes, by the scaffold of Covetousness with the Seven Deadly Sins. Yet Shrift, Penance, and the Seven Moral Virtues (armed with roses, as symbols of Christ’s passion) help him into the castle, protecting him from World, Devil, and Flesh, as they attack. Mankind is tempted again by Covetousness, then struck by a dart from Death, but prays to God, who decides with two of his Four Daughters, Mercy and Peace, against two others, Truth and Justice, to pardon Mankind.
16. *The Summoning of Everyman* (late 1400s), another allegorical morality play, shows God watching human life and judging it (or “Everyman”), as divine scriptwriter/critic, director, spectator, and actor, lamenting that humans are “blind” about “ghostly sight” (spiritual views). They seek pleasure, forget the “shedding of” His blood (as Jesus), and “fear not my righteousness, the sharp rod” (Cawley 207–8). God intervenes by sending Death to remind Everyman about the cosmic theatre, involving a final judgment with heavenly rewards or hellish punishments forever. Everyman learns that he cannot take Fellowship, Kindred, or Goods (as characters) with him at the end of his life’s journey or “pilgrimage.” But Knowledge helps him to find the Catholic ritual of Confession, and he whips himself in penance for his sins, gaining “the garment of sorrow,” which revives his Good Deeds. She stays with him to the end, even when Strength, Beauty, Discretion, and Five Wits abandon him (as he ages). Thus, through the Catholic Church, Everyman goes to heaven, although the play criticizes priests who sell the communion Host or whose children sit “by other men’s fires” because they have not been celibate (24).
17. *The Second Shepherds’ Play* in the Wakefield Cycle (or Towneley Plays, c. 1500) exemplifies the mix of serious and comical, religious and

secular elements in a biblical play, with the ancient world of Jesus's birth overlapping the current life of shepherds—as a vernacular religious drama with anachronisms. The thief Mak, who refers to Jesus and Pontius Pilate, steals a sheep while the shepherds are sleeping. His wife helps him hide it at home as their newborn child. The shepherds are fooled at first, but then discover it is their lost lamb. They put Mak on a blanket and throw him in the air as punishment. After returning to their sheep, an angel tells them to go to Bethlehem (as in the Bible). The shepherds travel there (anachronistically), bringing gifts of cherries, a bird, and a ball for the Christ child as Lamb of God.

18. A diagram from Valenciennes, France, in 1547, shows various cycle-play settings between Paradise on the stage-right end and Hell-mouth on stage left (perhaps corresponding to the brain's right-cortical Devil's Advocate networks, which connect with the body's left side).
19. Records of that production demonstrate that four girls were onstage, one as the Virgin Mary (Jesus's mother), unlike religious dramas in England. Other records show that adult women performed in various French cities: Romans, Valence, Grenoble, and Metz—often emphasizing their vocal skills (Normington).
20. Although men performed women in English cycle plays, Mary was still the ideal female, as virginally pure, silent, and obedient to her husband and God. She was the opposite of other mothers, also played by men: Gill (in *The Second Shepherds' Play*) as deceitful mother, the Mothers of the Holy Innocents (massacred by Herod in his attempt to kill the new King of the Jews) as swearing and fighting back, and Mrs. Noah as disobeying her husband and abandoning her children by refusing to get on the ark (Normington 97).
21. In the Chester version of *Noah's Flood*, Mrs. Noah gossips with the town wives, yet she also helps to gather materials for the ark, along with her sons' wives. When the actors carried signs showing the animals getting into the ark, the sons brought powerful animals while the women brought domestic and sly ones, such as cats, mice, birds, wolves, bears, weasels, and ferrets (Normington 127).
22. In the York *Flood* play, Noah is 600 years old and has been building the ark for 100 years. His wife is comically rebellious, doubtful about the need for an ark, and critical of him as a provider for the family. She questions his sanity and refuses to leave her home to go onboard.
23. In the Wakefield/Towneley version, Noah beats his wife for not entering the ark. But she tells the audience she was a better provider, cursing him and wishing him dead (as the male actor shows her mimetic rivalry).

**[How were biblical, miracle, and morality plays, inside or outside churches and on processional or platform stages, with special effects, akin to religious and secular, stage and screen performances today—or radically different?]**

24. Religious plays were banned in France in 1548, England in 1581, and Germany in 1597, due in part to the Protestant Reformation, but they continued in Spain until the late 1600s (Banham, *Cambridge* 179).
25. In ancient and medieval times, Jewish rabbis viewed theatre as idolatry—while Christian passion plays spread anti-Semitic views of Jews as Christ killers and inspired attacks against them, especially in Jewish Quarter of cities.
26. But in the fifteenth century or earlier, in East-European, Ashkenazi communities, Jewish *Purim* plays (*Purim-shpils*) developed, involving *klezmer* music. They staged stories from the Jewish bible (Tanakh) at the carnival-like festival of *Purim*, often with satiric references to local people in scenes of verbal obscenities and transgressive images. These alternated with serious, edifying scenes, which traveling players also performed in wealthy homes. Such performances led to the later development of Yiddish plays and operettas (Baumgarten).

**[How were medieval performances akin to carnivalesque events today—and their current limits?]**

## D. Premodern Africa with TIMELINE (300s BCE–1600s CE)

- 332 BCE, Alexander the Great conquered Egypt and its cultural center shifted from Memphis, the official capital, to Alexandria, a new city he founded on the Mediterranean coast near the Nile River, with an extensive library and many theatres built there under the Greek Ptolemaic rulers for the next three centuries and then under Roman rule
- 284–305 CE, under the Roman emperor Diocletian, Christians were persecuted in Egypt
- 451, with the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity, the Coptic Patriarch in Alexandria was recognized, with ancient hymns to Egyptian gods transformed into worship of the Christian God
- 642, Arab Muslims conquered Egypt
- 698, an Arab army took Carthage, ending Byzantine rule in North Africa

- 1000s, the Empire of Ghana (Awkar) in West Africa reached its greatest power and territorial expansion, after Muslim expansion in North Africa increased trade across the Sahara Desert, especially of gold and salt (on camels)
- 1100s, the Kingdom of Mapungubwe developed in Southern Africa, trading in ivory, copper, and gold
- mid-1200s, Mapungubwe declined and the stone city of Great Zimbabwe arose, as the center of a new Empire of the Shona people
- 1230s, the Mali Empire became dominant in West Africa until 1670, with trade routes shifting from Ghana
- 1300s, the Benin Empire became a political force in West Africa
- 1390, the Kongo Kingdom developed in Central Africa
- 1600s, the Oyo Empire emerged as the dominant Yoruba culture (in today's Nigeria), with each city-state ruled by an *oba*, a priestly monarch who could be compelled to abdicate if too dictatorial or incompetent

1. The trance-dances of San Bushmen influenced Bantu rainmakers and spirit mediums in Central and Southern Africa.
2. Bantu ancestral masquerades can be traced back to the fourteenth century or earlier and may have also been influenced by San trance-dances. Such masquerades include the *Gule wa Mkulu* (Big Dance) of the *Nyau* cult of the Chewa and Manganja peoples (Malawi), still performed today at initiations and funerals—with sacred animal masks of the lion, elephant, python, and (most sacred) antelope, plus comical masks of an old man and drunkard. These masks are made in the cult's private grove, used in the village for public performances, and then taken to the river for a ritual burning (Banham, *History* 268–69).
3. In twelfth-century Egypt, shadow-puppet plays became popular entertainment. A thirteenth-century performance, by Ibn Daniyal, *Ajib wa Gabrib*, satirized conmen. But in the fifteenth century such shows became increasingly lewd and were banned by Sultan Jaqmaq, who ordered that their properties and sets be burned.
4. “Jesters” performed at the court of Mutapa kings in the fourteenth century (in today's Zimbabwe).

**[How are the masquerade, shadow-puppet, and jester traditions of Africa related to, yet distinct from Euro-American traditions?]**

5. Ethiopian Orthodox Christian priests performed a slow and stately ritual dance (*shibsheba*) in full vestments, in two lines facing each other, accompanied by a large drum and hand-held sistrum, which continues today (Plastow 25).

6. Among the Zulu and Ndebele, in Southern Africa, the praise-singer (*imbongi*) wore a special animal skin, leapt, and gestured while honoring great warriors and rulers with improvised poems and songs.
7. In Ethiopian Amhara society, *imbongis* gradually transformed into *azmaris*, oratorical and less gestural entertainers in a professional caste. They also sang praises for warriors preparing for battle. In 1520, they were seen in the retinue of the Emperor, by the Portuguese traveler Alvares.

**[How did praise-singers (or Christian priests) frame identity needs and moral values—and how is that done in social networks or political arenas today?]**

8. The Wallega-Oromo (in Ethiopia) performed an elaborate ritual marriage request, with the girl pretending not to understand until the families agreed. Then the boy crowned her with grasses and the two fed each other to show mutual honor and dependence.
9. At the Wallega-Oromo wedding, a symbolic fight was acted out between the families to stress the bride's value and change of "ownership." This involved scripted dialog with the bride crying at leaving her family and the groom's father paying for her. It taught the groom to value his new wife, taught her obedience to her new family, and taught both to respect their elders (Plastow 28).
10. The *digubi* ritual of Kaguri women (in Tanzania) involved graphic demonstrations, with mime, dance, song, and music, to teach girls how to behave during menstrual periods and sexual intercourse.
11. A similar women-only rite of the Shona (in Zimbabwe) involved older female friends of the bride, showing seduction and sexual adventurousness with a husband figure, to teach her how to please him.

**[How were marriages arranged through theatrical rites in East and Southern Africa, and which values did that teach—like and unlike ours today?]**

12. After Shona peasants finished their work on the feudal chief's land, they performed a parody, showing the chief's drunkenness or corruption (Plastow 26).
13. At harvest each year, the pre-adolescent Shona children performed *mahumbwe* games in the moonlight, which dramatized certain aspects of adult life.
14. Shona rites for a dead man took an entire year, with the widow's nephew's wives (*varoora*) dressing in his clothes and performing scenes from this life, using mime, music, and joyous songs to console the mourners. This also cleansed his soul by showing his unpleasant

characteristics, so that he could improve for the afterlife. Then they performed the dead man's awakening among the ancestors, where he might help the living.

15. This practice was viewed as evil and banned by Christian colonists, with the 1899 Witchcraft Suppression Act. Yet it continued when that law was revoked, soon after Zimbabwe's independence.

**[How did Shona games and rituals empower people to alter their inner-theatre images—and then become a threat to colonial powers—akin to modern political theatre today?]**

16. Various rituals of spirit possession developed in West Africa, which then spread through the slave trade to the New World (in the Caribbean Islands, southeastern USA, and South America). Santaríá, Voodoo, Candomblé, and Umbanda derive especially from Ewe/Fon *vodun* and Yoruba *orisha* worship in Nigeria and nearby countries. These religions involve theatrical rites of dancing into trances, using costumes, colors, and symbolic objects, including animal sacrifices, specific to the spirit being invoked to “ride” the person who then becomes possessed—in a positive, healing experience, with humans bridging the natural and supernatural (also changing into the *orisha's* gender).

17. In these religions, spirit-possession performers and spectators believe in a supreme creator god (Olodumare in Yoruba). But they interact more directly with the *orishas*, such as Eshu Elegbara (trickster and messenger god of crossroads), Obatala (Sky Father), Ogun (god of metalworking), Shango (god of lightning, fire, and masculinity, a former human king of Oyo), Oshun (second wife of Shango and goddess of sensuality, beauty, and childbirth), Oya (third wife of Shango and *orisha* of rebirth), and Yemoja (Mother of Waters and amniotic fluid). These were identified with (hidden as) Catholic saints in the New World, such as Shango with Santa Barbara, enabling African-Americans to continue their theatrical worship and possession rites under slavery, in traditions that persist today.

**[How do *orisha* rites relate to San Bushman trances or ancient Dionysian *enthusiasmos* and *ekstasis*—or to current dance events with enthusiastic, ecstatic, and trancelike states?]**

## E. Australian Aboriginal Performances

1. 43,000 years ago, rock engravings (petroglyphs) were created in South Australia.
2. 35,000 years ago, cave paintings were made in Southwest Tasmania.
3. 26,000 years ago, charcoal drawings were created at Narwala Gabarnmung in Northern Australia (Arnhem Land).
4. Indigenous Australian *corroborees*, as private or public ceremonies, continue today to engage the sacred within everyday life. They involve mimetic movements of animals in the landscape, such as the kangaroo-hunting dance with male actors holding their hands near their chests, scratching, grooming, foraging, and jumping like kangaroos, until “killed” by hunters with long reeds as spears (Casey 22).
5. In the crocodile corroboree of the Cambridge Gulf people, the performer lies flat on the ground, pulling his body with his hands and forearms while his legs are held together like a tail, also raising his body and making a booming sound like a crocodile.
6. The birthing corroboree of the central desert region involves women singing about an ancestral baby while a mother actually gives birth—thus singing them both into being.
7. Corroborees involve the “Dreamtime” when the land was created and given shape with specific protocols for each Aboriginal group living there to care for it. Dreamtime or “Dreaming” figures are embedded in the physical landscape and spiritual laws. They are connected to individual dreaming and a mental stage underneath conscious experiences—in an eternal time with no past, present, or future.
8. Dreaming stories performed in corroborees involve ancestors aiding each new generation of a totem group, with good powers against evil spirits, such as the *mamu* of the central desert, who absorbs the spirits of children or eats people who wander away from the community.
9. A common creator spirit is the giant snake, such as the Rainbow Serpent, which moved across the earth creating landscapes and eventually rested in a deep secret place, watching people across time, with the sky’s rainbow reflecting it—although the type of snake varies among Aboriginal groups. The totem of the group, whether a snake, emu, ant, or other animal, connects current human members to ancestors and landscape elements, through cycles of song-stories in “songlines” as verbal and visual mappings, related to San Bushman “ropes” (Keeney, *Bushman* 112).



10. Performances begin with actors' bodies being painted with symbols and designs, using oil and red or white ocher, while the painter sings part of the Dreaming story. The performance site is also prepared as a sacred clearing with fire, moonlight, and shadows. Clapping hands, slapping thighs, didgeridoo, shaker, and bull-roarer are used for music, along with voices.
11. Individuals learn traditional songs at each level of initiation and maturity, but new songs are also added if dreamed and valued by the group, with certain clans having custodial rights over specific Dreamings. Traditionally, performers were either all male or all female, with cross-gender acting. Women only performed in secret ceremonies. But that has changed since colonization—from private rituals to public performances and topical entertainments, drawing from recent historical events.

**[How are dreams, landscapes, and songs combined in current performances of your culture, expressing identity needs and social values, like and unlike those of Australian Aborigines?]**

## **F. North American Indigenous Performances Before Colonization**

1. Hunter-gatherers migrated from Asia to the Americas at least 14,000 years ago.
2. The “Adena” culture left huge earthen mounds in Ohio, by creating multiple rituals on the same site with wooden structures, cremated bodies, and grave goods, buried 1000–200 BCE. Artwork showing shamanic human-animal transformations was also left at Adena sites, indicating ritual performances.
3. More intensive agricultural settlements developed along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers about 1000 CE, including the “Cahokia” culture near today’s St. Louis, which also left burial mounds and reached its peak around 1200 CE, during the Medieval Warming Period.
4. In the Colorado Desert (of California and Arizona), Native Americans, perhaps ancestral Quechan and Mojave, created about 200 “geoglyphs,” dated between 900 and 1200 CE. These are gigantic earth engravings of mountain lions, birds, snakes, humans, spirals, and other

shapes on the ground, some as long as 170 feet (50 meters), which can only be viewed fully from above.

**[What was theatrical about burial mounds and animal/human glyphs created by Native Americans and why do you think they put such effort into them? How do they reflect bio-cultural identity needs and metaphysical frames, like and unlike today's?]**

5. The “ancestral Puebloans” (called Anasazi, “ancestors of our enemies,” by the Navajo), in what is now Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado, lived in adobe and stone apartment complexes, built into cliffs, since about 100 CE. Some of these have been continuously inhabited for more than 800 years—and are today by the Acoma and Hopi.
6. Ancestral Puebloans built round *kivas* that held indoor sacred dramas. These included the Hopi *Palulukonti* with snake puppets manipulated through a screen, interacting with *kachina* (god) actors and a masked clown, who mimed a horned serpent with one arm.
7. Since the 1200s and probably earlier, Puebloans also performed outdoor *kachina* dances in plazas surrounded by flat-roofed buildings on which spectators stood or sat, with masked and costumed god-actors dancing in a line and clowns performing satiric improvised interludes of antisocial scenes.

**[How were Puebloan cliff-dwellings, kivas, and sacred or satirical performances with kachinas, clowns, and puppets like/unlike domestic, ritual, and theatrical structures and practices in our modern or postmodern world?]**

## G. Mexican and Central American Indigenous Performances

1. The Olmec culture in tropical Mexico created large stone heads, jade sculptures, ceramic effigy jars, and stones with writings, c. 1400–400 BCE.
2. The earliest Maya settlements started in the 1800s BCE, in what is now Mexico and Central America, with early artworks from 1500 BCE to 250 CE, but Maya civilization reached its height during the “Classical Period,” 250–900 CE.

3. Maya beliefs in over 150 gods led to their building of pyramids for various rituals, including human sacrifices, and to their scientific advances in mathematics and astronomy.
4. In the 800s, the Maya built small stone theatres, possibly for the elite to ensure their legitimacy through political plays.
5. The Maya also performed comedies and farces for popular audiences in large plazas, as noted by the Spanish bishop of Merida (Mexico) after the Conquest.
6. The “Dresden Codex,” the earliest surviving book from the Americas, with Maya images and writings about local history and astronomy, was created in the 1200s–1300s. (Many Maya books were burned by Spanish colonizers.)
7. By 1325, the Culhua-Mexica or “Aztecs” (after migrating from northern Mexico) established Tenochtitlan, today’s Mexico City, on an island in a lake, in a highland plateau, surrounded by mountains and volcanoes.
8. In 1428, the Triple Alliance of the city-states Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan won a civil war against others and started ruling together. But Tenochtitlan soon became the dominant center of the Aztec Empire.
9. The Aztec Sun Stone was carved (c. 1500) 12 feet in diameter, probably depicting the sun god Tonatiuh at its center, with his tongue as a sacrificial knife and each of his clawed hands holding a human heart. The Aztecs believed that the sun needed the nourishment of hearts, in monthly sacrifices, to rise each morning. (See Chapter 7, “[Early Modern Mixtures in England, Spain, and the New World \(1500s-1600s\)](#),” Section E, for more on Aztec performances.)  
**[How are Maya and Aztec human sacrifices of the past akin to the body or ego sacrifices in our mass and social media today?]**

## H. South American Indigenous Performances

1. Rock art with animal and human figures was made in northeastern Brazil (Serra da Capivara) and cave art in central-eastern Brazil (Lapa do Santo) 14,000–9000 years ago.
2. The Moche culture, 100s–700s CE, in what is now northwestern Peru, made ceramics and other art with realistic faces and figures of humans

and animals. Such artworks show hunting, fishing, and fighting scenes, plus ceremonies, ritual sacrifices (of humans), and sexual scenes.

3. The Inca Empire, centered in Cuzco, expanded across western South America from the 1200s to 1533, conquering other indigenous groups in various landscapes: mountains, plains, deserts, and jungles. In the 1430s, the Inca Empire peaked in size, with monumental architecture and irrigation systems, but no use of the wheel for transportation, no riding animals, and no writing system.
4. The Incas regarded themselves as the children of the sun god, Inti, and their ruler as Inti's embodiment on earth. They mummified and cared for the ruler's body after death. Inca ritual performances involved ancestor and god worship with poured libations, such as water or chicha beer, and sacrificial offerings, including children that were killed.
5. The Capac Raymi (Great Festival) was celebrated in December (summer), at the start of the rainy season. It involved manhood initiation rites of 14-year-old Inca boys, during which they climbed a peak, sacrificed llamas to the mountain spirits, were whipped on the legs by their relatives, climbed the peak again, and ran a dangerous race down the mountainside. They repeated such performances for 21 days and then had large plugs placed in their earlobes as warriors.
6. During the Inti Raymi (Sun Festival) in June (mid-winter), mummies of the deceased were brought out to participate, nobles chanted in prayer, and hundreds of llamas were sacrificed. The Sapa Inca (living emperor) ritually broke the earth with a hand plow to guarantee the growth of crops.
7. With no written language, the Incas used oral storytelling, songs, and public dramas to preserve their legends, myths, and poetry. They also practiced brain surgery, as evidenced by hundreds of skulls.

**[Which identity needs and social values do you see in Moche art or the Inca use of mummies, plus animal and human sacrifices, to honor their dead, worship ancestors and gods, initiate young men, and grow crops? How were such theatrical practices like/unlike performances today—through current media?]**

## References

- Banham, Martin, ed. *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Banham, Martin, ed. *A History of Theatre in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Baumgarten, Jean. "Purim-shpil." *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. [www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Purim-shpil](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Purim-shpil).
- Casey, Maryrose. *Telling Stories: Aboriginal Australian and Torres Straight Islander Performances*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2012.
- Cawley, A. C., ed. *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*. New York: Dutton, 1959.
- Harris, Max. *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Hrostwitha. *The Plays of Hrostwitha of Gandersheim*. Trans. Larissa Bonfante and Alexandra Bonfante-Warren. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2003.
- Keeney, Bradford. *The Bushman Way of Tracking God*. New York: Atria, 2010.
- Kobialka, Michal. *This Is My Body*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- Nagler, A. M. *A Source Book in Theatrical History*. New York: Dover, 1959.
- Normington, Kate. *Women in Medieval Drama*. Woodbridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2006.
- Plastow, Jane. *African Theatre and Politics*. Amsterdam: Radopi, 1996.
- Tydemans, William. *The Theatre in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.



# 6

## Early Modern Developments in Italy and France (1400s–1600s)

### A. Renaissance Europe, TIMELINE

- 1450s, Gutenberg’s invention of a printing press with moveable type made literature more accessible, including ancient Greek and Roman plays and theories, plus the Bible
- 1517, the Protestant Reformation began with Martin Luther posting his “95 Theses” in Wittenberg, Germany, while John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli developed other protests in Switzerland
- 1543, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus published *On the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres* just before his death, although it was written 13 years before, arguing for a heliocentric (sun-centered) model of the orbiting planets and stars—against the biblical earth-centered model
- 1545, the Catholic Counter-Reformation began with the Council of Trent (1545–63), which proclaimed the value of art (except when evoking “carnal desires”), especially images of Mary, contrasting with Protestant iconoclasm
- 1598, the Edict of Nantes ended the Catholic versus Protestant war in France with tolerance for Calvinist Huguenots (promulgated by King Henri IV, who had been a Huguenot, yet became Catholic as King of France)
- 1600, Giordano Bruno, a Dominican friar, was hung upside-down, naked, and burned to death at the stake in a public square (Campo de’ Fiori in Rome) by the Roman Inquisition for his religious and

cosmological theories, including pantheism (a belief that everything is god), reincarnation (the transmigration of souls), and heliocentrism (with the sun at the center of the planets' orbits and stars as other suns with their own planets, which might also bear life)

- 1608, the colony of Quebec was founded, starting the settlement of “New France,” which eventually spread to “Louisiana” in the 1680s
- 1618–48, the Thirty Years’ War occurred across Europe with Austria, Spain, parts of Italy, and southern Germany as Catholic forces against northern Germany, Bohemia, Sweden, Denmark, and France on the Protestant side (although France was mostly a Catholic country), causing the death of a third of Germany’s population—which, like Italy, was not one country until the 1800s
- 1620, the Roman Inquisition “corrected” Copernicus’s *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* (1543) to exclude the theory that the earth revolves around the sun (heliocentrism)—as against a literal reading of the Bible
- 1629 was the peak year in a wave of witch hunts across Europe, torturing and executing witches as scapegoats through fear of supernatural evil
- 1633, Galileo’s popular *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, with a character arguing for the heliocentric model but also others arguing against it, was banned as heretical by the Roman Inquisition and he was put under house arrest until the end of his life—although he viewed the universe as a book written by God with mathematics as its language
- 1685, the Edict of Nantes, involving religious tolerance, was revoked by King Louis XIV and 200,000 Protestant Huguenots left Catholic France.

## B. Italy’s Renaissance Ideals (1400s–1600s)

1. Merchant princes became wealthy rulers in the Italian city-states of Venice, Milan, and Florence (where the Medicis developed the biggest bank in Europe). They supported the new artistic techniques of “Renaissance humanism,” a rebirth of classical knowledge focusing on individual human figures with realistic physical details, symmetrical balance, and the illusion of perspective distance in sculpture and painting. Such artists included Donatello, Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Bellini, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci (who was also a scene and costume designer of plays and pageants in Florence). Renaissance humanism also involved scientific advances in physics, engineering, and astronomy, especially by Galileo, despite threats against him from the Roman Inquisition.

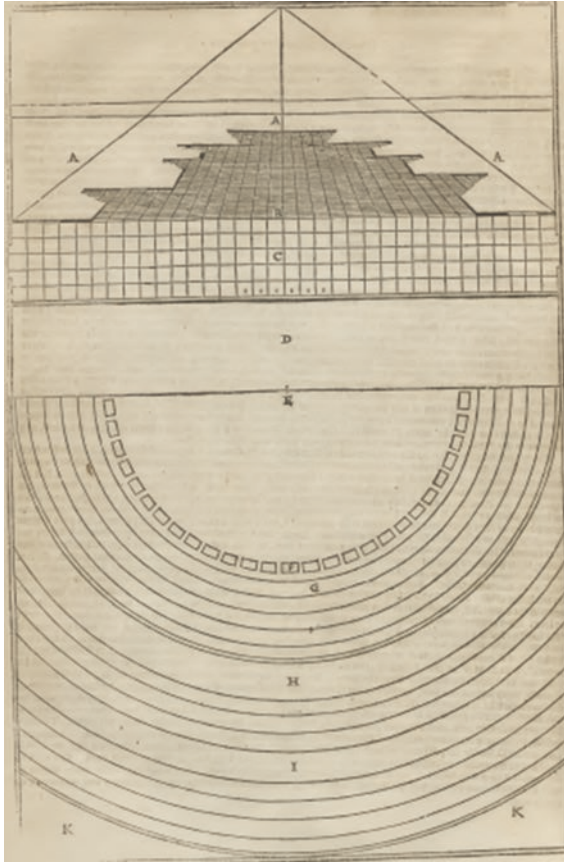
2. The writings of Aristotle, Horace, and ancient playwrights returned to Western Europe when scholars fled the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Influenced by these writings, Italian theorists developed the *neoclassical rules* of three unities for stage plays: limiting the *time* to one day or less, based on Aristotle's notion of one "revolution of the sun," *places* to those available by travel in that amount of time, and *action* to a single plot line. They also described rules of character *decorum* (proper behavior regarding class and gender) and distinct *genres* with moral *verisimilitude* (truth-likeness), pleasing and instructing—based on the ancient ideals of Horace. But Lodovico Castelvetro (1505–71) went further than Aristotle and disagreed with Horace, saying a play should be believable to common people and common sense, by matching their time in the theatre, with scenery limited to the view of a single person, not to teach them, just to please them (Carlson 49).
3. *Tragedies*, *comedies*, and *pastorals* were written in Italian, based on ancient models. They showed the distinct moral values of each genre with tragedies about elite heroes (admirable yet flawed), comedies about ordinary fools, and pastorals about rustic romantics (as softened versions of satyr plays).

**[How are the moral or realistic ideals of plot and character in today's media genres like/unlike the neoclassical rules of the Renaissance?]**

4. Religious dramas continued in Renaissance Italy (unlike in England), as *sacra rappresentazione*, especially in Florence. Performed with music, they led to the development of Italian *opera*, with libretto, aria, and recitative, in the 1600s.
5. Opera was also influenced by ancient models of tragedy and by Renaissance *intermezzi* (or *intermedi*). These were musical interludes with mythological characters appearing and dancing between the acts of plays, at court for special occasions, such as weddings. They became increasingly elaborate during the 1500s, with their own scenery and choruses, as allegories developing during the four breaks in a five-act play, often upstaging it. Several *intermezzi* were organized in Florence by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), who also wrote comedies, including *Mandragola* (1518).
6. Machiavelli's *The Prince* was published in 1532, five years after his death, but shared in manuscripts for two decades before that. It describes the ideal ruler as practical, all controlling, and sometimes cruel, while appearing virtuous. For social stability, he lies if necessary and kills rivals because "it is safer to be feared than loved if one cannot be both."

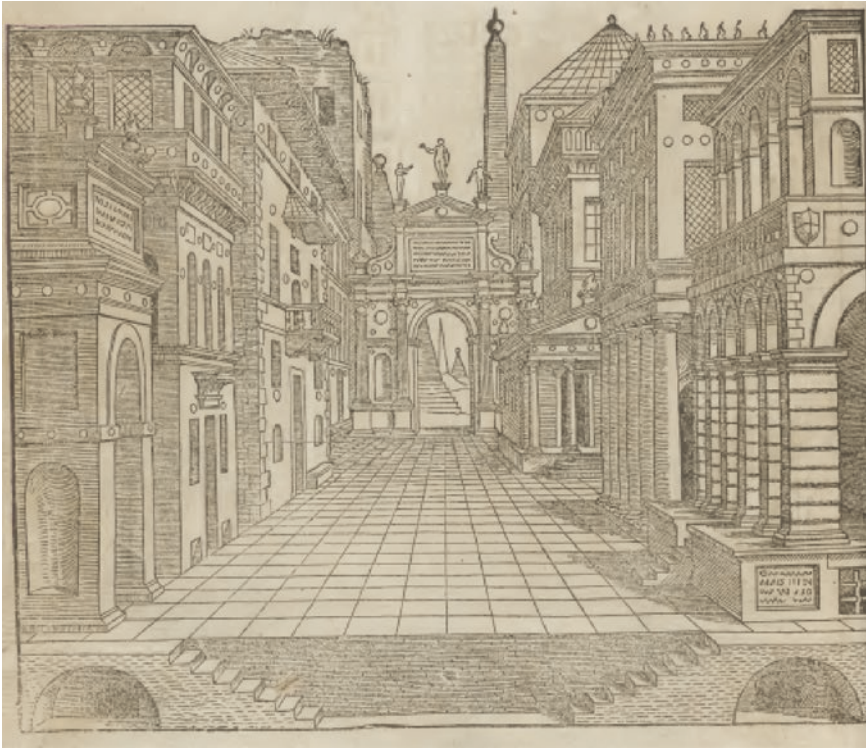


7. The ancient Roman *De Architectura* (*Of Architecture*, 30–20 BCE) by Vitruvius, describing theatre designs, was translated and printed in Italian in 1486. Later editions, starting in 1511, were illustrated with recent performances of classical plays.
8. The earliest full-stage use of perspective scenery probably appeared in Rome in 1513, designed by Baldassare Peruzzi (1481–1536). The painted scenic details, on parallel flats, gradually shrank toward a central vanishing point, giving the illusion of a great distance captured onstage—and reflecting an ideal ruler watching (like Machiavelli’s “Prince”). This shifted the emphasis toward his almighty power, instead of the ancient gods or Christian God watching in prior periods.  
**[How do today’s media illusions reflect a power in the mass audience, or beyond it, as controlling or cruel, akin to Renaissance perspective illusions and princes? How do such performance media create metaphysical frameworks, then and now, for bio-cultural identity needs, with religious and humanist elements?]**
9. In the second of his *Books of Architecture* (1545), Mannerist architect Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554) offered one set with central vanishing point for each genre: tragedy, comedy, and pastoral (influenced by Vitruvius). Serlio advocated angled wings and a raked stage (toward “upstage” in the back) for more three-dimensional illusions (Figs. 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3).
10. Teatro Olimpico was built in Vicenza, as designed by Andrea Palladio (1508–80) who also illustrated an Italian translation of Vitruvius’s *De Architectura*. The theatre still exists today with an elaborate set for its first production, *Oedipus the King* (1585). It involves a raked stage, angled wings, and Roman-style *scaenae frons* with three vanishing points, showing balance yet depth in its Italian Renaissance cityscape (Fig. 6.4). Designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548–1616), who completed the theatre after Palladio’s death, the set has oil lamps within its street-corridors to increase the illusion of depth.
11. As the audience appetite for spectacle increased, multiple sets for each play became popular. This conflicted with neoclassical rules of restraint and with the prior use of angled wings, which were difficult to change quickly. So flat wings (with painted corners) replaced them by the early 1600s.
12. The first permanent proscenium arch (or the earliest that survives) as picture frame for the set, hiding offstage flats, was installed at the Teatro Farnese in Parma in 1618.  
**[How are picture frames and perspective scenery used in various media today, like/unlike the vanishing points of the Italian Renaissance?]**



**Fig. 6.1** Serlio's plan for angled wings to create a vanishing point perspective (photo: Mark Pizzato)

13. Giuseppe Torelli (1658–1709) invented the pole-and-chariot system in Italy and took it to France in the 1640s, with a mechanism under the stage for the simultaneous scene-changing of flats painted in perspective, as parallel wings in grooves, along with shutters in the back. (This mechanism still exists today in the Drottningholm Theatre in Sweden, built in the 1700s.) Torelli also invented cutout flats of trees or bushes to give more of a three-dimensional illusion onstage.
14. Flying machines (glories) and trapdoors were used for scenic spectacles, plus candles or oil lamps in chandeliers above, in “ladders” along the wings, and as “footlights” on the stage edge (casting unnatural shadows on actors' faces).



**Fig. 6.2** Serlio's tragic scene, showing an Italian Renaissance city with classical statues (photo: Mark Pizzato)

15. Italian *commedia dell'arte* developed from ancient Atellan farce and regional caricatures. It involved masked actors, stock characters, conventional costumes and props, *zibaldoni* (plot sketches), and *lazzi* (slapstick bits)—in improvised, satirical, street performances on a bare stage for a popular audience. It was also valued by the French court, which brought *commedia* troupes to Paris as “Comédie Italienne,” which at first performed in Italian, then added French to their improvisations, plus scripted farce.
16. Major *commedia* caricatures were the innamorato and innamorata (overly serious young lovers without masks), Dottore (foolish academic from Bologna), Pantalone (miserly, lecherous old Venetian), and



Fig. 6.3 Serlio's pastoral scene (photo: Mark Pizzato)

Capitano (swaggering yet cowardly soldier). There were also several *zanni*, including Brighella (lusty, greedy servant or tavern owner, from Milan or Bergamo), Arlecchino/Truffaldino (hungry trickster servant with a dull mind in an agile body), and Smeraldina/Colombina (strong and rational, as personal maid to the innamorata).

**[How are today's satirical caricatures in stage or screen media akin to specific commedia types?]**



**Fig. 6.4** Teatro Olimpico's *Oedipus* set, with central street-corridor (photo: Mark Pizzato)

### C. France's Neoclassical Tensions (1500s–1600s)

1. French culture was influenced by the Italian Renaissance through Catherine de Medici of Florence who married King Henri II in 1533 (ruling 1547–59), with her sons as the next three French kings (Francis II, Charles IX, and Henri III). And then, Marie de Medici married the subsequent French king, Henri IV (1589–1610), with her son becoming King Louis XIII. Also, the Roman Catholic Cardinals Richelieu and (Italian) Mazarin were advisors to the young kings Louis XIII (1610–43) and Louis XIV (the “Sun King,” 1643–1715).
2. Court ballet (*ballet de cour*) started in the 1570s with dramatic dances involving costumed court members, in royal halls such as the Petit-Bourbon in Paris.
3. The Hôtel de Bourgogne, built in Paris in 1548, was the first permanent indoor theatre in France.
4. The Marais Theatre, converted from an indoor tennis court into a theatre in 1634, gave the first production of *Le Cid* in 1636.

5. The Petit-Bourbon theatre (Great Hall) was transformed by Torelli with his pole-and-chariot system and was the first theatre of Molière's troupe in 1658.
6. The Palais-Royal Theatre had the first proscenium frame in France in 1641 and became the theatre of Molière's company in 1660.
7. The Salles de Machines, built for "machine plays" in 1660, had a stage (140 feet long by 52 feet wide) that was much longer than the auditorium (92 feet) and could fly 100 people at once. But it was rarely used after 1670 because of its bad acoustics and expensive productions.
8. Such theatres typically involved a long, rectangular room with a stage at one end, a standing area near the stage and orchestra musicians (as the pit or *parterre*, meaning "on the ground"), a curved *amphithéâtre* of bleachers behind that, and upper galleries with seats along the side and back walls, partly divided into boxes as *loges*. Some theatres had a third level as *paradis* ("heavens"). There were also benches onstage for elite spectators.

**[How do the current structures of theatres, cinemas, concert venues, sports arenas, or other performance places compare with French Renaissance theatres?]**

9. French neoclassical plays often used balanced alexandrines, with six beats per line, rhyming each pair of lines—with a pause in the middle for symmetry like that in the scenery. They also followed the rules of the three unities, decorum, and separate genres.
10. But unlike neoclassical plays, with unity of place and action, "machine plays," along with operas and court ballets, emphasized grand spectacle with various exotic scenes, using a series of flats in painted perspective, each having a central vanishing point.

**[How is spectacle or poetry valued in today's performance media, with balance or extravagance, like French neoclassical plays and scenery?]**

11. In 1637, the French Academy (Académie Française), established by Cardinal Richelieu two years before, to give "exact rules" for the French language and culture, criticized Pierre Corneille's popular, performed, and published tragedy *Le Cid*. The Academy was judging a complaint against it by another playwright (Scudéry) for mixing genres, as a serious play that ends happily, and straining credibility as it followed the neoclassical rules of the three unities but with too many events. The play's Spanish hero, the Cid, fights a battle and two duels within 24 hours—offending "verisimilitude" (moral truth-likeness). The play also violates decorum (proper character and class behavior), as the Cid's beloved, Chimène, following the King's command, *marries* the Cid

(Rodrigue), *who killed her father* in one of his duels. Even if based on historical incidents, the play ought to be suppressed, the Academy said, “for the good of society,” because art “purifies reality” from its defects and “should prefer verisimilitude to truth” (qtd. in Carlson 96).

12. Pierre Corneille (1606–84), stung by the critique, stopped writing for several years. His rival, Georges de Scudéry (1601–67), wrote a less popular play with a similar story conforming better to the rules. But then Corneille returned to writing successful tragedies and comedies for several decades, following the rules of separate genres, the three unities, and decorum.

**[Which genre and character expectations do we have for plays and films today, based on historical paradigms or fantastic ideals? Which social values and metaphysical frames are reflected in them, like/unlike in the French Renaissance?]**

13. Jean Racine (1639–99) became the most highly regarded French tragedian, who obeyed the neoclassical rules while also drawing on ancient myths in plays such as *Phèdre* (1677). It shows the Greek queen, Phèdre, falling in love with her stepson, Hippolyte, while he has a different, forbidden love. When he rejects her, Phèdre encourages her husband, the Greek hero Thésée (Theseus), to think that he tried to rape her. This induces Thésée to curse his son, calling on the god Neptune. Due to this curse, Hippolyte falls from his chariot (offstage) and is dragged to death behind his own horses, after a sea monster frightens them. Phèdre then kills herself by drinking poison.
14. Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, 1622–73), as actor and writer, drew on Italian commedia characters for his French satirical comedies. He came into conflict with church authorities when he presented a religious hypocrite and his foolish, upper-class admirers in *Tartuffe* (1664–69). Molière revised it several times, appealing to King Louis XIV for protection. He was allowed to perform it and honored the king with a *deus ex machina* conclusion. A messenger describes the king’s godlike, all-seeing wisdom, creating a sudden, happy ending to the conflict, with Tartuffe’s villainy exposed, despite his apparent holiness.
15. In the preface to *Tartuffe* and his appeals to the king, Molière argued for the social value of such satirical comedies “to correct men’s vices,” even those of the upper class. This went against the neoclassical separation of genres with tragedies about the elite and comedies making fun of less noble characters.

16. In 1673, while playing the hypochondriac Argan in his play, *The Imaginary Invalid*, Molière, who suffered from chronic pulmonary tuberculosis, had a coughing fit onstage, hemorrhaging blood. He barely finished the performance and died a few hours later.
17. Armande Béjart (1643–1700), the sister or daughter of Molière’s lead actress and mistress (Madeleine), grew up as an actress in his care. They married in 1662, when she was 19 and he was 40. She led the company after his death, with the help of the actor La Grange.
18. That company merged with another in 1680 to form the French National Theatre, the Comédie Française, with actors as shareholders (sociétaires) and fixed-salary workers (pensionnaires). The lead shareholder (doyen) conducted the short rehearsal periods, with all actors providing their own costumes.
19. French Renaissance theatre companies performed a repertory of up to 70 plays but usually had audiences of just 20–25% of their theatre’s capacity, mostly from the upper class.
20. In 1697, Louis XIV expelled the Comédie Italienne troupe, for a political satire about his wife, leaving the Opera and Comédie Française as the only royally sanctioned theatres in Paris.  
**[What dangers do satirists face today—like/unlike Moliere and the Comédie Italienne? Do current entertainers help to cure audience vices, especially of the elite, and change our social systems, as Moliere argued in his time?]**

## References

- Carlson, Marvin. *Theories of the Theatre*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Serlio, Sebastian. *Five Bookes of Architecture*. 1611. [https://archive.org/details/ldpd\\_12760359\\_000](https://archive.org/details/ldpd_12760359_000).





# 7

## Early Modern Mixtures in England, Spain, and the New World (1500s–1600s)

### A. England’s Renaissance and Religious Conflicts, TIMELINE

- 1534, King Henry VIII (ruling 1509–47) created the Church of England, rebelling against the Pope by marrying Anne Boleyn and divorcing his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, hoping for a male heir (and dissolving the monasteries, taking their wealth)
- 1547–53, a Regency Council (and Lord Protector) ruled during the reign of the boy king, Edward VI, with Protestant reforms: clerical marriage, masses in English instead of Latin, “superstitious” images removed from churches (paintings, sculptures, and stained glass windows, along with altars, bells, and vestments), the ending of masses sung for the dead, and the Bible made accessible to all, not just priests
- 1553–58, England switched back to Catholic rule under “Bloody” Queen Mary (daughter of Henry’s initial Spanish wife), especially when she married King Philip II of Spain in 1554, making him co-ruler of England for several years, with hundreds of English Protestants burned at the stake for heresy, but Mary died of an illness at age 42, after a 5-year rule
- 1558–1603, Henry’s Protestant daughter, Elizabeth (daughter of Anne Boleyn), returned the country to Anglican rule and triumphed over the Spanish Armada, which tried to invade in 1588, 1596, and 1597

(during Philip's Catholic rule in Spain), while increasing the power of the English monarchy and the development of secular theatre with a ban on religious drama and the Catholic mass in the "Elizabethan" period

- 1568, Elizabeth's Catholic cousin, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, was forced to surrender the throne to her one-year-old son, James, and fled to England for sanctuary, but was executed there 18 years later for conspiring to kill Elizabeth and take her throne
- 1585, an English colony was established, with a charter granted to Sir Walter Raleigh by Queen Elizabeth, on the "remote, heathen and barbarous lands" of Roanoke Island (North Carolina), "to have, hold, occupy, and enjoy," but it was abandoned or "lost" after three years
- 1586, Sir Francis Drake, an English pirate sanctioned and funded by Queen Elizabeth, attacked the Spanish town of St. Augustine (Florida), plundered its wealth, and burned it, but it was later rebuilt
- 1603–25, James ruled Scotland first and then England also, in the "Jacobean" period, as a Protestant (Anglican) king, authorizing the King James Bible (1611), after publishing an earlier manual on witch-hunting (*Daemonologie*, 1597), but conflicts between Catholics, Anglicans, and Calvinist Puritans continued during his reign
- 1605, the "Gunpowder Plot" (or "Jesuit Treason") was discovered through an anonymous letter and 36 barrels of gunpowder found, with Guy Fawkes guarding it, under the House of Lords, the night before King James would have given a speech there, in a foiled attempt by a group of Catholics to assassinate him and other Anglican legislators
- 1607, the colony of Jamestown (Virginia) was established and survived
- 1609, the Sea Venture, flagship of a supply fleet sailing from England, was wrecked in a hurricane off the Bermuda Islands, but its survivors took two of its small boats to Jamestown (where the population had dropped from 600 to 70 due to famine)—and one of them, James Strachey, wrote a "true reportory" that influenced Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest* (1611)
- 1620, the colony of Puritans in Plymouth (Massachusetts) was established and survived
- 1625–49, James's son, Charles, ruled during the "Caroline" period, but that ended with a series of civil wars (1642–51) between the Parliamentarians and Royalists, the beheading of Charles (1649), and the banning of theatre (1642–1660) by the Puritan-dominated Parliament

## B. English Renaissance Theatre

1. Interludes were performed at court and at nobles' homes, starting in the late 1400s, as short sketches during banquets, sometimes with allegorical characters as in medieval morality plays.
2. Jousting tournaments were also popular with the elite. King Henry VIII was hit in the head in 1524 and knocked off his horse in 1536. The latter time, the armored horse also fell on him, badly injuring his leg and causing him pain for the rest of his life, along with further possible brain damage.
3. In the early 1500s, platform stages were set up at one end of *inn yards* for performances, with viewers standing nearby or watching from galleries along the sides.
4. Secular school dramas, written in English, were performed at *universities* in the 1500s, drawing upon ancient models, such as Roman comedies, and using boys for all roles.
5. Boys' acting companies developed from school dramas to court entertainments and then to public performances in 1575 (in Blackfriars Hall), with major dramatists writing for them.
6. Such writers included those known today as the "university wits," who went to Cambridge and Oxford universities. But that group did not include Shakespeare—and the phrase came from a later historian, George Saintsbury, in the 1800s.  
**[How are young actors and school shows valued today, like and unlike in Renaissance England?]**
7. Starting in 1574, the Master of Revels (Edmund Tilney), serving the Lord Chamberlain, the chief officer of the royal household, censored dramas that were deemed too religious or political—especially after Queen Elizabeth banned the performance of biblical plays in 1581.
8. English Renaissance dramatists, influenced by the ancient Roman tragedies of Seneca, the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and their own medieval tradition, specialized in revenge plots with supernatural characters and violence onstage, or romantic comedies, with "episodic" leaps in time and place. Most playwrights did *not* follow the neoclassical unities, as they went beyond 24 hours and adjacent locations, with intertwining main and subplots (rather than writing a linear, cause-and-effect, "crisis drama," valued by Aristotle). They also mixed genres in tragicomedies, sometimes with historical and pastoral scenes, and used *asides* and *soliloquies* (criticized by Italian neoclassicists as unrealistic).

**[Why do characters sometimes address the audience directly, through asides and soliloquies onstage in the Renaissance or voice-overs onscreen today? What roles do spectators play then, regarding characters' inner theatres?]**

9. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1599–1602) makes fun of this mixing of genres (while exemplifying it as a tragedy with comical scenes) when Polonius describes the Players visiting the court: “The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light” (2.2.1477–82).

**[Which plot types do you prefer in theatre, film, and television today—like or unlike those in Elizabethan England?]**

10. English dramatists wrote in blank verse (rhymeless poetic lines), except for a pair of rhyming lines at the end of some scenes, perhaps as a signal for actors to leave the stage. This involved iambic pentameter rhythm: five pairs of unstressed then stressed syllables per line.

**[How is rhyming used and rhythm stressed in popular media today—and how is that like/unlike Renaissance blank verse?]**

11. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) was very popular with audiences for a decade. Like Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, it exemplified the English taste for supernatural characters onstage, inspired by Seneca's vengeful ghosts, along with medieval legends.
12. Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1589–92) focuses on a scholar, a potential Renaissance humanist (or Machiavellian prince), whose greed for knowledge and power draws him into a pact with Lucifer, through a devil named Mephistopheles. After conflicting advice from his Good and Evil Angels, Faustus signs the contract with his blood, giving up his eternal soul to get 24 years of supernatural powers—including playing tricks on the Pope in Rome and impressing Emperor Charles V by conjuring Alexander the Great. He also meets Lucifer, who lures Faustus into the deal by entertaining him (and the theatre audience) with an allegorical display of the Seven Deadly Sins, as actors portray Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Wrath, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery.
13. In 1632, the Puritan William Prynne reported, in his attack on theatre (*Histriomastix*), that a “visible apparition of the Devill” had appeared onstage during *Doctor Faustus*, amazing the actors and spectators, as a “fearful sight,” driving them to distraction or madness (qtd. in Macdonald). Yet, this play was very popular when staged by the Lord Admiral's Men, 1594–97.

14. Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) studied at Cambridge University where he learned the legal skill of arguing from different perspectives. He was famous for his “mighty lines” of powerful poetic imagery, as when Faustus conjures the ancient Helen, an ideal beauty, taken by the Trojans and causing the Greeks to sail to Troy (Ilium) for a ten-year war: “Was this the face that launched a thousand ships, / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? / Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss. / Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies. / Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again. / Here will I dwell for heaven is in those lips” (5.1.97–102). This exemplifies how male actors would interact homo-erotically onstage, with a boy, as apprentice actor, in the role of Helen—even as the scene showed masculine and feminine ideals.
15. After he wrote *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe was given an arrest warrant, probably an accusation of religious blasphemy. Less than two weeks later, he was accidentally killed in a bar fight or assassinated (stabbed above the eye) at age 29.
16. In 1597, the staging of *The Isle of Dogs*, by Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe, probably satirizing the queen (though the play is lost today), provoked the authorities to jail those involved and temporarily close all London theatres.
17. Jonson also satirized the plays of John Marston and Thomas Dekker, and they satirized his in return, during the “War of the Theatres” (1599–1601).
18. Theatres were closed due to plague (the Black Death returning) in 1593–94, 1603, and 1608.
19. Public theatres were built *outside* the city limits of London to avoid complaints by authorities. For example, the Lord Mayor complained in 1597: (1) they corrupt the Youth with “lascivious devices” and ungodly practices, (2) they draw “thieves, horse dealers, whoremongers, ... [and] contrivers of treason ... to the great displeasure of Almightye God & the hurt & annoyance of Her Maiesties people,” (3) they draw apprentices and servants from their work and all sorts of people away from sermons on Sundays, and (4) they invite people with sickness and open sores to recreate by hearing a play whereby “others are infected” (qtd. in Nagler 115–16).
20. Jonson was jailed again in 1605, along with George Chapman and John Marston, for their play, *Eastward Ho*, with its satirical depiction of the Scottish court (during the reign of James in England, who was also King of Scotland).

21. Ben Jonson (1572–1637) developed a new subgenre, the “comedy of humours,” with four caricatures of extreme temperaments—sanguine, melancholic, choleric, and phlegmatic—caused by an excess of certain bodily fluids (“humours” in the original sense), according to ancient medicine. Jonson partially followed the neoclassical unities in *Volpone* (1606) and *The Alchemist* (1610).  
**[How do political satires with comical characters, onstage and onscreen today, show the imbalance of power structures and personal “humours” akin to Jonson’s caricatures?]**
22. Influenced by Marlowe’s tragic lines and John Lyly’s witty romantic comedies, William Shakespeare (1564–1616) appealed to both popular and elite audiences with his youthful plays of the early 1590s (such as *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Richard III*), more complex works of 1595–1601 (*The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *As You Like It*), fitful tragedies and tragicomedies of 1601–08 (*Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Measure for Measure*), and stronger, sweeter plays of 1608–13 (*Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Tempest*).  
**[If you have read one of Shakespeare’s plays, how do its characters and their interactions reflect the inner theatre elements of your brain, in the struggle of Self to be valued by others or the Other?]**
23. Edward Arden, an ardent Catholic and second cousin of William Shakespeare’s mother (Mary Arden), was convicted of treason in 1583—after Arden’s son-in-law, John Somerville, was arrested for planning to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and implicated him, then strangled himself in jail. Edward Arden was partially hanged, then drawn and quartered (disemboweled and dismembered), with his decapitated head put on London Bridge.
24. Hamnet Shakespeare, the only son of William and his wife Anne Hathaway, died at age 11 in 1596, possibly of the Black Death (bubonic plague). His fraternal twin, Judith, survived, along with an older daughter of William and Anne, Susanna, who was born just 6 months after their marriage in 1582. William’s father, John (1531–1601), may have been a covert Catholic. William’s younger brother, Edmund (the name of a character in his play, *King Lear*, 1606) followed him to London as an actor, but died in 1607, at age 27, four months after his son died.

25. William Shakespeare was both a writer and an actor, as a shareholder in The Lord Chamberlain's Men during the reign of Elizabeth, which then became The King's Men with James as their patron. Richard Burbage played many of the serious leads in Shakespeare's plays, with Will Kempe and then Robert Armin playing the main comical roles as shareholders in his company.
26. "Hirelings" played smaller roles, with a temporary salary, and boys acted most of the female roles, even though they were apprentices, learning the craft.
27. The custom of cross-dressing for female roles got an extra twist in some of Shakespeare's plays, such as *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, with a boy playing a female character who dresses in disguise as a boy—and spectators aware of the irony.  
**[When performers cross-dress today, does that raise awareness about stereotypes with ironic twists evoking disgust, fear, or laughter—as in Shakespeare's plays?]**
28. Actors received "sides," not the entire script, to learn their lines and cues, with "plots" posted backstage to help them recall when to go onstage. They had brief rehearsal periods and revivals of plays at short notice. Doubling or tripling of roles was common. Mostly contemporary costumes were used, sometimes with anachronistic elements and donations of expensive clothes from patrons.
29. Philip Henslowe (1550–1616), manager of the Lord Admiral's Men, kept a diary of props and set pieces, which now provides key evidence of Elizabethan staging practices.
30. Shakespeare's company performed in the Theatre (on the north edge of London) and then, after 1599, in the newly built Globe, south of the Thames River, which was rebuilt in 1614 after a fire (Fig. 7.1). These were open-air, "public" theatres. But his company also performed for nobility at court. Starting in 1609, they performed, during winter, in the second Blackfriars Theatre, an indoor, "private" theatre (meaning more expensive seats), built in the former dining room of a Dominican monastery and rooms below it, reconstructed, within the city of London.
31. Outdoor public theatres had a pit or "yard" where spectators stood near the stage as "groundlings" (originally meaning bottom-feeding fish). There were galleries around and above them, which had undivided benches as seats, plus private boxes with cushions or "lords' rooms," sometimes rented by prostitutes. Apples, nuts, water, and ale were sold before and during performances. The only toilets were buckets or the river.



Fig. 7.1 The recently rebuilt (1997) Globe Theatre in London (photo: Mark Pizzato)

32. The public theatre stage usually involved a thrust, with spectators on three sides, trapdoors, columns, and a roof, painted underneath as “the heavens.” There was a “tiring house” behind it, for costume changes, props, and minimal scenic pieces to be brought on or off. There was also an open platform above the stage for balcony scenes, musicians, and sound effects, such as rolling a cannonball and bending a metal sheet for thunder (Fig. 7.2).
33. Certain plays (such as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, 1610–11) suggest a reveal space with characters suddenly “discovered.” So there were probably curtains at the back wall of the set, maybe with a pavilion extending from it, or curtains hung across open doors in the tiring house, which could also be used to imagine exteriors of buildings and interior rooms. **[How was the discovery space in London’s public theatres like or unlike “the reveal” in cinematic realms today?]**
34. Since minimal scenery was used, plays sometimes had “spoken décor,” with characters describing the scene and evoking it in viewers’ imaginations.
35. Bear-baiting arenas were also popular, with chained bears attacked by dogs as a spectator sport. These were similar in structure to the public theatres, as were cockfight-watching “cockpits,” two of which were converted into theatres, including one at court. **[Is there a kinship between animals’ predatory or male-rivalry drive and human violence, as displayed today—like/unlike in the English Renaissance?]**





**Fig. 7.2** The Globe's yard, stage, tiring house, "heavens," and galleries (photo: Mark Pizzato)

36. Only boys' companies appeared in private theatres until 1608 when the King's Men (Shakespeare's company) started performing in the second Blackfriars Theatre.
37. Holding 600–750 viewers (unlike the Globe, which held 1500–3000), indoor, candlelit, private theatres had a pit with backless benches on one side of the stage. They also had galleries and boxes on three sides. Spectators sometimes sat onstage, too.
38. During the Jacobean and Caroline eras (the reigns of James I and Charles I), Jonson wrote court "masques," mythical dance-dramas involving professionals and court members. Sometimes these started with an "antimasque," a disordered display of lower-class characters, which the king's presence in the masque brought to order.
39. Designer Inigo Jones (1573–1652) brought Italian scenic devices to the English court masques, including a proscenium frame, angled wings with painted perspective, and back shutters shifted on grooves.
40. Shakespeare included a masque-like scene in his play, *The Tempest*.

**[What are the parallels between today's musicals, or other spectacles, and Jonson's masques and antimasques, displaying powerful figures that restore order in society while offering pleasure to the audience, as it submits to the stage or screen?]**

41. John Webster (c.1580–1634) wrote darkly tragic and grotesquely comic, Jacobean melodramas, such as *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), with its purely evil brothers, who torture and kill their sister (the duchess) and her children.
42. Thomas Middleton (1580–1627) was one of the most successful playwrights of the Jacobean period. He was equally popular for his comedies and tragedies, such as *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (c.1613, among the best Jacobean comedies), *The Changeling* (1622, written with William Rowley), and *Women Beware Women* (probably 1623–24, one of the bloodiest Jacobean tragedies). He also wrote masques and pageants. But his career ended with *A Game of Chess* (1624), a popular allegory with characters named and dressed as chess pieces, white (English Protestant) and black (Spanish Catholic), satirizing current political figures. The play was initially approved by the Master of Revels, but then banned after nine performances by the King's Men in the Globe Theatre, as it mocked a proposed marriage between an English prince and Spanish princess.
43. John Ford (1586–c.1639) wrote the tragedy, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629–33), about Annabella, who becomes pregnant through incest with her brother, Giovanni. He kills her and displays her heart on his dagger, at her husband's birthday banquet, admitting their sin and killing her husband, before being killed by others.
44. Jacobean/Caroline dramatist, Philip Massinger (1583–1640) wrote carefully plotted, realistic and satirical plays, such as *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625) with its central, cold-hearted, realistic villain, Sir Giles Over-reach, who became popular in the 1800s. Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (1626) shows a performer seduced by the wife of the ancient emperor Domitian and then killed by him onstage. *The City Madam* (1632) is a comedy of manners with Sir John Frugal posing as a devil-worshipping Indian.

**[How do screen media celebrate the melodramatic cruelty of purely evil villains or confirm comical stereotypes?]**

## C. The Iberian “Reconquest” and American Conquests, TIMELINE

- 711, Islamic “Moors” (Berbers and Arabs) from northwest Africa crossed the Mediterranean Sea and started expanding across the Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus), taking it from medieval Visigoths, who had taken it from the ancient Romans—and introducing new technologies, such as the astrolabe, while building 17 universities and 70 public libraries
- from the 700s to the 1400s, Spanish and Portuguese Christian forces, aided by other crusaders, gradually retook the territory of the Islamic Caliphate, in the “Reconquest” (*Reconquista*) of the Iberian Peninsula from north to south and west to east
- 718–1035, the Christian Kingdoms of Asturias/León, Castile, and Pamplona/Navarre/Aragon were founded during the Reconquest
- 1139, Portugal became an independent kingdom under Alfonso I
- 1212–38, Spanish Christians completed the Reconquest, except for the Emirate of Granada
- 1469, the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile united those kingdoms
- 1478, the Spanish Inquisition started enforcing Catholic orthodoxy, eventually through public rituals, *autos de fe* (“acts/performances of faith”) with a procession, mass, and reading of judgments for heretics and false converts—leading to the execution of thousands
- 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella finished the *Reconquista*, conquering the Emirate of Granada and expelling the Moors; they also ordered all Jews in Spain to convert to Catholicism or be expelled; and they funded Christopher Columbus in his attempt to reach India in the East by sailing West, leading to his discovery of the “West Indies” (Caribbean Islands)
- 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas divided the known world outside of Europe between Spain and Portugal
- 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral discovered what is now Brazil, claiming it for Portugal
- 1502, the Spanish royalty ordered all Muslims to convert to Catholicism or be expelled (violating an earlier treaty)
- 1519–56, Charles I of Spain, grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, and son of Philip I in the Habsburg line, ruled the vast Spanish Empire, where the “sun never set,” plus most of Europe, as the “Holy Roman Emperor” Charles V (who was raised in the Netherlands, but spent much of his life in Spain)

- 1521, the Spanish Conquistadors, commanded by Hernán Cortés (whom some Aztec saw as their god, Quetzalcoatl, returning as predicted), with local Tlaxcalans, Totonacs, Texcocans, and other local allies providing most of the warriors, conquered Tenochtitlan, the center of the Aztec Mexica Empire—as the Conquistadors also brought diseases that eventually killed about 90% of the indigenous population and melted much of the Aztec artwork, taking the gold back to Spain, partly for their Baroque cathedrals
- 1533, Spanish Conquistadors, commanded by Francisco Pizarro, conquered the Inca Empire, creating “Peru” (western South America)—with similar results in disease and destruction
- by 1535, the Viceroyalty of New Spain was formed in what is now Mexico, later extending to Central America, Florida, the central and southwestern US, and the Philippines
- 1556–98, Philip II, son of Charles, ruled the Spanish Empire and also England during his marriage to Mary (1554–58)
- 1565, Spanish colonists founded St. Augustine (Florida), as the first settlement by Europeans in what is now the US—and were initially helped by Native Americans to survive
- 1566, the Spanish established St. Elena (on Parris Island, South Carolina), which later became the capital of Spanish Florida, with further settlements extending to the Appalachian Mountains, but faced resistance from Native Americans and eventually retreated to St. Augustine
- 1570, the Spanish Inquisition created tribunals in New Spain (Mexico) and Peru
- 1570s–80s, Spanish priests established about 70 missions in Florida and 20 in what is now Georgia, but most were destroyed by the early 1700s (with the British Governor of Carolina, James Moore, attacking Spanish settlements)
- 1598–1621, Philip III ruled Spain as part of the Habsburg Dynasty
- 1621–65, Philip IV continued the Habsburg rule and “Golden Age” of art, literature, and theatre in Spain
- 1665–1700, Charles II continued both

## D. Spanish Golden Age Theatre

1. Italian commedia troupes toured Spain in the 1570s and 1580s, influencing Spanish drama.
2. The *zarzuela* developed as a short, stylized musical drama based on mythology with ornate scenic effects—a unique type of Spanish court entertainment, influenced by Italian operas and intermezzi.

3. Medieval Catholic dramas started in the 1500s in Spain, due to Islamic rulers, later than elsewhere in Europe, and continued longer (until a ban in 1765), featuring allegorical characters like the English morality plays. Each religious play, as *auto sacramentale* (sacramental act), was staged by a trade guild initially and then organized by the city council with professional actors.
4. Religious dramas were performed in theatres and on street wagons during festival processions, such as Corpus Christi (“Body of Christ”) when the transubstantiated bread, believed to be Jesus in the flesh, traveled through the city and back to the church. Thus, a processional wagon (*carro*) was used as both platform stage and scene house for scenery, special effects, and costume changes.

**[What kinds of performances occur during processions today, religious or civic, with identity needs, simulations, and social values like/unlike those in early modern Spain?]**

5. All secular plays were called *comedias*, mixing serious and comic elements (without following neoclassical rules). These were the major types: daredevil, romantic “cape and sword” (*capa y espada*), exotic “theatre” (*teatro*), “corpse” (*cuero*), and “noise” (*ruido*) with legendary saints or rulers.
6. *Comedias* often involved stock characters, such as the *barba* (old man), *gracioso* (comic servant), and Moor (as villain).
7. *Pasos* (short satires) were also presented between the acts of *comedias*.
8. Lope de Rueda (1510–65) was the most popular actor of the early Golden Age and an author-manager (*autor*) of his own troupe in the mid-1500s.
9. Tirso de Molina (1570–1648), a Catholic monk, created the first literary version of the folk hero and serial seducer, Don Juan, in *The Trickster of Seville*, perhaps staged as early as 1616, but published in 1630. Tirso also excited his audience by scripting a leading “breeches” role in *Love the Doctor* (*El amor médico*, 1620): a young woman wearing pants, thus showing her legs, while posing illegally as a male doctor.
10. Lope de Vega (1562–1635) wrote about a thousand episodic *comedias*, 470 of which survive. These included *Fuente Ovejuna* (1614) and *The King, the Greatest Mayor* (1620), plus a treatise about how drama should please the public. He was also embroiled in many love affairs and was widowed twice, but became a priest later in life, which did not affect his womanizing.
11. *Fuente Ovejuna* (*The Sheep Well*) presents an entire village as heroic, with the peasants killing a military commander who nearly raped a village girl, after they are shamed by her into getting revenge. They

continue to claim that they *all* did the deed, despite torture, and eventually the king intercedes—as the play moves from the commander’s headquarters, to a public square, to the offices of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, to the open countryside, to the town square, to the commander’s house.

12. Calderón de la Barca (1600–81) wrote over 100 secular comedias, often about the conflict between love and honor, involving violent family situations and human responsibility for actions, as in *Life Is a Dream* (1636), plus 70 religious dramas as well. In the mid-1600s, Calderón became a priest and wrote all the religious drama produced in Madrid for the next 30 years.
13. *Life Is a Dream* shows Prince Segismundo in Poland who is locked in a tower because his father, the king, got a prophecy that the prince would kill him and cause disaster to the country. But the king relents and releases his son, who then becomes enraged, and so the king imprisons him again, telling him it was just a dream. There is also a subplot with a female hero in breeches (pants).
14. Spanish *corrales* were theatres for *comedias*, created from the preexisting courtyard of adjoining buildings, with rooms and grilled windows (*rejas*) on several sides. The *corral* involved a platform stage, built at one end of the courtyard, with traps, reveals, and doorways in the facade of the one to three story scene house, plus awnings over the courtyard for shade (Fig. 7.3).



**Fig. 7.3** Almagro *corral*, stage side with rolled up awning above (photo: Mark Pizzato)



Fig. 7.4 Almagro corral, back wall and balcony areas (photo: Mark Pizzato)

15. *Corrales* had benches near the stage and in the central patio for young male spectators known as “mosquitos” (*mosqueteros*), elevated benches (*gradas*) along the side walls, a refreshment stand (*alojera*) along the back wall for eating and drinking during the show, a *cazuela* (“stewpot”) above that for unmarried females, *apostentos* (second-floor boxes), and *desvanes* (“attics” on a third floor) for others (Fig. 7.4).
16. Corral de la Cruz in Madrid was the first of these courtyard theatres created in 1579.
17. The small Corral de Comedias in Almagro, created in 1628, is the only one still existing.  
[How were Spanish corrales akin to English public theatres, or open-air theatres in ancient times and today?]
18. The Coliseo in Madrid was a court theatre, built in 1640, with the first proscenium frame in Spain.
19. Actresses were banned from the stage in 1596, though the ban was not always obeyed. Their performances were legalized in 1599, *if* wives or daughters of a company member, but breeches roles were banned. And yet, such roles continued in the 1600s.
20. Actors wore contemporary costumes, with some mythical and historical elements, often playing multiple roles and stock characters.

## E. Aztec Mesoamerica and New Spain

1. In the 1400s to early 1500s, the Aztec empire, centered in Tenochtitlan (today's Mexico City), conducted "Flower Wars"—ritual battles arranged between city-states, to capture warriors (Pizzato). They would then be made lean by drinking brine, trained to play music, and costumed to perform as gods in the monthly festivals of each city (Fig. 7.5).
2. The god-actor (*teotl ixiptla*) marched throughout the city for crowds honoring him, wearing the god's insignia—playing a flute, for example, as Tezcatlipoca, god of the obsidian "Smoking Mirror" used for prophecy. He also appeared before the ruler, with further ornaments given him and four women to enjoy as his wives for 20 days. On the final day, the *ixiptla* went up the temple pyramid, smashing his musical instrument on the steps. At the top, he was laid across the sacrificial



**Fig. 7.5** Aztec god-actor being costumed, in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, Book II, 1577 (photo: Mark Pizzato)





Fig. 7.6 Heart sacrifice, in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* (photo: Mark Pizzato)

- altar, with limbs held by priests. His heart was extracted, still beating, by another priest, who offered it to the sun as energy to rise from the earth each morning (Fig. 7.6).
3. For the festival of the maize-god Xipe Totec, after the heart sacrifice, the priests flayed the skin off the god-actor, wore it, and danced in it—also appearing as Xipe Totec, the “Flayed One,” before the ruler (Fig. 7.7).
  4. The Aztecs and other city-states performed further rituals and entertainments, such as the Totonac *voladores*, with four men “flying” off a turning, 30-meter (100-foot) pole. Tied to ropes, unwinding as the pole turned, they descended gradually from the top, hanging upside-down, while another man on top played a flute and drum—a performance that continues in Mexico today.



**Fig. 7.7** Ruler with a priest as Xipe Totec, wearing the god-actor's skin (with extra hands and feet), in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* (photo: Mark Pizzato)

5. After the Conquest in 1521, these and many other ritual performances were described, with pictures drawn, by Aztecs helping the Spanish missionaries Diego Durán and Bernardino de Sahagún record what happened, to prevent the sacrificial practices from continuing in "New Spain."
6. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–95), a Catholic nun and *criolla* (person of Spanish parentage born in New Spain), wrote an *auto*, *The Divine Narcissus* (1689). Its introductory *loa* shows the allegorical characters Zeal (a conquistador) and Religion (a Spanish lady) trying to persuade, by force or reason, Occident and America (an Aztec warrior and lady) to see in the new Catholic faith and its rituals something akin to, yet better than their own.

7. *Moros y Cristianos* festivals were exported to many of the former Spanish colonies, such as Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, and the Philippines. Continuing there today, as well as in Spain, they reenact battles of Moors beaten by Christians, with parades, historical costumes, masks, weapons, horses, sets, gunfire, and fireworks (Harris). **[Which sacrificial dimensions do you see in today's cross-cultural performances, especially through the Web, akin to those in Aztec America or New Spain?]**

## References

- Harris, Max. *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.
- Macdonald, James Ross. "Calvinist Theology and 'Country Divinity' in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*." *Studies in Philology* 24.1 (2014): 821–44.
- Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. 1604. Online: Project Gutenberg.
- Nagler, A. M. *A Source Book in Theatrical History*. New York: Dover, 1959.
- Pizzato, Mark. *Theatres of Human Sacrifice*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005.



# 8

## Restoration and Baroque Revolutions (1600s–1700s)

### A. England's Commonwealth and Restoration Periods (1642–1700), TIMELINE

- 1642, the English Commonwealth Period began with the beheading of Charles I and the Puritan-dominated Parliament in power, then involved several civil wars (1642–46, 1648–49, 1649–51) and the conquest of Ireland (1652)—with no king, but a de facto dictator, Oliver Cromwell (until his death in 1658), and Royalists (Cavaliers) fleeing to the European continent
- 1660, the English “Restoration” started when Charles II was invited by Parliament to return from the continent and become king, like his executed father, ending the Commonwealth Period
- 1665–66, the Great Plague (Black Death) hit London, killing 100,000 people
- 1666, the Great Fire of London destroyed 13,200 homes and many other buildings, including St. Paul’s Cathedral, which led to the redesign of many churches and theatres by Christopher Wren
- 1685, Charles II died and was succeeded by his brother, James II, but he was Catholic and only ruled for 3 years, due to Parliament’s disagreement with his religious tolerance toward non-Anglicans, plus his Catholic son as heir and his potential alliance with France
- 1688–1702, James’s Anglican daughter, Mary, ruled with her husband, William of Orange (who was also the nephew of James), after he invaded from the Netherlands with a fleet of ships in the “Glorious Revolution”

## B. English Restoration Theatre (1660–1700)

1. Theatre was banned during the Commonwealth Period (1642–60) as politically disruptive. But “drolls” were performed publicly, as short versions of full-length plays. Theatre also occurred in wealthy homes, through the domestic activities of aristocratic women and men. Toward the end of the Commonwealth, full public productions occurred, such as *The Siege of Rhodes*, an opera staged by William Davenant in 1656, with a proscenium arch, wings, and shutters.

**[What are the limits of performance today, reflecting current social mores, and how are they sometimes circumvented, like/unlike in the Commonwealth Period?]**

2. In 1660, Charles II granted Davenant (1606–68) and another royalist supporter, Thomas Killigrew (1612–83), a controlling patent to produce all professional theatre in London. Their separate companies were united as a monopoly in 1682.

**[Which performers or producers monopolize the stage or screen today—akin to Davenant and Killigrew during the Restoration?]**

3. John Locke (1632–1704), an English philosopher of the 1600s, argued that people have “natural rights” of freedom and equality, with the government ruling by “consent” of the governed, to secure their rights of “life, liberty, and property.” But rulers that fail to do so should be resisted and replaced—and religion should not use coercive power over its members. These ideals influenced the American and French revolutions in the next century.

4. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), however, saw the “desire for power” in all humans, as selfish, vain, competitive, and anti-social (against the ancient and medieval views, of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, that humans are naturally rational and social). He argued that anarchy is often caused by appeals to “natural rights” or “divine rights”—as in the recent, Puritan-led, English Civil War. So people should give up their freedom to an absolute ruler for security, peace, and prosperity.

**[Do you agree more with Locke or Hobbes about natural rights and desires in humans—and about the value of consensual or absolute rulers, to varying degrees, reflected in our theatrical media today?]**

5. Such a cynical view of human nature, supporting an English ruling class, was reflected, yet satirized by theatre artists. They showed the sexual desires and trickery of upper-class characters (akin to spectators) in the two dominant types of Restoration plays.

6. Tragicomedy (or comedy) of intrigue showed complicated strategies of characters manipulating one another, through serious twists but also farcical scenes and a happy ending. For example, in Aphra Behn's *The Rover or the Banish'd Cavaliers* (Part One, 1677), a young Spanish woman, Florinda, and her sister, Helena, gain freedom through disguise at a carnival in Naples. Helena falls in love with a scoundrel, the "Rover" of the title, but discovers he was courting her and a high-priced prostitute at the same time. Florinda is almost raped by the friends of her English fiancé and then again by her brother, unrecognized. (The English are "cavaliers," royalist supporters of the king in exile on the continent.) Yet Florinda outwits her brother's control over her marriage choice—and Helena forces the Rover (Willmore) to marry her.
7. Comedy of manners, developing from ancient Greek New Comedy, Roman comedy, and Molière, satirized ridiculous manners and hidden affairs with witty dialog. For example, in William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), a trickster pretends to be impotent while gaining access to other men's wives. He speaks about his affairs in coded metaphors, such as showing two women the "china" in his offstage closet (a euphemism for sex) and then saying he has no more for another woman. **[How do tragicomedies of intrigue and comedies of manners relate to thrillers and romances today, onstage and onscreen? How do they reflect bio-cultural identity conflicts, then or now?]**
8. In such plays, characters' names are often allegorical labels, such as "Willmore" in *The Rover*. In *The Country Wife*, the devilish Jack Horner cuckolded other men. Marjorie Pinchwife is stolen or "pinched" as a wife. And Dr. Quack is paid by Horner to gossip that he is impotent due to a failed treatment for venereal disease.
9. Aphra Behn (1640–89) was the first professional female playwright in England, writing under the pen name "Astrea," after serving Charles II as a spy in Antwerp.
10. Susanna Centlivre (c.1667–1723) became the most successful of subsequent female playwrights, which included Delariviere Manley, Catharine Trotter, and Mary Pix, who were mocked as "female wits" in an anonymous satire of 1697. **[Were women able to show their own stories, with men in power during the Restoration, like/unlike today?]**
11. Women also appeared as professional actors for the first time in England, sometimes in "breeches roles" as a female disguised as a boy, showing her legs in pants. For example, Helena pretends to be a messenger boy (sent by herself) to spy on Willmore in *The Rover*. Also,

Pinchwife dresses his wife as a boy to hide her from others, but that backfires in *The Country Wife*.

12. But some male actors continued to perform female roles, such as Edward Kynaston (1640–1712), whom the diarist Samuel Pepys called in 1660: “the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life, only her voice not very good.”
13. The diary of Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) describes how he went to the theatre in London and what he saw, including backstage with other male spectators, watching women change clothes.  
**[Were Restoration women achieving equality with men as actors—or were they objectified and pressured to please men through theatre—with parallels today?]**
14. John Dryden (1631–1700) imitated Shakespeare’s *Anthony and Cleopatra*, with his *All for Love* (1677), a “heroic tragedy” focusing on the climax of that story in order to fit the neoclassical unities. Dryden’s *The Conquest of Granada* (1670) coined the term “noble savage,” which Edwin Forrest embodied on the American stage in the early 1800s (as a white man playing a native “Indian” in *Metamora*).
15. In 1681, Nahum Tate (1652–1715) changed Shakespeare’s tragedy, *King Lear*, to give it a more popular, happy ending.  
**[How are Shakespeare’s plays modified onstage/onscreen today, like or unlike in the 1600s? How do such modifications reflect changing social, moral, and spiritual ideals?]**
16. For Restoration performances, the actor-manager led others in a short rehearsal period (two weeks or less for a new play, one day for a revival) with patterns of stage movement, declamatory speeches, and broad gestures—to prepare for shows in indoor theatres. Shows were in the afternoon, with upper-class spectators often speaking back to performers onstage.
17. Nell Gwyn (1650–87) exemplified the pressures and possibilities for women performers, rising from poverty as the daughter of a prostitute to “orange wench” (selling food in the theatre) to actress to the king’s mistress. Many orange wenches in the theatre were prostitutes and many actresses were favored as mistresses. But actress Anne Bracegirdle (1671–1748) was a famous exception, known as the “celebrated virgin.”
18. Thomas Betterton (1635–1710) was the most admired male actor of this period, known for his detail, discipline, and restraint across a 50-year career. He also led others as an actor-manager, even as they rebelled against the money-grubbing lawyer and patent-holder, Christopher Rich

- (1657–1714), to form a new company with Bracegirdle. Together, they gained a license from the king in 1695 to perform at Lincoln’s Inn Fields Theatre (an indoor tennis court converted into a theatre in 1661).
19. London actors’ control over their work lessened in this period as the shareholder system (with actors sharing ownership of the company) shifted toward a “contract system” with actors hired for a limited time. Yet theatres in the provinces and North American colonies continued using the sharing plan.
  20. A “benefit performance” was announced for a certain actor to get all the profits, or for several minor actors to get the profits. A playwright usually got the third night’s profits of a new play and perhaps the sixth, if the play ran that long, which many did not.
  21. Like many Puritans attacking the theatre, Jeremy Collier wrote *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698), accusing various Restoration playwrights of blasphemy, indecency, and the sympathetic portrayal of vice.
  22. In 1700, William Congreve (1670–1729) wrote *The Way of the World*, marking a shift from licentious comedies of manners to moral “sentimental comedies,” in which good people are rewarded and evil punished. It includes a romantic scene with a man and woman (Mirabell and Millamant, the latter originally played by Bracegirdle) negotiating a verbal agreement about their planned behavior during marriage.  
**[How do theatre and various screen media convey licentious or moral values today, akin to the English Restoration?]**
  23. The use of Italian and French scenic devices, with proscenium frame illusions in perspective paintings on flats, was introduced at court during the Jacobean and Caroline periods. This developed further in Restoration theatres, after Charles II experienced them during his exile on the continent.
  24. English theatres, unlike those on the continent, had four doors in the proscenium frame with balconies above them, two on each side, for exterior scenes as doors into buildings or interior scenes as doors to other rooms (such as Horner’s “china closet”). They also had a raked stage to enhance vanishing-point views, with an extended apron in front of the proscenium. There was a pit with backless benches, plus boxes with galleries above it.
  25. Onstage, sets of painted flats, as wings and back shutters, slid in grooves, moved by stagehands at the signal of a prompter’s whistle, as on ships with the coordinated movement of sails. Sometimes a decorated rear curtain was rolled up or dropped. Stock settings were often reused.



26. Contemporary costumes were worn, some with historical elements, but they were often anachronistic.
27. Lighting came from windows, candles in chandeliers, footlights along the stage edge, and oil lamps, sometimes with colored silk screens.
28. Drury Lane's Theatre Royal was built by Thomas Killigrew in 1663, but it burned down and was rebuilt with a Christopher Wren design in 1674. A larger theatre replaced it in 1794, and then again, after a fire, there was a new building in 1809, which is still in use today.
29. Drury Lane Theatre was closed due to mismanagement in 1676 and then used by the combined Killigrew-Davenant (United) Company, managed by Betterton, in 1682, until he left with many of the actors and it went bankrupt again in 1709.

**[How were theatres and staging elements in Restoration England akin to those on the continent—and to theatre or movie spectacles today?]**

### C. The Age of Reason Across Europe and the US (mid-1600s–1700s), TIMELINE

- 1644, René Descartes published his *Principles of Philosophy* with the famous phrase, “*Cogito, ergo sum*” (I think, therefore I am), marking the start of modern philosophy, with a basis for truth in self-awareness of one's nature, rather than divine revelation
- 1673, Dutch scientist Antoni van Leeuwenhoek became the first to observe microbes with his homemade microscope, calling them “animalcules”
- 1687–1726, English scientist Isaac Newton published his three-volume *Principia*, describing laws of motion, gravity, and planetary movement—regarding his view of God as a divine engineer, who created the mechanisms of nature, on earth and in the “heavens,” to run on their own, intervening with miracles to fine-tune them
- 1720, the Great Plague of Marseille, in southern France, killed 100,000 people
- 1723, Peter the Great abolished slavery in Russia, but turned the slaves into serfs

- 1729–35, John Wesley began Methodism in England, as similar to Anglicanism but with an emphasis on faith, charitable works, and hymns in church, plus salvation available to all
- 1748, French philosopher Montesquieu argued, in *The Spirit of the Laws*, for a balanced “separation of powers” with executive, legislative, and judicial branches (which later became the structure of the US government)
- 1771, an outbreak of bubonic plague (Black Death) in Moscow, with government quarantines of people and closing of public places, led to food shortages and a Plague Riot
- 1776 (March), Adam Smith, a Scottish moral philosopher, published *The Wealth of Nations*, inspiring modern “classical” economics, based on the rational behavior of humans and “invisible hand” of the market producing unintended *social* benefits from individual *self-interested* actions, with a “free market” and limited government role in providing for the common good, through the division of labor and use of capital
- 1776 (July), the US “Declaration of Independence” was signed by representatives of the 13 colonies at war with Britain, stating the “self-evident” truths that “all men” are created equal and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,” such as “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (although slavery was still legal throughout the colonies and women would not be able to vote until the 1920s)
- 1783, the US gained independence from Britain
- 1785–95, the Northwest Indian Wars were fought between Native Americans and the US military—after Britain ceded the Northwest Territories around the Great Lakes to the US and President George Washington sent troops to assert sovereignty
- 1789, France’s revolution against its monarchy began with a “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen,” promising the “natural right” to life (safety against oppression), liberty, and property
- 1793–94, the French Civil War involved a Reign of Terror, during which tens of thousands were killed, including leaders of rival factions, executed by the Revolutionary Tribunal of the National Convention (the new government in Paris), using the newly invented guillotine
- 1796, Edward Jenner invented the smallpox vaccine, starting the prevention of a disease that was killing 400,000 people a year in Europe (and spreading to the colonies)
- 1798–99, Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the US “Declaration of Independence” two decades earlier, referred in a letter to the deist idea that God created the world and watches at a distance without intervening, like a Divine Clockmaker, making rational humans as self-directing actors

- 1804, while serving as the Third President of the US, Jefferson wrote *The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth* (and a later sequel, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, 1820), extracting the teachings of Jesus from the Bible, without his miracles, as “pure principles,” “the most sublime and benevolent code of morals,” discovered like “diamonds in a dunghill”

## D. Baroque Exuberance and Enlightened Restraints

1. The “Age of Enlightenment” (or Age of Reason) in the 1700s promised new ideals of religious tolerance, human reason, and balanced government. This period included deist principles of a clockmaker God, but also revolutions in the US and France, plus continued conflicts between reason and passion, restraint and exuberance, reflected in theatre.
2. European colonialism benefitted a rising middle class of merchants, while also increasing the slave trade between Africa and the “New World.” Growing wealth and education in Europe made encyclopedias popular, such as the 17-volume *Encyclopédie* (1751–72), by French philosopher/playwright Denis Diderot (1713–84), which describes realism in drama and onstage as “verisimilitude” (truth-likeness).
3. The deist philosopher, Voltaire (1694–1778), criticized religious intolerance as being against “the law of nature,” with all men as “brothers” created by God. Yet he also criticized priests as god-falsifiers, as well as wealthy spectators who paid extra to sit on benches onstage during French plays, a criticism expressed, too, by Diderot (Carlson). Voltaire wrote plays about Oedipus (adding rational elements), Socrates (celebrating his defiance of the state), and the prophet Mohammed (criticizing the founder of Islam).
4. Philosopher/playwright Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) attacked society, including theatre as mere amusement, which flattered the public, with no possibility of instructive catharsis through emotions. He advised a return to “the state of nature,” where he saw a spiritual beauty created by a deist God. But he also argued that government depends on agreement from the governed through a “social contract,” not submission to a ruler.

**[How does Rousseau’s critique of society and theatre build upon Plato’s, while idealizing nature, God, or truth? How do such ideals relate to social contracts, especially with today’s hyper-theatrical media and political values?]**

5. Some monarchs (Catherine the Great of Russia, Frederick the Great of Prussia, and Joseph II of Austria) tried to be benevolent, “enlightened despots,” ruling for the benefit of their people. Yet ideals of representative government with balanced powers fueled the American and French revolutions against monarchies (1775–83 and 1789–99).
6. New inventions of the 1700s included the steam engine, fire extinguisher, thermometer, flying shuttle (for weaving), lightning rod, sextant, spinning jenny and frame (for making thread), flush toilet, bifocal glasses, power loom (for making cloth), cotton gin (for taking out seeds), and gas lighting.
7. In the Counter-Reformation (1500s–1700s), the Catholic Church tried to retain believers by supporting new developments in Baroque architecture (Bernini and Borromini), art (Caravaggio, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Velázquez), and music (Vivaldi, Handel, and Bach). The Baroque style involved curved or oval forms in swirling columns and groups of figures, trompe l’oeil (tricking the eye) perspective depths, chiaroscuro light/shadow effects, exuberant ornamentation with angels, and multiple harmonious melodies evoking involuntary emotions. Such melodies related to René Descartes’s theory of basic affects (admiration, love, hate, desire, joy, and sorrow), applied to music by Johann Mattheson in 1730, which later became known as the “Doctrine of the Affections.”
8. Rococo art developed later in the 1700s, especially in France, with playful, witty, and elegant designs or music (Watteau and Mozart), as a reaction against Baroque grandeur and symmetry.  
**[How does Baroque exuberance and Rococo elegance continue, or contrast with other styles, in various forms of art and entertainment today?]**
9. In Italy, the Bibiena family of designers developed a new style of Baroque perspective scenery with multiple vanishing points at different angles (*scena per angolo*), along with extensive ornamentation. This became popular in theatres throughout Europe, reflecting the power of ostensibly benevolent despots, to see infinitely in various directions.
10. Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–78) applied chiaroscuro to scene designs with shadows falling unevenly over objects, showing a strong contrast of light and darkness in painting.
11. Commedia dell’arte influenced both fantasy and realism in scripted plays. Carlo Gozzi’s fantastic fables, such as *The Green Bird* (1765), which parodied Enlightenment philosophy, exemplified Baroque exuberance with actors wearing masks, using commedia names and *lazzi*.

But Carlo Goldoni's comedies, such as *The Venetian Twins* (1747), based on *The Menaechmi* by Plautus, developed more realistic commedia characters without the masks.

**[Which kind of comedy do you prefer, fantastic or realistic, involving commedia-like characters, with mask-like faces and *lazzi*, or more realistic humor?]**

12. Gozzi's *The Green Bird* used "local color" with specific (talking) statues that the audience recognized from the neighborhoods of Venice, where the play was first performed.
13. Three-dimensional, practical elements started to be used—along with painted scenery, cut-out flats on grooves, ground rows (long, low cut-outs), borders at the top to mask the fly space, and act drop curtains (covering the stage for scene changes). Lighting came from candles, oil lamps, and afternoon sunlight through windows.
14. Eventually, flats were cleated together to form the three walls of a "box set," as in an opera design at Milan's La Scala, at the end of the 1700s.
15. In 1758, in his essay, "De la Poésie dramatique," Diderot advised the actor (and writer) to imagine a "wall at the edge of the stage ... as if the curtain had not been raised" (qtd. in McPhee). But he also referred to Molière making comic remarks to spectators. "Fourth wall" realism was generally *not enacted* until the next century.
16. Against the neoclassical separation of genres, Diderot proposed the *drame bourgeois*, or domestic "middle-class drama," as a mix of tragedy and comedy, with a serious plot about social problems yet a happy ending. This also led to a more natural style of speech and gesture onstage, with more historical accuracy in costuming.

**[How does middle-class drama or "fourth wall" realism appear today, akin to the past, reflecting social values and identity needs, in artists' and viewers' desires?]**

17. "Tearful comedy" (*comédie larmoyante*) emerged in France, with virtuous characters suffering serious dangers, but finding a happy ending, evoking audience tears.
18. *Sentimental comedy* developed in England from comedy of manners, with characters having allegorical names, but with the good ones rewarded in the end and the bad ones punished. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777) exemplifies this with Sir Charles Surface rising in the end as a "man of sentiment," unlike his brother, Joseph, who initially appeared (on the surface) to be noble but turns out to be a scoundrel.

**[How do we value “sentiment” in this way today, as noble feeling and good character that can rise to the surface, despite someone’s negative appearance?]**

19. English playwright Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74) attacked sentimental comedy for being too serious and advocated “laughing comedy” instead, such as his own *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773). In that play, Kate Hardcastle, daughter of a wealthy countryman, pretends to be a serving maid, changing her voice and costume, because the Londoner who has come to woo her is intimidated by upper-class women.
20. In the early 1700s, Pierre de Marivaux (1688–1763) developed a more subtle style of comedy in France, focusing on inner emotional conflicts.
21. In the late 1700s, Pierre de Beaumarchais (1732–99) moved sentimental comedy toward political satire. His *Marriage of Figaro* (1778) prefigured the French Revolution with a critical depiction of a Spanish count who demands the medieval right of “first night” (*primae noctis*), to have sex with Figaro’s wife before he does. After initial court performances, censorship, and revisions, it was staged publicly in 1784, was hugely successful, and then became a Mozart opera in 1786.
22. These styles of tearful and sentimental comedy may have influenced the emergence of *melodrama* in the 1790s, with popular plays by Guilbert de Pixérécourt (1773–1844) involving spectacular effects, violence, and moral lessons, scored with music (melody-drama).
23. In Germany, August Wilhelm Iffland (1759–1814) and August von Kotzebue (1761–1819) created melodramas with middle-class characters and battles of good versus evil, in a formula that also became popular in England and the US, into subsequent centuries.

**[How have melodramas developed today, onstage or onscreen, from eighteenth-century moral battles? Do they bear the danger of confirming stereotypes and stimulating emotions, through vicarious participation, toward copycat violence?]**

24. “Ballad opera” developed in England, starting with John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728). It combined lower-class characters, spoken dialog, and songs set to popular music, often with political satire.
25. “Comic opera” (*opéra comique*) developed in the early 1700s as a pantomime performance in the French fairground theatres. It involved actors as cupids holding signs with rhymed couplets, encouraging the spectators to sing, with popular music and satirical lyrics (*vaudevilles*), because the Opera in Paris held a legal monopoly over musical theatre with singing.

26. In London, the “Licensing Act” of 1737 allowed professional theatre *only at* Drury Lane and Covent Garden (until 1843). Approval was also needed from the Lord Chamberlain who licensed plays (with such censorship lasting until 1968).

**[What approval mechanisms do we have today for stage and screen performances, in certain venues, such as anti-nudity laws, funding requirements, or ratings systems—like/unlike those of the Paris Opera, London Licensing Act, and Lord Chamberlain?]**

27. Covent Garden Theatre (1732), was managed by John Rich (son of Christopher), who often led “pantomimes” with animals and acrobats.
28. Managers in London opened “unlicensed houses” with a concert or hot chocolate for pay and the play for free. They also offered “burlettas,” which were allowed as three-act plays with five or more songs per act, sometimes as converted Shakespeare plays.
29. William Hallam (1712–58) managed an unlicensed theatre in London for 10 years, New Wells in Goodman’s Fields. But it was forced to close in 1750. So he sent his brother, Lewis Hallam (1714–56), with a troupe of 10 shareholding actors, including Lewis’s wife as the leading actress and children as performers, to Williamsburg, Virginia. (English plays had been performed there since 1716, as well as earlier in the 1700s in Charleston and New York.)
30. Lewis Hallam’s troupe performed briefly in Williamsburg in 1752, and then in Charleston, New York, and Philadelphia, offering Shakespeare, Restoration, and recent popular plays. Then it moved to Jamaica and joined with English actor David Douglass’s troupe, forming the “American Company,” which toured to Newport, Rhode Island, in 1761 (performing “moral dialogues” to avoid anti-theatrical hostility), Philadelphia in 1766, and New York in 1767.

**[Which are the key cities for live theatre today—in relation to early developments in American theatre?]**

31. In his dialogical essay, “Paradox of the Actor” (written in 1773 but published decades later), Diderot valued *intelligent study, discipline, and control* in acting, for consistency of emotional expression across many performances—with no need to feel the emotions while performing them. He saw this in the English actor David Garrick (1717–79) and the French actress La Clairon (1723–1803).
32. Clairon’s rival, Marie Dumensnil (1713–1803), was valued for her *inspired, spontaneous, intuitive* style of acting.

33. Many actors had a “line of business” (a character type they played) and might also possess a specific character, once originated, across their professional lifetime.
34. In England, *declamatory*, *bombastic* acting prevailed, exemplified by James Quin (1693–1766, of Irish descent), known as “the bellower.”
35. Irish actor Charles Macklin (1690–1797) was successful with a more natural approach, especially in changing Shakespeare’s Shylock, in *The Merchant of Venice*, from a clownish caricature (with red hair and a large nose) to a sympathetic villain, in 1741. But Macklin killed a fellow actor, Thomas Hallam (father of William and Lewis), in 1735, in the “scene room” (actor’s waiting room) of the Drury Lane Theatre during a farce, *Trick for Trick*. In an argument over a wig, Macklin accidentally put his cane through Hallam’s eye, for which he was convicted of manslaughter, but did not serve prison time.
36. From 1747 to 1776, David Garrick was a patent-holder and actor-manager at the Drury Lane Theatre in London. He trained actors in a more *natural* style of individualized characters, with research, longer rehearsal periods of several weeks, stricter rules, and spectators banished from the stage.
- [Which style of acting do you practice or prefer to see onstage today, more natural or declamatory, inspired or controlled, like/unlike in the Enlightenment? Which do you see as dominant in our various media, including the theatre of politics, and how does it reflect current values?]**
37. Garrick thus became one of the first *directors*, in the modern sense, along with German playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and actress-manager Caroline Neuber.
38. German acting, developing from Jesuit religious theatre, stressed physical action in the 1600s, also influenced by actors from England (when theatres were closed there) who used slapstick due to the language barrier.
39. Critic Johann Gottsched (1700–66) tried to reform German theatre by valuing a company led by actress Caroline Neuber and her husband Johann in Leipzig (1727–40), which also went to Russia on tour.
40. As actress-manager, Caroline Neuber (1697–1760) insisted on line memorization, with careful rehearsals instead of improvisation, and the elimination of a popular “Hanswurst” clown (a mountain peasant buffoon who offered coarse, sexual, and scatological humor).



41. Leading the court theatre at Weimar, Goethe (1749–1832) wrote “Rules for Actors” (1803, 1824) and focused on a unified production with historical scenery and costumes. He wanted actors to face the audience, not each other, in a *formal* rather than natural style, with routine patterns of blocking and yet pictorial arrangements of actors onstage.
42. In the late 1700s, Goethe changed from writing “Storm and Stress” (*Sturm und Drang*) tragedies, along with other German playwrights in that movement (a precursor to Romanticism), to more neoclassical works in his “Weimar Classicism” period.
43. Storm and Stress writers rebelled against the conventional morals of neoclassical rules, sentimental comedy, and drame bourgeois with intensely challenging tragedies and grotesque violence onstage. For example, Heinrich Leopold Wagner’s *The Child Murderess* (1776) shows a poor, single mother who is so distressed when betrayed by her baby’s father, foreseeing its doomed life, that she puts a hat pin in its head, pulls it out, and licks it, calling it “sweet.”  
**[How were Storm and Stress dramas like/unlike “in-yer-face” plays or violent movies and videos today? How do they reflect changing metaphysical frames, then and now?]**
44. Other “Storm and Stress” playwrights, who wrote episodic plays mixing genres, with violence onstage, were Gotthold Lessing (1729–81) and Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), as well as Goethe.
45. Lessing also defined the new field of “dramaturgy,” with a journal of 100 analytical and theoretical essays, *The Hamburg Dramaturgy* (1767–69), commenting on plays produced by the short-lived Hamburg National Theater and criticizing the neoclassical interpretation of Aristotle, while valuing Shakespeare’s plays.  
**[What’s your dramaturgical view of today’s genres, onstage and onscreen, as confirming conventional moral ideals or rebelling against them—compared with those of the Enlightenment and regarding the identity needs of your inner theatre?]**

## References

- Carlson, Marvin. *Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998.
- McPhee, James. *Diderot’s “De la Poésie dramatique.”* ProQuest Dissertations, 1993.
- Pepys, Samuel. “Saturday 18 August 1660.” *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*. <https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1660/08/18/>.



# 9

## Romanticism, Melodrama, and Minstrelsy (1800s)

### A. Nineteenth-Century Events, TIMELINE

- in 1799, after the revolution, Napoleon took control, becoming “Emperor of the French,” and then conquered most of Western Europe, establishing a unified Napoleonic Code as “enlightened despot”
- in the early 1800s, the Industrial Revolution was a boon to the *growing middle class*, and yet urbanization, poverty, pollution, the birthrate, and emigration increased, with 12- to 14-hour workdays in mills and factories, for adults and teens
- the 1800s also involved a “Great Divergence” with tremendous growth in European capital and naval power, using American land and African slave labor, surpassing non-Western nations
- 1803, France’s Louisiana Territory (most of the midwestern US) was sold by Napoleon to President Thomas Jefferson, expanding the sense of “Manifest Destiny” as a North American empire, “from sea to shining sea”
- 1812–15, the US fought a war against Britain and local “Indian” nations in the “War of 1812,” ending in a draw
- 1814–15, after suffering a series of defeats, Napoleon was exiled, yet escaped with 700 men and returned to power for 100 days, but was defeated at Waterloo and exiled again
- 1820, London became the first city in the world to have a population of one million

- 1830, after the competition for land during the Carolina and Georgia Gold Rushes of the early 1800s, US President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, which barely passed in Congress (with frontiersman Davy Crockett speaking against it), resulting in the forcible removal of tens of thousands of Cherokees, Choctaws, and Seminoles from their ancestral homelands in the Southeast to reservations in “Indian Territory” (Oklahoma), with thousands dying during the march, in a “Trail of Tears”
- 1833, the “Slavery Abolition Act” ended slavery throughout most of the British Empire over the next seven years, but it continued in the US until the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, which did not include convicted criminals
- 1837, Victoria became Queen of Britain and Ireland, with her rule and the “Victorian Age” lasting until 1901, as the Empire continued its colonial expansion through new technologies of the steamship and telegraph, eventually including India, Afghanistan, Burma, much of Africa and the Middle East, Canada, Australia, and many Caribbean and Pacific islands, thus covering 24% of the world
- 1839, photography was introduced commercially, influencing the development of realist and anti-realist styles in visual art (Courbet, Manet, and various impressionists)
- 1843, Britain’s Theatre Regulation Act focused the power of the Lord Chamberlain to censor plays only for “the preservation of good manners, decorum, or the public peace”
- 1846–48, the US won the Mexican-American War, gaining the territories of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and parts of other Western states (55% of what Mexico had been)
- 1847, the British “Ten Hours Act” (or Factories Act) reduced the workday for women and teens, but not men, to ten hours Monday through Friday, plus eight hours on Saturday
- 1848, the Gold Rush began in California and it became a state in the US two years later
- 1852, Napoleon III (nephew of the first), after serving as President for six years, staged a coup when the constitution prevented him from running again and became ruler of the Second French Empire until 1870, doubling the size of its overseas territories
- 1861, with the threat to outlaw slavery and a declaration of independence by Southern states, the American Civil War began, lasting four years and resulting in 620,000 deaths, but the US stayed united and emancipated its slaves

- 1865, just five days after the Southern General Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Ulysses S. Grant, ending the US Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while watching a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington
- 1867, Alfred Nobel invented dynamite (and later donated his wealth from weapons sales to create the Nobel Prize, after reading a premature obituary criticizing his earnings)
- 1869, the Suez Canal opened for ship travel between the Mediterranean and Red Sea
- 1871, Germany and Italy were each unified as nations after the Franco-Prussian War
- 1873, an economic recession began and continued for several decades, especially in the US, Europe, and India (where 26 million people died due to famine)
- 1876, the Great Sioux War began with an alliance of indigenous Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho fighting the US Army, which was protecting settlers in the Black Hills, where gold had been discovered—leading to Custer's Last Stand, with the defeat of his cavalry at Little Big Horn (Montana) by the warriors of Crazy Horse and other chiefs, inspired by Sitting Bull's vision of victory, and yet their defeat a year later, with their land taken and their people forced onto reservations
- 1881, a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms began in the Russian Empire
- 1885, Louis Pasteur invented the first vaccine against rabies
- 1886, the first commercial automobile was made by Karl Benz in Germany
- 1896, Sigmund Freud coined the term “psychoanalysis” (*psychoanalyse*) while developing a “talking cure” for hysterical symptoms as eruptions of repressed sexual traumas and desires

**[How do conflicts about rulers, national identities, territories, technologies, or sexualities figure into mass and social media politics today, like/unlike in the nineteenth century?]**

## B. Romanticism, Riots, and New Forms

1. Partly in response to Napoleon's empire, *nationalistic* wars for independence developed in Latin America and Greece, plus unification movements in Germany and Italy. They were fueled by *Romantic* passions—also expressed in the music of Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Mahler, Puccini, and

- Grieg, along with the visual art of Turner, Delacroix, Friedrich, the Hudson River School, and Goya, especially in their natural landscapes and battle scenes.
2. Reacting to the suffering caused by industrialization and commerce, Karl Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), a pamphlet with Friedrich Engels. He then wrote *Das Kapital* (1867), three volumes about the “proletariat” of workers uniting to overthrow the “bourgeois” (urban, ruling class) devices of private capital, state government, and addictive religion.
  3. Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* (1859), challenging the Christian ideal of God’s creation of the world by developing a theory of animal evolution through natural and sexual selection. This involved individuals and species cooperating and competing to fit in their environments, fueled by survival and reproduction drives.
  4. Along with Marxism and Darwinism, Sigmund Freud’s “psychoanalysis” challenged long-held beliefs in the supremacy of God, a divinely established society, and the soul’s integrity—with his theories of super-ego, ego, and id as conflicting, between the conscious and unconscious mind. Freud related this conflict to the discontents of civilization, through reproduction/survival drives and childhood traumas, appearing in the pleasurable or destructive symptoms of dreams, free associations, mental illness, and literature. Freud’s ideas influenced Romantic (and later realist and surrealist) artworks.
  5. Romanticism peaked in the first half of the 1800s, inspired by the earlier French Revolution and the German Storm and Stress movement, which stressed intense experiences of apprehension, terror, and awe. It also focused on a socially outcast hero and the “sublime” in nature (as beautiful and grotesque, pleasurable and painful, arousing and peaceful)—to transcend urban sprawl and industrialism. This involved heroic individualism, freedom from classical rules, conflicts between love, honor, and justice, supernatural elements onstage, and belief in historic fate (*Zeitgeist*).  
**[How do the ideas of Marx, Darwin, or Freud involve Romantic yet scientific challenges to prior social and cosmic orders? How do they reveal sublime powers in the underclass, nature, or the “unconscious,” reverberating yet repressed today?]**
  6. British Romantics, such as Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley, wrote poetic tragedies with supernatural elements as “closet dramas” (intended just for reading). Likewise, medieval “Gothic” spirituality

was expressed in Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein* (1818), which became a popular science-fiction melodrama onstage.

7. Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) was a German Romantic who wrote about the magic of puppetry. His tragedy, *Prince Friedrich of Homburg* (1809–10, first performed in 1821), includes a scene of the prince's friends shaping his dream as he sleeps, which becomes a nightmare in real life, as romantic love and self-preservation come into conflict with honor.
8. Another German Romantic, Georg Büchner (1813–37), wrote *Danton's Death* (1835) about the French Reign of Terror and *Woyzeck* (1837) about a poor soldier pushed to madness. *Woyzeck* was left unfinished, in unordered scenes, when Büchner died of a fever at age 23, but influenced naturalist, expressionist, and postmodern artists many decades later.
9. French Romanticism developed after Napoleon, during the restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy (1814–30), when the brothers of Louis XVI regained the throne. *Hernani*, by Victor Hugo (1802–85), triggered a riot by Classicists when staged in Paris in 1830, with its dropping of the expected alexandrine rhyme.
10. London's "Old Price Riots" (OP Riots) took place in 1809, when the Covent Garden Theatre was rebuilt after a fire and ticket prices were raised. Riots continued for three months until actor-manager John Philip Kemble restored the earlier prices.
11. The "Astor Place Riot" occurred in New York City in 1849, when thousands of fans of rival Shakespearean performers, American star Edwin Forrest and touring British actor William Charles Macready, clashed on several nights near the Astor Opera House where Macready was performing. The rioting involved mostly working-class, nationalistic Forrest fans against upper-class, anglophile Macready fans. To restore order, the state militia fired on the crowd, causing at least 22 deaths and hundreds of injuries.

**[How do protests arise today and sometimes turn into riots through our hyper-theatrical mass and social media, with classical/conservative versus romantic/progressive tensions, underclass rebellions, or fan-identity rivalries, like and unlike Astor Place in 1849?]**

12. Shakespeare's plays became increasingly popular with Romantic artists, who valued his individual *genius* beyond neoclassical rules, and with audiences, even gold miners who acted them out from memory, just for themselves on winter nights.

13. Edwin Forrest (1806–72) was famous for his physical prowess in a natural style, with lead roles in Shakespeare and in new American plays that he inspired with a play contest (1828–47). These included John Augustus Stone's *Metamora; or, the Last of the Wampanoags* (1828), with its tragic Native hero in conflict with Puritan settlers in the 1600s, a role that Forrest performed for 40 years, embodying the Romantic “noble savage” ideal.
14. British actor Edmund Kean (1787–1833) was famous for his alcoholism and inconsistency, yet also his brilliantly inspired acting. Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge said that watching Kean onstage, with “rapid descents from the hyper-tragic to the infra-colloquial,” was like “reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning” (38).
15. William Charles Macready (1793–1873) was famous for his more realistic, studied approach, with tenderness and a *pause* he would make in Shakespeare's plays, to break the blank verse and make it sound domestic. He also directed actors in rehearsals with specific blocking (planned movements), unifying the scenic elements through an image or idea.
16. John Philip Kemble (1757–1823) gave studied, declamatory performances, with a stern demeanor, and often co-starred with his sister, Sarah Siddons (1755–1833), who was especially famous for playing Lady Macbeth. Kemble managed the Drury Lane Theatre and then Covent Garden during the OP Riots.

**[Which actors today are akin to the Romantic, natural Forrest and inconsistent, yet brilliantly inspired Kean—or the studied, pausing Macready and declamatory, stern Kemble?]**

17. In France, Alexander Dumas, *père* (1802–70), wrote a play about Edmund Kean in 1836, along with historical adventure novels, such as *The Three Musketeers* (1844) and *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1845), which were also staged and later made into films.
18. His son, Alexander Dumas, *fils* (1824–95) wrote the Romantic novel and tragic play, *The Lady of the Camellias* (1852), about a courtesan who falls in love and moves to the countryside for a better life, but then leaves her lover and dies, under pressure from his father. It was made into the opera, *La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi, in 1853.
19. French actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) starred in that play with her Romantic, flamboyant, “grand style.” In 1899, at age 55, she performed as a cross-dressed Hamlet in a prose adaptation of Shakespeare's play. She made three “Farewell Tours” to the US and continued to perform after her leg was amputated. She also became famous for sleeping in a coffin lined with letters from her many lovers, photos of which were sold to fans—perhaps inspiring Bram Stoker, author of the 1897

novel, *Dracula*, who knew her and her husband, actor and opium addict Jacques Damala. Stoker described Damala as looking like a dead man at supper, with a white waxen face, dreamlike speech, and post-mortem stare (Skal).

20. Her main rival, Italian actress Eleonora Duse (1858–1924), had an expressive face, eyes, and hands, but wore no makeup, showing sincerity and “inner fire.” She was valued by proponents of *realism*, such as George Bernard Shaw, who started as a reviewer and then became a famous playwright.
21. In 1878, Bram Stoker (1847–1912) started working as business manager at the Lyceum Theatre in London, under Henry Irving (1838–1905), its actor-manager, who was famous for his *total control* of productions. Irving rehearsed a large group of stagehands for smooth precision and experimented with lighting effects. Stoker admired yet feared him, using him as a model for *Dracula* and writing about Irving in similar ways.

**[How are current vampire figures like actors or manager-directors, in the nineteenth century and now? How are they also akin to those elements of the brain’s inner theatre, with its emotional drives as stagehands and its ghostly memories as audience?]**

22. The African Company was founded by the black actor-playwright William Alexander Brown, who built the African Grove Theatre in 1821, with a black cast and crew, for mostly black audiences. But it was closed in just a few years by local authorities due to racial tensions and its rivalry with the nearby Park Theatre, the dominant theatre in New York.
23. Ira Aldridge (1807–67) belonged to the African Company, but moved to London in 1824, as a black Shakespearean actor, performing in whiteface and wig when playing white characters. He gave highly acclaimed tours across Britain and Europe, where he became known as the “African Roscius” (after a famous actor in ancient Rome)—sometimes addressing his audience from the stage about the injustices of slavery.
24. In France, François Delsarte (1811–71) developed an acting method of emotional expression through *systematic gestures* based on observed human behaviors, with vocal and gymnastic training. It was used around the world, although sometimes reduced to melodramatic posing.
25. Eugène Scribe (1791–1861) was famous for his “well-made play,” a popular formula with crisis-filled plot twists involving a deep misunderstanding or immoral secret, known to the audience but not to most



characters. The conflict developed through key props, such as letters or lost documents, and led to a sensational revelation. This formula was criticized and became a derogatory term, but was used by many other playwrights.

**[How have current actors and writers continued to develop Bernhardt's flamboyance, Duse's sincerity, Aldridge's and Brown's African-American innovations, Delsarte's method, or Scribe's formula?]**

### C. Popular Melodramas with New Technologies and "Total" Artists

1. Rapidly growing US cities, with non-English-speaking immigrants, produced large audiences with popular tastes. They turned to the easily recognizable plots and stock characters of melodramatic spectacles, with passionate music, in big buildings with new technologies and traveling companies.
2. The Chestnut Street Theatre (or New Theatre) in Philadelphia, built in 1805, was the first in the world to have gas lighting in 1816. This soon became popular in Europe, too, with a "gas table" added as dimmer board in the 1840s.
3. Also in 1816, Thomas Drummond invented the "limelight" (or calcium oxide light), which created a sharp, intense beam, to illuminate an actor or show a sunbeam or moonbeam. By the 1880s it was in general use, but later was replaced by the carbon-arc lamp. That lamp started being replaced in the 1920s by the safer, incandescent spotlight (with the high-intensity discharge lamp surpassing it in the 2000s).
4. Other nineteenth-century inventions related to theatre were the telegraph (1837), telephone (1876), and phonograph (1877).
5. The transcontinental railroad was completed in the US in 1869, with rail lines between major cities, facilitating theatrical tours, especially of melodramas in *combination* companies. These toured a single show involving popular stars combined with other actors, elaborate scenery, and extensive costumes (such as "Tom Shows" based on the novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). They were unlike *repertory* companies, which also toured, but performed several shows with the same actors, often using stock sets.

6. Melodrama became the most popular genre on the American stage, with action-packed, suspenseful conflicts, peaking at the end of each act and then resolving happily. It showed good beating evil, as the ordinary, yet courageous, male hero, with a comic sidekick, struggled to save the innocent female victim, or became tempted by a “fallen” woman (eventually punished). He then got revenge against the villain, through apparently righteous violence.
7. Various types of melodrama appeared: domestic, crime, nautical, frontier, and equestrian (with live horses onstage, sometimes running on a treadmill with a “moving panorama” of painted canvas on spools behind them). Some also had animal stars. Melodramas included orchestras, along with scenic effects, to stir viewers’ emotions.  
**[Which elements of nineteenth-century melodrama continue today with related genres, technologies, spectacles, music, and tours, onstage and onscreen—or in political theatres?]**
8. *The String of Pearls* (1847), by English actor-playwright George Dibdin-Pitt, was a popular crime melodrama about Sweeney Todd, a legendary “demon barber” as serial killer, with a shop on Fleet Street in London. It became the basis, a century later, for a tragicomic musical by composer Stephen Sondheim and playwright Hugh Wheeler (1979).
9. A stock character from melodrama, the diligent, unpretentious, amusing, down-to-earth, rural New Englander, or “stage Yankee,” was developed into “Adam Trueman” by Anna Cora Mowatt (1819–70), in her sentimental comedy, *Fashion* (1845). It valued American sensibilities over the foreign ideals preferred by some in the US.
10. *Under the Gaslight* (1867) by Augustin Daly (1833–99) involved a famous scene of melodramatic tension with a character tied to a railroad track and a train approaching. But Daly showed the hero as trapped and the heroine as his sweetheart saving him—unlike later imitators who often showed the man saving the woman.  
**[How do current melodramas show the woman in jeopardy and the man saving her, or vice versa, akin to the 1800s? How do they show persistent or changing social values?]**
11. René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt, Victor Hugo, and Augustin Daly were playwright-managers who controlled the details of their plays in production, like modern directors. Daly opened his own theatres in New York (1879) and London (1893).
12. Richard Wagner (1813–83) completed his *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle of four operas, after 26 years of composition, and built his own operatic theatre, or *Festspielhaus*, in Bayreuth, Germany, for their first

performance in 1876. It had “continental seating” (no aisles) so that the audience would be unified on the main level. It also had a hidden orchestra below the stage, as a “mystic gulf” to create symbolic action and sublime music. Wagner demanded complete control over each production, as composer, librettist, and director of a “total artwork” (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), evoking nationalist myths.

13. Georg II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen (1826–1914), developed a court theatre with ensemble acting and unified, historically accurate productions. He rehearsed his company extensively with scenery and costumes, and toured them around Europe, with over 2500 performances in 38 cities (1874–90).

**[How were the productions of Wagner or Meiningen, as total artworks, akin to stage and screen melodramas today, conducting audience’s inner theatres with expansive spectacles?]**

14. Madame Vestris (1797–1856), an English actress-manager, popularized the “box set” with three walls for interior rooms and real three-dimensional set pieces, starting in 1832.

**[How did Vestris’s box set offer a different melodramatic experience with interior intimacy, akin to stage and screen media today, connecting with viewers’ inner theatres?]**

15. Laura Keane (1826–73) was a successful actress-manager, the first woman to run a large New York theatre: Laura Keane’s Varieties, starting in 1855. But her career was tarnished when on tour in Washington, DC, in 1865. She was performing in *Our American Cousin* when John Wilkes Booth (1838–65), avenging defeated Southerners, shot President Lincoln in a box above the stage and jumped down to it for his escape (though he was later trapped and killed).
16. Edwin Booth (1833–93), son of the great Shakespearean actor Junius Brutus Booth (1796–1852), built the first modern proscenium-arch theatre in New York in 1869. The Booth Theatre had individual armchairs and scenery raised from below by hydraulic elevators or flown in with wires from above. Edwin Booth was also a great Shakespearean actor, with a natural, quiet delivery (unlike his father’s bombastic style), gracefulness, depth of character, and a record-breaking run of 100 performances as the lead in *Hamlet* in 1864. But he suffered from shame after his brother assassinated Lincoln—and he later went bankrupt, selling his theatre in 1874.
17. Junius Brutus Booth, Jr. (1821–83), was also an actor, but less famous than his father and younger brothers. He was highly regarded with them in 1864, in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, playing Cassius, while

Edwin played Brutus and John Wilkes played Mark Antony. The youngest of the four Booth actors, John Wilkes, was thus the only one not associated by name or role with “Brutus” (who famously assassinated Julius Caesar) when he became an assassin the next year.

18. Writer-actor-manager Steele MacKaye (1842–94) started the first acting school in the US and invented folding theatre seats. He also created a “double stage” in 1879 at the Madison Square Theatre in New York for shifting complete scenes, all at once, with a counter-weighted elevator the full size of the stage.
19. Famous for its “blood and guts” melodramas, along with blackface minstrel shows and animal acts, the Bowery Theatre in New York expanded in 1826, from 2500 to 4000 people. It was nicknamed “the Slaughterhouse” because of its violent spectacles for lower-class audiences. They included the “Bowery Boys,” young “nativist” (anti-immigrant) gang members, with roots as volunteer firemen. They had a stock character, Mose the Fireman, with a stovepipe hat, mirroring them onstage, while they drank and threw food from the gallery. (Violent rivalry in the 1850s–60s between nativist British and immigrant Irish firemen groups is shown in the movie, *Gangs of New York*.)

**[Like the nineteenth-century “Slaughterhouse” stereotype of Mose, mirroring the Bowery Boys, do recent stage and screen reflections aggravate social dramas or help to heal them, with melodramatic passions to repeat or a greater awareness of tragic errors in vengeful violent acts?]**

#### D. Blackface Minstrelsy, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and “Wild West” Shows

1. P. T. Barnum (1810–91) created “freak shows” with the midget Tom Thumb performing Napoleon or other characters in song and dance numbers, plus “tribal people,” Siamese Twins, a Dog-Faced Boy, a Tattooed Man, a microcephalic black dwarf (William Henry Johnson) as a “man-monkey,” and other theatrical displays at his American Museum in New York from 1841 to 1865 (when the building burned down). It presented blackface minstrel shows with racist parodies, yet also a stage version of the antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Barnum later developed a traveling circus (Barnum and Bailey's).

2. In 1883, Robert Cunningham took Aboriginal people from their community in North Queensland, Australia (perhaps kidnapping them). He put them in Barnum and Bailey's "Ethnological Congress of Strange Savage Tribes." Touring throughout the US and Europe, Cunningham presented them as "Ranting man-eaters! Veritable blood-thirsty beasts in Distorted human form."
3. Grotesque stereotypes of African-Americans also appeared in US theatres, with white actors as the blackface character "Sambo" in melodramas and Thomas "Daddy" Rice (1808–60) mimicking a crippled slave boy in his "Jump Jim Crow" song and dance of the early 1830s.
4. Starting with Dan Emmett (1815–1904) and his "Virginia Minstrels" in New York's Bowery Theatre in 1843, the minstrel show became a collective performance. It featured an initial semicircle of 4, but eventually up to 100 seated, white men in burnt-cork blackface and exaggerated red lips, caricaturing black people as lazy, stupid, or silly. The men on the ends were called "Tambo and Bones" because they played the tambourine and sheep-bone castanets. Blackfaced men in the semicircle also played instruments, such as the banjo, and told dialect jokes to a straight man in the center, the master of ceremonies, "Mr. Interlocutor" (not in blackface).
5. The minstrel show also involved comical and sentimental songs, jigs, shuffle dances, and a "burlesque" (not yet meaning striptease), a farcical caricature often parodying Shakespeare. For example, "Oteller" showed a few scenes mocking *Othello* and African-American speech, with a white man in blackface and another as female.
6. Black dancers also appeared with the white performers in minstrel shows, including William Henry Lane (1825–52), known as "Master Juba," who got top billing in 1845 (on the show's "bill" or poster). Eventually, black performers created their own troupes, mostly after the Civil War, when white audiences wanted to see "genuine Negroes." Yet they often used blackface makeup, as did Bert Williams (1874–1922) and George Walker (1872–1911), who later developed the first African-American musical hits on Broadway, *In Dahomey* (1902) and *Abyssinia* (1906).
7. Vaudeville and variety shows emerged as popular entertainment, too, with comedians (sometimes in blackface), dancers, acrobats, magicians, and skits. (See <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLuAuHtAR-4pw3pbC-a2bm9q44LgNe-RAGe>.) This set up the later development of radio and television shows, with some of the same stars, and movies that continued to show white performers in blackface well into the twentieth century, often as caricatures. Yet blackface was sometimes

used to evoke sympathy for the white performer, forced to wear it by convention, as with the Jewish singer, Al Jolson, playing Jackie Rabinowitz in the first sound film, *The Jazz Singer* (1927).

**[How do minstrel caricatures persist today, along with vaudeville acts, reflecting mimetic rivalry and scapegoating, akin to prior centuries?]**

8. A blackface trickster, Topsy, and her opposite, the angelic, frail, white girl, Eva, appeared onstage in George L. Aiken's six-act version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). It also involved the honorable Christian slave, Uncle Tom, portrayed by a white actor in blackface, who is dutiful to good masters but defies the evil slave-owner Simon Legree. In another heroic scene, the slave Eliza escapes on blocks of ice across the Ohio River. There were many such "Tom Shows," due to loose copyright laws. But Aiken's version, which opened in New York in 1853, became the most popular of any in America and England for 75 years, seen by an estimated three million people, ten times more than read the book, although it was the best selling novel of the 1800s. (See <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/>.)
9. Magic lantern shows of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were also presented in theatres, from 1853 until the invention of cinema, projecting a series of static scenes on painted glass slides with music and narration from the novel.
10. T. D. Rice (famous for his Jim Crow caricature and dance) played Uncle Tom in H. E. Stevens's version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in New York's Bowery Theatre in 1854.
11. In 1879, there were 49 touring "Tom Shows." 20 years later there were 500 companies, with such tours continuing into the 1930s—exemplifying the creation of mass theatrical media, which continued into new technologies.
12. The conventional evening bill (list of shows), with popular melodramas like *Uncle Tom*, involved an opening "curtain raiser," plus songs, dances, and acrobatics between the acts of the play, and then an afterpiece. But by the end of the 1800s, with Aiken's *Uncle Tom* on Broadway, the bill focused on just the play.
13. Burlesque parodies of "Tom shows" appeared in minstrel troupe programs, sometimes supporting the abolitionist novel, sometimes attacking it, but with exuberant slapstick either way.
14. Irish-American actor and playwright Dion Boucicault (1820–90) wrote *The Octoroon* (1859), a popular, antislavery play about the American South, mixing Romantic tragedy and melodrama. It focused on Zoe, the "octoroon" (one-eighth black, but seven-eighths white) who cannot legally marry the white man she loves. She is auctioned as a slave and then commits suicide.

**[What is your view of Topsy, Eva, and Tom in Aiken’s script—as compared with the derogative term “Uncle Tom” today? Which identity needs and social values do they (or Zoe as “octoroon”) reflect, then and now?]**

15. “Buffalo Bill” Cody (1846–1917), who became famous for killing thousands of buffalo, then starred in various versions of his “Wild West” show (1884–1915). This involved “Rough Riders” from around the world, with distinctive horses and costumes, including sharpshooter Annie Oakley, performing in theatres and outdoor arenas. It toured across the US, to Canada, and 8 times to Europe, to 12 countries there.
16. Cody’s show also involved conquered Sioux chief, Sitting Bull (1831–90), and his warriors, who were hired from their reservation, after warring against the US but surrendering in 1881. They acted as villains in a melodramatic finale of “Indians” attacking white settlers in a burning cabin, who were “saved” by Cody and his men.
17. Many other “Wild West” shows were created, following the success of Cody’s, with white, black, Mexican, Native American, and female performers.
18. Soon to be US president, Theodore Roosevelt used the name “Rough Riders” for his successful troop of fighters in Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

**[How are Romantic ideals, melodramatic devices, and racial or gender caricatures reflected in “Wild West” shows, from Buffalo Bill’s to recent “Westerns” or sci-fi parallels onscreen?]**

## References

- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Table Talk*. London: Routledge, 1884.  
 Skal, David J. *Something in the Blood*. New York: Norton, 2016.



# 10

## Modern Realisms and Anti-Realisms (Late 1800s to Early 1900s)

### A. Turn of the Century, TIMELINE

- 1890s, the number of US lynchings peaked, as vigilante mobs executed people without trial, usually black men accused of miscegenation or murder—with over 4000 occurring from the late 1800s until the 1960s, while spectators sometimes brought picnic lunches and had their photos taken with the corpse
- 1893, Thomas Edison built the first movie studio with his “Black Maria” building in New Jersey, creating film strips for the Kinetoscope (viewed by one person at a time through a peephole at the top of the machine)
- 1894, Guglielmo Marconi invented radio
- 1895, the Lumiere Brothers offered the first public projected films in France with their cinématographe (camera/projector, invented by Léon Bouly in 1892), showing short “actualities,” with about a minute of everyday life, such as a train pulling into the station
- 1896 (April–May), the US Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, allowed “separate but equal,” black and white public facilities, schools, trains, buses, restaurants, restrooms, and drinking fountains, according to Jim Crow laws in the Southern states, which continued until the 1960s
- 1896 (May), Georges Méliès started making films with magical effects, creating over 500 films in the next 17 years
- 1896–97 and 1899–1900, the lack of monsoon rainfall in India caused two famines, with about a million deaths each time



- 1903, the Wright Brothers flew the first airplane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina
- 1904–07, Germany enacted the first genocides of the twentieth century against the Herero, Nama, and San people in southwest Africa (today's Namibia), responding to an anticolonial rebellion
- 1905, the First Russian Revolution, during the Russo-Japanese War, was suppressed by Tsar Nicholas II, with over 14,000 executed
- 1913, Henry Ford started mass-producing automobiles, with his moving assembly line producing one car every 15 minutes at a price his workers could afford with four months' salary
- 1914–18, World War I (known then as the “Great War” or the “war to end war”) brought destruction across Europe with trench warfare, machine guns, mortars, flamethrowers, tanks, aircraft, and poison gas producing 18 million dead and 23 million wounded
- 1914, British vaudeville comedian Charlie Chaplin acted in his first silent film with California's Keystone Studios (famous for the “Keystone Cops” movies) and then gained global fame as star of *The Tramp* (1915), which he also wrote and directed
- 1915, director D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* showed the advance of movies from fixed-camera, filmed theatre to mobile-camera action cinema—and the power of melodramatic stereotypes—as a three-hour epic with heroic Klan members in white robes and pointed hats on horseback, in South Carolina after the Civil War, saving white victims in a cabin from the mulatto villain's militia soldiers in blackface (like later Westerns with “Indians” as villains), after also getting vengeance by lynching a lustful blackface villain
- 1917, the Second Russian Revolution ended the Russian Empire (1721–1917), creating the Soviet Union (USSR), ruled by the Communist Party and led at first by Vladimir Lenin
- 1918, the “Spanish Flu” pandemic, probably starting in the overcrowded camps of the Western European war theatre, killed 50–100 million people in two years, 3–5% of the global population
- 1918–19, the German Revolution collapsed that empire and changed its monarchy to a parliamentary democracy during the Weimar Republic
- 1919–21, the Irish War of Independence (after the failure of the Easter Rising in 1916) led to the separate country of Ireland and yet Northern Ireland remaining part of Great Britain

- 1919, the US “Prohibition” against drinking alcohol began, but gangsters like Al Capone operated “speakeasies” as clubs with illicit drinks where races mixed and jazz flourished, during the “Roaring Twenties”
- 1920 (August), women gained the right to vote with the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, through efforts of the Suffrage Movement since the 1840s
- 1920 (October), Buster Keaton, a vaudeville knockabout comedian since age 3, got his first starring role in a silent feature film when *The Saphead* was released, and then directed, wrote, and starred in movies and television shows until the 1960s, often with dangerous stunts and deadpan facial expressions, becoming known as “The Great Stone Face”
- 1921, Adolph Hitler became the fascist Führer of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party, as the Weimar Republic began to suffer hyperinflation and economic depression, through the pressures put on Germany from treaty terms at the end of World War I
- 1923, the Ottoman Turkish Empire changed from being a Caliphate monarchy for 450 years to a secular republic—after losing World War I with its German allies and committing genocides against the Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks
- 1925, Benito Mussolini, with his National Fascist Party, became dictator of Italy, promising to restore order with his “Blackshirt” militia, through “revolutionary nationalism”
- 1926, dictators also took power in Greece, Poland, and Portugal
- 1927, the first feature-length film with sound, *The Jazz Singer*, was released (with Al Jolson as Jackie Rabinowitz, torn between performing as a cantor at his father’s synagogue or in blackface in a New York revue) but with sound only in brief moments of dialog, such as Jolson’s famous phrase, “You ain’t heard nothing yet,” and in songs, such as “Mammy”
- 1929, the US Stock Market crashed, starting a global “Great Depression” in the 1930s
- 1933, Hitler became Chancellor (and dictator) of Germany, after his Nazi Party was elected as the majority in parliament, promising order and advocating a Social Darwinist eugenics policy, which led in the next decade to the sterilization of people deemed subhuman, six million deaths in genocides against Jews and Romani (Gypsies), and the deaths of many Jehovah’s Witnesses and other pacifists, male homosexuals, and political opponents, such as communists, in the concentration camps
- 1936, Stalin’s “Great Purge” started in the USSR as a large-scale repression of his opponents in the Communist Party, government, and military,

involving police surveillance, imprisonment, and execution of “counter-revolutionaries,” with an estimated 600,000 deaths

- 1936–39, the Spanish Civil War between leftist revolutionaries and conservative fascists resulted in a half-million deaths, through battles and purges, and then the dictatorship of the fascist leader, General Francisco Franco, for the next 36 years

**[How do world events at the turn of the twentieth century relate to changing social values and identity needs today?]**

## B. Psychological Realism

1. In the late 1800s, mass transportation and media increased connections and communications—benefitting many, including a growing working class. But these developments also led to great destructiveness through vying ideologies. Darwinian evolution, Freudian psychoanalysis, and Marxist communism challenged traditional views of self and society. Likewise, philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche announced that “God is dead. ... And we have killed him. How can we console ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? ... who will wipe this blood from us?” (120). Physicist Albert Einstein demonstrated mathematically that time is *relative*, yet tied to gravity as a warping of space(time) around planets (General Relativity Theory, 1907–15). Such theories inspired “modern” (current mode) artists to aim for a new sense of *universal truth* as identity framework for transcendent meaning.
2. *Alienation* (in the earlier, Romantic outcast) continued to develop as a major concern of modern theatre, through industrialization, urbanization, and changing cultural values. So did psychological and social *repression*, involving the uncanny return of the repressed, as in the dark family secret of the well-made play, revealed in the climax. Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906) used that formula in his *realistic tragedies* to explore inner conflicts and current social problems, while questioning conventional morality.
3. Ibsen first wrote Romantic, nationalistic, verse dramas, such as *Peer Gynt* (1867) with trolls in the woods. Then he developed psychological realism with *A Doll’s House* (1879), which shows Nora leaving her husband and children because he blames her for forging her father’s signature on a loan to save his life. Nora’s exit, an act of social suicide (after she considers actual suicide as a Romantic ideal), became known as “the door slam heard round the world.”

4. Ibsen's realist period also included *Ghosts* (1881), about Oswald who wants to marry his mother's servant but learns that she is his half-sister and that he has a mind-deteriorating venereal disease inherited from his philandering father, *An Enemy of the People* (1882), about a doctor who discovers contamination in his spa-town's water and gets attacked for publicizing it, and *The Wild Duck* (1884), about a little girl's suicide through love for her father and his friend's "claim of the ideal." Then Ibsen wrote more symbolist dramas, such as *Hedda Gabler* (1890). It focuses on the idolization of a book manuscript, as the "child" of an illicit love affair, which is burned by Hedda, leading to a "beautiful" but foolish double-suicide.

**[How do the nationalist folk-fantasies of Ibsen's early verse drama and the realist critique of such Romantic ideals in his later plays reflect changing social values and technologies, with the themes of alienation, repression, and suicide pointing to parallels today?]**

5. In *The Inspector General* (1836), Nikolai Gogol (1809–52) exposed corruption in the Russian government, foreshadowing later experiments in modern realism and naturalism, but with exaggerated comical characters.
6. In *A Month in the Country* (written 1850, staged 1872), Ivan Turgenev (1818–83) showed realistic daily life on a Russian country estate.
7. Similar situations appeared in the realist tragicomedies of Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), but with intense twists of foolish passions, as staged at the Moscow Art Theatre, through the direction and new acting system of Konstantin Stanislavski (1863–1938). This started with *The Seagull* in 1898 (written and performed elsewhere two years earlier), showing the comical ironies of various romantics at a country estate, including a young playwright named "Konstantin." He tries to commit suicide (succeeding the second time) after not being appreciated for his artistic innovations by his actress mother and her lover, a popular writer, or for the gift of a dead seagull to the young actress who performed "the soul of the world" in his symbolist play, as she falls in love with the popular writer instead.
8. Chekhov's further tragicomedies included *Uncle Vanya* (1897) about a professor and his young wife visiting and disrupting the lives of people on his country estate, *Three Sisters* (1901) about women in their twenties longing for love and the big city, and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) about an aristocratic woman unable to stop the sale of her family's estate to the son of a former serf who worked there, reflecting the emancipation of serfs in 1861 and a rising merchant class.

9. Stanislavski's acting system, influencing what later became known in the US as the "Method," involved these principles: relaxation, concentration, analyzing the "given circumstances" of the play's plot and "super-objective" of the character, substitution (finding parallel experiences in one's life to the character's), the "magic if" of imagination, sense memory, affective memory, "animal work," and (after 1917) "psychophysical action." Near the end of his career (in 1938), Stanislavski employed "active analysis" with his actors instead of initial table readings, emphasizing movement as a director (Kemp).

**[Which identity needs and social values are reflected by the Stanislavski system, originally and today, onstage and onscreen?]**

10. Irish drama critic and playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), who won the Nobel Prize in 1925, wrote realistic comedies of manners, with dialectical debates about social problems. These included *Major Barbara* (1905) about a "Major" in the Salvation Army whose absent father suddenly appears in her life and writes a large check for the shelter where she helps the homeless. She finds this morally disgusting because his wealth comes from manufacturing weapons. Yet he wins her over by showing her his factory and workers' community, saving them from poverty.
11. Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893), about the female owner of a brothel who tries to convince her daughter about the necessity of her profession, and the hypocrisy of those who criticize it, led to the arrest of actors in a 1905 New York production.
12. In Finland, early feminist Minna Canth (1844–97) wrote plays while managing a draper's shop as a widow raising seven children. Her *Anna Liisa* (1895) depicts a young woman who gets pregnant without being married, hides her pregnancy, and panics when her child is born, suffocating it. Her boyfriend's mother helps her bury it in the woods. But the boyfriend and his mother threaten to reveal her dark secret when she wants to marry another man. She confesses and finds peace in prison.
13. Actress-playwright Susan Glaspell (1876–1948) wrote another key work of psychological realism involving gender issues, based on her journalism, the one-act play, *Trifles* (1916). It shows two women finding evidence in the kitchen of a farmhouse, which male authorities miss, about an alienated, abused wife murdering her husband. Glaspell and husband, George Cram Cook, founded the Provincetown Players, the first modern American theatre company (1915–16 in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and 1916–23 in New York).

**[How do the realistic plays of Shaw, Canth, and Glaspell reflect changing moral frameworks in their time with parallels today?]**

14. Eugene O'Neill (1888–1953), working initially with that company, wrote various plays influenced by European realism, naturalism, and ancient Greek tragedy. These included *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), *The Iceman Cometh* (1939, first performed in 1946), and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1941, first performed in 1956). The latter was about his own family, including his father, the Irish immigrant and melodramatic stage actor, James O'Neill, who played the lead in *The Count of Monte Cristo* over 6000 times. But Eugene O'Neill also experimented with anti-realist styles in *The Emperor Jones* (1920, his first big hit), *The Great God Brown* (1926, using masks), and *Strange Interlude* (1928, with unspoken thoughts as asides by various characters in stream-of-consciousness speeches). O'Neill won the Nobel Prize in 1936.
15. American designer Robert Edmond Jones (1887–1954), an early member of the Provincetown Players, brought them the “new stagecraft” of Adolphe Appia and E. Gordon Craig, after a year of informal study at Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater in Berlin. Jones developed impressionistic designs, focusing on the performer, through “simplified realism,” integrating scenery with story, vivid colors, and simple lighting, as described in *The Dramatic Imagination* (1941).

**[How do aspects of O'Neill's and Jones's work continue today in American stage and screen media?]**

### C. Socialist Realism and Propaganda

1. *Socialist realism*, glorifying workers and the new regime, became the imposed propagandistic style in the USSR and Eastern Europe, from the 1920s to 1960s, especially under Joseph Stalin in the 1930s.
2. Propaganda plays and films were made by the Nazis, with Hitler idealized as a Christ-figure (in Richard Euringer's *German Passion: 1933*), with mass marches performed in highly choreographed, outdoor spectacles (filmed by Leni Riefenstahl for *Triumph of the Will*, 1935), and with documentary films, such as *The Eternal Jew* (1940), which evoked racist hatred by associating Jews of all classes with disease-bearing rats.

**[Where does propaganda appear today and how is it similar to socialist realism or Nazi plays/films, through idealization and hatred of certain people? How is it resisted and at what cost?]**

## D. Naturalism

1. Influenced by the positivism of philosopher Auguste Comte in France, in the 1830s–40s, which valued objective social sciences, *naturalism* emerged in the late 1800s. It examined the cooperative yet competitive human animal as shaped and pressured by its domestic, urban environment (like a Darwinian naturalist studying other species). This style emphasized realistic scenery, characters of various classes, and “slice of life” plots without dramatic structure—through the theory of Émile Zola (1840–1902) that plays should be realistic, meaningful, and simple.
2. Subtlety was emphasized in psychological realism and environmental naturalism, but such plays encountered censorship problems for addressing mental and social ills. They were developed in small “independent theatre” clubs that members attended by subscription, such as the Moscow Art Theatre, London’s Independent Theatre Society, Berlin’s Free Stage (Freie Bühne), and Paris’s Free Theatre (Théâtre Libre) founded by Andre Antoine in 1887. These styles also emphasized the “fourth wall” and used “motivated lighting” (ordinary lamps within the setting).
3. Swedish playwright August Strindberg (1849–1912) wrote *Miss Julie* in 1888. Exemplifying naturalism, its preface asks for real shelves and kitchen utensils (rather than painted flats), solid doorframes, no footlights, and actors playing *for* the audience, not at them. But it also shows the aristocratic Julie tempted toward a sexual affair with her father’s servant, Jean, while a wild folk dance occurs mid-play. She then runs away with him, after killing her pet bird as a sacrifice, symbolizing her death as well.
4. Another naturalistic play, *The Weavers* (1892), by German playwright Gerhart Hauptmann (1862–1946), shows a group of weavers in Silesia protesting industrialism in the 1840s.
5. *The Lower Depths* (1902) is also considered a naturalist or social realist play, written by Russian playwright Maxim Gorky (1868–1936), who publicly opposed the ruling Tsar. Showing various poor people in a shelter, deceiving themselves about their problems, it was first presented at the Moscow Art Theatre, directed by and starring Konstantin Stanislavski.
6. Australian actor, Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869–1955) developed his “Alexander Technique” in the 1890s, to cure his own loss of voice through better posture. It is taught today for health and performance, retraining the body’s habitual tensions with natural, balanced postures, movements, and vocalizations (including the “Whispered Ah”).

**[How are naturalist or psychological realist elements shown in current verbatim theatre, cinéma vérité, docudramas, “reality TV shows,” or other genres—and why?]**

## E. Neo-Romanticism and Symbolism (as Anti-Realist Styles)

1. Benoît-Constant Coquelin (1841–1909) toured the US with Sarah Bernhardt in 1900, as they starred in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Edmund Rostand's neo-romantic tragicomedy (from 1897). It featured a fine swordsman with a long nose, who professes his love in poetry spoken by a handsome surrogate, only revealing his feelings directly to his beloved when it is too late.
2. Neo-romanticism developed into *symbolism* in France, Germany, Poland, Scandinavia, and Ireland in the 1890s, showing the visionary truth of myth and fantasy, often aligned with nationalism (Table 10.1). With the ideal of “the word creates the décor,” this movement turned toward alternative spiritual worlds with a focus on “mood.” Symbolism also appears in the paintings of Moreau, Redon, and Klimt, plus the tonal to atonal music of Scriabin.
3. Paris became the center of the symbolist movement with French poet Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–98) and Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949). Maeterlinck's theory of a “static theatre” (in 1896) tried to evoke the mysterious, invisible, and true meaning of life, beyond the realistic level, through dream and fantasy. He created obscure, metaphysical tragedies in ambiguous medieval settings, with incantatory dialog and iconographic gestures.
4. Belgian Michel de Ghelderode (1898–1962) wrote over 60 plays, influenced by symbolism and expressionism. In his *Escorial* (1927), a mad king, trapped in his palace with a dying queen, trades places with his court jester, who then attempts vengeance within the game, because he loved the queen.
5. Stanisław Wyspiański (1869–1907), Polish painter, poet, playwright, and director, created *The Wedding* (1901) about a village party after the marriage of an educated man and peasant woman. It includes ghosts of famous historical people, symbolizing the guilty superegos of the living, plus a poet, a black knight, a journalist, a court jester, and a gold horn to call the people to revolt, which is lost.
6. After suffering from paranoia during his “Inferno Crisis,” August Strindberg embraced occult mysticism. Influenced by the Swedish philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg, as well as Wagner and Maeterlinck, Strindberg turned from his earlier naturalism toward writing symbolist dramas. These included *A Dream Play* (1902) and various intimate “chamber plays,” such as *The Ghost Sonata* (1907). They were based in



Table 10.1 Anti-realist styles and movements (1890s–1930s)

	Symbolism (neo-romanticism)	Expressionism	Epic Theatre (see Brecht)	Dada	Surrealism (cf. Artaud)	Futurism	Biomechanics and Constructivism
Period	1890s	1910s	1920s–30s	1910s	1920s	1910s–20s	1920s
Country	France, Ireland, and Germany	Germany	Germany	Switzerland and France	France	Italy	Russia
Philosophy	Visionary truth of myth/fantasy	Man alienated by society		Insane world (global war)	Mimic logic of myth and dream	Reject past forms	Muscle pat- tern elicits emotion
Politics	Nationalism	Provoke social change		Protest	Find psychic truth as antidote	Glorify war and technology	Belief in science
Style	Stage iconogra- phy and unified mood (“the word creates the decor”)	Project interior (subjective) reality as scenographic distortion	Distancing effect with “gestic” acting and visible stage mechanisms	Calculated madness, chaotic dis- cord and rule of chance	Juxtapose ordinary and weird in self- (sub-) conscious parody	“Synthetic” (compressed) drama, mix- ing human/ object, actor/ spectator, and multiple arts	Replace the Stanislavski Method with physical and emotional reflexes, using the stage as a “machine for acting”
Attitude toward modern technology	Escape into alter- native spiritual world	Show mechani- cal subjection and pain	Use tech to show social problems and provoke political activism	Decry the mad- ness of war machine	Return to subconscious truth and its mechanisms	Embrace technological progress	

- subconscious visions and musical forms more than plot, “seeking only beauty in depiction and mood,” which also influenced the expressionist and surrealist movements (Strindberg, qtd. in Styan 2: 44).
7. Likewise influenced by Swedenborg and Maeterlinck, Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) developed local folktales, Christian stories, and Japanese *noh* drama into his own, nationalistic, symbolist plays, such as *At the Hawk’s Well* (1916). It is written in verse, for actors in masks and mask-like makeup, about a mythic Ulster hero, Cuchulain, who tries to drink from a well that gives immortality, but misses the water’s bubbling up when distracted by a hawk-like old woman. Many of Yeats’s plays were produced at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, which he co-founded with Lady Gregory in 1904.
  8. Another co-founder of the Abbey Theatre, John Millington Synge (1871–1909), wrote neo-romantic, realistic dramas about rural Ireland. These included *Riders to the Sea* (1904), about ancient Celtic beliefs in the spiritual forces of nature persisting behind Catholic culture in the Aran Islands, and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), about a charming storyteller/killer in County Mayo. It offended nationalists, causing a riot on its opening night.
  9. Seán O’Casey (1880–1964) also wrote neo-romantic, realistic plays, about the working class in Dublin, such as *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), which caused a riot at the Abbey as well.
  10. An earlier Irish playwright, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), might be considered a neo-romantic, proto-symbolist with his “art for art’s sake” Aestheticism in *Salomé* (1893, first performed in 1896 in Paris). But he is most famous for his witty comedy of manners, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895 in London), and his subsequent celebrity trials for “gross indecency” as a homosexual in England. He was jailed for that (1895–97), leading to his death a few years later at age 46.
  11. American poet TS Eliot (1888–1965), who moved to England and converted to Anglicanism, wrote explicitly religious, symbolist, verse drama, with *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), based on the historical assassination of St. Thomas Becket, and *The Family Reunion* (1939), based on the ancient *Oresteia*, in a modern setting.
  12. French playwright Paul Claudel (1868–1955) also wrote symbolist dramas influenced by Catholicism.
  13. Alfred Jarry (1873–1907) created a parody of symbolist idealism with his “pataphysical” (scientific yet imaginary) farce, *Ubu the King* (*Ubu*

*Roi*, 1896). It also parodied Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and scandalized the French audience with its opening word, "Pshit" (*merdre*), yet influenced later surrealist and absurdist writers.

14. Swiss designer Adolphe Appia (1862–1928) advocated simple, geometric, three-dimensional set pieces, "painted with light," through colors and shadows, rather than painted flats. With his *mise-en-scène* (setting into scene) for Wagner's operas and his theoretical writings, starting in the 1890s, Appia evoked symbolist mystery and mood, through romantic story and song—by unifying the actors' dynamic movements, perpendicular scenic elements, and depths of space.
15. In the early 1900s, British designer E. Gordon Craig (1872–1966), son of actress Ellen Terry, developed symbolist ideas of the director-designer with a unifying, controlling vision of the stage picture. Influenced by Asian styles, Craig argued for actors as "super-puppets" (*Übermarionetten*), use of masks, lighting from above, and neutral, mobile screens, trying to capture "pure emotion." He edited and wrote for the first international theatre magazine, *The Mask*, and created a school of theatrical design.

**[How does symbolism appear in visual art, theatre, film, or other media today, reflecting mystical elements of our inner theatres and social values, with the danger of nationalistic folktale aspirations as a unifying greatness?]**

## F. Dada

1. In the 1910s, anti-realist Dada artists in Switzerland and France, led by Hugo Ball (1866–1927) and Tristan Tzara (1896–1963), staged performance events with calculated madness, chaotic discord, and the rule of chance. Dadaists rejected the logic and artistic values of capitalism, while protesting the insanity of a developing global war. With performances involving collages, cut-up writing, sound poetry, and other visual and acoustic media, Dadaists foreshadowed the later development of "performance art."

**[Which artists, popular and elite, protest war today—like/unlike the Dadaists?]**

## G. Expressionism and Related Developments in African-American Theatre

1. In Germany, Frank Wedekind (1864–1918) was briefly associated with naturalism, but rejected its determinism in favor of Nietzschean vitality. Considered a precursor to expressionism, he wrote *Spring's Awakening* (1891) and his “Lulu plays” (*Earth Spirit*, 1895, and *Pandora's Box*, 1904), which show frank depictions of homoeroticism, masturbation, teen sadomasochism, rape, suicide, and lesbianism, with references also to abortion, unusual for their time. The former was adapted as a successful Broadway musical in 2006.
2. In the 1910s and 1920s, expressionists in Germany and the US used scenic distortions to show environmental pressures on the inner world of the hero, reflecting his animal drives and growing madness. This involved “station dramas” of alienation and mechanical subjection—drawing on the “Stations of the Cross” (a Catholic ritual with church images recalling Christ's agony en route to his crucifixion). A precursor to this was Strindberg's *To Damascus, Part 1* (1898).
3. Expressionist plays focused on failing social values through the hero's despair and ecstasy. They also involved mythic character types, rhapsodic or telegraphic speech, choral effects, grotesque intensity, and apocalyptic overtones. This sometimes included patricide, as in Walter Hasenclever's *The Son* (1914) and Arnolt Bronnen's *Patricide* (1922). The latter influenced the young Bertolt Brecht, who changed the spelling of his name to match Arnolt's.
4. German expressionism developed as a style in painting, sculpture, architecture, dance, and film, especially early silent movies, such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920, directed by Robert Wiene) with external distortions revealing inner emotions. Such artworks were censored by the Nazis as “degenerate” and associated with Jews (including Hasenclever's writings, which were burned). But expressionism greatly influenced the Hollywood genres of horror and film noir.  
**[How does expressionism extend from stage to screen today, in various genres?]**
5. Spain's Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866–1936), who influenced many later writers, mixed expressionism and realism in *Bohemian Lights* (1924), a tragedy about a blind poet wandering the streets of Madrid at night, encountering strange people and historical violence, during the Restoration of the monarchy (1874–1931). It illustrated

Valle-Inclán's theory of *esperpento* (distortion of norms to criticize society). But it was banned by the government after its serial publication in a magazine and not performed during his lifetime.

6. Eugene O'Neill used expressionism in *The Emperor Jones* (1920), with a caricatured yet sympathetic tragic hero, a corrupt black ruler of a Caribbean island, haunted by ghosts of his past in the US and by "Little Formless Fears," as he loses his throne and suffers a nervous breakdown in the jungle—where he tries to escape the rebels hunting him with witchcraft and an ever-increasing drum beat. O'Neill's expressionist play, *The Hairy Ape* (1922), shows a white laborer suffering an identity crisis after a wealthy young woman on a cruise ship calls him a "filthy beast."
7. *The Emperor Jones* made black actor Charles Gilpin (1878–1930) a star on Broadway in 1920 and during a subsequent two-year tour. But he often substituted "Negro" or "colored" for the word "nigger" in O'Neill's script. The playwright replaced him with the young concert singer Paul Robeson (1898–1976) in the play's 1924 New York revival and London production, which launched Robeson's acting career. He also starred in the 1933 film version.
8. Gilpin's career began with the Lafayette Players, a black repertory company in Harlem, New York City, founded in 1915 by actress and playwright Anita Bush (1883–1974). The company continued until 1932, performing white characters, sometimes in whiteface, in the desegregated, 1500-seat Lafayette Theatre where black spectators could sit in the main areas, not just in the balcony as was the norm elsewhere.
9. Additional black companies during the Harlem Renaissance were the Ida Anderson Players (1917–28), started by Anderson who had worked with the Lafayette Players; the Krigwa Players (1925–28), started by WEB Du Bois and playwright Regina Anderson, which then became the Negro Experimental Theatre (1928–34); and the Alhambra Players (1927–31).
10. Most African-American performers made their living in vaudeville, in black acts that toured to various cities in "chitlin' circuits" (booking associations), using school gyms as well as theatres in black neighborhoods, from the late 1800s to the 1960s. In the 1920s, these offered alternatives to the mainstream Theatre Owners Booking Association, TOBA, also known as "Tough on Black Actors."
11. Paul Robeson was the third black student at Rutgers University in New Jersey, where he became an All-American football star. He then played for two National Football League teams (the Akron Pros and

Milwaukee Badgers) in the early 1920s while earning a law degree at Columbia University. His subsequent acting and singing career made him an international star of stage and screen. But his political views in the 1950s, arguing for civil rights, saying that lynchings were genocide, advocating the independence of European colonies in Africa, and praising the Soviet Union, led to a denial of his US passport. That limited his ability to tour until 1958 when his passport was restored.

**[How do the innovations of Gilpin, Robeson, Bush, and the chitlin' circuits relate to current black artists and entertainers, reflecting identity needs and changing social values?]**

12. Another expressionist play, *The Adding Machine* (1923), by Jewish American writer Elmer Rice (1892–1967), shows an accountant, replaced by such a machine, killing his boss, being executed for it, and going to a heaven-like setting where he gets a similar job, but just temporarily.
13. Likewise, Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* (1928, with Robert Edmond Jones designing the set) shows a low-level female stenographer in the rituals of her job. She marries her repulsive boss, has a baby with him, but then has an affair with a younger man. She eventually murders her husband/boss and is executed in the electric chair.

**[How do the style, structure, and aim of initial expressionist plays relate to current metaphysical frameworks for bio-cultural identity needs, from theatre to film, TV, and music videos?]**

## H. Futurism

1. In the 1910s–20s, Italian *futurists*, rejecting past forms, glorified war and technology with “synthetic” compressed dramas, which mixed human and object, performer and spectator, puppets and electronic media. This anti-realist style also developed in Russia, Great Britain, and Belgium, with every type of art, including cooking.
2. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944) wrote the “Manifesto of Futurism” in 1909, celebrating speed, youth, machinery, industry, and violence, for the modernizing and cultural rejuvenation of Italy. Later, the futurists sought approval from the Mussolini regime, though they also had leftist supporters and were eventually rejected by the fascists as “degenerate.”

**[Which futuristic works today celebrate youth, progress, and technology, even to the point of violent, revolutionary change?]**

## I. Surrealism

1. In the 1920s, *surrealists* in France (and Stanisław Witkiewicz in Poland), influenced by Freud and Dada, drew on classical myths, personal dreams, and “automatic” writings to explore subconscious truth and its mechanisms. This involved the cool, sometimes whimsical juxtaposition of ordinary and fantastic elements in self-conscious parody.
2. French writer Guillaume Apollinaire (1880–1918) coined the term, “surrealist,” in the preface of his play, *The Breasts of Tiresias* (1903, first performed in 1917), about an ancient Greek soothsayer changing his sex to obtain power and equality.
3. French anti-fascist poet and art collector André Breton (1896–1966) published a “Surrealist Manifesto” in 1924 and another version in 1929. He defined the style as pure “psychic automatism” without any control exercised by reason (against a rival manifesto written by Yvan Goll in 1924). Spaniard Salvador Dalí (1904–89) eventually became the movement’s most famous painter.
4. Surrealist writer-director Jean Cocteau (1889–1963) adapted ancient Greek myths to modern settings, turning some of his plays into films with experiments in new techniques, as in *Orpheus* (1925 play, 1950 film) about a poet traveling to the underworld to retrieve his dead wife. Cocteau also made the innovative film, *Beauty and the Beast* (1946), which evoked later Hollywood and Broadway musicals.
5. Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), influenced by surrealism, developed its darker side (like the French writer Georges Bataille). His plays, such as *Blood Wedding* (1932) and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1936), evoked “*el duende*,” the Nietzschean, Dionysian spirit of the earth and flamenco dance, with intense, authentic, bodily emotions. (The term refers to a house-possessing goblin in folklore.) But García Lorca was murdered at age 38, probably by fascists because he was a socialist and homosexual. His works were censored by Franco’s government until 1953.

**[How does the surrealist exploration of subconscious realms, in cool self-parody or earthy intensity, relate to various elements of the brain’s inner theatre and its manifestations onstage/onscreen today?]**

## J. Other Movements and Artists of the Early 1900s

1. In 1912, Chicago's Little Theatre, along with an earlier Hull House theatre group (in a residence for immigrants), started the "Little Theatre Movement" in the US. This continued in various cities, such as Boston, Seattle, and Detroit. Like earlier "independent theatres" in Europe, these groups created non-profit, reform-minded, intimate performances, against the grand spectacles of commercial theatres.
2. From the 1910s to 1930s, director Jacques Copeau (1879–1949) rebelled against naturalism in Paris by focusing on a bare stage, simple screens and lighting, and a strongly trained actor. He used "eurhythmic" movement techniques from Émile Jacques Dalcroze, while stressing the text, improvisation, drama games, mask work, and ensemble acting toward "theatre as communion" with the audience.
3. Oskar Schlemmer (1888–1943) influenced performance design, combining Art Deco and brutalist functionality, through his work at Weimar's Bauhaus School (1919–33), founded by Walter Gropius, as part of German, post-expressionist, "New Objectivity" in modernist art and architecture.
4. Czech playwright Karel Čapek (1890–1938) originated the term "roboti" with the title of his science-fiction play, *R.U.R.* (1921), or "Rossum's Universal Robots," about people of flesh and blood, created in a factory, who rebel and destroy the human race.
5. Italian dramatist Luigi Pirandello (1867–1936) used meta-theatrical techniques and lengthy speeches to explore philosophical issues of reality and illusion, sanity and madness. In his *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921), passionate characters from an unfinished story ask the director and actors onstage, who are rehearsing another Pirandello play, to complete theirs instead.
6. Jewish and Polish-American writer Sholem Asch (1880–1957) caused a scandal in 1923 with his play, *God of Vengeance* (1907, originally in Yiddish). Set in Poland, it portrays a brothel owner who tries to keep his daughter a virgin and buys a Torah scroll for prestige. But his daughter falls in love with one of his prostitutes, leading to the first lesbian kiss on Broadway and the jailing of the producer and cast for obscenity.



7. American novelist and playwright Thornton Wilder (1897–1975) experimented meta-theatrically in *Our Town* (1938). It shows small-town New Hampshire life at the turn of the century through a Stage Manager as narrator on a mostly empty stage. Actors mime their props and sometimes address the audience to give information, as the play moves from the romance and marriage of Emily and George to a final graveyard scene with ghosts, after Emily's death in childbirth. Wilder also wrote *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), which mixes a modern family, the prehistoric Ice Age, an impending flood, and a war scene, with biblical archetypes, classical philosophers, and actors addressing the audience about problems backstage.

**[Which directors, designers, or dramatists today reflect the minimalist, communal approach of Copeau, the New Objectivity of Schlemmer and Gropius, or the philosophical, meta-theatrical passions of Pirandello and Wilder?]**

8. American actress Maude Adams (1872–1953) starred as Peter Pan in JM Barrie's play in 1905, becoming the highest paid performer of her time. She also innovated a "light bridge" above the stage in 1908, with seven incandescent lamps for natural illumination, reducing footlight shadow-faces.
9. John Barrymore (1882–1942), whose father Maurice, brother Lionel, and sister Ethel were famous actors, became a celebrated American tragedian when starring in *Richard III* and *Hamlet* in the early 1920s. He starred as a silent film actor, too, starting with *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), and then sound films in the 1930s. But he struggled with alcohol abuse, was divorced four times, and eventually went bankrupt. He was the grandfather of movie actress Drew Barrymore (1975–).
10. John's mother, Georgie Drew Barrymore (1856–93), was a stage actress and member of the Drew family of actors, which included her father John Drew, mother Louisa Lane Drew, and brothers Sydney and John Drew Jr.
11. Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874–1940) worked with Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre (acting the role of Konstantin in *The Seagull*). He then developed his own theatre, school, and psychophysical acting system in the 1920s. He promoted the acting system of *biomechanics*, with gestures producing emotions based on commedia and circus effects, along with simplified costumes and *constructivist* scenery as a "machine for acting." But after first embracing communism and then opposing socialist realism, he was arrested, tortured, and executed in 1939–40, during Stalin's Great Purge.

12. Russian director Yevgeny Vakhtangov (1883–1922) worked eclectically to find the right style for a given script, combining Stanislavski's realism and Meyerhold's theatricalism.
13. Director Max Reinhardt (1873–1943) experimented eclectically with various styles in Austria and Germany. But as a Jew, he left when the Nazis took control, emigrating to London and then to Hollywood, where he set up a theatre school and made films (as he had done earlier in Berlin). These included a famous film of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935).
14. Michael (Mikhail) Chekhov (1891–1955), nephew of Anton Chekhov and student of Stanislavski, developed an acting system of "psychological gestures," influenced also by Meyerhold. Chekhov focused on the unconscious creative self (through indirect external means), as a "permeable organism," and the "dual consciousness" of actor and character. This involved a range of dynamic exercises to develop the character's "imaginary body," such as floating, flying, radiating, and molding to find the physical core of a character. Chekhov described this in his book, *On the Technique of Acting* (1942), and trained various American stage and screen actors in the 1940s.

**[Which actors and acting theories currently work from the "outside in" like biomechanics and psychological gestures? Which directors of theatre or film use various styles, or combine them, like Reinhardt and Vakhtangov?]**

15. In the 1920s Noël Coward (1899–1973) became one of the world's highest-earning writers, with his popular, witty British comedies, eventually penning over 50 plays and a dozen musicals.
16. Musical theatre developed from vaudeville and variety shows in the 1800s, through the comic operettas of Offenbach in the 1850s–70s and of Gilbert and Sullivan in the late 1800s, plus revues like the Ziegfeld Follies combining song, dance, and comic sketches, into the "book musical" tradition of *Showboat* (1927) and *Oklahoma!* (1943), with a continuous, complete story. Especially influential were the London musicals of George Edwardes in the 1890s, the New York musicals of Bert Williams and George Walker, plus George M. Cohan, in the early 1900s, and then the later musicals of Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein II, Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, and George and Ira Gershwin.

**[How do musicals today reflect their origins in vaudeville, variety shows, comic operettas, revues, and earlier forms of music and dance as parts of theatre?]**

17. In the early 1900s, psychotherapist Jacob L. Moreno (1889–1974) started an improvisational group in Vienna, the Theatre of Spontaneity. He formulated theories of “psychodrama,” which he took to New York in the 1920s, developing various group therapy techniques with role-playing and improvisation. These also included “sociodrama,” which later influenced Viola Spolin’s theatre games and various sociologists doing sociometric analyses.

**[How do improv theatre and group-therapy role-playing interrelate today?]**

## References

Kemp, Rick. *Embodied Acting*. London: Routledge, 2012.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Styan, J. L. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.



# 11

## Mid-Twentieth Century, Euro-American Innovations

### A. Major Events of the Late 1930s–1950s, TIMELINE

- by 1938, the US economy began growing again, signaling an end to the Great Depression, but unemployment remained above 10% until 1941
- 1938, the US Congress created the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to investigate disloyalty and subversion by citizens and organizations tied to communism, which eventually involved the blacklisting of over 300 artists in Hollywood, through the work of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1940s–50s, with interrogations pressuring the accused to name (and scapegoat) others as communists, in order to defer blame by proving loyalty
- 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland, starting World War II in Europe, and then invaded France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway in 1940
- 1941, the Holocaust began (with 6 million Jewish deaths, plus 11 million others), Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese, the US entered World War II, and Germany tried to invade the USSR, but retreated after losing the Battle of Stalingrad (1942–43), which caused 2 million deaths
- 1942, the US government started moving 110,000 Japanese-Americans and 11,500 German-Americans to internment camps, as potential enemies, while the US was at war with Japan and Germany
- 1945, World War II ended after 60 million deaths (3% of the world population of 2.3 billion), including 25,000 people killed in the American/

British three-day bombing of Dresden in February of that year, 100,000 civilians killed in the US firebombing of Tokyo on one night in March, and 129,000 killed by the two atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August

- 1946, the First Indochina War began with the splitting of Vietnam into North and South, after Japan surrendered, with Britain returning the South to French colonizers, and then with the Vietnamese nationalists/communists starting eight years of fighting, which eventually forced the French to leave but brought in the US, supporting the South
- 1948, Europe was divided between the democratic capitalist countries of the West and dictatorial communist countries of the East, which were Soviet satellite states: East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania
- 1949, the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand joined in the Berlin Airlift to fly supplies to isolated West Berlin (surrounded by East Berlin and the rest of East Germany) after the USSR blockaded it
- 1950–53, the Korean civil war, with Soviet/Chinese and US support on each side, caused a million deaths (including 33,000 US soldiers) and the splitting of Korea into the dictatorial communist North and democratic capitalist South

## B. Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty"

1. While working as a theatre and film actor (playing Jean-Paul Marat in Abel Gance's 1927 film, *Napoleon*) and writing short surrealist plays, such as *The Spurt of Blood* (1924), Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) started his own theatre in Paris, Théâtre Alfred Jarry (1926–29). Artaud developed theories in the 1930s that greatly influenced European and American avant-garde artists in later decades. But he was only able to enact his theories in one full production, his 1935 staging of Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Cenci*, in which he played the lead role of a murderous, incestuous nobleman.
2. Artaud later suffered from psychotic paranoia, which put him in a Paris asylum after he traveled to Mexico and Ireland, seeking communion with the indigenous Tarahumara through their peyote ritual and with Irish mystical sites as well.
3. Artaud was influenced not only by surrealism and occult mysticism, but also by dancers from Bali that he saw in a 1931 Paris exhibition.

He argued that modern theatre should break its reliance on words and return to its ritual origins by learning from Asian styles. He asserted there should be “no more masterpieces” onstage, unless for current relevance (74).

4. Artaud wanted to make theatre a more sensory and spiritual experience, assaulting the audience with the “violence of the thought,” so that spectators would be purified of the urge to commit violence in real life, realizing its “uselessness.” So he called for a theatre that would “crush and hypnotize” the spectator through a “whirlwind of higher forces.” He suggested using newly found spaces for performance, putting spectators at the center, with the action swirling around them, and conducting them like a snake charmer, through their organisms, toward “the subtlest notions” (81–83).
5. Artaud used the metaphor of “plague,” with theatre as a “total crisis,” taking gestures “as far as they will go.” He invited the mind of each spectator “to share a delirium which exalts its energies,” as when people realize the precious value of being alive, “causing the mask to fall” (31). He stated that the actor should become like a martyr, “signaling through the flames” (154).

**[How does the tragic psychophysical intensity in Artaud’s theatre of cruelty, with the hope for spiritual purification, reflect his life and time, while connecting to inner theatres and conflicting social values today?]**

## C. Brecht’s Epic Theatre and Alienation Effects

1. After writing expressionist plays in the 1910s, reading Karl Marx, and finding a “New Objectivity” with director Erwin Piscator in the 1920s, Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) created a “collective” of artists, including Ruth Berlau, Emil Burri, Elisabeth Hauptmann, and Margarete Steffin. With them, he wrote and directed “epic theatre” plays with “alienation effects” (*Verfremdungseffekten*) or A-effects. He wrote extensively about such theories, while developing further plays, as a Marxist escaping Nazi Germany in the 1930s–40s, living in Prague, Zurich, Paris, Scandinavia, and the US.
2. With Piscator in the 1920s, Brecht developed narrative, epic, and interruptive techniques, using documentary materials, political songs, and multimedia, to distance and alienate the audience toward a critical questioning of character choices and social issues.

3. Brecht also worked with designer Caspar Neher and composer Kurt Weill starting in 1927, creating musicals, such as *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) and *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930), which evoked sympathetic emotions and yet distanced questioning, through plot twists, ironic lyrics, separate theatrical elements, signs, and narrator interventions.
4. With his writing collective, Brecht wrote short agitprop “learning plays” (*Lehrstücke*) and full-length parable plays, based on Marxist ideas, Chinese stories, and the gestures he saw of Chinese Opera performer Mei Lanfang when he toured Europe in 1935.
5. Brecht advocated “literarization” with scene titles and initial summaries presented onstage or other narrative aspects (43). He also advocated “historification” with a parallel context from the past used to evoke new perspectives on current social problems. For example, he used the Thirty Years’ War in Germany during the 1600s, in *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939), to show the complicity of capitalism with destructiveness during World War II. He showed the political pressures on a scientist in the 1600s, in two versions of his play, *Life of Galileo* (1947 in the US, 1955 in East Germany), after the atom bomb was used and more destructive nuclear weapons were built by the US and USSR during the Cold War.
6. Brecht developed “gestic” acting as an alienation effect, with performers showing a distinct identity, critical of their characters, while “demonstrating” them (like people telling about a traffic accident they saw in different ways), or being onstage while not playing a role—to evoke a distancing of spectators as critical “observers.” He exposed the lighting instruments, along with other techniques to stress theatricality with *independent elements*.
7. Brecht made this comparison between the conventional dramatic and his epic theatre:

The dramatic theatre’s spectator says: “Yes, I have felt like that too - Just like me - It’s only natural - It’ll never change - The sufferings of this man appal me, because they are inescapable - That’s great art; it all seems the most obvious thing in the world - I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh.”

The epic theatre’s spectator says: “I’d never have thought of it - That’s not the way - That’s extraordinary, hardly believable - It’s got to stop - The sufferings of this man appal me because they are unnecessary - That’s great art: nothing obvious about it - I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh.” (71)

8. Toward the end of World War II, Brecht worked in southern California, in theatre and film (with one screenplay produced in 1943, *Hangmen Also Die!*). In 1947, he was interrogated by the HUAC and left the next day for Europe. He created the Berliner Ensemble in East Berlin 1949, with his wife, actress Helene Weigel, who led the company for 15 years after his death in 1956.

**[How do Brecht's epic theatre innovations, with alienation effects on viewers, compare with Artaud's metaphors, techniques, and goals? Or with those of other artists, such as Wagner, drawing audience members into the performance, with ritual intimacy and total theatrical control? Or the realists, naturalists, and expressionists, developing other ways to focus on social problems?]**

## D. Existentialist and Absurdist Drama

1. Responding to the destructiveness of World War II and the Holocaust, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80) wrote about existence (becoming) preceding essence (being). Sartre argued that humans are alone in a godless universe, so they must take full responsibility. He illustrated this with his play, *No Exit* (1944), in which a man and two women arrive in an afterlife room, making it “hell” as each falls in love with one who loves another.
2. Albert Camus (1913–60) provided another analogy for existentialist meaning in meaninglessness through his 1942 essay about the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus, who is condemned in the afterlife to push a bolder up a hill, watch it roll down, and push it up, again and again. Camus states that we must imagine this character as “happy” because he persists in his role, taking responsibility for it (123). Camus also wrote six existentialist plays (1938–59).
3. Several French dramatists developed distinctive styles, related to existentialism according to Austrian-British scholar Martin Esslin, but not with conventional plays like Sartre and Camus. Instead, they reconceived dramatic action, dialog, and settings—although not forming a movement together like earlier anti-realists. Absurdist plays usually present a dramatic form that neither builds quickly to a crisis, like ancient tragedy, nor jumps in time and place, like medieval episodic plays, but has a circular structure, with sparse, telegraphic, or whimsical dialog, and a confusing location that appears realistic yet has unreal or exaggerated events. Thus, the transcendent framework of



metaphysical ideals in earlier periods collapses. But the audience still has a godlike or ghostly role in watching.

4. Samuel Beckett (1906–89), an Irishman who lived in Paris, wrote absurdist plays, first in French, then in English. *Waiting for Godot* (1953) shows tramps waiting on an almost empty landscape for a god-like figure who never appears, based partly on Beckett's exile with his wife to the French countryside after working in the covert Resistance Movement against Nazi occupation. *Endgame* (1957) presents a blind man in a wheelchair and his servant in a room, along with his parents in ashcans. *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958) shows a man at a table replaying his voice at earlier ages on a tape recorder. *Happy Days* (1961) displays a woman buried to her waist in dirt in the first act and then to her neck in the second, yet remaining cheerful.
5. Toward the end of his life, Beckett wrote shorter, minimalist plays, such as *Not I* (1972) with just a mouth in darkness speaking feverishly and *Footfalls* (1975) with a woman pacing at the front edge of the stage. In *Rockaby* (1980), an old woman rocks herself in a chair while the audience hears her prerecorded, narrative, fragmented voice. Sometimes, she stops rocking, says, "More?"—and then continues rocking, again and again, until it ends.
6. Another absurdist, Eugène Ionesco (1909–94), a Romanian living in Paris, wrote *The Bald Soprano* (1948) with two couples meeting in the home of one and telling random stories, sometimes with nonsense phrases, plus a fire chief arriving later and a circular plot beginning again at the end. In *The Lesson* (1951), an old tutor gets angry and kills his student. In *Rhinoceros* (1959), one man continues to resist as his co-workers, friends, and love-interest gradually turn into rhinos. Ionesco admired Beckett but rejected existentialism, writing against the ideas of Sartre as well as Brecht. He favored Jarry's pataphysics, the Dadaists, and surrealists instead.
7. Like Beckett and Ionesco, Jean Genet (1910–86) was included by Esslin in his list of absurdist playwrights. But Genet came from a very different background. As the white, orphaned child of a prostitute, he became a petty criminal and homosexual prostitute, who served jail time, but eventually wrote novels and plays. His *Deathwatch* (1947) shows the desires and fears of prisoners in their cell. *The Maids* (1947) presents two female servants who enact a sadomasochistic ritual about killing their mistress. *The Balcony* (1956–62) displays a brothel where lower-class men act out upper-class fantasy roles during a civil war and then take those roles in the city. *The Blacks: A Clown Show* (1958, on Broadway in 1961) shows blacks, some in whiteface, re-enacting the trial and killing of a white

- woman, while a white Queen and her court watch. *The Screens* (1961) presents over 50 Arab and French characters during the Algerian revolution, with some shown in the afterlife after breaking through screens onstage.
8. Sartre wrote a book about Genet's existential development from vagrant criminal to author, *St. Genet, Actor and Martyr* (1952). In the 1970s, Genet became a political activist, lecturing about civil rights with the Black Panthers for several months in the US, working to protest police brutality against Algerians in Paris, and meeting with displaced Palestinians for six months in Jordan. A decade later, he wrote about the massacre of Palestinians at refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon, which he visited in 1982.
  9. The British dramatist Harold Pinter (1930–2008) was also included in Esslin's book on absurdist. But plays in the first decade of Pinter's 50-year career are often called "comedies of menace," because their absurd worlds involve a subtle threat of violence that emerges in each "pause" or "silence" of his stage directions. For example, in *The Birthday Party* (1957), a man's seaside boarding-house birthday party, set up by his motherly landlady, is invaded by apparent thugs who just started living there, too, and talk about a "job" they are planning, with contradictions and apparent lies throughout the play's dialog. In *The Homecoming* (1965), a philosophy professor and his wife, from America, visit his working-class father and brothers in London. She eventually takes the place of the missing wife and mother there.
  10. The next period of Pinter's playwriting, 1968–82, focused more on memory plays with absurd uncertainties. The final period, 1980–2000, involved overtly political plays about powerful people, abuse, political involvement, and disengagement.
  11. Esslin's book also considers the "theatre of the absurd in Eastern Europe," with Polish dramatists Sławomir Mrożek (1930–2013) and Tadeusz Różewicz (1921–2014). Mrożek's *The Police* (1959) depicts the perfect police state, where the chief orders an officer to commit a political crime because there are no criminals left to catch. But the play was banned in authoritarian Poland after its first production. Różewicz's *The Card Index* (1960) expresses the dislocations of postwar Polish society with its fragmentary scenes, like scattered cards, showing a former soldier who feels guilt for killing and surviving, as his life lacks meaning in a Communist state.

**[What do various existentialist and absurdist plays reflect about identity needs for purpose and meaning in life, with new social values framing postwar Europe, like/unlike metaphysical beliefs today?]**

## E. American Realisms

1. The Group Theatre, founded in 1931 by businesswoman Cheryl Crawford, director Harold Clurman, and actor-director Lee Strasberg, brought Stanislavskian techniques to New York and cultivated realistic American plays, concerned with social problems, through ensemble work. It also included Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, and Elia Kazan.
2. Clifford Odets (1906–63), a Group actor influenced by Marxism, wrote *Waiting for Lefty* (1935), an agitprop series of scenes about taxicab drivers, showing their oppressed lives and based on an actual strike, which encouraged union organizing. Odets also wrote the very popular *Awake and Sing!* (1935). It shows the Bronx home of a large middle-class family in 1933, under the shadow of the economic crisis, with a Jewish mother and different generations of idealists and realists in conflict. It was the first play about Jews to reach a large audience beyond the Yiddish theatre. Odets's popularity increased with *Golden Boy* (1937) about a young Italian American who dreams of being a violinist but becomes a prizefighter instead and falls in love with his manager's girlfriend, breaking his hand and accidentally killing an opponent in the ring. It became a film in 1939 with William Holden in the lead. As a musical in 1964, the story was updated with a black prizefighter from Harlem who dreams of becoming a surgeon, to save the lives of blacks ignored by white doctors. Sammy Davis, Jr., in the lead role, shocked his audience with the first interracial kiss on Broadway.
3. Harold Clurman (1901–80) directed *Awake and Sing!* as his first play for the Group, using the acting theory of Richard Boleslavsky, who trained with Stanislavski. Clurman encouraged actors to find the “spine” of each character and of the overall plot, through “active verbs” defining goals. He sought to unify all elements of the production toward a key message, exemplifying modernist realism.
4. Stella Adler (1901–92), daughter of a Yiddish theatre star (Jacob P. Adler), was an actress in the Group Theatre. She traveled to Paris in 1934 with Clurman (whom she later married), where they studied with Stanislavski for five weeks. They learned he had revised his acting theory to stress *imagination and physicality*, focusing on the “given circumstances” of the script, more than the actor's own emotional experiences and memory. They brought this back to the Group as a new direction for actor training.
5. Adler worked as a film actress in Los Angeles for six years (1937–43). Then she returned to New York, teaching acting at Erwin Piscator's

Dramatic Workshop and at her own Studio of Acting, which she founded in 1949, training many future stage and screen stars.

6. Lee Strasberg (1901–82), co-founder of the Group Theatre, stressed *emotional recall* from Stanislavski's method, but left the Group after its orientation changed. Starting in 1951, Strasberg headed the Actors Studio in New York (founded in 1947 by Elia Kazan and others). He also founded the Actors Studio West in Los Angeles in 1966, plus the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute in 1970, with branches in both cities. He became broadly influential in teaching the affective memory techniques as American "Method Acting," or acting "from the inside out," as playwright Tennessee Williams put it.
7. Another member of the Group Theatre, Sanford Meisner (1905–97), rejected Strasberg's stress on affective memory, like Adler, and developed his own "Meisner technique" while teaching at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York. Meisner focused on *improvisation and repetition* to get the actor "out of his head," with more *attention to the other actors*, rather than one's own thoughts and feelings, in interpreting the script and physicalizing the character.

**[Which aspect of the Stanislavski system do you value most? What contradictions are there between finding the character's truth in the script (Adler's given circumstances), using emotional memories (in Strasberg's sense), or using interactive improvisation (Meisner's techniques)?]**

8. European surrealist and symbolist styles influenced subsequent American playwrights, Arthur Miller (1915–2005) and Tennessee Williams (1911–83), along with designer Jo Mielziner (1901–76), whose "selective realism" combined subjective dreamlike mystery with objective reality.
9. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) exemplifies this as a domestic tragedy about an alienated salesman, Willy "Loman," using flashbacks to show his misplaced idealism about his football-star son, affected by Willy's infidelity to his loyal wife. There is also a fantasy scene with Willy's absent uncle, in the selective realism of the play and the set of the original production, designed by Mielziner.
10. Miller showed that he valued a classical connection to his plays, as well as social justice issues, in an essay he wrote for the *New York Times* in 1949. He argued for modern tragedies of "the common man," modifying the ancient model of the upper-class hero.
11. Tennessee Williams developed poetic yet realistic and romantic tragicomedies, often set in the South, with strong, yet abject females

as social outcasts. They hint at his own family and identity struggles as a closeted gay man. For example, *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) is a “memory play” about a writer, as narrator, attached to the home of his dominant mother and disabled sister, while trying to help them with a “gentleman caller.” Williams also achieved success with *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1958), and *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), as plays and popular movies.

12. *The Glass Menagerie* was Williams’s first hit on Broadway. But *A Streetcar Named Desire*, directed by Kazan and designed by Mielziner, made Williams famous as a screenwriter, too, with the film version he penned, also directed by Kazan (1951). It starred Vivien Leigh from the London stage production and Marlon Brando from the Broadway hit, becoming his big break in Hollywood as well.

**[How do Miller’s father-son tragedies and Williams’s female-outcast tragicomedies show new possibilities for classical and romantic genres in the mid-twentieth century—relating to patriarchal and gender ideals today?]**

13. While some theatre and film artists refused to name others as dangerous Communists, or avoided appearing when subpoenaed to testify by the Congressional HUAC during the McCarthy Era, Elia Kazan did name others in 1952. This naming of others when accused, to prove one’s American loyalty, damaged the careers of artists, who were blacklisted as former Communist Party members and could not work in theatre or film.
14. Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*, staged on Broadway the next year (1953), critiqued this naming pressure through historical parallels with the Salem witch trials of seventeenth-century Puritan New England. Miller was also subpoenaed in 1956 and refused to name others, at the risk of going to jail—like the flawed hero of his tragedy, John Proctor. Under pressure at court, he confesses falsely to witchcraft (while feeling guilt for adultery) but refuses to name others and sign his name to the statement, at the risk of death. Miller was sentenced to five years in prison, but a judge overruled that decision because Miller had been promised, prior to the committee hearing, that he would not be asked to name others.
15. Lillian Hellman (1905–84) had many Broadway successes with her realistic plays exploring social issues, such as *The Children’s Hour* (1934) about the scandal of lesbians running a girls’ boarding school. She also became famous for her leftist politics. Called to appear

before the HUAC in 1952, she refused to answer questions about her Communist friends, insisting she was never a member of the Party. She was then blacklisted from Hollywood work, though she continued to write plays.

**[How are artists viewed as loyal or threatening to the country, from Communism in the 1950s to progressive protests today? When do they have a duty to be honest about their political affiliations and those of their friends, or about private details in their lives?]**

## F. Other Developments in US Theatre, along with Radio and Film

1. British-born, American actress, director, producer, and writer Eva Le Gallienne (1899–1991) founded the Civic Repertory Theatre in New York and ran it for six seasons (1926–33), focusing on high-quality, non-profit productions with low admission costs.
2. Singer, dancer, and actress Ethel Waters (1896–1977), known as “Sweet Mama Stringbean,” appeared in the all-black revue *Africana* (1927). She also performed in various films and with white performers in the wildly successful Irving Berlin revue, *As Thousands Cheer* (1933), with its satirical sketches and musical numbers about current celebrities. She became one of the first black women in a Broadway drama, with *Mamba’s Daughters*, as well as the first black singer with her own TV show (both in 1939).
3. Designer Stanley McCandless (1897–1967) developed a method of dividing the stage into uniform acting areas with the intensity, color, and distribution of light—including cool and warm colors from opposite directions, at 45-degree angles, creating natural intimacy, subtle daylight changes, and enhanced facial expressions.
4. Jean Rosenthal (1912–69) studied with McCandless (1931–34), worked with Orson Welles in the Mercury Theatre, and developed new lighting techniques for contrast without shadows, by controlling angles and mass, to create various moods. She also pioneered the role of “lighting designer” and of women in technical theatre.
5. Playwright Ferenc Molnár (1878–1952) fled Hungary for the US in 1940, to avoid Nazi persecution. His 1909 play, *Liliom*, had been a hit on Broadway in 1921, 1932, and 1940. Orson Welles, as actor and

director, created a one-hour radio version in 1939. It also became the musical *Carousel* in 1945. It shows Liliom, a carousel barker, falling in love with Julie, a maid, but mistreating her when they both lose their jobs. When she becomes pregnant with their child, he tries to steal money to provide for them. But the robbery fails and he kills himself. After 16 years in Purgatory, he is allowed to return to Earth for one day to help his teenage daughter, but fails again.

6. By mid-century, Richard Rodgers (1902–79) and Oscar Hammerstein (1895–1960) were leaders in American theatre through their “book musicals,” with an overall story integrating the songs and dances. These involved more serious subjects than earlier musicals. *Oklahoma!* (1943) showed a psychopath on the American frontier. *Carousel* (1945) depicted spousal abuse and suicide. *South Pacific* (1949) displayed miscegenation conflicts. *The King and I* (1951) featured an inter-class romance ending in death and a parody of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in Thailand. And *The Sound of Music* (1959) showed Nazi pressures on a performing family with seven children.
7. New views of women and romance also developed in musicals through Irving Berlin’s *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), Cole Porter’s *Kiss Me, Kate* (1968, adapting Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*), Frank Loesser’s *Guys and Dolls* (1950), Allan Jay Lerner’s *My Fair Lady* (1956, adapting Shaw’s *Pygmalion*), and Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim’s *West Side Story* (1957, adapting Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*).
8. The golden era of integrated book musicals climaxed in 1964 with Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick, and Joseph Stein’s *Fiddler on the Roof*, memorializing Jewish village life, matchmaking, and folk wisdom—with mournful, joyous nostalgia after the Holocaust.  
**[Which recent musicals involve innovative stories with characters of mixed races, women in new roles, and other serious subjects, like/unlike those of the mid-twentieth century?]**
9. The Federal Theatre Project (1935–39), part of the government-funded Works Progress Administration (WPA) giving employment during the Great Depression, supported various theatre programs across the country. These included the “Living Newspaper,” with new plays about current events, often with progressive themes, which drew the scorn of Congress.
10. Viola Spolin (1906–94) created “theatre games” as key tools for improvisational theatre, from the play-therapy theories of sociologist Neva Boyd. Spolin was a drama supervisor in the WPA’s Recreational

Project in Chicago, 1939–41, and led the Young Actors Company in Los Angeles, 1946–55. She published *Improvisation for the Theatre* in 1963.

11. Spolin's son, Paul Sills (1927–2008), established The Second City Theatre in Chicago in 1959, with its satirical revues and “improv” comedians influencing much of American comedy, onstage and onscreen, including the *Saturday Night Live* television show, staged in New York, which has been broadcast for over four decades (1975–).
12. The Negro Theatre Unit, part of the Federal Theatre Project, provided employment and apprenticeships for black artists in cities across the country. This led to the American Negro Theater in New York (1940–49) with a theatre school whose graduates included Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte.
13. The third production of the Negro Theatre Unit in New York, at the Lafayette Theatre in 1936, by a 20-year-old white director, Orson Welles (1915–85), became known as “Voodoo *Macbeth*.” He set Shakespeare's play on a fictional Caribbean island, with 150, mostly amateur, black actors, suggestive of the court of Henri Christophe, a black slave who became the independence leader and ruler of Haiti in the early 1800s.
14. In 1937, Welles directed and acted as Brutus in a bare-stage, modern-dress adaptation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which was also a huge hit, with a German/Italian fascist setting and streamlined script that Welles called *Caesar*. It was the first production of his Mercury Theatre, founded with John Houseman.
15. Welles created radio dramas in a weekly, hour-long, CBS series, *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*, adapting classic literature. This included “The War of the Worlds,” from HG Wells's novel, with news bulletins about Martians landing in New Jersey and firing ray guns, which caused a national panic in 1938 because many people thought it was real.
16. In 1941, Welles staged an adaptation of Richard Wright's controversial novel, *Native Son*.
17. Welles's first film in Hollywood, which he co-wrote, directed, and starred in, when he was 26, *Citizen Kane* (1941), revealed the abject loneliness of a wealthy, successful, news-media mogul, patterned on William Randolph Hearst. It used flashbacks, repressed secrets, and innovative cinematic devices showing the director's theatre background. These included long takes, extreme low-angle shots, high-contrast lighting, expressionistic shadows, overlapping dialog, complex montage



images linked with related sounds, and deep-focus figures, sometimes within a series of frames in a realistic scene.

18. In the 1930s–40s, Gothic horror and monster movies became popular, influenced by expressionism and surrealism onstage, such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *King Kong*, and their various sequels. Realistic gangster movies also emerged in “film noir” style, as an extension of melodrama onstage, with good versus evil characters and a “femme fatale” luring the hero toward the dark side, even as he tried to save her. Film comedies shifted from farcical slapstick toward witty banter (with a female dominating the romance in “screwball comedies”), sexual innuendos (especially with Mae West), and subversive nonsense (with the Marx Brothers). Broadway musicals became popular onscreen. So were Disney animations, domestic dramas about soldiers or spirits (such as *It’s a Wonderful Life*), sentimental tragicomedies featuring women (sometimes called “melodramas”), and grand spectacles of history, war, and fantasy (*Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*), including classic Westerns, as frontier melodramas. But in Europe, there was also the advent of Italian neorealism, with documentary-like stories onscreen, as with naturalism onstage.
19. In the 1950s–60s, Cold War fears and the competition with television led to Hollywood sci-fi thrillers (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Manchurian Candidate*), studio self-critiques (*Sunset Boulevard*), more Westerns, and other grand historical spectacles with anamorphic “CinemaScope” (*The Robe*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Ben-Hur*, *Spartacus*, and *El Cid*). There were also live-action fantasies (*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*), 3-D films, and family musicals (*Mary Poppins*). Yet avant-garde films emerged in Europe with directors such as Federico Fellini and Ingmar Bergman, plus the French “New Wave” and British “Free Cinema.” There were also Asian “Golden Age” films, Latin American “Third Cinema,” African cinema, and Hollywood “auteurs”—along with “Direct Cinema” documentaries and social criticism films, reacting to the civil rights movement, nuclear weapons, and the Vietnam War.
20. The Motion Picture Production Code (or Hays Code) set moral guidelines and censorship rules for movies from 1930 to 1968. It was followed by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ratings system, still in use today, but with changing limits as to sex and violence onscreen.

[Which social values were expressed through “Living Newspaper” plays, radio dramas, or early movie genres, related to today’s entertainment and politics?]

## References

Artaud, Antonin. *The Theatre and Its Double*. New York: Grove, 1958.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. Ed. and Trans. John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.

Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. New York: Knopf, 1955.

Esslin, Martin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. New York: Random, 1961.



# 12

## Postmodern Theatre in the United States (1950s–2010s)

### A. Major American Events of the 1950s–70s, TIMELINE

- 1955 (March), Claudette Colvin, a pregnant black 15 year old, was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, as required by “Jim Crow” segregation laws (named after the minstrelsy dance)
- 1955 (November), the Vietnam War, also involving Cambodia and Laos, began and continued for two decades with Americans supporting the capitalist South Vietnamese against the communist North and its Viet Cong guerrillas, resulting in an estimated one to four million dead, including 58,000 US service members, and the unification of Vietnam under communist control
- 1955 (December), Rosa Parks repeated Colvin’s defiance of Jim Crow, leading to a one-year bus boycott, during which Martin Luther King was arrested and his house was bombed, yet the boycott resulted in an end to segregation on Montgomery public buses
- 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina, four black college students sat at a “whites only” Woolworth’s lunch counter, starting protests that involved crowds of people (with that lunch counter desegregated in five months), repeated in many cities across the US
- 1962, the USSR challenged the US by placing nuclear missiles in Cuba, after the US put such missiles in Italy and Turkey, but an agreement to remove them was reached, as the early “Cold War” almost became a hot

- one, with the policy of “Mutually Assured Destruction” (MAD) creating over 60,000 nuclear weapons in the US and USSR
- 1963 (April), Martin Luther King led segregation protestors in Birmingham, Alabama, facing police with attack dogs and high-pressure water hoses, until he was arrested (the 13th of his 29 arrests), put in jail, and then penned a famous “Letter” calling for whites to join the black civil rights movement in the use of nonviolent disobedience to protest unjust laws
  - 1963 (August), King gave his “I have a dream” speech, while leading the “March on Washington”
  - 1963 (November), President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas
  - 1964, the US Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination based on race, religion, sex, or national origin—in voter registration, segregated schools, and employment situations
  - 1965 (February), Malcolm X, human rights activist and former leader of the Nation of Islam was assassinated by members of that militant group
  - 1965 (August), the Watts Riots occurred in Los Angeles, after alleged police brutality toward a black motorist stopped for drunk driving, which resulted in 6 days of looting and arson, 34 deaths, and \$40 million in damages
  - 1966 (August), the United Farm Workers was chartered in the AFL-CIO, through the leadership of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, with subsequent strikes in Texas and California, protesting the low wages and unsafe working conditions of migrant, Latinx laborers
  - 1966 (October), the Black Panther Party, a militant group founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, started armed citizens’ patrols in Oakland, California, to monitor and challenge police brutality, also creating community social programs, such as free breakfasts and health clinics—with chapters developing across the US and then in Britain and Algeria in the 1970s—but resulting in the gunfire deaths of police officers and party members in Oakland, triggering an extensive FBI program of surveillance, infiltration, and harassment
  - 1967, during the “Summer of Love,” young “hippies” gathered in San Francisco, London, and other cities to express their opposition to the government, consumerism, and Vietnam War
  - 1968 (April), Martin Luther King was assassinated, evoking riots in over 100 US cities
  - 1968 (June), Robert Kennedy, brother of John, was assassinated while running for president
  - 1969 (June), the Stonewall Riots occurred in New York when police raided a gay bar (the only one in that city where men could dance

together), abusing homosexuals who resisted arrest, and then thousands of people rioted for several days, with public displays of violence and effeminacy that were unusual at the time

- 1969 (July), Apollo 11 astronauts landed on the moon, in competition with the Soviet Union, but that led to later cooperation with Russia on an international space station
- 1969 (August), the Woodstock Festival created a three-day gathering of 400,000 young people who wanted rock music and peace in the Catskill Mountains near New York
- 1970, with college students protesting across the country against the Vietnam War and US bombings in Cambodia, nine were wounded and four killed at Kent State University, Ohio, by National Guard soldiers (including two students just walking by)
- 1972, President Nixon visited China and began normalizing relations with the Communist government there after 25 years of conflict
- 1973 (January), the Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade* overturned state anti-abortion laws
- 1973 (March), the US pulled its forces out of Vietnam and the war ended two years later with the North beating the South, unifying the country under communism
- 1973 (May), Skylab was launched as the first US space station
- 1974, Richard Nixon resigned (avoiding impeachment) due to the Watergate scandal, with Vice-President Gerald Ford becoming President and pardoning Nixon
- 1975, President Ford survived two assassination attempts
- 1978, President Jimmy Carter began a peace accord process at Camp David (near Washington), meeting with the leaders of Israel and Egypt
- 1979 (March), a partial meltdown of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania caused a release of radioactive gases and iodine, costing a billion dollars to clean up, but subsequent tests showed no significant increase of cancer in the area
- 1979 (November), after the change in Iran from monarchic to theocratic rule, from the Shah supported by the US to the Shia Muslim leader Ayatollah Khomeini, student revolutionaries took 52 Americans hostage in the US Embassy in Tehran for 444 days, triggering a conflict with the US government and an energy crisis in the US, with cars lining up at gas stations and the tripling of the cost of oil
- 1979 (December), facing bankruptcy, the car-maker Chrysler got a big government loan to survive

## B. American Avant-Gardists

1. After World War II, *postmodern* experiments decentered the modernist authority of literary texts, theatre scripts, and historical meta-narratives (as bearing a transcendent wholeness of essential parts and universal truths). Instead, they valued audience collaboration with fragments and diverse truths, involving politics, philosophies, puppetry-animation, clowning, and anthropologies—often mixing high and popular art.
2. In 1947, Julian Beck (1925–85) and Judith Malina (1926–2015) founded the Living Theatre in New York, influenced by Artaud, Brecht, and Piscator (who taught “objective acting” at his Dramatic Workshop in the 1940s). “The Living” staged avant-garde European plays by Brecht, Pirandello, and Cocteau in the 1950s, starting the Off-Broadway movement.
3. In 1959, The Living staged a Pirandellian-naturalistic play by Jack Gelber (1932–2003), *The Connection*, directed by Malina. It showed a producer and writer staging a play with “real” addicts, i.e., jazz musicians waiting for drugs to arrive, as their payment for being in a play. Actors put needles in their arms to “shoot up,” causing legal concerns. They also begged the audience for drug money during intermission. A film adaptation of *The Connection* by Shirley Clarke, with many of the same actors, was censored due to its obscene language in 1961, but screened a year later.
4. In 1963, The Living staged *The Brig*, by ex-Marine Kenneth H. Brown (1936–), directed by Malina with an Artaudian depiction of a Marine Corps prison (through painful drills and punishments for the actors in rehearsals). When authorities threatened to evict the company for refusing to pay taxes during the Vietnam conflict, they staged an illegal performance of *The Brig* and were arrested, along with the audience.
5. For the rest of the 1960s and into the 1970s, The Living toured Europe, including Communist countries, and Brazil (where they were also arrested), creating collective adaptations of *Antigone* and *Frankenstein*. They also staged their most famous work, *Paradise Now*, which came to the US in 1969, occasioning arrests for “indecent,” with naked actors onstage inviting audience members to join and hug them, in what came to be known as a “group grope.”
6. The Living continued its pacifist-anarchist productions after Beck’s death in 1985 and Malina’s in 2015, with a *Know Your Rites* tour in 2016.  
**[Did the pacifist-anarchist theatre of The Living go too far—and what might be too much Artaudian pain or Brechtian collective action for actors and viewers today?]**

7. Joseph Chaikin (1935–2003), former member of The Living, began the Open Theater with Megan Terry and other students of Israeli acting theorist Nola Chilton in 1963. They developed Chilton’s “post-Method,” post-absurdist, collective techniques most famously in Terry’s *Viet Rock* revue (1966), the first rock musical addressing the Vietnam War. They also staged Jean-Claude van Itallie’s *The Serpent* (1969), combining an autopsy, TS Eliot poem, biblical genesis figures, and King and Kennedy assassination scenes.
8. Megan Terry (1932–) used her experiences with the Open Theater to develop her own acting technique, “transformation,” improvising overheard dialog through playfulness. This resulted in sudden changes of mood and character that disrupted audience immersion with earthy language, political content, musical bits, and vaudevillian humor. Terry left the Open Theater after *Viet Rock* and wrote plays for the Firehouse Theater in Minneapolis and the Magic Theatre in Omaha, while also writing for radio and television.
9. Gerome Ragni (1935–91), a cast member in *Viet Rock*, developed its anti-war, countercultural themes and improvisation techniques into the rock musical revue, *Hair* (1967), co-written with James Rado, with music by Galt MacDermot. It was a hit off and on Broadway, with its depiction of illegal drug use, flag desecration, and nudity. It was made into a more narrative, musical film, without nudity, by Miloš Forman (1979).  
**[Are the “transformations” of collective improvisatory acting and rock musicals more appropriate for popular entertainment or political protest—then and now, onstage or onscreen?]**
10. In 1952, Herbert Blau (1926–2013) and Jules Irving (1925–79) founded the Actor’s Workshop of San Francisco, which helped begin the “Regional Theatre Movement” of professional companies outside New York. Influenced by the social activism and ensemble structure of the Group Theatre, they brought European plays to the US west coast, especially those by Brecht, Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, Pinter, and Osborne, while also staging American writers O’Neill, Miller, and Williams.
11. In 1957, Blau and the Actor’s Workshop presented Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* in San Quentin Prison, an event made famous in Martin Esslin’s book, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, with evidence from the prison newspaper that the play was palpably real to the inmates, as they waited absurdly.
12. In 1971, Blau founded the KRAKEN group at Oberlin College in Ohio, staging experimental, collective, physically centered productions, such as *The Seeds of Atreus* (1973), *The Donner Party, Its Crossing* (1974), *Elsinore* (1975–76, developed in 6 months from *Hamlet* scenarios), and

*Crooked Eclipses* (1977, based on Shakespeare's sonnets). This ensemble included future theatre leaders Julie Taymor and Bill Irwin.

13. Through his directing, teaching, and books, Blau developed performance theories of the "ideograph" (as a vortex of apprehended energy), "ghosting" (with uncanny, déjà vu moments), "blooded abstraction" (with spectators sharing the mortality of the actor onstage), and the "vanishing point" of theatre in its "thinking through of illusion." He drew on various postmodern theories from France, especially those of Jacques Lacan (French Freud), Julia Kristeva, (feminine *chora*), Jacques Derrida (deconstruction and *écriture*), Roland Barthes (photographic punctum), Guy Debord (society of the spectacle), Jean Baudrillard (simulations eclipsing the real), and Jean Francois Lyotard (little stories replacing meta-narratives).

**[How do Blau's philosophical yet physical experiments relate to theatricality onstage, onscreen, and in everyday life, in previous decades and today?]**

14. Founded in 1959 by RG Davis and continuing without him, from 1970 to today, the San Francisco Mime Troupe developed political satires focusing on capitalism, sexism, and war. They used commedia figures and jazz, with free performances in Golden Gate Park, sometimes in conflict with police.
15. In 1963, German-American Peter Schumann (1934–) organized the Bread and Puppet Theater in New York, which moved in 1970 to rural Vermont (where it continues today), with the collective creation of very large scale, puppet scenes focused on progressive politics, plus fresh-baked bread and aioli shared with the audience.
16. Mabou Mines, founded in 1970 by Lee Breuer (1937–), JoAnne Akalaitis (1937–), and others, created political theatre while drawing on pop-cultural images, including cartoons, as with Breuer's "animations" series. It continued into the twenty-first century with a new theatre building that opened in 2017.
17. As white artists, writer-director Breuer and composer Bob Telson (1949–) developed a black musical version of Sophocles's *Oedipus at Colonus*, called *The Gospel at Colonus*. It premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1983 with Morgan Freeman as lead actor, accompanied by gospel and blues singers, including Clarence Fountain and the Five Blind Boys of Alabama.
18. Breuer was also famous for adapting Shakespeare's *King Lear* as *Lear* (1990) with Ruth Maleczek (1939–2013) playing a Southern matriarch (as king) who divides her land, demanding love tragically.



19. As a director, Akalaitis became famous for her postmodern, highly visual productions, such as setting Beckett's *Endgame* in a subway tunnel, at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge in 1984. Beckett threatened legal action, but then agreed just to have his objection noted in the program: "My play requires an empty room and two small windows. ... [This production] is a complete parody of the play as conceived by me. Anybody who cares for the work couldn't fail to be disgusted by this" (qtd. in McCarthy).

**[How closely should directors follow stage directions in Beckett's plays or others from various time periods and cultures?]**

20. Julie Taymor (1952–) studied at Lecoq's mime school in 1969 (learning about bodily expressions and masks), apprenticed with Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre, and acted in Blau's KRAKEN group in the 1970s. She later developed his "ideograph" as an emblematic gesture, a minimal action or mask showing the essence of character, emotion, and moment. After working with Blau, Taymor studied traditional Javanese mask and movement theatre in Indonesia for four years. She directed works there with puppets she created and then in New York for several decades, most famously *The Lion King* musical (1998). She also directed various films, such as *Titus* and *The Tempest*, based on Shakespeare's plays, but giving the latter a female "Prospera."
21. Bill Irwin (1950–) worked with Blau's KRAKEN group at Oberlin in the 1970s, then attended Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Clown College and started the Pickle Family Circus in San Francisco. Later, he moved to New York as a "new vaudevillian" with thoughtfully reflective mime shows, such as *The Regard of Flight* (1982). It offered clown tricks and sketches parodying the avant-garde "new theatre." Irwin also worked as a serious and comic actor in theatre, film, and television (creating "Mr. Noodle" on *Sesame Street*).

**[How does the postmodern puppetry and clowning of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, Mabou Mines, Taymor, and Irwin relate to earlier puppet and clown traditions in Asia and Europe—or to the inner theatricality of the brain and outer theatricality of popular culture and politics today?]**

22. Richard Schechner (1934–) led the Performance Group in New York (1967–80), developing his theory of "environmental theatre" in the group's Performing Garage, influenced by Meyerhold and Artaud regarding "found space." With no designated seating area, spectators were allowed to choose which spaces to occupy, even parts of the set. In Schechner's *Dionysus in 69* (1968), loosely based on Euripides's *The Bacchae*, naked actors smeared

one another with blood, while moving one actor through a collective mass of moving bodies as a rebirth and death canal (for Dionysus at the start and Pentheus at the end). Wearing clothes again, they took the audience outside after the play for a public political protest, showing the influence of Artaud and Brecht. A documentary film by Brian de Palma (1970) used a split screen at times to capture more of the immersive experience.

23. In 1979, Schechner developed the Performance Studies program at New York University. With his anthropological research and sharing of performance practices, he encouraged the spread of that new academic field around the world, resulting in the Richard Schechner Center for Performance Studies at the Shanghai Theatre Academy in China in 2005. In 1992, Schechner started another theatre group in New York, East Coast Artists, leading them until 2009.
24. In 1979, members of the Performance Group formed the Wooster Group, led by Elizabeth LeCompte (1944–). Their “post-dramatic” productions mixed texts from different sources with deconstructed pieces of famous scripts, often read by actors at microphones or on video monitors, as an ironic collage of various media fragments. These sometimes involved cross-dressing and blackface, or life-recollections by actor Spalding Gray. For example, *L.S.D.* [... *Just the High Points*], in 1984, included pieces of *The Crucible*, but was forced to close due to a legal threat from Arthur Miller. *Route 1 and 9* included parts of Wilder’s *Our Town* in 1986 (Savran). The Wooster Group also staged a deconstructed version of O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones* in 1992 with Kate Valk (1956–) wearing blackface and a kimono in the lead role (revived in 2006). Valk has performed in every Wooster Group show since 1981, with LeCompte also continuing to lead the company.
25. Ron Vawter (1948–94) was raised by a military family and worked as a US Army recruiting officer in New York City. He then acted with Schechner’s Performance Group and became a co-founder of the Wooster Group with LeCompte and Gray, performing with them until his death in 1994. He was featured in their show, *North Atlantic* (1984), a satire of the American military imagination, set on an aircraft carrier near the end of the Cold War.
26. Willem Dafoe (1955–) apprenticed with Schechner’s Performance Group and then joined the Wooster Group, acting with them until 2000, while also starting a film career in 1980. (He was married to LeCompte from 1977 to 2004.)

27. Spalding Gray (1941–2004) worked with Schechner and LeCompte, then left the Wooster Group in 1980 to develop solo monologs based on his life, including his psychoanalytic therapy, attempts to write novels, and experiences as a film actor. Films were also made of his monologs: *Swimming to Cambodia* (1987), *Monster in a Box* (1991), and *Gray's Anatomy* (1996).

**[How are Schechner's environmental theatre and performance studies related to earlier European practices and theorists—or to LeCompte's post-dramatic Wooster shows and Gray's monologs, or similar work today?]**

28. Artist Allan Kaprow (1927–2006) coined the term “happening” in 1957 and eventually organized 200 such performances. They were non-scripted, yet site specific, partly planned, partly improvised events, involving audience participation, often with interdisciplinary, multimedia elements. Happenings contributed to the broader category of “performance art,” which eventually included monologs like those of Spalding Gray.
29. Performance art also started with the “body art” of visual artists staging an event using their own bodies as material and documenting it for later display. Chris Burden (1946–2015) arranged to be shot in the arm with a rifle from 16 feet away (*Shoot*, 1971) and lay faceup on a Volkswagen Beetle with nails driven into his hands as if crucified (*Trans-Fixed*, 1974). Vito Acconci (1940–2017) walked behind random people in New York for as long as possible (*Following Piece*, 1969) and ostensibly masturbated for eight hours a day under a ramp in an art gallery, where visitors could hear and walk over him, while he spoke fantasies about them (*Seedbed*, 1972). Carolee Schneemann (1939–) read from a scroll that she pulled out of her vagina while naked, parodying critics' views of her films as having personal clutter (*Interior Scroll*, 1975).
30. Director-choreographer Martha Clarke (1944–) created performance art with multidisciplinary, plotless, dreamlike, moving tableaux of dance theatre, such as *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1984, based on a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, c. 1500).
31. Jennifer Tipton (1937–) started as a ballerina and then, in the 1960s, became a designer, bringing dance techniques to theatre, with side and low-level lights evoking mystery.
32. Eric Bogosian (1953–), like Spalding Gray, presented his work as an autobiographical, writer-actor-character “monologist” and as a playwright with *Talk Radio* (1987, film 1988, based on a radio host who was assassinated in 1984) and *subUrbia* (1994, film 1996).

33. Richard Foreman (1937–) founded his Ontological-Hysteric Theater in 1968, defined as “total theatre” with a “disorientation message” (instead of a cathartic goal). It valued design, text, and live performers equally to refocus the relation between them and the audience, with video added in 2005. Foreman directed over 50 of his own scripts and various scripts by others.
34. After studying architecture and painting, director Robert Wilson (1941–) developed grand spectacles with his post-dramatic “operas,” such as the five-hour *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), in collaboration with minimalist composer Philip Glass (1937–). It involved huge formalist set pieces, actor-dancers repeating phrases or movements, and surreal images to show possible associations in the physicist’s mind.  
**[How do the postmodern disorientations of happenings, body art, monologists, Foreman’s Ontological-Hysterical Theater, or Wilson’s operas make demands on the audience as well as performers—reorienting their inner theatres?]**
35. Helping to introduce European absurdist plays to the US, Alan Schneider (1917–84) directed over 100 shows, specializing in Beckett, Albee, and Pinter. He also directed Beckett’s only screenplay (*Film*, 1965, 24 minutes) with silent film star Buster Keaton (1895–1966) as the sole actor.
36. Edward Albee (1928–2016) wrote early absurdist plays, such as *Zoo Story* (1958) and *Sandbox* (1959). Later, he focused on volatile marriages, alternative identities, and perverse relationships, regarding his own homosexuality and family rejection. In *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), a professor and his wife pretend they have a son while tormenting their guests, a younger professor and his wife. In *Three Tall Women* (1991), a woman interacts with herself at different ages. In *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* (2002), a man tells his wife and teenage son about his love affair with a goat.
37. Arthur Kopit (1937–) was known for absurdist plays in the 1960s–70s, especially *Indians* (1968) displaying Buffalo Bill’s “Wild West” show as a betrayal of Native Americans.
38. David Rabe (1940–), drafted into the US Army during the Vietnam War, wrote *Sticks and Bones* (1969) about a blinded veteran returning home to his family. *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel* (1971) depicts a soldier stumbling through basic training and battle with a chorus-like commentator beside him. *Streamers* (1976) shows soldiers with different race and class conflicts preparing for war. *Hurly Burly* (1984, film version 1998) displays competitive Hollywood filmmakers with drug and sex problems.

39. Neil Simon (1927–2018) became one of the most successful writers of comedy on Broadway, with zany characters and hints of pain, as in *The Odd Couple* (1965), about mismatched male roommates. It became a film in 1968 and a hit television sitcom in 1970–75, revived in 1982–83 and 2015–17.
40. Lanford Wilson (1937–2011) wrote a widely produced trilogy about the Talley family in rural Missouri, showing American disillusionment after the Vietnam War: *Fifth of July* (1978), *Talley's Folly* (1979), and *Talley and Son* (1985).
41. Horton Foote (1916–2009) became known for writing about his Southern heritage, especially in *The Orphans' Home Cycle* (1978–80), about a Texas family, with nine one-act plays in sets of three. *The Young Man from Atlanta* (1995) continues that story. Foote contributed as a screenwriter during the “Golden Age” of television dramas in the 1950s–60s and with his screenplays for *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) and *Tender Mercies* (1983).
42. Sam Shepard (1943–2017) wrote early absurdist plays, such as *The Tooth of Crime* (1972) with a sci-fi setting, rock music, and violence (given an environmental staging by Schechner in 1973). Later, he wrote realistic, myth-deconstructing plays. *Buried Child* (1978) shows a fragmenting farm-family in Illinois. *True West* (1980) depicts a vagrant criminal, switching places with his screenwriting brother in their mother's Los Angeles home. *Fool for Love* (1983) presents a cowboy, his half-sister, and the ghost of their father in a rural motel. Shepard was also a popular actor, playing the cowboy in Robert Altman's film of *Fool for Love* (1985) and starring as the pilot Chuck Yeager in the blockbuster movie, *The Right Stuff* (1983).
43. David Mamet (1947–) exposed the competitive insecurity and eruptive violence of male egos, speaking expletives in various settings, from lower to upper classes. *American Buffalo* (1975) involves petty crooks. *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983) focuses on realtors. *Oleanna* (1992) shows a female student accusing her male professor of sexual harassment. Mamet wrote, directed, and produced films and television shows as well.
44. Since the 1970s, New York playwright Mac Wellman (1945–) has rebelled against traditional plot, character, and dialog, showing instead a moving collage of events.

**[How do European realist and absurdist innovations combine with homoerotic, historical, comic, regional, masculine, and imagistic concerns in the plays of Albee, Kopit, Rabe, Simon, Wilson, Foote, Shepard, Mamet, or Wellman?]**

45. Founded in 1925, the Goodman Theatre is Chicago's oldest active nonprofit. Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago, starting in 1974, produced many leading stage and screen actors, including Gary Sinise, John Malkovich, and Laurie Metcalf.
46. Arena Stage in Washington, DC, founded by Zelda Fichandler in 1950, was also a pioneer in the nonprofit Regional Theatre Movement, with a resident company serving the nation's capital.
47. After the Actor's Workshop (1952–65), the American Conservatory Theater, founded in 1965 with an acting school, and the Magic Theatre, founded in 1967, became the leading regional theatres in San Francisco.
48. Other regional leaders in the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) include the Pasadena Playhouse (starting in 1924 as part of the Little Theatre Movement), San Diego's Old Globe Theatre (1947) and La Jolla Playhouse (founded 1947, revived 1983), Milwaukee Repertory Theater (1954), Dallas Theater Center (1959), Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis (1963), Seattle Repertory Theatre (1963), South Coast Repertory near Los Angeles (1964), Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven (1965), Berkeley Repertory Theatre (1968), Philadelphia's Wilma Theater (1973) and Philadelphia Theatre Company (1974), and American Repertory Theater near Boston (1980).
49. Since the 1950s, New York's Off-Broadway and then Off-Off-Broadway areas continued to grow in significance with intimate theatres and innovative works, especially in the East Village with Joe Cino's Caffe Cino (1958–68), Ellen Stewart's La MaMa (since 1961), Performance Space New York (since 1980), and Joseph Papp's Public Theater (since 1967). Papp also produced free productions of the Shakespeare Festival in Central Park, starting in 1957.

**[What do regional playwrights, regional theatres, or Off-Off-Broadway theatres offer as specific developments in relation to the many varieties of screen theatricality today?]**

50. Among the great American designers, Greek-born Theoni Aldredge (1922–2011) created costumes for half a century, on and off Broadway, and for movies. She was also resident designer at Papp's Shakespeare Festival.
51. Ming Cho Lee (1930–), originally from China, influenced American theatre as head of the design program at Yale's School of Drama for 45 years. He increased the potential for spatial abstractions with numerous designs, such as his set for *Electra* (1964, Shakespeare Festival) with scaffolding and relief foam combining ancient Greek and postmodern contexts.

52. Santo Loquasto (1944–) designed scenery and costumes for theatre, dance, opera, and film, including over 60 Broadway shows.
53. Low-pressure, sodium lamps were used for monochromatic effects in the 1960s–90s, in the US and abroad, turning everything onstage into shades of gray. On Broadway, “piano board” resistance dimmers were used to control lighting, involving two to three operators, until 1975 (*A Chorus Line*) when computer-controlled lighting began, with one operator. Computerized flying scenery also revolutionized theatre spectacle, along with air casters under large set pieces for movability and computer-controlled video projections for quick-changing, complex imagery.

### C. Musical Innovations

1. In the mid-1950s, a revival of Brecht’s *Threepenny Opera* ran for 2707 performances, showing the potential of avant-garde, small orchestra, Off-Broadway, musical theatre.
2. The 1960 production of *The Fantastics*, by Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones, loosely based on *The Romancers*, an Edmond Rostand play, ran for 42 years Off-Broadway.
3. *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Hello, Dolly!* (1964, based on Wilder’s *The Merchant of Yonkers*), and *Man of La Mancha* (1965), each ran for thousands of performances and was made into a major movie.
4. Stephen Sondheim (1930–) put postmodern, tragicomic twists in musicals, offering ironic plots and lyrics in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), based on ancient comedies by Plautus; *Sweeney Todd* (1979), about a “demon barber” and his cannibal pie making partner; *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), showing the pointillist painting passions of Georges Seurat; *Into the Woods* (1987), with fairy-tale characters; and *Assassins* (1990), about president killers.
5. Director-choreographer Bob Fosse (1927–87) added playful sexuality to the musicals *Sweet Charity* (1968), *Pippin* (1972), and *Chicago* (1975).
6. Homosexuality appeared in the popular musicals *La Cage aux Folles* (1983) and *Falsettos* (1992), plus the rock musicals *Rent* (1996) and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998).

7. Rock musicals became increasingly popular with *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970, starting as a concert album by Andrew Lloyd Weber and lyricist Tim Rice), *Godspell* (1971), *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1971, adapted from Shakespeare with lyrics by John Guare), *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973), and *Evita* (1978).
8. African-Americans were featured in the mainstream musicals *Purlie* (1970, based on Ossie Davis's 1961 play), *Raisin* (1973, based on Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play), *The Wiz* (1975, adapted from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* novel), and *Dreamgirls* (1981).
9. *A Chorus Line* (1975) ran for 6137 performances with soliloquies by dancers at an audition. It was based on group therapy sessions with "gypsy" dancers performing minor roles in musical choruses.
10. Mega-musicals became popular on Broadway in the 1980s with large casts, spectacular stage-effects, and nationwide tours. These included *Les Misérables* (1980) with revolutionaries storming a barricade, *Cats* (1981) with cat people and a giant rising tire, *Starlight Express* (1984) on roller skates, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) with a falling chandelier, and *Miss Saigon* (1989) with a helicopter landing onstage.  
**[What do postmodern, gay-oriented, rock, African-American, audition, or mega-musicals offer to the inner theatres of spectators, originally and now?]**

## D. Major American Events of the 1980s–2010s, TIMELINE

- 1980 (July), the US boycotted the Summer Olympics in Moscow to protest the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan
- 1980 (November), Ronald Reagan was elected president, promising to make America, in the biblical sense, "a shining city on a hill," quoting Puritan minister John Winthrop's vision of Boston in 1630
- 1980 (December), John Lennon was killed in New York a few hours after giving the assassin his autograph
- 1981, President Reagan was shot in an assassination attempt by John Hinckley Jr., who was motivated by the movie *Taxi Driver* (1976) and his attraction to its young female star, Jodie Foster, but Reagan survived
- 1983, the US invaded the Caribbean island nation of Grenada, in "Operation Urgent Fury," to depose a hard line Stalinist regime that had taken power



- 1985, professional wrestling became mainstream entertainment with the World Wrestling Federation's first *WrestleMania*, as a closed-circuit television event, staged in New York's Madison Square Garden, with the stars Hulk Hogan and Mr. T, seen by over a million people
- 1986, the Space Shuttle *Challenger* exploded during takeoff on its tenth mission, killing all seven crew members, including 37-year-old Christa McAuliffe, a school teacher
- 1987, the US Stock Market (Dow Jones Industrial Average) fell 22.6% in one day
- 1989, the Exxon Valdez tanker hit a reef off the coast of Alaska and spilled over 10 million gallons of crude oil into the ocean
- 1990–1991, the US and a coalition of 35 countries waged war against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait
- 1992, after the acquittal of four cops in the video-recorded beating of Rodney King, riots in Los Angeles resulted in 60 deaths and a billion dollars in damage
- 1995 (April), former army friends who then became anti-government, domestic terrorists, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, exploded a truck bomb near a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, including 19 children, and wounding over 600
- 1995 (October), former football star OJ Simpson was acquitted of murder charges in a televised trial about the slaying of his ex-wife and her friend the year before—when he was also shown on television in a car pursued by police
- 1996, during the Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Robert Rudolph exploded a pipe bomb, killing one person and injuring 111, and then exploded three more bombs the next year, as protests against the government sanctioning of abortion
- 1998–99, President Bill Clinton was impeached for lying and obstructing justice in a sexual harassment investigation, but then was acquitted
- 1999 (April), two teenagers murdered 12 students and a teacher, wounding 24 others, at Columbine High School, while committing suicide—after they played violent video games, wrote about getting “godlike” revenge against cops, and made a video of themselves for a school project, as “Hitmen for Hire,” rehearsing the shooting of students
- 1999 (December), anxiety spread at the end of the millennium, through apocalyptic stories and a mass media focus on the potential “Y2K” problem of computers malfunctioning, which did not occur
- 2001 (September), 19 foreign terrorists hijacked four airplanes, crashing two of them into the World Trade Center and one into the Pentagon,

killing almost 3000 people and injuring over 6000—with the biological weapon anthrax also sent one week later through the US mail, killing 5 and infecting 17 others

- 2001 (October), the US and its allies invaded Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban leadership for supporting 9/11 al-Qaeda terrorists, whose leader, Osama bin Laden, had protested the presence of the US military in Saudi Arabia, as sacred territory to Muslims
- 2003, the US, with allies UK, Australia, and Poland, invaded Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein, with the mistaken rationale that he had “Weapons of Mass Destruction”—and then captured him, but continued to fight insurgents there for decades
- 2005, hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma caused 81, 10, and 20 billion dollars in damages
- 2007, a South Korean student, who made videos likening himself to Jesus Christ and expressing hatred toward the wealthy, killed 32 fellow students and professors, injuring 17 more, before committing suicide, at Virginia Tech University
- 2008–09, the subprime mortgage crisis in the USA led to a global “Great Recession”
- 2009, President Barack Obama was inaugurated, the first African-American in that job, and later obtained 831 billion dollars from Congress to save big banks from bankruptcy and remedy the American economic crisis
- 2010, the oil drilling platform, Deepwater Horizon, exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 workers and spilling 210 million gallons of oil
- 2011 (May), US Navy SEALs found and killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, causing many Americans to celebrate this performance of justice or revenge
- 2011 (September), demonstrators marched and camped in New York’s Zuccotti Park, with “Occupy Wall Street” then spreading to many other cities for the next four years, in a movement protesting class inequities and government bailouts of banks during the financial crises, plus the failure to prosecute executives who were responsible
- 2012 (June), President Obama created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which allowed adults, brought to the US illegally as children, to be eligible for a work permit and be protected from deportation for a two-year, renewable period
- 2012 (July), a gunman entered a shopping mall movie theatre in Aurora, Colorado, during a midnight screening of a Batman movie, dressed in military clothing—and some in the audience thought it was a

promotional stunt for the movie, but he set off tear gas canisters and shot into the audience, killing 12 people and injuring 70 others

- 2012 (December), a 20-year-old gunman killed his mother at home, killed 20 children and 6 adults at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, and then committed suicide (after being obsessed with guns, wars, and the earlier Columbine massacre)
- 2013 (April), two Chechen-American brothers in their twenties set off homemade bombs at the Boston Marathon, killing three and injuring several hundred, later killing two police officers also, with the surviving brother, who was eventually caught, stating that they had learned to make the bombs from an online al-Qaeda magazine, were self-radicalized, and motivated by the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq
- 2013 (July), protests began through social media reactions (#BlackLivesMatter) to the acquittal of a white Hispanic man, George Zimmerman, in the “self defense” shooting death of a black teenager, Trayvon Martin—and the protests continued with further incidents, in various cities, of police killing blacks
- 2015, two Pakistani-Americans recently married and both immigrants, with a 6-month-old daughter at home, killed 14 fellow county employees and wounded 24 at a community center holiday event in southern California—with the FBI finding that they had private, online communications about jihad martyrdom before they physically met, with such Web sites influencing them
- 2016 (June), a man who identified himself as an “Islamic Soldier of God” killed 49 people and then himself in a gay nightclub in Florida, saying that his act of violence was triggered by a US airstrike in Iraq that killed an ISIL commander
- 2016 (November), billionaire real-estate tycoon and reality-television host, Donald Trump, was elected President of the US, but with Russian interference through the prior release of hacked e-mails and fake news in social media, as an “influence campaign,” according to US Intelligence Community investigations
- 2017, a real-estate investor and repeated, high-stakes gambler in Las Vegas (specializing in video poker), the son of a bank robber who had been on the FBI’s “Ten Most Wanted Fugitives” list, started shooting from his 32nd-floor hotel room at the audience of a country music concert below (many of whom thought it was a fireworks show), killing 58 people and injuring 546—and then killed himself
- 2018, the #MeToo Movement (with victims accusing people in power of sexually abusing them years before) turned the Senate Hearing on the

nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court into political theatre, with dramatic testimony from Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, and Kavanaugh's denial, yet he was still confirmed as Justice

## E. American Millennial Theatre

1. Christopher Durang (1949–) wrote satirical, absurdist plays about popular culture (*A History of the American Film*, 1978), Roman Catholicism (*Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, 1979), psychotherapy (*Beyond Therapy*, 1981), theatricality (*The Actor's Nightmare*, 1981), marriage and parenthood (*Baby and the Bathwater*, 1983, and *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, 1985), and Chekhov plays (*Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, 2012).
2. John Guare (1938–) developed absurd comedies that explore the painful failures and grandiose lies of sympathetic characters. In *House of Blue Leaves* (1971), a zookeeper in New York dreams of being a Hollywood songwriter, but is trapped between a schizophrenic wife, manic girlfriend, and AWOL son. In *Six Degrees of Separation* (1990, film 1993), a young black man appears at the house of an art dealer and his wife, pretending to be a friend of their son at Harvard.
3. Eric Overmyer (1951–) wrote the highly imaginative and witty *On the Verge; or, the Geography of Yearning* (1985). It shows three female explorers from the late 1800s traveling through time toward the mid-1900s, awed by new territories, scientific inventions, commercial products, and eight mythical creatures (played by one actor). Overmyer also became a television writer and producer in later decades.
4. Actor-writer Wallace Shawn (1943–) explored political and theatrical structures with his plays. In *Aunt Dan and Lemon* (1985), a young woman with a chronic illness talks to her aunt who believes in the realpolitik of dominance. In *The Designated Mourner* (1996, film 1997), intellectuals in an oppressive country speak memory-monologues to the audience and brief dialogs to each other.
5. John Patrick Shanley (1950–) explored his Roman Catholic heritage in his playwriting. In *Savage in Limbo* (1984), several 32-year-old, former parochial schoolmates discuss their dead-end lives in a Bronx bar. In *Doubt: A Parable* (2004), a nun accuses a priest of pedophilia. Shanley also gained fame as the screenwriter for *Moonstruck* (1987) and *Doubt* (2008, which he directed, adapting his play).

6. Director George Coates (1952–) founded his Performance Works in San Francisco in 1977 and in the 1990s developed computer-generated images that interacted with live performers.
7. Peter Sellars (1957–) became famous for creating spectacular settings of classic plays and operas, starting with a techno-industrial staging of Shakespeare's *King Lear* while he was an undergraduate at Harvard, with a Lincoln Continental onstage. His 1980 staging of Mozart's opera, *Don Giovanni*, was cast and costumed as a blaxploitation film, with the lead baritone dressed in underwear and shooting heroin. Sellars's 1980 production of Handel's opera, *Orlando*, was set in outer space and his 1988 staging of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* was set in a luxury apartment in New York's Trump Tower. In 1993, Sellars staged Aeschylus's *The Persians* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival as a response to the US-led war against Iraq.
8. Director Anne Bogart (1951–) created the Saratoga International Theater Institute (SITI) in 1992, with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki (1939–), in Saratoga Springs, New York. She sometimes staged plays in a new play-within-play framework, while also writing about her anti-Stanislawskian "Viewpoints" method, developed with Steppenwolf Theatre member Tina Landau (1962–) from the Six Viewpoints improvisation technique of choreographer Mary Overlie (1946–). Their method explores these six elements independently: Space, Shape, Time, Emotion, Movement, and Story (abbreviated as "SSTEMS" with Story decentralized in a postmodern sense)—adding also the vocal viewpoints of Pitch, Volume, and Timbre.
9. Collaborating with Bogart and Landau, through SITI and En Garde Arts, playwright Charles L. Mee (1938–) created radical de- and re-constructions of found texts, including internet pieces, from the 1990s into the 2000s. He put many of his plays online, in the "public domain," to be used piecemeal by others.
10. Chicago writer-director Mary Zimmerman (1960–) has adapted many classic works with stunning visual imagery, such as *Arabian Nights* (1994), *Journey to the West* (1995, based on an old Chinese novel), *Metamorphoses* (2001, based on Ovid's poem and showing transformations through a pool of water onstage), *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (2003), *Argonautika* (2006), and *The Odyssey* (2017).
11. David Auburn (1969–) wrote the tragicomedy, *Proof* (2001), with ghostly twists and memory flashbacks in an otherwise realistic plot about a female mathematics genius who tries to prove her worth to a

new boyfriend and others, after the death of her father, a famous mathematics professor with a mental illness.

12. Adam Rapp (1968–) mixed naturalism and surrealism in his tragicomedies, *Nocturne* (2000) and *Red Light Winter* (2005), about a young writer struggling for success in New York, after conflicts with family and friends, at home and abroad.
13. JT Rogers (1968–) explored harsh political realities in *The Overwhelming* (2006) about an American family visiting Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. His *Blood and Gifts* (2010) offers various views on the Afghanistan war in the 1980s. *Oslo* (2016) shows back-channel discussions during the 1990s peace treaty negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.
14. Lucas Hnath became known for his comic realism with *The Christians* (2015) about megachurch politics when a pastor learns from God that everyone goes to heaven and *A Doll's House, Part 2* (2017) about Ibsen's characters when Nora returns home after 15 years as a feminist novelist.
15. The Signature Theatre, founded in New York in 1991 to focus on a single playwright each season, starting with Romulus Linney, has helped to promote new plays by leading writers.

**[How do experiments since the 1980s, by American playwrights or directors listed here, show inner-theatre identity needs and changing cultural values, especially with Self/Other performances?]**

## F. Millennial Musicals

1. Disney musicals became popular in the 1990s and beyond, including *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), *The Lion King* (1997), *Aida* (2000), and *The Little Mermaid* (2008).
2. Small-scale musicals were successful Off-Broadway, such as *Little Shop of Horrors* (1982) and *Bat Boy* (2001).
3. Challenging stories were also offered in the new millennium. *Urinetown* (2001) depicted a corporation charging people to urinate during a water shortage. *Avenue Q* (2003) parodied children's puppets with adult situations. *Spring Awakening* (2006) showed teen sex and suicide in a rock musical based on Wedekind's play. *The Book of Mormon* (2011) presented comical Mormon missionaries meeting their match in Africa. *Fun Home* (2013) became the first Broadway musical with a lesbian protagonist in 2015, exploring her memories of a deceased,

closeted-gay father who had affairs with underage boys. *Hamilton* (2015) staged historical conflicts among the white founding fathers of the US, with a multicultural cast, involving jazz, rap, and hip-hop.

4. But most major musicals in the early 2000s were based on familiar stories, from movies and literature, or revivals of earlier hits.

**[What have recent musicals added to the theatre scene, reflecting bio-cultural identity changes?]**

## G. African-American Theatre Since Mid-Century

1. Alice Childress (1912–94) wrote plays from the 1950s to 1980s that were widely produced, such as *Trouble in Mind* (1955) about white and black actors working together. Her comedy with music, *Moms* (1987), about the comedienne Jackie (Moms) Mabley, became controversial due to a plagiarism charge from Childress against the actress Clarice Taylor who commissioned it and then staged a new version six months later without involving her.
2. Lorraine Hansberry (1930–65) became the first black dramatist with a play on Broadway, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). This realistic domestic drama focuses on a strong matriarch (Lena) after her husband's death, living with her daughter (Beneatha who has two suitors, an assimilated black American and a black African), her son (Walter Lee who wants to improve his life by owning a bar), his wife (Ruth who struggles with an abortion decision), and their young son. They live together in a two-bedroom apartment and want to buy a house in a white neighborhood. Told they will not be welcomed, they are offered a bribe not to move there, reflecting Hansberry's own family experience of housing discrimination in Chicago (in a case taken to the Supreme Court). Her drama led to various film versions, an award-winning musical, *Raisin* (1973), and two plays continuing the story, Bruce Norris's *Clybourne Park* (2010) and Kwame Kwei-Armah's *Beneatha's Place* (2013).
3. Actor and playwright Ossie Davis (1917–2005) wrote *Purlie Victorious* (1961) about a black preacher in the Jim Crow South, which was made into a musical in 1970.
4. Amiri Baraka (1934–2014) wrote *Dutchman* (1964, as LeRoi Jones, with film version in 1967), about an assimilated black man seduced into violence by a white woman on a subway car. Baraka also founded

the Black Arts Repertory Theatre and School in 1965. He changed his name then, advocating violent poetry and civil rights militancy, after the assassination of Malcolm X. He became controversial for his anti-Jewish writings as a Muslim, although in 1974 he distanced himself from Black Nationalism and became a Marxist-Leninist supporter of liberation movements in developing nations. Baraka was briefly Poet-Laureate of New Jersey (2002–03), but the position was abolished in reaction to his poem, “Somebody Blew Up America,” which claimed that Israel gave advance knowledge to Jews about the 9/11 Twin Towers attack.

5. Adrienne Kennedy (1931–) wrote *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964), a surrealist play within the mind of Sarah, who worships her white mother and despises her black father. Historical figures appear, such as Queen Victoria, Jesus Christ, and Patrice Lumumba (the first elected Prime Minister of the Congo, who was widely seen as a Pan-African martyr after being executed by political rivals). Kennedy continued writing plays for over 50 years, including *He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box* (2018), a memory play about a mixed race romance and segregationist father in Georgia in the 1940s.
6. Ed Bullins (1935–) emerged from Baraka’s Black Arts Movement, served as Minister of Culture for the Black Panthers, and wrote plays for the New Lafayette Players in the 1960s–70s and then for the American Place Theatre.
7. Ntozake Shange (1948–2018) became famous as a black feminist with her Obie-Award-winning “choreopoems” of monologs, dance, and music. These included *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (1975), about the sufferings of seven black women in a racist, sexist society, and *spell #7* (1979), about the struggle of black artists emerging from the history of blackface through the magic of theatre.
8. Charles Fuller (1939–) received the Pulitzer Prize for *A Soldier’s Play* in 1982, which explores the resentment of blacks toward one another, with racist attitudes, during the investigation of the murder of a black sergeant in an army camp in Louisiana in 1944.
9. August Wilson (1945–2005) was the son of a black cleaning woman and German immigrant baker, but rarely saw his father while being raised by his mother and maternal grandmother. He created a 10-play Pittsburgh cycle with poetic realist portrayals of black life in each decade of the twentieth century, including *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*



- (1984, set in the 1910s), *Fences* (1985, set in 1950), and *The Piano Lesson* (1987, set in 1938). A film version of *Fences* was a hit in 2016 and its director, Denzel Washington, promised to make a film of each play in the rest of the Pittsburgh cycle.
10. Wilson co-founded the Black Horizon Theater in Pittsburgh in 1968 and then moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1978, where he had a long association with the Playwrights' Center (in Minneapolis) and Penumbra Theatre (the largest African-American theatre in the US, founded by Lou Bellamy in 1976).
  11. Current African-American theatres also include: Karamu House in Cleveland (since 1915), New Freedom Theatre in Philadelphia (1966), National Black Theatre in the Harlem area of New York (1968), New Federal Theatre in New York (1970), Ensemble Theatre in Houston (1976), Crossroads Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey (1978), Lorraine Hansberry Theatre in San Francisco (1981), Harlem Repertory Theatre in New York (2004), and Black Improv, an all-black company that has performed since 2015 at Mixed Blood, a multi-racial theatre in Minneapolis (1976).
  12. August Wilson caused a controversy in 1996 at a convention of LORT regional theatre artists when he argued for more black theatres that would perform black plays by black writers and be run completely by black people, with black actors given new roles instead of "color-blind" casting in classics. He called such casting "an aberrant idea that has never had any validity other than as a tool of the cultural imperialists" (referring also to an all-black production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*). But a white director, Robert Brustein, founder of the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven and the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, called this attitude "self-segregation," referring to Martin Luther King's famous statement about judging people on the content of their character, not the color of their skin. A further debate was then staged between Wilson and Brustein in New York in 1997 (Butler).
  13. George C. Wolfe (1954–) mixed satire and realism with his revue of black history, stereotypes, and cultural achievements in *The Colored Museum* (1986). He also adapted three stories by Zora Neale Hurston in *Spunk* (1989). He created musicals about the jazz pianist Jelly Roll Morton in *Jelly's Last Jam* (1991) and black history through tap and rap in *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk* (1995). He was also Artistic Director of the Public Theatre (1993–2004).

14. Anna Deavere Smith (1950–) became best known onstage for her solo docudramas, as verbatim theatre, embodying the statements, accents, and gestures of people she interviewed on various sides of racial conflicts. *Fires in the Mirror* (1991) presented the Crown Heights riots by blacks against Jewish neighbors in Brooklyn, New York. *Twilight: Los Angeles* (1992) investigated the riots there after the acquittal of four police officers caught on video beating Rodney King during his arrest.
15. Pearl Cleage (1948–) wrote *Flyin' West* (1995) about pioneers in an all-black town in Kansas in the 1890s, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (1999) about a struggling blues singer and four people she meets in a Harlem apartment building in the 1930s, and *Song for Coretta* (2008) about a college student creating a radio piece about the widow of Martin Luther King.
16. Suzan-Lori Parks (1963–) was the first black woman awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama with *Top Dog/Underdog* (2001), a realistic tragedy about fratricide involving a black Lincoln impersonator whom others pay to pretend to shoot. She also wrote *The America Play* (1994), a surrealist, absurd, yet historically aware tragicomedy about the wife and son of a black Lincoln impersonator and *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1, 2, and 3* (2014) about a slave during the Civil War.
17. Katori Hall (1981–) wrote *The Mountaintop* (2009) about Martin Luther King being visited by an angel of death on the night he was assassinated, *Hurt Village* (2011) about a Memphis housing project, and *Our Lady of Kibeho* (2014) about Rwandan schoolgirls who claimed to see the Virgin Mary in the 1980s.
18. Lynn Nottage (1964–) explored the plight of Congolese women in a bar in a small tin mining town, suffering rape and abuse from miners and soldiers in *Ruined* (2009) and the job loss and racial strife of American steelworkers in Reading, Pennsylvania, in *Sweat* (2017).
19. Dominique Morisseau (1978–) wrote several plays about Detroit, her hometown, and *Pipeline* (2017) about an inner-city public school teacher who sends her son to a private school, where he gets in trouble, through his anger, and faces potential expulsion.
20. Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (1984–), named a MacArthur Fellowship “genius” in 2016, used historical parallels to satirize modern culture, regarding race and class in private and public settings. *An Octoroon* (2014) adapts Dion Boucicault’s nineteenth-century melodrama with characters in whiteface, redface, and blackface, shown as social constructs. *Everybody* (2017) revises the fifteenth-century morality play, *Everyman*, with the lead character chosen by lottery and Love (instead of Good Deeds) helping Everybody at life’s end.

[How do the works of these black playwrights relate to current identity struggles and changing social values in the US—or those in postcolonial Africa? How do they reflect the inner actor/character performing for a minority or majority Other?]

## H. Arab-American Theatre Artists

1. S. K. Hershewe (1918–2005) became the first professionally produced Arab-American playwright with *An Oasis in Manhattan* (1965) about his large, highly spirited, Lebanese family.
2. Najee Mondalek founded the AJYAL (Generations) Theatrical Group in 1988. He wrote and produced 12 comedies in 25 years, involving his alter ego, Im Hussein, a Lebanese matriarch, played by Mondalek in drag, plus her husband and friends. The dialog was in Arabic, sometimes also in a hybrid of Arabic and English, which the writer-actor called “Arabeezi.”
3. Responding to 9/11, a New York ensemble of actors, Nibras, first met online, then used audio-recorders to ask a wide cross section of people, “What comes to your mind when you hear the word ‘Arab?’” They staged *Sajjil (Record)* as a “theatrical testimonial,” drawing from over 30 interviews—in the Fringe Festival of 2002 (Sacre).
4. Also in response to 9/11, Malik Gillani, an Ismaili Muslim, and Jamil Khoury, a “white Arab Slovak Pole,” raised as an Antiochian Orthodox Christian, founded Silk Road Rising in Chicago in 2002, as a theatre focusing on Middle Eastern and Asian cultures (Najjar).
5. In Khoury’s *Precious Stones* (2003), a Jewish-American daughter of Holocaust survivors and a Palestinian-American daughter of refugees create a women’s dialog group in Chicago in 1989 (during the first intifada in Palestine). They debate the tragic history of both cultures, which ironically overlap, as the two women fall in love. Two actresses play three roles each in this first Arab-American play to explore homosexuality explicitly.
6. Egyptian-American Yussef El Guindi wrote *Back of the Throat* (2006) about a Muslim-American writer who is questioned and has his apartment searched, after the 9/11 attacks, because his former girlfriend implicates him.
7. Betty Shemieh’s *The Black Eyed* (2007) involves a chorus of past and present Palestinian women searching for the souls of martyred family members, trapped in the afterlife, including the biblical Delilah, a victim of the Crusades, a suicide bomber, and a doomed female architect on a 9/11 airplane.

8. Ismail Khalidi (1982–) wrote *Tennis in Nablus* (2010), showing tragic prejudices with comic twists involving a Palestinian rebel and Irish, Indian, and British soldiers in the British Army during the Palestinian revolts against Jewish immigrants and the British Mandate in 1939. The play also acknowledges the persecution of Jews in Europe.
9. Mona Mansour's *Urge for Going* (2012) shows a Palestinian girl growing up in a Lebanese refugee camp, mixing pop-culture references with Palestinian history and Lebanese politics.  
**[How do Arab-American theatre artists express different historical experiences and yet common cultural issues, regarding identity needs and simulations onstage? Which inner theatre elements are involved, such as the audience of memories?]**

## I. Asian-American Theatre

1. Since the 1960s, a new wave of Asian immigration occurred, including war brides, skilled laborers, and college students in high-tech fields (after the first wave in the 1850s–1910s). From 1970 to 2010, the percentage of Asian Americans increased from 1.5 to 17.3 million, totaling 5.6% of the US population, with Chinese, Filipinos, and Indians leading (over three million each).
2. East West Players started in Los Angeles in 1965 to give more roles to and express the experiences of Asian-Pacific Americans. Likewise, Frank Chin founded the Asian American Theater Company in San Francisco in 1973. The Northwest Asian American Theatre was created in Seattle (1972–2004); the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre was founded by Tisa Chang in New York in 1977; and the Ma-Yi Theater Company started in New York in 1989, focusing on new plays. Mu Performing Arts (Theater Mu) started in Minneapolis in 1992, blending Asian and Western styles.
3. In 1972, *The Chickencoop Chinaman*, Frank Chin's play about a documentary filmmaker, became the first Asian-American play with a major production in New York.
4. In 1990–91, when the musical *Miss Saigon* moved from London to New York, the American stage actors' union, Actors Equity Association, protested that a white British actor, Jonathan Pryce, rather than an Asian actor, was playing a lead Eurasian character (with eye prosthetics and bronzing cream). But Equity withdrew its protest when the producer, Cameron Mackintosh, decided to cancel the \$10 million

show and prominent white American actors, such as John Malkovich, threatened to leave the union.

5. Wakako Yamauchi (1924–2018) was interned as a teenager in an Arizona camp in 1942 with her Japanese parents. Later, she wrote a play about it, *12-1-A* (1982), and another about her earlier life, *And the Soul Shall Dance* (1977), with two Japanese-American girls and their families on southern California farms during the Great Depression.
6. Japanese-Latina playwright Naomi Iizuka (1965–) adapted various classics, such as *Polaroid Stories* (1997) about the ancient Greek myth of Eurydice and Orpheus, *Skin: An Adaptation of Buchner's Woyzeck* (1998), and *Hamlet: Blood on the Brain* (2006).
7. Chinese-American playwright David Henry Hwang (1957–) reached success with his first play, *FOB* (1980), about conflicts between established immigrants and those “Fresh of the Boat.” He then became the first Asian American to win Broadway’s Tony Award with *M. Butterfly* (1988). It deconstructed the orientalist stereotype of “playing the butterfly,” with references to Giacomo Puccini’s 1904 opera, *Madama Butterfly*. It was also inspired by the 20-year relationship between Chinese opera actor Shi Pei Pu and French diplomat Bernard Boursicot, who believed the male actor was a woman who bore him a child, while involving him in espionage. Hwang revised the play in 2017 when it was revived on Broadway and directed by Julie Taymor.
8. Canadian-born, Chinese-American, writer-director Ping Chong (1946–) has explored East–West intersections, often involving documentary materials, witty images, and movement theatre techniques, since 1975 when he founded his own company. His works included *Nosferatu* (1985, about a vampire who is like us, except for his eating habits) and *Kind Ness* (1986, with an actor in a gorilla suit). He created several productions with large-scale puppets, *Kwaidan* and *Obon* (1998 and 2002, about Japanese ghost stories) and *Cathay* (2005, about three eras in Chinese history)—plus *Collidescope* (2014, about racial violence in America).
9. Philip Kan Gotanda (1951–) wrote about crossing cultural borders. In *Yankee Dog You Die* (1988), two Asian-American actors, younger and older, meet in Hollywood. In *The Ballad of Yachiyo* (1995), a 16-year-old girl leaves her poor parents to live with sophisticated Japanese relatives in Hawaii in the early 1900s. In *After the War Blues* (2014), Japanese- and African-American communities meet in post-World War II San Francisco.

10. Chinese-American Elizabeth Wong (1958–) wrote *Letters to a Student Revolutionary* (1991) about the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989 and *China Doll* (1996) about the struggles of early movie star Anna May Wong in her career and interracial dating.
11. Filipino-American Han Ong (1968–) went from being a high-school dropout to a 1997 MacArthur Fellowship “genius” at age 29. He wrote *The L.A. Plays* (1993), *Middle Finger* (2000), and *Watcher* (2001), exploring immigrant struggles and non-stereotypical, alienated, Asian Americans. He also performed solo performance-art pieces.
12. Filipina-American Jessica Hagedorn (1949–) adopted her novel, *Dogeaters*, to the stage in 1998, showing life in Manila under Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos.
13. Korean-American Diana Son became known for her plays and for her television writing and producing. Her play, *R.A.W. 'Cause I'm a Woman* (1996), explores stereotypes of Asian women. *Stop Kiss* (1998) features two women who are physically attacked for kissing on the street. *Satellites* (2006) is a realistic play about an African-American husband, Korean-American wife, and their baby, in an inner-city home.
14. Indian-American Rajiv Joseph (1974–) wrote *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (2009), about a tiger's ghost on the streets of Baghdad encountering the absurdities of war, a gold toilet seat, and the humans involved, including Saddam Hussein's son, Uday.

**[How do these Asian-American artists show distinctive styles and concerns that relate to current theatricality in art, politics, and war? How do their works reflect the inner aspects of Self performing for personal and collective Others?]**

## J. Latinx Theatre

1. From 1970 to 2010, the population of Latinos in the US increased from 8.9 to 50.5 million, from 4.4 to 16.3% of the US population, according to census numbers.
2. Puerto Rico, which became a territory of the US in 1898, was the homeland of René Marqués (1919–79). His play, *The Oxcart* (*La Carreta*), was staged in the Church of San Sebastian in New York in 1953, and then in San Juan in 1954, about a rural Puerto Rican family of *jibaros* moving to the slums of San Juan and then to New York, seeking a better life, only to become disillusioned, wanting to return to the island.

3. With the success of *The Oxcart*, director Roberto Rodríguez and actress Míriam Colón created the first Latinx company in New York, in a 60-seat theatre, El Nuevo Círculo Dramático (The New Drama Circle), which later became the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater and inspired many others.
4. The 1957 musical hit, *West Side Story*, by Arthur Laurents, Stephen Sondheim, and Leonard Bernstein, depicted a Puerto Rican gang and female lead in stereotyped ways, yet opened doors for Latinx writers and actors.
5. The Nuyorican (New York-Puerto Rican) Movement started in the late 1960s and continued through the 1970s, promoted by the Nuyorican Poets Café, co-founded in 1973 by Miguel Piñero (1946–88). He also wrote *Short Eyes* (1974), a realistic play about a white pedophile in prison with non-whites, based on his own experiences serving a year in Sing Sing prison for armed robbery (1972–73). The play went from his prison troupe, The Family, to a Broadway production the next year.
6. Luis Valdez (1940–), who worked briefly with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, became a leader in the Chicano (Mexican-American) civil rights movement, as founder of El Teatro Campesino (the Farmworkers Theatre) in 1965. It was connected with the United Farm Workers, during their five-year, Delano (California), grape-pickers strike. Valdez's political plays, such as *The Two Faces of the Boss* (*Las dos caras del Patroncito*), *The Fifth Season* (*La quinta temporada*), and *The Sell-Outs/Sold Ones* (*Los Vendidos*), were performed on flatbed trucks for agricultural workers in the fields. After 1971, they were also shown, along with his mythic and musical plays, in the company's theatre in San Juan Bautista, California.
7. Valdez became most famous for his musical *Zoot Suit* (1978), about Chicano gang members in the 1940s wrongly charged for murder. Its mythic trickster, El Pachuco, narrates and controls the action in a Brechtian way, reminding the audience that they are watching actors playing characters, while showing the Aztec origins of the main characters' ethnicity. It was staged in Los Angeles and New York, and then made into a film by Valdez (1981), who also directed the Hollywood film, *La Bamba* (1987).
8. Culture Clash, a San Francisco and Los Angeles-based Chicano troupe, was founded in 1984 by José Antonio Burciaga, Marga Gómez, Monica Palacios, Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas, and Herbert Sigüenza—and continues today, led by the latter three writer-performers, who create sketch comedies, full-length satires, and videos.

9. Chicago's Teatro Vista (founded in 1989) and Teatro Luna (in 2000) promoted the staging of Latinx plays. The latter was created as a feminist company by ten Latinas of various backgrounds.
10. Cuban-American, lesbian playwright and director María Irene Fornés (1930–) has had a wide influence since the 1960s, through her mentoring of young artists and through her innovative, feminist plays. For example, *Fefu and Her Friends* (1977) has four parts taking place simultaneously in different rooms that spectators visit in small groups, while focusing on a woman paralyzed in a wheelchair, haunted by judgmental male voices. *The Conduct of Life* (1985) presents a military officer who keeps a torture victim at home, as discovered by his wife and maidservant.
11. Eduardo Machado (1953–) was influenced by Fornés in mining his Cuban-American heritage. He wrote the *Floating Islands* trilogy about a formerly wealthy family in Cuba during the 1920s–30s, in Cuba during the 1950s–60s, and in California in 1979. In 2004, Machado became Artistic Director of INTAR (International Arts Relations) in New York, one of the oldest Latinx theatres, founded in 1966.
12. Cuban-American journalist Dolores Prida (1943–2013) wrote eight plays, including several award winners, from *Beautiful Señoritas* (1977) to *Four Guys Named José* and *Una Mujer Named Maria* (2000).
13. Cuban-American Luis Santeiro (1947–) became known for his television screenwriting and for various stageplays, such as *Our Lady of the Tortilla* (1987), *The Lady from Havana* (1990), *The Rooster and the Egg* (1994), and *A Royal Affair* (1995).
14. Puerto Rican playwright José Rivera (1955–) put “magical realism” onstage, especially in *Marisol* (1992), an apocalyptic fantasy, and *Cloud Tectonics* (1995), about a female hitchhiker.
15. Monologist John Leguizamo (1964–), better known as a Latino screen actor, started his New York career with an Off-Broadway solo show, *Mambo Mouth* (1990), and recently returned to solo form with *Latin History for Morons* (2017 on Broadway).
16. Argentinian-American Susana Cook became a butch-lesbian performing artist in New York, starting in 1993.
17. For three decades, Mexican-born performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña (1955–) mixed experimental styles, different media, political activism, and audience participation in various works—focusing especially on Mexican-US border culture—while also serving as Artistic Director of the international troupe La Pocha Nostra since 1993.
18. Cuban-American performance artist Coco Fusco (1960–) also challenged audiences across several decades. In *Rights of Passage* (1997), she



- dressed as a South African policewoman in Johannesburg to explore race, identity, and apartheid. In *Bare Life Study #1* and *A Room of One's Own* (2005), she examined the role of women in the military, including torture, during the “War on Terror.” *Observations of Predation in Humans* (2013) was a lecture presented by Fusco as Dr. Zira from the original *Planet of the Apes* film.
19. Gómez-Peña and Fusco worked together for two years, 1992–93, traveling internationally. *The Couple in the Cage: Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West* presented them in a cage as a satire of colonial human zoos of a century or more before—at the 500th anniversary of Columbus “discovering” the New World.
  20. As a Chicana lesbian feminist, Cherríe Moraga (1952–) explored gender, race, and sexuality in her plays. *The Hungry Woman* (1995) combines the mythical Greek Medea with the Aztec goddess Coatlicue and folklore figure La Llorona (Crying Woman) in a post-apocalyptic future. *Watsonville* (1996) shows a cannery strike, earthquake, and visionary appearance of the Virgin Mary (Our Lady of Guadalupe) in central California a decade before. *The Mathematics of Love* (2017) presents an elderly Chicana with Alzheimer’s disease, her Anglo husband, and their daughter, who is mourning the death of her lesbian partner.
  21. Mexican-born, Chicana playwright Karen Zacarías (1969–), whose grandfather, Miguel Zacarías, was a film director during the golden age of Mexican cinema, became best known for *The Sins of Sor Juana* (2000), *Mariela in the Desert* (2005), and her satiric look at *telenovelas* (Mexican soap operas), *Destiny of Desire* (2017). She also founded the Young Playwrights’ Theater in Washington, DC, in 1995.
  22. Cuban-American Nilo Cruz (1960–) became the first Latinx playwright to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama with *Anna in the Tropics* (2003), set at the center of the cigar-making industry in Tampa, Florida, with a “lector” reading Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* to cigar rollers in 1929.
  23. Anne García-Romero (an American with a father from Spain) explored connections between white and Latinidad communities, becoming best known for *Juanita’s Statue* and *Earthquake Chica* (published in 2004). She also documented the influence of María Irene Fornés on other Latina playwrights in her book, *The Fornes Frame* (2016).
  24. Caridad Svich (1963–), who has Cuban-Argentine-Spanish-Croatian heritage, has written over 40 neo-romantic plays, often adapting prior works, and 15 translations, winning the New York Obie Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2012. In *Twelve Ophelias* (2004), a play with “broken songs,” characters from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* appear in

Appalachia, including Gertrude as a brothel manager. In *The Breath of Stars* (2016), two Ariels from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* seek a lost Prospero in cyberspace.

25. Chicano performance artist and director Luis Alfaro (1963–) has also written plays, often set in Los Angeles barrios with gay, lesbian, and working-class themes, such as *Oedipus El Rey* (2010), a retelling of the ancient Sophoclean drama, *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* (2012), and *St. Jude* (2013) about his relationship with his father.
26. Quiara Alegría Hudes (1977–), who has a Puerto Rican mother and Jewish father, wrote the book for the musical, *In the Heights* (2005). She won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for *Water by the Spoonful*, about a veteran of the Iraq War working in a sandwich shop in his hometown of Philadelphia, along with four characters connecting online in a chat room for recovering addicts.
27. Mainland-born, Puerto Rican Lin-Manuel Miranda (1980–) created the musical *In the Heights* about the Latinx neighborhood of Washington Heights in New York—and then the even more successful musical *Hamilton* (2015) about the US founding fathers, with a multi-cultural cast.

**[Recognizing the distinct traditions of various Latinx cultures, which concerns do they have in common and how do those relate to the brain's inner theatre and history's external political theatres? How do the works mentioned here reflect inner and outer theatre tensions, involving bio-cultural drives, emotions, images, or ideas?]**

## K. Native American Theatre

1. A crucial development in Native American Theatre occurred in 1978, when the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) legalized traditional rituals, such as the Plains Indians' Sun Dance. That ritual involved a central post as World Tree, with men fasting and dancing around it for many hours, some attached to it by thongs with skewers through their chest or back, and then experiencing transcendent visions.
2. Christopher Sergel (1918–93) adapted the 1932 novel, *Black Elk Speaks*, to the stage in the 1970s as *John G. Neihardt's Black Elk Speaks*, acknowledging its non-Native authorship. The play offers the words of an Oglala Lakota shaman who participated as a teen in the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn and survived the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre. He speaks about the Ghost Dance movement, which tried to bring

- back the spirits of ancestors to fight against white colonists in 1889, and his own spiritual visions, as translated by his son to Neihardt.
3. Playwright Hanay Geiogamah (1945–), from the Kiowa and Delaware peoples, started the Native American Theatre Ensemble in New York in 1972 to focus on indigenous people's concerns and the American Indian Dance Theatre in 1987 with 18 Native nations represented. Geiogamah became a television and film producer in later decades.
  4. Spiderwoman Theater, established in 1976, became the longest running Native American theatre, as well as the oldest feminist theatre in the US. It was founded by three sisters, Muriel Miguel, Gloria Miguel, and Lisa Mayo, plus Lois Weaver, and named after a Hopi goddess.
  5. E. Donald Two-Rivers (1945–2008), from the Anishinaabe Tribe, was a Native Rights activist since the 1970s and scripted 14 plays. He stated that non-indigenous actors performing them must undergo "sensitivity training" first.

**[How can non-indigenous actors perform Native plays well, from inner theatre imagination to outer theatre display, with various types of spectators? How might this involve various aspects of Self and Other: social, historical, or metaphysical?]**

6. Novelist and poet Diane Glancy (1941–), of Cherokee descent, wrote plays from 1995 to 2006, publishing six of them in 2002.
7. William S. Yellow Robe (1950–), a member of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, and Artistic Director of the Wakiknabe Theater Company, published five of his plays in 2000.
8. Mary Kathryn Nagle, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, works as a lawyer specializing in Native sovereignty issues. She wrote *Sliver of a Full Moon* (2013) about survivors of domestic violence on reservations and *Miss Lead* (2013) about a young Native American woman with lead poisoning.

## L. Feminist Theatre Artists

1. After First-Wave Feminism (late 1800s to early 1900s) focused on the right to vote, Second-Wave Feminism (early 1960s to 1980s) expanded the movement to domestic violence, workplace equality, and reproductive rights issues. Third-Wave Feminism (since the early 1990s) embraced more diversity of views regarding pornography, prostitution, sadomasochism, transsexual lesbianism, and queer theories.

Fourth-Wave Feminism (since 2005) considered social media and spiritual dimensions.

2. Marsha Norman (1947–) had early success with her realistic domestic tragedies about common women. *Getting Out* (1979) shows a young woman at home, paroled after eight years in prison for robbery, kidnapping, and manslaughter. *'night, Mother* (1983, film 1986) presents a young woman with epilepsy who decides to commit suicide and tries to prepare her mother for life without her.
3. Beth Henley (1952–) created the absurdly cheerful, yet realistic tragicomedy, *Crimes of the Heart* (1979, film 1986), about three adult sisters reuniting in their small-town Mississippi home because the youngest is in trouble for shooting her abusive husband, after he discovered her affair with a “black boy.”
4. Tina Howe (1937–) became known for her absurdist, impressionistic plays, such as *The Art of Dining* (1979), about the strange relations that three groups have with food, *Painting Churches* (1983), about a female artist painting a portrait of her parents, and *Pride's Crossing* (1997), about a 90-year-old woman who swam the English Channel.
5. Wendy Wasserstein (1950–2006) was most famous for her comedy, *The Heidi Chronicles* (1988, TV film 1995), showing changes in the main character from her high school enthusiasm in the 1960s to her earnest feminism in the 1970s to her sense of betrayal in the 1980s—and her decision to adopt a child as a single mother.
6. Paula Vogel (1951–), a political, magical-realist playwright since the 1970s, wrote *And Baby Makes Seven* (1984), a comedy about raising children in the LGBT community. Her tragicomic farce, *The Baltimore Waltz* (1992), shows a woman with a terminal illness, “Acquired Toilet Disease,” seeking a cure and having sex with many men while traveling with her gay brother in Europe, through ties to the classic film, *The Third Man*. Vogel became best known, perhaps, for *How I Learned to Drive* (1997). It uses the metaphor of driving lessons to show the sexual seduction and control of a young woman, from preteen to college age, by her uncle, while her family seems oblivious to the problem and the play jumps through various memories, with a chorus reflecting inner conflicts and individuals also speaking directly to the audience.
7. Margaret Edson (1961–) wrote one play, *Wit* (1995, HBO movie 2001), which won many awards and received hundreds of productions. It focuses on an English professor who thinks she knows about death through the poetry of John Donne, but discovers more through her hospital experiences with terminal cancer, keeping her wit with the audience as long as possible.

8. Eve Ensler (1953–) interviewed over 200 women about romance, sexuality, and violence—then scripted *The Vagina Monologues*, performing it Off-Broadway in 1996 as a celebration of vaginas. This turned into the “V-Day Movement,” protesting violence against women, with productions worldwide, a changing script, annual benefit readings on college campuses and elsewhere, and an all-transgender performance in 2004 (with a documentary film about it, *Beautiful Daughters*, 2006).
9. Theresa Rebeck (1958–) was a Pulitzer Finalist for *Omnium Gatherum* (2003, co-written with Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros) about a Manhattan dinner party with a variety of cultural icons and a possible terrorist, in the shadow of 9/11. She also reached Broadway with *Mauritius* (2007) about two sisters who inherit a stamp collection, possibly with a rare item, and several men who compete for their affections to get it from them. Her Broadway play, *Bernhardt/Hamlet* (2018), explores the history of Sarah Bernhardt playing a cross-dressed, prose Hamlet in 1899, adding a revision of the play and sexual affair with Edmond Rostand, author of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Rebeck also wrote comedy, crime, and musical dramas for television.
10. Sarah Ruhl (1974–) explored feminist concerns in various historical, yet fantastic modes. Her *Eurydice* (2004) is based on an ancient Greek myth about a woman almost returning from the dead. *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* (2007) shows a woman’s attempt to connect with the dead man whose cell she found, while drawn into the suffering he caused. *In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)* (2009) depicts a Victorian doctor’s use of a sex tool to treat his female patients’ and his wife’s “hysteria.”
11. Annie Baker (1981–) wrote naturalistic plays that use overheard conversations and pregnant pauses. *The Aliens* (2010) depicts three young men meeting behind a restaurant. One of them works, coming out on breaks, one takes drugs, and one fails to lead them to something better. *The Flick* (2013) shows three underpaid movie ushers with comically mundane conversations—and won the Pulitzer Prize.
12. Anne Washburn became known for *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (2012) about people acting out an episode of *The Simpsons* animated TV show, in a dystopian future. She also created two “transadaptations” of Euripides’s plays, *Orestes* (2010) and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (2015).
13. Lauren Gunderson (1982–) became America’s most produced living playwright in 2016–17, with her Shakespeare-influenced comedies and historical plays, such as *Leap* (2004) about the young Isaac Newton and *Bauer* (2014) about a German artists who loses ownership of his paintings, but is helped by his wife to meet with his ex-lover.

14. Laurie Anderson (1947–), a violinist and sculptor, became popular in the 1970s as a feminist performance artist, using technology to manipulate her voice and violin-playing, while inventing new devices for this and a masculine, digitally altered “Clone” of herself, through stage and screen works, plus concert albums and CDs. She continued to give witty, postmodern critiques of American culture, patriarchy, and science through the 2010s.
15. Karen Finley (1956–) became notorious as a solo performance artist, using words, props, costume changes, and her body, often with profanity and nudity, to challenge patriarchy and capitalism. She and three other performance artists (the “NEA Four”) appealed to the US Supreme Court, but lost, when the National Endowment for the Arts withdrew their funding in 1990, under pressure from conservatives in Congress who found their work indecent, after which the NEA stopped funding individual artists.

**[How have feminist writers and performance artists changed the scene since the 1960s, onstage and onscreen, reflecting inner-theatre identity needs and new social values, with a gendered Self appearing in different situations?]**

## M. Queer (LGBT+) Theatres and Artists

1. In 1969–70, the Stonewall Riots and the first Gay Liberation Day occurred in New York. In 1978, an openly gay, elected official, Harvey Milk, was assassinated in San Francisco by fellow politician Dan White. In 1980, the Democratic Party endorsed homosexual rights. In 1987, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) was founded, and in 1990, Queer Nation. In 1993, there was the first “Dyke March” in Washington, DC. Starting in 1999 in California and 2004 in Massachusetts, same-sex “civil union” and then “marriage” laws were passed, spreading across the US.
2. Jane Chambers (1937–83) wrote *A Late Snow* (1974), one of the earliest dramas with positive lesbian characters. In *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* (1980), she shows a woman leaving her husband and meeting seven lesbians on a beach, where she falls in love with one, not knowing she is dying of cancer.
3. After traveling in Europe with Spiderwoman Theater and seeing women’s theatre festivals there, Lois Weaver (1949–) and Peggy Shaw (1946–) created the Women’s One World (WOW) Café in New York’s

- East Village, starting in 1980, along with Jordi Mark and Pamela Camhe, as a multimedia environment with social café, films, and dancing, as well as theatre. It continues today as the oldest, collectively run, performance space for women and trans artists in the world (although it has moved to various locations in its history).
4. Butch-performer Peggy Shaw, along with director/performer Lois Weaver and writer Deb Margolin, also established the lesbian company Split Britches in 1980, which continues today, highlighting butch/femme identities with deconstructive critiques of classism, sexual oppression, and gender binaries. One of their shows, *Belle Reprieve*, created with the gay/drag performers Bette Bourne and Paul Shaw of London-based Bloodlips in 1990, parodied Williams's *Streetcar Named Desire*, reexamining gay and lesbian sex in the 1940s. Yet some critics have argued that the transvestism of Split Britches reconfirms binary, male-dominant stereotypes.
  5. Holly Hughes (1955–), a lesbian performance artist and one of the NEA Four, often appeared at the WOW Café. She is also known for her plays. *The Well of Horniness* (1983) is a campy murder-mystery play with lusty lesbians, set on the sound stage of a 1940s radio soap opera, with 5 women performing more than 30 characters. *Dress Suits to Hire* (1987) is a lesbian love story framed as film noir, with pulp fiction images.
  6. Performance artist Tim Miller (1958–), also one of the NEA Four, developed solo shows based on his personal life and political activism from the 1980s into the 2000s.
  7. Charles Ludlam (1943–87) founded the Ridiculous Theatrical Company in 1967 and became best known for his play, *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (1984), with 2 men playing 8 roles, male and female, with 35 costume changes, in a campy satire of Victorian melodramas and gothic horror novels and films, both deconstructing and celebrating them.
  8. Terrence McNally (1938–) wrote plays and musicals about straight and gay characters with romantic longings, such as *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* (1981, film 1991) and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1992 book for the musical adapted from Manuel Puig's novel). McNally's play, *Corpus Christi* (1997), evoked thousands of protestors and several death threats for showing Jesus and his followers as homosexuals.
  9. Larry Kramer (1935–) wrote *The Normal Heart* (1985) about the rise of the HIV-AIDS crisis in the 1980s in New York, stirring activist passions to address the medical and social issues.
  10. Tony Kushner (1956–) wrote many Brechtian epic plays, but became most known for his two-part *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* (1991–93), which helped straight spectators

appreciate the struggle of gay men during the AIDS crisis. It also shows a Mormon lawyer alienated from his agoraphobic wife, as he realizes his homosexuality—plus ghosts and angels, as messengers and cosmic spectators—with double and cross-gender casting. In 1996, the Pulitzer-winning play was almost banned in Charlotte, North Carolina, for seven seconds of male frontal nudity (showing AIDS lesions to a nurse) as “indecent exposure.” An opening-day court injunction *prevented* the arrest of the actor and the rented theatre’s closing of its doors, yet pro- and anti-play protestors marched outside the theatre. In 2003, the play was made into a six-hour Home Box Office movie with major stars, Al Pacino (playing the historical lawyer, Roy Cohn) and Meryl Streep (playing the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg, who was executed as a spy in 1953, and other roles).

11. *The Laramie Project*, by Moisés Kaufman (1963–) and members of the Tectonic Theater Project, was a devised (collectively scripted) docu-drama, created from interviews, news reports, and actors’ journals in 2000, about the brutal murder of a gay, University of Wyoming student, Matthew Shepard, in a hate crime two years before. It involves 8 actors portraying more than 60 characters in a series of short scenes. **[How did LGBT+ performance artists and playwrights change the scene since the 1970s, onstage and onscreen, reflecting inner-theatre identity needs and new social values, regarding potential selves and Others, as actors, characters, and audiences?]**

## References

- Blau, Herbert. *The Audience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- . *Blooded Thought*. New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1982.
- . *The Impossible Theatre*. New York: Macmillan, 1964.
- . *Take Up the Bodies*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- Butler, Isaac. “Breaking ‘Ground.’” *American Theatre*. 20 June 2016. [www.americantheatre.org/2016/06/20](http://www.americantheatre.org/2016/06/20).
- García-Romero, Anne. *The Fornes Frame*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016.
- McCarthy, Sean. “Giving Sam a Second Life: Beckett’s Plays in the Age of Convergent Media.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 51.1 (Spring 2009): 102–17.
- Najjar, Michael Malek. *Arab American Drama, Film and Performance*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015.
- Sacre, Antonio. Review of *Sajjil (Record)*. *nytheater indie archive*. [www.nytheatre.com](http://www.nytheatre.com).
- Savran, David. *Breaking the Rules*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1988.
- Schechner, Richard. *Performance Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2003.





# 13

## Postmodern Theatre in Europe (1950s–2010s)

### A. Major European Events of the Last Half Century, TIMELINE

- 1954, the “Western European Union” was established among Cold War allies of the US through NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949)
- 1955, the USSR and seven Eastern European countries, including East Germany, established the “Warsaw Pact,” reacting to West Germany joining NATO that year
- 1956, Hungary’s revolution against Soviet-imposed policies, starting with student protests, led to the Communist government collapsing, a new government forming, and the USSR invading to reassert control
- 1968 (May), protests by students and strikes by 11 million workers turned into riots and police violence in France, evoking revolutions in “postmodern” art and theory
- 1968 (August), “Prague Spring” reforms in Czechoslovakia, with greater rights for journalism, speech, and travel, ended in a Soviet (USSR and Warsaw Pact) military invasion
- 1972 (January), in Derry, Northern Ireland, British soldiers shot 28 unarmed protesters, killing 14, on “Bloody Sunday”
- 1972 (September), at the Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany, Palestinian terrorists killed 11 Israeli athletes and a German policeman
- 1978, Polish Cardinal, Karol Wojtyła, became Pope John Paul II, which also encouraged the Solidarity movement in Poland to rebel against atheistic, totalitarian Communism

- 1981–83, Poland declared martial law, using riot police (ZOMO) and military power to suppress the democratic trade-union Solidarity and any public gathering, while censoring political theatre as in other Communist countries
- 1985, the one-year UK Miners' Strike ended with unions weakened and Margaret Thatcher's government strengthened
- 1989, economic and political pressures, with strikes and protests, caused Communist governments to collapse in Poland (August), Hungary (October), Czechoslovakia (November), Bulgaria, and Romania (December)
- 1989–90, the Berlin Wall came down and then West and East Germany were reunited, after free elections in the East and large payments to the USSR by the West
- 1990–2008, the USSR's communist satellite, Yugoslavia, dissolved through warfare into Slovenia, Serbia, Kosovo (which Serbia still claims), Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina
- 1991, the USSR's dissolution turned its Soviet Eurasian republics into independent countries
- 1993, the "European Union" (EU) was established with Parliamentary Elections the following year
- 1995, civil war ended in Bosnia, after a three-year siege of Sarajevo killing 12,000 citizens and the Serbian (Orthodox Christian) "cleansing" of areas with Croat Catholics and Bosniak Muslims (including the massacre of 8000 Muslims in Srebrenica), later judged as "genocide" in the war crimes trial of Radovan Karadžić (President of the Serbian region of Bosnia)
- 1998, "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland diminished with the "Good Friday Agreement," after bombings, shootings, and other violent acts between Catholic republicans and British security forces, along with Protestant loyalists, killed 3500 people in 30 years—but new paramilitary groups emerged and 150 more deaths occurred in the next 20 years
- 1999, the "euro" became a collective currency for EU members (except the UK and Denmark) and three years later began appearing as notes and coins, replacing others
- 2000, Vladimir Putin became President of Russia, asserting his dominance by pointing to the threats of Chechen "terrorists" and American support for popular democratic movements in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia
- 2002, armed Chechen Islamist rebels captured a theatre in Moscow, holding 850 people hostage, resulting in 200 deaths

- 2003, in February, millions in London, Glasgow, Belfast, and other cities protested against military action in Iraq, but in March, UK forces joined the US war
- 2004, the European immigrant crisis began with the EU criticizing Italy's deportation of Africans back to Libya—and continued with the deaths of hundreds of immigrants in sea crossings from Africa and the Middle East in subsequent years
- 2005, on July 7, four Islamist terrorists set off homemade bombs in London, killing 52 people and injuring 700, in the “7/7 Attacks” on one bus and three underground trains
- 2008, Russia invaded (and later occupied) parts of neighboring Georgia in support of separatists in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which involved ethnic cleansing (removal of Georgians) and the first use of cyber-warfare in a military theatre
- 2009, the European Debt Crisis began with Greece, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and Cyprus unable to refinance government loans or bail out banks without external aid
- 2011, thousands rioted across Britain after police killed Mark Duggan, a black 29-year-old, during an arrest in London—with riots and police brutality also occurring in Greece while its parliament voted to accept economic austerity demands from the EU
- 2014 (February), Russia invaded Crimea, part of Ukraine, and a month later the majority there reportedly voted to join Russia, which then annexed the territory
- 2014 (September), Scotland's independence referendum produced 55.3% votes against independence from Britain
- 2015, in Paris, in January, Islamist terrorists killed 12 people at the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical newspaper office, after a cartoon image of the prophet Muhammad appeared on its cover, mocking Muslim Sharia law, and in November, 130 people were killed by suicide bombs and mass shootings, including 89 in a theatre
- 2016 (March, July, and December), terrorist attacks killed 32 in Brussels, Belgium, 86 in Nice, France, and 12 in Berlin, Germany
- 2016 (June), 51.9% of British voters on “Brexit” (with 72.2% of the electorate participating) decided to leave the EU
- 2017, an Islamist suicide-bomber killed 23 people and injured hundreds in Manchester, England, during the “Dangerous Woman” tour of 24-year-old American pop-star Ariana Grande

## B. British and Irish Theatre

1. Joan Littlewood (1914–2002) co-founded the Theatre Workshop in 1945, with actors living communally in the theatre building. In 1955, she directed and starred in the first British production of Brecht's *Mother Courage*. In 1963, she directed the ensemble-devised, epic musical, *Oh, What a Lovely War!*, which showed people losing their individuality by submitting to authority during World War I.
2. Various British playwrights in the 1950s became known as “the angry young men,” especially John Osborne (1929–94) and Edward Bond (1934–). Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) shows an educated, working-class hero, who is angry at society and his upper-middle-class wife. Edward Bond's *Saved* (1965) presents young unmarried Londoners on welfare who have a baby that they neglect, which gets teased and then stoned to death in its carriage in a public park by several men, including its father. The Lord Chamberlain censored this play, allowing its performance with certain cuts, and then prosecuted and fined the producers.
3. Reactions to that prosecution and to the censoring of Osborne's *A Patriot for Me* (1965), due to its “Drag Ball” climax of upper-class Viennese homosexuals cross-dressing and dancing in the 1890s, led to the abolition, in 1968, of two centuries of British censorship by the Lord Chamberlain's Office. The end of such censorship enabled the tour to London of the New York production of *Oh! Calcutta!* (1969), an erotic revue with sex-related, serious and comical sketches and dances, including extended scenes of full nudity.  
**[Is there censorship of today's theatre, film, or television, like/ unlike in the past and should there be?]**
4. In 1955, eclectic director Peter Hall (1930–2017) was the first to stage Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in London. Hall founded the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC, 1960–68) and then headed London's Royal National Theatre for 15 years (1973–88).
5. Peter Brook (1925–) emphasized experimentation with his theory of the “empty space” while defining four modes of theatre as deadly, holy, rough, and immediate. He directed Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* in London (1964), with the audience as visitors to an early nineteenth-century mental asylum. This was part of his “Theatre of Cruelty” season at the RSC. Brook made a film of that production (1967) and a film of Grotowski's *Akropolis* (1968). He staged many Shakespeare plays,

especially a minimalist, acrobatic, Meyerhold-influenced *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1970). He made other films, too, including *Lord of the Flies* (1963), *King Lear* (1971), and *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (1979). He also created a controversial stage production and television mini-series about the sacred Hindu epic poem, *Mahabharata* (1985), exploring universal themes with a multicultural acting company.

6. In 1971 with Michelle Rozan, Brook founded the International Centre for Theatre Research, which has been based in the Bouffes du Nord theatre in Paris since 1974, with a multinational company touring globally. In the 1970s, Brook invited Moshé Feldenkrais there to teach his method of uniting self and body-image through conscious awareness of the fine details of movement.

**[How does Brook's work resonate with Artaud's or Brecht's, or others' today, exploring identity and culture?]**

7. Peter Shaffer (1926–2016) took Britain's angry-young-men realism of the 1950s in a new direction with Dionysian ritual twists and metaphysical questions. In *Equus* (1973), a psychiatrist envies his patient, a boy who rode horses naked in divine rapture and then blinded six of them. In *Amadeus* (1980), Antonio Salieri mentors and envies the young Mozart, manipulating him toward death, while addressing the theatre audience as "Ghosts of the Future" (14). Both were made into successful films.
8. Czech-born British playwright Tom Stoppard (1937–) developed existential experiments with witty, philosophical explorations. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966, film 1990) shows the offstage waiting game of two minor characters in a Shakespearean tragedy. *The Real Thing* (1992) depicts the meta-theatrics of adultery. *Arcadia* (1993) explores chaos theory, history, and gardening.
9. Alan Ayckbourn (1939–) wrote over 70 plays, including popular comedies about suburban, middle-class marriages, such as his trilogy, *The Norman Conquests* (1975).
10. David Hare (1947–) wrote postmodern tragicomedies of intrigue, such as *Plenty* (1978, film 1985) about a bored, former spy, with flashbacks to her wartime career, and *Racing Demon* (1990) about gay ordination in the Church of England. He also wrote a trilogy about sacrificial love: *Skylight* (1995), *Amy's View* (1997), and *The Judas Kiss* (1998), the last of which concerns the Oscar Wilde scandal with his young lover, Lord Alfred Douglas. Hare helped to found the Joint Stock Theatre Company (1974–89) with a workshop method for writers (including Howard Brenton and Caryl Churchill) working with actors to develop new plays.

11. Michael Frayn (1933–) became best known for *Noises Off* (1982, film 1992), which shows both the front and backstage wildness of actors performing a farce. His *Copenhagen* (1998, film 2002) illustrates the “uncertainty principle” of past and future with the spirits of physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg reenacting different versions of their historical meeting, discussing the possibility of Germany building an atomic bomb for Hitler.
12. Caryl Churchill (1938–) created feminist plays using Brechtian techniques, which twisted history and gender-identities while double casting actors. *Cloud Nine* (1979) parodies a Victorian-era, British, colonial family in Africa, making their affairs and pedophilia explicit, and then shows some of the same characters, just 25 years older, but 100 years later, in 1970s London. *Top Girls* (1982) depicts women from various historical periods at a dinner party together, through a modern business-woman’s fantasy, and then her problematic relationship with her daughter, who was raised by her sister. Churchill’s later plays involved more Artaudian, surreal elements to challenge the audience in other ways, such as *A Mouthful of Birds* (1986), *The Skriker* (1994), and *Far Away* (2000).
13. Timberlake Wertenbaker (1956–) wrote plays exploring political ambiguities, as in *Our Country’s Good* (1988, based on Thomas Keneally’s novel, *The Playmaker*) about Royal Marines and convicts in an Australian penal colony, staging Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* in the 1780s, with Brechtian scene titles and a lone Aborigine offering comments.
14. Sarah Kane (1971–99) became known for her Artaudian, expressionist, poetic tragedies, experimenting with actor-audience relationships and violent stagecraft in the 1990s—although she suffered from severe depression and committed suicide at the age of 28.
15. Kane has been grouped (by Alek Sierz) with Anthony Neilson (1967–) and Mark Ravenhill (1966–) as “in-yer-face” playwrights, who explored sexual violence in consumerist culture.
16. Journalist Richard Norton-Taylor (1944–) created political docudramas based on transcripts of political hearings: *The Colour of Justice* (1999) and *Justifying War* (2003).
17. Robin Soans (1947–) created *Talking to Terrorists* (2005), using verbatim interviews structured as dialogs with the audience, to present various perspectives on terrorism in Britain and elsewhere.
18. Dennis Kelly (1970–) wrote the three-act, in-yer-face play, *Osama the Hero* (2005) about an awkward teenager who gives a school presentation sympathetic toward Osama bin-Laden and then, after a local bombing, is violently attacked by his frightened neighbors.

19. Laura Wade (1977–) wrote *Colder than Here* (2005), a comedy about the family of a woman dying of bone cancer, and *Posh* (2010), about Oxford University students in an elite “Riot Club” who get drunk, sexually wild, and violent at a dinner party, but handle the damage through upper-class political connections.
20. Jez Butterworth (1969–), a playwright and filmmaker, penned *The Ferryman* (2017) about the family of a former IRA activist during “The Troubles” in rural Northern Ireland in 1981.
21. Joe Robertson and Joe Murphy wrote *The Jungle* (2017), directed in London by Stephen Daldry and Justin Martin, which placed the audience at tables in a refugee camp café and in theatre seats above it. The play drew on the British writers’ experience of creating a theatre in Calais, France, where migrants from the Middle East and Africa organized a tent-dwelling community while trying to cross the channel illegally to England.
22. Leading English playwrights of the new millennium also included Mike Bartlett, Debbie Tucker Green, Alistair McDowall, Nick Payne, Penelope Skinner, and Simon Stephens.
23. British designer Cecil Beaton (1904–80) created scenery and costumes, for stage and screen, winning four Tony Awards and two Oscars. He was also knighted in 1972.
24. Designer and director Pamela Howard (1939–) wrote the influential book, *What Is Scenography?* (1998), insisting that design is vital and varied, not just background, in theatrical storytelling.
25. Welsh poet Dylan Thomas (1914–53) wrote the radio drama *Under Milk Wood* (1954), which later became a stage-play and film, about townspeople’s dreams and daily lives in Llareggub.
26. Saunders Lewis (1893–1985) penned *Siwan* (1956) in Welsh about the illegitimate daughter of England’s King John, who married the thirteenth-century ruler of Wales.
27. In Scotland, the annual Edinburgh Festival Fringe, which started in 1947, is now the largest arts festival in the world with over 3000 shows in 300 venues during 25 days.
28. Scottish dramatist Stewart Conn (1936–) penned *The Burning* (1971) about witchcraft, superstition, and the power struggle between James VI, King of Scotland (later of England also), and his cousin, the Earl of Bothwell.
29. Scottish playwright and director Anthony Neilson created *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* (2004) about a young woman’s imaginary life, shown in color, and her hospitalization for it, in black and white.

30. David Harrower (1966–) wrote *Blackbird* (2005) about a woman meeting a middle-aged man 15 years after being abused by him when she was 12.
31. Gregory Burke (1968–) created *Black Watch* (2006) about Scottish soldiers fighting in Iraq, performed on a traverse (corridor) stage with the audience on two sides.
32. David Greig (1969–) wrote *Dunsinane* (2010), a sequel to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.
33. Brian Friel (1929–2015), known as the “Irish Chekhov,” became famous for his *Translations* (1980) about language, history, and cultural imperialism, and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990, film 1998), a memory play about a boy's aunts and their brother, an old priest and former missionary in Africa. Both plays are set in the fictional, small town of Ballybeg.
34. Frank McGuinness (1953–) scripted plays about female workers in a small Irish town (*Factory Girls*, 1982), British Protestant soldiers during World War I (*Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, 1985), and British soldiers killing 14 Catholic protesters on Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland in 1972 (*Carthaginians*, 1989). He also wrote about men absurdly held hostage in Lebanon (*Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, 1992), two gay partners who founded the Gate Theatre in Dublin (*Gates of Gold*, 2002), and a middle-class family in conflict after the suicide of one of the three children (*There Came a Gypsy Riding*, 2007).
35. Martin McDonagh (1970–) penned black comedies about violence, often with shocking props, set in Ireland during “The Troubles” (*The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, 2001), in a fictional police state (*The Pillowman*, 2003), and in the US (*A Behanding in Spokane*, 2010).
36. Leading Irish playwrights of the new millennium also included Conor McPherson (1971–), with plays often composed of alternating monologues, and Marina Carr (1964–), whose *By the Bog of Cats* (1998) offers a modern version of *Medea* in an Irish village and *On Rafferty Hill* (2000) shows a woman raped by her father onstage.  
**[How do recent British and Irish theatre artists relate to earlier ones—with changing values and styles, involving Self/Other identities and inner theatre elements?]**
37. Since the 1960s, London's Royal Court Theatre has promoted the avant-garde works of many playwrights, including Osborne, Hare, Churchill, Kane, Ravenhill, and Tucker Green.
38. *Monstrous Regiment* (1975–93) developed new plays about women's lives through solo-shows, cabaret, epic theatre, and performance art.



39. In 1983, Simon McBurney (1957–) founded the London-based Théâtre de Complicité, which develops Lecoq movement, high-tech, often surrealist, and devised (collectively created) pieces, touring internationally.
40. Founded in 1986, DV8 Physical Theatre addresses sociopolitical issues through dance, theatre, film, and text.
41. Adrian Noble (1950–) was Artistic Director of the RSC (1991–2002) and made a film adaptation of his surrealist, boy-through-a-rabbit-hole staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1994, film 1996).
42. Kenneth Branagh (1960–), originally from Belfast, Northern Ireland, starred in and directed many of Shakespeare's plays—while also making film versions of *Henry V* (1989), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *Othello* (1995), *Hamlet* (1996), *Love's Labours Lost* (2000), and *As You Like It* (2006).
43. In 1991, Adrian Jackson created Cardboard Citizens in London, a homeless people's professional theatre company, inspired by Augusto Boal's "Forum Theatre" techniques.
44. In 1997, Shakespeare's Globe opened in London as a best-estimate, historical replica of the Bard's theatre, built with original materials, near its original site on the south bank of the Thames River. This occurred through the fund-raising efforts of American actor Sam Wannamaker, with Mark Rylance (1960–) as its first Artistic Director, staging shows with Elizabethan-Jacobean performance practices, plus modern techniques. It added an indoor, candlelit, Jacobean-type theatre in 2014.
45. Along with London's big, commercial, West End theatres, and its government supported RSC, Royal National Theatre, and Royal Court Theatre, the Old Vic put on quality, non-profit, "Off-West-End," non-subsidized productions, especially under the 11-year management of American theatre and film actor Kevin Spacey (2003–15). But just a few years later, Spacey's career was tarnished with 15 accusations of homosexual harassment across several decades.  
**[How are London's theatres like and unlike those in New York or other major cities, in developing certain types of performances, sharing and shaping inner theatres?]**
46. Wales developed two national theatres, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru (performing in Welsh) and National Theatre Wales (in English), in 2003 and 2009.
47. National Theatre of Scotland was founded in 2006, producing Burke's *Black Watch* that year.

## C. Continental Theatre

1. In **France**, Roger Blin (1907–84) worked with Artaud on *The Cenci* in 1935 and then directed early productions of Beckett's and Genet's plays in the 1950s–60s.
2. Jean-Louis Barrault (1910–94), a French actor, mime-artist, and director, worked with Artaud and became known for using his and other techniques, especially in staging Ionesco's plays.
3. Jacques Lecoq (1921–99) created a mime school in Paris in 1956, influenced by Copeau's concept of "natural gymnastics," by the ideas of Artaud and Barrault, by commedia (through his work with Dario Fo), and his own training as a gymnast. Lecoq emphasized *mask work*, with a neutral to larval (abstract shape), expressive (specific emotion), commedia, or half mask, and clown's red nose. Lecoq's technique also involved *gestures* of action, expression, and demonstration—while encouraging playfulness, togetherness, openness, and intimacy with the audience.
4. Étienne Decroux (1898–1991), another innovator of *physical theatre* influenced by Copeau and commedia, developed *corporeal mime* as a metaphor-based expression of universal emotions and ideas. This emphasized the trunk of the body, with or without texts.  
**[How does French mime and physical theatre, especially with masks, relate to earlier periods and current, inner or outer, personal or social theatres?]**
5. Ariane Mnouchkine (1939–) studied psychology in England and then mime at the Lecoq school in Paris, where she founded Théâtre du Soleil in 1964. It usually performed in large found spaces, such as barns, with actors putting on makeup and costume elements in full view of the audience as they entered. Mnouchkine rehearsed her actors to perform just one emotional state in each *present* moment in the script and was critical of Stanislavskian explorations into the character's past. She staged adaptations of classics by Aeschylus (a ten-hour *Oresteia* in 1992), Euripides, Shakespeare, and Molière, often applying Asian theatre styles. She directed new political scripts, including projects with deconstructive feminist Hélène Cixous (1937–), such as *The Indiade, or the India of Their Dreams* (1987). Mnouchkine also created *The Last Caravan Stop* (2003), a six-hour play with 169 characters about the epic journeys of refugees, using actor improvisations, and she directed a film of it in 2006.

6. Antoine Vitez (1930–90) gave radical reinterpretations of French classics in the 1980s stressing complexities, contradictions, and possibilities. He used minimal set elements moved by actors, sometimes with models onstage (such as a ship) to represent larger structures, lateral lighting to create planes of action, and actors shifting between realistic and anti-realistic styles.
7. Director Oliver Py (1965–) became famous for his long productions: *La Servant* (1995) with 5 pieces across 24 hours about spreading an angel's message and *Face of Orpheus* (1997) about a young masked man dismembered onstage for 4 hours.
8. Yasmina Reza (1959–) reached international acclaim through her intellectual comedy of manners, *Art* (1994), with friends debating the value of an abstract painting. In her *God of Carnage* (2007), two sets of upper-class parents discuss a fight between their boys, with civility devolving into bitter argumentation and vomit.

**[How did postwar French theatre reflect the grandness and violence of prior eras?]**

9. In **Norway**, Klaus Hagerup (1946–) wrote Brechtian parodies about Western romance (*Bullets at Sundown*, 1971), neo-fascism in Germany (*In this World Everything is Possible*, 1978), and the popular loss of identity through idolizing stars like Elvis Presley (*Heartbreak Hotel*, 1987) (Rubin 623).
10. Friends with Brecht after the war, **Swiss** writer Max Frisch (1911–91) created dialectical parable-plays in German, such as *The Firebugs* (1958) about a kind man who gives shelter to vagrants, but they burn down his house, and *Andorra* (1961) about people who treat a boy as “typically” Jewish although he was actually adopted by his Jewish father.
11. Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–90) wrote tragicomedies in German, including *The Visit* (1956), about a wealthy old woman who promises to revitalize her former hometown if the people there will kill a man who got her pregnant and then jilted her. In *The Physicists* (1961), set in an asylum, a brilliant scientist pretends to be insane (with visits from the biblical Solomon) to save the world from his dangerous knowledge. Two others, who seem to believe they are Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, become killers, as spies from different countries trying to get the scientist's secrets.
12. In **Austria**, Peter Handke (1942–) explored the actor-audience relationship in his “speech plays,” without character, plot, or setting, such as *Offending the Audience* (1966), in which four unnamed speakers attack and reformulate statements about theatricality. Handke also explored the theatricality of alienation in *Kaspar* (1968), about the

feral child, Kaspar Hauser (1812–33), who grew up in a cell without learning to speak and was then forced by society to conform, even when freed.

13. In **Germany**, Peter Weiss (1916–82) wrote documentary dramas, based on historical events and documents. These included his Brechtian tragicomedy, *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* (a.k.a. *Marat/Sade*, 1964), about two, very different, historical figures of the French revolution, and *The Investigation* (1965), about the Frankfurt war crimes trial of former guards at extermination camps.
14. In the 1970s–90s, Franz Xaver Kroetz (1946–) wrote consciousness-raising plays about the Bavarian working class, with naturalistic depictions of social horrors, including rape, child murder, and neo-Nazism.
15. Director Peter Stein (1937–) ran the Schaubühne in West Berlin (1970–85), staged monumental productions as head of the Salzburg Festival (1992–97), and created the first full staging of Goethe's *Faust*, which took 15 hours to perform (2000).
16. Frank Castorf (1951–), Artistic Director of the Berlin Volksbühne (1992–2015), became known as the “text destroyer” with his irreverent, anarchist, anti-realistic, and grotesque staging of scripts.
17. German writer/director Heiner Müller (1929–95), who lived in East Berlin, used classics with added symbolic elements to explore social and political problems, thus dodging Communist government censorship in the 1970s–80s. Müller was also critical of capitalism in West Germany, even as it reunited with the East in 1990, and led the Berliner Ensemble in 1993–95. His short, tragicomic *Hamletmachine* (1979) is an exemplary postmodern deconstruction, mixing German and English, with monologues by an actor (or Hamlet) who “was Hamlet” and says he wants to be a woman, an Ophelia who comes back after her suicidal drowning, and various surreal images, including three naked women as Marx, Lenin, and Mao.

**[How did Norwegian, Swiss, Austrian, or German theatre artists reflect postwar identities and audience-performance-script relationships, involving similar, inner-theatre networks?]**

18. Director-dramatist Kazimierz Braun (1936–), Artistic Director at the Contemporary Theatre in Wrocław, **Poland** (1975–84), also used symbolic imagery to bypass political censorship, with non-traditional spaces increasing the “interhuman process” of viewer-performer

- relations. His stage adaptation of Camus's novel, *The Plague*, in 1983, reflected the disease of Communism, especially under martial law, imposed by the regime for over a year to control opponents. He was fired from his artistic position in 1984, due to such coded yet dissident productions. He directed plays at various US theatres and universities, eventually becoming a professor at SUNY-Buffalo.
19. Polish artist and designer Tadeusz Kantor (1915–90) reintroduced absurdist dramas, such as those by Witkiewicz. He also founded Cricot 2 in 1955, a company that displayed his inner theatre's memories and fantasies. *The Dead Class* (1975) exemplifies his "Theatre of Death" (and Life), presenting the children he knew who died in World War II, shown as adult ghosts in a schoolroom with child-puppet appendages while dancing, with Kantor appearing onstage, redirecting them.
  20. Jerzy Grotowski (1933–99) developed a theory of the "holy actor" and "poor theatre," based on ideas from Artaud and Brecht. This involved intensive actor-training with archetypal forms, non-verbal vocalizations, and the face as a "life-mask," focusing on presence and "translucination." Grotowski also made spectators part of the setting. In his adaptation of Stanisław Wyspiański's *Akropolis* (1962), they were witnesses as concentration-camp prisoners built a crematorium, on the eve of Christ's Second Coming. They were diners at the table where Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* was being performed (1964). And yet, Grotowski shifted to paratheatrical activity in the 1970s, in the US and Italy, working solely with actors in private rituals, and in a more anthropological direction in the 1980s with his "theatre of sources" and "objective drama."
  21. Ryszard Cieślak (1937–90) was the lead actor in Grotowski's company, his closest collaborator, and teacher of his method.
  22. Sławomir Mrożek (1930–2015) wrote witty absurdist plays with striking metaphors and political edges, such as *Tango* (1965) about totalitarianism and *The Émigrés* (1975) about two Poles in Paris. He was forced to emigrate (to Italy, France, and Mexico) during the martial law period of the 1980s when his writings were banned in Poland and other Warsaw Pact nations, as orchestrated by Moscow, due to Mrożek's criticism of the 1968 Czechoslovakia invasion.
  23. Another Polish émigré, but to the US, Janusz Głowacki (1938–2017), achieved success with his absurdist mix of reality and grotesquerie in *Hunting Cockroaches* (1987) about an apartment in New York and then, after he returned to Poland, with *The Fourth Sister* (2003) about Chekhov's characters in today's Moscow.

24. In **Czechoslovakia**, Communist control in the 1950s meant that Soviet plays dominated with socialist realist propaganda. In the 1960s, various styles developed, from Brechtian to absurdist, poetic to nationalistic. But after 1968, the government's secret police attacked opponents. Many artists, including novelist and playwright Milan Kundera, left the country.
25. Václav Havel (1936–2011) achieved international notice with his first full-length play, *The Garden Party* (1963), with its absurdist hero conforming to the nonsense talk of bureaucrats in the "Liquidation Office," reflecting the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. But after 1968 and the failure of the Prague Spring rebellion, his plays were banned. He became a leading dissident and was imprisoned multiple times, the longest for nearly four years. Yet he became the country's first president when the USSR dissolved and Czechoslovakia changed to a democracy, serving from 1989 to 1992, and again as president of the Czech Republic (after Slovakia split off), 1993–2003.
26. Czech scenographer Josef Svoboda (1920–2002) took an architectural, holistic, non-naturalistic approach, introducing film projections, black light, and other electronic devices. In the 1990s, he became head of *Laterna Magika*, which combined video and live-action through computer programming.  
**[How did Polish and Czech theatre artists develop ritual, political, and non-naturalistic techniques through personal, Communist, and international contexts, related to other artists in the past and today?]**
27. In **Italy**, director Giorgio Strehler (1921–97) was a postwar eclectic, who became friends with Brecht after directing several of his plays in the 1950s. Strehler was also famous for staging Shakespeare, Chekhov, and various Italian authors in subsequent decades. Strehler worked with Svoboda in a nine-hour production of Goethe's *Faust*, shown in three parts, with some scenes read and some staged.
28. Eclectic director Franco Zeffirelli (1923–) became famous for his staging of operas and his film versions of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967), *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), and *Hamlet* (1990, starring Mel Gibson). He also served in the Italian Senate (1994–2001), as a member of the center-right Forza Italia party, led by Silvio Berlusconi.
29. Italian Eugenio Barba (1936–) studied with Grotowski for three years, writing a book about him in 1965, and studied *kathakali* in India. Then he founded Odin Teatret in Denmark, directing over 60 productions across four decades, and created the International School of Theatre Anthropology in 1979.

30. Italian actor-playwright Dario Fo (1926–2016) was awarded the 1997 Nobel Prize. His plays offered current political parodies through traditional commedia and *guillari* (medieval strolling players). In the 1960s–80s, they criticized government corruption, assassinations, organized crime, Catholic theology, racism, and war, and then in the 1990s–2010s, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his party, European banks, and the continuing debt crisis of EU countries.
31. Actress-playwright Franca Rame (1929–2013), wife of Dario Fo, co-founded their theatre company in Milan in 1958. She began writing feminist plays, often as monologs, in the 1970s. But in 1973 she was kidnapped by fascists (at the behest of police, a court found, after the statute of limitations for the crime had lapsed). She was raped, beaten, burned with cigarettes, slashed with razors, and left in a park. Later, she returned to the stage with her anti-fascist plays. She also entered politics, becoming elected to the Italian Senate in 2006, at age 77.

**[How did postwar, Italian directors and dramatists express conservative or progressive ideas, regarding tragicomic traditions and contemporary politics?]**

32. In **Romania**, Horia Lovinescu (1917–83) created poetic realist plays, despite government controls (as in Poland and Czechoslovakia), including *A Game of Life and Death in the Ashen Desert* (1979), a Cain and Abel story during a global nuclear winter (Rubin 689).
33. Romanian director Andrei Serban (1943–) moved to the US in 1969, working there and across Europe, giving new meanings to classics through his distinctive poetic style. Then, he became head of the National Theatre of Bucharest, 1990–93, and later a professor at New York's Columbia University.
34. Director Liviu Ciulei (1923–2011) had a 50-year international career, offering stunning visual metaphors, often blending discordant elements. He became Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis (1980–85) and a professor at Columbia University (1986–90) and New York University (1991–95).
35. A teacher at the Vakhtangov Theatre School in **Russia**, actor Yuri Lyubimov (1917–2014) became a director at age 46, using techniques from Brecht and Meyerhold, and then headed the Taganka Theatre in Moscow (1960s–80s). He staged over 100 plays and operas, working also in the US and Europe. He became known for his deconstructive adaptations of poems and novels, sometimes in conflict with political authorities. They banned his work in the USSR from 1980 to 1989

and took away his citizenship in 1984. In the 1990s, his status was restored and he again headed the Taganka.

36. **Macedonian** (Yugoslavian) playwright Goran Stefanovski (1952–) wrote *Hotel Europa* (2000) about immigrants in transit, including the ancient Odysseus returning home. Each scene was staged by a director from a different country, in derelict buildings in five European cities. Spectators were split into six groups, 50 in each, and taken to 15-minute scenes in various orders, with a longer, collective banquet in the middle.
37. Although socialist realism dominated postwar Yugoslavia, **Serbian** writers Aleksandar Obrenović and Djordje Lebović (both 1928–) wrote about historical reality in *Heaven's Detachment* (1956), with seven Auschwitz prisoners gaining three months of life by killing and cremating fellow inmates.
38. Ljubomir Simović (1935–) wrote *The Travelling Troupe Šopalović* (1985) about actors creating poetic beauty in Serbia during World War II, with one killed absurdly onstage and in reality, as they perform the Orestes story.
39. Serbian performance artist Marina Abramović (1946–) staged *Rhythm 0* in 1974, allowing viewers to do anything they wanted to her body with 72 given instruments, including cut away her clothes, slice her skin, and put a loaded gun to her head. In *The Artist is Present* (2010), she sat in a chair for 736.5 hours, while people stood in line to sit opposite her and look in her eyes, for as long as each one wanted.  
**[How has Eastern European theatricality expressed conflicts between democracy, communism, and capitalism, yet also shown potential resolutions--with parallels today?]**

## References

- Müller, Heiner. *The Hamletmachine*. <http://members.efn.org/~dredmond/Hamletmachine.PDF>
- Rubin, Don, ed. *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*. Vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Shaffer, Peter. *Amadeus*. New York: Harper, 1981.





# 14

## Global, Postcolonial Theatre

### A. Colonial and Postcolonial Events of the Last Half Millennium, TIMELINE

- 1441, the early modern, intercontinental slave trade started with Portuguese traders capturing 12 West Africans and taking them to Europe
- 1452, the Pope confirmed that non-Christians could be enslaved by Christians
- 1486, the Portuguese colonized the uninhabited West African island of Sao Tome, setting up a sugar plantation with African slave labor
- starting in 1492, with the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, 80–90% of an estimated 50–100 million indigenous people died, most of them from imported diseases, but some from direct violence
- 1493, in his second voyage to the New World, Columbus returned to Spain with several hundred Taino people from Hispaniola (today's Dominican Republic), but there was a debate about the legality of enslaving them
- 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas divided the New World between the Portuguese and Spanish Empires, separating what later became Brazil from the rest of Latin America to the West of it (and the Philippines across the Pacific)
- 1498, Vasco de Gama started the Portuguese presence in India
- 1525–1866, 12.5 million Africans were shipped by Europeans to the New World, almost all after being captured and enslaved by other Africans, with 1.8 million not surviving the voyage (according to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database)—in the “Middle Passage” of the Euro-African-American trade triangle

- 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted a Royal Charter to the East India Company, starting trade and imperial expansion into the next century, as the Mughal Empire declined and the British came into rivalry with the French East India Company, then won the Carnatic Wars of the 1740s–50s
- 1602, the Dutch East India Company was chartered for the spice trade with Africa and Asia (through sea lanes after the land route of the Silk Road was blocked by the Ottoman Empire) and it became the first public company with bonds and shares of stocks, gaining quasi-governmental powers with the ability to wage wars, imprison and execute criminals, negotiate treaties, make money, and establish its own colonies
- 1608, Quebec City was colonized, becoming the capital of New France
- 1663, Charles II granted the Carolina charter to eight of his loyal friends (the Lords Proprietors) and the port city of Charles Town (Charleston) was founded 7 years later, likewise named after the British king and exporting, in its first 45 years, more Native American slaves, captured or purchased from other tribes, than it imported from Africa
- 1664, Britain captured New Amsterdam from the Dutch and renamed it “New York”
- 1670, Hudson’s Bay Company was formed by English Royal Charter (from Charles II) with a fur trading monopoly over Prince Rupert’s Land (British Canada) and it continues today, operating department stores
- 1687, African slaves from British colonies escaped south to St. Augustine in Spanish Florida, where they could earn money, get married, keep their families together by law, and buy their freedom—starting waves of escaped slaves (maroons) moving to Florida and joining Spanish settlements or the Seminole Indians, who accepted them into their communities, as “Black Seminoles”
- 1692, the Salem witch trials in colonial Massachusetts resulted in the execution of 20 people, 14 of them women, with 5 others, including 2 infants, dying in prison
- 1701, the Great Peace of Montreal was signed between New France and 39 indigenous nations
- 1711–15, British, German, and Dutch settlers in North Carolina, with Yamasee and Cherokee allies, fought the Tuscarora nation, after encroaching on their land, capturing some of them as slaves, and introducing diseases—with the settlers winning and most of the Tuscarora fleeing to New York state, where they joined the Iroquoian League

- 1712, at the peak of its territorial expansion (1534–1763), New France extended from the Great Lakes northeast along the coast and northwest to Hudson Bay, as well as south along the Mississippi to its delta
- 1713, Acadia was ceded to Britain
- 1718, New Orleans was established at the Mississippi delta and Blackbeard, the pirate (Edward Teach), was killed off the coast of North Carolina
- 1754–63, the French and Indian War (against the British) was the North American theatre for a global conflict called the Seven Years' War, fought along the frontier between New France and the British colonies (involving a young commander named George Washington)—with Britain then gaining the territories of Mississippi from France and Florida from Spain
- 1769–70, James Cook explored and mapped New Zealand and Australia, claiming its eastern coast for Britain as “New South Wales,” during his global voyage
- 1769–1833, Spanish priests, soldiers, and settlers established 21 missions in California, forcing Native nations into “reductions” (reservations) and transforming them into colonial citizens, while forming the basis for many cities that developed along the coast, such as San Diego, Santa Barbara, and San Francisco
- 1773, the British East India Company started smuggling opium into China to address the trade imbalance (with porcelain, silk, and tea coming from China and silver going to it as payment), creating consumer dependency there and leading to the First and Second Opium Wars (1839–42, 1856–60)
- 1775–82, Britain's war against the Maratha Empire of India involved the British navy and the East India Company's private army, which was twice the size of Britain's (leading to a second war, 1802–03)
- 1778, James Cook and his men became the first Europeans on the Hawaiian Islands, where he was killed by natives when returning a year later, after he attempted to kidnap the local king for ransom, responding to the theft of a small boat
- 1783, the original 13 colonies of the eastern US gained independence from Britain after a war that also involved France (allied with the US) and Spain (allied just with France), but with few gains for those empires
- 1787, freed slaves from Britain established Freetown in today's Sierra Leone (West Africa)
- 1788, Britain started colonizing the eastern half of Australia, bringing convicts

- 1791, a slave rebellion led by Toussaint Louverture erupted in the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue—and by 1800, as he gained power over the island, it became the first colonial society to reject race as the basis of social ranking
- 1795, Britain invaded southern Africa
- 1804, Haiti, formerly Saint-Domingue, gained independence from France—and the Dominican Republic, part of the same island, separated from it in 1844
- 1810s–20s, various countries in Central and South America gained independence from Spain: Colombia (1810), Paraguay (1811), Venezuela (1811), Chile (1818), Costa Rica (1821), El Salvador (1821), Guatemala (1821), Honduras (1821), Mexico (1821, first as an “empire” for two years), Nicaragua (1821), Panama (1821), Peru (1821), Ecuador (1822), Brazil (1822, first as an “empire,” but then abolishing slavery and its monarchy in 1888–89), and Bolivia (1825)
- 1819, the Civilization Fund Act provided US government money to societies running schools for indigenous children, many as boarding schools taking them away from their families and assimilating them into Euro-American, Christian culture with language repression, haircuts, and name replacement
- 1821–22, the American Colonization Society, a group of otherwise contentious Evangelicals, Quakers, and slave-owners, founded Liberia on the west coast of Africa, for African-Americans’ return, and that country gained independence in 1844
- 1823, President James Monroe stated his doctrine that the US would protect Latin American countries from re-colonization, separating the Old and New World as spheres of influence—but the Monroe Doctrine was issued in cooperation with Britain to allow its merchants open access to New World markets, against France and Spain
- by 1825, the Dutch ceded all their territory in India to the British, although small Danish colonies lasted longer (1620–1869) and French ones also (1668–1954), while “Dutch East India” continued (with Japanese occupation) until 1949, when it became Indonesia
- 1827, the entire Australian continent was claimed as British territory (and Western Australia became a penal colony 22 years later)
- 1830, the French colonized Algeria, until the Algerian War (1954–62)
- 1842, Britain won the First Opium War with China, gaining Hong Kong and access to Chinese markets, including the right to sell opium from India there, also winning the Second Opium War 18 years later, gaining more trade rights

- 1850, French colonial administrators in Polynesia banned indigenous cultural practices such as inter-island voyaging, ritual prayer and feasting, wood carving, tattooing, dancing, and singing
- 1851, the Victorian gold rush began in southeastern Australia, leading to rebellions against British colonial authorities
- 1857–58, Britain suppressed the Indian Rebellion and acquired governmental control of India from the East India Company
- 1860s–70s, France started its colonization of Indochina (in southern Vietnam and Cambodia)
- 1867, the Dominion of Canada gained a degree of independence from Britain
- 1869, “Stolen Generations” of mixed-race Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were removed from their families for the next 100 years, by government and church authorities, to train them for survival in white societies
- 1875, the Page Act (Oriental Exclusion Act) banned unmarried Asian women from entering the US because they were assumed to be prostitutes
- 1876, Canada’s Indian Act was passed, with an amendment in 1884 that required indigenous children to attend schools, which were often residential and far from their families, attempting to assimilate or “civilize” them by forbidding their tribal languages and limiting parental visits—a system that lasted over 100 years
- 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act stopped immigration to the US of Chinese laborers for 60 years—and it also prevented Chinese people already in the US from becoming citizens—after the Gold Rush and building of the transcontinental railroad increased their population in the West in the mid-1800s
- 1882–1903, in the First Aliyah (migration wave), 25,000–35,000 Jews moved to Palestine, escaping persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe
- 1884, the Berlin Conference negotiated where seven European countries (Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, and Belgium) had the right to colonize territories in the “Scramble for Africa,” or “the Great Game,” acquiring almost 90% of the continent by 1914 (all except Ethiopia, Somalia, and Liberia)
- 1885, Canada became ethno-religiously polarized after the failed North-West Rebellion of Catholic-Francophone Métis allied with First Nations (Cree and Assiniboine) in Saskatchewan

- 1897, the First Zionist Congress, meeting in Basel, Switzerland, planned the re-colonization of Ottoman-ruled Palestine by establishing the World Zionist Organization, which led to a second wave (Aliyah) of 35,000 Jews migrating there, who created the kibbutz (communal agriculture) movement, 1904–14
- 1898, the US acquired the overseas territories of the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, taken from Spain after the Spanish-American War, while also annexing Hawaii after supporting a rebellion there against its Queen in 1893
- 1900–08, King Leopold of Belgium was denounced worldwide for the cruel treatment of Africans on rubber plantations in the Belgian Congo
- 1901, Australia became an independent nation and the “White Australia Policy” (as termed later) banned non-European immigrants, such as Asians and Pacific Islanders, for the next 70 years
- 1902, the Philippines gained independence from the US
- 1910, South Africa gained independence from the British Empire
- 1910–45, Japan colonized Korea
- 1918, women gained voting rights in Canada
- 1919, the Ottoman Empire (on the losing side with Germany in World War I) was split up, under a League of Nations mandate, leading to French control of Lebanon and Syria, plus British control of Palestine/Israel, Iraq, and Jordan (until World War II)
- 1919–22, Marcus Garvey ran the Black Star Line, shipping American blacks to Liberia, according to his Pan-African philosophy of strengthening bonds between all people of African descent, which eventually inspired the Nation of Islam and Rastafarianism
- 1919–23, a third wave (Aliyah) of 40,000 Jews, mostly Russian and Polish artisans and merchants, moved to Palestine
- 1922, Egypt gained independence from the British Empire after a revolutionary war
- 1924–28, a fourth wave of 80,000 Jews moved to Palestine, due to Zionist ideals and immigration restrictions in the US
- 1929–39, a fifth wave of nearly 300,000 Jews moved to Palestine
- 1931, floods in China killed 2.5 million people
- 1936–39, Arabs rebelled against the British Mandate in Palestine with strikes and violence, partly due to the waves of Jewish immigration, leading to British restrictions on that during World War II and the Holocaust
- 1937, Japan invaded China, starting World War II in Asia (and the “Rape of Nanjing”)

- in the 1940s, various Middle Eastern countries gained independence from their European colonizers: Lebanon (1943), Syria (1944), Jordan (1946), and Iraq (1947)
- 1947 (August), India and Pakistan gained independence from Britain as majority Hindu and Muslim states, but also in that year they fought the first of four wars over contested border regions, with millions of people in each religion fleeing persecution
- 1947 (November), the United Nations approved the partitioning of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, but Jewish military forces captured various cities and British forces withdrew from Palestine the next year
- 1948–49, in the Arab-Israeli War, the newly declared state of Israel, already in a civil war with Palestinian Arabs, fought off invasions from surrounding countries, greatly expanding its territory, while 700,000 Palestinian refugees (about half the population) fled, in what they called *al-Nakba* (the Catastrophe)
- 1949, the People's Republic of China was formed under communist leader Mao Zedong, with his forces dominating the Chinese nationalists (his former allies against Japan, with many moving to Taiwan after the civil war ended in 1950)
- in the 1940s–50s, African leaders, many educated in Western universities, led successful independence movements, creating new countries: Libya (1951), Sudan (1956), Tunisia (1956), Ghana (1957), and Guinea (1958)
- 1953, after a revolution, Egypt overthrew its king, starting a republic, with British troops leaving three years later
- 1956, Mao's "Hundred Flowers Campaign" in China encouraged diverse political views, but soon a violent crackdown against "Rightists" (1957–59) persecuted a half million people, including intellectuals who had expressed alternatives to Communism and were then sent to labor camps or executed—with Mao describing them as "snakes" that he had lured out of their holes to chop off their heads
- 1958–62, rapid changes from premodern agriculture to postcolonial industrialization in China's "Great Leap Forward" resulted in 20 million deaths through famine
- 1959 (January), after six years of armed revolution, Cuba became socialist, led by Fidel Castro
- 1959 (March), the Tibetan Uprising against Chinese occupation resulted in Tibet's religious and political leader, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, fleeing to India
- 1960, 17 African countries gained independence from European colonialism, with armed opposition to apartheid also beginning in South Africa

- 1962, after an eight-year war, Algeria gained independence from France, and then 900,000 Europeans fled the country with attacks against them in the next two years
- 1963, Kenya gained independence from the UK after seven years of the Mau Mau Rebellion
- 1964, having lost their nation-state in the Gaza Strip (1948–59) to Egypt, Palestinian Arabs in Israel formed the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)
- 1965, in Indonesia, an anti-communist purge by the government killed a million or more people
- 1966–76, China’s “Cultural Revolution” tried to purge traditional and capitalist elements in art, business, academia, and politics, purifying the Maoist state, especially through students in the Red Guard, with millions persecuted across the country in violent struggles, public humiliations, property seizures, arbitrary imprisonments, tortures, executions, and mass displacements, including at least 16 million youths who were “sent down” from urban to rural areas
- 1967, during the Six-Day War against surrounding Arab states, Israel captured more territory, such as the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem
- 1967–70, the Nigerian Civil War, with the southern, oil-rich state of Biafra (the Igbo people) trying for independence, caused three million deaths from war and starvation
- 1969–70, Yasser Arafat became chairman of the PLO, but its commandos were driven out of Jordan and they built their headquarters in Lebanon, continuing their raids on Israeli targets
- 1974, the United Nations gave the PLO observer status, recognizing Palestinians as a nation without a state
- 1975, the Vietnamese and Cambodian civil wars ended, with communist governments taking control and gaining independence from Euro-American forces, but in Cambodia the communist Khmer Rouge regime, led by Pol Pot, purged its rivals and others with foreign connections, in a genocide of 1.7 million people, until Vietnam intervened in 1979
- 1978, economic reforms in communist China, led by Deng Xiaoping, opened it to international trade and local entrepreneurship, with Vietnam and other southeast Asian countries following suit, but China also instituted a “one child” policy for three decades (allowing rural parents to have a second child if the first was a girl)
- 1979, the USSR invaded Afghanistan, installing a communist government against mujahedin “freedom fighters” supported by the US (although some of them later became the Taliban, fighting against the US after the 2001 attacks)



- 1982 (April–June), the UK and Argentina fought a war over the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic
- 1982 (June–September), Israeli forces invaded Lebanon and exiled the PLO to Tunisia
- 1983, after a decade-long “Dirty War” of state terrorism in Argentina, 30,000 people had “disappeared”
- 1985, simultaneous *Live Aid* concerts were held around the world to address famine, with satellite-linked TV broadcasts producing a live audience of 1.9 billion
- 1987, the first Palestinian *intifada* (“shaking off” or uprising) began in Israel
- 1988, Libyan terrorists bombed an airplane that crashed in Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people
- 1989, hundreds of thousands of peaceful, student-led protesters, demanding democratic rights, gathered for two months in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, creating a 10-meter “Goddess of Liberty” statue, but the Communist government declared martial law, sending tanks and troops, which destroyed the statue and killed thousands (yet protests continued in 80 other cities with hundreds more killed)
- 1990–91, the USSR dissolved and democracies developed in Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, and Ukraine
- 1994 (April), the “apartheid” system of minority whites controlling majority blacks in South Africa, since 1948, ended with the election of former militant protestor and political prisoner, Nelson Mandela, as the country’s president—after decades of student protests, human rights activism, labor strikes, and violent acts, plus the international pressure of trade sanctions from other countries
- 1994 (April–July), during the Rwandan Civil War, nearly one million Tutsi were killed by their Hutu neighbors and government authorities in just 100 days, after being exhorted “to exterminate the cockroaches” by radio broadcasts—and through Rwandan identity cards they were required to carry, showing their ethnic group, as a legacy of being a former European colony in central Africa, with the German colonizers favoring the minority Tutsi until World War I and the Belgians then taking control and favoring the Hutu
- 1994 (May), the Palestinian National Authority was created in the West Bank (on the east side of Israel) and Israel later withdrew its military from Gaza (in the west), allowing self-governance to Arabs in those geographically separate territories
- 1997, communist China regained control of capitalist Hong Kong from the UK
- 1999, Australia’s Parliament passed a “Motion of Regret” concerning past maltreatment of Aborigines

- 2000, the second *intifada* (Arab rebellion) began and Israel started building a wall around the West Bank to control the Palestinians—with fundamentalist Jews then building illegal settlements, protected by the Israeli army, in Palestinian territories
- 2002 (February), the ten-year Algerian Civil War ended with the government defeating Islamist rebels, although a splinter group joined al-Qaeda
- 2002 (October), Islamist bombings in Bali, Indonesia, killed 202 people in a tourist area (and 20 more three years later)
- 2007, a two-year, global, economic recession began with rising food prices and the US subprime lending crisis
- 2008, Islamist terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, killed 164 people in four days
- 2011–14, “Arab Spring” protests and revolutions developed in North Africa and the Middle East, resulting in changes of government, but also civil wars in Libya, Yemen, and Syria, with many refugees fleeing to Turkey and Europe
- 2013, masked gunmen attacked a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, and 71 people died
- 2013–16, the Ebola epidemic in West Africa killed more than 11,000 people
- 2015, in Somalia, with al-Shabab Islamist militants outlawing music and theatre, and attacking performers, in areas they controlled, the United Nations created *Inspire Somalia*, a television contest with amateur performers, modeled on the *Idol* franchise that spread from Britain’s *Pop Idol* in 2001 to 46 regions globally
- 2016–19, mimetic rivalry increased between China and the US, after Donald Trump, while campaigning, accused China of “theft” and “rape” against the US economy, and then as president imposed tariffs, to which China responded with tariffs, in an escalating trade war

## B. African Theatre in Anglophone Countries

See Fig. 14.1.

1. From the “Great Game” of the late 1800s until the independence movements of the mid-1900s, European colonizers, building on the conquests and slave-trading of prior indigenous empires, created democracies yet also hierarchies, with certain ethnic groups (or “tribes”) favored over others. The colonists’ beliefs, language, and culture became enforced through missionaries, educational systems, and local authorities. Indigenous religions and rituals were forbidden as uncivilized, although they continued covertly.



Fig. 14.1 Map of Africa (US CIA's World Factbook)

2. After independence, prior colonial structures were often retained, leading to dictatorial regimes in many African countries. Returning to indigenous performance styles and local languages, artists protested such “neo-colonialism” and political corruption. Yet, with various tribal languages in their country, in order to reach a larger audience, African writers also employed the European language: “tampering with it to temper its egregiousness,” as Nigerian playwright Ola Rotimi said about his use of English (personal communication).

3. The traditional African *storyteller* (or *griot*), playing a musical instrument, perhaps accompanied by others, was key to the local sense of oral history. He was the living archive of the tribe, like ancient Homeric and medieval storytellers in Europe.
4. In local rituals, the language of “talking drums” (with beats that mimicked verbal sounds) was combined with symbolic costumes, masks, and gestures, plus improvised songs and anecdotes. Performances also involved audience participation with “call and response,” singing refrains, clapping in rhythm, and spectators making direct comments about the actors or characters. Drawing on these traditions, modern African theatre developed more communally than its European proscenium model.
5. **Nigeria** is Africa’s most populous country with over 180 million people, including over 200 ethnic groups with their own languages. The Yoruba are 21% of the country’s population, second to the Hausa. The former Yoruba kingdom was centered in the sacred city of Ifa. Certain Yoruba festivals continued under British rule and modern independence, including the *Odun Egungun* performance. It exemplifies a widespread tradition of masquerade throughout West Africa for hundreds of years, with aristocratic, worker, and slave lineage cults (Kerr 11). Male dancers wear a full-body mask of colorful, dangling, strips of cloth, with hidden amulets holding protective charms. Covered from head to feet, they whirl, creating a “breeze of blessing,” while possessed by the spirits of ancestors (*egungun* or singular *egun*), who communicate through them with living relatives in the village or urban area.
6. These *Egungun* masked performances exemplify traditional “dramatic rituals,” which begin with cult members in a sacred grove, and then become neo-traditional “communal theatre” with the village audience participating in an open area or in the homes of villagers who want a personal meeting with a departed relative. Various magical and satirical *Egungun* performers also developed with representational masks and costumes, as trickster, tumbler, deformed-body, drunkard, mentally ill, and prostitute (with big teeth) caricatures (Kerr 11–12).
7. Another type of neo-traditional theatre in many African countries is the “folk musical,” such as Yoruba Opera, shifting from the goal of worship in dramatic ritual to entertainment, from communal harmony to moral message, from public area to theatre building, and from seasonal festival of the local village to professional shows in the city. The modern “literary theatre” retains many of these traditional and neo-traditional elements, along with chants, gestures, makeup or masks, and costumes, plus audience participation. But it adds sociopolitical issues in the colonial language and more scenic devices with European technologies (Table 14.1).

**Table 14.1** Types of African Theatre and their characteristics, from Nigerian playwright Ola Rotimi (personal communication)

Traditional	Neo-traditional		Modern
Dramatic Ritual	Communal Ritual	Folk Musical	Literary Theatre
1. Worship	Worship/ entertainment	Entertainment	Socio-political issues in the colonial language
2. Subservience to the supernatural	Communal harmony	Moral message	Moral/political message
3. Priest leads	Chief/performer leads	Performer leads	→
4. Exclusivity	Open to all	→	→
5. Shrine or sacred grove	Public arena or waterfront	Theatre building (tickets)	→
6. Brief storyline (mimed)	Mimed story	Full-length	→
7. Chanting, invocation, and incantation	→	→	→
8. Body makeup, masks, and costume	→	→	→
9. Occasion of major communal event, death of elder, famine, natural disaster, or religious festival	Seasonal transitions (harvest, planting, fishing, hunting, or coronation)	Whenever the group is ready	→
10. Priests and initiates only	Audience participation	→	→

8. Hubert Ogunde (1916–90) developed Yoruba Opera in the 1940s with an opening glee as rousing musical element, a topical or satirical story with dialog partly improvised, songs, dances, and continual music, ending with another glee. It included a moral message, like national unity after Nigeria gained independence, as in Ogunde’s *Yoruba Awake* (1964). But his earlier anticolonial pieces were often censored or forbidden.
9. Duro Ladipo (1931–78) created and starred in the most famous Yoruba Opera, *The King Does Not Hang* (*Ọba kò so*, 1964), about the god of lightning and thunder, Shango. As a human king, he tries to manage the threat of two generals, Timi and Gbonka, by pitting them against each other. Gbonka casts a spell to conquer Timi and walks through fire, further threatening the king. Shango becomes enraged and kills many of his people, then hangs himself, yet reportedly ascends as a god, according to his priests—in a potential critique of modern political authorities.

10. Wole Soyinka (1934–), son of an Anglican minister but attracted to the Yoruba community and *Egungun* performers, wrote modern literary plays and theories involving tribal gods (*orishas*), rituals, colonial history, and current politics, after going to universities in Nigeria and England. He worked at the Royal Court Theatre (1959–60) in London and then founded 1960 Masks in Nigeria, which presented his first play, *A Dance of the Forests* (1960). It depicts tribes assembling for a great feast and petitioning the gods for well-being, as with Nigerian independence that year. Yet the gods send two accusers who demand sacrifice and self-knowledge to avoid a dangerous future. Soyinka also founded the Orisun Theatre Company in 1964.
11. Soyinka was jailed for several months in 1965 for political reasons. After a military coup and subsequent Biafran civil war, Soyinka was again imprisoned for 22 months due to his politics. He then wrote *Madmen and Specialists* (1971), about a healer turned into a killer, and *The Bacchae of Euripides* (1973), about the ancient Greek god of theatre getting revenge against an oppressive ruler, turning the blood from his decapitated head into wine, in a reversal of the Christian Eucharist. In *Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), a colonial officer shows disrespect for the *Egungun* costume and the son of a local chief (Oba) commits ritual suicide in his father's place, after the death of their Yoruba king, to keep a divine opening for their people, according to tradition. Soyinka also wrote *Opera Wonyosi* (1977), an adaptation of Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*, and *A Play of Giants* (1985) about Africa's worst tyrants.
12. Soyinka became the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986. But in 1994, when he criticized the military dictator of Nigeria, Sani Abacha, telling people not to pay taxes, Soyinka's passport was taken away. He was sentenced to death in absentia by the Abacha regime in 1997, while living in exile in the US, yet he was able to return to Nigeria the next year when Abacha died mysteriously, perhaps poisoned.
13. Playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa (1941–95), also known as a television writer, led a nonviolent campaign against the multinational Royal Dutch Shell oil company to stop its exploitation and environmental degradation of the Niger delta, where his Ogoni ethnic group lived. He was executed in 1995 by the Nigerian military under Abacha's dictatorship.
14. Ola Rotimi (1938–2000), an internationally known playwright and director, spent much of the 1990s in the US and Caribbean, due to politics in Nigeria. He wrote *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (1968), with

- the ancient Oedipus myth set in an African village, and *Hopes of the Living Dead* (1985), with positive leadership emerging in a leper colony.
15. Femi Osofisan (1946–) represented a younger generation of Marxist playwrights in Nigeria, critical of Soyinka for not addressing class and economic problems. In *The Chattering and the Song* (1976), he shows an underground Farmers Movement, with a rehearsal of a play within the play as a metaphor for revolution, promising equity and sharing. His *Upon Four Robbers* (1978) suggests the thievery of the Nigerian military.
  16. Situated near Nigeria along the western “gold coast” of Africa, **Ghana** maintained its traditional storytelling of *Anansem* (Spider stories) with the Concert Party, a form of folk musical influenced by Yoruba Opera, black American vaudeville, and silent films. Ishmael (Bob) Johnson developed the Concert Party in the 1930s with an opening song and dance, a ragtime song, a joking duet between two “Bobs,” and a one-hour comic play, partly improvised, with music and dance, dealing with contemporary topics to provoke audience thought.
  17. After independence in 1957, Efua Sutherland (1924–96) founded an open-air theatre, the Ghana Drama Studio in Accra. She strengthened the Spider-storytelling tradition with her use of an open performance space, rather than the European proscenium. She also wrote *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975) about the trickster Ananse (Spider) setting off a bidding war among four chiefs for marriage to his daughter. The actors who are not in the scene act as a participatory audience onstage, with comments and responses. The play also includes a storyteller, musical numbers, and a visible property master resetting scenes. Such Ananse tales reflect the importance of spinning and weaving cotton into cloth in African culture.
  18. Ama Ata Aidoo (1942–) became known for *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1964) about a Ghanaian man returning home with a black American wife. His relatives are prejudiced about her slave ancestry and a chorus expresses fears and spreads gossip. In Aidoo’s *Anowa* (1970), a black man in the 1800s becomes impotent after buying slaves and his wife attributes this to witchcraft.
  19. Joe C de Graft (1924–78) wrote *Through a Film Darkly* (1966) about an educated young Ghanaian leaving his black fiancée for a white European lady, who then rejects him as an anthropological curiosity, and *Muntu* (1975) about African dictators.

20. In **Kenya**, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1938–) wrote *The Black Hermit* (1962), showing a young man, the first in his tribe to go to university, who must decide whether to return to his village and marry his brother's widow as traditionally required, or to support the Africanist party, or to continue wandering with his female friend. Ngũgĩ also wrote *The Time Tomorrow* (1968), about the indifference of the rich toward the poor.
21. Ngũgĩ co-founded the Kamiriithu Community Educational and Cultural Centre in Limuru, with theatre used to evoke social awareness and political action. Its first production, his collaborative play, *I'll Marry When I Want* (1977), written with Ngugi wa Mirii (1951–2008), was performed in the local Kikuyu language, about the betrayal of the populace by elite Kenyans aligned with foreigners. But the government banned it after a seven-week run. Ngũgĩ was detained for a year without trial and fired from his university job. He then went into exile, fearing for his life. The Kamiriithu Centre was closed five years later by the government and its building burned to the ground, but it started a populist theatre movement.
22. Britain took control of **Uganda** in the 1890s, making English its national language, but after it gained independence in 1962, a succession of dictators rose to power (including Idi Amin, 1971–79), ruining the economy and repressing the arts until 1986. Austin Bukenya (1944–) wrote *The Bride* in 1972, depicting such a destructive society, yet calling for bloodless revolution and integration, through African ritual and symbolism. Nuwa Sentongo's *The Invisible Bond* (1975) used a story about gods exploiting humans as a critique of Amin's government.
23. Judith Adong created *Silent Voices* (2010) based on interviews with victims of the government's long civil war against the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda. It explores the possibility of reconciliation, with the lead character, Mother, telling of her family's ordeal when her husband was sodomized by government soldiers—but also shows the tragic irony of her passion for revenge (Lutaaya).
24. In **Tanzania**, Ebrahim Hussein (1943–) wrote *Kinjeketile* (1970, originally in Swahili) about the Maji Maji revolt against German colonizers in 1904, with the hero, through the god Hongo, healing divisions among the rebels and yet giving them the tragic illusion that the god's sacred water would protect them from bullets in battle.
25. After a civil war between the minority white government and black rebels, **Zimbabwe** gained independence from Britain in 1980. But it suffered economically under Robert Mugabe, who ruled until 2017,



- crushing political opponents, killing at least 10,000 citizens, and forcing land redistribution from whites to blacks. This decreased the country's food production, causing famine and extreme currency inflation, while Mugabe distributed food supplies to people who supported him but not to others.
26. Zimbabwean theatre included Willie Chigide's *Where Will Another Chance Come From?* (1986), about a teacher who seduces his female students and is forced to make payments when a baby is born.
  27. Joanne Dorras and Peter Walker's *The Big Wide World* (1987) shows the failure of the educational system to lead to employment.
  28. In George Mujajati's *The Wretched Ones* (1988), the rich Mr. Buffalo oppresses the poor by grasping for more wealth. His son, Daniel, writes a play criticizing capitalism. Another character, Lazarus, blinds himself because he cannot bear to see "the lies of sweet things which I will never enjoy" (qtd. in Plastow 253).
  29. Amakhosi Theatre developed various political plays, involving dances, songs, and original music: *Book of Lies* (1982) about the theft of African heritage by Europeans, *Workshop Negative* (1986) about government corruption, *Children on Fire* (1987) about a mother discovering ties between a local politician and drug pushing, and *Hoyaya* (1994) about the spread of AIDS.
  30. Young Warriors Theatre Company created collective plays such as *What Is Socialism?* (1989) about the country's development and people's expectations under that ideology. They also staged *My Struggle* (1990), about the failure of former revolutionaries to realize their dreams, and *Under the Death* (1994), about the lack of sex education in many schools.
  31. Glen Norah Women's Theatre devised works such as *Who Is to Blame?* (1991), about the problems of girls in extended families, and *Ngozi* (1992), about the Shona custom of giving a girl in marriage to a man whose relative had been killed by a member of her family in order to appease the ghost. They created *Mother of Tapiwa* (1993), about communal solutions to depression in urban women, and *My Piece of Land* (1994), about land shortages affecting women's status and welfare (Rubin 3: 366).
  32. In **Namibia**, Lucky "Pieters" Mosalele became known for *Who Will Comfort Me?* (1999) about a father and son surviving together after their wife/mother is killed by a lion.
  33. In **Zambia**, Kabwe Kasoma's *Black Mamba* trilogy (1975) showed historical conflicts developing toward independence, but was banned after its initial performances.

34. *I Resign*, by Stephen Chifunyise (1948–), depicts a black manager resisting the white boss's plan to replace black workers with machines.
35. In **South Africa**, the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886 led to two wars between Dutch (Boers) and British settlers, with Britain taking control. In 1931, the Boer Afrikaners (speaking Afrikaans) and English colonists gained independence from Britain, with whites controlling the black majority. This “apartheid” system intensified in the 1950s, as blacks were forced to move into townships or “homelands,” with male workers often separated from their families. They had to live in dorms and carry a “pass book” showing where they were allowed to travel and work. Separate black schools provided minimal training, resulting in student riots, starting in Soweto in 1976 and spreading across the country. Apartheid also discriminated against “coloreds” (people of mixed black and white ancestry) and Asians (mostly Indians living in South Africa)—with segregation in many areas of social life, including theatre. South Africa also developed six nuclear bombs in the 1970s–80s, but dismantled them in the 1990s, after the end of apartheid and change in government rule from a white minority to democratic majority.
36. Under apartheid, even white Afrikaans playwrights had trouble with government censorship, such as Bartho Smit (1924–86). His play, *The Maimed* (1960), shows the absurdity of race laws. His *Bacchus in the Highveld* (1974) presents the Greco-Roman god Bacchus (Dionysus) switching the roles of whites and non-whites as winemakers and workers.
37. In the late 1950s to early 1960s, Athol Fugard (1932–), a white Afrikaner director and playwright who wrote in English, co-founded several companies with black actors in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. These included the Serpent Players, in the black township of New Brighton, which used Brechtian gestic acting, plus satire from urban vaudeville, with various European plays and original works.
38. Fugard worked with black actors Winston Ntshona (1941–) and John Kani (1943–) to create *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* (1972) about two black men altering the pass book of a dead man in the street to allow one of them to get a job where he would otherwise not be allowed to work. They also co-wrote *The Island* (1973) about two cellmates on Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela was held for 18 of his 28 years as a political prisoner). The cellmates perform hard labor with shovels during the day and rehearse Sophocles's *Antigone* at night, but further conflict arises when one of them is going to be released early. Ntshona and Kani performed these plays on tour in the US and UK. *The Island* was

published in 1974 with Fugard's *Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act* (1972), about white and black lovers arrested for their miscegenation.

39. Drawing from his own history, Fugard wrote "*Master Harold*" ... *and the Boys* (1982) about an Afrikaner teenager who relies on the support of two black adult servants, due to estrangement from his alcoholic father. Reluctantly, Harold asserts himself as "master" over both, spitting at the one who mentored him the most.
40. After apartheid ended in the 1990s, John Kani wrote *Nothing but the Truth* (2002) about conflicts between Africans who stayed to fight and those who left, but then returned afterward.
41. Jewish South African director Barney Simon (1932–95), who worked with Joan Littlewood in London in the 1950s, co-founded the Market Theatre in Johannesburg in 1976, as the country's first mixed-race cultural center, under the continual threat of arrest, due to segregation laws. In 1981, Simon co-wrote *Woza Albert!* (meaning "Come, Albert!") with black actors Percy Mtwa (1954–) and Mbongeni Ngema (1956–), who toured the show abroad. They used mime and simple props to perform dozens of working-class characters, black and white (with a pink clown nose), getting the news that Jesus Christ is arriving in spite of the apartheid system created by the Calvinist elite. The government explodes a nuclear bomb to stop him, but various slain leaders of the resistance movement, such as Albert Luthuli and Steve Biko, rise from their graves.
42. Mtwa and Ngema created other shows, such as Mtwa's *Bopha!* (1985, film 1993) about a black family with an activist son and policeman father during apartheid. Ngema also started a theatre group, Committed Artists, in 1982. He wrote the musical *Sarafina!* (1987) about a schoolteacher who is imprisoned, inspiring a female student toward social activism during the Soweto uprising. It was made into a Hollywood film with Whoopi Goldberg, Leleti Khumalo, and John Kani in 1992.
43. Maishe Maponya (1951–) established the Bahumutsi Drama Group in 1977, then studied in England and became influenced by Brecht's learning plays. Maponya wrote *Gangsters* (1984), inspired by Samuel Beckett's *Catastrophe* (1972) and the absurd reality under apartheid. It shows a political poet, Masechaba (Mother of the Nation), tortured to death by police.

**[How are the ritual traditions and theatrical developments of African countries related to indigenous and European influences, regarding inner-theatre drives and emotions, or metaphysical and political frameworks?]**



1. In the geopolitical theatre of its hemisphere, the US extended Europe's New World, Oriental, and "Great Game" colonizing with Cold War military and CIA operations in the Caribbean and Latin America. For "Hemispheric Defense," the US supported capitalist governments against communist insurgents in Colombia (220,000 killed, five million displaced), El Salvador (75,000 killed), and Guatemala (200,000 killed). With "Operation Condor" (1968–89), the US supported various dictators' right-wing death squads against leftist dissidents, during the "Dirty Wars" in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil (plus Ecuador and Peru peripherally). The US also supported military coups or insurgencies against leftist governments in Cuba (1961), Brazil (1964), and Nicaragua (1980s–90s).
2. Aimé Césaire (1913–2008) was of Igbo-Nigerian descent and born in **Martinique**. In the 1930s, he became a leader of the Francophone "Négritude" movement (as mentor also of fellow leader, Frantz Fanon), valuing connections to Africa through his essays, plays, and fiction. Césaire's *A Tempest* (*Une Tempête*, 1969) depicts actors gathering and staging their own version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, on a Caribbean island, with a mulatto Ariel akin to Martin Luther King (in his nonviolent rebellion), a black Caliban more akin to Malcolm X, and a white Prospero staying on the island with Caliban at the end. The African trickster, Eshu, also appears midway through.
3. Patrick Chamoiseau (1953–) helped to form the "Créolité" movement, reacting against Négritude by valuing the various strands of Caribbean identity, including European, East Indian, Chinese, and indigenous, while still rejecting French dominance. In Chamoiseau's play, *River Mama Versus Fairy Carabosse* (published in 1982), a Caribbean water-spirit conquers a wicked European witch, passing the wand of knowledge to her daughter (Rubin 2: 280).
4. Derek Walcott (1930–2017), from the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia, was the founding director of the **Trinidad** Theatre Workshop (1959–71) and a Nobel Prize Winner (1992). He wrote *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* (1958) about the devil as a white planter who demands "a child for dinner" and three brothers who try to defeat him, one at a time, in different ways (89). In Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1967, also broadcast on US television), an old hermit dreams of a journey to Africa. Walcott worked with composer Paul Simon to create *The Capeman* musical (1998), about Salvador Agrón, a Puerto Rican who killed two teenagers in New York, mistaking them for rival gang members.

5. Another poet-dramatist in Trinidad, Lennox Brown (1934–), wrote *A Communion in Dark Sun* (1970) about a group that creates a commune in the woods to escape civilization, meeting a friendly “green man,” but killing him through fear.
6. Mustapha Matura (1939–), a Trinidadian of East Indian ancestry, evoked distinctive speech rhythms of different racial groups and explored the effects of colonialism in works such as *Play Mas’* (1974), about an unpopular government using the annual carnival to trap revolutionaries. His *Rum and Coca Cola* (1976) depicts calypso performers’ hidden hostility toward tourists, while relying on them for income.
7. Dennis Scott (1934–91) of **Jamaica** wrote *Echo in the Bone* (1974), showing a spirit-possession rite at a funeral, which explains the drowning death of a black worker who killed a white landowner. *Dog* (1978) represents the social underclass as wild dogs, with upper-class vigilantes hunting them down, as both exhibit ethical systems of behavior.
8. In **Cuba**, in the early 1800s, Francisco Covarrubias (1775–1850) created the popular, blackface *negrito* (black boy), mulatto (mixed European and black), and Galician (from Galicia, Spain) characters in farcical sketches (*sainetes*).
9. During Cuba’s initial War of Independence against Spain (1868–78), José Martí (1853–95) modified the *negrito*, from buffoon to social hero.
10. In purification or fertility rites, dances, and processions, *diabolitos* (devil myths) offered alternatives to the dominant white depiction of blacks—with allegorical performances from various Afro-Cuban (former slave) cultures, such as the *ñañigo* dance, showing totemic sacrifice in a shift from matriarchal to patriarchal systems.
11. Actor, playwright, director, dancer, and puppeteer, Héctor Santiago (1944–) co-founded the Children’s Theatrical Movement in Cuba in 1959, writing six plays. But he was sentenced to three years in a labor camp for “antisocial behavior” (homosexuality) in 1970. He moved to Spain in 1979 and then to New York, continuing his theatre work. In his *Madame Camille* (1995), a dance class with two couples involves sado-masochistic military drills, with the goal of mastery to please an all-powerful leader.
12. Albio Paz (1937–) showed changes in the lives of rural farmers, as their land went from individual to collective ownership and then to state farms, in *The Showcase* (1971), *Paradise Found* (1972), and *The Financier* (1974).
13. Roberto Orihuela (1950–) explored women’s issues in *Ramona* (1977), family and class struggles in *The Ambush* (1978), student problems in *The Sweethearts* (1979), and workers’ conflicts in *Accident* (1986).

[What do Caribbean theatre works share in the geopolitical heritage of the “West Indies,” involving inner theatre elements of Self/Other performances, perceptions, and perspectives?]

14. In **Mexico**, Cantinflas (Mario Moreno, 1911–93) was a comic actor who performed in traveling, tent-theatre, variety shows and then became a screen star, as well as writer and producer, often portraying the poor farmworker (*campesino*) or vagrant (*pelado*), during the “Golden Age” of Mexican cinema, 1933–64.
15. José Revueltas (1914–76) wrote *The Quadrant of Loneliness* (1950), showing the psychological effects of overcrowding in Mexico City.
16. Emilio Carballido (1925–2008) scripted the comedy, *Rosalba and the Llaveros* (1950), about a conservative family in the provinces, challenged by a city-cousin’s visit.
17. Luisa Josefina Hernández (1928–) penned *The Royal Guest* (1957) about incest, *Popol Vuh* (1966) about Mayan myth, and *The Mulatto’s Orgy* (1971) about the Church and State oppressing the poor.
18. Elena Garro (1920–98) wrote plays from the 1960s to 1990s, with magical legends and poetry, including *The Pillars of Doña Blanca* (1956) and *The Lady on Her Balcony* (1963). But she lived in France for 20 years after accusing Mexican intellectuals of instigating protests prior to the 1968 Summer Olympics, which led to the killing of 300 students and other civilians in the Tlatelolco area of Mexico City, when authorities shot into the crowd of protesters, during Mexico’s “Dirty War” against anti-government leftists.
19. Actress-writer-director Nancy Cárdenas (1934–94) founded the first gay organization in Mexico, the Gay Liberation Front (1974), and wrote the play, *Radcliffe Hall’s Well of Loneliness*, based on a 1928 novel about an upper-class English lesbian.
20. In **Costa Rica**, Alberto Cañas Escalante (1920–2014) wrote *The Follower* (*La Segua*, 1971) based on the popular myth of an otherwise beautiful woman with a horse-like face who follows men at night, making them crazy if they turn to look at her.
21. In **Colombia**, Luis Enrique Osorio (1896–1966) started a journal promoting the idea of a national theatre company, while writing plays critical of social manners.
22. Actress-dramatist Patricia Ariza (1948–) founded Colombia’s first alternative theatre, Teatro La Candelaria, in Bogotá in the 1960s. But in 2009, a police dossier accused her of spreading propaganda from the Communist FARC insurgents.
23. Actress-producer Fanny Mikey (1930–2008) organized Bogotá’s biennial Ibero-American Theatre Festival, one of the largest performance festivals in the world, starting in 1988.

24. Mapa Teatro, based in Bogotá since 1986, explored history, myth, and topicality through plays and multi-media performance art. For example, *The Unaccounted: A Triptych* (2010–15) showed an African-heritage festival of men dressed as women in a small town on the coast, the ghost of an infamous drug dealer listening to band music in the tropics, and a family, musicians, and singer in a living room listening to radio reports about a revolution that never happens.
25. In **Brazil**, Comedians Theatre (Os Comediantes) marked the beginning of a modern, postcolonial theatre in the 1940s with non-realistic styles, especially when Zbigniew Ziembinski (1908–78) arrived from Poland in 1941, bringing German expressionist techniques. He also staged *The Wedding Gown* (*Vestido de Noiva*, 1943), by Brazilian playwright Nelson Rodrigues (1912–80), with complex character psychology and colloquial dialog. Three stage areas were shown: the reality around the female protagonist after being hit by a car, her memories, and her dying hallucinations.
26. Augusto Boal (1931–2009) studied at Columbia University in New York, where he learned about Stanislavski and Brecht, and started directing his own plays. In 1956, he returned to Brazil, directing at the Arena Theatre (Teatro de Arena) in São Paulo. He staged the political protest play, *Revolution in South America* (1960), and a series of productions that mixed Brechtian techniques with Brazilian folklore and music, drawing parallels between the past and present. In 1971, Boal created *Teatro Journal* (newspaper theatre), staging current events like the Living Newspaper during the US Great Depression, but questioning the supposed “objectivity” of the news media, which influenced the development of later docudramas throughout Latin America. That year, Boal was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured by the military government, which had ruled Brazil since 1964.
27. When released, Boal went into exile in Argentina and elsewhere for 14 years. He wrote *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1973), an anti-Aristotelian, Marxist-Brechtian plan for extending theatre to ordinary people as “spect-actors” (spectator/actors), with exercises for bodily awareness, expressiveness, and theatrical language—also regarding the political superego as a “cop in the head.” Boal traveled to Europe and the US, influencing others to create interactive performance groups using his techniques. These include “Image Theatre” with participants asked to imagine scenes of oppression and mold them with their bodies, “Forum Theatre” with the “simultaneous dramaturgy” of spect-actors intervening in a scene of oppression to suggest changes or act in it to



find a solution, and “Invisible Theatre” with the improvised staging of political issues in public places without announcing a play (Boal, *Games*). In the 1990s, Boal was elected City Councilman in Rio de Janeiro and developed “Legislative Theatre” techniques to make voters into legislators, like spectators into actors (*Legislative*).

**[How does your experience of theatre onstage, in the mind, in everyday life, and in politics relate to Boal’s theories?]**

28. Brazilian actor, Plínio Marcos (1935–99), known as the “accursed author,” wrote plays from 1958 to 1997, about struggles of lower-class characters, involving prostitution, violence, and homosexuality. His *Barrela* (1958), based on the true story of a young man gang-raped in prison, was censored by the government for 21 years, due to its crude language and subject matter.
29. After the political oppression of the 1960s–70s, José Antunes Filho (1929–) adapted a famous novel from 50 years earlier to the stage, *Macunaíma*, by Mário de Andrade, about an indigenous shape-shifter traveling from his jungle village to the big city of São Paulo. The company became Grupo Macunaíma, inspiring the “Theatre of Images” style in Brazil.
30. In **Ecuador**, Ricardo Descalzi (1912–90) wrote *Clamor of Shadows* (1950), using the well-made play formula to show a brother and sister with Oedipus and Electra complexes (same-sex parent hating and opposite-sex parent loving). His *Portovelo* (1951) criticized the subhuman work of gold miners and the US company employing them.
31. Demetrio Aguilera Malta (1909–81) created *White Teeth* (1955) about a white boss dominating a black worker and *The Tiger* (1955) about the fearful life of a *montubio* (coastal peasant).
32. In **Peru**, Alonso Alegría (1940–) wrote *Crossing Niagara* (1969) about the French tightrope walker, Blondin, who crossed Niagara Falls on a rope while carrying a man on his shoulders.
33. Rivera Saavedra (1930–) developed a “Theatre of Bewildermen” style in the 1970s.
34. Hernando Cortés (1927–), in his Artaudian play, *The True Account of the Conquest of Peru* (1976), explored the historical savagery of Spanish conquistadors, with Native women presented as horses. His *Land or Death* (1986) depicts prisoners in a provincial cell who witness a child being tortured as a rebel accomplice.
35. Novelist and Nobel Laureate Mario Vargas Llosa (1936–) also wrote plays from 1952 to 2010.

36. In **Chile**, Alejandro Sieveking (1934–) wrote plays from the 1950s to 1980s and co-founded Angel Theatre (Teatro del Angel) in Chile and then another theatre of the same name in Costa Rica, where he lived in exile.
37. Chilean Jorge Díaz (1930–2007) wrote over 90 absurdist plays since the late 1950s, satirizing Latin American politics, the modern failure to communicate, and existential anguish. For example, *The Toothbrush* (one act in 1961, revised as two acts in 1966) shows a married couple who cannot remember each other's names, speaking the empty language of news headlines, self-help columns, soap operas, commercial jingles, and tango lyrics, while playing games and enacting a homicide.
38. The plays of Juan Rojas Radrigán (1937–2016) showed the destructive effects of poverty, isolation, and urbanization. His *Consummations* (*Hechos Consumados*, 1981, film 1986) depicts a deserted dump at the edge of Santiago, with a woman who remains optimistic, after being thrown in a river, and a man who wonders about the ultimate purpose of life, resists a guard who tries to remove him, and is killed—reflecting the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–90) and Radrigán's own impoverished background.
39. Chilean-American playwright Ariel Dorfman (1942–) became a US citizen in 2004 but also lives in Santiago, Chile. His *Death and the Maiden* (1990, film 1994) features a woman telling her husband that the man he brought home as a guest, who gave him a ride when he had a flat tire, raped her when she was a political prisoner a decade before and she wants revenge.
40. In **Argentina**, Osvaldo Dragún (1929–99) drew on classical Greek themes in *The Plague of Melos* (1956).
41. In *Solitude for Four* (1961), by Ricardo Halac (1935–), two young couples in a small apartment spy on each other, as realistic archetypes of Argentinian society.
42. Germán Rozenmacher (1936–71) wrote *Requiem for Friday Night* (1964), showing the dining room of a Jewish cantor's home where a father has rigid expectations for his son, in conflict with his Argentinian identity.
43. In *The Granny* (1977), by Roberto Cossa (1934–), a grandmother eats constantly, devouring everything around her, showing the drives of survival and self-destruction.
44. Roberto Perinelli (1940–) wrote *Member of the Jury* (1979), focusing on a rapist and murderer who is released from prison, but then castrated by relatives of his victim (Rubin 2: 41).

45. *Information for Foreigners* (1973), by Griselda Gambaro (1928–), is a site-specific, environmental play with guides leading audience groups through various rooms to view 20 scenes, in different orders. This implicates the audience as tourists regarding the *desaparecidos* (disappeared ones) who were kidnapped, tortured, and killed by the right-wing government in its “Dirty War” (1969–83) against leftist political opponents, including students, professors, writers, and artists. Gambaro also addressed Argentina’s failed 1982 war against the UK over the Falkland Islands in *The Rising Sun* (1984) and *Furious Antigone* (1986).

**[How do the concerns of Latin American theatre artists—or the audience-participation techniques of Boal and Gambaro—involve primal drives, human emotions, and inner theatre elements, in diverse cultural ways?]**

## D. Canadian Theatre

1. Merrill Denison (1893–1975), art director of the Hart House Theatre in Toronto, wrote historical plays that were given radio broadcasts in the 1930s.
2. Irish-born John Coulter (1888–1980) also contributed to modern Canadian theatre with his historical play, *Riel* (1949), about a nineteenth-century rebellion against the British.
3. Stratford, Ontario, hired British director Tyrone Guthrie for its Shakespeare Festival and built a new theatre with the first thrust stage in Canada in 1953.
4. A Shaw Festival was also established at Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1962, dedicated to European drama written in George Bernard Shaw’s lifetime.
5. The Royal Manitoba Theatre Center in Winnipeg became the first professional regional theatre in Canada in 1958, presenting classical plays and light, contemporary comedies.
6. The Toronto Workshop Theatre, founded in 1959, led the “alternative” theatre movement of the 1970s, which rebelled against text-based, director-led independent and regional theatres. Instead, it championed community-based, actor-focused, collectively created plays.
7. Toronto’s anglophone theatre, *Passe Muraille* (Beyond Walls), was established in 1968 and then became the leading alternative group,

along with Grand Cirque Ordinaire (1969–78), focusing on nonverbal “sociopoetic” performances.

8. Michel Tremblay (1942–), a supporter of Quebec sovereignty, wrote plays in French from 1964 to 2012, often focusing on gay and female characters.
9. George Ryga (1932–87) was most famous for *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (1967) about a young indigenous woman struggling to understand white urban society.
10. John Herbert (1926–2001) became known for *Fortune in Men's Eyes* (1967) about homophobia in the prison system.
11. Alternative theatres continued in the 1970s, especially with the dreamlike, ritualistic displays of L'Eskael (The Ladder, 1971–88) in Quebec City, developing into “Theatre of Images,” through the Omnibus and Carbon 14 companies, plus director Robert Lepage (1957–). He created imagistic, high-tech spectacles in the 1980s and then established Ex Machina in Quebec City in 1994, also directing five films (1995–2001) and various operas.
12. George F. Walker (1947–) became Canada's most popular dramatist, with witty fantasies and nonlinear rhythms in plays such as *Zastrozzi*, *The Master of Discipline* (1977), based on Percy Bysshe Shelley's romantic novel of 1810.
13. Judith Thompson (1954–) became known for intense, stylized dramas. Her *White Biting Dog* (1984) is an expressionistic dark comedy about a self-destructive family. Her *Lion in the Streets* (1990) follows the ghost of a murdered girl as she tracks her killer, observing the cruel impulses of everyday life.
14. Quebec playwright Michel Marc Bouchard (1958–) became famous for *Lilies* (1987, film 1996) about an aging prisoner confessing to a bishop about a gay love triangle and a murder, ironically involving him.
15. In the 1980s, fringe festivals became popular, especially the largest one in Edmonton, with comedies and activist satires.
16. Richard Pochinko (1946–89) inspired the “physical theatre” movement of the 1990s and later, with his Pochinko Technique, which combined European and indigenous traditions of clowning and masked performances.
17. In 2001, Canada recognized “circus” as an art form eligible for government funding.

18. 7 Fingers was founded in Montreal in 2002, as a physical theatre of images and acrobatics, with performers revealing their own stories and developing Canadian culture.
19. Cirque du Soleil, based in Montreal, emerged from Theatre of Images as a postmodern mega-circus without animals and with a theme for each show. It involves physical theatre styles and international performers, as Canada's most popular theatrical export, along with the creations of Lepage. He also worked with Cirque, directing one of its many Las Vegas shows in 2005 and one of its touring shows in 2010.  
**[How do the distinctive aspects of Canada's alternative, sociopoetic, image, physical, and circus theatres reflect inner theatre elements, appealing to audience across cultural borders?]**

## E. Indigenous Theatre in Canada, Australia, and the South Pacific

1. Tomson Highway (1951–) grew up on a reserve in Manitoba, **Canada**, and his first language was Cree. He became a leading indigenous dramatist writing in English (sometimes mixed with Cree and Ojibway), especially with his plays about reservation life, death, gender issues, bingo, and hockey: *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (1989). The first focuses on women and the second on men, both with the trickster spirit, Nanabush, present as male in the first, female in the second, transforming into various characters. Highway also became the first Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts in 1986, when it began full-time operations in Toronto. It continues today as one of Canada's oldest indigenous companies, along with De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre on Manitoulin Island in Northern Ontario.
2. Other such companies include Centre for Indigenous Theatre and Takwakin Performance Laboratory in Toronto, Ondinnok in Montreal, and Awasikan Theatre in Winnipeg.
3. *Coyote City* (1988), by Delaware (Métis) playwright Daniel David Moses (1952–), adapts a Nez Perce trickster legend to modern life, switching the genders, with a woman trying to rescue her male lover from the spirit world in the Silver Dollar Bar where he was killed, but

failing because she disobeys instructions. Moses's *Almighty Voice and His Wife* (1991) offers a minimalist historical portrayal of a Cree man who was killed in 1897 in a shootout with the Mounted Police, combined with a whiteface minstrelsy show in the second act, which revisits the incident through song, dance, and melodramatic parodies, as a purging of stereotypes.

4. Marie Clements (1962–), a Métis playwright, director, performer, and filmmaker, wrote *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (2000), about a series of indigenous women who were killed through alcohol overdose, in Vancouver in the 1980s, by barber Gilbert Paul Jordan. The women tell their stories in surrealistic scenes, jumping in time through the days prior to their deaths, as a daughter seeks answers to her mother's disappearance.
5. Yvette Nolan (1961–), a playwright, director, and actress with an Algonquin mother and Irish father, wrote *Blade* (1990) about a young white victim of a serial killer, represented as a prostitute by the media. In *Job's Wife* (2003), God appears as "Josh," a Native man in rags, to a white Catholic woman, pregnant with an indigenous child.
6. Drew Hayden Taylor (1962–), who is half Ojibway, created *Sucker Falls: A Musical About Demons of the Forest and the Soul* (2001), an adaptation of Brecht's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, as a satire about a First Nations casino. He also wrote *The Berlin Blues* (2007), about Germans developing an Ojibway theme park, and *Dead White Writer on the Floor* (2010), about six Natives trying to recreate themselves, only to realize they are still being "written." Taylor's *God and the Indian* (2013) shows a Cree woman, "Johnny Indian," who lives on the streets and suffers from childhood trauma, but breaks into the office of an Anglican bishop and accuses him of raping her 30 years earlier as a child in a residential school.

**[In the plays of Highway, Moses, Clements, Nolan, and Taylor which issues are specific to their cultures, yet also relate to common human drives, emotions, and values?]**

7. In Melbourne, **Australia**, in the 1840s, European settlers witnessed an Aboriginal corroboree, "Dance of Thunder," with women using possum skins tied tightly over their laps as drums, while men jumped high and stamped the ground, recreating a local earthquake (Casey).
8. By the 1850s, indigenous people were performing in European theatres in Australia, using their cultural capital for economic survival after colonizers altered their traditional lives. For example, in 1885, an estimated 20,000–25,000 people watched the Grand Corroboree in Adelaide.

9. In Australia's Northern Territory, the "Aeroplane Corroboree" of the Yanyuwa people was based on their assistance in the search for survivors after the crash there of a US bomber, Little Eva, in 1942. It involved songs, dances, and miming with puppets, along with head-dresses representing biplanes, props such as steering wheels, and a mock airplane made of forked sticks and boughs.
10. In 1963, the Festival of Aboriginal Theatre in Perth included the Yirrkala initiation ceremony for young men with a Dreamtime story about the Thunderman, Bulnu, wandering through the clouds to make rain for his totem people and thus helping them to hunt kangaroos, which cannot smell humans during rain.
11. In the 1970s–80s, Nyoongah writer Jack Davis (1917–2000) raised awareness about the marginalization of indigenous people and their nostalgia for aboriginal life, especially with *The Dreamers* (1982) and *No Sugar* (1985), set in the 1920–30s, when children were taken from their families and raised by whites, as was Davis.
12. The title of Trevor Jamieson's *The Career Highlights of Mamu* (2002) refers to a traditional evil spirit. It is based on the experiences of his family and the Spinifex people, removed from their land (with some also dying from radiation) when the government created the Woomera Prohibited Area of 127,000 square kilometers in South Australia, including Maralinga, which was used for nuclear bomb tests in the 1950s–60s.
13. In Wellington, **New Zealand**, the Taki Rua theatre was founded in 1983, specializing in aboriginal Maori plays, such as those by Harry Dansey, Rore Hapipi, and John Broughton.
14. New Zealand Pacific Theatre was established in Auckland, to focus on plays about the immigrant experience of Pacific Islanders.
15. Maori playwright Hone Kouka (1968–), inspired by an Ibsen play about Vikings, wrote *Nga Tangata Toa: The Warrior People* (1994), set in a Maori coastal community with a veteran of World War I returning home.
16. Maori playwright Apirana Taylor (1955–) developed *Whaea Kairau: Mother Hundred Eater* (1995), an epic about nineteenth-century New Zealand wars, based on Brecht's *Mother Courage*.
17. In **Papua New Guinea**, the traditional *hevehe* ritual of the Orokelo and Orokaiva peoples reenacted their creation myth while building a men's longhouse. It connected various neighboring villages through dance, music, and masks, representing animals and sea monsters, plus contacts with ancestral spirits. Shorter *kovave* rituals involved the

initiation of girls into marriage and of boys wearing cane masks made by elders. Christian missionaries replaced such rituals with reenactments of their first arrival to the village and with scenes from the Bible.

18. In 1975, the Raun Raun Theatre staged *Nema Namba (Mother of the Birds)*, depicting the country's independence with birds symbolizing social harmony fighting evil chaos.

**[How are modern developments of indigenous theatres in Australia and the South Pacific related to ritual, communal, folk, and literary theatres in Africa and elsewhere?]**

## F. Australian and Asian-Pacific Theatre in Recent Decades

1. In Melbourne, **Australia**, in 1967, Betty Burstall (1926–2013) established La Mama, offering a place for new plays, like its New York namesake, especially for protesting Australia's participation in the Vietnam War.
2. *Norm and Ahmed* (1968), by Alex Buzo (1944–2006), about a middle-aged war veteran meeting a Pakistani student at a bus stop, caused controversy with its final line (involving the “F-word”). Arrests and fines were given to actors in two different productions in 1969, for using obscene language in public, but Buzo continued to write plays across the next three decades.
3. Rex Cramphorn (1941–91) founded the Performance Syndicate in Sydney in 1969, introducing Grotowski's techniques to Australia.
4. David Williamson (1942–) began writing and performing at La Mama in the late 1960s, with plays staged there and elsewhere for the next 50 years. He depicted changes in Australian politics with many of his plays, such as *The Removalist* (1971) about public protest and private repression, regarding an abusive policeman.
5. Feminist poet and novelist Dorothy Hewett (1923–2002) also wrote plays and musicals from 1967 to 2001, such as *The Chapel Perilous* (1971) showing a rebellious poetess on a heroic lifelong quest.
6. Feminist, queer, and ethnic theatres emerged in Australia in the 1970s–80s, such as the Woman's Theatre Group and the Pink Company of Melbourne, the Gay Theatre Company of Sydney, the Doppio Teatro and Gilgul Theatre of Adelaide, and the Deck Chair Theatre Company and multi-ethnic Black Swan Theatre of Perth—along with performances at international festivals in those cities.



7. Joanna Murray-Smith (1962–) has written plays since 1987, becoming best known for *Honour* (1995), about a middle-aged man who leaves his wife and adult daughter for a younger woman, and *The Female of the Species* (2006), a satire about celebrity feminists, inspired by an incident in 2000 when Germaine Greer was held at gunpoint in her home by a disturbed student.
8. In **New Zealand**, Renée Taylor (1929–), or “Renée,” is a lesbian, feminist, socialist playwright of Maori, Irish, Scottish, and English ancestry. She became best known for *Wednesday to Come* (1984) about four generations of women in a small town during the Great Depression of the 1930s.
9. David Geary (1963–) wrote broad comedies about New Zealand stereotypes, deconstructing the national self-image, such as *Pack of Girls* (1991) about a women’s rugby team.
10. Lorae Parry (1955–) wrote *Eugenia* (1996) about an Italian-immigrant woman in Wellington in 1916 who lived, worked, and married while using a male persona, which was how she viewed herself, as transgender, not lesbian. Modern students create a drama project about her, involving two teachers in conflict about gender and power (Rubin 5: 345).  
**[How did dramatists in Australia and New Zealand develop inner/outer theatre concerns in the last century that relate to ours today?]**
11. In **India**, Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, writing in Bengali. His plays included *The Post Office* (*Dak Ghar*, 1912), about a child gaining spiritual freedom from the world of hoarded wealth, and *Chintragada* (1936), a dance-drama.
12. Bijon Bhattacharya (1915–78) wrote about the Bengal famine of 1943, when over two million people died, in *The Harvest* (*Nabanna*, 1944).
13. Bengal director and dramatist Badal Sircar (1925–2011) took theatre out of the proscenium and into the public, founding the Shatabdi theatre group in 1967, while writing absurdist plays. He developed “Third Theatre,” as a protest against commercial entertainment, performing in found spaces, courtyards, and parks with minimal scenery and costumes.
14. Vijay Tendulkar (1928–2008) was an influential dramatist for over five decades in Maharashtra (western India). He was especially known for *Silence! The Court Is in Session* (*Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe*, 1967) about a group of teachers staging an improvised mock trial in a village that turns into an accusatory game and *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) about powerful men manipulating popular ideologies.

15. Safdar Hashmi (1954–89) developed political theatre in Delhi, through his troupe Janam (Birth). But when his play *Raise Your Voice* (*Halla Bol*), about government suppression of the labor movement, was performed in 1989 to support the local campaign of a Marxist candidate, Hashmi was beaten to death in an attack by a rival politician's hit men. His wife, Moloyashree Hashmi, returned to the spot a few days later and defiantly continued the performance.
16. Girish Karnad (1938–) wrote in the language of Kannada and translated his works into English, exploring current issues through Indian myth and history, as in *Hayavadana* (1971), *Play with Cobra* (*Naga-Mandala*, 1988), and *Death by Beheading* (*Taledanda*, 1990).
17. Manjula Padmanabhan (1953–) wrote *Harvest* (1999), an absurdist, sci-fi, video-inflected play about people in a developing nation being tempted and consumed by global corporations and technologies—through the metaphor of organ selling.

**[Which distinctive issues in modern Indian drama relate to ongoing aspects of our current political theatre?]**

18. In **China**, Ouyang Yuqian (1989–1962), a top Beijing Opera writer and performer of *dan* (female) roles, was also a screenwriter and film actor. Ouyang became one of the founders of modern Chinese “spoken drama” (*huaaju*), along with Hong Shen, Tian Han, and Cao Yu (family names first).
19. Hong Shen (1894–1955) received a scholarship to travel to the US and study at Ohio State University, where his student-play, *The Wedded Husband*, was performed for 1300 people in 1919. Then, he studied drama at Harvard University with George Pierce Baker. Returning to China in 1922, Hong wrote and performed the lead role in the anti-war play *Yama Zhao* (1923). However, he was accused of plagiarism by the literati because his play resembled Eugene O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones*, with its soldier fleeing in the jungle and hallucinating. Hong continued writing plays, including an adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s comedy, *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, and also became a filmmaker and actor.
20. Tian Han (1898–1968) wrote plays from 1922 to 1961. But he was jailed as a “counter revolutionary” in 1966 for the criticism of Mao’s government in his historical drama, *Xie Yaohuan* (1961), and died in prison. The play shows a female official, an inspector sent by the court in the late seventh century, disguised as male, who punishes cruel noblemen, but is tortured and killed (with parallels to modern secret police and prisons), and then avenged by the female emperor, Wu Zetian. It was rehabilitated and restaged in 1979 (Wagner 99–112).
21. Cao Yu (1910–96) studied Western authors, classical and modern, while writing in realist and expressionist styles. *Thunderstorm* (1934),

- his first play, depicts rigid traditionalism destroying a wealthy, modern family, through incest and oppression, caused by a corrupt businessman and patriarch. *Sunrise* (1936) shows the tragic disintegration of several Shanghai women. *Peking Man* (1940), written after the Japanese invasion of 1937, reveals the collapse of a traditional family unable to cope with a changing society in the capital city.
22. He Jingzhi (1924–) wrote *The White-Haired Girl* (1945), the most popular Chinese drama of the 1940s–60s, with several regional opera and ballet versions. It was also a model drama during the Cultural Revolution. It depicts a slave girl, raped by her master, who flees to the mountains where she is viewed as a goddess with white hair and joins the Communist rebels, finally getting honor.
  23. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), “Recalling Bitterness” performances were organized by the Party to re-educate young people “sent down” to farms from cities, with elderly peasants selected and trained to evoke emotional identification by telling stories of their oppression prior to Communism. Such *suku* (bitterness) was also performed earlier, in the 1940s, to trigger collective, revolutionary rage (Alexander 18–21).
  24. Lao She (1899–1966) became popular for *Teahouse* (*Cha Guan*, 1957), set in a teahouse in 1898, 1910 during the war, and 1945 after World War II. But Lao was publicly denounced during the Cultural Revolution and murdered or driven to suicide in 1966, yet posthumously “rehabilitated” by the Communist Party in 1979.
  25. Jiang Qing, a former actress and wife of Mao, led the “Gang of Four,” which promoted the Cultural Revolution, suppressing traditional Beijing Opera and other forms of professional theatre. 18 “Revolutionary Operas” were created instead, as propaganda onstage (with related films, posters, stamps, and other products) glorifying the Red Army, common people, and Communist Party leaders. However, after Mao’s death in 1976, the Gang of Four lost power. By 1980, thousands of traditional theatre companies reappeared, with new lighting designs, increased spectacle, and electronic amplification.
  26. Influenced by Grotowski, but focused on the actor’s discoveries in relation to other people, Gao Xingjian (1940–) wrote absurdist plays in the 1980s and 1990s, such as *The Other Shore* (1985). It shows actors improvising in a rope exercise, trying to reach Buddhist enlightenment, with conflicts between individuals and “the Crowd.” It criticized Chinese government policies and was banned by authorities during rehearsals, causing Gao to flee to France. Yet he became the first Chinese writer to win the Nobel Prize in 2000.

27. Beijing director Lin Zhaohua (1936–) became known in the 1980s for defying socialist realism in spoken drama (*huaju*) and leading the Little Theatre Movement (Xiao Chujang) with his non-illusionistic style, especially in staging Gao's plays, starting with *Absolute Signal* in 1982, using a small rehearsal hall at the People's Art Theatre. As China shifted from a planned to market economy, with less state subsidies for large productions, Little Theatres offered intimate spaces with low cost, experimental works.
28. Sha Yexin (1939–2018) became head of the Shanghai People's Art Theatre in 1985 and wrote various plays, including *Jesus, Confucius, and John Lennon* (1987) about the absurdities they find traveling around the world as representatives of God.
29. *China Dream (Zhong guo)*, written in both English and Chinese by Sun Huizhu (William Sun) and Fei Chunfang (Faye Fei), was performed in New York and Shanghai in 1987. It shows eight nonlinear scenes of Mingming, an actress who opens a Chinese restaurant, and her American boyfriend, a lawyer with a PhD in Chinese philosophy (performed by an actor who also plays an American suitor, her grandfather, and her lost lover in China).
30. Meng Jinghui (1966–), Artistic Director of Beijing's PlayPlay Studio, became known for his "Meng-style" of energetic, cajoling, and provocative, comic and serious, political and popular elements. He adapted Western plays and staged new Chinese drama, such as *Si Fan* (1993), which mixed Ming *kunshan* opera with stories from the classic fourteenth-century novel, *The Decameron*, by Giovanni Boccaccio.
31. Stan Lai (Lai Shengchuan, 1954–), an American-born writer-director of Chinese heritage, founded the Performance Workshop in Taiwan in 1984, but later became based in mainland China. He often worked collaboratively, selecting from actors' improvised words and actions to create the script. He became internationally known for *That Evening, We Performed Cross-Talk* (1985), which revived the dying art of *xiangsheng*, "face and voice," with a stand-up comic duo giving a rapid banter of puns and allusions, sometimes with singing, bamboo clappers, and other musical instruments. *Secret Love in Peach-Blossom Land* (1986, film 1992) shows two troupes trying to rehearse an early modern tragedy and a period comedy based on a classic poem, on the same stage at the same time, due to a scheduling mistake. *A Dream Like a Dream* (2000) is an eight-hour epic with the audience at the center, surrounded by four stages, depicting linked lives of violence and love in Shanghai, Paris, a train wreck, and a boat on the ocean.

**[How did Chinese drama and related performances develop in the last century, through Western influences and Communist ideals, reframing bio-cultural identity needs?]**

32. In **Korea**, under Japanese control, from 1930 to 1945, masked dance-dramas and puppet performances were banned.
33. The civil war (1950–53) split Korea into the communist North and democratic South. Military leaders took control of South Korea in the early 1960s, promising to fight corruption and communism. They gradually imposed censorship on artists and journalists, with military officers then ruling as elected presidents for the next 30 years.
34. Yoo Chi Jin (1905–74, family name first) wrote realistic, patriotic dramas in the 1940s–50s, showing hope for greater enlightenment, as in *The Han River Flows* (1958).
35. Cha Bum Suk drew on his own war experiences in his realistic yet lyrical plays, such as *Mountain Fire* (1963), showing villagers as victims.
36. Choi In Hoon (1936–2018) used archetypes from Korean folktales in *We Shall Meet Again* (1970) about the tragic encounter of a military general with a princess.
37. Kim Eui Kyung was an early leader in Korea's Little Theatre Movement. He wrote *Namhan Sansung* (1974), about China's seventeenth-century invasion of Korea, and *The Anarchist from the Colony* (1984), about the courtroom consciousness of a nationalist during the Japanese occupation (Rubin 5: 268–69).

**[Which cultural experiences shaped modern Korean theatre, as it reflected artists' and viewers' inner theatres?]**

38. **Japanese** playwright Kunio Kishida (1890–1954) studied theatre with Jacques Copeau in Paris in the 1920s and then wrote Western-style dramas. Kishida influenced the growth of the New Theatre (*shingeki*) movement in Tokyo in the 1920s–40s, with realistic plays and women onstage.
39. Junji Kinoshita (1914–2006), a translator of Shakespeare's dramas, contributed to the *shingeki* movement. He also involved folktales in his plays, such as *Twilight Crane* (1947) about a farmer who discovers that his wife is actually a crane that he saved from a trap some years before, but then loses her. Kinoshita's *Between God and Man* (1992) depicts the Tokyo War Crimes Trials.
40. Chikao Tanaka (1905–95) developed *shingeki* through a Christian viewpoint, involving metaphysical themes with rhythmic dialog. His *Head of Mary* (1959) shows Catholics in Nagasaki rebuilding their faith after the atomic bomb destroyed their church.

41. Kōbō Abe (1924–93), an admirer of Brecht, wrote protest plays, such as *Slave Hunting* (1955) about the postwar selling of the remains of the dead. He also used magic realism in his trilogy: *The Suitcase* about birth, *The Cliff of Time* about the course of life, and *The Man Who Turned into a Stick* about death (1957–69).
42. Yukio Mishima (1925–70) wrote historical *shingeki*, such as *The Nest of the White Ant* (1955) about Japanese immigrants in Brazil, *Madame de Sade* (1965) about the wife of the notorious Marquis during his incarceration, and *My Friend Hitler* (1968) about a purging of Nazi leaders. Yet he also adapted traditional *noh* and *kabuki* plays to modern settings.
43. Director Tadashi Suzuki (1939–) moved his company from Tokyo to rural Toga in 1976, creating the Suzuki Company of Toga (SCOT). He also directed and taught internationally with his Suzuki Method of actor training, involving intense physical exercises based in *noh* and *kabuki*, with squatting, stomping, and marching.
44. Writer-director Jūrō Kara (1940–) created a theory of the “privileged body,” with the actor as shamanic medium for the audience’s dreams and desires. Kara’s troupe performed throughout Japan in a mobile red tent.
45. Kara’s theory and Suzuki’s physical acting method became the most prominent examples of the Little Theatre Movement (*Shōgekijō*) in the 1960s. It involved original works with complex, multilayered mixtures of reality and fantasy, through distorted time sequences and body-oriented spectacles, drawing on traditional *kabuki* and *noh* techniques in new performance spaces. Second-generation Little Theatre in the 1970s added self-parody, making it popular with young people, and the third in the 1980s became more individualistic.
46. Satoh Makoto (1943–) led Black Tent in its first three years, 1968–71, another mobile Little Theatre. He also wrote *My Beatles* (1969) about the Japanese abuse of Korean women after invading their country in 1910 and continued racism against Koreans in Japanese ghettos. It shows students rehearsing a play based on another historical incident, which reversed that power relation, the rape-murder of a Japanese girl by a Korean boy, while movers appear as the Fab Four, like impotent gods.
47. Influenced by the works of Samuel Beckett and Anton Chekhov, Minoru Betsuyaku (1937–) was a member of the Waseda Little Theatre in the 1960s and wrote absurdist tragicomedies. In *The Elephant* (1962), a victim of the atomic bomb wants to show his scars but is

told by his nephew to suffer in silence. In *The Little Match Girl* (1966), a woman brings her family to the home of an elderly couple, claiming she is their daughter, in a denunciation of Japanese society for pretending World War II never happened. In *Godot Has Come* (2007), Beckett's famous vagrants are joined by two women and a child, who keep them so busy that they miss Godot's arrival.

**[How did *shingeki*, Little Theatre, and Suzuki techniques involve traditional Japanese elements along with Western influences, reframing postwar identities?]**

48. Ovidia Yu (1961–), one of **Singapore's** earliest feminist writers, wrote plays about changing roles and identities, including *Hitting (on) Women* (2007), which relates to her own lesbianism.
49. In **Malaysia**, which gained independence in 1957 and added Sabah and Sarawak in 1963, *bangsawan* became the first theatre style to use a proscenium stage, with actors improvising the roles of a hero, heroine, clown, and demon, accompanied by an orchestra.
50. Malaysian *drama moden* (modern drama) playwrights started depicting social problems realistically onstage in the 1960s. *Teater kontemporari* (contemporary theatre) then developed with experimental styles in the 1970s (Rubin 5: 286–87).
51. In the **Philippines**, Spanish colonialism (1565–1896) brought various genres of religious and secular dramas, which were transformed on the islands and continue today. These included the popular *komedya*, a verse play about Christian saints or Christian-Muslim wars, staged for five hours a night across three nights during a town fiesta, with colorful costumes (blue/black for Christians and red for Moors), processions, mock battles, and magical effects, such as figures materializing from flowers or birds swooping down from towers.
52. The *panunuluyan* (search for lodging) involved a street procession showing Joseph and Mary seeking a place for the birth of Jesus.
53. The *pastores* included 13 men and women in shepherd's clothes, dancing and singing in Spanish.
54. The *tatlong hari* (three kings) showed biblical kings or wise men seeking Bethlehem and visiting King Herod.
55. The *osana* involved a Palm Sunday procession with a priest and others depicting Jesus on a donkey, entering Jerusalem in triumph with the apostles.
56. The *salubong* (encounter), a musical with song and dance, showed the first meeting of the Risen Christ with his mother (the Virgin Mary) and an angel descending from heaven to remove her mourning veil.

57. The *sinakulo* (passion play) was an elaborate verse drama, staged across Holy Week (from Palm Sunday to Easter). It depicted the entire history of salvation, from the creation of the world to the crowning of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven, while focusing on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—with marches, chants, and miraculous special-effects. All of these Spanish-Filipino religious dramas shaped the minds of colonized people toward European, Christian ideals.
58. Filipino artists also took the secular *zarzuela*, which the Spanish introduced in the late-1800s, and indigenized it as the *sarswela*: a play with songs and dances about a love story across social classes. It included comical scenes with amorous servants and popular topics, such as usury, European manners, greedy landlords, corrupt politicians, cruel stepmothers, husbands addicted to cock-fighting or wives to card-games, drug addicts, and migrants abused by recruiters.
59. Without the songs and dances, another form from Spain, the more realistic *drama*, was used to comment on social conflicts, such as divorce (a controversy for Catholics) or abusive priests, landlords, and capitalists.
60. Amelia Lepeña-Bonaficio (1930–) created *The Mountain* (1976) in the *sarswela* form, showing a mountain people's resistance to a mining company trying to displace them.
61. Al Santos created realistic docudramas, such as *Mayo A-Beinte Uno* (1977) about freedom fighter Valentin de los Santos in the independence revolutions against Spain (1896–98), the US (1899–1902), and Japan (1942–45).
62. Marilou Jacob (1948–) wrote *Juan Tamban* (1978) about a poor boy forced to eat lizards and roaches.
63. Virgilio Vitug (1951–) created the *sinakulo*, *Passion Play of the Country* (1982), which reinterprets Jesus Christ as a champion of the poor who condemns the modern votive-candle sellers for commercializing religion (Rubin 5: 426).

**[How did theatre artists in Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines draw on European styles, yet develop their own distinctive forms, expressing human drives, inner-theatre elements, and changing social values?]**



## G. Middle Eastern Theatre

1. Arabic shadow puppetry (*khayal al-zill*), with flat figures and a translucent screen, began in the tenth or eleventh century.
2. In **Turkey** and across the Ottoman Empire, *karagöz* (black-eye) shadow puppetry became popular after the sixteenth century, especially during the Muslim daytime-fasting/nighttime-celebrating month of Ramadan. The puppetry was lewd and raucous, with sexual jokes and political satire, until nineteenth-century reforms. Its main characters are Karagöz (witty hunchback with get-rich-quick schemes) and Hacivat (educated poet trying to refine the other). Other characters are the drunkard Tuzsuz Deli Bekir with his wine bottle, the opium addict Kanbur Tiryaki with his pipe, the long-necked Uzun Efe, the eccentric dwarf Altı Kariş Beberuhi, the half-wit Denyo, the spendthrift Civan, and the flirtatious female Nigâr, plus dancers, jinn-spirits, and various non-Turks. Camel-hide puppets in multiple colors move mostly at the waist and knees, while seen through a translucent screen. The performance has five parts: an introduction, *muhaddeme* with Hacivat reciting prayers, *muhavere* with a debate, *fasel* (main plot), and epilog.
3. *Orta oyunu*, an improvised folk theatre, developed akin to *karagöz* but with live actors, costume-changes visible to the audience, a folding-frame stage, sometimes grotesque dancing, and musicians. Characters included Pishekiar, a conjurer in a yellow gown, red tunic, and multicolored cap; Kavuklu, a comical trader/servant in a red gown and huge hat; and Zenne, a woman played by a man. In the 1800s, *orta oyunu* improvisers drew from Western melodramas, with further stock characters, creating the hybrid form: *tuluat*.
4. With the twentieth-century reforms of the Turkish Republic by Atatürk, Muslim women were allowed to attend shows, sit with men, and perform onstage. Performers spoke Anatolian Turkish to spread that language instead of Ottoman Turkish.
5. Actor and director Muhsin Ertuğrul (1892–1979) developed Istanbul's first municipal theatre and state conservatory for theatre training, later founding six other theatres in various cities.
6. In the 1960s, *Sacrifice*, by Güngör Dilman (1930–), showed a village woman as modern Medea who kills her children and herself because her husband wants to marry a second wife, and *Those Within*, by Melih Cevdet Anday (1915–2002), depicted an isolated prisoner who becomes obsessed with sex.

7. Meltem Arikan (1968–), inspired by the “Arab Spring” revolutions, wrote *Mi Minör* (2012) about the fictional democracy, Pinima, where the president decides everything and the musical note “mi” is banned. It was staged with the audience encouraged to read the script on their cell phones.
8. Sa’dallah Wanous (1941–97) studied in Paris in the 1960s and then advocated political theatre in Damascus, **Syria**, with his *Manifestos for a New Arab Theatre* (1970) about inciting the audience to action with direct dialog. His play, *The Adventure of Jaabir the Slave* (1970), combined political allegory with an Arab storyteller (*al-hakawati*), in a café as theatre. With director Fawwāz as-Sāhir, Wanous founded the Experimental Theatre (Masrah at-Tajreebi) in 1976, promoting a presentational style without the proscenium arch and using social research to make Arabic performances distinct from European.
 

**[How were developments in Turkish and Syrian theatre, such as puppetry, folk performance, gender norms, and politics, like or unlike European and Asian parallels?]**
9. Since at least the 1400s, the Shiis in **Iran** (formerly Persia), who are now 10–15% of Muslims worldwide, have commemorated the tragic massacre of the prophet Muhammad’s grandson, Hussein, and his male sons, by marching in a religious procession (*dasteh*), with males beating and whipping themselves in pious mourning and carrying large wooden structures (*nakhl*) symbolizing Hussein’s coffin. In the 1600s, the procession, during the first month of the Muslim calendar (Muharram), also involved tableaux on wheeled carts.
10. The Muharram procession eventually developed a ritual drama, *Tā’zieh* (or *Taziya*), reenacting the massacre of Hussein’s family, in a power struggle for leadership of the Muslim community in Karbela in 680, with Sunni Muslims as villains in the play. *Tā’zieh* shows the migration of Imam Hussein and his followers from Medina to Mesopotamia, his battles with rivals, and his martyrdom, through which he becomes an innocent victim and intercessor for humanity (like Jesus), sacrificing himself for the redemption of all Muslims. The actor playing Hussein is joined in his weeping by many spectators lamenting their own miseries and oppressions. In 1989, three large-scale *Tā’zieh* were staged to commemorate the death of Iran’s revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. Current Muharram rites may also include a procession of men beating, whipping, and cutting themselves, mourning and identifying with the slain Hussein.

11. In *Tā'zieh*, the villains are traditionally dressed in red (reciting their Persian lines) and heroic martyrs in green or white (singing their lines). Women are portrayed by men in veils, but not effeminately. Some actors wear masks as demons. Some performers ride horses. Other animals are also used, such as camels and sheep. There are minimal props, yet also musical instruments. The audience stands around an open-air platform or follows the performance in processional staging. Because of the aniconic Muslim view that figural art might be disrespectful, in mimicking the divine creator, performers often carry the script in hand, so as not to fully embody a character.
12. The *Tā'zieh* director (*gardan*) distributes texts, orders performers around, and pushes them with his club during the performance. He also provides props, such as blood-soaked wool representing flesh. Comic plays (*gushbeh*) are also included during the *Tā'zieh* passion play.
13. Improvised satires (*ruhozi*) were performed in Iran, too, in teahouses and private homes, celebrating marriages, births, or circumcisions, with actors wearing masks. The principal character (*siyah*) appeared in blackface with black hands, talking crudely with the accent of former Iranian slaves, while criticizing dignitaries, rich people, and himself as “stupid,” yet showing his daring as a wise fool.
14. Women improvised their own satirical performances, as *ruhozi* with known stories and stock characters, yet more singing and dancing. They performed in a private room or courtyard of the home, just for other women (and very young boys), including friends and servants, with drums, trays, pots, and pans (for music), plus a sitting chorus. Subjects in women’s *ruhozi* or theatre games (*bazi*) included: infidelity, bastard children, being forced to marry an unknown or disliked man, problems with female in-laws (with whom a young wife must traditionally live), and decorum (proper behavior).
15. During a popular, improvised, women’s *ruhozi* called “Auntie Ro-Ro,” a young bride tells her maternal aunt that she is two months pregnant, although just one month married, and does not know who the father is. The performer stuffs rags under her clothes to have a bigger and bigger belly. Then, there is a birth scene with yelling and cursing, which also involves a reluctant midwife riding a donkey (portrayed by other women), but the rags that emerge prove to be “empty.”
16. In another women’s *ruhozi*, “There Are Ants,” the performer improvises an itching body, with a chorus telling her to “Take it off and throw it away,” which she does with various parts of her clothing until she is dancing naked (Rubin 5: 197).

17. Traditional Iranian folk performances also involved *Siah-Bazi* (a witty, verbal duel between two men wearing red turbans, who portray a clownish servant in blackface and his immoral master), *Kheimeh-Shab-Bazi* (with a storyteller, puppets, and musician), and *Naqqali* (with a storyteller, music, and painted scrolls).
18. Mirza Fath-Ali Akhundzadeh (1812–78), who eventually became Russian with the name “Akhundov,” wrote six comedies in Turkish Azari in the 1850s (later translated into colloquial Persian). These included *Monsieur Jordan*, *the Botanist*, with a scientist advocating for his field against superstitions. He also wrote a pamphlet, *Letters*, which criticized Islam for censoring theatre, which he called “a beautiful gift.”
19. In the early 1900s in Iran, Western-style theatre became popular. But then in 1907, parliament suppressed the word “theatre” as obscene. In 1968, theatre was again discussed in parliament as an indecent activity.
20. During the 1930s, women started to appear on the public stage, though they were mostly Armenians and Jews. Muslim men and women could attend shows together, but in segregated areas of the theatre.
21. Between 1947 and 1979, the International Theatre of Tehran put on many Western plays.
22. Gohar Morad (Gholam-Hosseyin Sa’edi, 1936–85), a doctor who opposed the Shah’s regime in the 1960s, wrote many plays. In his *Club-Wielders of Varazil* (1965), villagers befriend but become threatened by hunters (representing modern foreigners) and take refuge in a Muslim shrine.
23. Bahram Beyzai (1938–) wrote various plays inspired by the symbolist marionette theatre of Maeterlinck, including *Four Boxes* (1967), with four characters in different colors, representing factions of society who are put in separate boxes by a scarecrow, for his own safety (Rubin 5: 206–7). **[Which aspects of religious, secular, domestic (women’s), and public theatre in Iran are distinctive, also regarding censorship and key plays, or have similarities in other cultures—showing unique moral frameworks or common identity needs?]**
24. In **Iraq**, the free-verse dramas of Kaalid ash-Shawwaaf, 1950s–80s, used the well-made play formula (Rubin 4: 109).
25. In the same period, Yousif al-A’ni (1927–) wrote allegorical and realistic plays, showing the influence of Brecht.
26. Director Ibraheem Jalal, who studied in Italy and the US, wrote essays about mixing techniques from Stanislavski and Brecht.

27. Writer-director Badri Hassoun Fareed (1927–) studied theatre in Chicago and created plays in Iraq emphasizing the actor's importance, writing mostly in colloquial Arabic (*'ammiyya*).
28. Muhieddeen Zankana (1940–) penned realistic plays in classical Arabic (*fusha*) in the 1960s–80s.
29. In 1848, Marun al-Naqqash (1817–55) wrote and staged in his Beirut (**Lebanon**) home: *The Play of the Miser*, based on Molière, yet written in a mix of classical and colloquial Arabic.
30. In the 1950s, Lebanese musical theatre developed as *al-masrah al-gh-inaa'i* (singing theatre) with folk tales, jokes, anecdotes, demons, and criminals.
31. Ya'qoub ash-Shidraawi wrote *Parse the Following* (1970) in verse, which critiqued the Arab world for its fragmentation and inability to help Palestinians.
32. Adapting George Orwell's novel (*Animal Farm*), Shakeeb Kouri wrote *The Animal Republic* (1971), satirizing Arab military regimes that came to power as socialist but became dictatorial. Kouri also wrote and directed *Cabaret* (1972) about the human submission to machines, evoking nostalgia for rural village life.  
**[Which theatrical styles or value systems appear in Iraqi and Lebanese dramas, related to frames of meaning in other cultures?]**
33. Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898–1987), known as the founder of modern **Egyptian** drama, adapted French plays in the 1920s, including *The Modern Woman* (1923). Then he studied in Paris, learning more about European theatre. In the 1930s, he wrote closet dramas in classical Arabic (*fusha*), inspired by history, folklore, and Greek and Arab mythology, as a theatre of ideas. These included *People of the Cave* (1933), about three people who awake from a cave after 300 years and are overwhelmed by the world's changes. In the 1950s, al-Hakim wrote populist plays, in a modified version of *fusha* that could be understood in modern Arabic countries, such as *Song of Death*, a critical, realistic tragedy about a peasant widow seeking blood vengeance for her husband's death, although her son refuses.
34. Ahmed Shawqi (1869–1932) wrote plays about noble heroes of Egyptian history, who chose to die, such as *Cleopatra the Great* (1927).
35. Abdul al-Rahmani al-Sharqaw (1920–87) wrote *The Tragedy of Jamila* (1962) in free verse, about a young female fighter in the Algerian resistance to French colonialism.
36. Yusif Idris (1927–91) imagined new social systems and the relativity of truth, mixing social satire, abstraction, and surrealism, as in *The*

*Third Sex* (1971) about a super-being and ways to improve personal relationships.

37. In *The Crows* (1984), Muhamad Anani (1939–) used such animals as symbols of a despot with his aides, harem, and servants.
38. In **Saudi Arabia**, Abdul-Rahman al-Hamad wrote *The Play and Its Production* (1982), a comedy about plays being given the value of real estate and thus taken seriously.
39. Privately and with an all-female cast, the Good Will Club, a women's group in Riyadh, staged Ibrahim al-Hamdan's *Monokilya* (1985) about a Saudi wife catching her husband making passes at other women while they vacation in Greece (Rubin 4: 213–14).

**[Which new or traditional modes of theatricality, and which stories, were used by Egyptian and Saudi dramatists to express modern identity conflicts and changing political ideals?]**

40. Staged in Ramallah, **Palestine**, in 1934 and published the same year, *For Your Own Sake, O Homeland!*, by two brothers, Wadi and Shafiq Tarzi, depicted a Palestinian middleman selling village land to Jews, which his son sees as a betrayal of their people (Snir).
41. Mu'in Bsisu (1926–84) was born in Gaza but lived outside Palestine, after the *Nakba* (exodus) of 1948 and the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel in 1967. He wrote several postcolonial plays, including *The Tragedy of Guevara* (1969), which compares Palestinians to Native Americans, and *Samson and Delilah* (1971) about the reactions of two brothers and a sister to the Israeli occupation of Jaffa. The latter play includes an Israeli who tries to get the sister to betray her friends, with his long hair (like the biblical Samson) made of bullets.
42. Staged in Haifa in 1972, *The Ululation of the Land*, by Suhayl Abu Nawwara, shows a sick old man trying to persuade his three sons to stay on their ancestral land, but they want to improve their lives with education elsewhere.
43. The son of a French mother and Palestinian father, Francois Abu Salim (1951–2011) studied in Paris and was influenced by the work of Bertolt Brecht and Jean Genet. He formed al-Balalin (The Balloons) Theatre in the early 1970s, for local audiences in the Occupied Territories, and then al-Hakawati (The Storyteller) Theatre in 1977. The first production of al-Hakawati, *In the Name of the Father, the Mother, and the Son*, showed such family members in cages with an animal tamer, plus a stranger who symbolized Israeli occupation and Western modernization.

44. In their 1980–81 season, al-Hakawati staged the collectively written *Mahjub Mahjub*, with a clown figure as innocent, “living dead” collaborator with the Israeli authorities, subjected to a harsh interrogation because his clothes match the colors of the Palestinian flag. In 1983, al-Hakawati produced *Ali, the Galilean* about a young Palestinian who knows Hebrew, leaves his village for the city of Tel Aviv, makes friends with Jews, and is advised to change his name to the Jewish “Eli,” causing an identity crisis. In 1983, al-Hakawati received a grant from the Ford Foundation and refurbished a cinema in East Jerusalem as its home base, becoming the Palestinian National Theatre.
45. In the mid-1980s, al-Hakawati staged *A Thousand and One Nights of a Stone Thrower*, showing a ten-year-old boy, armed with stones, who challenges a military governor, like David against Goliath, in a satirical mix of Arabian Nights and Star Wars. This was shortly before the first *intifada* (Palestinian uprising), when boys actually threw stones at soldiers. The staging of the play also led to the arrest of the theatre’s leader, Francois Abu Salim.
46. In 1989, Abu Salim went into voluntary exile in Paris. But he returned in 1993 and wrote a play with his mother, *Jericho, Year Zero*, about a romance between a female tourist and a male refugee, both alienated from their cultures, resulting in tragic misunderstandings.
47. In 1987, the Palestinian theatre troupe al-Sanabil (The Spikes) performed their own adaptation of Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* as *Waiting for Deliverance*, asking the audience to fight for liberation, rather than waiting for it to come from outside. A Palestinian television station in Bethlehem, which broadcast a video of the play, was closed by Israeli authorities.
48. al-Qasaba Theatre was established in Jerusalem in the 1980s by George Ibrahim. It collaborated with the Hebrew Khan Theatre to stage a joint Palestinian-Israeli production of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. It also formed joint productions with theatres internationally, including the Royal Court in London in 1999, and toured the US in 2002.
49. The first professional Hebrew theatre, Habima (The Stage), was founded by Nahum Zernach in Russia in 1912 and was supported by the Moscow Art Theatre after 1918. It moved to Tel Aviv in 1929, which later became part of **Israel**, and Habima became Israel’s National Theatre.
50. In 1922, Habima became famous with Vakhtangov’s direction of *The Dybbuk, or Between Worlds*, by S. Ansky (1863–1920), from a Jewish folktale about a young woman possessed by the evil spirit (*Dybbuk*)

of her dead romantic lover, who had practiced the mystical Kabbalah. In 1925, Habima staged the emblematic play, *Golem*, by H. Leivick (1888–1962), about a sixteenth-century rabbi in Prague who molds a dummy out of clay and animates it, by writing the name of God on its forehead, to get revenge against Christians. But the monster turns against the Jews and must be reduced again to dust.

51. The hardships of early Israeli colonizers are featured in Shin Shalom's *Dan the Guard* (1936) and Ahron Ashman's *This Land* (1942), showing the melodramatic victory of pioneer heroes over enemies and stragglers at the start of the century.
52. *He Walked in the Fields* (1949), by Moshe Shamir (1921–2004), depicts a love affair between a holocaust survivor and a *kibbutznik* (commune dweller), who dies in Israel's war of independence.
53. Nissim Aloni (1926–98) wrote *The Cruellest of All—The King* (1953) about political divisions in Israeli society (including the decision of whether to side with the US or USSR in the Cold War), using the biblical split between Judea and Samaria.
54. *The Lady of the Castle* (1955), by Leah Goldberg (1911–70), shows the difficult decision of a holocaust survivor about moving to Israel or staying with the man in Poland who saved her from the Nazis.
55. Ben Zion Tomer (1928–98) wrote *The Children of the Shadow* (1962), depicting a childhood survivor of the holocaust as a macho Israeli army officer meeting a relative who was a “kapo” (prisoner as overseer with special privileges) in a concentration camp.
56. In 1970, the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv staged a biting satire by Hanoch Levin (1943–99), *Queen of the Bathtub*. It broke taboos and caused outrage by questioning the myth of self-sacrifice in Israel's wars.
57. Yossef Mundi (1935–) wrote *Around and Around* (1971), focusing on a masochistic spiritual Jew and sadistic physical Jew, as prisoners together in an asylum, and *The Governor of Jericho* (1975), using anti-realist styles to portray the new Israeli soldier as a fascist and tyrant, provoking anger in the audience.
58. *Soul of a Jew* (1982), by Yehoshua Sobol (1939–), depicts a self-hating Jewish philosopher who converts to Christianity.
59. In 1984, *Messiah*, by American playwright Martin Sherman (1938–), caused a debate in the Knesset (Israeli parliament) with orthodox religious politicians attacking the Haifa Theater that produced it and



- threatening to make financial support dependent on proper content. But President Chaim Herzog intervened with a simpler demand that the play drop one sentence, “I hate you, God” (Ben-Zvi 18).
60. In 1988, *The Jerusalem Syndrome*, by Yehoshua Sobol and Gedalia Besser (1939–), blamed the fall of the Second Temple, during the ancient Roman Empire, on Jewish zealots. This triggered right-wing demonstrations, picketing the entrance to the Habima Theater with hostile banners, and then noisy protests and firecrackers inside that stopped the show.
  61. At the Akko Festival in 1990, first prize went to 26-year-old Ilan Hatzor’s *Masked-Faced Terrorists (Reulim)*, the first Israeli play to focus on the Palestinian uprising (*intifada*), with three Jewish actors playing Palestinian brothers: one a terrorist in hiding, another suspected of collaborating with the Israeli authorities, and the youngest as innocent.
  62. In the 1992 Akko Festival, Pablo Salzmann’s *The Coexistence Bus* took place on a bus that traveled to villages in Galilee, as a guided “tour” of Arab villages, led by Jewish and Palestinian actors, some of whom actually lived there (Ben-Zvi 46).
- [What common concerns appear in Palestinian and Israeli theatre, regarding identity needs, inner/outer simulations, or cultural values?]**

## References

- Alexander, Jeffrey. *The Drama of Social Life*. Cambridge: Polity, 2017.
- Ben-Zvi, Linda, ed. *Theater in Israel*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1979.
- . *Games for Actors and Non-actors*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- . *Legislative Theatre*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Canadian Theatre Encyclopedia*, Athabasca University. [www.canadiantheatre.com/dict.pl?action=index](http://www.canadiantheatre.com/dict.pl?action=index).
- Casey, Maryrose. *Telling Stories: Aboriginal Australian and Torres Strait Islander Performances*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2012.
- Kerr, David. *African Popular Theatre*. London: James Currey, 1995.
- Lutaaya, Samuel. Ugandan Voices of Change. *Start*, 3 September 2012. [startjournal.org/2012/09/ugandan-voices-of-change-adong-judith-lucy/](http://startjournal.org/2012/09/ugandan-voices-of-change-adong-judith-lucy/).
- Plastow, Jane. *African Theatre and Politics*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996.

- Rubin, Don, ed. *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*. Vols. 1–5. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Snir, Reuven. *Palestinian Theatre*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005.
- Wagner, Rudolf G. *The Contemporary Chinese Historical Drama*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Walcott, Derek. *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays*. New York: Farrar, 1970.

## Further References and Suggested Readings

- Ancient History Encyclopedia.* [www.ancient.eu](http://www.ancient.eu).
- Asian Traditional Theatre and Dance.* [www.xip.fi/atd](http://www.xip.fi/atd).
- Beacham, Richard C. *The Roman Theatre and Its Audience.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film: An Introduction.* New York: McGraw, 1993.
- Bracher, Mark. *Social Symptoms of Identity Needs.* London: Karnac, 2009.
- Braun, Kazimierz. *A Concise History of Polish Theater from the Eleventh to the Twentieth Centuries.* Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003.
- Brockett, Oscar G., and Franklin J. Hildy. *History of the Theatre.* New York: Pearson, 2007.
- Brown, John Russell, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Burkert, Walter. *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.
- Crabtree, Susan, and Peter Beudert. *Scenic Art for the Theatre.* Burlington, MA: Focal, 2012.
- Dixon, Wheeler Winston, and Gwendolyn Audrey Foster. *A Short History of Film.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008.
- Erasmio, Mario. *Roman Tragedy: Theatre to Theatricality.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.
- Fernyhough, Charles. *The Voices Within.* New York: Basic, 2016.
- Fliotsos, Anne, and Wendy Vierow. *American Women Stage Directors of the Twentieth Century.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.
- Fortier, Mark. *Theory/Theatre.* New York: Routledge, 2016.

- Gainor, J. Ellen, Stanton B. Garner, Jr., and Martin Puchner. *The Norton Anthology of Drama*. Shorter 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2014.
- Gallay, Alan, ed. *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.
- George, David. *The Modern Brazilian Stage*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992.
- Harding, James M. *The Ghosts of the Avant-Garde(s)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013.
- “Indigenous Australian Timeline—Pre-contact.” [australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-timeline-pre-contact](http://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-timeline-pre-contact).
- Keeney, Bradford, and Hillary Keeney, ed. *Way of the Bushman*. Rochester, VT: Bear, 2015.
- Kennedy, Dennis, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Theatre and Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Kuritz, Paul. *The Making of Theatre History*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1988.
- Levi, Shimon. “Israeli Theatre.” [www.myjewishlearning.com/article/israeli-theatre/](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/israeli-theatre/).
- Looser, Diane. *Remaking Pacific Pasts*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014.
- Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- McConachie, Bruce. *Engaging Audiences*. New York: Palgrave, 2008.
- . *Evolution, Cognition, and Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Meserve, Walter J., and Mollie Ann Meserve. *A Chronological Outline of World Theatre*. New York: Prospero, 1992.
- Nellhaus, Tobin, Bruce McConachie, Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei, and Tamara Underiner. *Theatre Histories: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Pizzato, Mark. *Ghosts of Theatre and Cinema in the Brain*. New York: Palgrave, 2006.
- Romanska, Magda, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Weber, Samuel. *Theatricality as Medium*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2004.
- Westlake, E. J. *World Theatre*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Wilson, Edwin, and Alvin Goldfarb. *Living Theatre*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2012.
- Worthen, W. B., ed. *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2004.