

Peking Opera and Grotowski's Concept of "Poor Theatre"

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Volume 12 Issue 1 (March 2010) Article 6**Yao-kun Liu,****"Peking Opera and Grotowski's Concept of 'Poor Theatre'"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol12/iss1/6>>

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Abstract: In his article "Peking Opera and Grotowski's Concept of 'Poor Theatre'" Yao-kun Liu presents a comparative study of Peking opera and Western theatre with special attention to Grotowski's concept. Explaining Peking opera's dramatic elements (such as gesture and body-movement) and theatrical devices (such as stage-setting, costume, and conventions) Liu elaborates on the universality and distinctions between Eastern and Western aesthetics of drama. As an attempt to reveal the speciality and uniqueness of Peking opera, Liu employs Jerzy Grotowski's notion of "poor theatre" in a context of Constantin Stanislavski's concept of empathy, Antonin Artaud's dramatic prophecy, and Peter Brook's notion of "deadly theatre." Liu comes to the conclusion that opposite to the spiritual and individual approaches of poor theatre, Peking opera in its long history and contemporary practice satisfies a social need for contact with culture and thus Peking opera is both educational and functional. Besides the purpose of entertainment, it is an instrument to transmit the attitudes, concepts, and knowledge of Chinese society and to instruct the audience about values and morals derived from Chinese ethics and philosophy.

Yao-kun LIU

Peking Opera and Grotowski's Concept of "Poor Theatre"

In the long and rich Chinese cultural tradition, theatrical performance is one of the most popular artistic forms. Many dramas have been performed for about a thousand years and are still popular. Among the various forms of drama, Peking opera is the most influential and successful among and it is said that wherever there are Chinese, there is Peking opera. Although its origin can be traced back to ancient times, Peking opera, as performed today, is largely a product of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). In 1790, Emperor Qian Long of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) invited several drama groups to the capital, Beijing, to give performances for the celebration of his eightieth birthday. Afterwards, these drama groups stayed in the capital and continued to perform, thus bringing about a flourishing period in dramatic performance in Beijing. From the dramatic performances given by different drama groups, a new type of drama emerged gradually. It took shape as a combination of the dramatic elements from both the ancient tradition in performance and local dramatic genres. Since this new type of drama was first performed in Beijing, it was traditionally called "Beijing opera" or "Peking opera" as foreigners have pronounced it. However, the Chinese people prefer to call it "National Drama." This was not only because the term "opera" may mislead Westerners with the concept of "opera" in the Western dramatic tradition, but also because Peking opera has become an important part of Chinese culture, and because it is a dramatic embodiment of Chinese aesthetics, philosophy, and ethics (see, e.g., Scott).

Undergoing more than two millennia of development and with thousands upon thousands of dedicated dramatists striving for its perfection, Peking opera evolved from primitive religious rituals to a highly developed artistic form of dramatics. It is a dramatic performance of symbolic gestures, dance-like body movements, poetic dialogues, singing, and dancing in harmony with music and rhythm. With different historical, social and cultural backgrounds, essential differences inevitably exist in both dramatic aesthetics and theatrical practices between Western and Eastern traditions of drama. These differences fascinated and impacted upon some of the most representative modernist dramatists in the Western theatre, such as Constantin Stanislavski, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Jerzy Grotowski and Eastern dramatic traditions have either inspired or were embodied in their theories of drama and theatrical practice. With his examination of Balinese theatre and his unique position in the "theatre of cruelty," Antonin Artaud explained that to stage a show he intended to "explore the limits of our nervous sensibility ... use rhythm, sound, words, resounding with song, whose nature and startling combinations are part of an un-revealed technique" (66-67). In discussing the influence upon the formation of his actor-training methods, Jerzy Grotowski wrote that "particularly stimulating to me are the training techniques of Oriental theatre — specifically the Peking opera ... but the method which we are developing is not a combination of techniques borrowed from these sources (although we sometimes adapt elements for our use)" (16). However, owing to their unfamiliarity with Oriental culture and stage conventions, these modernist dramatists tended to focus on one aspect in the stage performance of Eastern theatre while neglected the other in their exploration of the differences between Western and Eastern theatrical traditions.

In *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud appreciates Oriental theatre while criticizes its Western counterpart. He admires "the metaphysical inclinations" in Oriental theatre as against "the psychological inclinations" (33) in Western theatre. He advocates "physical language" in Eastern dramatic performance as against "the spoken language" (27) in the stage productions of Western theatre. He considers Oriental dramatic performance as "magic enchantment" (54), but condemns Western theatre as "mad, crazy, perverted, rhetorical, philistine, antipoetic and positivist" (30). In turn, in his investigation and experiments in methods of theatre, also Grotowski criticizes traditional Western theatre where "the text is the most important element, and the theatre is there only to plug certain intellectual arguments, thus bringing about their reciprocal confrontation. It is a revival of the medieval art of the oratorical duel" (28). In contrast, in Peking opera, metaphysical inclinations co-exist with psychological inclinations where physical language goes hand in hand with spoken language, and reciprocal confrontation, and where oratorical duel occur frequently. The fundamental difference between Western theatre in general and Peking opera lies in the different concepts of stage presentation: realism in Western theatre and symbolism in Peking opera.

With regard to poetic presentation, in ancient Western thought Plato used the term *mimesis* (imitation) with the wider sense of the "copying of reality — of the objects and circumstances of the actual world ... in the attempt to reproduce life exactly as it is" (see Dorsch 11). However, Plato believed that people should be educated in "good art" in which "not only is the imitation — all art

being imitative — as true as it is possible to make it, but also the object imitated is beautiful or good" (Dorsch 12) and asserted that "the worth of poetry should be judged by the truth to life achieved by the imitation, not by the pleasure it gives" (Dorsch 17). And in *On the Art of Poetry*, Aristotle offered us a scientific explanation on the origin of imitation in human life and the various kinds of imitation: "some artists... can represent things by imitating their shapes and colours, and others do so by the use of voice; in the art I have spoken of the imitation is produced by means of rhythms, language, and music, these being used either separately or in combination ... The instinct for imitation is inherent in man from his earliest days; he differs from other animals in that he is the most imitative of creatures, and he learns his earliest lessons by imitation. Also inborn in all of us is the instinct to enjoy works of imitation... we enjoy looking at the most accurate representations of things which in themselves we find painful to see ... They enjoy seeing likenesses because in doing so they acquire information" (Dorsch 32-35). Thus, in the tradition of Western drama Platonic and Aristotelian concepts of imitation remain in the prevailing position. It is an attempt to reproduce life exactly as it is in dramatic performance. In the plays of this tradition, as J.L. Styan comments, "Dialogue approximates in varying degrees to a normal idiom of speech, and the behaviour of a character is accordingly detailed like a person's in real life" (35).

Constantin Stanislavski is the most representative of this tradition. In his book entitled *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski writes that "Scenic action ... does not lie in the movement of arms, legs, or body but in inner movements and impulses... the word 'action' is not something external, but rather something internal, non-physical, a 'spirit activity'. Scenic action is the movement from the soul to the body. External action on the stage when not inspired, not justified, not called forth by inner activity, is entertaining only for the eyes and ears, it does not penetrate the heart, and it has no significance in the life of a human spirit in a role" (48-49). In order to invoke this activity of spirit from the actor and "reach the heart of the spectator," Stanislavski emphasizes that "an actor must keep up a continuous fire of artistic desires all through his part so that they in turn will arouse the corresponding inner aspirations, which will engender corresponding inner challenges to act, and finally these inner calls to action will find their outlet in corresponding external, physical action ... an actor can experience or live his part only with his own genuine feelings" (*Creating a Role* 50). Stanislavski believes that "an attractive aim, a creative objective" is necessary and that the "best creative objective is the unconscious one which immediately, emotionally, takes possession of an actor's feelings and carries him intuitively along to the basic goal of the play ... Unconscious objectives are engendered by the emotion and will of the actors themselves. They come into being intuitively; they are then weighed and determined consciously. Thus, the emotions, will, and mind of the actor all participate in creativeness ... Deeply passionate emotions are necessary to carry away feelings, will, mind, and all of an actor's being ... [to] find a bond between the imaginary circumstances of my role and my present surroundings" (*Creating a Role* 52-86). What Stanislavski requires from the actor is genuine feeling, emotional experience, aspiration, the inner impulse to creative action, and the empathy for the dramatic embodiment of the truth of life and real characters. According to J. Willett, for Brecht Western theatre is deficient because of its "designs on the spectator's emotions which tend to prevent him from using his head" and that in this theatre "the sensations, insights and impulses of the chief characters are forced on us, and so we learn no more about the society than we can get from the setting" (Willett 169-70).

Grotowski confesses that he "was brought up on Stanislavski" who is his "personal ideal" although their "solutions differ widely and sometimes reach opposite conclusions" (15-16) and argues that "We do not want to teach the actor a predetermined set of skills or give him a 'bag of tricks'. Ours is a deductive method of collecting skills" (16). He suggests that "We compose a role as a system of signs which demonstrate what is behind the mask of common vision: the dialectics of human behaviour ... A man in an elevated spiritual state uses rhythmically articulated signs, begins to dance, to sing. A sign, not a common gesture, is the elementary integer of expression for us" (17-18) and that the "signs we use are the skeletal forms of human action, a crystallization of a role, an articulation of the particular psycho-physiology of the actor" (24). Thus Grotowski's solution is to exteriorize the inner truth of an actor, a role, and human action. Nevertheless, according to Peter Brook "no one since Stanislavski has investigated the nature of acting, its phenomenon, its meaning, the nature and science of its mental-physical-emotional processes as deeply and completely as Grotowski" (11). For Brook, Grotowski's method in training actors by "the laying bare of one's own intimacy ... without the least trace of egotism or self-enjoyment" and his technique of "the integration of all the actor's psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct" (16), as well as his advertisement for "freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction" (16) are

not far away from Stanislavski's theory of "spiritual activity," "inner aspiration," and "unconscious creative objective," and are, after all, an attempt to destroy inner falsity in stage presentation.

In contrast, Artaud suggests that "in Western theatre, words are solely used to express psychological conflicts peculiar to man and his position in everyday existence. His conflicts are clearly justifiable in spoken words" (52) and he believes that "since the Renaissance, we have become accustomed to purely descriptive, narrative theatre, narrating psychology ... To make speech or verbal expression dominant over the objective expressiveness of gestures and everything on stage spatially affecting the mind through the senses, means turning our backs on the physical requirements of the stage and rebelling against its potential" (52-57). Further, Artaud praises "gestured metaphysics" (38) in Balinese theatre in which "concepts clashed with gestures first" (33). He believes that it is "spatial poetry" which "belongs to sign language ... pure theatre language that escapes words, that sign, gesture and posture language with its own ideographic values ... This language conjures up intense images of natural or mental poetry in the mind and gives us a good idea of what spatial poetry, if free from spoken language, could become in the theatre" (29). Thus, "Theatre can re-instruct those who have forgotten the communicative power or magic mimicry of gesture, because gesture contains its own energy" (61). He then advocates that "We ought to consider staging from the angle of magic and enchantment, not as reflecting a script, the mere projection of actual doubles arising from writing, but as the fiery projection of all the objective results of gestures, words, sounds, music or their combinations" (54). As he believes, "To link theatre with expressive form potential with everything in the way of gestures, sound, colours, movement, is to return it to its original purpose, to restore it to a religious, metaphysical position, to reconcile it with the universe" (51).

Grotowski criticizes Artaud's theory as "an astounding prophecy" which lacks "long-term practical investigations ... his writings have little methodological meaning" (24) and "impossible to carry out" (86) and he argues that "Artaud explains the unknown by the unknown, the magic by the magic" (87). Interestingly, for Brook "Grotowski's theatre is as close as anyone has got to Artaud's ideal" (67). In my view both Artaud's dramatic prophecy and Grotowski's theatrical technique assimilate in many respects to Peking opera. However, they take different features with different concepts and understandings in different dramatic traditions. In Peking opera, the Platonic concepts of imitation and Stanislavski's actuality do not exist. The "outer falsity of stage presentation" is fully accepted and demonstrated, first of all, through its gestures, mimes, and body movements, which are generally called *zuo*. This "physical language" — in Artaud's terms — is articulated in Peking Opera not only through the movement of the body, but also by means of facial expression. As K. Huang remarks, "An excellent actor of Chinese drama is a great master of body movements and facial expressions" (15). *zuo* in Peking opera covers a wide variety of gestures, mimes, and body movement, ranging from the delicate gestures of fingers, hands, feet, arms, and legs to vigorous poses of the whole body. It also includes a complex series of movements made with the actor's sleeves, the plumes worn on head dresses by certain characters, the beards worn in the *sheng* and *jing* roles, and other props. It is an important means in not only in performing dramatic actions, but also in creating theatrical sceneries and displaying various emotions from different characters on stage. Generally speaking, there are two major aspects of *zuo* in Peking opera. One is gesture and mime without props: The actors create vivid and lively dramatic scenes on stage merely by symbolic gestures and mimes. They can indicate to the audience the imaginary doors, windows, bridges, a garden or a lovely spring, a group of chickens, etc., on an empty stage. They can even mime the chasing and fighting in darkness on the brightly-lit stage. The other aspect of *zuo* is gesture and mime with props. With specific gestures and body movements and with the help of a limited number of props, the actors can demonstrate effectively many specific scenes on stage. For instance, if an actor comes on stage with a whip, it means that he is riding a horse. If he is taking an oar, he is rowing a boat. A white flag indicates waves at sea, while a black flag is used to signify strong wind.

If the mimes, gestures, and body movements in Western theatre are used to inject a sense of realism, actuality, and immediacy into the dramatic scenes of the play, this physical language in Peking opera is employed imaginarily, symbolically, and abstractly. Although it originated from life and is intended to illustrate the reality of life, yet, as a specific theatrical language, the mimes, gestures, and body movements in Peking opera developed far beyond the reality and logic of life. When watching Mei Lanfang performing a play, Brecht observes: "A young woman, a fisherman's daughter, is shown on the stage, rowing a boat. She stands up and steers the (non-existent) boat with a little oar that hardly comes down to her knees. The current runs faster. Now it is harder for her to keep her balance. Now she is in a bay and rows more quietly. Well, that's the way to row a boat. But this voyage has an historic quality, as if it has been sung in many songs, a most unusual voyage, know to

everyone. Each of this famous girl's movements has been preserved in pictures. Every bend in the river was an adventure that one knows about. The bend she is now approaching is well-known" (Brecht qtd. in Martin 16). Thus, Peking opera combines the abstract with the concrete, symbolism with realism, and natural behaviour in life with pleasant songs, beautiful dances, graceful movements, and delicate lines of art. As mentioned above, the door, chickens, and a boat on stage are symbolic, imaginary, and abstract, while the way of knocking on the door, feeding the chickens, or rowing a boat are realistic, natural, and concrete. Peking opera is an artistic distillation of the essence of life, an illustration of universal truth and artistic beauty in life. It is appealing to the reality and the life-experience of the audience, but higher than the reality of life. In Stanislavski's words, "Art lives higher, observing from the height of its birdlike flights all that takes place beneath it. It makes concrete and synthesizes all that it sees" (*My Life in Art* 347).

In the performance of Peking opera, every spoken word is sung and every movement is danced. The former is pleasing to the ear, whereas the latter is pleasing to the eye. Moreover, all the singing and dancing are unified and rhymed with music, which is the core of performance of Peking opera. All the singing, dancing, gesture, mime, and body movement on stage must be consistent with the rhythm of music. Meanwhile, the rhythm in singing and speaking is also counterbalanced by the rhythm in gestures, mimes, and body movements. The dramatic performance and the rhythmical music not only restrict each other, but also support each other during the performance. As Artaud understands Balinese theatre, Peking opera is characteristic of its "evocative power of rhythm, the musical quality of physical movement, the comparable, wonderfully fused harmony of a note" (38), in which "all sounds are linked to movements" (41) and where "a kind of a deliberate accuracy directing everything, through which everything happens" (40).

In the production of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, Stanislavski invented "all sorts of *mises en scene*, the singing of birds, the barking of dogs" in order to help actors "to create a mood around them, in the hope that it would grip them and call forth creative vision" (*My Life in Art* 420). This is what Grotowski calls rich theatre, "a synthesis of disparate creative disciplines — literature, sculpture, painting, architecture, lighting, acting (under the direction of a *metteur-en-scene*)" (19). According to Grotowski, "Rich Theatre depends on artistic kleptomania, drawing from other disciplines, constructing hybrid-spectacles, conglomerates without backbone or integrity, yet presented as an organic artwork" (19). As a result, "theatre is transformed ... into a series of living tableaux. It becomes a kind of monumental 'camera oscura', a thrilling 'laterna magica'" (30). Alternatively, poor theatre is described as "By gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, etc." (Grotowski 19).

What traditional, "realistic" Western dramatists try to do is to make use of every theatrical means to create an illusory reality on stage. They intend to make the audience forget that they are watching a play, but indulge themselves in the illusory life created by the stage performance. In contrast, in Peking opera the acceptance and implementation of "outer falsity of the stage presentation" has been the fundamental principle in its long historical period of development, which determines the concepts of space and time on the stage. In order to make full use of space and time on stage and for the benefit of the swift change of place, time, and characters, Peking opera, like Grotowski's poor theatre, has a simple stage setting with only a backdrop and a red carpet. On each side of the backdrop, there is a curtained doorway: on the right is the entrance, on the left the exit. On this almost empty stage, a table and a few chairs, and a limited number of props are all that is required. However, these props are put to various uses. For instance, a chair in front of a table indicates a room; but if it is put behind the table, it symbolizes a study, a judge's seat, or even a commander-in-chief's headquarters; if a chair is put on top of a table, it signifies a hill; if two tables are put one above the other, it indicates a high wall. This spatial flexibility is also accompanied by the theatrical device of double- or multi-spaces on stage. In Peking opera, two or even more dramatic scenes can occur simultaneously on stage. If an actor moves in a single circle on stage, it may indicate that he has moved from one place to another, or even that he has traveled thousands of miles away. This theatrical device of swift change of place, as well as two or more scenes on one stage strengthens the dramatic effects through contrast and intensifies the dramatic conflicts in the play. Spatial flexibility also brings about the density of time on stage. Peking opera does not require that space and time on stage should agree with space and time in real life. It demands, however, that they must meet the need to unfold the plot, to develop the dramatic conflicts, and to portray the characters of the play. Anything unnecessary to the fulfilment of this demand will be condensed, simplified, or even cancelled.

Grotowski believes that "Art doesn't like rules. Masterpieces are always based on the transcendence of rules" (56). When summarizing the most important elements of his technique in

actor's training, Grotowski says that "in all you do you must keep in mind that there are no fixed rules, no stereotypes" (172). On the contrary, strict rules and conventions are rigorously applied to every aspect of Peking opera, in which there are not only specific tunes of singing and particular ways of speaking, but also specific patterns of mime, gestures, and body movements with special meanings. For instance, the imaginary door on stage must be pulled from the inside, whereas the imaginary window must be pushed open to the outside. When crossing an imaginary threshold, an actor must lift his right foot first or should first raise his right arm. When performing crying, an actor shall raise his left arm toward his face, pull his left sleeve with his right hand while shake and bowed his head. Each type of role has its own style of singing, speaking, walking, and gesturing. In order to express the feeling of anger or despair, a *hua dan* (young female) may bite her handkerchief, a *qingyi* (adult female) may throw off and catch her long sleeves, a *lao sheng* (old male) may shake his beard, a *xiao sheng* (young male) may sway his hair, and a *wu sheng* (military male) may shake his plumes. These patterns and rules have been formulated through long historical processes and have become conventions of drama. These conventions have to be followed in performance, as they are the basis of communication between actors and audience. As a result, the training of actors is a long, continuous, and arduous process in Peking opera. Actors start their training at the age of seven or eight years and it normally takes them seven to eight years to master these rules and conventions in singing, speaking, dancing, gesturing, miming, body movement, and acrobatic fighting. A popular saying among the Chinese depicts the importance and hardships of the training in Peking opera: "One minute on stage, ten years training." Only when these rules and conventions become the natural behaviour of the actors can they perform spontaneously on stage.

The strict training of actors in Peking opera must have inspired Grotowski to formulate his own concept in actor training for his concept of poor theatre: "One should not be older than fourteen when beginning. If it were possible, I would suggest starting at an even earlier age with a four-year technical course concentrating on practical exercises" (50). He also suggested that actors should "receive an adequate humanistic education ... aimed at awakening his sensibility and introducing him to the most stimulating phenomena in world culture" (50). When actors complete this four-year course, they should have another "four years' work as an apprentice actor with a laboratory" (50). He believes that only "after eight years' work of this kind, the actor should be comparatively well equipped for what lies ahead. He would not escape the dangers that threaten every actor, but his capacities would be greater and his character more firmly moulded" (51). Thus, Grotowski's concept in actor training and apprenticeship is similar to the training system for actors in Peking opera. Nevertheless, the prevailing position of rules and conventions in Peking opera makes Grotowski believe that "the hieroglyphic signs of the Oriental theatre are inflexible, like an alphabet" (Grotowski 24). In contrast, Brook believes that "The real Peking Opera was an example of a theatrical art where the outer forms do not change from generation to generation, and only a few years ago it seemed as though it were so perfectly frozen that it could carry on forever ... Its force and its quality enabled it to survive way beyond its time, like a monument ... In the theatre, every form once born is mortal; every form must be reconceived, and its new conception will bear the marks of all the influences that surround it. In this sense, the theatre is relativity" (17-18). Peking opera is an integration of conventions and spontaneity, a unity of generality and individuality, and a combination of old traditions and new conceptions. Within the framework of various rules, conventions and traditions, actors and actresses are demanded to perform spontaneously and are allowed to develop freely their own characteristics in performance. That is the reason why new schools or styles of performance have emerged one after another in the development of Peking opera. The most famous and influential ones are the four major schools in *dan* performance, and the other four major schools in *sheng* performance. Accordingly, actors become the centre of the performance and their qualities and popularity determine the success of the performance. In many cases, plays are specially created in order to develop and emphasize an actor's specific qualities. The plot of a play and its major tunes of songs are specially selected for the demonstration of the actors' techniques and qualities in performance.

As to audiences of Peking opera, they come to the theatre in particular to watch the performance by actors whom they appreciate and love. Their dramatic techniques and the quality of performance are the most attractive aspects to the audience, who do not care if the plot of the play might be thousands of years old, and is well known among them. Without doubt, *Peking opera* is the art of actor. What the Chinese audience appreciates most is not the story of the play but how it is performed on stage, as is the case in ancient Greece: "The plots of all Greek plays were already well known to the audience. The interest for them lay not in the novelty of the story, but in seeing how the dramatist had chosen to deal with it" (Hartnoll 9). Therefore, conventions and spontaneity are the two most

important principles in the performance of Peking opera. Instead of contradicting or weakening each other, they reinforce each other and this, again, is similar with Grotowski: "I believe there can be no true creative process within the actor if he lacks discipline or spontaneity. Meyerhold based his work on discipline, exterior formation; Stanislavski on the spontaneity of daily life. There are in fact, the two complementary aspects of the creative process" (177). With its simple stage setting, limited props, its gestures and mimes as the means of dramatic expression, and its flexibility in space and density in time, as well as its integration of conventions and spontaneity, Peking opera may be considered as the prototype of Grotowski's concept of poor theatre: "I do not claim that everything we do is entirely new. We are bound, consciously or unconsciously, to be influenced by the traditions ... When we confront the general tradition of the great Reform of the theatre from Stanislavski to Dullin and from Meyerhold to Artaud, we realize that we have not started from scratch but are operating in a defined and special atmosphere. When our investigation reveals and confirms someone else's flash of intuition, we are filled with humility" (Grotowski 24). Nevertheless, in my view it is also true that Grotowski's theory of poor theatre is an idea initiated primarily by the challenges of film and television and fundamental differences exist between Grotowski's theory of poor theatre and the aesthetics of Peking opera. For example, in his training of the "holy" actor, Grotowski required his "disciples" to obtain "inductive technique" with "psycho-analytic language" and "psychic penetration" in "a state of trance" (38) and he compares this "holiness" with sexual organism, as "one must give oneself totally, in one's deepest intimacy, with confidence, as one gives oneself in love ... This act culminates in a climax. It brings relief" (38) and "theatre is an act carried out here and now in the actors' organisms, in front of other men" (86). According to Grotowski, the utmost goal for a "holy" actor is "to study what is hidden behind our everyday mask – the innermost core of our personality – in order to sacrifice it, expose it" (37). What Grotowski strives for is to physicalize the deepest personal sensibility of an actor in order to engender his/her unconscious creative objectives. Obviously, this "psycho-analytic" approach in actors' training has little connection with Peking opera. Nevertheless, when writing about the social significance of poor theatre, Grotowski suggests that "it is social because it is a challenge to the social being, the spectator" (53). To that extent, Grotowski's concept approximates the effect and impact of socialization in Peking opera.

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