# REVELATION VS. CONFLICT: DEITY VS. WARRIOR Nô PLAYS AND COMPARATIVE DRAMATURGY (1994, 16,200 words)

> Shame on the meals today...! They always follow the law of "Much too much" and of "All kinds of stuff".... Shame on the dreams that must follow! Shame on the arts and books that are the dessert in such meals! Let these people do what they will: Their deeds will be ruled by pepper and contradiction, or by resignation!
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche, 1881

## 0. How May Intercultural Theatre Studies Approach Nô?

> It should be clear that our study of the nô must include the resources of comparative literature. Indeed ...we must study the nô drama from every possible direction, using every useful approach.
>
> Konishi Jin'ichi, 1960

0.1. To begin with, two notes about the object and approach of this essay. First, any student of Nô is acutely aware that its verbal signs are in constant interaction with a rich array of musical and other acoustic signs as well as with dance and other optical signs; the final dance of the *shite*[1] takes by itself often one third of performance time. Though it is misleading to call the verbal text of Nô a libretto, any encompassing meaning resides only in the performance as a whole. Nonetheless, my approach is predicated on the hypothesis that the integral "stage story" is the backbone of Nô's semiotic "performance text," and that some crucial parameters of this theatre storytelling can be inferred from natural language and must be fruitfully isolated for an initial discussion.

Second, I take it we must by now recognise that there is no transhistorically stable object "out there" which would be analogous to the Moon seen imperfectly or anamorphically in our telescopes or spectrometers. The first thing that strikes one in Nô studies is how inevitable it is to foreground this realisation. Instead of approaching a stable ontology, wiser and sadder today, we have to deal with the epistemology of competing societal stances towards, and indeed competing definitions of, an entry in the imaginary cultural encyclopedia of a given social spacetime (Eco “Dizionario"). What such an entry refers to, its referentiality, is perhaps more arbitrary in the case of the Nô play than in most other fields of theatre studies. This will be exemplified by the quite basic or constitutive decision of what are the significant *subdivisions* of Nô.

For the purposes of this essay I shall attempt to skirt the minefield of referentiality (cf. at least Whiteside) by refusing both the contemporary ontological absolutists who believe they can travel with Plato and Saul of Tarsus from shadowy contours to the deep Truth, and the deconstructionist absolutists who believe no legs are lost in minefields and no delights incurred or emotions hurt in sexuality since all these are -- since reality in general is -- simply matters of discourse. To my mind the golden in-between position is to be found in a dialectical refusal to segregate to opposed poles the seeing subject and the object seen, since the practice of seeing presupposes and proves that they share the same structure. As seminally introduced by Hegel, "It becomes clear that behind the so-called curtain which is supposed to veil the inner, there is nothing to see unless *we* step behind it, not just in order that there

be someone who can see, but equally in order to have something there to be seen" (129; tr. from Taylor 147). An analogous denial of enclosed interiority or depth for both observer and cultural text is suggestively formulated in Paul Ricoeur's two-tier discussion of sense and reference in texts:

> The sense of the work is its internal organization, whereas the reference is the mode of being unfolded in front of the text…. [T]he most decisive break with Romantic hermeneutics is here; what is no longer an intention hidden behind the text, but a world unfolded in front of it. (93)

This is perhaps most precisely phrased in Brecht's discussion of criteria for the art of acting: “The positions (enunciations) were thus not brought near to the spectator but distanced, the spectator was not led but left to his discoveries” (17: 984).

For such a stance, it is impossible to believe any longer that cultural constructs are finally anchored by referring *back* to a pre-existent eternal reality or *inside* to an equally fixed "objective" essence of Nôness. Rather, the pragmatically useful concept and category of "Nô," its world and its values, would become present or unfold *in front of* the (culturally constructed) text, as the observer's discovery, as a methodological necessity and mandatory presupposition for speaking at all about this congerie of phenomena. The referent is then needed to explain not "the meaning of the text, but...the limits of its meanings and ... their historical preconditions..." (*Ideologies* 108); and as Fredric Jameson concluded: meaning is a given text's "'historically operative' significance or function ..., the meaningfulness of a gesture that we read back from the situation to which it is precisely a response" (45-46). The quest for meaning is to my mind inseparable from the human condition, the interpretive mysteries subsist, yet neither subject or object are a monadic unit that bestows meaning. I made a general argument in the Introduction to my *Lessons of Japan*, based both on Hegel and on the dominant Japanese pragmatics of being always *en situation*, that this whole mode of nomination may be radically diseased; but if we still must use it, let us at least have meaning arising between the two societal, historical and situation-bound, constructs of knower and known. *The essence is historical and dynamic, the founding epistemological unit is not a monad but a relational dyad.*

In that sense -- but only in that one -- I believe the term "Nô" does refer, albeit to a subject-object constellation rather than to an objective reality; so that it still makes sense to talk about Nô (or Renaissance theatre or Brecht).

0.2. The shifting and evidently "socially constructed" nature of a unit of Nô studies -- a good instance of what Saussure identified (if misnamed) as the arbitrariness of linguistic and other signs -- can be followed on at least three levels. *First*, when we speak about any Nô title, which text and/or variant are we speaking about? Texts and scores were until this century transmitted exclusively by the performing "extended families" (*ryû*), which had their own criteria of selection. Konishi has noted how "many plays popular today were not well liked during the Muromachi period," including some of Zeami's masterpieces; the staging of *Kinuta*, possibly Zeami's favourite, lapsed for about a quarter millennium so that no performance traditions survived. Obversely, evidence from various sources, centrally from Zeami’s own writings, establishes that "a number of important works performed at that time have not been retained in the [modern] repertory" (Rimer xxvii). Other aspects were simply changed: Konishi goes on to discuss how e.g. the dramaturgic agent played by the *waki* was in a well-known play degraded from *daimyô* (feudal lord) to yeoman.[2] In fact, from the ca. 250 plays today considered canonical, only about 100 are performed in the original, pre-Edo verbal text. Hare presents a careful discussion (55-61 and 267) of what we can assume has changed from Zeami's to present-day performances. A conclusion might be that the central red thread of plot outline has in most cases changed little, but that there are numerous, sometimes startling, transformations in many segments. In

some cases the play variants may diverge widely, amounting to rewrites, and the modern printed versions may be "often simplified, even bowdlerized" (Rimer xxvii). Furthermore -- although we seem to know very little about the changes in dance and instrumental music -- all proportions must have been radically altered by the approximate *doubling of performance time* in the quarter millennium after the latter part of 16th Century, when the performance of one Nô took no more than 45 minutes (see O'Neill's painstaking proof, *Early Nô* 88-90). Other major shifts included the introduction of the *tsuyogin* and *yowagin* (roughly, "major" and "minor") scales ca. 1680, the increased stylisation of masks and the canonisation of their kinds ca. 1600 (cf. for both Konishi, "Approaches" 13 and 15-17), as well as the freezing of fixed dimensions for the Nô stage (cf. Rimer xxiv).

My subsequent argument demands a reminder that in this canon Zeami is the central "playwright," in the integral sense including text, music, and probably dance (he was also protagonist and organiser-"director," of course). Attributions in this genre -- where plays are often anonymous or rewrites -- are always difficult and most frequently a matter of guesswork, subject to oscillations in what one might call constructive and deconstructive waves, so that Zeami's opus is estimated at somewhere between 50 and 110 titles. It has been increasingly recognised as not only splendid but also very personal or idiosyncratic, rather different both from his predecessors (such as his father Kannami) and from his successors, and as having set up some central parameters in terms of which Nô is being discussed and perceived -- first by the players themselves, and consequently by the often intensely clannish Japanese critics, on whom necessarily much of the foreign discussion builds. (To this should be added in our century the impact of the newly published theoretical writings by Zeami: they are highly interesting but also obscure and will be only fugitively mentioned here, within a methodological choice that favours implicit over explicit poetics.) Yet, "[o]ver half a millennium has passed since Zeami himself performed his plays, a period in which changes have inevitably taken place," remarks Hare, so that (in a striking and accurate parallel) a discussion of Zeami in terms of today's plays "would be tantamount to discussing Shakespeare's style using Polanski's *Macbeth*" (54). In particular, political monopolisation of all Nô groups by shogunal patronage led to a strong ceremonializing trend of shortening texts, cutting down on secondary agents, and slowing the dances (see Yokota-Murakami, "Nô" 261-66, 268-70, and passim). Thus, there is general agreement that the original Nô performances were more realistic and much less solemn than after the Edo period (cf. O'Neill, "Background" 20), so that, in a diplomatic formulation, "the kind of stately experience usually offered today seems at some variance with the rough-and-tumble world described in [Zeami's] treatises" (Rimer xxiv).

However, all such deep changes in play texts shall not be pursued further here (cf. also Brazell, "Nature" 214ff., and especially Yokota-Murakami "Nô"; I attempt to discuss in somewhat greater detail the case of the Nô-play *Tanikô*, where the *shite*-role probably shifted to a different agent in Edo time, in Suvin, "Use-Value"). Instead, I shall briefly face two other levels. For, second, if we take as our unit one single play, how many plays are we speaking about? And third, if we wish to approach any significant generalisation about Nô, how do we categorise them into higher-order units or groups?

On the *second* question of this subsection, in the Nô's heyday, the Muromachi period (14th to 16th Century), perhaps more than 1,000 plays were written, of which about 600 survive. To them another 1,000 or more plays were added later -- mainly in the Edo period, 300 years on -- but these were not at all or very rarely performed, so that O'Neill suggests they should be considered as (a separate sub-genre of?) closet plays.[3] However, only about 250 are in the canon performed by the five Nô schools, and its first trace -- a list of Nô plays no longer in the active repertoire -- stems from 1686 (Matisoff 254). In this canon, there are perhaps less than 100 plays performed and discussed with any frequency (according to an investigation of mine, there are over 150 Nô plays translated into one of the main European languages in reasonably accurate versions, but only 84 of them more than once). Yet frequently there exists "a misapprehension that the existing repertory or canon of 200 plays suffices to

study the nô .... Most of the plays in the acting canon are excellent dramas, superior to the rest in many respects, and we seldom find a masterpiece among the uncanonical plays .... Is it reasonable, [however,] to discuss the style -- much less the history -- of nô drama on the basis of the present-day repertory ...?" (Konishi, "Approaches" 3-4)

A *first conclusion* is, therefore, that a contemporary critic must be very cautious when generalizing from the plays seen in performance and known from translations or critical discussions to Muromachi Nô in general. Our view today is a combination of Edo-period and 20th-Century filtering and refraction. The resolute shogunal moulding of Nô into an official institution cut it off from the commoners and congealed it into rigid upper-class forms; and the post-Meiji refraction of the last 100 years largely retained that tradition within its own, nostalgic -- and sometimes indeed chauvinist -- agenda of a quintessential "Japaneseness." Thus, a selection of plays and aspects to be foregrounded, quite analogous to the procedures of condensation and relocation (*Verdichtung und Verschiebung*) Freud discovered in positing a dreamwork, is inevitable and sometimes very illuminating, but only on condition that it be clearly seen as what it is: a particular slant (or series of slants) rather than "as it really was" (Ranke's illusory *wie es eigentlich gewesen*). Nô theoreticians in particular should bear this in mind when attempting speculations such as those in my following sections.

On the *third* question, the contingent nature of determining significant units or macro-texts (cf. Barthes 155ff.) holds in spades for the various Nô categorisations. The commonest one, used in actually composing a Nô-performance program -- though decreasingly so in practice -- is a system of division into five categories (*goban date*), variously called First to Fifth Piece; or Deity, Warrior, Woman, Miscellaneous, and Final Piece (*kami, shura, kazura, zatsu* with various subtitles, and *kiri*-Nô); or other names. It reposes squarely on the nature or type of the *shite*-role in each group, though there is strong evidence for "an older form of Nô before Zeami established the Shite as the single central figure" (Shimazaki 42), and after Zeami the *waki*-role functioned as a second focus in some prominent plays. The first category consists of auspicious plays about the blessings by deities, the second is about dead warriors recounting their memorable downfall, the third consists of graceful plays about beautiful women, living or dead, and about the spirits of plants or non-sentient beings. It is quite remarkable that only the first two categories are clear-cut. The third begins to grow eclectic; the fourth, even called miscellaneous, may have for the *shite*-role mad people, living warriors, vengeful spirits, female deities, etc., while the fifth-category *shite*-role is a beast, demon, non-warrior spirit, etc. This system is extremely important for performance from its inception to the present, but it was arrived at, first by revising and watering down Zeami's parameters by the rivals who usurped his position as head of the Kanze troupe when he was banished by the new shogun, and then in the reactionary reorganisation under the Tokugawa shogunate:

> ...the disturbing human emotions came to be contained in the middle of a program, the second, third, and fourth categories, framed by the celebration of the status quo expressed in the two prefatory pieces, *Okina* and the first-category waki nô, and in the concluding chant of felicitation, also excerpted from the first category. (Yokota-Murakami, "Nô" 12; cf. also eadem, "Poetics" 306 and 309-11)

The whole system was finally transformed into a modern canon by developments after 1870 which culminated in the publication of the canonic repertoire by Nogami Toyoichirô in 1935/36 (Yokota-Murakami, "Poetics" 314). To extrapolate this backward is an open imposition on a period that did not know it (cf. Rimer xxvii); I shall use it as a convenient shorthand to get to more important distinctions. Some other distinctions, such as the division into *geki* or "dramatic" Nô vs. *furyû* or "spectacular" Nô (cf. Hoff-Flindt 214 and Terasaki passim) may be getting at worthwhile oppositions but seem to me too impressed by a quasi-Aristotelian, in fact European 19th-Century drama model, and therefore not very useful today. More useful may be the distinction between plays where the *shite*

remains in the same role throughout, called one-part Nô, and those where he plays two roles, changing mask and costume, called two-part Nô. Still, a theoretically minimally satisfactory grouping of Nô plays on the basis of clear, compatible, and encompassing parameters is not yet present.

0.3. My initial denial of objectivism does not at all mean -- as I concluded in 0.1 against philosophical idealists and agnostics -- that there is nothing out there interacting with our critical eyes and constricting what they may see. As Einstein once remarked, the belief into the existence of an external world, independent of any single observer, is the basis of all knowledge (though we would have to add today that the knowledge is constituted by the interaction of observers with observed). In Shakespearean studies, e.g., Terence Hawkes's famous "sense of a text as ... an area of conflicting and often contradictory potential interpretations, no one or group of which can claim 'intrinsic' primacy or 'inherent' authority..." (117), manifestly has to rely on a provisionally stable text and also on a pragmatic authority, however socially contingent, for (its) given purposes. I quite agree with him that "Our 'Shakespeare' is our invention" (124); but I have argued at some length elsewhere that it is *not only* our invention (Suvin "Modest"). Thus, on the one hand, all interpretations are negotiations between a set of presuppositions and an object partly constructed by the obscure desire to articulate those same presuppositions. But on the other hand, the object and the presuppositions are partly constricted by material limits, resistances, and vectors coming from “out there." The more one knows about the practice and history of interpretation, the more one realises that what the interpreter finds is not the fixed meanings of a text (or of the Book of Nature) but only other interpretations. Edo-period categorisations of Nô effected a power-inposed closure by "citation" of past categories. Such "citational acts ... closing down on unbound meaning... can succeed only because they presuppose and continually reinvent an iterable corpus of detextualized 'texts' that privilege a certain interpretation of cosmology, values, and norms, i.e., an interpretation of what there is in the world, what one ought to think about it...." (Berger 155)

Therefore, a *second conclusion* from the foregoing discussion, complementary to the first one, might be that, while not disregarding the significant continuities within the nonetheless changeable traditions of the Nô acting schools, both Edo and post-Meiji Nô can be illuminated by Hobsbawm's definition of an "invented tradition":

> ...a set of practices, normally governed by ... accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past .... The peculiarity of "invented" traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, and which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. (1-2)

"Seek to inculcate" is a bit one-sided, and Hobsbawm speaks later of other types of "invented traditions" that establish, symbolise or legitimise real or artificial communities and institutions (9). Nô is clearly not instituted in the ad hoc way of various European and other nationalisms, "mass produced" since the 19th Century, but more like Scottish "Highland Traditions" or English Christmas carols, i.e. with a significant but unacknowledged break in continuity (Hobsbawm 6-7); with these caveats, much of the rest in the quote and argument seems applicable.

Thus, there is no cognitive reason why a contemporary critic cannot, with due humility, attempt to emulate the Edo-period *shites* of Nô or the earlier 20th-Century Japanese critics who have in fact excogitated the present canon and categories of Nô, i.e. "invented" the present "tradition," and why s/he cannot find for new purposes some new units and categories -- or indeed new functions for carefully

reformulated old, not quite invented categories. Since any macro-text (e.g. "the Nô play") is always established as a cognitive and pragmatic unit/y by specifiable agents from a specifiable point of view or stance, it stands to reason that for a different purpose all texts current in (say) Zeami's lifetime might constitute a macro-text. This is in fact what Nô studies routinely do when elucidating any play by Zeami by means of its intertextuality with tankas, Kannami, *The Tale of Genji*, etc. My present purpose, as suggested by the references to Barthes, Eco, Jameson or Ricoeur, is "not an ultimate appraisal but some answers to the practical questions: what particular attractions and values have the Nô plays for [people] of the twentieth century?" (Wells 154). For various interests these attractions and values will be legitimately different, ranging from interpretations of particular segments or aspects in plays that increase the spectator's delight to very general questions that may be posed by these plays to a comparative dramaturgy and theory of theatre. While I believe that ultimately any theory is justified mainly by feeding back into an increased understanding of historical texts and attitudes, it may itself at times be a both necessary and enjoyable detour, to what one hopes would be a new vantage point for mapping. This is the road I propose to take here.

## 1. A Move Toward Recategorisation: Zeami and the Anamorphosis of Warrior Nô From Deity Nô

> Many conclusions reached so far are provisional, each question needs further particularized and sweeping investigation....
>
> Hagen Blau, 1966

1.1. Proposing to practice what I preach, I shall now attempt to build on the crucial distinction between *genzai nô* (where the role played by the *shite* or protagonist is a dramaturgic agent alive in the time of the story) and *mugen nô* (the "visionary" plays where this agent comes from outside of that quasi-empirical time, e.g. is a deity or spirit). This division was developed in the 20th Century, the term *mugen nô* being introduced by Sanari Kentarô in 1930 and *genzai nô* by Yokomichi Mario in the 1950s (Terasaki 14-17). Thus, it is equally anachronistic in relation to the Muromachi period, and it is not absolute or all-encompassing, but it does seem to repose on some dominant structural features of the plays such as central agent and time-horizon. This makes it better suited for a theoretical discussion than the empirical *bricolage* of the fivefold categorisation. Today the *genzai nô* -- the "everyday" plays in which, to repeat, the shite plays a human living at the time of the stage story -- are to be found mainly in the fourth category and partly in the third and fifth categories (Miscellaneous, Woman, and Final Nô). Zeami himself wrote both *genzai* and *mugen nô*,[4] but his major innovation seems to lie in the series of masterpieces which codified the *mugen nô*. Thus, for reasons both of fascination with his talent, comparable to very few people in the history of world theatre such as Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Molière or Brecht, as well as of ideological preference by the commentators, the main impression about Nô plays (certainly outside Japan) is based on *mugen nô*. This is a Meiji-period invention, sometimes traced back to the influential position formulated by Haga Yaichi in 1899: "the essence of Nô is the ghosts" (cited by Terasaki 27); in Europe, this was furthered by the elitist fantasies of Pound and particularly Yeats.

Yet historically speaking, the defining of Nô in terms of *mugen nô* only is an optical illusion. Even prescinding from a possible different ontology in medieval Japan, for which numinous beings were perhaps differentiated from empirical ones in other ways than in secularised thought, it seems that at the time of Nô's inception and early development the performances developing exclusively within supposedly empirical time-horizons constituted its mainstream. Other templates clearly existed, and in

particular the auspicious visit of a godhead in folkrite-derived performances carried forward in temples and shrines: "some kinds of liturgical dramas, whose direct posterity is today still found in the *kagura* plays ... of most Shinto shrines. Which, of course, does not mean that Nô itself is religious art..." (Sieffert 16).[5] At least one prominent history of Japanese literature has no doubts at all: "[W]e must conclude that living-figure nô ... -- and, moreover, other plays that had a dramatic plot -- were the mainstream of nô in its early period" (Konishi, *History* 524). Finally, if one takes into account all Nô plays written, *genzai nô* seem to account for almost half of the 2,500-3,000 pieces, while within the canonic 250 repertory plays they may account for half or more (Terasaki 76-77 and 197; other estimates place *genzai nô* at one third of the repertory, further evidence of the unclear categorisations).

1.2. I shall begin by presenting an initial argument in the form of a table of parameters which, starting from the dominant categorisation into five groups, proceeds to doubt it with help of the distinction between *genzai* and *mugen nô*, and proposes to refine this in favour of a trisection. Leaving other matters aside, I shall then advance to focus on the first two categories -- the Deity and Warrior plays -- which are *prima facie* correctly distinguished sets, more or less monolithic because mainly created for the same purposes and same audiences by Zeami. I am banking on these clear groupings being useful for an initial theoretical discussion which could lead us to what I take to be the central theoretical problem in a discussion of Nô dramaturgy, and of immense consequence for any theory of dramaturgy and theatre, namely: the puzzle of whether *conflict is necessarily present* in Nô.

TABLE 1: DIVISION OF Nô PLAYS BY COSMOLOGY AND DESIRE/S/

| | IMPERMANENCE, DESIRE | |
|---|---|---|
| PERMANENCE ← | → Categories 2-5 | |
| (**kami** or Deity Nô) (category 1) | (**shura** or Warrior Nô) (category 2) | (other categories, 3-5) |
| positive permanence (fertility), always there | Negative permanence (nirvana), achieved at end | Desires = impermanence |
| No discordant desires | Desires vanquished by enlightenment | Conflicting desires |
| Divine values | Human values yield to divine | Different human values |
| ← **mugen nô** → | | ← **genzai nô** → |

What I propose is, it can be seen, a first step (and only first!) toward a new categorisation. As was mentioned, beginning with category 3 (which is characterised as having elegant and soft protagonists) the subdivisions of the fivefold categorisation grow hopelessly miscellaneous. The very useful division into *genzai* vs. *mugen* Nô gives us a good pointer by differentiating in the *shite*-role between the presentation of living humans and of non-human entities (deities or specters), which entails significantly different time-horizons and time-flows: the arrow of empirically sequential time in *genzai*

*nô* vs. multiple qualitative times in *mugen nô.* We could call this parameter "*shite*-role reference and temporality." I believe it may turn out to be necessary for a sensible definition, but it is not sufficient. This seems easily proved by the fact that each of these two categories again contains admittedly heterogeneous groups of plays, with little similarity to each other beyond the *shite*-role's reference-cum-temporality. One division of *genzai nô*, e.g., breaks it down into plays: 1/ dealing with events contemporary to the author; 2/ drawn from previous literature (such as the Komachi plays); 3/ realistic, non-masked portrayals of historical warriors -- e.g. *Ataka*; 4/ episodes from the earlier life of spirit-Nô heroes or heroines, marked by a title beginning in "Genzai," such as *Genzai Matsukaze* (Terasaki 65-73). The *mugen nô* subdivisions are still more heterogeneous, as I hope partly to show in the next section. It is rather as if Kafka, Tolkien, Steven King, Isaac Asimov, and William Morris were all to be put into a single category called Fantasy Fiction (a grouping that alas is being propounded, but has at least the excuse that it deals with genological matters no older than the 19th Century). Other parameters have to be introduced for a basic sense-making categorisation. To begin this, in a combination of structural and historical arguments, I propose the above trisection into Deity Nô, Warrior Nô, and Others.

As indicated by the little overlap at the bottom of Table 1 between *mugen nô* and my "other categories," the boundary between my second and third categories is deficient. In particular there are in Woman Nô obviously some plays (e.g. *Seigan-ji*, *Eguchi* or the plant-spirit plays such as *Bashô*) which are homologous to the laudatory Deity Nô, and some (e.g. *Yuya, Sôshi-arai Komachi, Senju, Yoshino Shizuka*) which tend toward a conflict, albeit backgrounded, muted, and/or finally amicably resolved or superseded. In between, some plays are rather similar, possibly homologous, to the Warrior Plays.[6] Were this not so inelegant, my second category ought more precisely to be called "Warrior Nô and some Woman Nô and possibly some plays from the *goban date* Fourth and Fifth Pieces." It is therefore adopted here as an intermediary step, provisional and clearly needing supersession, for the sole purposes of the present initial essay; it should be considered further at a later stage of the approach broached here.

In the meantime I may, to begin with, claim that I am starting from what most previous categorisations also started from, the quite central attitude-cum-emotional-aura transmitted by the *shite*-role, who may largely represent "the incarnation of some powerful emotion" (Keene, *Nô* 24). However, the *shite*-role is clearly at the antipodes of an individualistic protagonist, since the emotion it is transmitting to the audience results from an interaction between her or his desires and the all-encompassing stance toward the world that this agent shares with the audience. Thus, my categorisation introduces as parameters what seem undeniably matters of overriding importance for these plays: the agent's -- and the audience's -- *central desire(s)* and its (their) relationship with the play's *cosmological framework* (permanence vs. impermanence), which is consubstantial to the type and ranking of the *values* espoused by the play.

1.3. I shall narrow my focus now to the relationships between the Deity Nô and Warrior Nô categories. It is generally acknowledged that, just as Zeami seems to have inflected Deity Nô from fierce agents actively and even conflictually intervening into events (*aragami*), as well as featuring a much greater number of important female deities (cf. Dômoto "Bangai-kyoku," and Yokota-Murakami, "Nô" 18, 24, and passim, and "Poetics" 306-08), to benevolent guarantors of an existing state, he practically invented the Warrior Nô, in 13 plays of which at least half are masterpieces: he certainly or probably composed ab ovo or reworked into its distinctive shape *Atsumori, Kanehira, Kiyotsune, Sanemori, Tadanori, Tamura, Tomonaga, Tsunemasa, Yashima, Yorimasa,* and possibly also *Ebira, Tomoakira,* and *Tomoe*. All of them are even today -- though sometimes with important subsequent changes -- in the repertory of all five Nô schools (*ryû*), except for *Tomoakira* which is in the repertory of four schools. The three

dubious titles and three more non-Zeami Warrior Nô in the canon are centrally imitations of his model (93 more "inactive" plays seem to have been written in this mould, see Terasaki 76). How did Zeami come to compose them thus, whence did he take their common distinctive elements and aspects?[7]

Now, it would be very possible and I think useful to pose the question: what do the Nô deities and warriors stand for or signify? There is little doubt that one of their central intertexts is the power relations and value horizons of Japanese politics (in the widest sense of long-duration orientations) in the society as a whole and in the shogunal court in particular. Our distinctions between religion and politics do not obtain in the Middle Ages, when (e.g.) the deities were guarantors and indeed personifications of "an ordered country," as monotonously repeated in one after another Deity Nô.[8] However, before proceeding to this, I believe much more work is due on the signifier level. Therefore, I shall discuss here some central implications, modalities, and consequences of this trajectory of Zeami's. The generally accepted thesis that the Warrior Nô were created by Zeami taking as their template the Deity Nô seems to me not only correct but inescapable. This argument may be strengthened by the fact that this innovator, yet also continuator within a living theatre tradition, explicitly championed such a procedure, e.g. when transforming his troupe's traditional totally fierce demon type and Nô-play into "a variant derived from the form of the warrior," where the usual "demon form" was transformed by adding to it the "heart/mind of a human."[9] Zeami proceeded then from "the prototype first established in kami nô" (Konishi, *History* 526 and passim) to Nô plays such as the Warrior Nô -- as well as to some Woman Nô -- in which the *shite* plays a human, not a deity. My argument will again be proposed first in the form of a synoptic table:

TABLE 2: ZEAMI'S EDUCTION OF WARRIOR NÔ FROM DEITY NÔ

SIGNS: → same, ⇝ = changed, ⇝ = mixed

| *PARAMETERS* | *DEITY NÔ* | | *WARRIOR NÔ* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ACTION | Revelation (of the true state of the protagonist) | → | revelation (of the true state of the protagonist) |
| AGENT (SHITE ROLE) | deity | ⇝ | human |
| VALUE | "+" permanence = fertility, was always there | ⇝ | "–" permanence = nirvana, reached for at end after struggle in war and with desire |
| TIME-HORIZON | seems empirical present but underlying reality = cyclical | ⇝ | begins as empirical present turn into recapitulation of past (often in dream) |
| DIACHRONY | revelation of permanent presence: *maejite* = incarnation of deity, *nochijite* = aspect of deity | ⇝ | revelation of struggle and of attaining permanent absence: *maejite* = spectre, *nochijite* = vision (in dream?) |
| AFFECT INDUCED | blessing of permanence (felicific) | ⇝ | ***main***: beauty of passions' impermanence, *mono no aware* (pain-allaying); ***subordinate***: peace of nirvana |
| CONFRONTATION OR OPPOSITION | ignorance vs. knowledge | → / ⇝ | ***main***: as in Deity NÔ ***subordinate***: conflicts as below |
| INDIVIDUALIST CONFLICT | none | ⇝ / ⇝ | marginal or contained: ***main***: passion vanquished by impermanence; ***subordinate***: possibility war vs. art, rarely, between agents |

The originating parameters here are clearly the first two, the play's overall action and central agent (*shite*-role), which amount to transplanting from divine to human dramaturgic agents the same central understanding of *action (or story) as revelation*. However, this shift is simultaneously feasible and problematic. It is possible because the humans are dead, it is problematic because their passions are still human: "Violently my heart yearns for the earthly world," exclaims quite typically, if in a

somewhat simplified translation, the eponymous hero of *Yorimasa* (Shimazaki 118). There is a common theological or ontological trait between godheads and dead warriors in relation to the time-horizon of other stage roles (primarily the *waki*-role's horizon, imaginatively identified by the audience with their everyday horizon). As Brazell put it, "[t]here is a connection between the nature of the [*shite*-role] and the way in which the time and space are manipulated" ("Nature" 206): both divinities and fallen warriors come from outside the quasi-empirical or human horizons on the stage, and thus deny their exclusivity, and yet both can manifest themselves within the human time and space. Furthermore, both these types of agents appear in two shapes -- in a kind of disguise and then *in propria persona* -- which require, and correspond to, the two parts of these Nô plays.

Yet Zeami's bold shift from Deity to Warrior Nô is also fraught with problems, for the theologico-ontological status of godheads and dead humans is after all very different. Beside coming from outside the *waki*-role's human time, they have little in common. In Deity Nô, the numinous fullness of the Shinto divinities makes of the *shite*-role of the play's first part (the *maejite*) a human incarnation of the same deity that appears in the second part (as *nochijite*) in one of its divine aspects. In Warrior Nô, that joy-bringing succession and clear uplifting movement necessarily gives way to the troubled succession from *maejite* as misleading spectre -- presented by Zeami, in a direct copy of Deity Nô, in seemingly human form -- to *nochijite* as vision of the warlike nobleman from the past (cf. Konishi, *History* 524-25). True, the *nochijite* warrior visions are more vivid than the shadowy European stage ghosts in the tradition of Euripides and Seneca, which as a rule do not attain protagonist status (e.g. in *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*). While I doubt that Zeami deals in anything resembling individualist identity or Self (cf. Suvin "Soul" passim), I concur that "an inability to escape the ties of a past life, love, hate, longing, and pride ...[are] characteristics [that] persecute Zeami's shite" (Hare 242). The vividness can be attributed to various factors of the Japanese cultural tradition, which in Nô come to a head precisely in Zeami's eduction of the warrior ghosts out of the resplendent Shinto divinities that bring the blessings of fertility in the latter part of Deity Nô. This is why I have substituted the more specific "passion" for the "desire" of Table 1. Yet this same change radically transforms the logic of the story. It enforces and sets into train a set of complex anamorphic manoeuvres so that the stage action may make sense to the Nô audience.

The resulting play-model for Warrior Nô[10] is by necessity significantly modified. I mentioned that at the beginning its *maejite* appears on the stage in the same way as in Deity Nô -- as a lay person, usually an old man, of the locality the *waki*-role is visiting. But instead of a felicific (*medetai*, happiness-bringing -- cf. Gundert 225ff.) divine revelation or theophany, the Warrior Nô proceeds then to a tale of woe and regret. The syntagmatics of this type therefore diverge strongly from that of Deity Nô -- e.g., he Warrior Nô has a shorter first part and longer second part in which, after the ghost's disclosure, the past glory and present suffering are recounted (cf. Yokota-Murakami, "Poetics" 308-09). But to restrict myself here to the paradigms only, the Warrior Nô epistemologically speaking also partakes of a revelation, and I have found it convenient to call it the revelation of a final permanence, an absolute cosmic closing chord, as supreme value. But if the paradigm's syntax is the same, the semantics diverge. If both Nô groupings reveal a permanence, it is in Warrior Nô not a positive but either a frankly negative permanence (the warriors are often in the special afterlife realm of torment for them[11]). Or, at best, it may become, in a second and final revelation, the "positive negativity" or zero of Buddhist nirvana attained at the end of the play, where the warriors' pre-history is usually recounted in verse, music, and dance to the *waki*-role listener so that he, a priest, may pray for their salvation through purgation of their martial passion as well as of any other earthly attachment -- e.g. to poetic fame in the case of Tadanori.

Now, in the "non-duality" (Loy) of Mahayana Buddhism a proper passage through desires may be finally conducive to enlightenment; but once enlightenment is achieved, desires are definitely left

behind. This is clearly foregrounded in Warrior Nô. For all these reasons, Zeami's adaptation of the Deity-Nô model has to modify it much more strongly in the second part of the Warrior plays, where the real situation will out. The founding divergence between Deity and Warrior Nô is that the fallen warriors' final permanence not only contrasts with the impermanence of their earthly life, it also differs radically from the "positive" permanence of the Shinto deities. The deities reaffirm the evergreen continuity of time's ongoing cycle (e.g. in *Takasago*'s marriage of two great historical ages of poetry as magical creativity), they ensure and bring forth the future to an audience that is ideally supposed to represent the community. Their fulness of value and time -- the potential simultaneity of all times -- is in sharp contrast to the dead warriors' bringing up only their personal past (albeit typical of a hegemonic social class) for anamnesis and redemption out of time. No doubt, in both Deity and Warrior Nô the audience in the present also experiences delight and probably -- more so before the Edo period -- a magico-religious awe at seeing in the *shite*-role's apparition (cf. Gundert 221) respectively the promise of communal felicity or the representative passion and comforting of the great transgressor (cf. Ruch, "Medieval" 306); this should qualify my oversimplified isolation of positive vs. negative permanence, necessary for a tabular overview. Still, in Warrior Nô the only connection that I could see to the community's future is in the nature of an awful warning about what is to be avoided.

The Warrior Nô therefore induces an affect quite distinct from Deity Nô (though these affects are symmetrically obverse and quite compatible). Or it might be better to see the Warrior-Nô revelation as working through a number of passionate affects, such as the affection for another person -- kin, lover, master -- or the striving for fame, but finally leaving the spectator with two main, complementary affects: first, of the sweetly sad beauty of that special impermanence of passions mentioned above, well-known in the Japanese poetic tradition and retrospectively named *mono no aware*, the sense of the fugacity or tears of things (cf. Morris 208-09); and second, of the final peace of nirvana.[12] The latter is not always present -- e.g. not in *Kanehira or Yashima* -- but when it is present it is usually achieved in the last verses and seconds on stage, after the main dance. Furthermore, while the stage agent may have freed him/herself of passion, this achievement can only be transmitted to the audience by way of a sympathy affect, complementary to yet also sustained by the clash of desire and fugacity. The protagonist may (in some plays, not always) by his confession and the *waki*-role's sympathetic intercession have been purged of "wrongful clinging" to earthly ambitions and passions (*môshû*), but the audience must affectively cling to the protagonist's story.

For both these weighty reasons -- the brief, indeed sometimes omitted, instant of mostly verbal affirmation that the *shite*-role's passions have been extinguished, and the affect-laden transmission of all stage propositions -- the *shite*-role's supposed release into nirvana does not seem to me so important for the spectator as verbally inclined commentators looking for official religious doctrine would have us believe. Zeami's affect-laden refunctioning of nirvana seems incompatible with the Buddhist *a-ranâ*, dwelling in Peace, which combines conflictlessness with full absence of passion (cf. *Diamond Sutra* 9, in Conze ed., 44-45). As Ruch convincingly establishes, the popular imagination and art of medieval Japan freely chose among elements of official Buddhist doctrine -- embracing, e.g., karmic causality -- and then even more freely or fancifully alloyed them with aspects of other "available traditions and doctrines" so as to make them "most emotionally and aesthetically satisfying to the need of the moment" ("Coping" 100 and passim). In particular, "[the Nô] plays ... are not religious rites or treatises, but art; and their goal is not primarily to set forth ideas .... An accurate account of Nô should convey its lack of [doctrinal] rigor." (Tyler, "Path" 170, and see Gundert 5). This is why there can be an inherent and, as far as I can see, unresolvable contradiction between the peace of nirvana as value-horizon striven for and explicitly invoked, and nirvana as affect to be induced in a spectator who balances it with the aching beauty of the warrior's doomed passions. The dead warriors move fluidly across the supposedly strictly separated realms of transmigration, in every play they are found "clinging to the [earthly] place of their greatest love, deepest hate, or greatest pain" (Ruch, "Coping" 102), usually near their grave. Therefore

I have in Table 2 called nirvanic yearning a "subordinate" affect. The Nô plays mingle "accuracy of canonical detail" with a "disregard for overall paradigm integrity [concerning the Buddhist afterlife, DS]" in a doctrinally incoherent "illogical eclecticism of major scope" (Ruch, "Coping" 103 and 129): which was yet, I would maintain for the superior instances at least, affectively coherent.

1.4. Finally, and perhaps for a comparative dramaturgy most interestingly, the last two parameters of Table 2 deal with ***opposition*** and ***conflict***. In this case, Zeami's twofold adaptations in the Warrior Nô template are not complementary but divergent. Deity Nô had no trace of conflict of individual wills. It simply told, by stage means, a story (*katari*, the principle of classical Japanese theatre -- cf. Raz, "Japanese") enacting the *waki*-role's -- and the audience's -- advance from ignorance to knowledge, or from blindness to enlightenment: a trajectory characteristic for epochs of practically absolute, and thus theoretically -- or discursively -- unchallengeable, norms such as partly the European and even more so the Japanese Middle Ages (*in sua voluntade è nostra pace*, "in His will is our peace," is the way Dante formulated it). In Warrior Nô it was impossible to fully evacuate individual subjects and their oppositions or confrontations. First, there is the brute fact of of death in war, as a rule recapitulated in the *nochijite*'s final dance; often, however, the opponent is either not important, simply an agent of destiny (as Rokuyata in *Tadanori*), or non-existent in any individualist sense, as in the suicide of the eponymous protagonist of *Yorimasa*, so that this as it were background conflict seems to me quite subordinate. Second, there may be a "conflict" (or better opposition) ***within*** the protagonist, which is in some cases also double: the tension between two passions (poetry and martial prowess in *Tadanori*), and the overall or umbrella opposition between any earthly desire and the fleetingness or impermanence (lack of stay, *hakanasa*), which is in Buddhism foregrounded as unavoidable suffering and in this Nô category evidently demonstrated. This is a full inversion of the happy enlightenment from the Shintoist Deity Nô into the *mono-no-aware* enlightenment, further tending toward a more complex, bittersweet but equally blessed, nirvana.

## 2. Revelation as Stage Story Alternative to Conflict

> This one is hunting pleasant truths, t'other -- unpleasant ones. But the former too delights more in the hunt than in the catch.
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche, 1881

2.0. A discussion of the anamorphic transformations of Deity into Warrior Nô is not necessarily connected with a discussion of conflict in Nô, to which I now propose to indicate a first approach. The former may certainly lead to, and the latter may probably be arrived at from, other directions. Yet neither is their connection arbitrary, for – as argued in Section 1 -- *Genzai nô* as a rule has some (often attenuated) forms of conflict, while in the passage from Deity to Warrior Nô we might observe the birth (or rebirth) of conflict. Warrior Nô seems to me, as explained above, determined by the tension between conflict and revelation: as shown in Table 1, it is a "mixed" form, making a virtue of some intrinsic conceptual contradictions.

2.1. I feel impelled to begin by sharing a certain sense of discomfort, if not amazement, at the thesis I am developing here which amounts to saying that we should, with all prudent disclaimers, in certain specified cases embrace the validity of celebration. Is that compatible with the heritage (which I do not

wish to lose) of the Marxist lesson of class struggles or with Nietzsche's and Freud's lessons of hypocrisy as the inevitable basis of all ruling-class pieties? My answer is that nobody (in particular no social group) can or does exist by denial only, and that at a minimum, the affirmative aspect of life and performance ought to be studied too. Further, class conflict is not a simple conflict of interests or values but also a struggle for the control of historicity -- and celebration is always a focus or metonymy for historicity. Any functioning society is a contradictory unity of class struggle ***and*** community, utopia and ideology, it is what Gramsci analyzed as a hegemony and what Ricoeur contrasted as the double motivation of hermeneutics, negative suspicion and positive build-up of meaning (though see Jameson's critique in *Political* 284ff. of Ricoeur's individualist formulation for the positive pole). In sum, I find revelation and/or celebration simply too important to be conceded to the rulers and their ideologists. Bloch's Principle of Hope, Bakhtin's notion of plebeian carnival, and the Left existentialists' *promesse de bonheur* – promise of happiness, Stendhal's definition of beauty -- as well as the tradition of celebrating (say) the First of May or Eighth of March would be my allies here. Perhaps clearest is the final horizon of Walter Benjamin, e.g. his "dialectical image" of irruptions of messianic time. As an otherwise fractious friend noted, Bernjamin's very presence fostered the aura of celebration: "In his proximity one was like the child at the moment when the door to the room with the Christmas present opens a crack and the abundance of light overwhelms the eyes to the point of tears.... All the power of thought gathered in Benjamin to create such moments, and into them alone has passed what the doctrines of theology once promised." (Adorno 232)

One of the problems I can only faintly suggest here is that the rhetoric of celebration differs strongly from the rhetoric of conflict or critique. Of course, in a wide sense, best formulated by Vološinov/Bakhtin, all sign-systems and representations are within given ideological horizons. Yet I would argue that though Zeami's plays often abound in explicit, e.g. religious, ideologemes, their rhetoric is not primarily ideological in the narrower, purely conceptual or doctrinal sense, but primarily performative or topological inasmuch as they directly ostend[13] imaginative transpositions of human relationships. His opus, however diminished or augmented by attribution, is mainly oriented toward passions or affects; this is a common denominator of plays attributed to him (as of the whole Nô tradition), and any categorisation I can imagine would crucially have to use different affects and affect-combinations as a central parameter. Now, the fact that conflicts give rise to strong affects seems immediately clear within the Euro-American tradition from Shakespeare and Hobbes to Freud and Hollywood; and clearly, Zeami too was well aware of the existence of conflicts in empirical life, within a human subject as well as between subjects and classes of subjects. But in Warrior Nô at least (as well as in some beautiful Women Nô on unhappy love, such as *Izutsu* or *Matsukaze*) he systematically expunged conflicts or subordinated them to revelation and Buddhist pacification. This, however, does not at all expunge the affects. On the contrary, one could argue that these are in some ways intensified by his procedure, as a rhetorics of double negation: if the *shite*-role incarnates some powerful emotion(s), then presenting this antithetic yearning as strongly as possible makes its refutation all the more effective and final.

Thus, Zeami's opus testifies that he took for granted there could be plays based on conflict. But parallel to this -- and on the model of Deity Nô, which knows no conflict -- there could also, and with equal right, exist whole groups of plays based on ***revelation***, which subsumes and overrides secondary conflicts (if we can still call them so). An excellent example of such subsumption is the usual Deity-Nô tension between the *waki*-role's initial misunderstanding of the situation and of the *shite*-role's identity, and the *waki*-role's final arrival at understanding, a "conflict" which progresses through an initial mistaken argument for which he is rebuked. In *Takasago*, e.g., this may be the *waki*-role's wonder at the geographic separation of the old couple, who will be revealed as deities without spatial limitations: "Only when the waki has accepted the contradiction or understood the riddle does the *shite* gradually begin to reveal his true character" (Brazell, "Atsumori" 15). In inverted mimicry of this, the

*waki*-role of the Warrior Nô *Tomoe* wonders at the mingling of weeping with prayer at an auspicious shrine: "You wonder in ignorance," is the *shite*-role's rebuke (Shimazaki 170). Or, in the anonymous Deity Nô *Ema*, it is a couple of divine protagonists (who are for rigid professional reasons today split into a principal male, *maejite*, and a subsidiary female, *mae-zure*, role) that engages in a mutual argument with opposed views as to the best means of propitiation. But since their value-horizons are identical, this argument soon subsides in a mutual agreement, exemplifying that the *waki*-role and the audience are enlightened into the overriding value-horizon at the end of any Deity Nô. From the point of view of any post-Christian or antagonistic tradition, these are only seeming or fake conflicts.

Antagonistic conflicts are perhaps best exemplified by opposing armies -- a concept haunting European philosophy since Heraclitus and canonised in the founding Christian opposition of God to Devil (cf. Suvin, "Soul"). They could be defined with Nietzsche as opposed wills *and ideals* (131) and tend to the victory of one side. However, in "cold" societies changing only slowly, such as medieval Japan, the generally accepted framework of the community and its values may gain an overriding and paradigmatically undoubted precedence over any particulars. Conflict is shunted aside in such a system of presuppositions, Williams's "structure of feeling," even if this is in practice hypocritically violated (e.g. by warlords claiming to act in the name of the consensual emperor). In that sense, while "cold" and "hot" societies should be thought of as poles of a spread rather than a digital opposition, Kamakura-period Japan had a deeply hegemonic epistemic regime in which "it had been difficult to [make qualitative distinctions]" (Harootunian 32), which are indispensable for conflict. In such an epoch, whose absolute ethics are usually justified by an absolute cosmology, *oppositions* -- as different from the openly antagonistic conflicts -- tend to be (at least perceived as) metonymic, as of part to whole, and they tend to be resolved by supersession. No doubt, once the spectators left the performance, the esthetic revelation could be seen as functionally tied to claims of sacredness permitting access to very conflictual positions of political power; the history of Japanese Buddhist sects as well as of performance genres is full of such functionalisations. Of Max Weber's two bases for charismatic rule, "revelation and the sword" (435), the second one is occulted in such claims. Nonetheless, for the present purposes of finding out in Nô plays Ricoeur's "sense" rather than reference, this crucial category of *absolute ideological framework* or paradigm for human life and relationships must first be accepted at face value. I would distinguish in it the two main possibilities of determinism vs. contingency, with the following main ramifications:

- If the human condition is taken to be ontological and *predetermined*, the determination may in any particular case be either known or unknown. *Ignorance* about one's fixed fate leads to active anxiety (as in Calvinism) or passive resignation. *Knowledge* of one's predetermined situation may be axiologically *accepted* either gladly or at least with a final horizon of reconciliation (as in the revelatory Nô plays), or stoically (as in Beckett). Alternatively, it may be axiologically *rejected* (as in most known Hellenic tragedies).
- If the human condition is taken to be *contingent*, i.e. modifiable, efforts to modify it are mandatory. Strictly speaking, it is only in this case that an ethical discussion can be meaningfully entered upon (cf. Jameson, *Political* 135 and passim). This is the case with the horizons of Euro-American individualism, together with the socialist reaction against individualism, within which horizons it has therefore been necessary to differentiate between revolutionary changes of the whole societal (no longer ontological) framework and changes of individual fortune within a more or less stable framework. A *successful change of the frame as a whole* is only believable in the rare moments of ascending revolution, as in Mayakovsky's *Mystery Bouffe* or Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle and He Who Says No*. A *successful change of an individual fortune*, on the contrary, is the staple of all individualist comedy from Shakespeare to the farce. If the effort to change a situation that is in principle contingent has failed, the *unsuccessful change* may again relate to the societal frame or to individual (but exemplary) protagonists. In the first case, we have what may be called a revolutionary tragedy in

the sense of Raymond Williams, such as Brecht's *Mother* or Vishnevsky's *Optimistic Tragedy*. The second case, the failure of the protagonist, is represented in the long bourgeois tradition of the *drame sérieux* culminating in the middle Ibsen. No doubt, all kinds of recombinations of the above may be found: e.g., Beaumarchais's *Figaro* plays combine individualist comedy with a sense of caducity of the contingent feudal frame, whereas Brecht's *Life of Galileo* melds in the protagonist both individualist and societal failure. Even the Christian Mystery-plays, based on revelation, are infiltrated by the monotheistic conflict of Good and Evil, and thus a less pure case than Japanese Nô and Hellenic tragedy.

TABLE 3: FRAMEWORK AND CONFLICT IN STAGE STORIES

1/ PREDETERMINED (ONTOLOGICAL) **FRAME**

"Cold" societies: **CONFLICT** absent or secondary

UNKNOWN: anxiety or resignation

| REVEALED: | ***& accepted*** | | ***& rejected*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ( + ) | ( – ) | |
| | Nô, Mysteries | Beckett | classical tragedy |

2/ CONTINGENT (SOCIETAL) **FRAME**

"Hot" societies: **CONFLICT** dominant

| | ***of frame*** | ***of individualist case*** |
|---|---|---|
| SUCCESSFUL CHANGE | Brecht, *Naysayer* | Individualist comedy |
| | Beaumarchais | |
| UNSUCCESSFUL CHANGE | "Revolutionary tragedy" | *drame sérieux* (Ibsen) |
| | Brecht, *Life of Galileo* | |

2.2. From this brief overview two consequences may be immediately drawn. I shall first mention a particular one -- the relationship of Nô to classical tragedy, a subject of recurrent but still unfinished discussion[14]. In both these theater forms there is a predetermined ontological frame generally believed in by the play's original audience and eventually understood by the protagonist. However, this understanding is in Nô plays met with axiological agreement and in classical tragedy with axiological disagreement. Any similarity between Nô and tragedy makes sense only when they are conflated in opposition to a contingent frame of human relationships modelled on the stage. Most important, a general consequence may be drawn from the whole argument so far: that individualist conflict is by no means the only way of making sense of stage narrations, nor perhaps even -- historically *and* typologically -- the central way.

The fact that in many Nô plays there is to be found little or no conflict in the Euro-American or monotheistic sense is widely acknowledged. To provide only two citations: Konishi seems to give it an epistemological basis by defining *yûgen*, the highest effect of Nô, as a negation of "existence conceived of as a confrontational *[tairitsuteki*] relationship between the perceiver and the perceived" (cited in LaFleur 102); and Brazell concluded, "In deity ...plays some truth or lesson is usually revealed; in ghost plays the individual's past is relived and salvation is sought" (Brazell, "Nature" 206; cf. also, among others, Gunji Masakazu in Hoff 9, Keene *Nô* 18, LaFleur 119 and 131, Miner *Poetics* 71, Takahashi 260-61, Wells 183). Sometimes this is -- as in Konishi -- even unduly generalised as the hallmark of Nô as a whole. Thence the contention (that adopts as its major premise the exclusive and historically limited individualistic model of drama) that Nô is not drama (*gikyoku*), because as a lyrical expression centered exclusively on the *shite* it does not have a conflict of two personalities who embody opposed horizons (Nogami).[15] More prudently and more correctly, conflictlessness is confined to *mugen nô*: "Conflicts are not generally present in the spirit plays.... If conflict exists, it is in the hero's own mind." (Terasaki 62) However, unless I have missed something, I think that this major, and in my opinion supremely significant, lesson has scarcely been used for the elaboration of any general theory of theatre narration or stage story (Brecht's *Fabel*).

For, Zeami's triumphant and indisputable success in the creation of both Deity and Warrior Nô amounts to proving that there can be great and fully valid plays organised around an "effect of initiation into a true awareness of something," which is (as the poet-dramatist Goodman remarked) a mainstay of most lyrical poetry: "But the Japanese have invented a technique for producing this effect in a play.... (Goodman 3-4). This raises then such revolutionary questions for drama poetics and theatre theory that one has to backtrack at least to some consideration of the curious European -- Christian and then bourgeois individualist -- fixation on adversariness. I would define it (as Weber did for *Kampf*, struggle) as "the endeavour to carry out one's will against an opposing other will" (138) which implies either a collision of ideals (as Nietzsche noted) or a distributively shared yet individualistically adversary pseudo-ideal of "me only" egotism. Yet *conflict is only the adversarial or antagonistic form of* opposition, confrontation or *contrast* (cf. for some clues Simmel 13-14). Conflict could in a first approximation be thought of as *personalised* and *simultaneous* contrast of *incompatible wills and/or values*. Obversely, "[f]or a play," says Gadamer -- whom I do not propose as the perfect philosopher of theater -- "another person does not have really to play along (*mitspielen*), but there must always be present something else (*ein anderes*) with which the player plays and which answers each move of the player by a counter-move of its own" (101). It seems to me that *what we necessarily must have for a stage story or plot pattern is a development (succession and explication) which moves from an initial state to a CONTRASTING final state, and which is sufficiently interesting to keep the play's patrons in their seats during the story*. A stage story must have an agent confronted with social -- and cosmic -- time-horizons; it then may, but does not necessarily have to, have a collision with other personalised agents (cf. Kanze 33): contrasts within and with the world will suffice. I do not see why for an audience with pre-individualist or non-Christian presuppositions this could not be, e.g., a progression from the

darkness of life's passions to the light of ataraxic enlightenment. Philosophically speaking, we would today have to ask which Sinaitic Tables established that drama, or if you prefer stage action, must necessarily be based on conflict of opposed subjects, their wills and ideals?

2.3. The answer, which I can only sketch in an exceedingly foreshortened way, would be that this is the conclusion, central orientation, and rarely argued horizon of a major and powerful current of societal action and justification which solidified around Descartes's time, with strong roots in the monotheistic tradition (which he simply split into clerical and lay turfs). Since then, this dogma has dominated almost undisputed the Euro-American and bourgeois tradition of economical, political, and philosophical theory and practice, including drama and all diegetic (plotted) theatre as an exemplary, almost didactic case. Its argument was perhaps most richly and radically formulated by Hegel in the famous chapter on mastery and slavery of the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. He presented two possibilities for the absolute founding antitheses which constitute self-consciousness or individuality (though in other places he seems to have believed such antinomies could finally be sublated in the Absolute Spirit). First, each "individual" is an absolute Self, i.e. a consciousness "oriented toward the death of the other one .... They *affirm* themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle." Without such a split into opposed extremes, there would be only a "dead unity," in which the two opposed individualities would "remain indifferent to each other, [remain] as things, free": in the bourgeois dispensation, freedom is incompatible with a hospitable world. Or second, a reified consciousness may exist for -- and tied to -- another, independent consciousness: "one is *the master*, the other *the slave (Knecht*)."[16] In the "unhappy consciousness" the Master-Slave relation is then internalised within a split Self (cf. Taylor 159). Obversely, civil society as a whole is for Hegel "the battleground of the individual interests of each against all." Marx's critique then both begins from this and exasperates it into a revelation of a "more or less hidden civil war within existing society" (*Communist Manifesto*, *MEW* 4: 473) in view of its superseding. I think it is safe to conclude that the concept of adversariness is deeply embedded in the monotheistic (God vs. Devil, scapegoating) structures of all Euro-American social practices, including cultural institutions and speech genres. As Barthes remarked, precisely in a contrast to Japanese culture, "Antithesis is a privileged figure of our [bourgeois] culture .... these contraries...[regulate] our whole morality of discourse" (171 -- on his tracks, this is argued in my essay “Soul”; cf. on adversariness also the suggestive Allen, though I disagree with her deriving it from patriarchy, 312). Analyzing Bateson's studies of another Asian society, Berman -- whose Batesonian term for adversary is "schismogenic" -- concluded that

> we [in the West] are trapped in the notion that schismogenic situations, which are in fact profoundly neurotic, are exciting, and that anything else must be dull.... Schismogenesis ... is *learned*; it is as much an acquired habit as is the nonschismogenic behavior characteristic of Bali. (214)

In the capitalist dispensation, this adversariness crystallises as competition between billiard-ball individual entities (physical and legal persons, nation-States, etc.), lauded as the principal social and psychical engine of progress. Even supposedly critical voices have mythologised this "American religion of competitiveness ... at once our glory and (doubtless) our inevitable sorrow" (Bloom viii), seing it as predetermined rather than contingent. Yet we should take heed of what Brecht shows in a little note called "The Drawback of Disputes":

> The necessity for a new assertion to displace an old one imperils the new assertion almost as much as the old one.... The refutations are often not taken from new systems, determined by precise matters or relationships, but are simply unproven contraries of the old parts....
>
> Yet, of course, thinking is a struggle with thoughts. (GW 20: 177)

"In a society in which conflict of interest is the *principium individuationis*" (Marcuse 111), even just adversariness, however necessary, will necessarily be tainted (see Moulton).

To the contrary, the hierarchical Japanese tradition strongly privileges status-bound emotional propriety and suavity over a dialectical clash of thesis-antithesis which presupposes an at least hypothetical parity of confronted ideals and wills (cf. Nakane 36, also 67 and passim). Consubstantially to this, the astoundingly rich verbal, musical, and gestual "polyphony" of Nô is not at all similar to Bakhtin's view of Dostoevsky or to European theatre but a means to building up emotional "monophony" in a pyramidal subsumption.

Further, it has been persuasively argued on the tracks of Marx that, "whereas Hegel found the cause of stratified development in conflict and contradiction, it is only from the perspective of a telos (the end understood as the goal) that conflict and contradiction can be identified. Conflict and contradiction are thus, as it were, posited through techniques of drafting (projection) ...." (Karatani 145) Abstracting any process into antitheses or contraries can only be done by strong simplification, and this dichotomizing simplifies whatever it abstracts. In particular, any "formal simplification of complex and often traditional situations into simple winning or losing" introduces a "zero-sum logic" particularly well suited to capitalism (Jameson, "Soseki" 132) and to its plays – such as football or poker. Bourgeois competitive individualism is a great leveller of hierarchies, since it demands that all players at life's table or dealers in life's market start with the same rights, in interchangeable roles. Any Euro-American definition of drama and its plot that I know of between Aristotle and Brecht (both of whom were wiser) reposes on individualist conflict. I would undertake to prove this from any handbook of drama extant, usually phrased in terms of Cartesian and Newtonian mechanical materialism, and I shall here take an example from Kernan's representatively titled introduction, *Character and Conflict*, which adds a slight Freudian sheen: "To recapitulate: the basic forces at work within a play seek fulfillment, and as they do they come into conflict. Out of this conflict, or, more accurately, a series of conflicts, the plot emerges." (289) Nonetheless, conflict is not one of the 57 terms in the book's "Glossary": it is a primitive presupposed, used to explain action but itself not examinable.[17]

In keeping with its exclusive nature in all practices it invades, the adversary logic in storytelling -- theatrical or written -- ruthlessly displaces older forms of diachronic tension. The chief such form seems to be what Fredric Jameson calls "the mystery, the withholding, the expectation of the secret or revelation (what Barthes called the 'hermeneutic code' in *S/Z*)" ("Soseki" 135; significantly, Jameson too arrived at these formulations in an essay on Japanese vs. Western writing). If <u>*celebration*</u> can be defined as non-adversary, auspicious revelation boding well for a community, in it the world and the words share a magical identity. I take as an important argument in favour of my hypothesis the fact that such celebration "is one of the oldest and most attractive features of Japanese civilisation, and...the simplest way to account for this happiness and almost ritual praise of things is to point to Shinto, the way of *kami*, the indigenous spirits or gods" (Miner, Introduction 11, and cf. also 150 and passim) -- e.g., in *kami nô* (Deity Nô). True, celebration is often linked with desolateness to constitute perhaps the most frequent "dual theme" of classical Japanese literature; "for Japanese poets ...the celebration and the sense of desolation became intermingled" (Miner, *Introduction* 90 and 153). This mingling in poetry is quite parallel to the characteristics of Warrior Nô as discussed above: "the austere combination of deprivation and beauty is very like that in many *nô* plays" (Miner, *Introduction* 115).

<u>2.4.</u> If we accept arguments tending to dethrone the absolute sway of adversariness in favour of allowing revelation as a second principle of storytelling, at least two sets of consequences follow from such a hypothesis. Within <u>*comparative dramaturgy*</u> (or should I say narratology?) it would behoove us to work out the strengths and limitations of these two poetics or two fundamental alternatives of stage story.[18] I can here mention two sub-themes.

First, as argued in Section 1, revelation is a formal or syntactical organizing device; it can reveal Heaven or Hell (as in Dante's "demonic epiphany" of the *Inferno*, Frye 223), Purgatory or Limbo. Beckett's opus, e.g. -- not casually immensely popular in Japan -- is a revelation of arrested Limbo, near-zero meaning, desolateness without celebration. When Joyce resuscitated the notion of epiphany in *Stephen Hero*, it had contracted to a brief and occasional moment bounded and suffused by triviality. Beckett went his guru one better and rooted it durably and permanently in the absence of the Millennium. His work is a black Mystery-play, the exact obverse or inverse of a Deity Nô (cf. Takahashi 261). He can be seen as the culmination of a hundred years of European gropings in literature and theatre -- and outside them -- toward finding sense to conflictual events (as in the final discussions of Shaw's plays) or giving this up in favour either of an absolute desolateness (as in early Maeterlinck) or, much more interestingly, of cross-purposes thwarting amiability (in Chekhov's black vaudeville). It turned out that celebration -- the positive or uplifting revelation -- was believable, rather than fake ideology in the narrow sense (shared by much Hollywood and Zhdanov), only in periods of long-standing consensus on indisputable societal horizons and values. In our age of Fichte's "perfectly sinful society" or Weber's "disenchantment," hermeneutics of suspicion are deeply justified: "in the secularized and reified world of modern capitalism," a revelation or epiphany “is [not] possible as a positive event, as the revelation of presence" (Jameson, *Political* 135) -- or at least annunciation rather than denunciation is possible only as a rare exception (cf. Moylan). Attempts at celebrating fake "common interests," e.g. of a company or a nation, only achieve Hegel's reified and ideologised "dead unity." This is the rule in the present social formation (as it was when the Tokugawa ideologists stressed *shûgen*, the celebration of the rulers -- cf. Yokota-Murakami, "Poetics" 317). In that case, warnings such as the poet Kaneko Mitsuharu's, who means by opposition civic ideologico-political resistance, are to be heeded:

> Of course I'm against *Yamato-damashii* [the racial spirit of Japan];
>
> *Giri* and *ninjô* [duty vs. passion] make me want to vomit....
>
> I'm sure opposition is the one decent thing in life
>
> To oppose is to live
>
> To oppose is to take hold of yourself.
>
> ("Hantai" ["Opposition"], ca. 1917, tr. modified from Keene, *Dawn* 358)

Second, in revelation the opposition or contrast is defined not as a conflict of opposed wills and ideals but as a confrontation with life and world (the flow of events in time) from the vantage point of absolute judgment -- in Dante (cf. Auerbach 165ff.) or Deity Nô of divine knowledge, in Warrior Nô of ambiguous death, in Beckett of atheist Limbo. Revelation -- or at least the Japanese, Buddhist and/or Shinto, type of it -- does not deal in the morality of good protagonist vs. bad antagonist but in the epistemology of who sees or understands more. The "adversary" is not evil but delusion, the solution is not in victorious individualist will -- indeed, that will is the problem -- but in increasing insight into generally valid laws (cf. Loy 296 and passim).

Within a <u>*historical*</u> study of Zeami and Muromachi Nô, one could even argue that the action of Warrior Nô was for the protégé of shogun Yoshimitsu a way to serve as the conscience -- or perhaps the bad conscience -- of the *bushi* (warriors') class. Zeami was largely oriented toward those warriors at the shogun's court who were rapidly shedding their plebeian materialism and provenience in pursuit of aristocratic excellence. Yet this orientation was never exclusive. It is not only that traditionally the status of actors was extremely low (they were called *hinin*, non-people), though their services were eagerly sought by top priests and noblemen. It is also that his father's and his troupe's tradition was rooted in the popular *Yamato sarugaku* theatre, so that they performed at fixed times in the Kôfuku

temple at Nara but were otherwise a travelling group, playing besides the shogunal court "at the homes of the lesser aristocracy, at large public spectacles, and at temples and shrines in all parts of Japan" (Hoff, "Seeing" 136, and cf. Raz): "Their audiences were, thus, for the most part ordinary country people and priests of low rank and little education, and they themselves were similar..." (O'Neill, "Background" 19). As critics have abundantly pointed out, Zeami himself wrote frequently about the overriding importance of the audience: "It is dangerous for an actor" (Hoff comments on Zeami's attitude) "to lose the ability to move an audience. He may one day stand in need of its support when his esteem wanes among superior patrons." (Hoff, "Seeing" 136) Though it seems oversimplified to say "what the noh expresses is the consciousness of the common people of that time" (Watsuji 467 and ff.), it is safe to conclude that "[Zeami's] most immediate artistic heritage was popular, nonliterate and nonintellectual, a practical tradition completely dependent on the favor of the masses" (Hare 227); and furthermore, this favour was not as murderously fickle as that of the *bushi* shogunate. There is a good probability that

> many of the elements of the Muromachi 'great tradition'... should be attributed...to the adoption by the elite of elements from the 'little tradition.' Men of humble origins were intimately involved in the perfection of such genre as *nô*, poetry, gardens, architecture, and certain styles of painting. (Hall 7; and cf. Grapard 170, also generally Suvin “Preliminary”)

Exploiting this contradictory gap and the resulting congerie of elements, the Warrior Nô plays finally deal with upper-class dying rather than success. It is perhaps in that sense that the otherwise somewhat puzzling stance of Zeami's, who wrote that he was not interested in warrior roles except when related to the beauties of the seasons (cf. Konishi, *History* 536-37), might be explained. The beauties of the season were, in the whole poetry and prose tradition in which Zeami and his audience were steeped, strongly linked with the seasons' swift passage and impermanence. For example, Tadanori is -- as all warriors, but more so in proportion to his paragon status -- linked with the cherry tree because of its particularly aching combination of extreme beauty and extreme fleetingness. Only dead warriors seem for Zeami esthetically admissible: ethically, they may sometimes be triumphant in defense of their honour (as Yoshitsune in *Yashima*) but never in victory over an enemy. This is perhaps most clearly enunciated at the end of *Atsumori*:

> "You are my foe!" Atsumori shouts,
>
> lifting his sword to strike; but Kumagai
>
> with kindness has repaid old enmity,
>
> calling the Name [Amida] to give the spirit peace.
>
> They at last shall be reborn together
>
> upon one lotus throne in paradise.
>
> Renshô, you were no enemy of mine.
>
> (tr. R. Tyler)

As Tyler remarks, speaking of the ex-warrior Kumagai, now expiating monk Renshô, "[Zeami] seems to have cared no more than Renshô for war" (*Japanese* 38; cf. Watsuji 482-97, who regrets Zeami's depreciation of the "way of the warrior"). The subject-matter in Warrior Nô is usually taken from *The Tale of the Heike*, a story of various representative people of the *bushi* class dying in various ways (cf. Konishi, *History* 339). This cluster of "affecting dying" is recuperated and reworked by Zeami. Even the warriors' ideal image of service and loyalty rather than vulgar success, this furthest reach of the warrior code, is finally revealed as another delusory attachment. It is better to have none than to be a ruler -- perhaps even a shogun.

*Notes*

1/ Analytic and indeed ideological ambiguities may appear when the *shite* (doer, central and dominant player), e.g. Kanze Hideo, is confused with his role, e.g. the Takasago deity (this *shite*-role I sometimes *faute de mieux* call "protagonist," though there is no antagonist and strictly speaking no *agon* in many Nô); the same holds for *waki* (sideman, introductory player), used in criticism both in its proper meaning and as ellipse for "*waki*-role." I have therefore reluctantly decided that the clumsy addition of "-role" may in all ambiguous cases be unavoidable semantic hygiene. Other terms are explained in the text, but I might repeat the main ones: *maejite, nochijite* = in two-part Nô, where the shite plays different roles, name for shite in the first and second part; *genzai nô* = Nô where the shite plays a living human in the (supposedly) empirical time of the stage story; *mugen nô* = Nô where the *shite* plays "non-empirical" entities (deities, specters), sometimes appearing in the *waki*-role's dream.

It might be added that the original implication when the term of *mugen nô* was coined, namely that it always presents an empirically non-existing dream or vision, is no longer acceptable. It was always semiotically tricky to enforce different epistemological statuses on actors equally present on the stage. But even without invoking semiotics, it would be absurd to exclude from *mugen nô* one of its mainstays, Deity Nô, where the divinities appear in real spacetime (Kanai observed this apropos of *Takasago* in 1969, as cited in Gardner 33; and in fact Konishi seems to follow that line, cf. *History* 525).

2/ Konishi, "Approaches" 4 (based on Nose Asaji) and 14-15 (based on costume changes for the *waki* of *Yoroboshi*), and cf. 8ff.; had his splendid overview from 1960 had the impact it deserved on criticism in European languages, my Section 0 could have been different and briefer.

3/ O'Neill, *Early Nô* 101 and 94, also Konishi, "Approaches" 4-5; and see Goff 3, Keene, *Nô* 41 and passim. Sieffert follows Tanaka Makoto's "Yôkyoku no haikyoku" ("Uncanonical Nô Texts," in Nogami Toyoichirô ed., *Nôgaku Zensho*, Tôkyô 1942, 4: 133-35) by speaking -- as do Konishi and O'Neill -- of "nearly 3,000 Nô libretti," 12; the discrepancies are largely due to the yet imperfect bibliographic control of a list of some 3,000 titles, which comprises in some cases same title for different plays and in other cases same play under different titles.

For quicker orientation, I recall the standard historical periods referred to: Kamakura -- late 12th to early 14th Century; Muromachi -- 14th to 16th Century; Edo -- 17th to 19th Century; Meiji -- 1866-1912.

4/ Sieffert allots Zeami 48 plays in the Deity, Warrior, and Final categories and 59 plays in the other two categories. O'Neill, another impenitent "attributor," gives him from among plays "thought to be directly connected with one in the modern repertoires" 49 in the Deity, Warrior, and Final categories and 76 in the other two categories (*Early Nô* 161 and 165-71). On the other pole, Hare (42-47; he follows Omote Akira) confines himself to 46 plays in the present canon plus 15 "of uncertain attribution," which leads him to allot four fifths of Zeami's plays to *mugen nô* (236) ...

5/ Cf. also, e.g., Blau 189 and 206-07, Honda, O'Neill, *Early Nô* 85-93 and passim, Raz 83-85 and passim, as well as Wang for early Chinese parallels. Nonetheless, as has been argued by Kobayashi Shizuo, there is evidence that such old *shushi sarugaku* (sarugaku plays performed by priests from temples) were not an exclusive or possibly even not a prevailing ancestor of Nô, but that there was ample room for the plebeian, empirically oriented and often satirical, *senmin sarugaku* (Terasaki 22-26; cf. O'Neill, *Early Nô* 4-9, 87, and passim, Raz 80 and 98-101). Indeed, the *shushi sarugaku* itself

seems to be most credibly defined as a combination (loose in the 11th-12th century and more intimate after that) between the deeply plebeian performance genre of *sarugaku* -- which began with Chinese-style acrobacies, stunts, juggling, folk music and dance, farces, travesties, and similar, and graduated under temple protection to inclusion of satirical comical dialogue (Blau 104-07, 180-215) -- with the magically and religiously oriented singing and dancing *shushi* performances (cf. Blau 252-59, 277-90, 304-09, and passim).

6/ The complexities of the Woman-Nô category as constituted in the Edo-period, which also includes some plays that are possibly derivative from the revelation model but do not precisely follow either the conflictual or the revelatory pattern (e.g. *Ohara Gokô, Ohmu Komachi* or *Yô-kihi*), are such that a separate investigation is needed.

7/ In the vexed and shifting matter of attributions I follow Dômoto Masaki (Interview); cf. also Shimazaki 73. In view of my comparatist purpose, I am in this paper not touching upon Zeami's own stage "micro-syntax" of division into *dan* (sections) and its build-up from blocks or subsections (called *shôdan* by Yokomichi), nor upon Zeami's *jo-ha-kyû* theory of rhythm; cf. Hare for detailed treatment of both. Zeami's distinctions based on what I would call social type (woman, oldster, warrior) would have to be considered carefully in a more detailed treatment.

8/ Another very important matter that I cannot enter upon is an as clear as possible differentiation between Zeami and his followers, considerably more conformist to hegemonic ideology (e.g. Nobumitsu), as well as the relentless pressure and close supervision of the Tokugawa shogunate, especially upon the overtly political Deity Nô. All this led to an exclusive focus in them on increasingly bland and far-off approbation in the service of social control and indeed of State oppression (see Yokota-Murakami, "Nô" 295, 298, 260-71, 285-86, and passim). In particular, Yokota-Murakami makes a persuasive case for the wilful downgrading and elimination of female deities, reversing Zeami's adoption of the "feminine" *tennyo-mai* dance and his general principle of yin-yang balance evidenced in the fact that he "actually composed as many plays featuring female deities as those featuring male deities" ("Nô" 148, and cf. 57-59, 137-38, 156, 179, and passim)

9/ I have used both the Rimer/Yamazaki (157) and the Quinn (79) translations with minor modifications. I am much indebted to their useful comments.

10/ A somewhat different sub-type is presented by Zeami's three *kachi-shura* (Warriors' Victory) Nô, *Ebira*, *Tamura*, and *Yashima*, whose *shite*-role is a victorious warrior. This may modify the second four parameters in Table 2 (most clearly in the case of *Tamura*). Whatever these plays' dates of composition, such Nô may therefore be typologically somewhat nearer to, or a transition from, Deity Nô to the "pure" *make-shura* (Warriors' Defeat) Nô. At any rate, it seems most significant that the consensually most memorable plays and protagonists are the "defeat" ones, and that even the "Victory Asura" plays leave the victors in the Warriors' Hell (*ashuradô*, see next note). Obversely and characteristically, reinforcing my claim at the end for Zeami's heterodox position, these "Victory Asura" plays were the most frequently performed ones for the Tokugawa shoguns (see Yokota-Murakami, "Nô" 366). Though the *kachi-shura* are not analyzed here, it may therefore be seen how they could be accommodated by the above Table. For other possible divisions of Warrior Nô based on position between the poles of dance-cum-song and narration, on the social rank of *shite*-role, etc., see Shimazaki 185-87.

11/ Doctrinally, in Japanese Buddhism this *ashuradô* is not a hell but one of the six "realms of transmigration" or states of sentient existence (*rokudô*) through which people are cyclically reborn according to their karmic deserts until released to a paradise and ultimately into nirvana (see Ruch, "Coping" 93ff.). However, it is a place and/or state of the dead warriors' perpetual bloody torture in frenzied battle, befitting their passion, and usually translated as "hell" in Nô renditions (see e.g. Shimazaki 64, 84, 92, and 136). Ruch stresses a significant difference between officially

"commissioned" and "noncommissioned" works, e.g. "religious/didactic writ" vs. poetry and most prose in Japanese Middle Ages ("Coping" 106 and passim). Nô seems in this usage too to show its hybrid nature, arising out of a contradictory fusion of "low" with "high" cultural and ideological elements (cf. Ruch, "Medieval").

12/ This matter of affects is crucial for any discussion of Nô as plays composed to have effects for given audiences. It is also the major unresolved crux of present-day theatre theory. Cf. some interesting hints on the "affect pattern" of *mono no aware* in Hijiya-Kirschnereit 214.

13/ "Ostend" is a beautiful though somewhat unusual term (the OED glosses it as archaic but revived by H.G. Wells) which I would much like to see adopted in theatre studies for the basic *Gestus* of theatre, i.e. putting something forward as if on a platter, drawing attention to the fact that you are showing it. I picked up its use from Eco, "Semiotics" 110, who however correctly credits it to the Czech semiotician Ivo Osolsobě, see in English his “Role" and "Ostension." The term stems from Latin: Osolsobě credits it to Augustine of Hippo, and I found an illuminating example in G.B. Piranesi's print of Rome *Scenographia Campi Martii*, whose subtitle says "veterum aedificiorum reliquias ostendens..." (s.p.).

14/ Cf., e.g., Yun and Immoos.

The Nô vs. tragedy discussion, which has a parallel in discussions of Chinese culture, may serve to point out a suspicion (I am far too ignorant to call it anything else) that the problem of consensual revelation vs. adversariness would receive much illumination if not only Japanese but East Asian or "Chinese sphere" cultural forms in general were compared to Euro-American ones.

15/ "Nogami Toyoichirô ... put forward [in 1923] a provocative interpretation that completely overwhelmed the intellectuals of the day. Although his view was highly dogmatic, ... for many years his thesis was accepted as authoritative.... He stated that Nô is not drama and that the essence of Nô rests on the solo performance of the principal actor *shite* alone." (Terasaki 28; cf. Tyler's well-argued rebuttal of Nogami, *Japanese* 157-58). It is easily demonstrable that Nogami's description at best fits only one part of Nô plays. Even more important, his laudable desire to account for the specificity of Nô (e.g. his welcome stress on a narrative recitation that combines presentation with description) is here -- paradoxically and ironically -- tied to a 19th-Century European definition of drama that has since then been recognised as parochial in time and space, thus quite insufficient. This is where, as Dômoto justly argues, going back to considering the actual medieval material -- i.e. the original Nô texts and all plays, including the "non-canonical" ones -- becomes crucial: to confront these original forms means that "such logic as 'Nô is Nô, not drama,' which is similar to the logic of the quondam nationalists, 'the Japanese are Japanese, not human beings,' completely loses its power" ("Bangai-kyoku"). I’m much indebted to Dômoto *sensei* for explaining his views in the “Interview.”

16/ Hegel, ch. (B.) IV. A, properly titled "Independence and Dependence of the Self-Consciousness," quotes from 144-46; cf. Taylor, especially 148-61. My application of this to Japanese culture was catalyzed by Jameson, "Soseki" 136.

Gellrich has an interesting argument about Aristotle's silence on conflict in Hellenic tragedy which she attributes largely to Plato's view of strife as evil, and which was decisively broken by Hegel in his *Aesthetics* (8-9, 12-15, 97-101, and passim). Disappointingly, in Gellrich's book, subtitled "The Problem of Conflict since Aristotle," the concept and/or necessity of conflict is in not delved into.

17/ This introduction to drama (not European drama only) from 1969 has 12 play texts: 11 from Europe, one from the USA -- none from Asia! I am not trying here to allot personal blame, and Kernan should not be especially singled out: present-day introductions are usually not much better in their individualist "Occidentalism," see e.g. Cohen. I have consulted ca. 40 books dealing with drama in general.

18/ The attractions and values of Nô today, for an audience which is not only Japanese, can for a given purpose very well focus on a single Nô category or even a play -- regardless of the fact, e.g., that Deity Nô is always played at the beginning of a program composed of at least one or two more Nô plays which have some, sharper or weaker, form of conflict. There is in fact a great abundance of studies dealing with, e.g., single Nô plays (see the bibliography in Ortolani). It seems therefore admissible to isolate, in my meta-discourse, revelation as a story-principle or *etymon*.

It would, however, be useful to find out whether, why, and when revelation can or cannot function by itself, say in an entire theatre visit. The example of Beckett -- revelation at its most desolate, revealing that there is nothing to reveal -- suggests it definitely can: though not for all audiences. (But then, there seems to be no theatre aspect or element which works for all imaginable audiences.) Such checking should remember that already in Zeami one of the five typical poetic themes to be used for Nô is *bô'oku*, as so often a multivalent and obscure expression which seems to be the dark twin of hope or congratulation and is sometimes translated as desolation (see Quinn 66-67); Zeami's own example is the Nô *Komachi at Sekidera* that presents the withering and regrets of the eponymous poetess and beauty.

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