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ARTICLE

Yeats's Photographs and the World Theatre of Images

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> [O]ur art of the stage is the art of making a succession of pictures.
> —W. B. Yeats, "At Stratford-on-Avon"

W. B. Yeats's dramatic career was transformed in the 1910s through a series of collaborations in London. In an essay from the period, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan," he writes: "I have invented a form of drama, distinguished, indirect and symbolic."[1] This form, like many other modernist inventions, is better understood as something else, in this case the alchemy of his earlier work, some eclectic influences, and the contributions of his American, English, French, and Japanese collaborators. Together, this group of artists drew on Irish mythology, the occult, the continental avant-garde, and—as often has been stressed—Japanese *noh*. Originally, the "Certain Noble Plays" essay was published as an introduction to a related *noh* project, Ezra Pound's liberal completion of Ernest Fenollosa and Hirata Kiichi's incomplete translations.[2] There have been at least four book-length studies on the relationship between Yeats and *noh*, as well as many theses and articles. It remains an exemplum of transnational modernist theatre.

Yeats's papers are one of the signature collections in the National Library of Ireland. Amid the manuscripts, correspondence, and ephemera, there are two folders of postcards and photographs that, according to the finding guide, are comprised "mostly of performers and scenes from Noh plays." Even for researchers interested in Yeats's theatre—a small subset compared with those drawn to his poetry or his life—these unassuming folders have received little attention. They contain images that Yeats seems to have gathered, and there are few contextual markings—their uncertain provenance also makes their direct reproduction here impracticable.[3] These eclectic images highlight Yeats's habits as a collector and researcher, beyond his usual, canonical casting as a visionary poet. While going unmentioned in studies of Yeats and *noh*, the presence of these pictures nonetheless provides corroboration for his sustained interest in the form. If, as he had written in 1901, theatre is made of a succession of pictures, this collection is an illuminating supplement to Yeats's engagement with the venerable Japanese form.

Curiously, however, most of the images are not of *noh*; they are of *kabuki*. There also are images of the puppet theatre *bunraku* and of *shingeki*, one of the Japanese modern theatre movements adapted from European models. The images in the

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folders do not have a set order. Their shifting arrangement is subject to the whims of previous library visitors and so yields intriguing combinations. In one photograph, a *noh* actor in profile prepares his mask; in another, against the backdrop of the moon, an *onnagata* speaks to a young man in a modern uniform; in a third, there is a trio of *bunraku* puppets, a miniature chorus. A few of these Japanese pictures also make for good reminders that dramatic ideas do not move in one direction. In a wider stage shot, there is a church, a tree, and an actor playing the guitar—it appears to be a Japanese production of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.[4]

The logic of this collection—the disorder and the ambiguities—confers practical, tangible insight into Yeats's methods and his evolving dramaturgy. The eclectic form and the content of the archive matter, in part because modernist artists were doing their own eclectic archival work, often with the equivalent of unlabeled and mislabeled folders. The resulting irreverent and imprecise adaptations of cultural material sometimes trouble our present pieties, especially as artists tend to privilege transformation over authentic replication, as Craig Latrell argues in "After Appropriation."[5] Yeats and his collaborators saw their own unusual combinations and generative opportunities in their varied source materials. For them, and for other practitioners of the period, circulating visual materials conveyed suggestive dramaturgical ideas without rigid rules or classifications.

On one level, Yeats's understudied engagement with visual culture can refresh our understanding of his theatre career. These "*noh*" images expand the well-rehearsed and oversimplified story of Yeats's inspiration for his *Plays for Dancers*. Many scholars have meticulously documented Yeats's misunderstandings of *noh*—effectively a given—instead of reckoning with his more panoramic, and messier, practice. We inherit critical horizons of expectation (such as "Yeats adapted *noh* plays") that lead us to repeat our predecessors' refrains and sometimes to reproduce their blind spots. As Yoko Chiba and Shotaro Yamauchi note, Yeats appreciated and researched *kabuki* and other Japanese traditions alongside *noh*, but the critical conversation has maintained a cleaner narrative about Yeats's engagement with a single, artificially isolated, and misunderstood form.[6]

With the wider set of references in view, some of the inaccuracies or innovations in Yeats's own plays—understood as his departures from *noh*—can be reframed as evidence of his drawing from other forms and other iconographies. His combination of masks and makeup, for example, indicates an incorporation of *kabuki*'s makeup style rather than a modification to *noh*'s iconic masks. The *Plays for Dancers* even call for a purposeful confusion of the two, with the actors' "*faces made up to resemble masks*."[7] By appreciating the many art forms in Yeats's reading, writing, and image collections, we can move from a checklist account of fidelities to a wider examination of the materials and the networks that informed his theatre. In his writing, Yeats does describe a more dispersive and syncretic method, though those references have been treated as rhetorical eccentricity rather than the expressions of a committed artistic principle. In "Certain Noble Plays," Yeats invokes consistent pictorial examples, pointing to prints, screens, and paintings. Many of these references are Japanese but relatively few concern *noh*. The images at the National Library practically illustrate some of these more eccentric references.

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On a broader scale, Yeats's collection is indicative of how visual materials traveled during the modernist period and how this unpredictable traffic informed cultural (mis)understanding and innovation across the arts. A renewed attention to images, I propose in this essay, can help us better understand theatre's global movements in the period. This era saw the formation of a provisional world theatre, and scholars tend to account for that phenomenon in one of two ways. In the first, theatre travels as drama, as a printed literary genre. Tracing dramatic histories draws attention to the playwright's (and sometimes the translator's) work, at the expense of the performer's, designer's, director's, or impresario's. It privileges readerly values over theatrical sensibilities, domesticating many world traditions to Europe's bookish tastes. In Yeats's case, it is especially easy to center the distinguished poet's print drama and therefore sideline his experiments with and contributions to theatre practice.

The other approach, informed by cultural history, has been to commemorate the early tours and mythologize key encounters. Some of the most famous examples of this kind of cultural exchange concern single European artists "discovering" Asian classical traditions. Bertolt Brecht's writing on Chinese opera and Antonin Artaud's on Balinese dance join Yeats's work with *noh* as some of the classic cases. (This approach implicitly overlaps with the first, insofar as these artists' writings memorialize their transformative experiences.) Setting aside the significant cultural politics, these celebrated occasions were too brief and sporadic to account fully for the more consistent and reciprocal exchange of ideas that led to a modernist world theatre. Recent scholars have documented global performance networks in more nuanced ways, but our sense for theatre's circulation remains overwhelmingly shaped by belated translations and by anecdotes of inspiring meetings or landmark productions.[8]

The case of Yeats's images suggests an alternative approach, one that emphasizes the vital role that circulating pictures played in the emergence of more cosmopolitan theatre practice. While the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw unprecedented contact between performance traditions—through translations and tours—images of performance moved earlier, more easily, and more erratically. Images were the avant-garde for the exchange of theatrical ideas. Yet in our histories, images of all kinds are treated as attendant illustrations rather than as essential materials for the working artist and, by extension, the working scholar. A more dedicated and dexterous approach to image archives can help reveal how, among other things, modernist theatre corresponded with other contemporary phenomena, such as the age of mechanical reproduction, the rise of stage design as an art form, and the invention of celebrity.

In what follows, I first assess our critical approaches to theatre images, what Peter Buse calls one of the "great unthought conventions of theatre criticism."[9] I advocate for methods that treat images not as accessories to theatrical performance, but as their own dynamic—even performing—archive. To ground these ideas in Yeats's context, I analyze his writing about images, his use of visual materials in the production process, and the visual legacies of his plays. I focus on "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" to showcase his thinking on images and as an indicative document of how Japanese theatre became world theatre during the period. Japan played a major role on the emergent world stage, and this prominence was

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due in part to reproducible pictures, first woodblock prints and later photographs. Yeats and his coterie's engagements with these circulating images suggests a wider prevalence of prints, photographs, and visions in and around modernist theatre. Pictures appeared in studios and rehearsal rooms, in treatises and reviews, in plays and performance themselves. As I discuss in the final section, *kabuki* in particular—the form pictured most often in Yeats's own collection—elegantly demonstrates the dynamics of this moving modernist theatre, corroborating Yeats's belief that "our art of the stage is the art of making a succession of pictures."[10]

Photographic Theatre Studies

In 1901 Yeats reflected on his recent visit to Shakespeare's hometown: "the theatre has moved me as it has never done before."[11] His essay lavishes praise on the library and repertory performances, but he reserves some criticism for Stratford's "half-round theatre." Yeats believes that the half-round architecture impedes a designer's ability to compose "a succession of pictures."[12] Modernist theatre already had ushered in the "new and legitimate art" of set design, led by Yeats collaborator Edward Gordon Craig, who built "the first beautiful scenery our stage has seen."[13] In the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner had pioneered the proscenium frame and the darkened house to accentuate this legitimate art, and at the turn of the century Yeats wanted to maintain those conditions.

Yeats's reference to this succession of images is part of a longer theatre history. Across the nineteenth century, theatre and other arts were characterized by a committed pictorialism. Performance was discussed in terms of iconic poses and tableaux, as Martin Meisel details in *Realizations*, and this trend stretches further back as well. In 1758, Denis Diderot called theatre "une succession de tableaux," and Meisel finds similar precursors in English and German contexts.[14] Yeats's advocacy for a pictorial sensibility is another of modernism's only seeming novelties, better understood as an artful modification of inheritance.

In his writings on theatre, Yeats regularly appeals to a visual vocabulary with references to visions, images, and pictures, as well as to prints, paintings, and photographs. The terminological distinctions matter, of course, but the slippages and imprecisions are revealing too, as if Yeats is auditioning language for what he sees and what he wants to realize. In broad terms, the "image" became less painterly for Yeats's generation: it was part of a new vocabulary for poetry, for example, and in its Francophone usage the "image" emerged as a key concept for psychology and philosophy. A "succession of pictures" inevitably called to mind photography and cinema. Modernist artists variously adopted, resisted, and responded to questions of mechanical reproduction, and a theatre of images was becoming, a little anxiously, a theatre of prints and photographs.[15]

Photographs are often understood by theatre makers, audiences, and scholars as records of past performance. Since the mid-nineteenth century, they have provided a limited but valuable visual impression of what a performer or a performance looked like.[16] Our personal and collective senses of the theatrical past are shaped by iconic images. In *The Empty Space*, Peter Brook writes that certain images are in fact all that remain in a spectator's memory. He recalls a set of iconic tableaux: "two tramps under a tree, an old woman dragging a cart, a sergeant dancing, three

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people on a sofa in hell."[17] Among theatre scholars and teachers there is a shared, virtual photo album of these kinds of distilled moments, reproduced on our handouts and presentation slides: Hugo Ball's costume at the Café Voltaire, the constructivist sets of *The Magnanimous Cuckold*, the backdrop-bones in Orson Welles's Voodoo *Macbeth*. The modernist theatre is remembered and replayed in research and teaching as a succession of pictures.

And yet photographs and theatre have a still more complex and dynamic relationship. Since about the 1980s, scholars led by Laurence Senelick have interrogated our assumptions about photographs in theatre history.[18] Joel Anderson synthesizes these discussions in his 2015 *Theatre & Photography*, detailing the roles photographs play for theatre makers, spectators, and scholars. If photography is understood first as a record of performance, that is, as something that comes *after*, Anderson shows how the image also comes *before* and *during* performance.[19] Pictures may be afterimages, in Brook's sense, but they are used for making new work and for priming future audience members. Working from photographs remains common theatre-making practice, as a visit to a design studio or a rehearsal room would attest. And since the mid-nineteenth century, photographs and cameras have been integrated into dramatic performances themselves. The plot of Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon* (1859) turns on the taking, developing, and consulting of a photograph onstage. Anderson shows how onstage photography updated *tableaux vivants* for and beyond the age of mechanical reproduction.

Yeats's dramatic career, from the 1890s to the 1930s, coincides with an important phase of this medial transition. Images are present at every stage of Yeats's artistic process: *before*, *during*, and *after*. A new project begins with the consultation of prints and photographs; the performed plays comment on their own images and aspire to more mystical visions; and Yeats was wary of photography's somewhat crude role in advertising, recording, and displaying his theatre beyond the theatre.

The Image in Yeats's Theatre

Yeats is cast in cultural history primarily as a poet, but his theatre career was robust, varied, and international. As the largely autobiographical speaker in a late poem puts it, "Players and painted stage took all my love / And not those things that they were emblems of."[20] Yeats recognized the collaborative, material, and multimedia nature of his work. He was—in that poem's language—fascinated by and an advocate for the stage's players. The title of his *Four Plays for Dancers* is in one sense a dedication of these plays to their featured performers, Michio Itō and later Ninette de Valois. For the "painted stage," Yeats sought out collaborators such as Edmund Dulac and Gordon Craig to craft what that same poem calls "Those masterful images." Visual artists helped to realize Yeats's stage pictures, as well as those of other playwrights he promoted in England and Ireland, including Maurice Maeterlinck, August Strindberg, and Rabindranath Tagore. Yeats's involvement in theatre was always-already cosmopolitan, despite its famed tethering to the Irish literary revival.

His plays themselves feature traces of this syncretism and this collaborative process. The published version of *Four Plays for Dancers*, for example, includes Dulac's illustrations and musical score. Like Samuel Beckett after him, Yeats was a

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hands-on playwright invested in how his plays would be realized, in terms of voice, movement, and design. Stylistically, he broke with the popular naturalists of his generation, preferring an artistic allegiance with the symbolists working on the Continent and with other movements further afield. In "Certain Noble Plays of Japan," he compares his method to what he imagines to be that of a *noh* actor, "there is no observation of life."[21] Yeats left life's observation to the likes of Ibsen and Shaw, whom he saw, according to J. L. Styan, as "bourgeois moralists and reformers—mere logicians whose colourless dialogue was lacking in poetic vision and exhilaration."[22] Yeats's plays were in careful verse, but that was only one element; the poetry was not the ultimate form. The "poetic," as Styan's syntax insists, was in service of a "vision"—and it needed to be exhilarating.

One of Yeats's first plays, *The Shadowy Waters*, dramatizes how spoken lines are not enough for the poet-playwright. The play's hero Forgael puts the predicament into words, "I can see nothing plain; all's mystery / . . . I have but images, analogies."[23] At this early stage, the obstacle for Yeats was in not yet knowing how to express the images and analogies, how to synthesize these elements into a unified vision. In a metatheatrical moment, Forgael speaks of the physical set's meager offerings. He apologizes for this poor theatre: "I weep because I've nothing for your eyes / But desolate waters and a battered ship."[24] Yeats continued to rework this same play over nearly twenty years. It was begun in the 1890s, first performed in 1904, and published in different versions in 1906 and 1907.[25] *The Shadowy Waters* eventually worked for Yeats not because it had stronger characters or more refined dialogue but because it had become a series of compelling pictures. In a 1904 letter, Yeats describes the effect he hoped to achieve: "one should lose the persons in the general picture." The people lost, the image takes on its own character: "The whole picture as it were moves together—sky and sea and cloud are as it were actors. It is almost religious. . . . It is deliberately without human characters."[26] What matters for Yeats is not so much what is said or by whom but how the "whole picture" moves. It is almost religious.

In the *Four Plays for Dancers* from the late 1910s, Yeats further develops his theatrical vision to make the audience see differently, the pictures and visions almost mystical. These plays begin with a common ritual, the unfolding and folding of a cloth. For this devised convention, the ornamental cloth is opened and, despite spectatorial desire for something to be revealed, it is empty; it is the material and gestural transaction that matters. In the first two plays this action is accompanied by a choral incantation: "I call to the eye of the mind / A well long choked up and dry"; and "I call before the eyes a roof / with cross-beams darkened by smoke."[27] The singing, coupled with the cloth's unfolding, creates a mental vision that is both bound to and beyond the visible stage. Yeats repeats variants of the "calling to the mind's eye" line frequently. The phrase appears seven times in his poetry, five times in the collection *The Wild Swans at Coole*, whose composition coincided with that of these plays. Beckett shared Yeats's affection for these words too, cribbing them in *Happy Days*, in one of several homages to *At the Hawk's Well*.[28]

By the time of his last play, Yeats had grown more skeptical of theatrical speech in favor of stage images realized by props and costume. In the opening of *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939), Yeats supplants the chorus and cloth with a "very old man looking like something out of mythology." This old man introduces the play in

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prose. He welcomes the same kind of chorus from the *Plays for Dancers* but tells us that he "picked them up here and there about the streets." He promises a dance, "because where there are no words there is less to spoil. Emer must dance, there must be severed heads." There will be seven severed heads in all, black parallelograms arranged by the Morrigu, a woman with a crow head. This old man, a kind of stage manager and "out of fashion and out of date" proxy for Yeats,[29] cautions readers, prospective performers, and the audience against too narrowly attending to language. He distrusts his words, even on a Nobel Prize–winning poet's stage. In isolation, he warns, they are a source of ruin or disappointment.

Across his dramatic career Yeats experimented with how the action, symbol, and mood could be carried through incantation and choreography, through music and plastic design. He aspired to create a succession of moving pictures, relying on images he invented, remembered from galleries, or witnessed in mystical visions. Like Forgael, the playwright negotiated a catalog of pictures. "Certain Noble Plays of Japan"—the essay most directly linking Yeats and *noh*—opens with a striking singular image. Like many of the photographs held at the National Library of Ireland, this image does not neatly correspond to the noble plays of Japan. Writing this introduction to *noh* plays, Yeats calls other pictures to mind.

A Certain Noble Image

Between 1913 and 1916, Yeats and Ezra Pound lived together for part of each winter in Sussex, in the now-famous Stone Cottage. Pound worked as Yeats's secretary, and the two read and wrote and drank cider in the evenings. It was over this period that they both principally became acquainted with *noh*, a form neither saw performed. They gathered their impressions through the Hirata–Fenollosa translations; by way of their acquaintance with Michio Itō and other Japanese expatriates; and through visits to museums, where they examined prints of Japanese theatre. In imagining these plays, both writers appealed to the "image." In 1914, Pound connected his poetic Imagism to *noh*: "the whole play may consist of one image. I mean it is gathered about one image"; a year later, "the Japanese 'Noh' plays seem to me in many cases to be built 'out of the image' . . . or from two or three images in dramatic relation."[30] Pound joins Yeats in implying that the image comes both before and during the play; it offers the material for the play's construction (it is "built" from the image) and it also becomes its center of dramatic gravity (the play "consist[s]" of one image). If, in an Imagist poem, Pound transforms "the motion of narrative into the stillness of epiphany," his *noh* adaptations reverse or dilate that process.[31] In Imagist plays, he makes epiphanic stillness move.

Yeats's 1915 "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" presents the reader with a succession of pictures. He begins by simulating a live scene of writing; rhetorically, he has *just now* returned home to write. The essay shares this immediacy with other modernist texts such as F. T. Marinetti's 1909 manifesto. "We have been up all night, my friends and I," Marinetti begins, "beneath mosque lamps. . . . And, while we trod our native sloth into opulent Persian carpets, we carried our discussion to the farthest limits of logic."[32] Yeats and Marinetti both put into words the excitement springing from collaboration. Writing from European cities, they also turn to exotic materials to share a sense of that moment. Yeats begins: "I am writing

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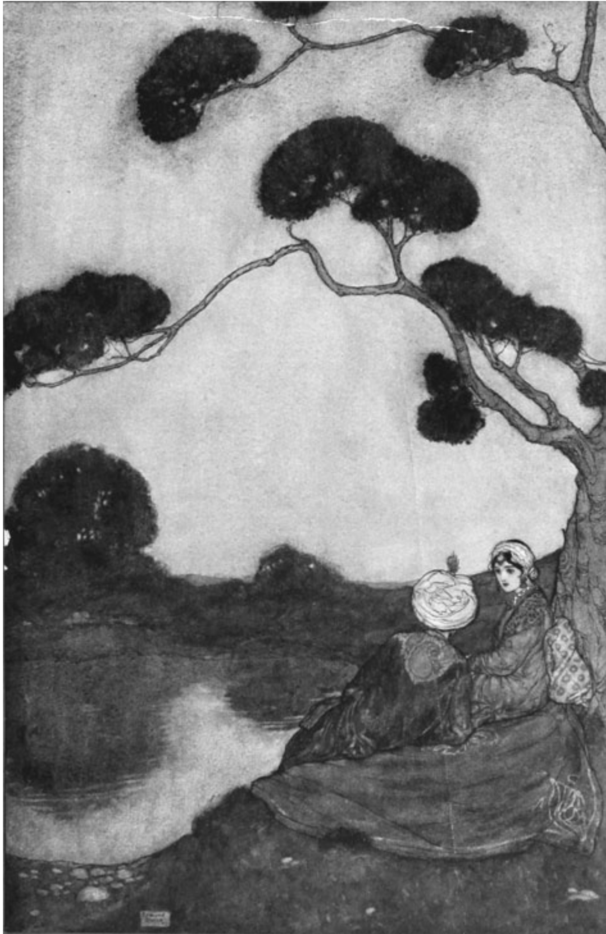

Figure 1. Edmund Dulac, illustration from *One Thousand and One Nights,* retold by Laurence Housman (London: Stoddard & Houghton, 1907), Plate 34. Source: Wikicommons; public domain.

with my imagination stirred by a visit to the studio of Mr. Dulac, the distinguished illustrator of the *Arabian Nights*."[33] Yeats's invented form of theatre does not begin with *noh*, nor with the work of an actor or playwright, but with the French illustrator of the *Arabian Nights* (Fig. 1). Despite this essay's stated relationship to certain noble plays of Japan, Yeats insists from the first on the relevance of other arts and other places. His method of artistic derivation and association is loose and expansive, his theatre practice part of a "flexible, mobile, rather messy version of modernism."[34]

Yeats describes the source of his stirred imagination: "I saw there the mask and head-dress to be worn in a play of mine . . . this noble, half-Greek, half-Asiatic face, will appear perhaps like an image seen in reverie by some Orphic worshipper."[35] Yeats offers this half-and-half equation to make sense of Dulac's mixed

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Figure 2. Edmund Dulac, illustration for *At the Hawk's Well*, from W. B. Yeats, *Four Plays for Dancers* (London: Macmillan, 1921). *Source:* Author's collection; public domain.

"Orientalist" inspirations, an example of the "wild hybridity of styles" in fashion during the period, combinations like "Egypto-Greek, Greco-Asian, Biblical Moorish."[36] Dulac's mask is the product of this combinatory poetics, but Yeats's treatment of this mask makes it still stranger (Fig. 2): it will "appear perhaps like an image seen in reverie by some Orphic worshipper." In a performance yet-to-come, this mask appears in a displaced vision. It will be seen by another, and it will be the occasion for transgression; Orpheus' crime was to look where he was not supposed to. The "image" in Yeats's theatre is associative and other than it seems.

Later in "Certain Noble Plays," Yeats more concretely indicates how he works with theatrical images, commenting on the kind of activity that finds eventual form in the contents of the National Library folders. After describing the sliding

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movements of a Japanese dancer—in a Stone Cottage demonstration—Yeats abruptly opens a new paragraph: "The Print Room of the British Museum is now closed as a war-economy, so I can only write from memory of theatrical colour-prints."[37] Following his Orphic worshipper, Yeats cites another displacement in his process. The Print Room's closure makes it impossible for Yeats to look directly at the prints, but the obstacle is an artistic opportunity, a strategic limitation characteristic of modernist poiesis.

As Rupert Richard Arrowsmith details in *Modernism and the Museum*, the British Museum was "the West's most significant hub of global aesthetic exchange during the years leading up to the First World War."[38] Pound, Yeats, Fenollosa, and Dulac were all regular visitors to Laurence Binyon's exclusive Students' Room, where they examined newly acquired prints. The fascination with these prints and with *japonisme* generally extended well beyond this small coterie. The public portion of Binyon's Print Room welcomed twenty-thousand visitors a month, and new collections at the Victoria & Albert brought in similar crowds.[39] Beyond these institutional walls, the Japanese–British exhibition of 1910 attracted more than eight million visitors, more than had visited the Great Exhibition.[40]

Inside the more exclusive reading rooms, these artists studied and riffed on the *nishiki-e* (the full-color woodblock prints), with Yeats's attention drawn especially to depictions of theatre. The museum's main acquisitions—the collections of W. C. Alexander, Arthur Morrison, and Samuel Tuke—feature many such prints, the preponderance of which are of *kabuki*. *Kabuki* was the more popular form, and its sets, costumes, and makeup better lend themselves to colorized treatment. Many prints isolate performers in iconic roles, while others capture the atmosphere of the theatrical event (Fig. 3a). These acquired collections also include "reverse shots," in which Europeans would see themselves represented from a distant point of view (Fig. 3b).

Yeats sought out the less common *noh* images among these prints, embellishing their minimalism with his own interpretive projections, for instance, "a ship . . . represented by a mere skeleton of willows or osiers painted green."[41] But his eye did not remain fixed there, and it wandered to the adjacent representations in Binyon's Students' Room and beyond. Yeats acquired books on Japanese visual arts for his own library, and in later years showcased Japanese art in his home.[42] Shotaro Oshima recalls seeing twenty *kabuki* prints along Yeats's wall, festival dolls on the mantlepiece, and Junzō Satō's gifted sword on the writing table.[43] If the theatrical prints at the British Museum were unavailable for immediate consultation, Yeats could rely on other sources as well as on the unreliable and creative work of memory.

In "Certain Noble Plays," Yeats writes what sounds like a conclusive statement regarding his newfound influence, a sentence routinely cited as evidence for his *noh* fascination: "Therefore it is natural that I go to Asia for a stage convention, for more formal faces, for a chorus that has no part in the action, and perhaps for those movements of the body copied from the marionette shows of the fourteenth century."[44] This "Asia" to which Yeats rhetorically departs is indistinct and expansive, through the essay and throughout his career. Yeats adopts something of the typical orientalist gaze, but his manifest vision remains idiosyncratic. Asia poses a "vexed and vexing question" for Yeats, Seán Golden writes, variably

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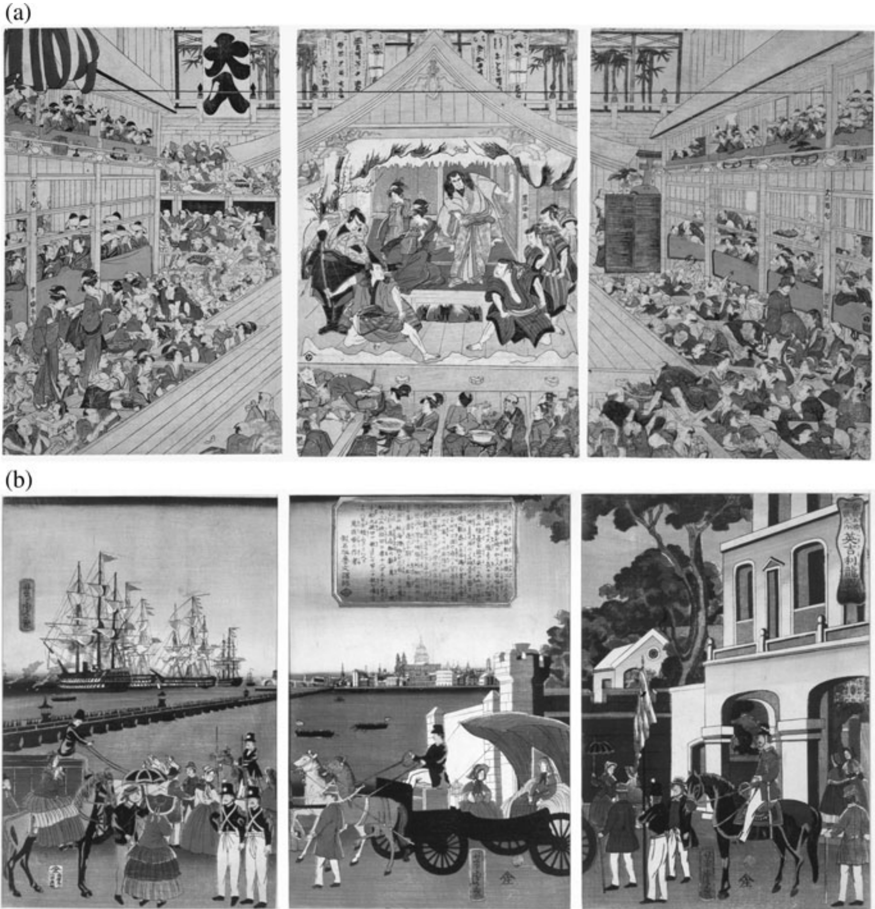

Figure 3. (a) Color woodblock print by Utagawa Toyokuni of a performance of *Shunkan futatsu omokage* (1800). *Source:* The Samuel Tuke Collection, The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum. **(b)** Woodblock print by Utagawa Yoshitora depicting London, *Irigisu Rondon-ko* (1859). *Source:* The Arthur Morrison Collection, The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

calling to mind Byzantium, Zen, or the Upanishads.[45] Reading the *Plays for Dancers*, critics often ignore this variability and fail to account for both the faults and virtues in Yeats's more expansive, associative thinking. In the paragraph preceding the touchstone line, Yeats describes going "to school in Asia" with Greek sculpture and Egyptian funerary practices; then he mixes those ideas with Tintoretto, Velazquez, and Dryden.[46] This proliferation of references signals a desperation to communicate an elusive idea. He closes the section about a journey to Asia by asking who among his readers can forget the face of the Mogul King in the Russian opera *Prince Igor*.[47]

Aside from his erratic geography, Yeats more concretely specifies that it is a "stage convention" he seeks. He does not mention *noh* within a few paragraphs,

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and the features in the quotation pertain to a number of Japanese traditions. The named "marionette shows" are *bunraku*, photographs of which appear in his personal papers. (He also mischaracterizes that *noh* borrows from *bunraku*; the reverse is more accurate.) The "more formal faces" are present in all these forms, through mask, makeup, and the puppets; and *noh*, *kabuki*, and *bunraku* all include chorus elements. The scholarly paper trail casts Yeats as a fellow writer working with Pound on *noh* translations, but the named features regard a physical and visible style, the mise-en-scène. The figurative journey to Asia, by Yeats's own accounting, has very little to do with playwriting as such. Yeats is grappling with dramaturgical ideas more easily accessed through images than in print.

Under the label of *noh*—as he understood that form through demonstrations, scripts, and memories of the print room—Yeats discovered a visual vocabulary and a dramaturgical framework that systematized many elements with which he previously had experimented. In early plays Yeats already deployed many of the features that, according to some, *noh* taught him: a symbolic mise-en-scène, transformative dances, the musicians and the chorus, and the meetings between the mortal and the immortal.[48] The noble plays of Japan did not offer Yeats a straightforward model for playwrighting; they did offer elegant synthesis, distant solidarity, and exotic prestige for his ongoing collaborative practice. Some of Yeats's new choices do derive from *noh* proper, but for his invented form Yeats moved across what Yoko Chiba calls Japan's "interconnected" arts.[49]

Masks, dances, and staging ideas tend to be only superficially glossed in printed plays, in the stage directions. In Pound's *"Noh," or Accomplishment* there is little attention to that unique register of dramatic discourse. In the Fenollosa and Hirata materials, stage directions would have been spare, as the *noh* repertory is transmitted from teacher to student, through instruction and imitation. Pound recognized the limitations of his own literary approach, as it was "impossible to give much idea of the whole of this art on paper."[50] Nevertheless, for him the project remained a publication enterprise, his plays a series of closet dramas. Unlike Yeats, he made no real efforts to organize productions, despite recognizing that *noh* was "an art of splendid posture, of dancing and chanting."[51]

For indications of that "whole of this art" Yeats looked to other sources and materials. Chiba insists that "Yeats took whatever ideas he could from Japanese art and prints, Noh and Zen," and he "took an interest in Kabuki."[52] Concentrated study of one form did not preclude his drawing upon another; it likely even encouraged it. Just as he drifted easily across a figurative map of Asia, he moved across genre, form, and medium in imagining the Japanese dramas he never saw. His eclectic, unfaithful speculations are on clear display both in his "Certain Noble Plays" essay and in his disorganized folder of "*noh*" images. Traditions such as *kabuki* and *noh* are rigidly distinct in practice, but they share similarities too. They have common plays in their repertories, they both include female impersonation, and they rely on various forms of stylization and "decorativeness."[53]

Chiba suggests that *kabuki* had an intertwined and perhaps an earlier influence on Yeats's work than did *noh*, through *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints).[54] In a lecture at Harvard University in 1911, Yeats praises the exacting realism of Japanese set interiors, presumably *kabuki*'s; here, he is not describing the abstract visual suggestions

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of the *noh* stage. His eye and mind follow larger stylized wave patterns that "represent the sea by surrounding not only the stage but the auditorium."[55] In his lively imagination, these decorative patterns go beyond the stage and they travel beyond the auditorium. Despite the expression, Yeats did not need to go to Asia for these designs, these images, and these ideas. In the early twentieth century, iconographies of Asian performance and visual art came to him, through circulating pictures and exhibitions.

The World Theatre of Images

In a 2015 address to the Modernist Studies Association, Martin Puchner argued that world literature is in fact a modernist enterprise. Despite obvious earlier contact among literary traditions, it was in the late nineteenth century that publishing, trading, and reading practices ushered in what we now call "world literature." In a related essay, Puchner demonstrates how such a vast formation became sustained and legible through steady and reciprocal (through rarely egalitarian) exchanges among mutually remote cultures.[56] The main character in Puchner's essay is the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen.

World literature and world theatre share a common period of historical emergence, some of the same underlying geopolitical conditions, and some of the same players. The fields diverge, however, in terms of the means and materials of their global transmission. The printed paper trail, so essential for world literature, tells only part of the story of world theatre's development, even for distinguished writers like Ibsen and Yeats. Theatre practitioners, as well as new cosmopolitan audiences, certainly appreciated the availability of newly translated plays, but they were more fascinated by opportunities to see new kinds of touring performance, in person and more vicariously through circulating print culture.

Theatre historians join their literary colleagues in privileging published records, but during the modernist period the paperwork was rarely what inspired theatre artists. Comparing the mutual influences of European and Asian theatre, Olga Taxidou characterizes what different parties sought from the exchange. The mutual borrowing consisted of physical staging styles more than literary values, and scripts were seldom the site of artistic excitement. European and Asian adaptations, for Taxidou, were characterized by respective outward and inward turns: European artists tended to seek "stylisation, exteriority and artificiality" from their sources, while Asian artists looked for "individuation and psychological character."[57] Even if "individuation and psychological character" could be gleaned from printed lines, Asian artists more often borrowed storytelling structures or acting conventions. This approach is similar to what Yeats *did* extract from the translated *noh* plays: he borrowed scenarios, such as a lost traveler asking his way or a site that promises immortality. But he invented his own characters, suited to an "*Irish Heroic Age*," and fashioned for them a new language.[58]

Siyuan Liu finds similar domestication and local repurposing in his study of *shingeki* in Japan and *wenmingxi* in China. The Spring Willow Society, the group of Chinese students who brought "Western" theatre to China, first staged an adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Tokyo, based on the developing styles of *shingeki*; their *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* commented on the United States'

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anti-Chinese biases.[59] Spring Willow adapted a scenario, a mode of commentary, and a staging style with little regard for authentic replication of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Modernist theatre, despite functional classifications by national tradition, was forged through this kind of cross-pollination, and there were few contexts in which dramatic scripts themselves held much sway. East Asian theatre traditions were performer-centric, and domestic and foreign scripts alike "were treated cavalierly by actors."[60] In Euro-American theatre as well, the concern for authorship was decidedly weak, as Katherine Biers and Sharon Marcus show.[61] Content, language, and interiority were produced locally, within more experimental, and often borrowed, dramatic frameworks.

With translations either arriving late to the scene or being disregarded by artists, theatre historians also turn to exceptional moments of contact between practitioners and audiences to help explain the emergence of world theatre. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a boom in regional and global touring facilitated by steamships and railroads. Transporting live performances far from a production's or a tradition's place of origin became increasingly common. Such theatrical exchange was coordinated through colonial networks, often sited at expositions and world fairs. European and American theatre historians have assembled a canon of important encounters from this traffic, in which the outward style of presentation once again takes precedence over dramatic content. In Moscow in 1935, Mei Lanfang mesmerized Bertolt Brecht, Sergei Eisenstein, and Vsevolod Meyerhold with his demonstrations of Chinese opera, and Antonin Artaud found "pure theater" in the "delightful anachronism" of Balinese dance in Paris in 1931.[62] But even these celebrated moments came relatively late, given the global repertory established decades earlier through the tours of Sarah Bernhardt, the Kawakami troupe, and others.

Mythologized encounters make for fascinating case studies, but they were belated, sporadic, and inaccessible to most audiences and artists. Alone, they do not account for the prevalent world theatrical zeitgeist of the late nineteenth century. I here contend that the image—what Yeats believed to be theatre's basic unit—played an as yet underappreciated role in the development of these transnational networks and in the formation of something like a world theatre. Aside from those rare, undoubtedly memorable performances, mutually distant performance forms were more patiently and more creatively consulted through reproduced images. Visual reproductions of *noh*, Kathakali, and *wayang kulit*—and Greek stage architecture, ballet, and commedia dell'arte—were circulating earlier, further out, and more consistently than were written documents or performance troupes. World theatre was a theatre of images *avant la lettre*.

These comparisons and timelines are inevitably broad-strokes, and the case of Japanese theatre *as* world theatre neatly bears out the dynamics and the historical sequence of print translation, performance tours, and the broader circulation of images. Like some of its European counterparts, Japan played an outsized role in this transnational traffic, due to its Meiji-era modernization—which took the form of westernization—and its later imperial expansion. The translations came relatively late, after much of the initial *japonisme* had been assimilated or had dissipated. Marie Stopes published *Plays of Old Japan* in 1913, and Pound's publication of individual plays culminated with his *"Noh," or Accomplishment* in

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1916. Arthur Waley's more comprehensive and expertly translated *The Nō Plays of Japan* was published five years later in 1921. As another point of reference, *The Tale of Genji*, Japan's monumental entry in world literature proper, would be fully translated into English in the 1930s.

The tours came earlier and made a stronger impression on European and American audiences. The peripatetic career of Yeats collaborator Michio Itō is itself, as Carrie Preston notes, "an exemplary case study in modernist transnational circuits" in all their "paradoxes and contradictions."[63] From 1912 to the 1960s, Itō danced, choreographed, and taught in Europe, the United States, and then back in Japan—making him a relative latecomer as well. The Kawakami troupe and its star, Sadayakko, were at the forefront of Japanese theatre's becoming world theatre at the turn of the century. In another instance of slippage between forms—and national traditions—Yeats miscasts these performers in his memory, writing of "Chinese dancers" performing in Paris in his poem "Nineteen Hundred Nineteen."[64] Otojirō Kawakami's theatre, even before it toured, was always-already a syncretic form of world theatre. As Ayako Kano shows, his plays drew on *kabuki* and European staging practices, and he cribbed ideas from Jules Verne and Adolphe d'Ennery's plays.[65] The Kawakami troupe were among the first to bring Japanese theatre to the United States and Europe, and they brought those theatres back to Japan. But they also showed how traces of those theatres had already arrived there, by other means.

Images depicting Japanese theatre, first woodblock prints and later photographs, were available in Europe as early as the 1860s. Major collections were in London by the early 1880s, with institutional acquisitions peaking in the 1900s.[66] These prints often featured theatrical images and particularly *kabuki*. The woodblock medium lent itself to mass reproduction, and copies moved easily, as stand-alone art and as illustrations in magazines, newspapers, and promotional materials. Laurence Senelick tellingly opens his article on theatre and photography in Europe and Russia with a detour to Japanese prints. He sites *ukiyo-e* as the "first attempts to preserve the evanescent" event of theatre.[67] These images had at least a double function in extending performance: they were mementos for in-person spectators and proxies for those who did not attend. The early international circulation of these Japanese theatrical images—half a century before Itō danced the Guardian of the Well—started an incredible exchange of theatrical ideas, methods, and motifs, inspiring practitioners who as yet lacked access to translations or performances themselves.

For Yeats, images provided a consistent way for understanding both familiar and unfamiliar theatre practices. In a 1937 introduction to his plays, he reflected on the tenacity of image-inflected stage conventions. In rehearsal, he recalls, he gave the actor Frank Fay a spear rather than a sword because "I knew that he would flourish a sword in imitation of an actor in an eighteenth-century engraving."[68] Acting styles are beholden to the power of images, and Yeats processed new performance ideas through a pictorial frame. In describing the dance demonstrations at Stone Cottage, he wrote: "I notice that their ideal of beauty, unlike that of Greece and like that of pictures from Japan and China, makes them pause at moments of muscular tension."[69] At a poised moment of tension, a pause becomes a pose, an ideal image arrested from the continuum. In this formulation, remembered pictures are

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the originals for which live theatre provides a moving copy. Yeats goes further to suggest that this sensibility is shared with characters *within* dramatic fictions. In the world of a *noh* play, he speculates, a meandering traveler is guided by the pine trees, "which he will recognise because many people have drawn them."[70] Trees become real for the characters onstage through their extratheatrical pictorial representation.

As the "Certain Noble Plays" essay nears its conclusion, Yeats recalls image after image. He suggests that the Irish and Japanese—apart from the English and European—share a kindred emotion, "always associating itself with pictures and poems." This poetic–pictorial emotion is "as deliberate as the echoing rhythm of line in Chinese and Japanese painting." Yeats asks his reader to recall ostensibly common examples: "One half remembers a thousand Japanese paintings, or whichever comes first into the memory: that screen painted by Korin, let us say, shown lately at the British Museum."[71] After Korin's abstract landscape, he calls to mind Nobuzane's seated portrait of the fourteenth-century Buddhist monk Kōbō Daishi. From the combination of these two images, he strives to name what is essential in Japanese art: "the most vivid and subtle discrimination of sense and the invention of images more powerful than sense."[72] Given the frequency of image references—which overwhelm the erstwhile discussion of *noh* plays—one wonders whether this essay is about plays at all.

Despite the essay's eccentricity, Yeats manages to convey the power and portability of the image for modernist theatre. Once in focus as a key dramatic unit, the image appears to surface throughout the period's theatrical culture. Theatre pictures were printed in newspapers, programs, and other ephemera, producing a bigger virtual audience. Allusions to image culture appear in the period's foundational treatises. August Strindberg opens his famous preface to *Miss Julie* by comparing theatre to a "Bible in pictures."[73] Émile Zola, author of "Naturalism in the Theatre," was an avid photographer and once wrote, "In my opinion you cannot say you have thoroughly seen anything until you have got a photograph of it."[74] And Brecht's epic theatre involves, as Puchner puts it, "proceeding through series of tableaux and framed stills."[75] Photographs and photographers come out onstage too: the main character in Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* is a photographer, as is a character in Jean Cocteau's *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*. From the 1920s, Erwin Piscator and others projected still and moving images onto their sets.

Beyond the cameras and cameos, the photographic image profoundly shaped audience expectations, experiences, and memories of performance. Theatre circulated in the public imagination in advertisements, distilled mementos, and other surrogates. Nineteenth-century performance and print cultures were jointly fixated on the pose, whether the flat illustration or the live tableau. Like a *noh* character seeking out the memory of a painted pine tree, audiences went to a play for a glimpse of a famous scene they already had seen. It was both a photographic memory and a script for the spectator.

Matte imashita! or, This Is What We Were Waiting to See

Images were essential for Yeats's theatrical practice, and yet he expressed suspicion about photographs.[76] About the now-legendary 1916 performances of *At the*

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Hawk's Well, Yeats wrote in a letter, "No press, no photographs in the papers, no crowd."[77] The performance of his new form, shared with select spectators, was to be protected from the looser networks of circulating images on which Yeats himself relied. He wanted a visionary theatre, a succession of pictures witnessed fleetingly or not at all. This prohibition shows, as through a negative, how powerful he took photographs to be. At the time and in retrospect, Yeats's photographic policy made the performance more special for its audience; in colloquial terms, "you really had to be there."

For a production that explicitly curtailed its own photographic representation, *At the Hawk's Well* is accompanied by an unusually prominent visual archive. Dulac's iconic design illustrations were published in *Four Plays for Dancers*. The costumed actors were photographed outdoors by the American photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn, who, as Carrie Preston indicates, was effectively another collaborator on the project.[78] His photos, especially of Itō but also of the other artists, have acquired iconic status, placing this production in modernism's visual repository. In the undocumented drawing-room performances, the actors were lit by twin lanterns, and so the Coburn photographs, taken in the garden sunlight, are another displaced vision. The actors Allan Wade and Henry Ainsley model Dulac's masks, though Itō's portraits are the more striking. In one, he wears a headdress, and makeup defines his nostrils and flares outward from his eyes, a style on display in the circulating images (Fig. 4a). His eyes do not meet the camera's lens for this close-up but are rolled upward in the style of *mie*, a *kabuki* pose (Fig. 4b). In the play most associated with Yeats's *noh* inspiration, the principal performer's visage is reminiscent of *kabuki*, aligned with the playwright's and the designer's visual research (Fig. 5).

At the Hawk's Well has had an autonomous visual afterlife. The contemporary British artist Simon Starling in the mid-2010s recreated the masks and costumes as part of a gallery show held in Yokohama, New York, and Basel. The New York show was subtitled "After W. B. Yeats' Noh Reincarnations." In writing about the minimal properties in "Certain Noble Plays," Yeats predicted this kind of extra-theatrical legacy. He remarks on the portability and visual appeal of *At the Hawk's Well*, "its few properties can be packed up in a box or hung upon walls where they will be fine ornaments."[79] Despite the photographic prohibition, Yeats's most important play is memorialized and updated through the circulation of related objects and images, and further images of its objects. These pictures do not capture the staged action itself, but they extend the long tradition of performance ideas traveling to other artists and audiences through pictures. They are a record of a past event, and they inspire future ones.

Theatrical pictorialism stretches before and after Yeats's historical moment. But as images were printed and circulated en masse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they became a novel way for audiences to participate virtually—at once more distantly and more personally—in theatre culture. As Penny Farfan and Sharon Marcus show, the circulation of actor portraits, commemorative cards, and illustrated advertisements was fundamental to modern theatre, modern celebrity, and modern culture at large.[80] Amateur collectors were not passive consumers, and many became—not unlike Yeats—the archivists, collagists, and page-setters of their own theatre scrapbooks. Through this print culture, Sarah Bernhardt was a

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(a)

(b)

Figure 4. **(a)** *Kabuki* makeup illustration in the Edward Gordon Craig Collection. *Source:* gallica.bnf.fr, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). **(b)** Color woodblock print by Toyohara Kunichika depicting Nakamura Shikan IV (1869). *Source:* The Arthur Morrison Collection, The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

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Figure 5. Michio Itō as the Guardian of the Well from W. B. Yeats's play *At the Hawk's Well*. *Photo:* Alvin Langdon Coburn. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum.

household name and image for far more people than those who saw her in person. If someone did see her perform in Guayaquil, New Orleans, or Sydney, they likely would have already seen images of her signature scenes. Seeing her reassume one such pose live offered a thrilling sense of recognition. This modern theatre experience, enabled by the precirculation of theatrical images, provides a bluntly literal gloss on Herbert Blau's characterization of theatre's uncanny liveness: "*we are seeing what we saw before*."[81]

The transnational movements of print and photographic archives were extensive and unpredictable. The *kabuki* actor Matsumoto Kōshirō VII did not tour like Bernhardt or Kawakami, and yet his likeness appeared in Europe nonetheless. Yeats's collaborator Edward Gordon Craig had a color woodblock print of this actor in his personal collection, a print now held at France's national library. One of the most recognizable images in the Yeats papers at the National Library of Ireland is a photograph of the same actor performing in *Kanjinchō*. In *kabuki* —the form most documented in Yeats's private collection—there is a codified way for appreciating stage images inside and outside the theatre. In the lobbies

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of contemporary *kabuki* productions, audience members can purchase souvenir photographs of performers in their iconic poses. These pictures continue in the tradition of the woodblock prints that circled the world in the nineteenth century and the photographs that followed in the twentieth. These are material reminders that theatre is made out of a succession of pictures.

Kabuki invites image dissemination more than *noh* does, and its iconography informed Yeats's sense for Japanese plays of all kinds. Within a *kabuki* auditorium, images are realized onstage and emphatically cheered; this atmosphere is a far cry from *noh*'s comparative austerity. Devoted fans, the *omuko-san* ("the people beyond"), vocally punctuate live performances, isolating important moments. The *omuko-san* shout signature phrases at particularly heightened moments, often for a star's entrance or exit or for an emphatically held pose. They have a number of expressions in their repertoire—saying the performer's name, for example, or offering praise. They shout "matte imashita!" meaning "I was waiting for that!" or something like "this is what we came to see!"[82] In this long established, interactive process, the audience marks, quite literally, the moments when their visual expectations have been realized, when they see what they have seen before. This convention affirms an ongoing conversation between audiences and artists that is facilitated by images and that carries beyond any single performance. The exclamations score the moments when a remembered vision, called before the mind's eye, finds fleeting form in the theatre.

Notes

1 W. B. Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" [1915], in *Essays and Introductions* (New York: Collier, 1968), 221–37, at 221.

2 Yeats published Pound's translations as *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* through his sister's Cuala Press (Churchtown, Dundrum, 1916) in Ireland. The plays saw wider circulation (without Yeats's introduction) as Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, *"Noh," or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan* (London: Macmillan, 1916). The plays finally were reunited with Yeats's introduction in Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa, *The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan* (New York: New Directions, 1959).

3 Peter Kenny, comp., "Manuscript Material from the Library of W. B. Yeats and George Yeats" (Collection List No. 96), National Library of Ireland, Dublin. Folder MS 40,585 includes more postcards, MS 40,586 more photographs. A few captions provide some basic context. The *noh* play *Ataka* and the related *kabuki* adaptation *Kanjinchō* are both photographically represented; among the *kabuki* actors pictured are Matsumoto Kōshirō VII and Nakamura Ganjirō I.

4 Chekhov was important for modern Japanese theatre, with translations of his plays as early as 1903 and performances starting in 1909. See Yasushi Nagata, "The Japanization of Chekhov: Contemporary Japanese Adaptation of *Three Sisters,*" in *Adapting Chekhov: The Text and Its Mutations*, ed. J. Douglas Clayton and Yana Meerzon (New York: Routledge, 2013), 261–73.

5 Craig Latrell, "After Appropriation," *The Drama Review* 44.4 (2000): 44–55. Euro-American critics' lament about the "pillaging" of non-Western forms (44), Latrell shows, comes with a side-effect condescension toward the traditions they (or we) try to defend. In seeking to protect the other, that is, scholars fix those traditions as static and historical, casting their practitioners as guardians of a legacy. Latrell points out that "we deny to other cultures the same sophistication and multiplicity of response to 'foreign' influences that we grant to ourselves" (45). The broad-strokes assumption that these transactions are unidirectional, imperial, and exploitative is also ill-fitting for the case of Yeats in the 1910s, as he was a colonial subject adapting the art of imperial Japan.

6 Yoko Chiba, "W. B. Yeats and Noh: From Japonisme to Zen," Ph.D. diss. (University of Toronto, 1988); Shotaro Yamauchi, "Yeats and Hōjin Yano: Yeats's Japan, Yano's Japan," *Journal of Irish Studies* 33 (2018): 104–10.

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7 Yeats, *Four Plays for Dancers* (London: Macmillan, 1921), 3.
8 Katherine Biers and Sharon Marcus's special issue on "World Literature and Global Performance" (*Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 41.2 [2014]) charts this development in the late nineteenth century, an account updated for the twentieth in "Modernism on the World Stage," *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus 4.3 (2019), ed. Rebecca Kastleman, Kevin Riordan, and Claire Warden.
9 Peter Buse, "Stage Remains: Theatre Criticism and the Photographic Archive," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 12.1 (1997): 77–96, at 77.
10 Yeats, "At Stratford-on-Avon," *Essays and Introductions* (New York: Collier, 1968), 96–110, at 99.
11 Ibid., 97.
12 Ibid., 99.
13 Ibid., 100.
14 Quoted in Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* ([1983] Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 42.
15 In 1977, Bonnie Marranca gathered contemporary American avant-garde theatre—particularly the work of Robert Wilson, Lee Breuer, and Richard Foreman—under the banner of "the theatre of images." Bonnie Marranca, ed., *The Theatre of Images* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977).
16 David Mayer, "'Quote the Words to Prompt the Attitudes': The Victorian Performer, the Photographer, and the Photograph," *Theatre Survey* 43.2 (2002): 223–51. Mayer provides crucial historical guidance for reading images of the theatrical past, including the fact that prior to the twentieth century photographs would have been staged in studios rather than theatres (227).
17 Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 136. David Wiles suggests that a given play can be condensed into such a silhouette, "this shape will be the essence of what it has to say." See Wiles, "Seeing Is Believing: The Historian's Use of Images," in *Representing the Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, ed. Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 2010), 215–39, at 235.
18 There is a 1997 special issue of *Theatre Research International* on "Theatre Iconography" (22.3; ed. Robert L. Erenstein) and a 2017 special issue of *Theatre Journal* on "Theatre, Performance, and Visual Images" (69.4; ed. Joanne Tompkins).
19 Joel Anderson, *Theatre & Photography* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
20 Yeats, "The Circus Animals' Desertion," in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, rev. 2d ed., ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 1996), 347.
21 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 231.
22 J. L. Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice,* vol. 2: *Symbolism, Surrealism and the Absurd* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 62.
23 Yeats, *The Shadowy Waters*, in *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats*, new ed., *With Five Additional Plays* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 95–110, at 99.
24 Ibid., 107.
25 A. Norman Jeffares and A. S. Knowland, *A Commentary on the Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 58–9.
26 Yeats, *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 425.
27 Yeats, *Four Plays*, 4, 29.
28 Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days,* in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber & Faber, 1986), 135–68, at 164. Beckett famously praised Yeats's plays while slighting Shaw's, remarking "that he would give the 'whole unupsettable applecart' of George Bernard Shaw's dramatic canon 'for a sup of the Hawk's Well'"; see Terence Brown, *The Life of W. B. Yeats: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 382.
29 Yeats, *Collected Plays*, 438–9.
30 Quoted in David Ewick, "Strange Attractors: Ezra Pound and the Invention of Japan, II." 英米文学評論 *Essays and Studies in British and American Literature* 64 (2018), 1–40, at 5–6; cf. Ezra Pound, "Affirmations VI: The 'Image' and the Japanese Classical Stage," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 53.1 (1991): 17–23, at 17.
31 James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats & Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 202.
32 F. T. Marinetti, "The Joy of Mechanical Force," in *The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds on Modern Literature*, ed. Richard Ellman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 431–5, at 431.
33 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 221.

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34 Carrie J. Preston, "Introduction: Modernism and Dance," *Modernist Cultures* 9.1 (2014): 1–6, at 1.
35 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 221.
36 Emily Apter, "Acting Out Orientalism: Sapphic Theatricality in Turn-of-the-Century Paris," in *Performance and Cultural Politics*, ed. Elin Diamond (London: Routledge, 1996), 15–34, at 24.
37 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 231.
38 Rupert Richard Arrowsmith, *Modernism and the Museum: Asian, African, and Pacific Art and the London Avant-Garde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.
39 Ibid., 105.
40 Ibid., 138.
41 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 231.
42 Wayne Chapman, "The W. B. and George Yeats Library: A Short-Title Catalog" (2006), https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cudp_bibliography/1/, accessed 24 June 2021. Yeats had comparatively little material on Japanese theatre in his private collection but volumes on other art forms. Works published prior to 1915—early enough for Yeats to consult them for the *Plays for Dancers*—include a catalog of ceramics, *Tales of Old Japan*, *The Miscellany of a Japanese Priest*, and several of Yone Noguchi's books.
43 Shotaro Oshima, "An Interview with W. B. Yeats," in *W. B. Yeats: Interviews and Recollections,* 2 vols., ed. E. H. Mikhail (London: Macmillan, 1977), 2: 233–8, at 234.
44 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 226.
45 Seán Golden, "Introduction," in *Yeats and Asia: Overviews and Case Studies*, ed. Seán Golden (Cork: Cork University Press, 2020), 1–18, at 1.
46 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 225.
47 Ibid., 226–7.
48 Longenbach, *Stone Cottage,* 197; David Ewick, "W. B. Yeats, Certain Noble Plays, and Japan," in *Japonisme, Orientalism, Modernism: A Bibliography of Japan in English-Language Verse of the Early 20th Century* (2003), http://themargins.net/bib/B/BL/00blintro.html, accessed 29 April 2021.
49 Chiba, "W. B. Yeats and Noh," xxxi.
50 Fenollosa and Pound, *"Noh," or Accomplishment,* 5. (The cover of the [retitled] Dover reprint edition features a *kabuki* print, in another instance of the general confusion: Fenollosa and Pound, *The Noh Theatre of Japan* [New York: Dover, 2003]).
51 Ibid.
52 Chiba, "W. B. Yeats and Noh," 246.
53 Ibid., 73, 111, 244.
54 Ibid., 149. In a more speculative essay Monika Fludernik shows how Yeats's early plays actually "were much closer to the Kabuki theatre than to classical Nô," despite his having had little exposure to them at the time. See Fludernik, "*Ichinotani Futaba Gun'ki*: A Kabuki Parallel to *On Baile's Strand*," *The Harp* 6 (1991): 6–26, at 8.
55 Yeats, "The Theater of Beauty," *Harper's Weekly* 55 (11 November 1911), 11.
56 Martin Puchner, "Goethe, Marx, Ibsen and the Creation of a World Literature," *Nordlit,* no. 34 (2015): 1–14.
57 Olga Taxidou, *Modernism and Performance: Jarry to Brecht* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 128.
58 Yeats, *Four Plays*, 3.
59 Siyuan Liu, "Adaptation as Appropriation: Staging Western Drama in the First Western-Style Theatres in Japan and China," *Theatre Journal* 59.3 (2007): 411–29, at 415.
60 Ibid., 416.
61 Katherine Biers and Sharon Marcus, "Introduction: World Literature and Global Performance," *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 41.2 (2014): 1–12, at 7.
62 Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 53, 64.
63 Carrie J. Preston, *Learning to Kneel: Noh, Modernism, and Journeys in Teaching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 104.
64 Chiba, "W. B. Yeats and Noh," 63.
65 Ayako Kano, *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan: Theater, Gender, and Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 63–5. Arrowsmith more broadly stresses that Europeans were latecomers in adapting

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Asian works, with artists in China, Korea, and Japan looking to Europe "since the beginning of the nineteenth century" (*Modernism and the Museum,* 3).

66 Michelle Ying Ling Huang, "The Influence of Japanese Expertise on the British Reception of Chinese Painting," in *Beyond Boundaries: East and West Cross-Cultural Encounters*, ed. Michelle Ying Ling Huang (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2012), 88–111.

67 Laurence Senelick, "Early Photographic Attempts to Record Performance Sequence," *Theatre Research International* 22.3 (1997): 255–64, at 255.

68 Yeats, "An Introduction to My Plays," *Essays and Introductions* (New York: Collier, 1968), 527–30, at 528.

69 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 230–1.

70 Ibid., 233.

71 Ibid., 233–4.

72 Ibid., 235.

73 August Strindberg, *"Miss Julie" and Other Plays*, trans. Michael Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56.

74 Zola quoted in Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography,* rev. and enlarged ed. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964), 94.

75 Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, & Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 151.

76 Min Tian, *The Use of Asian Theatre for Modern Western Theatre: The Displaced Mirror* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 78, 81.

77 Sylvia C. Ellis, *The Plays of W. B. Yeats: Yeats and the Dancer* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 86.

78 Preston, *Learning to Kneel*, 114.

79 Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays," 222.

80 Penny Farfan, "'The Picture Postcard is a sign of the times': Theatre Postcards and Modernism," *Theatre History Studies* 32 (2012): 93–119; Sharon Marcus, "The Theatrical Scrapbook," *Theatre Survey* 54.2 (2013): 283–307.

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82 Raju Thakrar, "Playing the 'Hooligan': Re-Calling Kabuki's Earthy Roots," *Japan Times,* 17 June 2007, www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2007/06/17/general/playing-the-hooligan/#.WpUbUmaB27o, accessed 24 June 2021.

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