

Introduction

This thesis discusses the theatrical presentation of translated texts of Australian plays in Japan. I have produced and published Japanese translations of Australian plays since the beginning of the 1990s. Especially since 1995, when my translation of John Romeril's *The Floating World* was produced, I have collaborated with theatre companies and directors.¹ My purpose was to change and to enlarge the partial (mis)representations of Australia in Japan by introducing Australian theatre to Japan. In order to achieve this purpose, as well as undertaking translations of Australian plays, I have written and published a book on the history of Australian film in Japanese. When I started translating Australian plays, most Japanese people did not even know that theatre and film existed in Australia. When they saw Australian plays and films for the first time, they would certainly have been surprised. So, why did many Japanese never dream that culture and arts existed in Australia? In order to answer this question, in the first half of the Introduction, I will clarify how Japan has regarded Australia by investigating the characteristics of representations of Australia in Japan. When my translations have been presented by theatre companies, I have often found responses from the Japanese audiences which I had never expected when I translated the plays. That was probably because the presentation of translated texts of Australian plays has multifaceted significance. This not only reflects the cultural context of 'translated plays' as a genre, but in some cases, also reflects other elements specific to Japanese life and society. In the latter half of the Introduction, I will further explain the reason why the presentation of translated texts of Australian plays has such a multifaceted significance in Japan.

Representations of Australia in Japan

First, I will clarify how Japan has regarded Australia. One characteristic of representations of Australia in Japan is that they are excessively partial. Compared with representations of the United States and some European and East-Asian countries, information on which is painstakingly provided through Japanese media, representations of Australia in Japan are rather different from the reality. For a country which has active exchanges with Japan, Japanese indifference and misunderstanding of Australia are unusual. This is what I also

¹ See Appendix 1.

have experienced with my academic and theatrical activities about Australia. Japanese people receive information about Australia and its culture in many ways. Various forms of information about Australia including TV commercials, travel guides, academic books, etc are available in Japan. Through these media, what kind of images of Australia have the Japanese created? How are they partial and fictional? I will survey this by referring to the works of Australian and Japanese researchers.

Alison Broinowski, a former Australian diplomat and the author of several books dealing with Australia-Asia relations, discusses Asian countries' opinions of Australia in her new book *About Face: Asian Accounts of Australia*.² In a chapter of this book, Broinowski surveys the history of Australia-Japan relations. She also examines the transition of representations of Australia in Japan from the latter half of the 19th century (when the feudal era ended and the modern Japanese nation started) until today. From the end of Japan's isolation policy in 1868 to the beginning of the 20th century, a diverse group of Japanese including miners, divers and prostitutes migrated to Australia. In this period, Australia developed exclusion policies towards Asian migrants including the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901. In 1919, at the drafting convention of the League of Nations in Paris, Japan insisted on including a proclamation of the abolition of racial discrimination. However, Australian Prime Minister Hughes raised strenuous objection to Japan's proposal. This was a symbolic event which (according to Broinowski) determined Japan's image of Australia as 'White Australia', a racist country.³ The image of White Australia would linger in Japan for a long time. According to Broinowski, even after abolition of the White Australia policy, there were descriptions of the White Australia policy in Japanese school textbooks, and despite protests from Australian officials, such descriptions remained in textbooks for a long time.⁴ Broinowski gives many examples of stereotype and prejudice towards Australia in Japan. For example, Australian chefs were refused working visas by Japanese officials in 1994, the reason being that "Australia having no cuisine, they had nothing special to offer Japan".⁵ Another example Broinowski gives is that, when a devastating bushfire occurred in New South Wales in 2002, a Sydney correspondent with Japan's leading newspaper was told to "report on the

² Alison Broinowski, *About Face: Asian Accounts of Australia*. Melbourne, Scribe Publications, 2003.

³ Ibid., p.70.

⁴ Ibid., p.83.

⁵ Ibid., p.87.

fate of kangaroos and koalas...not on people or property".⁶ By giving these examples, Broinowski points out that, in representations of Australia in Japan, Australia is pictured as a cultureless place, and Australians are represented by koalas and kangaroos.

So how have Japanese mass media represented Australia? Tada Masayo, a Japanese researcher, analysed representations of Australia in articles from 1970 to 1996 in *Asahi Shinbun*, one of the leading newspapers in Japan, using a media studies quantitative methodology. According to Tada, the quantity of articles on Australia shows little change during the first 27 years, but in the 1990s articles became fewer than in the 1970s and 1980s. Tada writes that her research proves that Japanese newspapers rarely report on Australia, and representations of Australia in *Asahi Shinbun* suggest both a lack of information and indifference about Australia in Japan. According to Tada, the amount of advertisements for Australian tourism in the newspaper drastically expanded in the 1980s especially, and such advertisements were out of proportion to the quantity of news and information articles about Australia. In 1984, when koalas were exported from Australia to Japan for the first time, the Australian Tourist Commission ran a campaign to encourage Australian tourism using images of koalas. As a result, stereotypical images like vast landscapes and wilderness were reinforced. Since the 1990s, to correct the images, Australia has run a campaign to introduce a new image of Australia as an industrialised and high-tech country. However, Tada suggests that the image of the koala as an icon of Australia is still dominant even in the 1990s.⁷

Japanese scholar Suzuki Seiji administered questionnaires to Japanese who had been longterm residents of Australia, to survey Japanese images of Australia at the end of the 1980s.⁸ Suzuki reached the conclusion that Japanese who had received higher education in Japan and who were playing important roles in Australia-Japan collaborative business activities had unfriendly attitudes towards Australia and the Australians. For example, they often described Australia as rural, and the Australians as simple. It is possible to think that

⁶ Ibid., p.88.

⁷ Tada Masayo, "Asahi shinbun ni okeru ôsutoraria no hyôshô: 1970 nen kara 1996 nen ni kakete" (Representations of Australia in the Asahi shinbun 1970-1996) *The Otemon Bulletin for the Australian Studies*, Vol.24, 1998. pp.239-256.

⁸ Suzuki Seiji, *Nihonjin no ôsutoraria kan*. (Images of Australia in Japan) Osaka, Sôgensha, 1988.

“simple” and “rural” carry positive nuances close to honesty, frankness, egalitarianism, trustfulness, etc. However, Suzuki suggests that “simple” and “rural” also mean the opposite of “sophistication” and include a negative understanding of Australia. Suzuki argues that these negative images indicate that Japanese underestimation of Australia and the Australians is due to a Japanese feeling of superiority towards Australia. Suzuki cites as evidence that the Japanese feel superiority to Australia the prevalence of the following views of Australia:

- Without Japan as a customer, Australians are unlikely to be able to run their businesses.
- Australia has a short history which dates back only about two hundred years, and Australian culture is just a copy of the British.
- Australia has a past as a British colony, and, besides, as a convict colony.
- Australia is an unsophisticated country without anything Japan can learn from, while European countries and the United States are sophisticated countries whose examples Japan should follow.⁹

Suzuki's research was conducted in the latter half of the 1980s, while Tada's research is based on newspaper articles from 1970 to the latter half of the 1990s. Broinowski published her work in 2003. Each work was done in a different period, but they all suggest that representations of Australia in Japan have had significant problems for a long time.

Although Tada and Suzuki do not deal with it in their research, perhaps the most important element which representations of Australia in Japan lack is the memory of the war between Japan and Australia. In Japan, only a few people know Australian symbolic icons of the war against Japan such as the Kokoda Trail and the Thai-Burma Railway and POW camps. In Australia, representations of Japan are often related to the war, and they are circulated through various forms of media. In the case of theatre, there are significant Australian plays dealing with Japan and the Japanese which are related to the war. John Romeril's *The Floating World* (1974) is a play about an ex-Australian serviceman who awakens the memory of Japanese brutality he experienced as a POW during his voyage to Japan thirty years after the war. Nigel Triffit's *The Fall of Singapore* (1987) is a spectacular work describing Japanese atrocities after the fall of Singapore. Therese Radic's *The Emperor Regrets* (1992) is a play which

⁹ Ibid., pp.132-140.

accuses Emperor Hirohito of responsibility for the Japanese war by making him confront the nightmares of the war when he is dying. John Misto's *The Shoe-Horn Sonata* (1996) is a story about two ex-nurses who remember hard experiences at the Japanese detention camp when they are reunited in the present.

We should notice that some Australian plays compare Japanese economic expansion in the present with Japanese military expansion in the past. For example, in *The Floating World*, 'the Dippy Birds' symbolise Japanese products overflowing into Australia. The birds overlap with the nightmares of the Japanese atrocities and torture the protagonist. Jill Shearer's *Shimada* (1986) is a story about the relationship between a Japanese businessman who came to take over a rural car factory and an ex-POW Australian who finds the image of brutal Japanese soldiers in the Japanese businessman. In *The Emperor Regrets*, there appears a strange form of sea creature found by the Emperor who was known as a biologist. It is clear that the sea creature was created as an image of Japan, and the creature's characteristic of increasing in size at an abnormal rate is a metaphor for the attempted invasions of Australia both by the past Japanese militarism and the present Japanese economy. These plays show that the Japanese economic penetration into Australia is interpreted by Australians as a menace, which is related to the memory of Japanese imperialism during World War II. On the other hand the Japanese have been completely indifferent towards these Australian feelings towards the Japanese economic expansion of the 1980s, although the Japan-US trade friction became a matter of national concern in the same period.

In World War II, Australia was the only country among the Allies whose mainland was attacked by the Japanese. Furthermore, it is said that Australia is the only country which has not received any official apology for the atrocities during the war from Japan. The Japanese have lost even the memory that they fought against the Australians in World War II. Soon after the war, because Australia most firmly insisted on putting the Emperor on trial the most firmly of the allied countries, Australia became one of the most hated countries in Japan, although nowadays no Japanese remember that either. For most Japanese, Australia is just an attractive destination for honeymoon tours and working holidays. In this way, representations of Australia in Japan, which are excessively superficial and fictional, have the potential to cause difficulties in various forms of exchange between Australia and Japan.

Suzuki suggests that the representations of Australia by the Japanese which he dealt with in his research reflect the fact that Japanese have a sense of superiority over Australia and the Australians. He suggests that for this reason that representations of Australia in Japan could serve as a test-case for the nature of the Japanese self-image. So, what kind of Japanese attitudes can we read in these representations of Australia which I have mentioned? I will discuss this under three aspects as follows:

1. The Japanese attitude towards the West
2. The Japanese attitude towards the idea of nation and national identity
3. The Japanese attitude towards race

The Japanese attitude towards the West has a history where Japan has regarded the West as a standard, and imitated it in the process of modernisation since the latter half of the 19th century. There has been a dominant idea in Japan that the West always has something Japan can learn from. In the representation of Australia as a copy of Britain in Suzuki's research, we can see the Japanese recognise that Australia is a part of the West. By the latter half of the 1980s, however, when the Japanese economy reached its peak, Japan had already far surpassed Australia in the size of its economy. When the Japanese contemplate this fact, they not only gain a sense of superiority over Australia, but also experience a sense of superiority over the West in general. This reflects a Japanese desire to surpass the West as a teacher someday. To read the Japanese sense of superiority as a representation is to investigate the complexity of the Japanese attitude towards the West.

In speaking of the Japanese attitude towards the idea of nation and national identity, I mean to refer to Japan's self-concept as a nation. The idea of Japan as a racially homogeneous nation, which has defended its independence for about two thousand years, and has had a rich culture and long tradition, is also the Japanese standard by which to judge other nations. Therefore, while Western nations which have rich and long traditions, and in which the nation is regarded as ethnically homogeneous (although usually that is just an illusion or an obsession) are regarded as superior, Australia is represented as an ex-convict colony and is regarded as an inferior, cultureless nation. On the assumption that Australia is cultureless but rich in resources which Japan needs, Japan has increased its economic penetration into Australia. This attitude is close to the British colonisation of Australia on the assumption that Australia was *Terra*

Nullius. An unconscious desire of colonisation lies behind the Japanese understanding of Australia as a nation lacking culture, history and tradition.

The Japanese attitude towards race is reflected in the fact that, as Broinowski suggests, representations of Australia in terms of the persistence of the White Australia policy and discrimination against Aborigines have to some extent lead to an image of Australia as a generally racist country. There has been discrimination against minorities such as Ainu, Okinawans, and Koreans in Japan too. While neglecting to notice their own discrimination, Japan has continually represented Australia and the Australians as racist. This reflects a Japanese desire to counter racial discrimination against the Japanese by the West and a Western identification of the Japanese as uncivilised. This has urged the Japanese to create their self-concept by creating minorities inferior to the Japanese since the beginning of Japanese modernisation (I will discuss this point further in Chapter 6). It is quite likely that the Japanese preconceived idea that Australia does not have a significant theatre culture is created from some of these Japanese attitudes.

Translation and presentation of Australian plays

Next, I would like to clarify how the translation and presentation of Australian plays in Japan is similar to and different from more conventional ways of introducing information on Australia into Japan. First, I will point out that both the presentation of Australian plays and the other forms of provision of information are affected by Japanese attitudes towards Australia. Let us take a case of imported Australian art and culture for example. The importation from Australia to Japan obviously reflects Japanese attitudes towards Australia as I will discuss in this section. Sometimes an Australian desire to manipulate the Japanese understanding of Australia is also reflected in the particular representations chosen. In this case too, the decision about which Australian cultural products should be imported to Japan often depends on the Japanese understanding of Australia. Tours of Australian performing arts, exhibitions of Australian fine arts, and the showing of Australian films are good examples. Such tours and exhibitions in Japan are often included in festivals planned and promoted by the Australian government. In 1993, a festival called *Celebrate Australia* was held in Japan. The project was planned by the Australia Abroad Council and carried out by the Australian Embassy in Japan. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating announced the project in Tokyo in 1992. The planning

committee included thirty Australian federal and state government officials including the Australian ambassador to Japan, and Japanese business managers belonging to the Japan Federation of Economic Organisation. The aim of the Australian government in this project was to change Japan's fixed image of Australia as solely a place of "great natural beauty, a paradise for tourism, and rich natural resources" and "to introduce to the Japanese a new image of the nation, which has a New World culture: sophisticated arts, business, education and high technology".¹⁰ In this festival, there were 33 events in the area of performing arts, fine arts and crafts. In addition, there were 46 business events, featuring information about matters such as Aussie beef, wine, flowers, investments, locations for film-making, and education. Japanese researcher Tôyama Yoshihiro writes that the aim of the festival was to open up and promote export markets for tourism, education and culture, high technology, investments, and various services.¹¹ Eleven years later, in 2003, a festival called *Ancient Future: 2003 Australian Art Festival* was held in Japan. This time, business events were deleted and the festival concentrated on Australian art. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said:

Our cultural program projects Australia as a democratic, tolerant, vibrant, innovative and creative nation. The *Ancient Future* program planned for Japan reinforces this view in another culturally rich country.¹²

The media release for the festival included catchphrases like "not only koalas and Aussie beef" and an explanation saying "(the programs of the festival) will give Japan a taste of Australia that goes beyond beaches and koalas".¹³ The use of these key phrases reflects Australian desire to change the stereotypical image of Australia in Japan by providing new representations of Australia.

¹⁰ Tôyama Yoshihiro, "Sereburêto ôsutoraria no kaisai to igi: ôsutoraria rikai no sokushin ka ichi dai kankô kyanpên ka" (The staging and the meaning of *Celebrate Australia*: to develop an understanding of Australia among Japanese or to promote Japanese tourism in Australia?) *The Otemon Bulletin for the Australian Studies* 19, 1993, pp.3-17.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Alexander Downer, "Ancient Future Showcases Australian Culture in Japan." The Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia. 1 July 2003.[On-line] Available WWW: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2003/fa080_03.html

¹³ "Australian artists feature at leading Japan venues and festivals." Australia Council for the Arts. 14 July 2003.[On-line] Available WWW: http://www.ozco.gov.au/issues/releases/2003/rel03_19.htm

The Japanese attitudes we are discussing are reinforced even by some representations of Australia by Australians themselves, for instance in films circulating in Japan. In Japan, Australian film has been represented by *Mad Max* (1979) and *Crocodile Dundee* (1986) for a long time. Few Australian films except these were released in Japan during the 1970s and 1980s. Since the 1990s, Australian films such as *The Piano* (1993), *Shine* (1996), *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (1994) and *Babe* (1995) have received international acclaim at the Academy Awards and Cannes International Film Festivals. This has fostered the recognition of Australian films in Japan to some extent. However, some Japanese film distributors still hesitate to advertise Australian films as 'Australian'. I was told by a Japanese film distributor that in distributing an Australian film (*Angel Baby*, 1995), they worried that if promoted as an Australian film it would lack the ability to pull in audiences in Japan.¹⁴ This reflects Japan's preference for American and European films (even Asian films have already received a reputation in Japan). The Australian films *Romper Stomper* (1992) and *The Sum of Us* (1994), where Russell Crowe plays the lead, have not been shown in cinemas, but their videos were released in Japan. I was told by the video company who released these films that they did so in expectation of Russell Crowe's future popularity in Japan after he received a reputation in Hollywood.¹⁵ From these examples we can see that a reputation in America and Europe virtually decides which Australian films should be shown in Japan.¹⁶

Representations of Australia in publicity for Australian tourism have provided influential concepts of 'Australianess' for the Japanese imagination. These representations are circulated through TV commercials made by the Australian Tourism Commission. In the 1980s, TV commercials were made which featured Yothu Yindi's music and pictures of Australian nature and traditional Aboriginal dances. There were very few commercials which referred to non-Aboriginal Australians' life and culture except for images of the Sydney Opera House. This trend has continued until the present, but there is also a parallel new trend, in which advertisements for Australian tourism have started to feature the faces of

¹⁴ Personal conversation with a staff of a Japanese film distributor Only Hearts. April 1997.

¹⁵ Personal conversation with a staff of a Japanese video company Creative AXA. June 1998.

¹⁶ Recently, there is a movement (quite a small movement) to plan special programs to show Australian films in some regional film festivals in Japan. This movement reflects how some Japanese have started to recognise Australian films as an independent category similar to European or Asian films.

Australians instead of koalas and kangaroos for the first time. In 2002, the Australian Tourism Commission appointed Ian Thorpe as the goodwill ambassador for tourism. Ian Thorpe visits Japan frequently for international championships and has become virtually the first Australian everyone knows in Japan (to be correct, the first famous Australian the Japanese actually recognise as an Australian). He is famous for his popularity among young Japanese women. This may be why he was appointed as the tourism ambassador, with the purpose of cultivating a market targeting Japanese women. However, while Ian Thorpe can be seen as part of new trend, representations featuring Australia's natural beauty are also still strong. The Australian Tourism Commission launched a campaign entitled "Making Ian Thorpe strong. Australia, a continent for refreshing" in 2003. The advertising statement of the campaign urges Japanese that, as Japanese society is filled with stress due to economic depression, they should take advantage of a refreshing experience in Australia which has great natural features.¹⁷

In this way, even the selection of Australian cultural products exported to Japan reflects the dominant Japanese attitudes. That is because, by importing such products, the promoters attempt either to reinforce Australianess as the Japanese imagine it, or to change it. The production of a translated play works in a similar way to these cultural products. As a translator, I have often chosen a play to be translated in order to change the fixed image of Australia in Japan. Whether the content of the play can attract Japanese audiences' interests is also an important criterion of the selection. In some cases, Japanese theatre companies want to produce an Australian play because it was produced in America or Britain (for example the cases of Joanna Murray-Smith's *Honour* and Andrew Bovell's *Speaking in Tongues*). On the other hand, there are cases where an Australian playwright or an Australian theatre company give us suggestions about the selection of a play.

Next, I will clarify the position translation of Australian plays occupies in the history of Japanese academia. In Japan, translations of foreign literary texts are an important element of studies of foreign culture. This is related deeply to the national policy of promoting absorption of Western culture since 1868 when Japan started its modernisation. Today, most established departments of literature in

¹⁷ News Release. Australian Tourist Commission. 21 May 2003. [On-line] Available WWW: <http://www.jata-net.or.jp/member/newsletter/pdf/O02/030604.pdf>

Japanese universities have English, French, German and Russian disciplines. These disciplines correspond to the Western imperialist countries which were powerful in the latter half of the 19th century when Japan started its modernisation. Translation of Western literature has been conducted in these disciplines. As for English literature, large numbers of those works regarded as the canon of English literature have been translated into Japanese. Most Japanese scholars of English have never considered that Australian literature should be included in the canon. Therefore, Australian literature has not been studied and translated systematically unlike British, American, and Irish literature. In Japan, traditionally, Australian literature has been studied by researchers who belong not to English departments, but to languages and liberal arts departments for students majoring in law, political science, commerce, technology, medicine etc. These researchers have studied and translated works of Australian writers such as Patrick White and Henry Lawson, according to their personal interests, but their achievements have never affected the English discipline in Japan. Since the discipline of Australian literature has never been established, their studies and translations of Australian literature could not be but sporadic. The point is that translation of Australian literature has been marginalised. In addition, the fact that none had translated Australian plays before I started doing so indicates that translation of Australian plays is even more marginalised than that of Australian novels and poems.

Here we must not forget that studies of Australia are generally marginalised in Japan's academic world. Let us take an example. A book entitled *Grôbarizeishon no nakano Ajia: karuchuraru sutadîzu no genzai* (Asia in Globalisation: the present of Cultural Studies) was published in Japan in 1998.¹⁸ In this book, Chen Kuan-Hsing and Ien Ang discuss Australia's political controversy over 'Asian-ising' Australia in the 1990s as the main subject. This is one of the most valuable and rare books about Australian Cultural Studies available in Japanese. A large part of the book is dedicated to discussions about nationalism and post-coloniality in Australia. Unfortunately, however, the word 'Australia' does not occur in the title of the book. We cannot find the word either in quotations from the content or advertising statements printed on the book cover, though there are catch phrases such as "Where is Asia going?" and "New discussions on Asia through Cultural Studies". This book certainly includes important discussions in

¹⁸ *Grôbarizeishon no nakano Ajia: karuchuraru sutadîzu no genzai*. (Asia in Globalisation: The Present of Cultural Studies) edited by Iyotani Toshio, Sakai

many fields covered by Australian Studies, but it is quite difficult for people who are interested in such fields to access it because the subject of this book is classified as "Asian Studies" in cataloguing-in-publication data. It is as if the editors or the publisher of the book insist that Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Studies don't have to be related to Australian studies in Japan, and that they don't have to shed a new light on the accumulation of Japan's Australian studies. Examples of deliberate neglect of the Australian context in the process of choosing, translating, and publishing works on "Australian" Cultural Studies are too many to enumerate here. I believe the reason why the Australian context is excluded is that there is a legend that academic books on Australia do not sell well in Japan. In Japan where a huge number of foreign academic works are published each year, some works by Australian scholars are translated, but they are limited to works which do not mainly deal with Australia. Compared with the fact that many works on British and American culture are being translated and published, research works on Australian culture are clearly neglected in Japan. Cultural Studies, which aims to criticise the hegemonic relation between centre and margin, is ironically marginalising Australian studies in Japan, due to the excessive commercialism of the Japanese publishing industry. Also, this commercialism reflects that only a small number of Japanese scholars are interested in Australian studies. Although this may not be what Japanese scholars and translators intended, it is true that this has reinforced the marginalisation of Australian studies in Japan.

The specific cultural context of the role of 'translated plays' as a theatrical genre in Japan also makes the presentation of Australian plays a unique phenomenon. A recent article in *The Weekend Australian* reporting Australia-Asia artistic exchange stated that Australian music and dance were able to cross cultural borders and be accepted in Asia. However, according to the article,

Because so much Australian theatre is text-based English it doesn't really work in Asia.¹⁹

This remark appears to be ignorant of the existence of 'translated plays' as a genre in which English plays are translated into Japanese and produced by

Naoki, and Tessa Morris-Suzuki. Tokyo, Miraisha, 1998.

¹⁹ Susan McCulloch, "The Oriental express" *The Weekend Australian* 20-21 April

Japanese companies, and the fact that these 'translated plays' have played an important and distinctive role in the process of acceptance of Western culture in Japan. I will discuss this role in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Moreover, the comment also possibly reflects the fact that very few Asian plays, including Japanese ones, have been translated and staged in Australia compared with plays written in European languages. This also reflects a structure where the West has always been the sender of something universal, and Asia has always been its receiver. Australians also have had generally little knowledge of the significance of the Japanese presentation of Australian plays in the form of 'translated plays'. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, in Japan there has been a large amount of discussion and criticism of 'translated plays'. As we have seen, while translation and presentation of Australian plays in Japan have something in common with the conventional activities of introducing information about Australia into Japan, they distinguish themselves in the respect that they are at least doubly marginalised.

In addition, the reception of translated texts of Australian plays works very differently from the reception of other Australian cultural products or representations of Australia. Let us think how an audience receives other cultural products. In the case of cultural products produced by Australians, no matter how the representation is affected by Japanese attitudes, audiences and the readers will receive it as 'Australian material'. In the case of Japanese translations of Australian literature (fiction or poetry), similarly, even if some difference occurs due to the transition between languages, readers will receive it as 'Australian'. In the case of a journalistic or academic book on Australia, the readers will see it as material *about* Australia, and as a representation from a Japanese viewpoint. In contrast, consider the case of a play written by an Australian which is translated and directed by Japanese. When translating, a contract is usually made between the playwright and the translator's publisher to guarantee that the text will be translated accurately. Therefore, it is a prerequisite that the translation is as faithful as possible to the original. In particular, since many Australian playwrights are interested in their plays being translated into Japanese, they have given their assistance to help with correct understanding and translation of the plays. In common with the translations of Australian literature, the play which was translated as faithfully to the original as possible, and published as a book, is accepted by Japanese readers as 'Australian material'.

However, there are special considerations which complicate the situation when a play is theatrically produced. Even when an Australian theatre company produces an American play which was produced on Broadway, the production will be different from the original. In the case of a Japanese production of an Australian play in Japan, for Japanese audiences, and by Japanese actors, it is clear that the production will be quite different from the original production. Even if a Japanese director reads the play carefully, researches it well, and understands the playwright's intention, the production will become different. Every production of a play text is, after all, an 'interpretation' (even in the original language). Besides, even if audiences know that it is an Australian play, they will not be able to regard the production as "pure Australian material without any Japaneseness" because Japanese actors are speaking in Japanese in front of them. In other words, there is quite a possibility that the audiences will regard the production as not only a representation of Australia but also a representation of Japan.

In the case of translations of Australian literature, readers approach reading them on the precondition that minimal alteration is made to the original. In contrast, in the case of productions of translated plays, audiences approach them assuming changes to the original meaning will occur as part of the process of production itself. The audiences will avoid categorising whether it is more 'Australian' or more 'Japanese'. What brings such an attitude to audiences is a characteristic which only a production of a translated play has. I call this the double function of 'translated plays'. I will discuss the way in which Japanese theatre started using the double function of 'translated plays' developed in Chapter 3. Also, I will investigate the effect of this double function by taking examples of the Japanese productions of Australian plays in Chapters 4 and 8.

Suspending the need to categorise whether it is Australian or Japanese, that is, suspending mental questions about the 'national' character of the work, produces particular effects in audiences which cannot be seen in the reception of other representations, where audiences clearly consider the work as either Australian or Japanese. These different effects reveal significant things not only about Japanese attitudes towards Australia but also about the Japanese self-image. The most important purpose of this thesis is to examine how the Japanese productions of Australian plays, as quite unique representations of Australia in Japan, can be analysed to explore both the contemporary Japanese society and theatre as well as the relationship between Australia and Japan.

This thesis will focus on the issues of theatre translation. Patrice Pavis analysed theatre translation from an intercultural perspective.²⁰ Although Pavis does not investigate theatre translation in Japan, it is seemingly possible to apply theories by Pavis and other theorists to theatre translation in Japan. However, it is difficult to classify theatre translation in Japan into the categories of intercultural theatre, which Pavis and other theorists have argued. This is due to the fact that most theories of intercultural theatre that have been developed focus on the hegemonic relationships between the West and the non-West in intercultural exchanges. It is evidently not appropriate to apply Japan to the simple hegemonic relationship between the West and the non-West because the West has not colonized Japan 'literally,' but has maintained an unequal relationship with the West. This complicated relationship between Japan and the West has created certain uniqueness in theatre translation in Japan. In this thesis, I will call the presentation of translated playscripts in Japan 'honyakugeki,' as it is called in Japanese, in order to distinguish theatre translation in Japan from that in the Western countries. Furthermore, I will explain how we should position 'honyakugeki' in the theories of intercultural theatre in Chapter 4.

This thesis addresses two separate but related topics. The first part (Chapters 1-4) makes clear the cultural context of 'honyakugeki' in Japan, and explores how Australian plays were presented in the form of 'honyakugeki'. Chapter 1 demonstrates the historical and cultural context of the emergence of 'honyakugeki' as a genre, and their special significance in the modernization of Japanese theatre. Chapter 2 deals with the cultural and the general significance of 'honyakugeki' in Japanese theatre history by surveying the Japanese alternative theatre movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter 3 demonstrates the cultural context in which 'honyakugeki' obtained what I call their double function under the influence of the alternative theatre movement. Chapter 4 investigates how the double function worked in the Japanese productions of Australian plays, and also what kind of resistance the productions attempted to make to dominant representations of Australia in Japan.

²⁰ Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*. London and New York, Routledge, 1992. pp.136-159.

The second part of the thesis (Chapters 5-8) demonstrates that a new paradigm of 'honyakugeki' began with the translations and productions of Aboriginal plays in 2001. I will argue that these productions were important because they represented resistances against both representations of Aborigines in Japan and Japanese attitudes towards Japanese minorities. Chapter 5 investigates representations of Aborigines in Japan in order to know what kind of image of Aborigines the Japanese audience had before they saw the Japanese productions of Aboriginal plays. Chapter 6 clarifies the Japanese attitudes towards their own minorities. Chapter 7 explores how the Aboriginal plays were translated and presented in Japan. Chapter 8 demonstrates what kind of achievements and problems the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays brought with them.

Chapter 1: The emergence of 'honyakugeki'

In this thesis, I will discuss the translation and presentation of Australian plays in Japan. It is necessary to know what kind of role 'honyakugeki' as a genre has played in the history of Japanese theatre. The history of 'honyakugeki' commenced when Japan started its modernisation. Therefore, 'honyakugeki' is inseparably related to Japanese modernisation. However, it was not until the rise of the alternative theatre movement of the 1970s that Japanese theatre started taking advantage of the double function of 'honyakugeki'. It was the Japanese modernisation that had prevented Japanese theatre from taking advantage of the function, although, ironically enough, it was also Japanese modernisation that had established 'honyakugeki' as a genre in Japan. In order to demonstrate this, this chapter first deals with the role of 'translation' which conceptualised 'Japanese theatre' as an inferior, then the role which was given to 'honyakugeki' as a way to modernise the conceptualised Japanese theatre, and the process in which 'honyakugeki' became the important repertoires of Shingeki, Japanese modern theatre.

Translation and modernisation

The modernisation of Japan commenced when Japan encountered the West as an Other, and then conceptualised the unity of 'Japan'. A Japanese scholar Sakai Naoki writes as follows:

The attempt of posit the identity of one's own ethnicity or nationality in terms of the gap between it and the putative West, that is, to create the history of one's own nation through the dynamics of attraction to and repulsion from the West, has, almost without exception, been adopted as historical mission by non-Western intellectuals.¹

What Sakai points out holds true in various aspects of Japanese modernisation. This also holds for the modernisation of Japanese theatre. It is possible to find the dynamics of attraction to and repulsion from the West in the conflict between 'honyakugeki' and the Japanese alternative theatre movement, since the 1960s

¹ Sakai Naoki, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*. Minneapolis & London, University of Minnesota Press, 1997. p.50.

and the 1970s. I will discuss the Japanese alternative theatre movement in the next chapter. In this chapter, I first examine the device of 'translation' which conceptualised 'Japan' as an equivalent of 'the West'.

Sakai points out a close relationship between the emergence of the Japanese nation, Japanese language and translation. According to Sakai:

Strictly speaking, it is not because two different language unities are given that we have to translate (or interpret) one text into another, it is because translation articulates languages so that we may postulate the two unities of the translating and the translated languages as if they were autonomous and closed entities through a certain representation of translation.²

In this discussion, Sakai uses the idea of translation to investigate the process of inventing 'Japanese thoughts' since the Japanese modernisation. Sakai says:

...autoconstitution of the national subject would not proceed unitarily, on the contrary, it would constitute itself only by making visible the figure of an other with which it engages in a translational relationship.³

Sakai's idea of translation is useful to understand the modernisation of various cultural activities in Japan. Since the Meiji periods (1868-1912), translation has been a device to import Western thoughts. According to Sakai, the idea of translation means not only changing a language into another language, but also an effect to make one imagine the existence of cultural unities which belong to both languages. Translation conceptualises not only 'the West', but also 'Japan' as the national subject in opposition to 'the West'. Therefore, it is possible to say that the device of translation made the unity of 'Japanese culture' visible. Only after inventing unity of the 'Japanese culture', will one be able to go to the next step, that is, its modernisation. I want to examine this process in theatre by giving examples of dramaturgy and performance.

Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935) is a pioneer in the study of dramaturgy in Western theatre in Japan. Tsubouchi was a critic, novelist, playwright and professor of English literature at Waseda University. He was also a major figure in the

² Ibid., p.2.

³ Ibid., pp.15-16.

modernisation of the Japanese theatre, and established a theatre company called Bungei Kyôkai (1906-1913) to practice his theories about the reform of Japanese theatre. Besides, Tsubouchi was the first translator who completed Japanese translations of Shakespeare's oeuvre (1884-1928). In the middle of the 1890s, he gave a series of papers in which he investigated the works of Shakespeare and other European playwrights including Racine, Corneille, Marlowe, Dryden, Schiller and Goethe, and compared them with the works of Japanese playwrights from the end of the 17th century to the end of the 19th century. This comparative study allowed Tsubouchi to find the characteristic of dramaturgy in Japanese theatre.⁴ In other words, he conceptualised the unity of 'Japanese theatre' through the comparison with the European playwrights' works. According to Tsubouchi, in Western theatre, drama consists of characters' personalities and their circumstances. In contrast, the major characteristic of Japanese plays, Tsubouchi 'discovered' was that they were not drama but epics. This means that Japanese plays concentrate on telling just events, and that the actions of characters scarcely express their personalities. In Japanese plays, narratives consist of just a series of accidents without any influence of the characters' personalities. Tsubouchi regarded this characteristic of Japanese plays as a defect which should be corrected. Tsubouchi's discussion clearly indicates that he discovered 'Japanese dramaturgy' by finding the unity of 'Western dramaturgy' in Western playwrights of various periods and styles, and comparing them (To be correct, Tsubouchi regarded Shakespearean works as being typical of Western dramaturgy). It is possible to say that the visualisation of both 'Western dramaturgy' and 'Japanese dramaturgy' was brought about by the device of 'translation', as Sakai argues. After grasping the conventional 'Japanese dramaturgy', Tsubouchi attempted to establish new Japanese dramaturgy, and create new Japanese drama which is based on it.

As another example of this process in which Japanese theatre practitioners discovered 'Japanese theatre', especially its defects, by regarding a form of theatre as 'Western theatre', I will discuss the Japanese reception of the Stanislavski method. The Stanislavski method has been worshipped as if it is something sacred in Japanese modern theatre. It was director Osanai Kaoru (1881-1928) who made the Stanislavski method the most important theory in the modernisation of

⁴ Tsubouchi Shôyô, "Wagakuni no shigeki" (Historical plays in our country) *Waseda Bungaku* 49, 50, 51, 55, 60, 61 (1893-1894). Republished in *Tsubouchi Shôyô shû* (Collected Works of Tsubouchi Shôyô) edited by Inagaki Tatsurô. Tokyo, Chikuma Shobô, 1969. pp.287-315.

Japanese theatre. Although there were many approaches to the modernisation of Japanese theatre, the most influential one among them was Shingeki, a form of theatre modelled on Western modern theatre. Even now there are many Shingeki theatre companies, and their direct forefathers were Jiyû Gekijô (Free Theatre, the rival of Tsubouchi's Bungei Kyôkai) (1909-1919) and Tsukiji Shôgekijô (Tsukiji Little Theatre) (1924-1929), which were established by Osanai Kaoru. Like Tsubouchi, Osanai's approach to the modernisation of Japanese theatre was to emphasise the importance of dramaturgy, but he had an interest in stage direction, to reproduce dramaturgy correctly. It was the Stanislavski method which supported Osanai's directions. In common with Tsubouchi, who regarded Shakespeare as most typical of Western dramaturgy, Osanai regarded the Stanislavski method as most typical of Western performance. This allowed him to discover 'Japanese performance', which was very different from what Osanai believed to be Western performance. Throughout his career as a director, Osanai consistently criticised conventional 'Japanese theatre' and attempted to create completely new theatre, but 'Japanese theatre' he criticised was conceptualised only by comparing it with 'Western theatre', symbolised by the Stanislavski method. This visualisation of Japanese performance and Western performance was brought about by the device of 'translation', too.

This discussion about Stanislavski will become clearer when we compare the Japanese case with the Australian one. In Australia, the Stanislavski method was, of course, an important theory of realist theatre, but the system was imported to Australia through American and British channels. Here, 'translation' is not necessary. The Stanislavski method was just one of the methodologies of stage direction, and it will never make 'Australian theatre' visible and urge the reform of Australian theatre.

'Honyakugeki' as a genre

This section demonstrates the process in which 'honyakugeki' was given a significant role as one of the attempts to modernise Japanese theatre.

As we have seen, in Japan, putative Western theatre made Japanese theatre visible in terms of dramaturgy and performance, and urged Japanese theatre practitioners to reform and modernise it. Tsubouchi wrote plays which were not based on 'Japanese dramaturgy', he discovered. For an example earlier than Tsubouchi, Morita Kanya (1846-97), an entrepreneur of Kabuki, just after the

Meiji restoration, became enthusiastic about Westernization and, in 1880, he started to make an innovation of traditional Kabuki theatre with an assistance of some politicians.⁵ Through the exchanges with higher governmental officials who went to European countries and found 'Western theatre' as an ideal model, Morita discovered 'Japanese theatre' which was inferior to the putative 'Western theatre' in many respects. His enthusiasm for Westernisation reflected his desire to modernise inferior Japanese theatre, and make it close to putative and idealised Western theatre.

These examples show that there were various approaches to the modernisation of 'Japanese theatre', which was conceptualised as an inferior. Translating and presenting Western plays was one of those approaches. What is important is that the real purpose of this attempt was not to add Western plays to the repertoires of Japanese theatre companies, but to make the presentations of Western plays the first step to establishing a completely new Japanese theatre.

A feeling of impatience caused by the absence of "Japanese theatre" imagined as an equivalent of "Western theatre" can be seen in the following discourse by Osanai Kaoru. Osanai agrees with the fact that there exist theatres in Japan. However, he questions as follows:

...are they really theatres? Houses where people do such things are real theatres? I doubt it. I agree that their appearances are fine, but can we really declare to the world that they are real theatres? I doubt it.

My opinion is that Japan's contemporary theatre is in existence, but actually non-existence.⁶

Here we can see a desire to seek real "Japanese theatre" which should be equal to "Western theatre" and which allows the Japanese to "declare to the world". It is very interesting that, when Osanai established the Jiyû Gekijô in which he practised his new theatrical theory in 1908, he decided his company's policy emphasising presentations of 'honyakugeki'. Osanai continues:

⁵ Ôzasa Yoshio, *Nihon gendai engekishi: meiji Taishô hen*. (The History of Japanese Modern Theatre: The Meiji and Taishô Periods) Tokyo, Hakusuisha, 1985. p.32.

⁶ Osanai Kaoru, "Grain no dokuritsu gekijô" (Grein's Independent Theatre) *Kabuki* 105, 1908. Republished in *Osanai Kaoru engekiron zenshû* (Collection of Theatrical Discussions of Osanai Kaoru) edited by Sugai Yukio. Vol.1. Tokyo, Miraisha, 1964. p.360.

I want to create "the real age of translation" both for playscripts and for performance.

...Theatrical creativity in the new age will come only after that.⁷

The series of Osanai's remarks reveal the process of provoking a desire for Japanese national theatre in opposition to Western theatre which was made invisible through translation.

In 1924, there was a controversy between Osanai Kaoru and Japanese playwrights belonging to a group of *Engeki-Shincho* magazine, about the launch of the Tsukiji Shôgekijô, Osanai Kaoru's new theatre after his Jiyû Gekijô. Osanai Kaoru said "the plays which will be staged in the new theatre should be Western plays for the first two years". Asked why you wouldn't stage Japanese plays, he insisted, "as a director, I am not attracted at all to works by Japanese playwrights (including myself if you say my plays aren't attractive)". Besides, he explains the reason as follows: "I am not mimicking the West because I hate Japanese plays", but "I cannot but present Western plays because there isn't any stimulation in Japanese plays".⁸

In his remarks of 1908 and 1924, Osanai argues that the only way to find what is absent from conventional theatre, to establish the Japanese modern theatre, is the presentations of Western plays. In other words, since Osanai could not find a clear answer to the question of what is absent from conventional Japanese theatre, he tried to reproduce the original Western productions as faithfully as possible. After having seen Stanislavski's production of Gorky's *The Lower Depths*, Osanai had an opportunity to direct the same play at the Jiyû Gekijô in 1910. He explained his direction as follows:

I think that [Stanislavski's direction was] a correct interpretation of the play. Therefore, I planned to reproduce the production as faithfully as possible. I

⁷ Osanai Kaoru, "Haiyû D kun e" (To actor D) *Engeki Gahô* January 1909. Republished in *Osanai Kaoru engakiron Zenshû*. (Collection of Theatrical Discussions of Osanai Kaoru) edited by Sugai Yukio. Vol.1. Tokyo, Miraisha, 1964. p.101.

⁸ Osanai cited in Sugai Yukio, "Tsukiji Shôgekijô ronsô" (Controversies about Tsukiji Shôgekijô) *Kôza nihon no engeki 6: kindai no engeki II*. (Studies in Japanese Theatre 6: Modern Theatre II) edited by Suwa Haruo and Sugai. Tokyo, Benseisha, 1996, pp.8-21; quote from p.15.

thought I had only to copy it.⁹

The Cherry Orchard staged at that time had been one of the most popular 'honyakugeki' in Japan. The play had frequently been staged by Shingeki companies. In her reminiscences, Yamamoto Yasue, a leading actress of the Tsukiji Shôgekijô, says:

(At the Tsukiji Shôgekijô) Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* was staged by following Osanai's notes of the production of the Moscow Art Theatre, and by copying its staging.¹⁰

This attitude of Osanai indicates the role of 'honyakugeki' in the modernisation of Japanese theatre. Since then, 'honyakugeki' has been regarded as a device to absorb advanced Western theatre. That is why Osanai simply copied the Western productions.

'Honyakugeki' became very important in the repertoires of Japanese modern theatre from the establishment of the Jiyû Gekijô and the Tsukiji Shôgekijô. Osanai declared the beginning of "the real age of translation" when he established the Jiyû Gekijô. Indeed, nine out of fifteen plays which the Jiyû Gekijô presented during the period of its activity were Western plays, the works of Ibsen, Wedekind, Chekhov, Gorky, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann, Andreyev and Brieux. In the case of the Tsukiji Shôgekijô, within just five years, the company presented Western plays including the works of Goering, Kaiser, Hauptmann, Wedekind, Schiller, Gorky, Chekhov, Gogol, Andreyev, Tolstoy, Shakespeare, Shaw, John Masefield, Bjornson, Ibsen, Pirandello, Strindberg, Romain Rolland, Maeterlinck, Molnar, Schnitzler and O'Neill. Japanese theatre critic Sugai Yukio points out that this declaration of Osanai "indicated the crucial direction for a theatrical activity in our country".¹¹ At his two theatre companies, Osanai presented 'honyakugeki' with the goal of the establishment of 'Japanese modern theatre'. However,

⁹ Osanai Kaoru, "Yoru no yado enshutsu oboegaki" (A memorandum on the direction of *The Lower Depth*) *Butai Shinsei* June and July, 1927. Republished in *Osanai Kaoru engekiron zenshû* (Collection of Theatrical Discussions of Osanai Kaoru) Vol.2. Tokyo, Miraisha, 1965, pp.286-289; quote from p.287.

¹⁰ Yamamoto Yasue, "Tsukiji Shôgekijô" (Tsukiji Shôgekijô) *Kôza nihon no engeki 6: kindai no engeki II*. (Studies in Japanese Theatre 6: Modern Theatre II) edited by Suwa Haruo and Sugai Yukio. Tokyo, Benseisha, 1996, pp.48-71; quote from p.58.

¹¹ Sugai Yukio, "Nihon kindaiengeki ronsôshi 7: honyakugeki ronsô" (The history of controversies in Japanese modern theatre 7: controversies on 'honyakugeki')

Osanai's sudden and unexpected death in 1928 led his successors' efforts into a different direction from Osanai's eventual goal. 'Honyakugeki', which Osanai presented in preparation for the establishment of Japanese modern theatre, continued to occupy the repertoires of the theatre companies which were successors of Tsukiji Shôgekijô. In this way, 'honyakugeki' became what symbolised Shingeki. In this case, 'honyakugeki' meant the faithful reproduction of original Western productions. In contrast, Tsubouchi insisted on the significance of presenting Western plays with the Japanese perspective. For example, Tsubouchi argued in 1911:

Some criticise that my translations [of Shakespeare] are so 'Japanese' that they cannot avoid the atmosphere of Japanese literature. If you prefer pure Western taste, just see Shakespearean plays presented in the West. If a Shakespearean play is performed by Japanese, the production should have a Japanese taste.¹²

This approach of Tsubouchi is very close to the Japanese theatre practitioners who started taking advantage of the double function of 'honyakugeki' from the 1970s. However, this attitude of Tsubouchi had little influence on the mainstream of Shingeki, whose forefather was Osanai. So, how did the mainstream of Shingeki try to copy Western plays?

It is important that 'honyakugeki' has created a particular style in text and acting. The style has been called 'honyakugeki-chô' ('honyakugeki' style) or 'Shingeki-chô' (Shingeki style) and 'Tsukiji-chô' (Tsukiji style), because 'honyakugeki' is inseparably related to Shingeki and its forefather Tsukiji Shôgekijô. That 'honyakugeki' has a style is seemingly contradictory because the acting of Shingeki was based on 'realism' and the Stanislavski method which Osanai introduced to Shingeki. In the period when Osanai founded Tsukiji Shôgekijô, Europe had not only realist theatre but various styles of theatre including Dadaism, Surrealism, and Expressionism. However, according to the Japanese theatre critic Kan Takayuki, "there is no evidence of influences of those theatrical trends on Osanai".¹³ For Osanai, the device of 'translation' to conceptualise

Higeki Kigeki December 1977. pp.70-77; quote from p.70.

¹² Tsubouchi Shôyô, "Hamuretto kôen go no shôkan" (Impression about the production of *Hamlet*) *Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun* 6-7 June 1911. Republished in *Shôyô senshû*. (Selected Works of Shôyô) Vol.12. edited by Shôyô Kyôkai. Tokyo, Daiichi Shobô, 1977. pp.667-673; quote from p.671.

¹³ Kan Takayuki, *Zôho sengo engeki: shingeki wa norikoeraretaka*. (Post-War

'Japanese theatre' was the Stanislavski method. Therefore, for Shingeki too, which developed from Osanai's Tsukiji Shôgekijô, the Stanislavski method was the inflexible principle. For example, the avant-garde theatre of Meyerhold, in which some influence of Kabuki is recognised, was not acceptable for Shingeki, because what Shingeki denied was nothing but the conventional, inferior Japanese theatre including Kabuki. Indeed, although there were some Shingeki theatre practitioners who were influenced by Meyerhold, it was an inevitable result that they did not become the mainstream of Shingeki. Kan Takayuki writes:

The Stanislavski-style method became embodied as second "nature", as if almost the mythology for Shingeki. It was possible to resist each methodology, but it was almost impossible to systemize other ways within the same code once they shared the precondition Stanislavski established. This proved a perfect quality as a theory for realist theatre.¹⁴

As Kan points out, the Stanislavski method was very important for Shingeki. At the same time, 'honyakugeki', which was important in the repertoires of Shingeki theatre companies, were inseparably related to the theory. Although 'honyakugeki' should have been presented in the style of realist theatre which was based on the Stanislavski method, actually the productions revealed their lack of 'realism' at various levels. In order to pretend 'real' Westerners, Japanese actors performed with overblown expressions, and sometimes they even wore blond wigs, western period costumes, and 'nose putty' (an artificial nose). Indeed, nothing symbolizes the acting style of 'honyakugeki' more than 'nose putty', a form of make-up. Japanese actors did so because they believed that faces of the Japanese were too flat to be the Westerners. Today, this make-up has almost disappeared. According to Aoki Michiko who has been a Shingeki actress since the 1950s, 'nose putty' disappeared from Japanese theatre about 1970, probably under the influence of the Shôgekijô movement.¹⁵ The expressions of Shingeki and 'honyakugeki' were so different from 'realism' that they were criticised by some theatre critics and audiences. In the case of the texts of 'honyakugeki', they were greatly influenced by the desire to present plays in as faithful a way to the original as possible, in order to absorb advanced Western theatre. Therefore, a style of language which reflects any Japanese cultural context was never

Theatre: Was Shingeki Conquered?) Tokyo, Shakai Hyôronsha, 2003. p.23.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.29.

¹⁵ Aoki Michiko, Personal interview with author. 12 November 2003, Tokyo.

permitted. Instead, they invented a putative, unrealistic style of Japanese language which was not the language ordinary Japanese speak, but the Japanese language which Western characters might have spoken if they had been Japanese. However, even the invented language could not be a perfect language to reproduce the original's dramatic world faithfully. That is why various controversies about this issue have been repeated.

These include for example: a question of tempo¹⁶ (It has been said that whenever a play is translated from a European language to the Japanese language, its running time becomes 1.5 times or 2 times longer than the original's one); a question of how to express the original's rhyme or literary technique in Japanese¹⁷; a question of how to express jokes and puns or local customs and religion in Japanese; a question of speech level ¹⁸(What kind of Japanese language (social classes and vocations) should dialects and slang in the original be translated to?). Japanese translator and director Anzai Tetsuo argues,

While translation of novels and stories are accepted through silent reading, the most abstract and conceptual activity in the ways of communication, translation of plays provokes a question of language through the body of a performer, a concrete reality, not in the level of text but in the level of performance. Furthermore, we cannot but be conscious of the cultural and social context through the society represented by the audience. That is why, although this might be a special case, translation of plays reveals questions most vividly when we think about the possibility and limitation of translation.¹⁹

As we have seen, translation of plays provokes more obvious questions than translation of novels does. It might be an illusion that there exists absolute authority of the original. That is because, even if translation is very faithful to the original, the direction and the acting could result in a transformation from the

¹⁶ See Kawakami Shin, "Engeki wa gengo wo chôetsu shienai: honyakugeki no mondai" (Theatre cannot cross the border of languages: problems about 'honyakugeki') *Higeki Kigeki* January 1959. pp.30-33.

¹⁷ See Narumi Shirô, "Gikyoku honyaku no tanoshisa" (The pleasure of translating drama) *Higeki Kigeki* February 1971. pp.6-9.

¹⁸ See Ibaraki Tadashi, "Sengo no honyakugeki ni tsuite" (About 'honyakugeki' in the post-war period) *Higeki Kigeki* November 1981. pp.39-45.

¹⁹ Anzai Tetsuo, "Honyakugeki no kanôsei to genkai: gikyôku no honyaku jôen wo chûshin ni" (The possibilities and limitations of 'honyakugeki': about the presentations of translated texts of plays) *Eigo Seinen* 127(9), December 1981. pp.

original. Although I do not mean to deny a faithful translation, it is difficult to decide to which level of the original the translation should be faithful, because theatrical productions follow stages of the original playscript, the original production, translating, the Japanese playscript, and the Japanese production. Therefore, we cannot avoid facing various contradictions if we seek authenticity in translation.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the historical and cultural context of the emergence of 'honyakugeki'. 'Honyakugeki' was given a significant role in the modernisation of Japanese theatre. However, since Shingeki concentrated on the faithful reproduction of original Western production, it was impossible to develop a 'Japanese perspective' which was needed for the double function of 'honyakugeki'. Although some thought 'honyakugeki' should be presented with a 'Japanese perspective', such as Tsubouchi, they had little influence on the mainstream of Shingeki. It took a long time for 'honyakugeki' to conquer some of these issues and enter the new stage, including the double function of 'honyakugeki' as discussed in the Introduction. In the next chapter, I move on to the issue of what brought this change to 'honyakugeki'.

Chapter 2: Shôgekijô and the quest for national identity

As discussed in the previous chapter, 'honyakugeki' represented Shingeki, and Shingeki represented the West and modernism. Shingeki, or the image of Shingeki, became the subject of strong criticism by the alternative theatre movement (Shôgekijô), which emerged in the latter half of the 1960s. The absurdity of Shingeki's slavish faithfulness to Western modern theatre had already been exposed even in the 1950s and early 1960s. The irritation at the absurdity provoked the quest for national identity. In this respect, Japan and Australia share something in common. In this chapter, I will investigate the quest for national identity in Japanese theatre by comparing it with the Australian alternative theatre of the same period. It is necessary to investigate the movement of the alternative theatre in order to understand the context in which 'honyakugeki' obtained the double function that it has today. I will discuss this in four stages: the significance of the alternative theatre in the large cultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s; the strategies of the alternative theatre which were influenced by the world-wide theatrical movement; 'cultural cringe' in the 1950s and early 1960s which encouraged the quest for national identity; and the concrete examples of the quest for national identity.

The significance of the alternative theatre in the cultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s

In this section, I will investigate the significance of the alternative theatre in the social and cultural movement including the civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement driven by the mass participation of youth and students in the 1960s and 1970s. The movement involved not only Shôgekijô but also Shingeki and the Japanese film industry. Moreover, I will point out that theatre, along with film and other genres, constituted the movement both in Japan and in Australia.

It is no exaggeration to say that the first generation of the Shôgekijô movement started their activities with the denial of Shingeki. Then, what was Shingeki in the period when Shôgekijô emerged? Generally, it is said that the post-modern era in Japanese history starts from 1945 when World War II ended. There are criticisms claiming that Shingeki failed to keep up with the true essence of the times. Japanese theatre critic Senda Akihiko says:

Due to its resumption and reconstruction at the hands of leaders of the pre-war generation, Shingeki in the post-war era entered the 1960s without creating a complete new form of "post-war theatre" equivalent to "post-war literature".¹

So, how did Shingeki survive from the death of Osanai to the 1960s? Shingeki had inseparable relations with the proletarian movement and communism before World War II. According to Japanese theatre critic Ishizaki Katsuhisa, the audience for Shingeki in the 1950s was "dominated by males", with "an eggheaded attitude", and "they always seemed to want to learn something from Shingeki".² As Ishizaki pointed out, Shingeki was for intellectual audiences from its beginning, and its aim to educate and inform lasted even after the post-war period. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Shingeki emerged from the theatrical activities of Tsubouchi Shōyō and Osanai Kaoru at the beginning of the 20th century, and was developed at Tsukiji Shōgekijō, established in 1924. The company adopted the style of Western realist theatre as Shingeki's way of expression, and sought a new style of Japanese theatre through presenting translated Western plays. After that, the Tsukiji Shōgekijō was divided into the Tsukiji Shōgekijō Theatre Company and the Shin-Tsukiji Theatre Company. Although both companies declared that they aimed for left wing theatre, the Tsukiji Shōgekijō Company showed a tendency towards art for art's sake, while the Shin-Tsukiji Theatre Company developed into a more politically charged company, so that they were forced into dissolution by the authorities. As for the artistic tendency, Osanai Kaoru, the forefather of Shingeki, had faith in Stanislavski. However, there were also other Shingeki theatre practitioners who were influenced by the contemporary European avant-garde, such as Vsevolod Meyerhold and Alfred Jarry.³ After the death of Osanai, Shingeki deepened its commitment to Soviet theatre. They had no option but to stick with social realism, officially recognized by the Soviets, even after they knew

¹ Senda Akihiko, *Nihon no gendai engeki*. (Contemporary Theatre in Japan) Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1995. p.8.

² Ishizaki Katsuhisa, "Shingeki to shōgyō-engeki no kōryū no nakade" (In the exchange between Shingeki and commercial theatre) *Teatoro* 509, July 1985, pp.80-86; quote from p.82.

³ Sofue Shōji, "Shinkyō Tsukiji jidai" (The period of Shinkyō and Tsukiji). *Kōza nihon no engeki 6: kindai no engeki II*. (Studies in Japanese Theatre 6: Modern Theatre II) edited by Suwa Haruo and Sugai Yukio. Tokyo, Benseisha, 1996. pp.101-126.

Also Peter Eckersall, "Towards a proletarian theatre: Murayama Tomoyoshi and the prewar avant-garde theatre movement" 2003 Annual conference of Australasian Drama Studies Association. Banyo, Queensland, 3 July 2003.

the fact that Meyerhold had been liquidated.⁴ Since Shingeki leaders continuously kept their leadership even after the war, the dominance of realist theatre in Shingeki companies continued. Just after the end of the war, Shingeki was praised because they survived wartime suppression. However, as the society became more stable and higher education was popularised, Shingeki's prestige as an intellectual movement began to crumble.⁵ It is undeniable that an irritation with Shingeki had been smouldering among Japanese intellectuals until the 1960s. Various contradictions of modernisation since the Meiji period such as hasty Westernisation, militarism, and colonialism should have been buried and a completely new era should have started in 1945 when World War II ended. That is because such contradictions seemed to have a deep relationship with the emperor system, and because the emperor system changed drastically with Japan's defeat in the war. A drastic change should have occurred throughout the Japanese society and culture along with the change of the emperor system. However, against expectations, Shingeki prolonged its life even after 1945. As a result, the desire to reconstruct the existing framework of modernised Japan directed a barrage of criticisms at Shingeki. Those criticisms consisted of accusations that Shingeki was concentrating on presentations of 'honyakugeki', and that the activity of Shingeki was just mimicry of the West. This is the historical context of Japanese modern theatre before the rise of the alternative theatre movement from the 1960s.

The weakening of Shingeki was part of the background in which the first generation of the Shôgekijô (small theatres) movement emerged in the latter half of the 1960s. The first generation included writers/directors such as Satô Makoto (1943-present), Kara Jûrô (1940-present), Terayama Shûji (1936-1983), Ôta Shôgo (1939-present), directors such as Suzuki Tadashi (1939-present), and playwrights such as Betsuyaku Minoru (1937-present). Since it is generally understood that the Shôgekijô movement continues until today in different forms, those theatre practitioners are called 'the first generation'. Also, they are called 'Angura', an abbreviation of 'underground' which means 'alternative'. However, the word 'Angura' did not mean just 'underground' in the heyday of the movement. It gave people unpleasant feelings beyond words, and suggested enigmatic images such as "angry youngsters" and "the sink of iniquity".⁶ The period when 'Angura' emerged

⁴ Kan Takayuki, "Sengo-engeki towa nandeattaka" (What was the post-war theatre?) *Teatoro* 630, June 1995, pp.28-34.

also Nishidô Kôjin. "Angura sekaiengeki wo miru" ('Angura' [Underground] sees the world theatre) *Teatoro* 595, September 1992, pp.30-40.

⁵ Ishizaki, 1985.

⁶ Kazama Ken. *Shôgekijô no fûkei: Tsuka, Noda, Kôgami no gekisekai*. (The

was the period when the New Left rose and gained support from people who were disappointed with the old left wing's defeat in the movement against 'Anpo', (the Japan-US Security Treaty) in the 1960s. The New Left gave impetus to student activism such as violent clashes between students and riot police at university campuses, the protest campaign against the construction of the Narita Airport, and the Vietnam anti-war movement. The image of 'angry youngsters' associated with 'Angura' was related to this social background in those days.

The impact of the first generation of Shôgekijô will be clear by comparison with Shingeki. During the 1960s and 1970s when the first generation of Shôgekijô practitioners were flourishing, Shingeki theatre companies also continued their activities. However, in the history of Japanese contemporary theatre, there is a tendency to neglect Shingeki's activities from the latter half of the 1960s onwards.⁷

From the latter half of the 1970s, the activities of the first generation of Shôgekijô were inherited by the second and the third generations. Playwrights/directors of the second generation included Tsuka Kôhei (1948-present) and Takeuchi Jûichirô (1947-present), and the third generation included Noda Hideki (1955-present), Kôgami Shôji (1958-present), Kisaragi Koharu (1956-2000), Kawamura Takeshi (1959-present). These successors of the Shôgekijô movement were greatly influenced by the first generation. The theatre practitioners of the first generation denied the realist theatre that Shingeki represented, and sought a completely new way of expression. This means the first generation had to confront Shingeki, whether they denied it or not. Similarly, the theatre practitioners of the second and the third generations created their original expression by making their choice about the inheritance of the first generation. This means that the second and the third generations had to confront the first generation of Shôgekijô. For example, the first generation created the acting style of 'shouting and screaming'. This was not only a resistance against the stylized, realist acting of Shingeki. According to the theatre critic Senda Akihiko:

The 1960s, when the society was glowing hot and the faith in ideology was strong, was 'the period of shouting' ... 'shouting' was an acting style real

Landscape of Shôgekijô: The Dramatic Worlds of Tsuka, Noda and Kôgami) Tokyo, Chûô Kôronsha, 1992. p.5.

⁷ For example, in the part of Japanese theatre in *The Continuum Companion to Twentieth Century Theatre* (London, Continuum, 2002), authors discuss mainly Shingeki about Japanese theatre before the 1960s, but they refer to only the Shôgekijô movement about after the 1960s.

enough to be reasonable and real in those days.⁸

In other words, the acting style of shouting was a timely expression, when university campuses were filled with agitation and collective speaking of student activists. This acting style of shouting was inherited by the second and the third generations. However, around the end of the 1980s, it became difficult to depict the society, where no one any longer shouts, by the acting style of shouting. Senda points out that this isolation of Shôgekijô's acting from the reality of the society resulted from the stylization of the acting of the first generation. As realism was stylized in Shingeki, the acting of shouting was also stylized in Shôgekijô.⁹ Like the realist acting of Shingeki, styles of the first generation of Shôgekijô, including the acting of shouting, has maintained great influence in Japanese contemporary theatre since the 1960s.

As with David Williamson and John Romeril in Australia, the theatre practitioners of the first generation are still active in the frontline of Japanese contemporary theatre. Satô Makoto, one of the leaders of the first generation of the Shôgekijô movement, directed the Japanese production of John Romeril's *The Floating World* in 1995.

We should note that, in its infancy, the first generation of Shôgekijô was greatly influenced by European avant-garde theatre, which Shingeki introduced into Japan through 'honyakugeki'. It was the works and theatrical theories of Artaud, Brecht, and Beckett which had influenced the first generation of Shôgekijô. Antonin Artaud's theory was introduced to Japan by Shingeki director and translator Andô Shinya in 1965. The theory of Artaud had great influence on Japanese avant-garde which was looking for new theatre.¹⁰ Terayama was especially influenced from Artaud. Suzuki Tadashi was fascinated with Beckett.¹¹ Betsuyaku Minoru, the playwright who funded the Waseda Shôgekijô with Suzuki, is regarded as the most Beckett-like playwright in Japan.¹²

⁸ Senda Akihiko, "Shôgekijô no engi no kage" (The shadow of Shôgekijô's acting) *Teatoro* 595, September 1992, pp.36-40; quote from pp.37-38.

⁹ As the counter reaction of the stylization, the playwright/director Hirata Oriza created a new acting style called 'Shizukana engeki' (quiet theatre).

¹⁰ Takahashi Kôichi, "Angura engeki" (Angura theatre) *Risô* 629, October 1985, pp.69-76.

¹¹ Shichiji Eisuke, "Suzuki Tadashi, Kara Jûrô, Satô Makoto: 60 nendai no zenei ga hatashita yakuwari" (Suzuki Tadashi, Kara Jûrô and Satô Makoto: the role of avant-garde of the 1960s) *Teatoro* 631, July 1995, pp.42-46.

¹² According to Nishidô Kôjin, however, Betsuyaku actually aimed to draw a sort of

Nevertheless, the leaders of the Shôgekijô movement stopped following Beckett, Artaud and so on. Nishidô Kôjin supposes that the Japanese theatre practitioners of the 1960s and 1970s thought that the essence of Beckett's and Artaud's theatre is to praise negative attitudes towards modern theatre, and that they would not find anything valuable even if they followed Beckett and Artaud.¹³ Instead of that, the idea of 'national identity' became important for the first generation of Shôgekijô. I will discuss this in the next section.

Here I would like to emphasise that it is necessary to take the history of Japanese film into consideration in order to grasp the whole image of theatre of the 1960s and 1970s both in Japan and Australia. Conventional studies of the Japanese theatre history have emphasised only that Shôgekijô emerged as a rival of Shingeki, but little attention has been given to the fact that leaders and members of Shôgekijô participated in a larger cultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s, including the film industry. Theatre and film have been discussed separately in each field, and have never been contextualised. However, many artists of the 1960s and 1970s sought after a new expression without regard for genres. Therefore, it is also important to consider the 1960s and 1970s without regard for genres. Also, we can notice the significance of the exchange between theatre and film in Japan simply by comparison with the exchange between theatre and film in Australia in the same period. To provide a new perspective to grasp alternative theatre movements, I would like to provide a brief survey of how Japanese and Australian theatre practitioners participated in the film industries of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Japan Art Theatre Guild (ATG), which members of the first generation of the Shôgekijô movement participated in, was established in 1961. The ATG developed from an institute, which was founded by young film directors, film critics and journalists in 1957, with the aim of establishing cinema houses specialising in non-commercial art films in Japan. The ATG selected European art films, and they

reality from the inside of actors, although he seemingly denied the mentality of actors by making them speak absurd lines. Even Betsuyaku, who has been regarded as the most Beckett-like playwright, was not free from mentalism. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was no Japanese playwright who was influenced by the discontinuity of intelligence which Beckett represented especially in his later works.

Nishidô Kôjin, "Tekunoroji / shintai / engeki" (Technology / body / theatre.) *Kokubungaku* 43(4), March 1998, pp.49-53.

¹³ Ibid.

were put on screens for at least one month at ten franchised cinema houses in major cities. The films shown at the ATG cinemas include the works of Jean Cocteau, Ingmar Bergman, Francois Truffaut, Andrei Tarkovsky, Serguei M. Eisenstein, Luis Bunuel, Federico Fellini, Orson Welles, Jean-Luc Godard, Peter Brook, and Roman Polanski. The ATG showed not only these Western films but also Japanese experimental and art films. From the latter half of the 1960s, film directors such as Imamura Shôhei and Ôshima Nagisa had approached the ATG with projects which were impossible for major film companies, so the ATG started the production of low budget films. The cost was equally shared by the ATG and a film-maker, and once the project was approved by the ATG committee, the ATG never intervened in the film-making. Many first-class film directors started making films at the ATG.

The circumstance of the Japanese film industry in those days convinced many film directors to make their films at the ATG. The size of film audiences decreased because of the popularisation of television in the 1960s, and major film companies hesitated to produce artistic films, and concentrated on producing only entertaining films. Many film directors left the major film companies criticising their commercialism. Since the major film companies had owned a strong network including production, distribution, and management of cinema houses, these directors' independent works were excluded from the distribution system. The ATG undertook the role of breaking through this cycle for many film directors.¹⁴ At the end of the 1960s, since the price of foreign films rose and the major film companies started distributing the works of famous foreign directors such as Fellini and Godard, the role of the APG as a distributor of foreign art films ended. The ATG began to emphasise the production and distribution of works of Japanese film makers. Since then, the ATG has produced many important 'low budget' Japanese films, for more than twenty years.

The ATG also contributed to the exchange between genres. Satô Tadao wrote about the Japanese film industry at that time as follows:

In foreign countries, it is common that various talented people outside the mainstream industry make films. The Japanese film industry is so conservative that there are only very few exchanges between film directors

¹⁴ Satô Tadao, *ATG eiga wo yomu*. (Reading the ATG Films). Tokyo, Firumu Âtosha, 1991.

and TV directors. In addition, there are few examples where directors of documentary films and theatre make feature films, although those are common in foreign countries.¹⁵

It was the ATG which gave the chance of film-making to talented people working in various genres. Kuzui Kinshirô, the manager of the Shinjuku Bunka Art Theatre, a leading cinema house of the ATG chain, attempted various experimental projects and the Shinjuku Bunka cinema became a special place for artists in those days.¹⁶ For example, Kuzui allowed theatre companies to give performances at the cinema after screenings. In addition, the basement depository was converted into a theatre called Underground Sasori-za (Underground Scorpion Theatre), where performances were given and experimental films were shown. This name 'Underground' is the origin of 'Angura' the nickname of the first generation of Shôgekijô, along with 'Underground Liberal Theatre', another little theatre for an alternative theatre company. This fact reflects the significant role of the ATG in the movement of Shôgekijô in the 1960s and 1970s.

Shinjuku, where the Shinjuku Bunka was situated, became a kind of 'liberated zone'. Shinjuku was the place where anti-Vietnam war demonstrations were carried out, antiwar folksong concerts were held, and the place where many young artists came to find the city's bohemian atmosphere. Also, Shinjuku became one of the sites of the International Anti-Vietnam War Rally of 21 December 1968, which gathered 290 thousand people across the country. More than ten thousand people broke into the Shinjuku station, and scuffled with riot police. This incident created an image of Shinjuku as 'the city of riots'.¹⁷ As mentioned before, it was Shinjuku where Kara Jûrô and his company the Jôkyô Gekijô gave a performance, struggling against riot police. Many theatre practitioners assembled and presented plays at the Shinjuku Bunka; playwrights such as Betsuyaku Minoru and Shimizu Kunio, directors such as Ninagawa Yukio and Suzuki Tadashi, and the writer / director Terayama Shûji.

¹⁵ Satô Tadao, "Ishokuna jinzai ni ba wo ataeta ATG no sokuseki" (The history of the ATG which gave chances to various talented people.) *Kinema Junpô* 1522, May 1977, pp.118-119.

¹⁶ Kuzui Kinshirô, *Kieta gekijo: âto siatâ Shinjuku bunka*. (Disappeared Theatre: Art Theatre Shinjuku Bunka) Tokyo, Sôryûsha, 1979.

Also Kuzui Kinshirô. "Waga kokorono ATG: tourisugiteitta eiga" (The ATG in my heart: films passed by) *ATG eiga no zenbô: nihon eiga hen*. (The Whole Picture of the ATG Film: Japanese Films) edited by Ogasawara Masakatsu. Tokyo, Natsushokan. 1986, p.12.

¹⁷ Kazama, 1992. p.7.

In this way, the Shinjuku Bunka, a franchised theatre of the ATG, gathered many theatre practitioners and many other talented people of different genres, and encouraged them to make films. Terayama was one of the people who directed his films at the ATG. Betsuyaku also wrote a script for an ATG film. Kara appeared in an ATG film as an actor, and also directed a film. Apart from these theatre practitioners, a documentary film director, a TV director, a journalist, an illustrator, a stage artist and a cartoonist all participated in film-making at the ATG. As for actors, not only film and stage actors, but also a rock singer, a Noh actor, and a Kabuki actor appeared in ATG films. In the films which Terayama and Kara directed, members of the Tenjô Sajiki Theatre Company and Jôkyô Gekijô Theatre Company made their appearances.¹⁸

It is important to note that theatre practitioners, not only from Shôgekijô but also Shingeki, participated in the ATG films. Mishima Yukio, a famous novelist and one of the leading figures in Shingeki in the 1950s and 1960s, made his independent film for which he wrote the script, directed, and acted a leading role. This film *Yûkoku* (Patriotism; 1965) became the first box-office hit among the Japanese films which the ATG distributed. This example of Mishima shows that there were attempts to take part in this large cultural movement of the 1960s, not only from Shôgekijô but also from Shingeki.

The exchange between film and theatre in the period of the worldwide alternative theatre movement was not unique to Japan. It is possible to point out a similar phenomenon in Australia too. The Australian situation at this time was very different from the Japanese one. The policies for the recovery of the film industry brought a good effect. In the first half of the 1970s, about ten films were made each year, and about twenty films each year in the second half of the 1970s. This revival of Australian film in the first half of the 1970s was due to the production of a series of low budget films called 'ocker films'.¹⁹

¹⁸ Kuzui, 1979.

¹⁹ According to *Macquarie Dictionary*, 'ocker' means:

1. the archetypal uncultivated Australian working man.
2. a boorish, uncouth, chauvinistic Australian.
3. an Australian male displaying qualities considered to be typically Australian, as good humour, helpfulness, and resourcefulness.

The Macquarie Dictionary. Rev. 3rd ed. edited by A. Delbridge et al. North Ryde, Macquarie Library, 2001.

The first director who made ocker films was Tim Burstall. His second feature film called *Stork* is regarded as the first ocker film. This film was completed on a low budget of 70000 Australian dollars in 1971. Like the ATG films in Japan, ocker films are distinguished by the fact that talented theatre practitioners participated in them. About *Stork*, Melbourne's *Herald* says as follows:

"Stork" is the clearest proof yet of what can be done here.

There isn't a skerrick of overseas involvement and, more than that, the writer, the actor and the idea were all bred in our own Carlton backyard at the experimental La Mama theatre run by the director's wife, Betty Burstall.²⁰

This article emphasises that the project of *Stork* was developed at La Mama. In the 1950s and the 1960s, because of the stagnation of the Australian film industry, there were few popular Australian film actors apart from exceptions such as Chips Rafferty. It had great significance that a 'local' writer and 'local' actors developed a 'local' project and completed a film without any foreign intervention. It was David Williamson who provided the most scripts and original stories to ocker films. Williamson's first play, *The Coming of Stork*, was premiered at La Mama on 25 September, 1970. The title role was performed by Bruce Spence. Tim Burstall was impressed by this production, and came up with the idea of filming this story. He commissioned Williamson to write the script based on the play. Burstall chose Bruce Spence for the leading role, as in the stage version, and cast Graeme Blundell for the role of Stork's friend, who had acted a leading role in *Two Thousand Weeks* (1969), Burstall's first film. Peter Cummins, who played the role of Alan, was cast for an avant-garde artist. Anne, the only female role, was played by Jackie Weaver, who was not a member of La Mama / APG, but had acted at the Old Tote Theatre Company and Nimrod Theatre Company. The example of *Stork* shows that actors²¹ and playwrights of La Mama / APG played the significant role in the revival of Australian film.

Jack Hibberd's participatory play *Dimboola* was also filmed. The play, which had been an important repertoire item for the APG since its premiere in 1969, was filmed by John Duigan in 1979. When it was filmed, the role of a groom was played by Bruce Spence who acted the same role in the original play, and members of the APG acted other roles. Jack Hibberd adapted his original play to the film script.

²⁰ Ann Gillison, "The Stork brings plenty of laughs", *Herald* 27 December 1971.

²¹ These actors include Graeme Blundell, Peter Cummins, Bruce Spence and Max Gillies.

The film version of *Dimboola* was keenly awaited, not only because the film was made after the success of a series of ocker films, but also because the original play had been performed at theatres and theatre restaurants across the country and about 350 thousand audience members had seen it. Nevertheless, the film's box-office record was miserable. Scott Murray describes it as "one of the film industry's biggest disappointments".²²

In Australia, playwrights have often written scripts for films, or had their plays filmed. Unlike in Japan, they have never directed the films. It is only film adaptations of plays rather than theatre practitioners' experiments with a different media. The nature of experiments of introducing theatrical elements into film can be classified into two types: the introduction of new expression and direction developed from theatrical experiments; and the adaptation of the narrative of a play into a film. The latter is David Williamson's contributions to ocker films. Since Williamson's style was close to that of realist theatre, it might be easy to adapt his narrative into his plays.

The ocker film, which symbolised the revival of the Australian film industry of the 1970s, would never have emerged without the alternative theatre in the form of La Mama / APG. In terms of the contents of the films, there is a large difference between Japan's ATG films and Australia's ocker films. However, in terms of the exchange between theatre and film industry, both countries have something in common. The history of these exchanges reminds us of the fact that the alternative theatre movement both in Japan and in Australia was a part of the movement in which the young artists at that time attempted to resist the conventional mainstream culture.

In this section, I have demonstrated the significance of the alternative theatre in the cultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In the next section, I will demonstrate what strategies Shôgekijô used in order to differentiate itself from the conventional theatre.

The strategies of Shôgekijô

In this section, I will discuss various strategies of Shôgekijô by comparing them

²² Scott Murray, *Australian Film 1978-1994: A Survey of Theatrical Features*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1995. p.31.

with the ones of the Australian alternative theatre. They include the reforms of theatrical performance space, the relationship between actors and audiences, and physical expressions. Also I will discuss the structure of theatre companies as a difference between Japanese and Australian alternative theatres.

In terms of the alternative theatre movements in the 1960s and 1970s, there are many things in common between Australia and Japan. I will analyse the characteristic of the Japanese Shôgekijô by comparing with the Australian alternative theatre movement. Alternative theatre movements synchronously emerged around the world in the 1960s and 1970s. The movements of freeing up modern theatre in Britain, the United States, France and so on were expanded around the world so that similar movements developed in each country. For example, in Australia, there were the alternative theatre movements of Melbourne's Australian Performing Group and Sydney's Nimrod Theatre.

The move into alternative spaces for performance is one of the common innovations in the alternative theatre movement around the world in the 1960s and 1970s. In Australia, La Mama Company was the pioneer which brought the idea of 'street theatre' to Australia. By 1970, the company produced three street plays: *Mr Big, the Big Big Pig*, *The American Independence Hour*, and *Dr Karl's Kure*. *Mr Big, the Big Big Pig*, performed on May Day of 1969, was the first and the most famous street performance by La Mama Company. In this performance, actors with white masks paraded through several parks performing music, pantomime, dance, and acrobatics. According to Geoffrey Milne, John Romeril wrote the script, following the style of commedia dell'arte. The idea of street theatre also came from the contemporary American alternative theatre, and Brecht's *Lehrstucke*.²³

Similarly, Terayama Shûji also attempted the restructure of the conventional theatrical performance space. In 1975, the Tenjô Sajiki Theatre Company led by Terayama performed an outdoor play called *Knock*. This play was not performed at a particular space. Rather, Terayama aimed to make the whole suburb a theatre. The company announced that there would be performances at 27 places within Suginami, a residential suburb of Tokyo, over thirty hours. The company placed actors at shops, public bathhouses and dwelling houses, and made them wait for

²³ Geoffrey Milne, "Pervaded by APG'eeism: John Romeril now and then", *John Romeril*, edited by Gareth Griffiths, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1993, pp.13-34; quote from pp.20-21.

the audience. The audience wandered about the suburb with a map in their hands, and saw the performances at various places in Suginami. This was one of the most radical attempts at the reconstruction of conventional theatre space in Japan.

The alternative theatre movement, both in Australia and Japan, attempted the reconstruction of the relation between actors and audiences too. La Mama Theatre's small cramped size created closeness between actors and the audience. Some photographs of the performances show audiences hemming in the actors, sitting at barely arm's length. This closeness between the stage and the audience was increased before and after performances and during intervals. Peter Cummings writes as follows:

An actor who relaxes with the audience drinking coffee, serves coffee, sells tickets, talks to latecomers prior to an external entrance, discusses the play and sees the audience out, who does this not as a phoney patronizing gesture to break the actor/audience barrier, but to get the show on and to provide for his own comforts, must intimately develop a natural relaxed familiarity with his audience, making communication as easy as talking with your mother...²⁴

This closeness of the relation between actors and audiences, which had not been seen in any conventional theatre in Australia until then, was utilised in the works themselves. The best example is Jack Hibberd's *Dimboola* which was produced for the first time in 1969. *Dimboola* celebrates the vulgar atmosphere of gatherings in rural Australia, by depicting a wedding held in Dimboola, a Victorian rural town. In this play, audience members become guests who are invited to the wedding. They are greeted by the parents of the bride and groom, served glasses of sherry, and led into the banquet room. The audience have their meal, and sometimes participate in a toast, sing, dance, and talk with actors. This type of play is not totally invented by Jack Hibberd. He wrote this play in London where he saw this kind of play. Hibberd writes:

During the late 1960s audience participation was all the go in London's experimental theatre.

...I thought there could be something of human and theatrical merit in the

²⁴ Peter Cummins cited in Liz Jones with Betty Burstall and Helen Garner, *La Mama, the Story of a Theatre*. Fitzroy, McPhee Gribble/Penguin, 1988. p.33.

notion of audience participation, if only the participation were natural and not enforced. These ruminations quickly led me to the conclusion that any such theatre event must embrace a familiar social ritual, must require the simulation of a ritual in which the audience (the paying public) could readily assume a role. After that it didn't take me long to make the choice of a wedding reception as the ideal vehicle.²⁵

This idea might have occurred to Hibberd because there was the above mentioned close proximity between actors and audiences at La Mama Theatre. The participatory theatre, the idea for which Hibberd took from British experimental theatre, became a different form with new connotations in Australia. After the first performance, *Dimboola* became a repertoire piece in theatre restaurants and established a record as the longest-running play in Australia.

A sense of unity between actors and audiences was one of the most important elements of Shôgekijô in Japan too. Similarly, the first generation of Shôgekijô also abandoned conventional theatre. They presented their works at new performing spaces such as in the outdoors, or in a tent, a basement, a park and a storehouse. Kara Jûrô, who found a new performing space in a tent, and his company the Jôkyô Gekijô made frequent guerrilla-like appearances at the precinct of a shrine in the middle of downtown Shinjuku, the heart of Tokyo, setting up a tent to present plays. In those days, Shinjuku was confused by a large number of university students who occupied the place and gave demonstrations against 'Anpo' (the Japan-US Security Treaty) almost every day. Kara's company was turned out of the shrine in 1969, and set up their tent at a park in Shinjuku. However, the Governor of Tokyo called out more than three hundred riot police to force the company to stop the performance. Despite attempts to obstruct them by the policemen, the company continued their performance, and, after the performance, Kara and his actors were arrested. Despite this setback, Kara and his company, the Jôkyô Gekijô, continued with tent theatre because a tent was deeply related to the content of their works. In the tent of Kara's company, the audience faced the shrine, the trees, and the city lights of Shinjuku, revealed by opening the tent at the end of the plays, and they were invited to see this as the 'theatre' expanding infinitely. Even now, this effect still remains Kara's favourite trick at his tent theatre.

²⁵ Jack Hibberd, "introduction", in *A Country Quinella: Two Celebration Plays*. Ringwood, Penguin, 1984.

This strong sense of togetherness between the actors, the audience, and the city was filmed in an ATG film of the same period. In 1968, Ôshima Nagisa directed a film called *Shinjuku Dorobô Nikki* (The Diary of a Thief in Shinjuku). This feature film seems to be a documentary which recorded Shinjuku, 'the city of riots', as it was. What is important is that the scenes in which actors of Jôkyô Gekijô, Kara Jûrô's theatre company, appear are inserted into the main plot which is set at Kinokuniya, a real bookshop in Shinjuku. The scene, including the dressing room of the tent set at Shinjuku Hanazono Shrine and the stage of the Jôkyô Gekijô, are filmed as landscapes symbolizing Shinjuku. In this way, Ôshima filmed Shôgekijô as a symbol of Shinjuku of the 1960s.

About the above mentioned episode with Kara's tent theatre, Nishidô Kôjin writes:

It shows the deep mutual relationship between the company and the audience that the company protected their audience from the violence of the riot police and that the audience protected the company's production by barricading themselves into the tent.²⁶

It is possible to say that the cramped space of the tent reduced not only the physical distance but also the mental distance between actors and audiences.

In the case of Australia, John Romeril's *Whatever Happened to Realism?* was performed in December 1969. This was not street theatre, but an outdoor play in the park in front of La Mama Theatre. The main purpose of the play was to make the audience members say four-letter-words outside the theatre as an act of opposition to the censorship of the theatre. This ended up with the arrest of the all actors who performed this play, after the performance. The arrested actors were accompanied by about 150 audience members, who sang protest songs on the way to the police station. In consequence, this incident became regarded as a most successful 'street performance' involving the audience.

In contrast, in Japan, Terayama sought after the use of the audience in his work more theoretically. Terayama says, "A theatre as a building is a jail for theatre".²⁷

²⁶ Nishidô Kôjin, *Engeki shisô no bôken*. (The Adventure of the Philosophy of Theatre) Tokyo, Ronsôsha, 1987. p.38.

²⁷ Terayama Shûji cited in Senda Akihiko, *Gendai engeki no kôkai*. (The Voyage of Contemporary Theatre) Tokyo, Riburo Pôto, 1988. p.190.

In the above mentioned outdoor play *Knock*, the audience were not only viewers of the work but also a component of the work. In 1974, Terayama and his company the Tenjō Sajiki produced a play called *Kankyakuseki* (Auditorium). In this play, many actors were placed in the auditorium, which created a situation where the audience did not surround the stage, but the actors surrounded the audience. Terayama's intention to re-shape the actor-audience relationship was quite effective because he did this experiment at the Kinokuniya Hall, a conventional theatre which Shingeki theatre companies often used.²⁸

Needless to say, the new idea of performing space, and the new relation between actors and audiences had an influence on acting style. Peter Cummins, one of the leading actors of La Mama, writes about the La Mama of 1970:

...La Mama acting deodorant is the elimination of those rigorous and stultifying theatrical gestures of voice and body, essential for communicating with the distanced audiences of large theatres. These grotesque over-enlargements of nature are not only time and energy consuming in their technical accomplishment but also, they cause an insurmountable barrier to the expression of those subtle and unnamed human emotions which drama endeavours to explore. The well painted proscenium actor will, more often than not, become forced, false and theatrically ludicrous when working in the intimate La Mama environment.²⁹

Jack Hibberd writes:

One style that did emerge, partly dictated by the small size of the space, was physical, direct, unadorned, tough, comic, yet strangely realist – no tricks of the trade, no bullshit affectation.³⁰

In another article, he says:

The less formal training, the less standard professional experience the actors had, the more likely they were to succeed.³¹

²⁸ Ibid., p.192.

²⁹ Cummins cited in Jones, 1988, p.33.

³⁰ Jack Hibberd, "How *Marvellous Melbourne* came to life" *Theatre Australia* 2(4), August 1977, pp.36-38; quote from p.36.

³¹ Jack Hibberd, "Twenty-one tomorrow", Paul McGillick, *Jack Hibberd*. Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1988, pp.4-24; quote from p.12.

Leonard Radic also writes similarly:

...it was raw, vital, strongly physical and mostly comic, relying as it did on realistic characterisation slightly exaggerated for effect.³²

To put it plainly, in the Australian alternative theatre, amateurish, raw and untrained acting was important to remake the acting style of realist theatre. Radic points out that this style came from Hibberd's early works, where superficial naturalism and unusual characters coexist.³³ Graeme Blundell called the early works of Hibberd, Romeril, and Buzo "quasi-naturalistic with absurdist overtones", and this description can be adapted to the acting style at La Mama too.³⁴ Also Radic points out that "a new larrikin style of acting" of the APG and Nimrod "disappeared". When "the original APG and Nimrod actors had to adapt to the more disciplined playing style demanded by the mainstream companies". He says that the style can still be found in the works of Circus Oz, in some of the community theatre groups, and the comedy and cabaret circuit.³⁵ Similarly, in Japanese alternative theatre, to deny the acting style of realist theatre was very important. Shôgekijô refused the acting of Shingeki or 'honyakugeki' in which Japanese actors pretend to be Westerners by exaggerating their gestures. This refusal became 'the acting of shouting' as mentioned in the previous section. Also, this resistance of alternative theatre led to what became revealed as the 'national' body. I will discuss this point later. In terms of the resistance to realist theatre, there are many things in common between Australian and Japanese alternative theatre movements. Hibberd wrote *Dimboola* under the influence of the British experimental theatre of the time, and the first generation of the Japanese Shôgekijô movement started their activities under the influence of Artaud, Beckett and Brecht. In other words both the Australian and Japanese alternative theatre were stimulated by Euro-American alternative theatre movements.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, however, in Japan, 'modern' meant 'the West', and the resistance to modern theatre meant the resistance to Western theatre. Thus, the first generation of Shôgekijô started with denying Shingeki, which had

³² Leonard Radic, *The State of Play*. Ringwood, Penguin, 1991. pp.56-57.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Graeme Blundell, "Introduction", Alexander Buzo, John Romeril and Jack Hibberd, *Four Australian Plays*. Ringwood, Penguin, 1970, pp.7-13; quote from p.9.

³⁵ Radic, 1991. p.167.

seemingly imitated Western theatre. In Australia, as a part of the West, the resistance to modern theatre did not have completely the same meaning as in Japan. The resistance in Australia included anti-colonial meaning. About this issue, I will discuss this issue in the section on national identity. We do also find some differences between Australian and Japanese alternative theatres. The structure of theatre companies is one of these differences.

In Australian alternative theatre, the collaborative activities of a group or collective were regarded as important. Before alternative theatre emerged, there were few playwrights writing especially for a particular company. Such writers were not needed as long as Australian theatre companies imported and produced ready-made British (or American) plays. In 1970, when the APG emerged from La Mama Company, Graeme Blundell commented on this aspect of Australian theatre:

One can't help but feel that the Australian theatre shuns the writer because creative relationships between writer and company are almost unknown ... A writer is only wanted after he has written his palatable play. He does not write *in* a theatre. The theatre is the place where he is merely represented and recited.³⁶

A new relationship between playwright and theatre company was a most important component of the activity of La Mama / APG. Blundell says:

This group [La Mama / APG] in fact acted as a showcase for the plays of these dramatists and a mutually rewarding relationship has developed. The writer is able to work with actors and directors on improvisational work and even at times to develop pieces out of the group's exercises.³⁷

This idea was realised in the process of creating the works written by John Romeril, "the chief recurring voice or symbol of APGism".³⁸ About the process of making *The Floating World*, Romeril emphasises the significance of the group collaboration rather than an author's creativity, saying:

³⁶ Blundell, 1970. pp.9-10.

³⁷ Ibid., pp.11-12

³⁸ Leslie Rees, *Australian Drama 1970-1985*. North Ryde, Angus & Robertson, 1987. p.62

In any case the play is the result not so much of an act of writing on my part, hence something in which I have a great proprietorial interest, as of an act of editing. The story came from someone else, a lot of the text is out of books and newspapers, the dialogues stolen from mouths that had no idea they were engaged in such a weighty task as the manufacture of dialogue. All I have done is give it a bit of shape and fill in the gaps. It is up to casts, directors and audiences elsewhere to give it the additional body it needs.³⁹

The APG's idea of the collaborative activities of a group sometimes had a downside. There are some who could not accommodate themselves to this company's system. Radic wrote:

The APG was established as collective with commitment to the notion of participatory democracy and worker control. ...the rules were clear. Members had to pay their dues, attend meetings on a regular basis, and generally pull their weight. In practice, that meant taking turns at the ticket office, sweeping the floor, cleaning the lavatories, helping with the publicity and set-building, and running errands. ...The writers were treated no differently from the actors or the technical or administrative staff, despite the fact that it was the product of their lonely hours spent away from the theatre that gave the group its reputation and kept the theatre going. It was a blinkered approach, and led to the early departure of its most celebrated son, David Williamson.⁴⁰

This shows the position of the APG's playwrights, which is the exact opposite of the position of the Japanese Shôgekijô leaders who behaved like an absolute monarch at each theatre company. This structure of the APG is similar in many respects to Shingeki theatre companies rather than Shôgekijô theatre companies. As I mentioned before, Shingeki theatre companies were recognized as places where a group's collectivity based on political ideology should be prepared before people gather. According to their theory, a play exists to realize ideology, and a theatre company exists to develop their skills to stage an understanding of reality more keenly. In Shingeki, a theatre company was recognized as a place where a group's collectivity, based on political ideology, should be prepared before people gather.⁴¹ Post-war Shingeki had little influence from communism. That is because

³⁹ John Romeril, "Author's note", *The Floating World*. Sydney, Currency Press, 1975. p.xxx.

⁴⁰ Radic, 1991. pp.88-89.

⁴¹ Ei Kisei, "Engeki denakereba naranai mono wo motomete: shôgekijô undô to

the politically-free Bungakuza Theatre Company took the lead in Shingeki. However, even after the war, the image of Shingeki, whose structure and artistic stance were dominated by left wing ideology, lingered well into the 1960s.

In contrast, the Shôgekijô movement had a tendency to realise a group's collectivity by sharing, not political ideology, but sensibility. Also, a theatre company belonging to Shôgekijô tended to present the works of one playwright exclusively.⁴² These tendencies of Shôgekijô showed a difference from Shingeki theatre companies. In other words, a theatre company of Shôgekijô consisted of one charismatic artist and his followers as actors, who reproduced his artistic world.⁴³ These tendencies of Shôgekijô were inherited from the first generation to the second and third generations of Shôgekijô movement in the 1970s and the 1980s.

Cultural Cringe

I have pointed out that there are similarities and differences between the Australian and Japanese alternative theatre movements in various dimensions. I would like to emphasise a similarity between the two countries' theatres in the same period in terms of their searches for national identity. The cause of this similarity is a similarity between the circumstances around both countries' theatres in those days. The Australian society and culture have often been characterised by a 'cultural cringe'. That is inseparably related to the quest for national identity, both in the Australian and Japanese alternative theatre movements. First, I will explain what 'cultural cringe' in Japanese modern theatre was.

It is interesting that the Japanese sense of inferiority towards Western theatre should appear in different ways, even after the Shingeki movement created modern theatre by imitating Western theatre. We can see a lot of examples of an inferiority complex especially after World War II. Since the 1950s, the controversies over 'honyakugeki' particularly flourished. The reason why such controversies flourished was that, compared with 'honyakugeki', original plays seemed to be of poor quality. In the 1950s, there were numerous remarks

shôgekijô bûmu no aida" (Looking for what should be theatre: the gap between Shôgekijô movement and Shôgekijô boom) *Teatoro* 509, July 1985, pp.74-79.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Some critics call this a quasi-patriarchal system. See Kan, 1995.

criticising the fact that the history of Shingeki had been dominated by 'honyakugeki' and insisted that 'original plays' by Japanese playwrights should be encouraged more. For example, one of the leading Shingeki playwrights Uchimura Naoya says:

Japan's Shingeki is still dominated by 'honyakugeki'. The tradition of Shingeki has simply continued in the style of 'honyakugeki' since the establishment of Osanai Kaoru's Tsukiji Shôgekijô. ...There are always voices like "Original plays are poor" and "More original plays!" However, it is rare for 'original plays' to be included in the regular seasons, and, even if 'original plays' are staged, their box-office records are poor barring a few exceptions. In contrast, the productions of 'honyakugeki' have recently become active and are gathering a new audience group.⁴⁴

In the situation where 'original plays' were of poor quality, 'honyakugeki' took on the role of good examples or textbooks. Kurahashi Takeshi, a famous translator, referring to remarks by Paul Green, an American playwright who made a visit to Japan in the 1950s, said:

As Green and others have pointed out, there is a tendency that presentations of 'honyakugeki' by Shingeki end up just a superficial introduction of foreign plays to Japanese stages. The younger generation of the audience look at the stage as a kind of illustration more understandable than reading playscripts, and the performers satisfy themselves with their attempts at something new. Both the audience and the performers are indulging themselves in something far different from the originals.⁴⁵

It appears that Kurahashi concludes the audience comes to theatre only to see something new.

In 1958, there was an epoch-making event for the relation between 'honyakugeki' and original plays. This was the first Japanese tour of the Moscow Art Theatre. While Tsubouchi, the first Japanese translator of the whole Shakespearean canon, had never been to Britain in his whole life to see Shakespeare's plays (he just saw

⁴⁴ Uchimura Naoya, "Sôsakugeki to honyakugeki to" ('Original plays' and 'honyakugeki') *Ningen* 5(3), March 1950, pp.70-71; quote from p.70.

⁴⁵ Kurahashi Takeshi, "Honyakugeki no mondai" (A problem about 'honyakugeki') *Shingeki*, 5(12), October 1958, pp.51-53; quote from p.52.

a Shakespeare play staged by a British theatre troupe touring to Yokohama), Osanai studied in Moscow and tried to copy the direction of the Moscow Art Theatre as mentioned in Chapter 1. Since the introduction of *The Cherry Orchard* to the Japanese stage by Osanai in 1915, Japan's tradition of presenting the play should have been rich, and comparable to authentic Russian productions. Nevertheless, the Japanese premiere of the Moscow Art Theatre's *The Cherry Orchard* gave a tremendous shock to both the Japanese theatre practitioners and the audience. The shock obviously came from the fact that "we are no match for the authentic production". Suzuki Tadashi, a leading director of the alternative theatre movement since the 1960s, has commented on the impact of the first visit of the Moscow Art Theatre. This long comment is worth quoting because it indicates that the impact of the Moscow Art Theatre revealed inferiority complexes, not only at a cultural level but also at a physical level, and because it was a comment which was made by Suzuki, who attempted to overcome those inferiority complexes in his theatre. Suzuki writes:

One of the leaders of Shingeki inheriting a tradition since the Tsukiji Shôgekijô, who had seen a Chekhovian play staged by the Moscow Art Theatre, has said that, in principle, Japanese actors should be performing dramas written in Japanese by Japanese dramatists. He insisted that a repertoire consisting solely of foreign plays in translation would never come to much. Why? The reason he gave was, "In the first place, our appearance is wrong; our arms and legs are too short".

The fact that doubts concerning the orthodox tradition in Shingeki of faithfully reproducing foreign dramas was at least partially attributed to a shortness of arms and legs is interesting in itself. I myself don't think that the physical appearance of a Russian is automatically superior; still, it is true that the essence of Chekhov's production involves delicate reconstruction, in physical terms, of Russian manners and morality. Shingeki actors have gone to tremendous pains, throwing themselves into the effort of imitation, yet they have never achieved an appropriate likeness. So the failure has been attributed, quite bluntly, to the physiological: their arms and legs are too short.

Ever since the beginning of the Meiji period in 1868, there have been tremendous efforts within Japanese culture to catch up with, then surpass, the West. Although Shingeki actors have put themselves at the forefront of

such activities, they have only managed to imitate the surface of things. If the above-mentioned expert means to emphasise once and for all the obvious impossibility of remaking the Japanese physique, then he should be praised. After all, it is better to see the truth as it is and abandon one's illusions, than to continue on while harbouring a tremendous sense of inferiority. But those involved in Shingeki have admired Europe too much: the way to smoke, the way to use a handkerchief, the way to eat. "Louis Jouvet did this, Danchenko did that, such-and-such film showed so-and-so". They have made an almost pathetic attempt to copy completely the superficial things.⁴⁶

This remark shows that Suzuki has an interest not only in an inferiority complex at a cultural level but also that at a physical level, which the Japanese of that time felt underneath. In his theatre, Suzuki took advantage of the 'inferior' Japanese body as a strategy. I will discuss this later.

What is interesting in the history of Shingeki is that there had been a number of discussions until the 1960s which blamed Japanese plays for being of poor quality compared with 'honyakugeki'. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Osanai claimed he would concentrate on producing 'honyakugeki' because Japanese plays were not attractive in 1924. The great opposition from Japanese playwrights to this remark of Osanai's revealed the fact that there were surely some active Japanese playwrights and Japanese plays in Shingeki. It is not true that Shingeki has exclusively produced only 'honyakugeki'. In the post-war period too, there were a number of excellent Shingeki playwrights including Mishima Yukio, Kinoshita Junji, Abe Kôbô and Akimoto Matsuyo. Then, why were there a large number of opinions saying Shingeki had been dominated by foreign plays until the 1950s? What does it mean in the Japanese cultural context?

⁴⁶ Suzuki Tadashi, *Ekkyo suru chikara*. (The Power Crossing Borders) Tokyo, Parco, 1984. p.60.

This English quotation is based on an English translation of Suzuki Tadashi's *The Way of Acting* (translated by J. Thomas Rimer. New York, Theatre Communication Group, 1986. pp.3-4.), although I changed some parts of the translation. The changes I made include the restoration of a proper noun Shingeki (Suzuki uses in the original Japanese book, but, in the translation, the word was translated into "the mainstream of modern Japanese theatre"). The aim of this English translation is probably to introduce the theatre writings of Suzuki, "one of the foremost figures in the contemporary theatre, to the English-speaking world" (Rimer). However, it is improper that the word Shingeki, the quite unique movement which has dominated Japanese theatre for a long time, was deleted from the translation without any comment only because it is not known outside Japan. The deletion reveals an attitude which pays little attention to the local cultural context of the emergence of Suzuki.

In order to answer this question, we can examine Sakai Naoki's argument on modernity in the history of Japanese thought. Sakai writes:

The entire discipline (of Japanese thought) has been built on the premise that, if there is thought in the West, there ought to be its equivalent in Japan. But these demands necessarily gave rise to the sense of a lack, as is best testified to by the often professed bitter realization that there was nothing worth calling philosophy in Japan, although there should be an equivalent to it. Because of this mimetic desire, intellectuals since Nishi Amane (1829-97)⁴⁷ have repeatedly deplored the absence of a systematic reasoning or of philosophical thinking in Japan.⁴⁸

It is possible to say the same thing about the field of theatre too. The premise that, if there is 'theatre' in the West, there ought to be its equivalent in Japan, drove Japanese theatre practitioners to create 'Japanese modern theatre' by presenting 'honyakugeki'. Even if the play they produced was a Japanese play, that is just an offspring from the mimetic desire.

There were attempts to establish Japanese modern theatre through research of 'honyakugeki'. This aspiration obviously arose from demands for symmetry and equality. However, as long as such attempts (even new Japanese plays) amounted to mimicry of the West, the absence of 'Japanese theatre' would be repeatedly deplored. In the 1950s, the great shock caused by the Japanese premiere of the Moscow Art Theatre's *The Cherry Orchard* provoked many criticisms against 'honyakugeki' produced by Shingeki. It is possible to consider this as a reflection of a sense of absence displayed repeatedly in the history of Japanese modern theatre.

When we see this context from the comparative viewpoints of Japanese and Australian theatre, we can find a similarity in the Australian situation before the alternative theatre movement, where the younger generation complained that there were very few Australian plays, that there were very few plays depicting Australian social issues and Australian nationhood, and with Australian English.

⁴⁷ Nishi Amane was "an educator and governmental official, and one of the first to assert that Western civilization should be a model for Japan's national reforms in the late 19th century." (Alan Campbell et al. eds., *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopaedia*. Tokyo, Kôdansha, 1993. p.1097.)

⁴⁸ Sakai Naoki, *Translation & Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*. Minneapolis & London, University of Minnesota Press, 1997. p.48.

The quest for national identity in the Australian alternative theatre was related to the cultural movement of the late 1950s and the 1960s. For example, in *The Australian Legend* published in 1958, Russel Ward found the image of the typical Australian in the Australian bush legends.⁴⁹ In the 1960s, leftist intellectuals of those days criticised 'the Australian Way of Life' influenced by Americanism which regards material wealth most important. According to Richard White, they "concentrated on convincing themselves of a natural egalitarianism and collectivism in the 'national character' or the 'typical Australian'",⁵⁰ some of which were used in the Australian alternative theatre movement too, as I will discuss in the next section.

It is possible to say that the backlash against 'cultural cringe' is common between Japanese and Australian alternative theatre movements. If we consider this backlash against the cultural cringe, in other words recognising the limitation of imitating the central culture and aspiring to uniqueness and differences from the centred culture, as a sort of cultural nationalism, it will be useful to refer to Yoshino Kôzaku's idea of 'ethnoperipherism'. Yoshino argues that, for the reaffirmation of national identity, the Japanese did not use the idea of ethnocentrism in which 'their' difference is used to enhance the sense of 'us'. According to Yoshino, the Japanese used 'our' difference for the reaffirmation of national identity. After pointing out that the Japanese have regarded the Japanese culture to be on the 'periphery' in relation to the 'central' civilisations, Yoshino argues:

China and the West have constituted the two 'significant others' from which the Japanese have borrowed models and against which they have affirmed and reaffirmed their identity. For the Japanese, learning from China and the West has been experienced as acquiring the 'universal' civilisation. The Japanese have thus had to stress their particularistic difference in order to differentiate themselves from the universal Chinese and Westerners.⁵¹

This approach is adaptable not only to the history of Japan, but also to the history of Japanese theatre. The understanding that Japanese theatre is on the

⁴⁹ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1958.

⁵⁰ Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1788-1980*. St Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1981. p.167.

⁵¹ Yoshino Kôzaku, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Enquiry*. London & New York, Routledge, 1992. p.11.

'periphery' urged Japanese theatre practitioners to concentrate on learning from the 'central' and 'universal' Western theatre. Moreover, in order to differentiate themselves from the 'central' theatre, they had to stress their particularistic difference in the form of the quest for national identity in the 1960s and 1970s. This attitude can be seen in the Australian cultural context. The Australian cultural cringe means the colonial mentality of the Australians, who have never thought that Australia could be 'central'. Australian theatre also has borrowed its model from the 'central' theatre. In order to differentiate itself from the 'central' theatre, the Australian alternative theatre of the 1960s and 1970s also had to stress its particularistic difference in the form of the quest for national identity. Australia and Japan have something in common in terms of the understanding that they are on the 'periphery'. If the world-wide movement of the alternative theatre emerged in the 'centre', it was inevitable that the movement ended up as the quest for national identity in both countries.

A cultural cringe brings the consciousness of being on the periphery in relation to the centre, and connects it with cultural nationalism. Therefore, it seems to be important to find expressions of the cultural cringe in the situation of pre-alternative theatre movements both in Japan and Australia, and to see its reactions as an expression of cultural nationalism.

The quest for national identity

In this section, I will examine the quest for national identity in Shôgekijô by comparing it with an equivalent of Australian alternative theatre. To be more precise, I will deal with the alternative theatres' attempts to rediscover national theatre, national history, national characters, national ethos and national bodies.

In Japan, in order to overcome the 'cultural cringe', Shôgekijô sought after a new form of Japanese theatre. Unlike Osanai and Tsubouchi, they found the new form in the quest for national identity. Although Shingeki also had felt the lack of new Japanese plays, they did not take the same approach as Shôgekijô did. That is because Shingeki was deeply related to left-wing ideology. In order to counter the conservative swing, especially during World War II, Shingeki had to prevent the nationalistic element coming into their productions. Because left wing ideology is not consistent with nationalism, Shingeki could not confront the subject of 'the conquest for national identity'. In contrast, the first generation of Shôgekijô, which was free from the ideological restraint of Shingeki, was able to adapt itself to the

movement in search of national identity.

Looking back to the past is one common path to establishing a sense of national identity. In Japan, the leaders of Shôgekijô looked to traditional Japanese performing arts. As mentioned before, Shingeki tried to create modern theatre in Japan by learning from the West. This meant the denial of pre-modern Japanese theatre. Japanese Theatre critic Kan Takayuki writes:

The high-speed economic growth of the 1960s completely modernised cities in Japan. It modernised theatre too, so that forms of theatre which failed to keep up with the modernisation were weeded out. The tradition of pre-modern theatre in the modern era, like brainstorming theatre companies doing small shows at places such as the Shinohara music hall in Senju, an old town of Tokyo, was rapidly forced to the edge of extinction.

As leaders of post-Shingeki became conscious of the fact that the tension between Shingeki and themselves was the confrontation between Japanese modernity and themselves through theatre, they were forced to realise that their duty was to help the endangered pre-modernity in theatre to survive.⁵²

As we have seen, in the 1960s, Shingeki, an offspring of the denial of Japanese traditional theatre such as Kabuki and Noh, and of a desire for a Japanese modern theatre equivalent to Western theatre, was considered as the representation of modernity. Therefore, Shingeki became an authority which the alternative theatre movement, from the 1960s, plotted to overturn. Therefore, it was natural that the leaders of Shôgekijô, who denied Shingeki, became interested in the pre-modern Japanese theatre which Shingeki denied. The pre-modern theatres such as Noh, Kabuki, and Jôruri (Bunraku) still existed in this period. There are many plays of those genres which were first performed hundreds of years ago, and are performed even now. The leaders of Shôgekijô took an interest in these plays, but what they tried to introduce to their theatre was the essence of those performing arts, which is far different from the essential nature of Western modern theatre.

For example, Kara Jûrô investigated Kabuki, but he and his company the Jôkyô Gekijô did not perform any Kabuki plays. Today, Kabuki is performed at large theatres, and Kabuki actors, inheritors of the tradition, have a high status in

⁵² Kan, 1995. p.190.

Japanese theatre. In today's Japan, Kabuki is part of a high culture like Western opera. However, 400 years ago, during the early days of Kabuki, it did not have the form of 'drama', and was only simple revue showing group dancing. In keeping with the fact that the word 'Kabuki' originally meant 'anarchy', the original Kabuki was far from the present Kabuki whose performer gains a high status and becomes a national treasure. Inspired by the legend that Kabuki originated from the dance of a woman called Izumo no Okuni, who performed in Kyoto about 400 years ago, Kara set up his company's tent theatre in Shijôgawara, Kyoto in 1968. The play which the Jôkyô Gekijô performed at this time had no relation with Kabuki. However, what Kara aimed was not only the resistance to conventional theatre but also the restoration of traditional performing space in Japan.⁵³

Suzuki Tadashi is also one of the theatre practitioners who investigated Kabuki. Suzuki founded Waseda Shôgekijô with playwright Betsuyaku Minoru, his former classmate at Waseda University. However, after Betsuyaku who wrote plays left the company, Suzuki did not have a new play for the company's performance in 1969. Lacking a writer, Suzuki directed a work which mixed up fragments of great plays of all ages and countries, *Gekiteki narumono wo megutte* (About Something Dramatic). This became the work which first earned the director distinction. The great plays of all ages and countries included Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Kabuki plays. While Kara attempted to introduce not Kabuki plays themselves but the performing space of Kabuki such as 'kawara',⁵⁴ what Suzuki found in Kabuki is the distinct characteristic of lines in the Kabuki plays. Suzuki writes:

[Scripts of Kabuki] allow us to confront a feeling at the bottom of egos about the subconscious, fixed words and behaviours and to discover physical memories, which are forgotten in everyday life, as theatrical words.⁵⁵

In other words, Suzuki insists that he can find in Kabuki scripts the old Japanese words which were forgotten in modernised lifestyle, and words which the

⁵³ On the ground of the legend that Kabuki was born on 'kawara' (a dry riverhead), Kara insists that theatre should return to the modern 'kawara' which must exist anywhere. See Kara Jûrô. *Tokkenteki nikutairon*. (Discussion on the Privileged Body) Tokyo, Hakusuisha, 1997. pp.20-25.

⁵⁴ 'Kawara' literally means 'a dry riverbed' In the pre-modern period, performers including Kabuki actors were the members of the lowest class of the Japanese society. The government permitted them to perform only at riverbeds on the fringe of cities. These performance spaces developed into theatres during the Edo period (1600-1868).

⁵⁵ Suzuki Tadashi, *Naikaku no wa*. (The Sum of Three Interior Angles) Tokyo,

Japanese 'body' remembers even if the Japanese lifestyle has been modernised. Suzuki analyses it as follows:

We can find it if we compare Kabuki scripts with Western plays. Reading Kabuki scripts requires a special way of reading: a way of reading which follows the context of the body. ...The words of Kabuki are the language which the body requires --- each punctuation mark is a punctuation mark which the body requires --- and the language which Kabuki as the linguistic world created along with its audience.⁵⁶

In other words, what Suzuki found in the language of Kabuki is not logically-constructed language but the language which the body of the Japanese can create. Suzuki summarises his idea as "the language which sensuously took itself in the style with a kind of ethnic reality".⁵⁷ This idea of "ethnic reality" clearly shows that Suzuki found scripts of Kabuki to be something in which he could find something essentially Japanese, something 'national'.

Theatre practitioners of the 1960s and 1970s investigated not only Kabuki but also Japanese story-telling traditions such as Katarimono. This was a form which was performed by Japanese minstrels with music and stories about local histories and legends. Kurotento 68/71 (Black tent 68/71), whose leader was Satô Makoto, included education and publishing in their activities. As one of their educational programs, in 1979, they dealt with *Sekkyô-bushi Oguri hangan* as a heroic tale medieval people handed down.⁵⁸ Satô explains that the reason he was attracted to Japanese traditional story-telling is because of the Japanese language. Satô felt odd when he wrote his early plays with the 'quasi-translation style' like Shingeki. When he knew the works of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, a Kabuki and Jôruri playwright of the 18th century, he found in Chikamatsu's style the most appropriate Japanese language to write his plays. He claims that this was when he became conscious of being Japanese.⁵⁹ This example shows that Satô, like Kara and Suzuki, found something 'national' in the old Japanese expressions which

Jiritsu Shobô, 1973. p.104.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p.233.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ôzasa Yoshio, *Dôjidai engeki to gekisakkatachi*. (Contemporary Theatre and Playwrights). Tokyo, Geki Shobô, 1980. p.82.

⁵⁹ Satô Makoto cited in David Goodman, *Fujisan mieta: Satô Makoto ni okeru kakumei no engeki*. (I Found Mt Fuji: Satô Makoto's Revolutionary Theatre) Tokyo, Hakusuisha, 1983.

were not contaminated by modernism.

In the case of Australia, the alternative theatre sought national identity in history. The APG resisted the situation in which mainstream theatre had presented only plays by foreign countries, and attempted to create works by locals. In looking for something local, they rediscovered an old Australian play called *Marvellous Melbourne*⁶⁰. *Marvellous Melbourne* was performed by the APG at Melbourne's Pram Factory in December 1970. What is important is that *Marvellous Melbourne* was the first play presented after the APG moved from La Mama to the Pram Factory. For this reason, *Marvellous Melbourne* perhaps showed the future direction of the APG. I would like to survey the creative process of *Marvellous Melbourne* because it is important to grasp the play's significance in terms of nationalism. Leonard Radic explains the process in detail as follows:

From the middle of 1970, Jack Hibberd, John Romeril, Graeme Blundell, Max Gillies, and the historian Margaret Williams held a series of workshops. Williams was a PhD student and specialised in the history of Australian theatre in the 19th century. She discovered an old play called *Marvellous Melbourne*, and showed it to the members of the APG.⁶¹

The 1889 version of *Marvellous Melbourne* was written by Alfred Dampier and J. H. Wrangham. The play was premiered on 19 January 1889. The production gained a large audience, and had a long run of more than five weeks. Romeril and Hibberd did not restore the old play but created a completely new play which reproduced the atmosphere of 19th century Melbourne in 1970. Another thing which Williams taught the members of the APG was the history of Australian theatre in the 19th century. Australia was a mecca of light theatre such as vaudeville. In the 19th century, Sydney and Melbourne became worldwide showcases of light theatre which attracted performers from all over the world. The element of light theatre as an Australian theatrical tradition was included in the 1970 version of *Marvellous Melbourne*. Certainly, this attempt to introduce light theatre coincided with the trend of worldwide alternative theatre movement in those days which re-evaluated light theatre and ritual theatre. However, more importantly, this attempt to rediscover an old style of theatre in the Australian theatre history clearly shows an attitude to search for national identity.

⁶⁰ Jack Hibberd and John Romeril, "*Marvellous Melbourne*" *Theatre Australia* 2(4), August 1977, pp.38-44, & 2(5), September/October 1977, pp.30-39.

⁶¹ Radic, 1991, pp.89-90.

Both Japanese Shôgekijô and Australian alternative theatre in different ways attempted to reproduce the circumstances around the local old theatre. Moreover, they tried to find national identity in the past narratives. The methodologies in both countries seem to be similar.

Let us take the example of Satô Makoto's *Onnagoroshi aburano jigoku* (The Woman-Killer and the Hell of Oil) (1969). This play is based on a play with the same title, written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon as a Bunraku play in 1721. The original story that a beautiful wife of an oil merchant was killed by a delinquent youngster evolved into the contemporary story that a female owner of a petrol station was killed by a motorcycle gang. Satô's adaptation is not faithful to the original play of Chikamatsu: the fact that the Mistress is a Korean resident in Japan reflects Japan of the 1970. No one would notice that the play is an adaptation of the classic play of 250 years ago if the play was not entitled *Onnagoroshi aburano jigoku*. Although Satô's play is filled with things of the 1970s which the original classic play does not have, American researcher David Goodman points out that there are many things which emphasise Japaneseness in the play: for example, one of the members of the motorcycle gang is a house painter with an obsessive interest in painting the picture of Mount Fuji on the walls of public baths. Besides, a song sung in the play consists of words which had been used up until the war, but were forgotten then. The image of Mount Fuji and the old Japanese words remind us of what Japan used to be, and evoke nostalgia.⁶²

Satô also dealt with historical figures in his plays. One of his most important works, *Nezumikozô jirokichi* (The Rat) (1969) deals with an actual robber called Nezumikozô in the middle of the 19th century. The life of Nezumikozô was exaggerated in a Kabuki play by Kawatake Mokuami, the most important Kabuki playwright in the 19th century, so that Nezumikozô became a national hero. Since then, the story of the robber has been dealt with in Japanese novels, plays and films. Satô did not attempt to reproduce the true history of Nezumikôzo. Rather, he changed the character of Nezumikozô into five poor persons who dream of reforming the world as Nezumikozô did. They represent three levels of the Japanese: the depressed people in the feudal society of the middle of the 19th century, the people who confront devastation just after the war and the people of 1970 who are longing for a communist revolution. David Goodman points out that

⁶² Goodman, 1983. pp.88-89.

Satô emphasises the identity of the Japanese, which has stayed unchanged in opposition to the Westernisation since the latter half of the 19th century, and the influx of American culture since the defeat of the war.⁶³ It is possible to say that this attitude of Satô shows a desire to seek national identity.

In the case of Australia, in *Marvellous Melbourne*, there appear historical figures such as Alfred Dampier, Louis Esson and Breaker Morant. Apart from *Marvellous Melbourne*, there are other plays of the same period which deal with Australian historical figures. The plays include *The Legend of King O'Malley*, premiered at Sydney's Jane Street Theatre in 1970. In this play, the protagonist is King O'Malley, an extraordinary politician who is claimed to have founded the Commonwealth Bank. These re-discoveries of historical figures lead to the rediscovery of Australian history. Besides, the stories of historical figures are not just biographies, but metaphors for the situation of Australia in the 1970s. For example, King O'Malley breaks the force of objection against Billy Hughes who proposed a national referendum to introduce conscription into Australia during World War I. O'Malley's objection is the metaphor of the movement against the Vietnam War and conscription in the 1970s. This way of dealing with historical figures makes it possible for the creators and the audience to confirm that the Australian history they discovered is connected to present day Australia.

The quest for national identity included an attempt to describe the national character. As mentioned above, the 'ocker' as a national character, was discovered in this period, and was used in many plays and films. The writer who contributed the most works to this genre was David Williamson. In his works of the 1970s, Williamson depicts 'ockerness' in each class, especially in the middle-class. One of the good examples is *Don's Party* which premiered at the Pram Factory in 1971. This play was also filmed in 1976, and both the play and the film were successful. The play uncovered that not only working-class but also middle-class Australians such as a lawyer, a teacher, a professor and an accountant were vulgar and amorous, and that they were nothing but 'ockers'.

The image of Australians which Williamson depicted in the 1970s was added to the various images of Australians found in each generation. However, the period of the 1970s is different from other periods when writers sought Australian national identity. The 1970s is the period when the White Australia policy ended, so that

⁶³ Ibid., pp.98-135.

ethnic diversity became more visible in Australian society. Despite such a social change, Williamson depicted Anglo-Australian middle-class ockers as a national type on the assumption that there exists 'the typical image of Australians'. This attitude to seek a national type in the face of the multicultural reality is quite important in understanding what the national identity was for the alternative theatre practitioners in the 1970s.

The ocker was not a type used exclusively by Williamson. A number of playwrights positively tried to depict the ocker in their plays. Lisa Jacobson has invented a humorous ocker's Curriculum Vitae, which reads that the ocker's parents are Jack Hibberd, John Romeril, David Williamson, and so on.⁶⁴ As Jacobson says, the playwrights belonging to the alternative theatre movement started writing ocker dramas at the same time.

In *Norm and Ahmed*, Buzo created an ocker character called Norm who is rough and unpolished. In the case of John Romeril's *The Floating World*, which Jacobson mentions as a typical ocker-play, Les Harding, the main character, is filled with various exaggerations emphasizing the ocker disposition (for example, Les indulges in beer, vomiting over and over again, and also likes to recite very nasty limericks).

What is in common between Norm and Les is that both characters are hopeless racists. Therefore the ocker in the works of this period is not always an amiable type, but could be the subject of severe criticism. Jacobson explains the image of the ocker which was recycled in many plays and films as follows:

The Ocker as icon was a strange metonym for national identity. His habits included a preoccupation with the orifices used for drinking and vomiting, belching and farting, defecating and ejaculating... One might have hoped that the 1970s would produce a more desirable figure, but Australian drama was just beginning to break free from the colonial icon and claiming to be Australian - even if that did mean white, middle-class and male.⁶⁵

Indeed many Australian plays in this period dealt with the ocker characters. However, the usage of them is different depending on each play. For example, in

⁶⁴ Lisa Jacobson, "The ocker in Australian drama" *Meanjin* 49(1), Autumn 1990, pp.137-147; quote from 138.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

The Floating World, the mentality of Les Harding, who is going mad as the ship approaches Japan, is critically investigated. Therefore the character of Les Harding has depth. In contrast, such depth of character is completely removed in Jack Hibberd's *Dimboola* which can be also categorised as an ocker play. The characters there are far from real and are represented like puppets. This shallowness of the characters in *Dimboola* was pointed out by some critics: Ian Robinson says "the cast have only one or two lines followed by long stretches of inactivity so have to use broad strokes for characterisation".⁶⁶ and Dennis Carroll says "character in the play is a sketch, part cartoon and part archetype".⁶⁷

I would like to examine some characters as examples, to confirm that each character is given only quite stereotypical characteristics. The groom, except for during the last speech, keeps saying "No worries". This extreme monotony makes the audience laugh. Horry, a relative of the bride, always tries to sing a song, taking advantage of the privilege of MC. He simply repeats this behaviour for the whole play. The priest exists only to express a vulgarity which the clergy are never permitted to have in general. Mutton and Bayonet, local drunks, often get mixed in the audience and heckle the people on the stage. They are given a part as hecklers in the play.

What is most important is that *Dimboola* is ritual theatre. The idea that restoring pre-modern theatre and approaching the archetype of theatre leads to a challenge to the mainstream modern theatre was quite popular among the alternative theatres around the world in the 1960s and 1970s. *Dimboola* was produced along the same lines. In fact, Paul McGillick says "In this *Dimboola* echoes an earlier form of theatre --- before the theatre became institutionalized --- itinerant performers of the commedia dell'arte and other forms of improvisational street and court theatre".⁶⁸ Additionally, McGillick considers a bizarre skit about matrimony performed by Mutton and Bayonet "almost Elizabethan in tone".⁶⁹ Elements that remind us of medieval and renaissance plays can often be seen in the productions of *Dimboola*. To take an example, referring to the production of *Dimboola* directed by David Williamson in 1973, John Hainsworth says "Mutton and Bayonet are equivalents of the Lord of Misrule who presided over Christmas revelry at the

⁶⁶ Ian Robinson, "A play on the Australian wedding" *National Times* 7-12 May 1973.

⁶⁷ Dennis Carroll, *Australian Contemporary Drama*. Sydney: Currency Press, 1995. p.279.

⁶⁸ McGillick, 1988, p.52.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.54.

Inns of Court and elsewhere in sixteenth-century England".⁷⁰ I would like to go further and add another example. The last scene (performed by Bayonet, Mutton, Aggie, and Father O'Sea) is acted without words, so that it looks like a dumb show in Elizabethan plays or *commedia dell'arte*.

Thus, it is correct to say that *Dimboola* expressed the archetypal ocker characters by borrowing the idea of stock characters and pre-modern theatrical expression from Europe's traditional and folk theatre. The ockers who appeared in *Dimboola* are themselves stock characters. Quoting various forms of pre-modern theatre, the author deleted unnecessary elements of the characters (that is, a depth as a human being) except for the characteristic of the ocker. The characters of ockers became a highly symbolized icon only to show how they are ocker. At the same time, the ocker was presented as the pure icon of national identity. It is interesting that *Dimboola*, which was influenced by a 'global' trend of alternative theatre, developed the ocker as a 'local' and 'national' icon.

Anti-British sentiment was another thing which the playwrights of the Australian alternative theatre had in common. Let us take the example of *Marvellous Melbourne* again.⁷¹ In this play, Louis Esson, the actual Australian playwright who was influenced by the Abbey Theatre and founded The Pioneer Players in 1922, appears as a character. Louis Esson says,

I shall write plays that depict the lives of Melbournians as they really are. I shall people the stage with my own people, and ignore all imported myths and England's mediocre rejects. I shall write in a Fitzroy and Carlton tongue. I shall have Melbournians sing and suffer, dance and die, as well as any Athenian or Londoner...⁷²

It is clear that this scene represents antipathy towards the British high culture. Moreover, Esson says this not only as a person of the end of the 19th century but also as a person of 1970. Louis Esson symbolises the Australian theatre as the antithesis of the British theatre, and at the same time, he also symbolizes APG's strategy to quest for national identity. The writers also have Breaker Morant

⁷⁰ J.D. Hainsworth, *Hibberd*. North Ryde, Methuen Australia, 1987. p.52.

⁷¹ In the interview with the author in October, 2000, John Romeril, the co-writer of *Marvellous Melbourne* said that he wrote this play for a quest for national identity.

⁷² Qtd in Hibberd and Romeril, 1977, p.42.

appearing in the latter half of *Marvellous Melbourne*. Breaker Morant, who is a real person in Australian history, indeed killed many Boer POWs under the orders by the British. He also killed a German missionary, which made the British fear that the Germans would take the side of the Boers. The British executed Morant and his men as a scapegoat to satisfy the Germans. *Marvellous Melbourne* is the first play which dealt with the actual story of Breaker Morant.⁷³

Of course, anti-British sentiment and an inferiority complex towards the British are also reflected in behaviours of ockers as mentioned above. In *Norm and Ahmed*, Norm shows a too-sensitive reaction to the 'Queen's English' being fluently spoken by a Pakistani student. In *The Floating World*, Les Harding keeps abusing an ex-British officer on board. Apart from in theatre, anti-British sentiment can be seen in ocker films in the same period. Let us take the example of the Australian film *The Adventure of Barry Mackenzie* directed by Bruce Beresford in 1972. Barry, the protagonist, is forced to go to London to see more of the world in order to inherit his father's property. With his Aunt Edna, he arrives in London. He wears an Akubura hat, old fashioned suits, and a T shirt with his slogan "Pommy Bastards" on it. Barry causes a big fuss among snobbish British people with his humorous chauvinism. The characterisation of Barry McKenzie exaggerated the ridiculous feature of Australians who regard anti-British sentiment as their identity. These plays and films reflecting anti-British sentiment certainly drew attention to the identity of the Australian, whether it was taken seriously or it was ridiculed. In this way, creators of plays and films in this period found national identity not only in the Australia history but also in the behaviour and sentiments of contemporary Australians.

In Japan, theatre practitioners had an interest in the mentality and sense which the Japanese may subconsciously retain even if they live modernized lives. Many works of Terayama are often described as 'dozoku' (native and primitive). Dozoku also means folklore, rituals and ways of thinking which the people in rural areas still retain, and which many Japanese used to have. Terayama classifies his plays such as *Aomoriken no semushi otoko* (A Hunchback in Aomori Prefecture) (1967), *Aohige* (Bluebeard) (1968), *Inugami* (The God of Dog) (1969), *Shintokumar*

⁷³ In 1978, Kenneth Ross's play *Breaker Morant* was produced by Melbourne Theatre Company. This play was adapted into the film *Breaker Morant*, directed by Bruce Beresford. This film became a box-office hit. Also, this film is regarded as one of the films made in the early 1980s which deal with Australian national identity along with *Phar Lap* (1983), *Gallipoli* (1981), *The Man from Snowy River* (1982), and so on.

(Shintokumaru) (1978), and his film *Denen ni shisu* (Death in Countryside) (1974) as works which explore the nature of 'dozoku'.⁷⁴

Terayama Shûji's play *Shintokumaru*, premiered by the Tenjô Sajiki Theatre Company was subtitled "a sideshow opera with a theme of Sekkyô-bushi". Sekkyô-bushi is a genre of traditional story telling. Compared with Jôruri, another genre of story telling which included sophisticated music and narratives by collaborating with puppet theatre in large cities such as Kyoto, Edo (Tokyo) and Osaka in the Edo era (1600-1868), Sekkyô-bushi is unsophisticated and barely exists in rural areas. The stories which Sekkyô-bushi deals with are strongly influenced by Buddhism. A typical story of Sekkyô-bushi is that a protagonist, who suffers from a miserable fate such as blindness, leprosy or other disability, is saved by the power of Buddhism. Sekkyô-bushi was created in medieval times, became popular in the early Edo period, and, since then, has retained five important repertoires. One of the five repertoires is *Shuntokumatu* which inspired Terayama's play *Shintokumaru*. As mentioned above, the place of Sekkyô-bushi as popular performing arts was taken by another story-telling Jôruri in the Edo era. However, the five repertoires were adapted into Jôruri, and the Jôruri versions are still popular in Japan. *Shuntokumaru* is also a popular play of Jôruri (Bunraku), even today. The five repertoires were also adapted into stories for children, which were widely read, well into the 1970s (Today, such stories are not read by Japanese children). As we have seen, Sekkyô-bushi became out of date in the Edo era, but its stories were well known by the Japanese at least until the 1970s.

The stories of Sekkyô-bushi were adapted into Jôruri and children's stories, while the form of Sekkyô-bushi still remains in rural areas. The inspiration which Terayama received from Sekkyô-bushi is the primitive form of Japanese performing arts which did not exist in Tokyo of the 1960s and 1970s, but which did exist in rural Japan. Also, Terayama was inspired by the fact that Sekkyô-bushi retains the atmosphere of medieval performing arts compared with other traditional performing arts. Terayama was not interested in Kabuki and Jôruri which became sophisticated as urban performing arts during the Edo era. In his commentary on the Tenjô Sajiki's production of *Aomoriken no semushi otoko* in 1967, Terayama explains his work by quoting a critic's review as follows:

⁷⁴ Terayama Shûji, "Sakuhin nôto" (Commentary) *Terayama Shûji no Gikyoku*. (Plays of Terayama Shûji) 9 vols. Tokyo, Shichôsha, 1986. Vol.6. p.350.

Kabuki has degenerated, and lost its darkness and the smell of blood. However, *Aomoriken no semushi otoko* has the darkness and the smell of blood which Kabuki has lost.⁷⁵

Terayama certainly finds in Sekkyô-bushi the power of unsophisticated, old Japanese performing arts – not a sanitized way of expressing and uncovering the instinct of human beings. The story of the original Sekkyô-bushi version of *Shuntokumaru* is as follows: A noble and handsome young man called Shuntokumaru is poisoned by his step-mother. With the effect of the poison, he becomes blind. He is banished from his home, and becomes a beggar. However, his health is recovered by the prayers of his fiancé, and his status is also restored, while the step-mother is cast out. In the more sophisticated Jôruri version, to this story is added an episode in which the step-mother comes to love Shuntokumaru who is almost as old as her. Terayama used this mother-son story of Sekkyô-bushi along with the chant of Sekkyô-bushi. Terayama found his interest in the love-hate relation between Shuntokumaru and his step-mother and created other works dealing with the incestuous relationships between mother and son. In his film *Denen ni shisu*, he described a son's killing of his mother at the spiritual level. To describe the strong mother-son relationship which could never be cut off even if a son killed a mother, Terayama created the imagery that the mother continues to get pregnant and give births to her son infinitely. This surreal imagery became the basic subject of *Shintokumatu*.

With the non-sanitized atmosphere of Sekkyô-bushi, Terayama attempted to describe the strong relationship between mother and son, which is regarded as a feature of Japanese culture even today. It has been believed in Japan that the quasi-incestuous relationship between mother and son distinguishes the Japanese culture.⁷⁶ Therefore, it can be said that Terayama depicted the intensity of the

⁷⁵ Terayama Shûji, "Sakuhin nôto" (Commentary). *Terayama Shûji no Gikyoku*. (Plays of Terayama Shûji) 9 vols. Tokyo, Shichôsha, 1983. Vol.2. p.348.

⁷⁶ This mentality in the Japanese culture has been criticised especially by feminists. Today, the phenomenon symbolising this mentality is 'hikikomori' which often can be seen in the contemporary Japanese society. 'Hikikomori' is a phenomenon that Japanese young males refuse communication with others and shut themselves in their rooms for years. Today, 'hikikomori' is regarded as a social problem peculiar to Japan. (Even in Australia, 'hikikomori' was reported as a phenomenon peculiar to contemporary Japan in a SBS TV program in 2003.) Ueno Chizuko, the leading feminist, concluded that 'hikikomori' is caused by mothers who become obedient slaves of their sons. (Ueno Chizuko, *Mazakon shônen no matsuro: otoko to onna no mirai*. (The Tragic Ends of 'Mama's Boys': The Future of Men and Women) Tokyo, Kawai Bunka Kyôiku Kenkûjo, 1986) However, some

mother-son relationship as a distinctive characteristic of the Japanese.

Terayama intentionally introduced folkways, which had disappeared in big cities in the 1960s and 1970s but survived in rural areas, into his works. He showed to the audience of urban theatres the fact that the ethos and philosophy surrounding such folkways are still alive in modernized Japan. In other words, Terayama attempted to awaken the urban audience to the memory of the Japanese ethos and old philosophy. In his commentary on *Shintokumaru*, Terayama explains his work by quoting a review as follows:

The play bases on the legend of Shintokumaru, adds a contemporary interpretation to it, develops its bloody folkways and faith in the God of Mother into our ethnic memory, and mixes the West and Japan before we know it.⁷⁷

It is certain that Terayama's plays including *Shintokumaru* had a power to make the audience believe that such an ethos and ethnic memory were still alive in modernised Japan. One review of the premiere of *Aomoriken no semushi otoko* put it as follows:

This bizarre show drags out mystic passions lurking in the bottom of Japan, and continues to anatomize them.⁷⁸

Apart from the incestuous relationship between mother and son, the imagery which Terayama used to awaken the Japanese ethos included the feudal patriarchy system represented by a Buddhist family altar, a feudal community represented by village festivals, and shamanism such as cursing and magic. He also often introduced the imagery of a sideshow into his works as a stranger to the excluded community. He explains this effect as follows:

The theme of contrasting the festival of an agricultural community with the festival of a sideshow as a foreign community (in *Shintokumaru*) is also what I attempted in our Tenjô Sajiki's film *Denen ni shisu*.⁷⁹

people criticised Ueno saying that hikikomori is a mental disease, and that Ueno's understanding of hikikomori could encourage prejudice against it.

⁷⁷ Terayama, 1986. p.350.

⁷⁸ *Mainichi Shinbun*. 15 June, 1967.

⁷⁹ Terayama, 1986. p.350.

Terayama says that he introduces sideshows into his play to "segment the continuity of everyday life".⁸⁰ This remark shows that Terayama assumes that an excluded community exists not only in rural areas but also in modernised big cities, and makes his theatre act the role of a stranger to the 'urban' excluded community.

These methodologies of Terayama were also shared by the leaders of the first generation of Shôgekijô as part of their relation to the modern theatre as represented by Shingeki. Terayama criticises Shingeki, saying that Shingeki lacks attractions which excite people, like the circus we looked forward to in our childhoods, and that Shingeki, which has advocated the cause of modernism, lacks ritual elements which theatre used to have.⁸¹ The 'ritual element' Terayama mentions was an element in the worldwide alternative theatre including the APG's *Dimboola*. However, unlike European and American alternative theatres, Australian and Japanese alternative theatre practitioners used ritual elements as part of a quest for national identity.

While Terayama took notice of 'dozoku-sei' (nativeness and primitiveness), Kara attempted to introduce 'taishû-sei' (subculture) into his works. Kara used old cartoons, heroes of TV programs for children, and old pop fictions as imagery in his plays. The audiences are supposed to find what they loved in their childhood in the plays, and to be overcome with nostalgia. Like Terayama, Kara's strategy to evoke nostalgia is also the discovery of national memories which have been neglected by modern theatre (Shingeki).

The Australian alternative theatre's introduction of light theatre such as vaudeville into their works had the same intention as these attempts of Japanese Shôgekijô. By focusing on local folklore, stories, beliefs, and memories, both Japanese and Australian alternative theatre practitioners tried to remove the cover of modernism, and quest for national identity.

As we have seen, both Japanese and Australian theatre looked for national identity with similar methodologies. As such methodology originated from the global movement of alternative theatre, the similarity between both countries is not accidental. The feature of Japanese alternative theatre, which cannot be found

⁸⁰ Terayama Shûji cited from *Suzuki Tadashi taidanshû*. (Interviews with Suzuki Tadashi) Tokyo, Riburo Pôto, 1984. p.184.

⁸¹ Ibid.

in the Australian equivalent, is the discovery of 'the ethnic body'. The person who focused on the ethnic body was the director Suzuki Tadashi. Unlike Terayama, Kara and Satô who directed and wrote plays, Suzuki did not write plays. Therefore, Suzuki especially had an interest in physical expressions. As mentioned before, Suzuki founded Waseda Shôgekijô together with the playwright Betsuyaku Minoru. Since the departure of the writer Betsuyaku from the company, Suzuki has never cooperated with any playwright, and has created his productions using various texts of masterpieces of all ages and countries including Kabuki, Shakespeare and classic Greek plays.

In 1974, Suzuki directed Euripides's *The Trojan Women*. In this production, Suzuki introduced a new form of use of the performance body. This involves the performers maintaining a squatting position throughout. The theatre critic Senda Akihiko writes that the squatting position in Suzuki's production was a procedure for the re-examination of the original play, and for the creation of a new work through a 'national' sense and body of the Japanese. Senda regards Shingeki as "a fertile tradition to make their theatre as close to the Western theatre as possible, neglecting the physical expression, sensibility, aesthetic feeling peculiar to the Japanese (or Asians)", and he regards Suzuki's 'squatting' as a resistance to Shingeki.⁸²

Suzuki does not ask the performer to produce the type of acting required in the Stanislavski system, where an actor should identify with a character. Rather, according to the critic Ôzasa Yoshio, Suzuki asks the performer to create a new personality with his/her sensibility, feeling and life history. Ôzasa argues that, in Suzuki's theory, a performer should "live his/her own situation which possibly happens to him/her by reading the words in the text".⁸³ In other words, a performer should not reproduce a character as faithfully to the playwright's intention as possible, but perform while imaging what he/she would do if the situation in the play happened to him/her. The assumption of 'if the situation happens to him/her' means 'if the situation happened to him/her with his/her Japanese body and life history'.

Suzuki believes that there is a form of movement peculiar to the Japanese body. He points out that, when the Japanese perform the translated text of a Western

⁸² Senda Akihiko. *Hirakareta gekijô*. (An Opened Theatre) Tokyo, Shôbunsha, 1976. p.173.

⁸³ Ôzasa, 1980. pp.44-45.

so that the second and the third generations of Shôgekijô were dominated by works dealing with fantastic and unrealistic materials.

Even if Suzuki's theory might not have had a great influence on Japanese theatre, his idea of the Japanese body was often still used to prove the uniqueness of Japan and the Japanese. *Foot Work: Ashi no seitaigaku*⁹⁴ published by Parco in 1982, and the leading theatre journal *Higeki Kigeki's* special issue of "The importance of 'koshi' (waist and hip) for acting" published in 1990⁹⁵ clearly shows the influence of Suzuki's theory of the Japanese body. *Foot Work: Ashi no seitaigaku* comprises essays and the record of the discussion between Suzuki Tadashi, the architect Isozaki Shin, the scholar of English Takahashi Yasunari and the anthropologist Yamaguchi Masao. In this book, the uniqueness of the Japanese body, especially Japanese 'feet' is highlighted, and Suzuki's idea about the Japanese body is corroborated by specialists in other fields such as architecture and anthropology. Although Suzuki's theory did not have broad influence on Japanese theatre, it was regarded as an effective theory to prove the uniqueness of the Japanese culture.⁹⁶

Terayama's company the Tenjô Sajiki performed widely in Europe and were well received. His work called *Jashûmon* received the first prize of the Belgrade International Festival in 1971. The theatre critic Ôzasa Yoshio explains Terayama's success in Europe as follows:

The element of dozoku [nativeness and primitiveness] in Terayama's works had a great impact on the West, whose rationalism had reached deadlock. That was why Terayama became known internationally.⁹⁷

The twin facts that Suzuki's work and theatre had greater influence overseas than in Japan, and that Terayama's works were highly praised in Europe, probably reflects that Western orientalism towards Japan coincided with the works and

⁹⁴ Suzuki, Isozaki, Takahashi and Yamaguchi. 1982.

⁹⁵ "Tokushû: koshi engi no pointo" (Special topic: the importance of 'koshi' [waist and hip] for acting) *Higeki Kigeki* April 1990, pp.6-44.

⁹⁶ Suzuki was greatly influenced by the works of the anthropologist Yamaguchi Masao. (see *Suzuki Tadashi taidanshû*, 1984. p.227). Terayama received an assistance of an ethnologist to create his 'dozoku-teki' (native and primitive) works. (See *Terayama*, 1986. p.359) David Goodman points out that the works of Satô were influenced by the famous ethnologist Origuchi Nobuo (See Goodman, 1983. p.67) These facts reflect that the idea of 'Japanese' or national characteristics were greatly influenced by anthropology and ethnology which had had a great influence on the discussion about the uniqueness of Japanese culture.

⁹⁷ Ôzasa, 1980, p.211.

theories of Terayama and Suzuki.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the following: the first generation of Shôgekijô, who started with the resistance to Shingeki and their translated Western plays, discovered national identity as a result of removing Shingeki-like elements from Japanese theatre. The discovery of the Japanese-ness and the quest for national identity signified the resistance to modernism. It was the theatre movement of this period that created a distinctive Japanese perspective for Japanese theatre, which had previously presented translated Western plays to introduce 'modern theatre' into Japan, and which had made futile efforts to imitate Westerners by acting. In the next chapter, I move on to the subject of the influence of this movement on 'honyakugeki'.