Arab Theatre and the Search for an Independent Arabian Based-Theatre Art Form

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Abstract

This study is a brief historical overview of the Arab theatre from its roots in the oral tradition and cultural heritage of the Arabian people to the contemporary theatre movement. The study shows that some practitioners and directors are beginning to disengage from Western theatre and to search for a new form built on a foundation of ceremony and heritage. However, while many of these practitioners have sought a purely Arab theatre in form and content, in fact, they continue to unknowingly utilize Western theatrical traditions.

The study argues that all the traditional forms of entertainment (shadow theatre, story-telling, ceremonial, etc.) in the Arab world can serve as sources for theatrical devices and structural components. They should themselves be good sources for production styles. It should, therefore, be possible for any of them to be developed into fully mature and genuine theatrical forms.

The study includes recommendations that provide initiatives for strengthening the current theatre movement while establishing a starting point in the search for an independent Arabian based theatre art form.

Introduction

Theatre in the Arab world is still struggling to find its own identity. Today there are many serious attempts from writers and directors to improve and/or distinguish the Arab theatre as an intellectual and professional institution. The purpose of this study is to develop a concise history of the early theatrical movements in the Arab world with the intent of clarifying the issues these theatres must explore in order to create a truly Arab theatre. An examination of the theatrical movements in the Arab world with particular attention given to each of the periods of its development will help elucidate why and how the theatrical movement has developed into its present form.
Statement of Problem

Arab theatre began with a subordination to and imitation of the theories, principles, and production practices of the Western theatre. Western theatre has been directly and consciously borrowed with a complete acceptance of the production practices and style but with an incomplete understanding of the philosophies and purposes that guide the selection and use of the techniques that create this style. Many issues and questions frustrate the Arabian theatre artists and can, thus, be considered obstacles, which hinder achievement for the Arab theatre. These factors include, but are not limited to, misunderstanding of the concepts of Western Theatre or the improper application of these non-native forms by the directors.

For the Arab theatre to reach a higher level of development, knowledgeable theorists and practitioners must carefully study the issues stated above in order to find solutions and answers to the problems that prohibit the growth of a truly Arab theatre. These practitioners must develop concrete long range plans to begin a theatrical revolution built on a strong foundation.

An examination of the history of early Arab theatre will lead to a clearer vision of the future. Along with this history, a short examination of traditional forms of Arab performance will help to prepare a path for a better understanding of the traditional artistic culture and heritage that Arab theatre may draw upon in its quest for a theatrical identity. For the purpose of this study, this history will be divided into three periods of development, which characterize the three major theatrical movements within the Arab countries. This categorization is similar to the one outlined by Dr. Mufeed Hawamdeh (1993). Although the dates are not congruent, Hawamdeh’s division of Arabian theatre will serve as a paradigm because it accurately mirrors and contextualizes the most important movements, which need to be examined. This model is also a workable approach, given that Hawamdeh’s text is an existing, although not comprehensive, written history. Other historical research will be used to supplement Hawamdeh’s history. Although brief in historical terms, these three periods will encompass the entire record of the Arab theatre.

This study will examine the problems and difficulties Arabian theatre practitioners have faced in the three periods of development. This examination will include a definition of the theatre’s most common elements: the play, the actor, the performance space, and the audience. In documenting this study, supporting opinions from both Western and Arab sources are used. Translations of Arabic sources have been made by the author of this study, and have focused on the meaning or spirit of the opinion and not on a literal, word-for-word translation.
Arab Theatre

The theatre in the Arab region, like other aspects of the educational and cultural movements, attempted to express the overall intellectual and mental state of the Arabian nations’ thoughts and emotions. At the heart of this brief examination is that Arabs have never developed what most would recognize as a fully developed indigenous theatrical form. Without understanding these forms, it would be difficult to develop a uniquely Arab form based solely on this heritage.

According to Hawamdeh (1993), the Arab theatre went through three periods of development.

1. The birth and establishment of the theatre by Arab pioneers who began by imitating the European theatre.

2. The period of conflict during the independence movement against colonial rule that led to the growth of nationalism and spiritual morals.

3. The endeavor toward achieving independence from the European style, and the search for an independent Arab theatrical form (p.8).

The first period extended more than one century starting from 1847 when a Lebanese merchant named Marun al-Naqqash (1817-55) prepared in his own house, in Sidon, Lebanon, a performance of *Al Bakhil* [The Miser], a play based on Moliere's *The Miser*. When the curtain rose, he stood before the audience and delivered a preface where he promised to introduce his people to a new artistic form, "a literary theatre... which shall be Western gold in an Arab mold" (Rahee, 1980, p.43). Al-Naggash added: “I trust that I have made the right choice, and that you will benefit from this theatre, for it teaches proper manners, offers good advice, polishes and refines (p.44). After his death, his brother Nicolas and his nephew Salim al-Naggash continued his work.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Abu Khalil al-Qabbani (1836-1902), another merchant in Damascus, Syria, was doing what Marun al-Naqqash had started in Beirut. Although he had not traveled abroad as Bandai(1988) stated, he might have seen performances of Italian opera by visiting troupes and plays staged by Turkish actors (Mustafa, 1990). Like al-Naqqash, al-Qabbani began to establish a theatre in the Arab society as a form of entertainment that was deeply rooted in the tradition of new ideas open to the outside world. In her book *Alf Am Waam Ala al-Masrah Alarabi* [One Thousand and One Years of the Arab Theatre], Tamara Botitseva (1981) says that al-Qabbani directed a play titled *Jamal Pasha al-Safah* [The Thug Jamal Pasha], who was the Turkish governor of Damascus and Beirut at that time. The play criticized implicitly the repressive policy of the Ottoman occupation authorities. Such political plays helped to push the Ottoman administration to exile Jamal to Egypt (p.161).
Like Al Qabbani, Salim al-Naqqash and others from Lebanon, left for Egypt, where a young man named Yacoub Sannu (1839-1912) had started a new theatre movement. Yacoub Sannu had been sent to Europe, where he learned languages and developed a passion for the theatre. On his return to Egypt in 1870, Sannu wrote a number of plays, most of which were performed with him as a principal actor, director, and producer. The majority of his plays dealt with contemporary issues. Some had political overtones, which made him enemies and alienated some of his friends. Therefore, his theatre survived for only two years before being closed down by the authorities (Rahee, 1980).

During this first period, many translations were made of works by European dramatists such as Jean Baptiste Racine, Pierre Corneille, William Shakespeare, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and Carlo Goldoni (Botitseva, 1981, p.166). Most of them were adaptations in which translators and directors adjusted the content to suit contemporary taste. The title of Romeo and Juliet, for example, was changed to Martyrs of Love, ended happily and included song and music (Botitseva, 1981, p.167). During this productive period, Arab theatre professionals considered the world drama tradition as their own and used it freely, often shaping it to meet their needs. This period was distinguished by the complete acceptance of the European theatre’s styles and forms, while only partially accepting their content. This did not cause any concern since educated people did not yet consider the European culture as a threat to the Arab identity. Instead, they resorted to the European culture for constructive ways to benefit their own culture.

The second period started in 1948 and was distinguished by the awakening nationalism of the Arab nations. This national spirit grew after the Arab nations discovered that Europe was principally interested only in colonizing their countries, occupying their land, and utilizing the national resources for their own benefit. The entire Arab world responded to the call of modernity by developing its academic and cultural institutions, interacting with the outside world and confronting its challenges.

A new era in the history of the Arab theatre began, with a demand for a communal drama, which could contribute to the wider social and political awakening. Some cultivated voices, such as Egyptian writers, Yousef Idrees and Tawfeeg al-Hakeem, began a call for an independent identity for the Arab theatre. Idrees (1974) called for an end to the “bad habit” of copying from and imitating Western theatrical models, which made the Arab theatre look like the illegitimate grandson of the eighteenth and nineteenth century French theatre (p.473). Instead, Idrees sought the development of a pure Arab theatrical form that allowed an equal give-and-take relationship with the Western forms. Even though Idrees and al-Hakeem were not successful in their attempts to achieve this independence, this may be considered a significant rejection of the Western theatrical forms and styles.
The third period of theatrical development is more recent. It is distinguished by a strong refusal to be subordinated by the Western culture. The fifth of June 1967, marking the defeat of Arabs in the Six-Day War between the Arab countries and Israel, brought home to many Arabs the need for political stability and democracy. The defeat also created a new level of awareness among artists and intellectuals. It was thought that drama could contribute to the stabilization process by drawing on and contributing to a national identity. Many dramatists endeavored to write plays that addressed the issues surrounding the defeat of 1967, but when one or more of their plays were banned or remained unpublished and unperformed, as Roger Allen (1989) states, these playwrights turned to other literary genres such as poetry and oratory where their efforts were more likely to find their intended public.

Some directors and groups like al-Fawanees [Lanterns] in Jordan, al-Ihtifaleeyen [Ceremonials] in Morocco and The al-Hakawateen [Story Tellers] in Lebanon attempted to disengage from Western forms and started to build a new, independent form based upon a foundation of ceremony and heritage. Their explicit goal was to free themselves from the bonds of Western forms by developing Arab heritage and traditions into fully mature Arab theatrical forms.

“Now, We, and Here.” These three words are at the center of the collaboration between al-Fawanees and the al-Ihtifaleeyen group. Their collective goal was to find a new form for Pan-Arab theatre that would be essentially different from the Western theatre. In their first Joint Communiqué in 1984, they established as their primary objective to study popular sentiment, and explore collective memories to find a new theatrical language based on the Arab heritage. But “now” contradicts the need to study popular sentiment and Arab heritage since “Now” means to deal with incidents occurring in the present time. Current culture does not start from “Now”. Instead it reveals the heritage. ‘We’ means the involvement of society in the incident, which is the center of Brecht’s alienation theory. “Here” means the masses must create popular Arab phenomena.

Many critics and researchers suggest that al-Fawanees group based its communiqué on ideas and concepts of the Western theatre movement. What remains unclear is whether they did this with any knowledge or understanding of Brechtian theory. At this time they reject all current forms of theatre and search for new ones far from any present frame. In their Joint Communiqué they added: “Since the [theatre] is a collective art that depends on research and experiments, it is necessary to widen the scope of research and to enrich our dialogue through the continuation of experiments to establish a format different from Western theatre”. Here is an indication that the two groups reject the continued imitation of Western theatre practices.
“After the al-Fawanees and al-Ihtifaleeyeen inspected Pan-Arab theatre, they discovered its bankruptcy” (Burshaid, 1986, p.10). However, the play *Dum Dum Tek* [Drum Rhythm] in 1982, presented by al-Fawanees and directed by Khalid al-Tarifi, adapted from Brecht’s play Puntilla and His Hired Man Matti along with many other productions of translated and adapted western plays indicates that the influence of the west continued unabated during the third experimental period when al-Fawanees was developing their theatrical philosophy. According to Jordanian critic Mahmoud Bader, everything in the presentation, such as the use of masks, appearance of the musical group, the direct talk to the audience, and breaking the fourth wall indicates that it is an Epic presentation (1993).

The al-Fawanees group was influenced not only by the techniques of the Epic theatre. Mohammed al-Refaei discerned the influence of two western styles in the play *Abu al-Fawanees Fe kaa al-Seksak* [Carrier of Lanterns in the Bottom of al-Seksak]. They are the Epic theatre and theatre of Cruelty(2). Al-Refaei saw the violence, danger, and shocks in addition to the use of symbols, signs and sounds, which represent Artaud’s language in theatre. Changing costumes in front of the audience and the direct address to the audience in the production indicates that it uses Epic Theatre techniques, but for what purpose and to what end? In *Hamalat Sanabel* [Wheat Spike Carriers], also presented by al-Fawanees, there was a mix of Epic and Documentary theatre styles. The show was filled with movements, gestures, group songs, and narrative. All were presented in the framework of the Brechtian style. Documents and facts were shown using a slide screen and projector. In addition, a large map of the Arab World was hung on the rear wall of the stage in a documentary style.

In 1985, Al-Fawanees presented *Ors al-Aras* [Fancy Wedding] for the Jordanian First Festival of the Theatre. The author of this study attended the production and realized that director al-Tarifi borrowed some of the aesthetics of Asian theatre such as visible musicians playing drums, mimetic gestures and storytelling, dance, poetry, and actors wearing colored masks along with some of the alienation techniques in the Epic theatre in order to create a ritualized theatrical event. The ritual element was obvious to such a degree that the show lost some of its Epic influence. The ceremony changed into a goal in itself and lost its ability to instigate thought and stimulate ideas. Al-Tarifi continually makes use of vague symbols in his plays. This fact led some critics to criticize his work after viewing *Ors-al-Aras*. They claimed the performance was impossible to understand, even for the elite sophisticated theatregoer. However, the final report of the Judging Committee of the Jordanian First Festival of the Theatre confirmed his abstraction. "Al-Tarifi’s direction emphasized breaking known conventional styles used many gestures, which sometimes led to abstractness. Furthermore, this makes his work as if it were presented to the elite, rather than a general audience”(3).
Arab Performance Traditions

The oral tradition existed in the Arab culture from its earliest history. Arab historians and researchers differ as to whether or not Arabs knew a theatrical tradition before the nineteenth century. There are some who claim that there were forms of Arab plays in this heritage and those plays contained structure, themes, plots, dialogue, characters, and other elements of the theatrical art. Others deny the relation between the current theatrical form and Arab performance heritage. All agree there is a need to search for a unique identity for the Arab theatre far from the influence of the Western theatre.

A short review and examination of the traditional forms of performance in the Arab world prior to the introduction of Western culture will help to prepare a path to understand the trends in the contemporary theatre movement.

The Magama

The Arab culture prided itself on the oral literary accomplishments that were unknown to other nations. Egyptian writer M. M. Badawi described this literary genre as a “tale in rhyming prose generally about the tricks of an eloquent vagabond who has to live by his wits by impersonating other characters” (1988. p.53). Most historians and scholars see that the Magama is written and not just improvised. They have found evidence from its use of extensive rhymed prose, pun, alliteration, and composition of verses and/or treatises containing letters with antithetical meanings if read in reverse. These characteristics could not have come about without a written art.

The Magama has been considered the most perfect form of oral literary presentation in Arab literature since it came into being in the eleventh century at the hands of Badi az Zaman al-Hamadani, (1969 – 1007 AD). The imprint he left on this genre has been imitated throughout the ages (Botitseva, 1981). This kind of art developed as an oral literary expression exclusively within the Arab culture. Even though the Magama has parallels to those of Medieval European drama or some Asian theatrical forms, most scholars have avoided making any connection and they have claimed that the Magama is indigenously Arabic. A few scholars, most notably J. Horovitz, claimed, that the Magama has Hellenistic roots (Moreh, 1992).

Although the Magama is not lacking in the dramatic elements of character and dialogue, its artistic and literary form is its backbone, and it depends more on its linguistic sophistication rather than on its relatively thin plot, as Moreh (1992) asserts when he says that the Magama was “composed for mimetic declamation and used a harangue style with a prodigious store of sophisticated rhetoric and eloquent turn of phrase” (p.108).
In every Magama, a single narrator told the entire story. The plot was structured in the form of a conversation, which allowed the storyteller to imitate various characters. Landau (1958) claims that the linguistic sophistication and rhetorical value of the Magama was more important than successful imitation. Many scholars agree with Landau and assume that the Magama was narrated rather than performed; “they were not read silently, the mimetic element being limited to gestures and changing tones of voice by the narrator” (Moreh, 1992, p.109).

In every Magama there is a narrator who generally appears as a disguised beggar trying to earn his living by his wits, his linguistic skill and rhetorical talent. Each Magama contains a separate episode in which the narrator meets the disguised hero, with no connection between them except for the haphazard wanderings of narrator and hero. There was no developing plot, narrative thread, or full characterization (Rahee, 1980).

Khayal al-Thill [The Shadow Theatre]

The Shadow Theatre is another type of Arab performance tradition, which dates back to approximately 1260-70 AD and can be briefly described as “histrionics performed by the casting of shadows on a curtain visible to the audience” (Landau, 1958, p.10).

The origins of Khayal al-Thill are uncertain; some historians believe the shadow theatre started in India; others say it was from Japan or ancient Egypt while still others believe it came from China. Landau (1958) claims that “China is the homeland of theatre and it is noteworthy that Europeans, for a long period of time, called this form of amusement Ombres Chinoises” (p.9). This is an old form of entertainment that enjoyed a vast popularity in the Arab countries. Acting behind the shadow screen was allowed by the authorities, encouraged by the rank of society and was accepted within the Islamic environment since the images are abstracted and not truly representative acts. Shadow plays were performed in the streets and market places and occasionally also at court and in private houses; the action was represented by shadows cast upon a large screen by flat, colored leather puppets, held in front of a torch, while the hidden puppet master, Al-Rayyis or Al-Migaddim, delivered the dialogue and songs, helped in this by associates, sometimes as many as five persons including a youth who imitated the voice of women (Badawi, 1988).

If credit for the unique character of the Arab Shadow Theatre should go to one artist, it would be Mohammad Ibn Daniyal (1248-1311 AD) who emigrated from Iraq to live in Egypt when he was nineteen years old. The Arab heritage still possesses the written poem and prose by Ibn Daniyal. His writing is all that we know about the Arab theatre prior to the seventeenth century. The first play by Ibn Daniyal is Taif al-Khayal [The Spirit of Imagination], and is about a soldier named Wisal. He was very poor and he was deceived into marrying a woman. The marriage broker did not specify
that she was a pretty woman. On the night of his marriage, he discovered that his bride was ugly; her nose looked like a mountain, and her lips looked like those of a camel. In the second play *Ajib and Gharib* [Amazing and Strange], there is no developed plot. It revolves about the lives and personalities of two paupers. The third play, *Al-Mutayyem Waal Da’veh al yateem* [The Love Stricken and the Misfit Orphan], deals with love and includes songs and speeches (Hamada, 1963 & Landau, 1958).

The impact of the Magama on the Shadow Theatre can be seen in the kind of language this theatre adopted. In its early period the medium of expression was the classical Arab of that time, but this gradually gave away to the colloquial when the shadow plays lost their literary value (Rahee, 1980). Even though we do not have any surviving written scripts until four centuries after Ibn Daniyal, there are indications that the shadow theatre remained a popular entertainment for most of the society’s classes and continued to be performed until the beginning of the 20th century.

The importance of the shadow theatre is best seen in the light of observation made by Landau in his study, *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema* (1958) when he says that the great service of the shadow theatre to the Arabic history of civilization is in its having preserved, for the future, precious information about little-recorded ideas and customs of past generations. Artistically, it prepared the ground for the arrival and acceptance of the Europeanized amusements— the theatre and the cinema. Rahee (1980) believes the shadow plays prepared people in the Arab world, and especially in Egypt, to accept theatre in general and human performances in particular when Western theatrical groups began to visit Arab countries at the end of the eighteenth century. This is most probably because any kind of performing art with live actors would not receive support from Islamic people.

**The Ta’ziya**

The Ta’ziya is another traditional Arab form of storytelling with a dramatic component. This quasi-dramatic form is mainly concerned with a tragic and serious event in Islamic history. The death story of Imam Al Hussein (628-680 AD) and his family in the form of the Ta’ziya is performed every year throughout the first ten days of the month of Muharram Ma’atim [places of mourning].

Ashura is considered the most important of festivities celebrating martyrdom among Shiites. The Ta’ziya ceremonial performances are held twice a day every morning and evening in commemoration of Imam al Hussein. The people come together in mourning assemblies in mosques or any large open area close to the mosque. A narrator tells the story of the death of Imam al Hussein and his family, moving the audience in an emotional manner arousing their tears. For this special event, the narrators are
also allowed to act the roles of different characters in their narration (Abd-Moumen, 1982).

The Ta’ziya is similar in a way to the Christian passion play but differs significantly in the basic ideology of the people. Whereas the passion play deals with the lives of the saints, the Ta’ziya deals with Imam al Hussein. It also attempts to awaken in the people the Shiite notion of martyrdom. Botitseva points out that the Ta’ziya is also very symbolic. The performer playing the murderer role is dressed in red, which signifies blood, cruelty and savagery.

**Al Hakawati [The Story-Teller]**

During medieval times the Arab countries knew another kind of performing art: Al Hakawati [The Story-Teller]. Al Hakawati is, as it is said, a good storyteller who knows the story well. People from different classes would gather in the market and squares to listen as he told the popular stories, the myths carried by word of mouth from one generation to another. He used body gestures and movements during the telling in order to illustrate what he was trying to say. Abdulmajeed (1993) mentions that the storyteller used a musical instrument. Hawari (1979) adds that he also used the drum, a stick, and a scarf. The beating of the stick accompanied the scenes in which the storyteller imitated wild animals and birds. He also used to call on a friend or two in order to help him provide a picture in the story, respond to him with some dialogue, or to imitate movements of some people. The Arab masses found the storyteller’s presentations to be of great amusement and enjoyment.

Some researchers find it hard to determine the origins of this oral form. Landau (1958) claims it came to the Arab world from India. Others say China. However, this type of art was popular in most Asian countries. A. C. Scott (1972) asserts that the storyteller’s art was very popular in China and reached great heights and the puppet theatre, including the shadow show, became much patronized during Sung times, which embraced a period from the tenth to twelfth centuries. Tawfeeg al-Hakeem was one of the pioneers of this form of performance in the Arab heritage. He tried to develop a pure Arab theatrical form based on the storyteller performance art in 1950s in Egypt. Al-Hakeem (1967) felt performers should discover the features and the personal complications in an imitating style, but they should not attempt to represent those characters. The performers were further distanced from theatrical presentation by using their own names, their common clothes, and performing not on stages but in common areas such as market places and streets.

**Ceremonials**

Another performance venue, which is often neglected, is that of the Ceremonials or rituals. Ritual elements exist in many aspects of Arabian life. Public ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, circumcisions, and
graduations are held on the streets, playgrounds, cafes and even in Mosques. Ritual and theatre share some common aspects. Richard Schechner (2002), who has carried out many experiments with his group (The Performance Group), shows the interplay between the sociological and theatrical, affirming that any everyday processes or any community ritual can be staged as theatrical event. The sociological studies of Victor Turner and Erving Goffman use theatrical paradigms to describe universal patterns and suggest that drama is that art whose subject, structure and action is social process.

Conclusions

From this review of the indigenous Arab forms of performing arts, it is obvious that all these forms contain and consist of two or more of the most important essential elements of theatrical presentation including a performance space, the actor, the audience, and the play. These elements have been considered the most common components of theatre worldwide, from ancient Greek until these days. However, in evaluating these four traditional forms as bases for developing theatrical form, the following conclusions emerge:

- All these forms share commonalities with theatre and explicitly include the audience and actor.
- These forms can be recognized as presentational art or at least provide clues to presentational theatre.
- All these forms contain elements of plot including story and themes, which are sources of inspiration to the playwrights.
- All these forms consist of characters (character or narrator), even the Khayal al-Thill can be employed as characters (narrator, chorus) similar to those used in Greek drama and Epic theatre, for example.

This study has established that the road toward developing a genuinely Arab form based upon the traditions of the Arab culture has been a difficult journey, but it is not entirely road-blocked. This examination confirms that the experiments in search of an independent Arab form by many directors and groups did not bring about a divorce from Western theatrical influence. Rather, directors remained bound to it even when they claimed that they were not. In their attempts, however, they may have succeeded more in creating a synthesis of forms in the interaction between elements of this old heritage and Western practices. As they and other groups continue their experiments, this hybridization of theatrical forms may create a new and exciting theatre. But this limited experimentation is not enough to lessen Western influences to the point that significant work on a truly Arab theatre form may begin. In other words, directors have not studied deeply and widely enough to break free from this dependence on Western traditions.
Creativity requires knowledge and understanding as well as inspiration. It is implausible that Arabian artists should attempt to isolate themselves from world-dramatic trends or from drama and its traditions. It is also implausible that the one-sided interaction should continue so that Arabs continue to imitate people who are culturally different. Arabs must develop and maintain an individual personality or identity in literature, art, and theatre. But to accomplish this, Arabian practitioners must first understand the benefits to be derived from the theatrical experiences of other cultures.

Brecht, for example, originally borrowed techniques from the classic Chinese theatre, especially in their styles of acting, to help make his Epic productions “strange” to his German audiences. Since then the Chinese theatre has borrowed back Brecht’s hybrid dramatic techniques to enrich their own contemporary theatre. These Brechtian techniques have been used in many productions in China during the past years. However, Chinese theatre practitioners never intended to copy Brecht but have rather tried to combine Brecht with their own aesthetic principles (Guangrun (1999).

The Epic theatre’s incorporation of Asian theatrical techniques rendered it strange to western audiences. Similarly, other Asian theatres have also contributed directly or indirectly to the development of modern theatre. The use of costumes, musicians, singers, mime, narrators and actors also influenced Artaud’s theatre of cruelty, the psycho-dramas of Grotowski, the eclecticism of Peter Brook, as well as many other contemporary practitioners.

The “Method” actor training work of Strasberg in the United States is another example of the hybridization of theatrical forms. The Method was based on the principles and procedures of the Stanislavski system, but Strasberg added his own experiences, interpretation and procedures and made it fit his own work first at the Group Theatre, then for the Actors Studio, and finally in his private classes. In fact, Strasberg “Americanized” this Russian born system.
المسرح العربي والبحث عن شكل يحمل هوية عربية مستقلة

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ملخص

تتصفح هذه الدراسة تاريخ الحركة المسرحية في الوطن العربي منذ عرفت الحضارة العربية الكثير من الظواهر المسرحية مثل الحكواتي وخيال الطلل وغيرها إلى وقتنا الحاضر.

وقد تعرضت هذه الدراسة إلى محاولات عدد من المفكرين والخرجين الذين سموا إلى الاتجاهات من تبعية الشكل الغربي للمسرح والبحث عن شكل آخر يحمل هوية عربية مستقلة مصدرها الموروث الثقافي والفكري وال>|<< عند العرب يكون أكثر اتسجاماً مع بنيته المجتمع العربي وخصوصية هويته.

وقد خلصت هذه الدراسة إلى أن هذه المحاولات لم تحقق أهدافها بسبب غياب المنهجية والرؤية الواضحة. وإن جملة المسرحيات التجريبية التي قدمت لا زالت غريبة الشكل رغم عدم اعتراف صانعيها. كما أكدت هذه الدراسة على أن ما تتبعه الحضارة العربية والإسلامية من موروث في ذلك صوراً إبداعية، يمكن أن يتمتعها خصوصية لمسرح له ملامحه الخاصة التي تميزه بوصفه مسرحاً عربياً.
Endnotes


References


