The Noh Plays of Samuel Beckett

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"Le drame, c'est quelque chose qui arrive, le Nô, c'est quelqu'un qui arrive."
—Paul Claudel, Mes idées sur le théâtre, 1926

Aristotle's idea of theatre being the mimesis of a praxis (action) is a post-Aeschylean notion that has deeply influenced the way that the theatrical event is conceived and perceived. In the mainstream of theatrical performance since Aristotle, the action imitated becomes the major device through which the theatrical event is propelled. Through the passage of real time during the duration of a performance, an action comes to be. Crystallized in its perfect form as early as Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, this tradition of theatre is deeply imbedded in modern consciousness.

In the Noh theatre and in certain plays of Samuel Beckett, the theatrical experience is quite different, as are the mechanics of playwriting and performance. Progressive action in the immediate temporal plane is dulled and often brought to a standstill while action in a different temporal plane -- the past -- is evoked and merged with the present, immediate stage performance. Such dynamics throw focus on the one main ghost-like character, while at the same time create distance through which the character's past pathos is seen to freeze the character in a crystallized limbo in which he or she seems doomed to exist. "Action" in the conventional sense is no longer a device that propels the theatrical event, for the action of a Noh or Beckett play does not concern external events, but rather focuses on the internal. What is performed is precisely this internal action, and the effect of the performance on the performer through the course of performance becomes key to the theatrical aesthetics.

Through the suspension of external action, the conventions of dramatic conflict are at the same time suspended, and climactic points are achieved not through the clash of conflicting characters or issues, but rather through the deepening and climax of the one solitary character's inner journey. The process of this performance is aptly summed up in Claudel's afore-quoted observation that "Noh is someone that happens," as opposed to the conventional "something that happens," a quote that in many ways holds deep relevance to the plays of Samuel Beckett. This study is an attempt to identify common characteristics of the Japanese Noh and certain plays of Beckett that function differently from conventional drama, toward a keener appreciation of the unique contribution that Beckett has made to the theatre of the twentieth century.
「山繆·貝克特的“能”劇」

賴聲川

山繆·貝克特的戲劇作品和日本傳統能劇在時間上之差距有六世紀之久，且各屬極爲不同的文化、社會背景之下的劇場產物。貝克特在其創作生涯中不曾刻意摹仿或研究日本之能劇，而這些貝克特的戲劇作品及日本傳統能劇中，觀劇的經驗同樣的異於亞里斯多德所闡述、影響甚巨的「戲劇爲一動作之摹擬」觀念下所呈現的戲劇演出。立即空間層面中所進行的戲劇動作在這兩種戲劇中往往被頻化或靜止，而另一個時間層面——過去——中的戲劇動作則呈現強化，使立即空間層面之演出合而為一。這種劇場寅學生成的焦點投射在一個孤單、鬼魂式的人物身上，而他所處的困境似乎在過去與現在的融合中結晶，加強了這人物的悲感。

傳統所定義之「戲劇動作」在能劇和貝克特的戲劇中則無法推動演出，而傳統所謂之「戲劇衝突」也無法發揮作用，因為這兩種戲劇中之高潮並非由人物或事件之彼此衝突而造成，反而是經過主角內在旅程之逐漸深化而成。法國戲劇家克勞岱爾曾指出：「戲劇中，一件事情發生了；能劇中，一個人物發生了。」這句話頗能描寫出貝克特戲劇與能劇之間的關係。

貝克特的戲劇中常呈現一些關聯或聆聽複雜記憶片段的角色。他的作品中往往有多數人物在呈現同一段記憶，而這些人物其代表的是一個意識的多重面，所表演的段落極似能劇結構中之「曲」段。本文先分析能劇中之下列特點，進而分析能與貝克特的關係：

一、神聖空間中之記憶表演；
二、能劇結構中之「曲」段分析；
三、人物之重疊性，以及多重聲音之互動及融合性；
四、角色之被附身性以及神靈儀式中之附身行為。

所運用之例子包括能劇之「松風」、「半瘖」、「卒塔遙小町」、「羽衣」及「翁」。

根據以上之分析，本文展開對貝克特戲劇之討論。在許多早期作品中有部份屬於能劇式結構和人物的片段，包括如同「仕女」、「膿」、「歌隊」、歌隊彼此關係的角色，以及類似能劇之「曲」段的戲劇表現。主要探討之早期貝克特劇作包括兩部廣播劇「言語與音樂」（1961）、「卡斯坎多」（1962）、「等待果陀」（1954）及「克拉普最後的錄音帶」（1958）。

「落腳聲」（1975）及「俄亥俄即興」（1981）則被視為非常接近能劇的劇作。本文深入分析此二劇之人物及結構，將「落腳聲」中之「梅」與「母親之聲音」視爲一個角色意識中之二種聲音，而非兩個角色；而將「俄亥俄即興」中兩個角色之關係定位為能劇中「仕女」與「歌隊」之關係。此一結論與德國詩學家白克曼所做之結論不同。其中，貝克特所運用之意識多重呈現手法，以及記憶之自由剪接技術，也與本文所細緻討論。