

An Introduction to European Theater

Shazia Anwer Cheema

Sanjha

# *An Introduction to* EUROPEAN THEATER

History of Performing Arts from Greek Period to 20th Century



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II



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*Shazia Anwer Cheema*



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*To*

***My mother Safia Bagum***

*Her patience, endurance, and persistence I am trying to replicate but the set milestone always seems way beyond my reach.*



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## **About the Book**

Art is always a mirror of the time giving the absolute justification for the idea that any art form cannot be understood in

a vacuum. Artistic work is an organic process that comes into existence with the help of certain binary forces such as politics, economics, and social fabrics of that time. First in the shape of an idea then it transforms into philosophy and later to it gets executed into artistic forms/genres. Sometimes a philosophy provides nurturing ground for artistic genres and other times artistic experimentation creates a philosophical sphere. In both ways, history, politics, and sociology cannot be filtered out from art. To understand, visual, performing, and literary art, the reader's trajectory must be social, and political history of art and artist. So, any book that is written on visual art, performing art, and literary art is equally a book on history, philosophy, and politics thus must be useful for historians, philosophy students, and students of politics (International Relations, Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy).

While doing my Ph.D. in Semiotics and Philosophy of Communication I chose theatre as a prime mode of communication. For detailed in-depth analysis when I started researching about theater as an art form, especially European Theatre I came across an overwhelming number of books on almost all aspects of European Theater, alarmingly all books are written by experts for the experts, however, a regular reader, as well as students, can hardly get any substantive information from these books. Books spanning from Greek theater to contemporary theater are neither written in proper chronological order nor provide any direct link from point A to B. For instance, one information can be found on page number 11 but it is directly linked with information provided at page number 111. For a novice, it is nearly impossible to keep the thread and make any sense out of it. I must not claim that I have discovered any new information on the contrary the only discovery I have made is figuring out a maze of information, disconnected and disjunctive from its contextual relevance. Sometimes dislocated from history other times ripped from philosophy.

I dare to enter the labyrinth of fragmented history confused with politics, overlapping with socioeconomics, claustrophobic by the amount of provided information. I figure out one simple rule to find my way out, clutching history, politics, and philosophy in one hand and thread of chronology in another hand. I move from one point to the next as a historian and try to link performing art with its time. The organic process of evolution was a key factor throughout my journey. That's why this book is not just about theater history or theater production; as I have claimed earlier art cannot be understood and explained in a vacuum, theater is a carrier, in this case, carrying the past with it.

I tried to jot down all the required information in the simplest possible way. The everyday reader will not find it laborious hence can quench his/her esthetic thirst also students and researchers will find it useful for clarity of form and content. For instance, it has sociopolitical movements of the twentieth-century tracing back its origin into the politics of antiquity. When did humanity feel suppressed and get the idea of revolt which gave birth to the theatre of revolt, how did the proscenium arch and concept of the fourth wall in the theater changed the course of history plus the history of performing art.? Why feminism is still an undercooked theory and Queer has become a phenomenon?

Moreover, since how long theater is being used for public diplomacy can be traced back to Katherine De Medici, the use of theatre for imperial grandeur can be seen in the Baroque period. Religious and state propaganda will take the reader to the Byzantine period, and theater as a commercial venture will tour the reader to the late renaissance. To sum up, this book is a journey that will take its reader to a long historical ride and that journey will break political clichés and untie philosophical knots.

## **Chapter Summary**

### **Antiquity**

The chapter has expanded upon antiquity drama set over three periods that include Greek, Hellenistic and Roman. Greek period will explain the institutionalization of the antiquity drama, through competition mostly based on mythologies. One actor plays transformed into three actor plays, and three types of drama were introduced. The Theater venue known as theatron was circular during the Greek period while it gets rectangular during the Hellenistic period. Hellenistic period evolved Theater into multiple genres and New Comedy emerged during this period.

### **Byzantine Theater**

The chapter will shed light on the decline of the Roman Republic and the subsequent emergence of the Eastern Roman Empire later known as Byzantine Empire. The Empire was strongly influenced by Church and theater faced problems from the middle of the fourth century AD when Archbishop of Constantinople, John I Chrysostom became a prominent critic of theater, attributing theater as a source of spreading immorality. According to the Church circles, songs, music, and theatrical performances aroused lust, which posed dangers to peaceful family life. The liturgical drama was introduced, dramatic representation of divine characters in physical shape was not allowed. Old pagan festival Hippodrome was used for religious diplomacy and many theological dramas were written during that period. Astonishingly female dramaturge somehow came on the surface and survived.

### **Dark Period--- Middle Ages**

Medieval or Middle Age has been divided into three phases from 900 AD to 1015 the beginning, from 1015 to 1300 the middle period and from 1300 to 1500 the late period.

The available literary works for the period were mostly based on theological texts. All available resources from the

Middle Ages have reached us because they were stored in monasteries. Monasteries were immune from any kind of violence and destruction, and hence most evidence we have for the medieval ages in terms of art and culture exists solely because it was stored in monasteries. In the eighth century, Europe returned to greater stability under the Carolingian kings and Art was restored. Pope Clement V promoted the tradition of the “Feast of Corpus Christi”, and one-week celebrations were announced in 1311 AD, resulting in the reemergence of performances. These performances were mainly based on Christ's feast stories, stories of Christian Muslim crusades, and war heroes of crusades. Plays were mostly biblical but they somehow managed to include social and civic issues.

## **Renaissance**

Renaissance is the French word meaning rebirth, it is the revival of classical thoughts and renewed interests which have been long evolving smoothly in classical antiquity at the time seemed static in the development of the evolution of human intellect.

Italian Renaissance is known as the humanism era. Theater took rebirth from flounce with unscripted comedy performed at makeshift arrangements. The later theater was sponsored by the elite class. Script was of three kinds: contemporary poetic dramas based on ancient texts; Latinized versions of Greek dramas; and the works of Seneca, Terence, and Plautus. Sebastiano Serlio published his “Trattato di architettura”, which was based on the Greek architect of Theater construction. Stage and theater scripts got revolutionized and pave the way for modern theater and drama. Verisimilitude became the key element of theatre.

English Renaissance drama evolved around England from the morality and mystery plays mostly performed by clergymen and tradesmen having a message of high morality but later the element of entertainment was included in plays.

Italian theatre provides sophisticated drama plots and set designs. New indoor theatre construction was also an Italian venture.

French theater mastered the Italian techniques and forms and it took it to the pinnacle, French renaissance went through massive political upheaval even then managed to flourish the art.

Spanish theater of the Renaissance period was greatly influenced by Italian Theater. Spanish drama grew with its own characters although got led by Italian or other traditions, Spanish playwrights did a great job to form their own style for which they became famous. Spanish playwrights had a journey from crude beginnings in the streets, churches, and courtyards to the private residences of the kings and noblemen, and finally to the open-air and permanent theaters. Spanish drama contained a brilliance of its own and must be taken into consideration when studying Spanish drama of the Golden Age.

The German-language theater in the middle-ages and the Renaissance was religiously motivated and plays were directed by clergymen who were producing plays for the religious and moral education of society. With continued growth, German language theater had three different setups by the beginning of the 1600s.

## **Enlightenment**

This chapter will discuss theatrical developments triggered and driven by socio-political movements.

In previous chapters, the brief history of theater from the Greek period to the Renaissance has been discussed to get an understanding of phases from where theater went through for developing rules and codes for performers, dramaturgs, and architects of theater buildings. European theater is normally divided into three transitional stages beginning from Classical to Realistic and then Anti or Non-Realistic. There is a huge shift between Classical and Anti-Realistic Theater. Although experimentation started during the Late-Classical period such as tragicomedy, however, the major point to keep in focus is that the



anti-Realistic period started when experimentation started deliberately disobeying Aristotle's three unities. One can also question that the evolution of Theater from Aristotle's era till today had gone through several changes and several new genres came out from Comedy and Tragedy through experimentations.



## **Introduction**

Theater can be considered as old as the history of mankind however theorists have multiple theories about its origin. The most plausible and widespread are three viewpoints among many.

1. The theater is originated from rituals.
2. The theater is evolved from the skill of storytelling.
3. The theater is a direct outcome of human natural behavior and conduct (transaction).

The theater has emerged from myths and rituals is one of the champion theories of the nineteenth century (1). Rituals based on mythologies are the oldest available sources of any kind of performing act. Rituals are primarily based on religious practices including dance, eclectic movements, dialogues, and staged performances. Their first and foremost concern is to please a particular entity though, god or gods. Without having esthetics in the core of the performance these rituals have spectatorship and plausibility (2).

The phenomenon, from totemic dance, shamanistic séance, and pagan libation all sum up to performance as a core element. There is widespread agreement that, within a religious framework, “ritual” refers to the practical or, rather, the performative aspect of religion regarding a sacred sphere. Jane Harrison, who subscribes to Durkheim’s approach, noted that in ancient Greek dromenon (religious ritual) literally means “things done”. Ritual practices refer to the entire set of performed acts, such as the sacrifice of animals, saying of prayers, and related mythical narratives. There is always a clear distinction between the performative aspects of prayer and the beliefs it conveys. Fundamentally, practices are nonverbal in nature” (3).

Historians of Theater and performance usually focus where evidence exists in the form of written texts or in archeological ruins

of purpose-built performance structures (4). This idea certainly diverts attention towards the oral art of storytelling. Mythological events are transferred from generation to generation, myths are components of characters, events, and emotions such as fear, gratitude, hope, and peace. All stories have a particular sequence and are replete with cyclical controlled yet crafted events. Recurrence in skillful artifacts juxtaposed with ambiance and spectacle all is the basic ingredient of any performance (5). More than twenty years of research in this subject led to the conviction that it is not literature that constitutes and secures Theater as art, but performance (4). The idea clearly unveils the basic human nature as a center of any performing act. Human actions are by default attribute qualities that can replicate any controlled and crafted Theater performance. The human cognitive system is the source of mythologies and ritual traditions making the case of how Theater originated even more complex. (6) This leads a researcher to examine the evolution of theater throughout history.

## Antiquity

### The beginning of European Theater

There is a popular notion that the beginning of the Western tradition of Theater dated from the Athenian festivals of Dionysus in the sixth and fifth centuries BC while Ikhnofret stela which was excavated from Egyptian archeological site gives us an indication of its influence over European Theater.

Ikhnofret stela was erected in 1850 BC, around 1200 years before we found Athenian festivals of Dionysus performance. This stela (slate with writing) tells us the story how the mysteries of the Egyptian deity Osiris were carried out in the city of Abydos. The stela is 100 cm high and made of limestone and is preserved in Berlin Museum (7).

Ikhnofret stela gives us detail about the "Abydos Passion Play" in theoretical history. The Abydos Passion Play was enacted at the most sacred place in Egypt, Abydos- the burial site of Osiris. Performed annually from 2500 to 550 BC, first of its kind ever recorded. This is a story of murdering of god Osiris by his brother Seth. Story says wife of Osiris Isis, and his son Horus gathered remains of Osiris and made him alive again. These events used to be performed in Abydos Passion Play. Greek



historian Herodotus reported that he watched the play in 450 BC during his visit to Egypt. Herodotus reported that play had comedy factors although its theme was religious, and act was to remember god Osiris (2)(1). Herodotus being the oldest and the most influential historian, his account and documentation of the play seems very likely to impact the Greek Theater. Another Egyptian drama which would probably has influenced ancient Greek drama was "The Triumph of Horus". The available ancient text indicates that drama was developed between 1300-1200 BCE with performance instructions, epilogue and the plot of the drama telling a battle between Horus and Seth, the god of Chaos (5) (8).

### **Greek Theater**

Dionysus was the Greek god of fertility, grape cultivation, wine and winemaking. Since alcohol is known to bring instable behavior therefore Dionysus is also known to have madness and desire for pleasure and religious ecstasy. He is known as Bacchus



by Romans. Historians believe that he had been worshiped before the period of 1500 BC. Story related with him made him unique

god in ancient Greek culture because he was the son of immortal Zeus (god) and the mortal Semele. Zeus is known as the first of the gods and he is considered as “Father of Gods and men”.

Dionysus is depicted as a mature male having beard and holding a thyrsus (wand). However, in his later images, Dionysus is shown as a beardless, sensuous, naked or semi-naked intersexual youth. Greek literature also described him as womanly or “man-womanish”.

The beginning of Greek Theater is linked with Dionysus because an annual festival was held in Athens to applause Dionysus and this festival had Theater competitions. Since Dionysus is also known as god of fertility therefore it was believed that holding his festival would bring good crops. The festival used to start with dithyrambs, or songs sung by a large chorus in the honor of Dionysus. The remainder of the festival was dedicated to dramatic competitions in which five new plays each years were performed and judged for the prizes to the best authors and actors.

In the beginning Dionysus Theater was uni-actor but after 5<sup>th</sup> century second actor was added by Aeschylus and then Sophocles introduced one more actor to create “three”, a final change that became the standard of Greek plays as we know it today. Such theater is known as a theatron. This theater had three sections accordingly housed the orchestra that included ten to fifteen singers from the chorus, the skene where the actors



performed, and the audience which consisted of huge crowds. The type of plays performed were also dominated by three; comedy,

tragedy, and the satire usually performed by actors covering their faces with masks. In Dionysia plays, tragedies appeared to dominate the play, performed by three actors and only men were allowed to perform. The female characters if any were also played by men.

Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were lead playwrights and their plays made the role of actors much more sophisticated and changed the standard of Greek plays. Aeschylus also developed the tragic play as it is known today and was the first winner at the City Dionysus festival in 484 BC.

Sophocles is fortunate playwright as majority of plays were well documented and he is known to introduce themes of struggle of the individual against fate such as Oedipus Rex (The King) and Antigone.

Euripides introduced the theme of life of men and the role that the gods played in it. According to his theme, people's lives were dominated by chance not by the gods. His theme can be compared to that of modern humanist philosophy, placing more emphasis on the common person being in charge of his or her own destiny, with gods having little involvement in matters of humans. Historian said that this theme was shocking and far ahead of his time therefore he had been under criticism for choosing to focus on the ordinary and not incorporating much more heroic god themes into the tragedies of his era. Despite of his being under criticism for his unique themes, one of his play "Bacchae" earned him critical acclaim and a victory in 403 BC Dionysus Festival. Drama critics still consider Bacchae one of the best tragedies ever written. Dionysus god is the central character of the play but in a human form as Dionysus appears to the people of the city of Thebes under the "guise of a common man.

### **Important Playwrights of the Greek Era**



The date of births or date of deaths of some of the playwrights are unknown therefore the period of their active work is mentioned with “c” (Circa---approximately).

### Aeschylus

Born around 525 BC, Aeschylus is considered the first great tragedian of the Greek era and he produced his first drama in 498 BC. He is alive in history for writing “The Oresteia” which is a trilogy of Greek tragedies. The trilogy is about the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra and the murder of Clytemnestra by Orestes. It has three main parts—Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers, and The Eumenides. This metaphysical and mythological story shows how the Greek gods interacted with the human characters and influenced their decisions pertaining to events and disputes. The Oresteia won first prize at the Dionysia festival (in theatre competition) in 458 BC. Aeschylus wrote around 89 plays; of which we have only seven.

His important work like trilogy and plays include Achilleis, Myrmidons Oedipodea, Oedipus, Oresteia, Prometheus Bound, Prometheus the Fire-Bringer, The Sphinx and The Libation Bearers.

### Sophocles

Sophocles was born 497/496 BC at Colonus outside Athens. He first entered Dionysia festival competition (in theater class) in 468 and won first prize by beating Aeschylus at the same time. He won eighteen victories at the Great Dionysia, and he never placed lower than second. He died in 406 BC. His only seven plays survived although Aristotle indicated he wrote many. Famous plays of Sophocles include Ajax, Amphiaraus, Antigone, Electra, Odysseus Acanthoplex, Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus Rex and Women of Trachis.

### Euripides

Euripides was the youngest of the three great tragedians. Born in 480 BC, he first competed in the Great Dionysia (in theatre competition) in 455 BC. He competed 22 times in theater competitions but won only four times. He died in 406 BC. His 19 plays survived. His famous plays include Alcestis, Andromache, Archelaus, Children of Heracles, Helen, Oedipus, Thyestes and The Trojan Women.

Menander 342/41 – c. 290 BC)

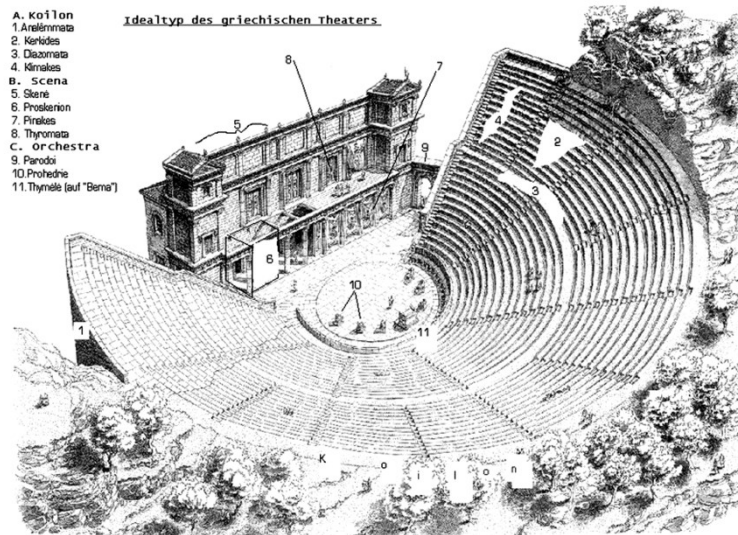
Menander is known for introducing New Comedy and he wrote 108 comedies but his complete work is not available and lost under the dust of time.

His plays what we have include *Aspis* ("The Shield"), *Dyskolos* ("The Grouch" or "Old Cantankerous"), *Epitrepontes* ("Men at Arbitration") and *Misoumenos* ("The Hated Man"), *Samia* ("Girl from Samos") and *Sikyonioi* or *Sikyonios*.

### Hellenistic Theater

The word Hellenistic comes from word "Hellazein". Hellazein literary means something related to Greek (language, period, personalities) (9). Events and culture that took place between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the beginning of the Roman Empire (in result of Roman success in Battle of Actium) in 31 BC are called Hellenistic. Hellenistic also refers to Hellenization or Hellenism -----the historical spread of ancient Greek culture, religion, language over foreign peoples conquered by Greeks or brought into their power or influence (9). A good physical shape of Theater arena came up during this era. Stavros A. Frangoulidis has described it in his book *Roman Drama and its Contexts*:

*The construction of wooden bleachers fronting a playing area in a hollow created by three sides of a hill – the configuration of the theatron in Athens – would likely have created a trapezoidal orchestra.*



*Later orchestras built during the Hellenistic era, such as the Theater at Epidaurus, were circular. But the evidence for a trapezoidal orchestra in fifth century (9).*

During Hellenistic period Greek Theater reached as far as India and Asia Minor (27 BC–476 CE). Late Hellenist period before Byzantine era was the time when church has established its control over the major social institutions, however even not being patronized by church Greco-Roman Theater managed to sustain for Western Europe to rediscover it (4).

*Between 336 BC and his death in 323 BC, Alexander the Great, ruler of mainland Greece, conquered the Persian Empire and extended his realm into present day India and Egypt, creating the first great empire to be launched from Europe. Wherever he went he built new cities and promoted Greek culture and learning (1). A Greek Theater still exists as far east as Ai Khanoum in central Afghanistan.)* Athens remained a cultural hub even after 322 BC but slowly Pergamum (in Asia Minor) and especially Alexandria (in Egypt) took its place. The biggest library and intellectual resource gave Alexandria a prime space in the spectrum

During Hellenistic period new form of comedy emerged, unlike its predecessors it was based on social and political ideology. One of the popular comedy plots was about the love story of slave girl and a rich young boy (1).

Critics then and even now consider new comedy a lower level of Theater which displays follies and trivialities and lack a higher perspective. But on the other hand, new comedy is the beginning of modern satire (1). The only extant playwright from the period is Menander (341 – 290 BC). During the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, he wrote his first play, and it was the time when Athens was losing power. The time was turbulent, and audience wants to see common man dilemma instead of political satire. This gave space for a new form “Niceties” which subsequently replaced the Fantasy, Farce, and Bawdry. Menander’s play mostly included layman’s life and domestic/social complexities (2).

Critics believe that Greek cultural profile was declining in that period so as aesthetic and Greek values (10).

Menander wrote more than one hundred plays. His plays are considered lengthy and fragmented, dictating common issues of the era and considered an important New Comedy Playwright

of Hellenistic period. His sympathetic character building and easy natural style is still being copied (2). One of the Hellenistic New Comedy's most important contributions was its influence on Roma Comedy (9). New comedy also introduced sound effects art effects such as thunder, lighting and other sounds (2). New comedy revolutionized the performing art by including art effects and sense perception. Late Greek Theater and Hellenistic period were era of construction of huge infrastructures for Theaters. The excavations of Theater of Dionysus revealed that a new orchestra (with a radius of approximately 9.9 m) was formed within the orchestra/threshing-floor and was moved closer to the auditorium, leaving a free space behind it facing downhill, in which a wooden stage framework with scenery was installed. More space was created on stage for more performers and sitting capacity enhanced manifold (11).

### **Roman Theater**

It is important to mention the detail account of Roman Drama is not available beside the Plautus and Terence on comedy and Seneca on tragedy. It is difficult to draft the development of Roman Theater. One of the major reasons for this difficulty is that major changes took place in the Imperial Roman Period and Republican Roman Period and unfortunately the loss of almost all dramas from Augustine time. Roman drama considered to be difficult as for analytical purposes mainly because they possessed different styles and models coming from Greek and even after being Hellenized during the Hellenistic period that's why New comedies by Terrence ad Plantes can be studied by putting Greek Comedy in light but Seneca's Tragedy showed different influences. Therefore, studying Roman drama one single doctrine cannot sufficient. It is to be noted that the approaches of understanding and viewing Roman drama just as a translation of Greek Drama may not be justified (9).

But we also come across the term romanization which later coined by the scholar to study solely the Roman period influence on Roman drama. The evidence could be *Fabula Praetexta*, *Fabula Palliata* and *Fabula Togata*.

In second century BC, a form of drama known as *Fabula Togata* appeared. Toga was the standard form of Roman dress while pallium was the word used to describe normal Greek dress. Therefore, this name indicates *Togata* culturally linked with Roman not Greek culture. Since its name indicates that it represents Roman lifestyle therefore we find that the form of *Fabula Togata* of drama provide their audiences with situation comedy of domestic and business life of a common man.

Translations of Greek comedies by Menander and later authors into Latin and their performances are known as form of drama as *Fabula Palliata*. The first individual whose name is attached to it is Livius Andronicus (a Greek slave of a Roman master), one of whose plays was acted at the public games in 240 BC.

*Fabula Praetexta* is a genre of Latin tragedy introduced by Gnaeus Naevius in the third century BC. It dealt with historical Roman figures, characters and conventional Greek myths.

Due to lack of data and destruction of content and literature, it become difficult to paint Roman Theater and drama traditions and stage-wise development and there is a dire need for further scholarship in this field to get an idea of Roman comedy and tragedy into their dramatic settings. However, we have useful information and references about Republican Drama because of survival of text and literature of this era. We also know that *amphi-Theaters* came on scene. Due to surviving complete dramas of Republican period, information about Republican period public festivals, the selection of plays in festivals, costumes and masks are available. An important question for scholars is to find the appropriate answer about how far Roman Drama and Theater was different from Republican era (9).



History of Theater indicates one of the most important works in the field of Comedy was done during Roman era by Caecilius Statius (c. 219–168 BC) but his entire work is lost under the dust of the time and works of drama writers Plautus and Terence and others are available. Genre of Comedy of Roman era namely *Fabula Togata* is known to us but no play of this genre have survived.

The notion that Roman comedies are adaptations of Greek plays is also debatable. There is a perception that Plautus and Terence made minor changes in the structure of their writings and mostly followed originals from Greek tradition may be wrong as lengthy fragment of Menander's *The Double Deceiver*, on which Plautus' *The Two Bacchides* is based, has been discovered, allowing comparative study between the original and adaptation. While this comparative study, it is evident that work of Plautus was a creative adapter rather than merely a translator.

Moreover, it is also evident that Roman Theater eliminated the chorus, which in Greek New Comedy divided the plays into episodes. (The division into acts found in most present-day editions of the Roman comedies was made by later editors.) Another important change is the addition of musical accompaniment to the dialogue, a feature probably reflecting the Etruscan heritage. In Plautus' plays, about two-thirds and in Terence's about one-half of the lines were accompanied by music.

It is problematic to generalize that early Roman tragedy is translation of Greek Tragedy because no play of early Roman tragedy survives to compare with Greek Tragedy. Judging from fragments, titles, and contemporary comments that they were adapted from Greek originals without major changes is hypercritical (1).

### **Important Playwrights of the Roman Period**

The date of births or date of deaths of some of the playwrights are unknown therefore the period of their active work is mentioned with “c” (Circa---approximately).

Livius Andronicus (c. 284 – c. 205 BC)

Livius Andronicus Lucius was a Greco-Roman dramatist and epic poet of the Old Latin period. He worked as a translator as well as a teacher of a noble family in Rome. He translated Homer's *Odyssey* from Greek to Latin. His first play was staged in 240 BC. He is considered as the first playwright of Rome who first time wrote a play in Latin with a proper plot. He used to perform also as an actor. His famous plays include *Achilles*, *Aegisthus*, *Ajax*, *Mastigophorus*, *Andromeda*, *Antiopa*, *Danae*, *Equus Troianus*, *Hermiona*, and *Tereus*, *Gladiolus*, and *Ludius* and *Virgo*.

Plautus Titus Maccius (c. 254 – 184 BC)

Plautus is known as the master of comedy as well as of tragedy of the Old Latin period. According to theater critic and historian, Morris Marples, Plautus started work at theatre as a stage carpenter and scene-shifter. He introduced several techniques in play including maximum and constant use of stock characters for amusing to the audience instead of using constant long scenes and his comedies were full of puns and wordplay. Some of his full surviving plays (as the majority of manuscripts are not complete in form) of plays include *Asinaria*, *Captivi*, *Curculio*, *Epidicus*, and *Persa*.

Terence (c. 159 BC)

Died at the age of 25, Terence was a start at the theatrical scene of Roman-era around 159 BC). He was a slave of Senator Terentius Lucanus who educated him and later on, impressed by his abilities, and freed him. Terence abruptly died in Greece on his way back to Rome due to a shipwreck or disease. His six plays

survived and they are Andria (166 BC), Hecyra (165 BC), Heauton Timorumenos (163 BC), Phormio (161 BC), Eunuchus (161 BC), and Adelphoe (160 BC).

Seneca (c. 4 BC-AD 65)

Master of tragedies, Seneca had a tragic death as he was bleed to death by himself under the order of King Nero. He was a Roman Stoic philosopher, dramatist, and satirist during the period of 4 BC-AD 65. In AD 41, Seneca was exiled to the island of Corsica under Emperor Claudius but was allowed to return in 49 AD to become a tutor to Nero. When Nero became emperor in 54 AD, he hired Seneca as his advisor. In 65 AD, Seneca was accused of partnering a conspiracy to kill Nero therefore Nero ordered him to kill himself. His famous work includes *Fabulae crepidatae*, *Hercules*, *Phoenissae*, *Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Oedipus*, *Agamemnon*, and *Fabula praetexta*.



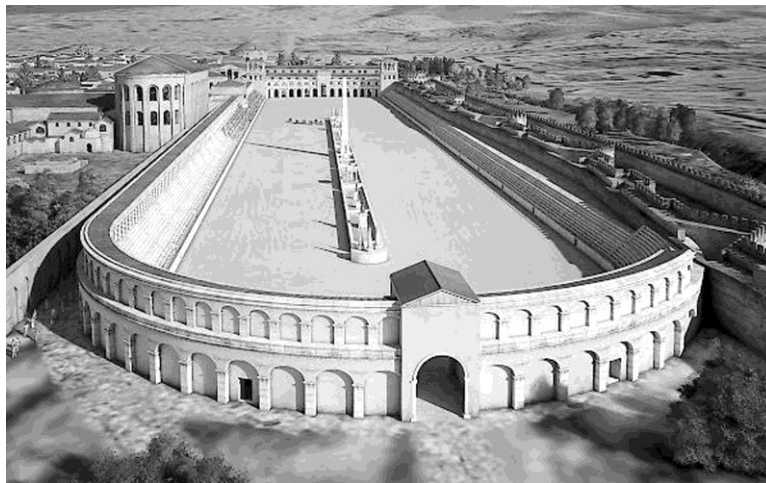
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## Byzantine Theater

In late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, Roman theater had entered a phase of decline, at least as far as traditional, classic drama (tragedy, comedy) was concerned but other genres like mime and pantomime became gradually popular. Roman Comedy that was ruling the Theater had come to be associated with dissolution, vulgarity, and the loss of valuable time by first century AD.

The Western Roman Empire fell into severe decay, the seat of Roman power shifted to Constantinople in 330 AD and the Eastern Roman Empire came into being. This Empire later called the Byzantine Empire.

Research and study of the Byzantine Theater is problematic, as the available information and data on this topic are rare. One thing is almost clear that Theater and Drama under



Byzantine era survived when it became a tool of religious promotional activities.

Old pagan festival Hippodrome presented mime and pantomime which created space for new form of Theater. Sathas Constantine documented first religious form of Theater written by

*Methodius 311AD* performed in 'evdw' by Photius. Another Christian drama genre was Thaleia. Arius wrote a Thealeia in which he mixed theological discussions and songs in a format of drama which was later followed by *Christos Paschon* of Gregory of Nazianzus. Sathas found evidence of iconologist and anti-iconologist Theater during 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Secular Theater was active during the first century of the Byzantine Empire. It was a type of mime. The plays acted consisted of short dialogues on topics from mythology, everyday life and Christian religion and were accompanied by music, dance and singing (1). From the 7th century on the course of mime becomes blurred. Certain priest "dramatic" texts do exist, but we do not know whether they were ever performed or not. Furthermore, certain parts of Christian Liturgy (Rites) were acted out in church, but we do not know if they were ever developed as theatrical performances staged independently from the church (4).

*The anti-iconoclastic group restored in their plays the ancient classical method of versification, as it is shown by the fragments of the Death of Christ of Stephanus Sabbaita and of the Adam of Ignatius of Nicaea* (12).

The Empire was strongly influenced by Church and theater faced problems around middle of fourth century AD when Archbishop of Constantinople, John I Chrysostom became a prominent critic of theater, attributing theater as a source of spreading immorality. According to the Church circles, songs, music, and theatrical happenings aroused lust, posed dangers to peaceful family life (12).

The fight between the Church and the Theater was intense and the hostile attitude and approach of the Church towards Theatre virtually halted the progress and the evolution

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<sup>1</sup> This, according to Sathas, was 'the place where the catechumens (a person about to be christened) gathered together to hear the mystic dramas of the popular bishop.'

of the Theater under Byzantine Empire. Church considered stage as tool of moral corruption, while acting was considered sinful because Church believed that imitation of life was mockery of God's creation(2). *This harsh criticism continued throughout the Middle Ages and was particularly promoted by Jerome, Augustine, and their pupil Orasius. Eventually the Theaters were closed (3).*In the 6th century, the Emperor Justinian permanently closed the Theaters but theater didn't die off and survived in literary clubs where poetry and orations were read aloud (2).

Roman Theater actors were considered sinful and were denied owning slaves, wearing gold and even could not allow to have any social contact with Christian women. Even their basic religious rights like attending religious services marriage and burial were also denied. In simple words, they were officially excommunicated and defamed throughout Europe (13).

One of the most important development of this era is the entry of women as dramaturge and Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (c. 935-973AD), wrote six plays based on Terence's comedies. She claimed that her plays had only adapted the goodness of female characters and has discarded all the Luddite available in the original text. Critic thinks that she did it manly to avoid church criticism (4)(2).

A female performer name Theodora got attention of King Justinian and she finally became Empress. After this marriage King Justinian who was too against the Theater that he banned it reopened the theatrical performances and these performances continued until Arab invasion (2).

From the very beginning the Orthodox Church in the Byzantine time refused to mix the ritual practices and the religious practices in the format of performance. Eventfully, they did it but by drawing a clear line between the divine and the physical manifestation of divinity. They tried their best not to project divine elements such as Jesus, marry and God in physical representations. However, they could not avoid it too long and during the late period especially in the medieval period, performances including baby Jesus, birth of Jesus and also stories about different disciples where enactment of the divine characters and divine elements came on theatre. Even by avoiding the mixture of physical representation of divine elements we can see the Liturgical Drama, a form in which theological stories/ biblical stories presented in a theoretical form and the perfect example is the "Office of the Three Children". The close examination of the

play “Office of the Three Children” reveals that the director of the drama tried his best to prevent or follow the rules of the church by not presenting the divine elements but we can see that it was almost impossible to do that so the clear examination of the Office of the Three Children can show that it is mixture of the ritual and the theological performance, so this effort create ambiguity and complexity in the all five version of the Office of the Three Children (14).

*By the Early Byzantine period the prevailing theory of sacred art was Neo-Platonic, i.e., a fusion of Aristotelian and Platonic notions of mimesis that avoided confusion between divinity and an image, but which nevertheless proposed a dynamic relationship between the two*(14).

In the last period of Byzantine, it had been decided that divine images could be presented. One thing is very important to note here that the winning situation of the aesthetic in which icon and symbols could be used in theoretical format actually pave way for the middle age drama and also revived the neo-platonic doctrine of theater (14).







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## **Dark Period--- Middle Ages**

During the 6th and 7th century of Byzantine, the crusade wars had been started between the Muslims and the Christians which created a very chaotic situation. The men in the Byzantine time were fighting as crusades and their cultivated lands were left abandoned and turned into the forest again. The poverty and the diseases like plague, black fever spread across the Byzantine area and the situation created opportunity for the church to establish their hegemony even stronger. In the result Archbishop of Rome was considered the ultimate power in the hierarchal structure (1).

Medieval or Middle Age has been divided into three phases from 900 AD to 1015 the beginning, from 1015 to 1300 the middle period and from 1300 to 1500 the late period. The late medieval period also overlaps the Renaissance. During the middle and the first medieval period the stone structures and the sculptures were almost diminished, and the artifacts and the artwork intentionally was built in a smaller size because in the case of any upheaval would have been easy to transport. Throughout the 1st and the 2nd medieval period we see decline in the aesthetic domain (1).

The available literary work of the period was mostly based on theological text. The Latin was merely become the language of elite and the common man's language was comprised of different dialects which later considered the forerunners of the upcoming languages in the Europe. All available resources of the Middle Ages have reached to us because they were stored into the

monasteries. Monasteries were immune from any kind of violence and destruction so whatever evidence we have for the medieval ages in terms of art and culture they were stored in the monasteries (1).

In the eighth century, Europe returned to greater stability

under the Carolingian kings. The most important ruler from this line was Charlemagne who extended his kingdom eastward into Slavic territories. During 800 AD Charlemagne was crowned as the King of Rome by the Pope, giving priority over all other secular princes. He later foregrounded the new empire which is called the Holy Roman Empire. Art somehow thrived in his reign, he started a learning institution in his Palace mainly for the purpose of his clergies' education but that reading and writing somehow benefited the art and the craft (1).

We do not find substantial information about performing art, drama, or theater till the time when Pope Clement V promoted the tradition of the "Feast of Corpus Christi". One-week celebrations were announced in 1311 AD and the event of the feast of Corpus Christi started with performances mainly based on Christ's feast stories, stories of Christian-Muslim crusades and war heroes of crusades. Plays were mostly biblical, but they somehow managed to include social and civic issues. The mixture of the biblical stories and the layman's emotions created a way out of the theatrical performance under the patronage of the church (4).

Moros versus Christos was a famous festival particularly sponsored by the Spanish people. They promoted their heroes who were victorious in Christianity and Islam crusades. This gave birth to the theatrical genre of Joly Drama (4). *Capa y espada*<sup>2</sup> (Kappa versus a spider) was another theatrical form started in the 17th century. Its plot revolved around a Knight who fought for the honor. He fell in love with a woman and eventually after different complexities and details they happily married ever after so Kappa versus spider also known as Clock and sword drama (4). *During the reign of Philip IV (1621–1665), the Spanish monarchy asserted more control of its kingdom and colonies and also called more*

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<sup>2</sup> Dramaturge Lope Félix de Vega Carpio (1562–1635), wrote 800 *Capa y espada*. This form was comedy of love, intrigue, peasant wisdom and valor backed by Catholic faith

*frequently on the Theater to bolster its absolutist claims to power* (4).  
Historians believe that Byzantine and even in Middle Ages theatrical genre of “Christian Drama” developed although it was based on complete religious philosophy and background (3).



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## **Renaissance**

Renaissance is French word meaning rebirth, it is revival of classical thoughts and renewed interests which have been long evolving smoothly in classical antiquity at time seemed static in the development of evolution of human intellect. The Renaissance took birth out of several events. Europe defeated Muslims in crusades and got exceptional confidence over its weaponry and military power. Crusades also helped Europe to review and rebuild its marine and naval power and better and bigger ships were constructed for long-haul voyages. This new European fleet helped to enhance trade and exploration to far flung regions—as far as South Asia and Africa. Renaissance also resulted European colonization over far lands.

Interaction as far as China, exploration of new lands, encountering new people brought consciousness in Europe that they were stuck to primitive ideas. New trade opportunities brought economic prosperity and more resources to elite class that wanted to do something more than just humdrum life. Therefore, listening to music, philosophical discussion, patronage of art and craft emerged, and elite class wanted to behave like Roman elite. This behavioral changed brought idea of investing in architecture, art, literature, mathematics, music, philosophy, politics, religion, and science. The Renaissance that begun in the city-states of the Italian peninsula in the 14th century swiftly engulfed entire Europe. Italian ports had been a part of the Silk Road therefore they were linked to trade with China, Indian subcontinent, Persia, the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern



Europe. This linkage was the major reason for the birth of Renaissance--- a behavioral change backed by economic prosperity.

### **Italian Renaissance**

The Italian Renaissance consist of period of 14<sup>th</sup> till 17<sup>th</sup> century which marked it presence on the modern time. Italian

Renaissance was based on philosophy of Humanism that represents concept of placing human as center point of universe the starting point for serious moral and philosophical inquiry (15) (16). Proponents of a "long Renaissance" argue that it began around 1300 and lasted until about 1600.

Just before 1500 Italian comedians were performing amateur comedies in the open areas without any proper staging and script. By 1589 the concept of stage had been developed in Florence, but that stage was usually a basic backdrop with makeshift props however in 1650 proper staging and dramatization had been introduced and the skills which were pioneered by Italian renaissance ruled over European theater for the next 150 years (2).

Italian renaissance is also called Humanism period which was started in Italy mainly focus on the humanistic aspect in the art which was placing human in the center point of the universe that was predominantly being ignored by in the classic antiquity (15).

During Renaissance new ideas, based on classical teachings ruled visual arts, performing arts, literary art etc., It may be remembered that fading Church influence over society and decaying Church control in establishment, paved a way to accept and introduce new thoughts because Human became center point of the Universe not the divine powers and rituals. Art being the prime source of human expression filled the empty space by making Art and Artist fashionable. Elite class in pursuit of modernity started sponsoring art including performing art.

Theatre was also sponsored by the elite class. Script was of three kinds: contemporary poetic dramas based on ancient texts; Latinized versions of Greek dramas; and the works of Seneca, Terence, and Plautus.

Sebastiano Serlio published his “Trattato di architettura”, which was based on the Greek architect of Theater construction; he improvised outdoor Theater into indoor Theater. There was major problem of lights and sound, but his manuscript is considered the bible of modern theatrical hall construction (15) (2).

Printing press was invented in 1465 and during the period of 1467-1470 Bible and manuscript of Aristotle’s work got printed which made them accessible to common man, the famous Biblical Drama lost its popularity at some extent being Bible available to read the stories. Italian elite continued patronage the theatre and the famous genre was still classical Greek (4).

New ideas came out from Humanism and Neoclassicism, and they required drastic changes in presentation of drama and theater that led to introduction of new techniques therefore physical construction to conceptual construction of drama was changed and new technologies like artificial lighting and revolving stage (Periaktoi) were introduced (15).

During this period, we observe a series of theatre construction across Italy. The Accademia Olimpica commissioned a famous late Renaissance architect, Andrea Palladio, to design a Theater. Palladio researched classical outdoor roman theatre and constructed a combination of indoor and outdoor performance arena, first of its kind. The Teatro Olimpico, (foundation stone date 1580. Operational in 1585) was the first permanent modern



indoor Theater, and it has survived till now (15).

Another famous architect Scamozzi Designed a relatively small theatre named Teatro all'Antica in 1589. Its horseshoe functional design paves the way for the most prominent theatres of renaissance (2)(4).

Vitruvius (16-13 B.C.) wrote *De Architectura*, a volume on the detail of stage and staging. 1545 Sebastiano Serlio wrote *Dell'Architettura*, an interpretation of Vitruvius. This gave detailed account of Theater construction, keeping Greek Theater as prototype by making it indoor instead of outdoor. The concept of perspective and point of view was the key observation. On the bases of Sebastiano and Vitruvius vision first theater was built in 1618 named Teatro Farnese (1). Another noteworthy concept which Vitruvius wrote in *De Architectura*, is the description of revolving floor which revolutionized Theater art, different acts were possible to shift quickly and efficiently, the same very concept give margin for elaborated plots and extensively replicated during Renaissance.



During 16<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian stage was perspective oriented, use of scenery by multiple wings, which could be attached as per requirement, a figure ground concept was also introduced by putting a larger image on the backdrop and comparatively smaller images on the wings, the idea of depth was also included by making a rake stage, higher from back and lower from front. Stage was purpose fully U shaped and seating arrangement was not necessary, few theaters have no seats, and audience can stand and move around in hall while play is being staged. Elite as always avoided masses so there were special private boxes made for them (15).

As the stage has been constructed on the technique of today's camera which include light and sound as major components, artificial lights with the help of candles and oil lamp were in use to create visual language. Rope and pulleys were introduced on stage to create different frames. During the same period Opera was getting popularity, music, and dance to feel extravaganza and different props to create ambiance was popular. Nicola Sabbattini (1574-1654) in 1638 published a Manual for constructing theatrical scenes (15).

Theatrical presentation reached to a new level of esthetic maturity one such example could be "Intermezzi", a musical presentation between the scenes at time composed by finest music composer (15).

While giving account of Italian Renaissance commedia dell'arte cannot be ignored, unlike elite drama performed indoor this comedy was performed outdoor in the format of tropes sometimes the origin of commedia dell'arte is unknown but it represents clear influence of classical comedy but with exaggerated make over, strange mask, buffoon acting, and stock characters from ancient roman drama. Commedia dell'arta experience it popularity at it peak during 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (17) (18). Commedia mercenaria (mercenary commedia), commedia all'improvviso (improvised commedia), commedia delle maschere (mask commedia), were the off shoots of Commedia dell'art. Another notable historical point to mention here the role of women in Drama, it was considered the first time ever in history that women could act in the plays (4).

### **Italian playwrights of Renaissance**

During the Renaissance period, Italian dramaturges

mostly worked under the influence of Greek and Roman style and trends. Some writers also refer Italian Renaissance theater as period of “Neoclassical”. Italian neoclassicism was based on several important concepts including Decorum, Formulaic Structure, three unities, and Purpose (to Educate and Entertain at the same time).

Gian Giorgio Trissino (8 July 1478 – 8 December 1550)

Gian Giorgio Trissino who is also known as Giovan Giorgio Trissino, was a tragedy playwright, a humanist, poet, diplomat, grammarian, linguist, and philosopher. His tragedy “Sofonisba” was a Greek-style tragedy.

Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (3 May 1469 – 21 June 1527)

There is no doubt that Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli is known for his political treatise “The Prince” but his five-act comedy *Commedia Erudita*, *Mandragola* (The Mandrake) placed him as an important playwright of his era. He has often been called the father of modern political philosophy and political science.

Torquato Tasso (11 March 1544 – 25 April 1595)

Torquato Tasso was a poet and playwright and he wrote over 2,000 lyrics and Rhymes. His tragedy “*Torrismondo*” (1587) is considered a true Italian version of the tragedies of Sophocles and Seneca. *Dialoghi* (Dialogues), written between 1578 and 1594 dealt with issues from morality (love, virtue, nobility) to the mundane (masks, play, courtly style, beauty).

Giacinto Andrea Cicognini (1606–1651)

Giacinto Andrea Cicognini was the son of poet and playwright Jacopo Cicognini and he is known for his work for opera, where he carried elements of tragedy and comedy at the

same time. His most acclaimed works are *Giasone*, *Orontea* (1649), and *Cesti* (1656).

Carlo Osvaldo Goldoni (25 February 1707 – 6 February 1793)

Carlo Osvaldo Goldoni was a playwright, author of books, and poet. He worked in different genres including tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy. He is considered a playwright of the public because they offer a mix of wit and honesty, lives of simple people, moral values, and conflicts of the then-emerging middle classes. He worked in French, Italian, and regional vernacular. He also wrote under the pen name of Polisseno Fegeio. His popular plays include *Rosmonda* (1734), *Griselda* (1734), *Belisario* (1734), *Rinaldo di Montalbano* (1736) and *Servitore di due padroni*.

### **Neoclassicism**

Neoclassicism was rules of dramatic criticism based on Antiquity plays, it has been clearly monitored that drama must have real life characters which was called decorum, meaning a character must relate to the presented figure or class of society. The plot and the narrative must be time and space bound unlike supernatural themes Italian renaissance discourage surrealist effect, according to neoclassicism theater must be replica of day-to-day life. Verisimilitude comprises of three unities, unity of time, unity of place and unity of action (4)(16).

Verisimilitude or truth seeing was key component of neoclassicism, drama should present what is possible in real life events, plots categorically segregating comedy from tragedy because it was not allowed to mix comedy and tragedy in one plot by neoclassicism, all dramas should inculcate the reward and punishment, good will be rewarded and evil can avoid punishment. Heroes and heroic characters were not allowed to present in comic situation, comedy could only deal domestic issues, but tragedy can deal the higher subjects such as devotion, martyrdom, sacrifice, goals larger than life. So, prose tragedy and domestic tragedy was unacceptable.

Neoclassicism give nurturing to drama, which was long being considered immoral and evil, by giving it a purpose Italian renaissance justify the existence of the Theater in society (16).

### **English Renaissance**

English Renaissance drama evolved around England from the morality and mystery plays mostly performed by clergyman and tradesman having a message of high morality but later the element of entertainment was included in plays. English drama chiefly played in the court houses or in the homes of nobility and they were specifically based on comedy and tragedy. Later dramaturges included political satires in it which were initially based on the biblical stuff as coming right away from the medieval time so they could not get away from the medieval influence. With the passage of time dramaturges also included plots such as the life of a King emperor or Lord or other things (1). Play writers also include history in their plays so later gave birth to the historical play and Shakespearean plays are one of such genre (19).

English renaissance theater also got influenced by the Roman Tragedy writers like Seneca, detail study provide evidence of the roman tragic elements in English drama, not only in the dramas of Marlo but direct translation Seneca's work was popular (19).

*In the 1580s Philip Sidney complained that English playwrights were ignoring the principles of drama; he meant the classical principles exemplified by the tragedies of Seneca and the comedies of Plautus and Terence (20).*

English Renaissance was the time of change for Theater and audience, instead of being entertainment for elite it became entertainment of masses. During the period of Queen Elizabeth 1576 a theater building was constructed for the general public. In beginning, one actor had to play more than two or even three roles, male and female both because female of English renaissance time was not allowed to perform (20).

English renaissance introduced an Act 1545 by which every performer must be a member of a Guild and all performers



required permission for any performance. Anyone who was not the member of Guild but performing in a play could be penalized. Later Queen Elizabeth abrogated the act with one exception that not performers but performance itself needed to be got approval from the office of the Revels therefor the modern-day censorship board can be traced back to 16 century English Renaissance (20). *A Court official called the Master of the Revels was charged with licensing scripts for public performance; to perform an unlicensed play was an offence* (20).

English theater became a business by 16<sup>th</sup> century when public Theaters and private Theaters came on the surface. Public Theaters were sometimes performed and propagated political view because they were under the direct supervision of “The Master of Revels” (official authority of the State). Theater was also separated in term of economic affording; expensive Theaters were performed inside with proper seating arrangement and inexpensive theatre were performed outside mostly in an open place. Master of the Revel was a modern equivalent to censor board. It could be said that Theater performance was being regulated and what was being presented was also closely monitored (19).

Critics have divided English Renaissance period into Elizabethan Period, Jacobean Period and Caroline Period.

### **Elizabethan Period**

Elizabethan Period was from 1558-1603; during that period drama evolves from Medieval to Renaissance. The holy drama become less popular and drama involving human, and humanism took its place. Humanist aspects contained all human elements such as emotions, regret, life and death, intrigues and society. Shakespeare's plays are right example for it and Elizabethan period gave a remarkable opportunity to become a creative. The old ways, and stubborn rules were deliberately flouted, more poetic descriptions of emotions got replaced by emotion enactment, strict meter of dialogues shifted to free/blank verse and didn't stop here finally prose became part of theater creation. All the rigidity inherited from the past became an experimental platform where new styles and ideas were taking shape (19).

### **Jacobean Period**

Jacobean Period Drama is considered during 1603-1625. During that period comic satire was performed and madness or being free from societal control penetrated into the performances which of course gave a more lifelike appearance to the performance. It could also be considered that first stone of modern era was placed by artists in Jacobean era. The best possible theatrical mode for that type of drama is mimicry and theatrical imitation and of course these two mode performances flourished a lot during that period (19).

Plays performed or written during King Charles I era are called Caroline drama. Date of this period is from 1625 to 1649. Caroline Theater moved even further in terms of techniques and style. The use of imagery had been started during the Jacobean Period, but it became complex in the Caroline era. The use of metaphoric images and symbol to translate idea such as London Bridge on the backdrop corresponding a far-flung area, this was the start of mind flight technique through script and visuals (19).

### **Caroline Period**

During the late Caroline period (1643) England witness civil war which last for eighteen years.

It is the irony of the history that very little can be found anything about drama and its development that took place during the civil wars time. In the reign of King Charles, I Puritans got hold on London and banned the Theater, this ended when Charles II reclaimed the throne in 1660. Therefore, there was no theatrical performance in England for 18 years. King Charles II started the aesthetic activities again, and a new form of drama emerged mainly called Restoration Theater (2). A monarchy which was in exile in Paris for 18 years made a fresh start and Master of the Revels become functional again for the same purpose for regulating Theater art, but this patronage also serves the purpose of Theater evolution without any interruption (2).

Predominantly English Renaissance Comedy Theater took the lead after restoration of theater. Comedies were divided into Pastoral Comedy and City Comedy; Pastoral comedies were performed in the suburbs on open places and these comedies represented village life in characterization, scripts and even dramatization. However, city comedies were performed in urban areas with urban social political backdrop for city life audience (20).

*For this subject, the most unambiguously pastoral comedies are Shakespeare's As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Twelfth Night, although Much Ado About Nothing, The Merchant of Venice, and The Taming of the Shrew contain pastoral element (18).*

Pastoral comedy was interested in the themes of love, romance and forgiveness. Its principal characters tended to be young and belonged to the educated minor aristocracy, whereas its locations tended to be well-kept courts or houses or rural settings like the Forest of Arden or the wood outside Athens. Pastoral comedy was interested in marriage intrigues and the passage of true love, for example, Portia's marriage test in The Merchant of Venice, or the fiery courtship of Beatrice and Benedick in Much Ado About Nothing. As is often the case with all Shakespearean drama, the central narrative movement of pastoral comedy revolved around the idea of removing societal conflict and replacing it with harmonious relationships.

### **Playwrights of English Renaissance**

William Shakespeare (26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616)

William Shakespeare was a poet, playwright, and actor who is still respected as the greatest writer in the English language. His plays have been translated into every major living language. His famous plays include All's Well That Ends Well (1601–05), Antony and Cleopatra (1606–07), As You Like It (1598–1600), The Comedy of Errors (1589–94), Hamlet (1599–1601), Henry IV, (for parts produced during 1593–97), Henry V (1599), Julius Caesar (first produced 1599–1600), King Lear (1605–06), Macbeth (1606–07), The Merchant of Venice (c. 1596–97), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595–96), Romeo and Juliet (1594–96) and Twelfth Night (1600–02).

Benjamin Jonson (active era 1572 – 1637)

Benjamin Jonson was poet and playwright. He is known as the king of English poetry and stage comedy. His famous plays include *The Isle of Dogs* (1597), *Every Man in His Humor* (1598), *Volpone* (1607), and *The Alchemist* (1610).

Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 30 May 1593)

Christopher Marlowe was a poet, playwright, and translator of the Elizabethan era. His famous plays include *Doctor Faustus* (1589 or 1593), *Edward II* (1592), *Tamburlaine* (Part 1. 1587—Part II. 1589 and *The Jew of Malta* (1589).

Richard Brome (date of birth not confirmed- 24 September 1652)

Richard Brome was a playwright of Caroline's era. Nothing is known about his private life but it is believed that he started work as a servant of Ben Jonson. His work was influenced by the Johnsonian comedy and did not pen any tragedy. His famous work includes *The City Wit* (1629), *The Northern Lass* (1629), *The Queen's Exchange* (written in 1630 but printed in 1657), *The Novella* (1632), *The Weeding of Covent Garden* (1633), and *The Court Beggar* (1640).

### Spanish Renaissance

Spain's Renaissance Theater is known as Spanish Golden Age Theater or *Sig/o de Oro*. The Spanish Golden Age refers to the period between 1590 and 1681 AD.

*Out of this background one of the true manifestations of Spanish genius ---- the Golden Age drama, known as the Comedia---came into existence in the last decades of the sixteen century and flourished for fifty years (21).*

Spanish dramas grow consistently through the course of history in comparison to any other European drama; Spanish drama does not show suspension in the history of Theater (2).

Rise of Spain as European power started after the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile in 1469. Economically rich and strategically stable Spain became a hub of art and culture and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a monumental increase in the production of live Theater (1). *Another important influence on drama was Spain's sense of its own position as a world power. Following Columbus's first voyage in 1492, Spain rapidly became the dominant force in the New World, and in 1519 its king, Charles I, became the Holy Roman Emperor. By 1640 the decline of Spain's empire had already begun, but this was not fully evident until the end of the seventeenth century* (1).

By 1492, Spain became the most important hub of trade after conquering Granada and with discovery of America by Vasco da Gama (21).

It may be added that the renaissance that took birth in Spain brought strength to almost all visual and performing arts and Spanish Golden Age developed two primary types of theatres; Religious Theater and Secular Theater. Both theaters performed parallel.

Henryk Ziomek in his book "A History of Spanish Golden Age Drama" at Page 23 writes that liturgical plays, called as "autos" were one-act plays and known as integral part of festivities of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and later Corpus Christi Day. Another kind of religious plays were "miracle plays" and autos (plays) were also named misterios (mystery plays) and moralidades (morality plays). The realistic misterios, having scenes from the lives of Christ and the saints, were later called autohistorias and finally evolved into "comedias de santos" (saints' plays) in the Golden Age (22).

Spanish theater of Renaissance period was greatly influenced by Italian Theater. Charlotte Stern in her book "The Early Spanish Drama: From Medieval Ritual to Renaissance Art" writes at page 310 that the Italian literature and dramas became popular in Spain and Italian theatrical troupes started performing in Spain in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century with their techniques and innovative dramatic art influenced Spanish theater.

*"They (Italians) persuaded the Spaniards to imitate aspects of their style, to modify their calendar for the performances of plays, to modernize the stage, and to introduce women as members of the cast. During this time Spanish grandees also began to follow the example of*

*Italian dukes by becoming patrons of dramatists," writes Charlotte Stern (23).*

The most popular genre of secular theater was known as Comedias but this genre was not only Comedy rather everything that was performed at Secular Theater was called "Comedias". In simple word, the name of Secular drama was Comedias in the Spanish Renaissance indeed.

Influenced by Roman domestic drama and Italian Pastoral, Comedias was drama of common people having issues of everyday life including love and social relationships. The style of Comedias was most closely resembled with modern melodrama.

The major development took place in construction of theaters. Corral de comedias, (also known as Corrales) literally a



"theatrical courtyard", were constructed as a type of open-air theatre. Secular dramas were performed in Corrales having capacity of over 1500-2000 people at the maximum. Such theatres also had boxes and galleries for high-ranking officials and

churchmen. Another type of theatre venue were the courtyards surrounded by houses used for performance and the windows of these houses along the side walls served as boxes, occupied by the gentry and town officials, elite men and women. The commercial theater in Spain was successful from its earliest beginning (22).

A unique part of constructions was a space called the *Cazuela*. This was a separate place for unaccompanied women having a separate access, usually guarded by an armed person to prevent any men from entering.

Makeshift theaters were also popular called “done on carros” (wagons). They were wooden frames covered with painted canvas. By the 1690’s, they were 16 feet long by 36 feet tall and was similar to the English pageant wagon staging.

Dramaturges were considered as very influential and popular among elites and theater was the most popular recreational industry. By the end of the 16th century, full-length plays, serious or comic and three acts were popular, and women dramaturge were also very active and their plays contested stereotype gender roles and also questioned traditional play forms and ideas.

Spanish drama grew with its own characters although got lead from Italian or other traditions, but Spanish playwrights did a great job to form their own style for which they became famous. Spanish playwrights had a journey from crude beginnings in the streets, churches, and courtyards to the private residences of the kings and noblemen, and finally to the open-air and permanent theaters. Spanish drama contained a brilliance of its own and must be taken into consideration when studying Spanish drama of the Golden Age (22).

### **Playwrights of Spanish Theater in Renaissance**

We have learned that Spanish theater in Renaissance (Golden Age) promoted the themes include masculine honor, reputation, right versus wrong is a common theme in plays and the honor had connotation and denotation linked with the rules of Christianity and the State. Women characters represented protectors of their chastity because their reputations were considered to be linked with the honor of their male family members. Above-mentioned themes were promoted by writer and novelist Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (September 1547-1616)

and playwrights Lope de Vega (1562-1635), Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), Tirso de Molina (c. 1571-1648), and Juan Ruiz de Alarcón (c. 1581-1639).

Lope de Vega (November 25, 1562 – August 27, 1635)

It is believed that he wrote 100 short plays, 500 plays, 3,000 sonnets, three novels, four novellas, and nine epic poems but the majority of his short plays are not available. At least 80 of his plays are still considered masterpieces.

It is difficult to fix his work under the genres of tragedy, comedy, or tragicomedy because he played so much with history, norms, and deep-rooted social structure of Spanish society that made a unique kind of his own genre. He is considered a master of the drama of intrigue and he used history, especially Spanish history, as his main source of subject matter. His most famous plays belong to the social class called “Capa y Espada” (Cloak and Dagger), where the plots are chiefly loved intrigues along with affairs of honor, most commonly involving the petty nobility of medieval Spain.

His important plays include *El maestro de danzar* (1594) (The Dancing Master), *Los locos de Valencia* (Madness in Valencia), *El acero de Madrid* (The Steel of Madrid) and *El perro del Hortelano* (The Gardener's Dog).

Pedro Calderón de la Barca (January 17, 1600 – May 25, 1681)

Calderón de la Barca was a soldier and a Roman Catholic priest, poet, writer, knight of the Order of Santiago, as well as a playwright.

Known as a perfectionist, he used to rework many of his plays that were already popular or considered as the best even long after they were first performed. He was very conscious about depth, complexity, and unity in drama and his work is considered



as a catalog of dramatic structure, philosophical depth, and poetry.

His popular plays include *Amor, honor y poder* (Love, Honor and Power) (1623), *El sitio de Breda* (The Siege of Breda) (1625), *La vida es sueño* (Life is a dream), *La dama duende* (The Phantom Lady) (1629) and *Casa con dos puertas* (The House with Two Doors) (1629).

Tirso de Molina (c 1571-1648)

Tirso de Molina is considered as the third master of the drama of the Spanish Renaissance or Baroque period after Vega and Calderón.

He was a dramatist, poet, and Roman Catholic monk. He promoted female protagonists in his plays and explored the sensitive subject of sexuality but in reference to morality and religion. His play "El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra" (The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest) created the fictional character of Don Juan that became a byword for those men who devote their lives to seducing women.

His other popular plays include "El condenado por desconfiado" (Damned for lack of faith, 1624), *Deleitar aprovechando* (delight taking advantage) (1635) and *Cigarrales de Toledo* (1624).

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón (c. 1581 - 4 August 1639)

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón is considered the fourth famous playwright of the Spanish Olden Age (Renaissance).

Though during his era intrigue and honor were the main subjects, his work includes subjects like political situations, astrology, magic, and other occult practice. He wrote 25 plays and his most famous play is *La verdad sospechosa*, (published in 1634). Other important plays are *La verdad sospechosa* (Suspect Truth), *Los favores del mundo*, *La industria y la suerte* and *Las paredes oyen* (The Walls Have Ears).

### **French Renaissance**

History and topography of any region set its cultural scene and France had gone through a series of turbulences and upheavals before and after Renaissance. Several extended religious and civil wars (1562-98), at least four revolutions,

revolutions related wars, First World War and Second World War would have definitely influenced cultural scene of France during stormy periods.

When we talk about the growth of the French Theater, we find that Italian Theater and Spanish Theater are foundations of French Theater and French Theater played a pivotal role in developing French language also. Like Italian, Spanish and English Theaters, French Theater had also its origin in the Church as early as 9<sup>th</sup> century and had been under the influence of Church even till 12<sup>th</sup> century (24).

The Mass Service itself was in a form of drama with its singing mixed with recitation and dialogues between the officiating priest and his assistants. The immediate source of the drama, however, was not the mass but the "office du jour". The "office du jour" consisted of prayers or recitations dealing with the divine act, or with saints or martyrs whose memory the "office du jour" consecrated. At first it was the priest who conducted the entire service, but with passage of time, the roles were distributed to the deacon (A person of order ranking below the priest) and sub-deacon. The best known liturgical drama was "Les prophètes du Christ" (The Prophets of Christ), adapted from a mythical sermon of Saint Augustine (25).

At first the text of the drama was slightly different from that of the sermon. Later the appearance of prophets in scenes became more frequent, and comic characters were introduced. One fact is yet to be found that why did French Theater become increasingly lewd during this time?

*The "Jeu de Saint Nicolas", by Jean Bodel, evidenced the pronounced profane character of the Theater. It was one of the first plays to be performed outside the church, hence its vulgarity. The plot was an amusing one based on an old legend (25).*

Many liturgical plays of that time contained fighting

between devil and saints but in a comic way. Comical villains and clowns also became part of religious plays for making the productions effective for theatrical entertainments. The authors of these religious plays are for the most part anonymous but some are popular including Jean Bodel, author of *The Play of Saint Nicolas*; Rutebeuf, author of *The Miracle of Theophile*; Arnoul Greban, author of *The Mystery of the Passion*. The play was performed 1501 and was an adaptation and amalgamation of Greban's and Michel's plays (2).

Thirteenth century brought Dramatic societies in France and French dramatic societies (called *pays*) were first Dramatic societies in the world.

*The "Pays" presented both religious and profane drama, the miracle being their chief medium of dramatic expression. Rutebeuf's "Miracle de Theophile", meagre in thought and action, was the first of many composed to the honor and glory of the Virgin (25).*

Though religious stage was popular, but a non-religious theater also appeared in thirteenth century and grew steadily. This kind of performances emerged from mimes and entertainers of all sorts, jongleurs with their stories and songs, and pagan rituals (1).

According to historians, the possible origin of the professional comedian in France was three-fold: the jongleurs, the "joueurs de personnage" and the farceurs de metier" (25).

The work of Jongleurs was inspired by ancient performances of Middle Ages. They formed four classes; the danseurs (a male ballet dancer.), the satiriques (a genre of the visual, literary, and performing arts), the chanteurs (a singer of ballads) and the chanteurs de geste (song of heroic deeds) (25).

The fifteenth century is considered as the golden era for the Theater in France because the end of religious wars gave a respite to the society and Court (the King Office) gave support to art and Theater and new companies and theatrical societies developed and experimentation was done in playwriting as well as in production (25).

Medieval Theater and art greatly influenced France throughout the sixteenth century and outdoor religious dramas were staged between 1500 and 1550, and farces and *sotties* were

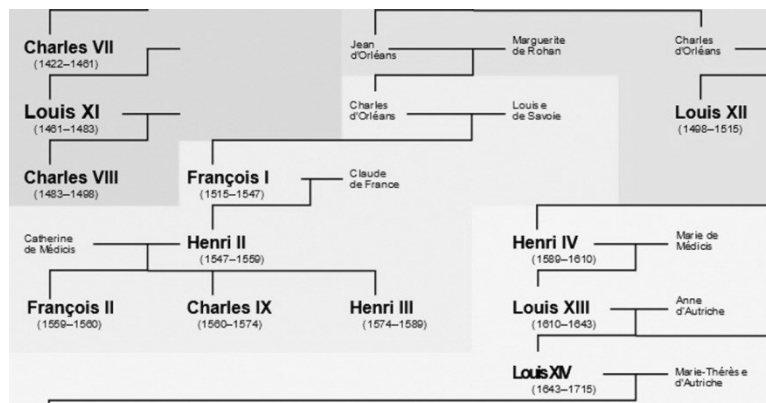
among the most popular of dramatic types. *Two variations on farce—sotties and sermons joyeux—also became popular in France* (1).

From 1494, France maintained close relationships with the Italian Theater practitioners. Since the King Francis I was very much interested in the new artistic and literary movements of the Italian Renaissance therefore he invited several Italian scholars and artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, and Serlio, to his Court. *Among Serlio's favorite stage effects were the appearance of a comet, lightning, thunder, and thunderbolts. Although he does not mention the use of a stage curtain, his phrase "the unveiling to our view of a stage setting" seems to indicate such an arrangement* (26).

Renaissance's influence enhanced after Henri II (reigned 1547–1559), who married Italian Noblewoman Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589) who was very interested in Italian Theater (26). But this period lasted for just thirty-six years till France had a turbulent time when religious cum civil wars started in 1562 and continued till 1598 and this situation seized cultural developments. These wars were between Catholics and the Huguenots (Protestants).

Going through brief history of political changes brought by religious and civil wars is important to understand because this period had great impact on psychology of French population for many centuries to come and played a pivotal role in developing political thoughts and considerations. Since political thoughts and psychological aspects greatly influence performing and visual arts of any nation, therefore it would help readers to understand kinds and genre and content of French theater during and after this turbulent time.

When the Catholics increased strength under the leadership of the Duke of Guise, Henri III became worried and he managed to assassinate the Duke in 1588 and within a year, Henri



III(26) was assassinated. Since he had no heir, Henri of Navarre who was brother-in-law of Henri III succeeded to the throne as Henri IV (reigned 1589–1610) but he was not accepted by nobles and a civil war started in France and Henri IV was not able to enter Paris until 1594. Under Henri IV, order was finally restored, but he too was assassinated in 1610 and Louis XIII (reigned 1610–1643), who only nine years old was placed as new ruler. His mother, Marie de' Medici and her ministers practically ruled the country and this situation again put France into kind of a civil war but Court managed to control situation by 1620s, under the command of Cardinal Richelieu (26).

Armand Jean du Plessis, Duke of Richelieu was a French clergyman and statesman. Richelieu died in 1642 and Louis XIII died in 1643. Now five-year-old son of Louis XIII succeeded to the throne. He was named as Louis XIV. The country was run by his mother Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin (1602–1661). Cardinal Jules Mazarin was an Italian and he served as chief minister to the kings of France Louis XIII and Louis XIV from 1642 until his death in 1661. He had deep interest in Theater and contributed well to French Theater (25).

Mazarin was unpopular because he was an Italian so the nobility launched a political movement "La Fronde" ("the sling") and he had to leave Paris (25).

After the mutiny of movement "La Fronde", Louis XIV decided to make Versailles as unofficial capital of France (27).

Louis XI forced all of France's leading noblemen to live in Versailles so he might keep an eye on them to purge conspiracies against his rule. This is the time when French nobles and royal family lost contact with common man because they were living far away from common people in newly developed city. Historians say that new city Versailles was the symbol of the king's absolute power who had no place for poor and common people. This disintegration of rulers and ruled created political conditions that led to the French Revolution a century later.

### **Theater and cultural developments during sixteenth century**

The invention of printing press opened ways for French language to become mature and a group of seven French writers, led by Pierre de Ronsard started work to develop French as a

mature language from vernacular.

*In 1556, Pierre de Ronsard published a poem in which the name 'la Pléiade' is used for the first time to designate the new generation of poets. The founder members of the group were Ronsard, Du Bellay, and Jean-Antoine de Baïf, who had studied together under Jean Dorat at the Collège de Coqueret in the later 1540s; membership of the group fluctuates somewhat over the years, but the term has survived and is a convenient way of referring collectively to this prolific and formative phase in the history of French poetry (27).*

The usage of French as the medium for literature increased and rules of grammar and prosody were formed while new words were coined in French language. Classical plays by Greek and Roman playwrights including Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Seneca, Plautus, and Terence were on French Theater and invention of Printing press enabled to published French translated works of Aristotle and Horace and popular Italian plays were also translated into French language during this period.

The first play in French modeled on classical forms was written by Etienne Jodelle (1523–1573), who wrote the comedy *Eugène* (1552). He also wrote the first tragedy in French, *Cléopâtre Captive* in 1553. *Cléopâtre captive* is considered as the first 'humanist' tragedy in French (28).

*It was in the universities and academic circles, however, that the new drama, patterned after classic models, was born and nurtured. At the college of Reims, in Paris, Jodelle and his classmates first performed his tragedy, CleonLtre. and his comedy, Eugene, before Henry II and his court in 1552. As yet the colleges had no Theaters; and at Boncourt, where Jodelle's plays were repeated, a platform stage set against a wall in a courtyard served. Windows opening upon the court sufficed as loges; and chairs and benches were placed on the ground to seat the royal spectators (25).*

The achievement of tragedies produced by Jodelle encouraged other playwrights to use classical models. Tragedies of this time exposed the miseries of the characters who were the victims of their fate and they narrated their distress in rhetorical dialogues but dramatic elements were less in such scenes and comedies were of classical in form, resembling medieval farces in their subjects. Therefore, the feel of drama with action and arrangements were still not at sight.

Pierre de Larivey (c. 1540–1619) produced comedy without following the rules of medieval farce and his model of works was based on Italian *commedia erudite*. However, Larivey included French texture and manners in *commedia erudite*. His comedies were very popular during his time around 1630 (1).

### **Shaping the infrastructure of Theatre**

Renaissance brought massive content and physical infrastructure developments to French theater.

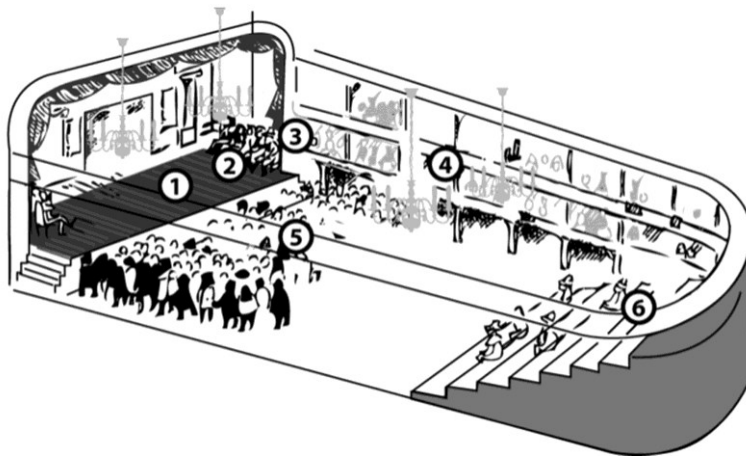
Renaissance brought massive content and physical infrastructure developments to French theater due to deep interest of Royal family and elites who heavily invested in construction of theatre buildings as well as hired foreign Dramaturges. Catherine de' Medici who was Queen consort of France from 1547 until 1559 wanted to use Theater and art as Public Diplomacy and used to invite royal families from neighboring countries and made them impressed with power of France and this activity helped her for forging alliances or reconciliations. She invited several Italian Theater practitioners to France because she wanted to collect best theatrical experts to France(25). This period is also known for Court Festivals and festivals resulted to develop the *ballet de cour* (the French variation on Italian *intermezzi* and English masques) (29). Producers of such ballet did experiments and united dramatic plot, song and dance in the “antique manner” (31).

During this era, theatre practitioners were being sponsored for experimentations, encouraged to introduce new kind of performances and foreign stage designers were invited to Paris and a boom of construction of huge theater buildings was recorded.

At first, sets were composed of painted cloths which could be dropped to reveal the next behind. But in 1617 angled side wings and back shutters were introduced for the play “*The*

*Deliverance of Renaud*" (26). By 1620, perspective scenery, unified settings, the raked stage, and scene shifting were in use at court. There are four dramatists Jean de Mairet, Pierre du Ryer, Rotrou, and Corneille in post 1620s who worked extensively for the revival of Theater in Court.

Until 1629 the Hôtel de Bourgogne (26) was the only permanent Theater in Paris and no map or design of its interior is available with us. According to available information, it was about 40 feet wide and 105 feet long. The first floor was a pit, or *parterre*, without permanent seats (with the possible exception of a bench running along each of the side walls). There were two or three galleries around the auditorium. The total capacity of the auditorium may have been about 1600 sitting capacity. The stage was raised around six feet above the pit. There was no



proscenium arch, but extended side galleries created a frame.

In 1548, Duke of Burgundy donated land for construction of a permanent building Theater. The building was named after Dukes of Burgundy and was called the Hôtel de Bourgogne and building can be considered the first permanent public Theater to



be built in Europe since Roman times (25).

Cardinal Richelieu hired the architect LeMercier to construct the first Theater in France with a permanent proscenium arch and flat wings. This Theater that was constructed in the palace of Cardinal Richelieu, therefore it was called the Palais Cardinal. It had a stage 59 feet wide by 46 feet deep and an auditorium 59 feet wide by 65 feet deep with two levels of undivided galleries around three sides.

*Most of the ground floor was taken up by an amphi-Theater that rose in broad steps from a small pit. Since the Theater was intended only for invited guests, the auditorium did not follow the arrangement used in the public Theaters. It opened in January 1641 but its capabilities were not fully displayed until later that year when the Ballet de la Prospérité des Armes de la France, with nine settings, was produced. The Theater came under the control of the crown when Richelieu died in 1642 and became known as the Palais Royal thereafter (1).*

The construction of Palais Cardinal was the beginning of a series of huge theaters constructed or remolded thereafter. In following years, the Italian set designer Giacomo Torelli was hired by Royal family and *Torelli* remodeled and reshaped theater in the *Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon*. Established in 1645 at the Petit-Bourbon by Torelli, it (Pole and Chariot system) was soon installed in numerous other Parisian Theaters (25).

Italian set designers like Tomaso Francini (1571–1648), gave Italian touch to French Theater. He introduced new scenic art (26). *For his first opera in Paris, in 1645, Torelli chose The*



*Conterfit Madwoman (La Finta Pazza)*. Torelli converted the *Petit Bourbon* in the Tuileries Palace, into an Italianate Theater. He erected a platform 6 feet high to make a stage about 49 feet wide by 48 feet deep. He also installed his famous chariot-and-pole system of scene shifting (1).

French Renaissance theatre has a unique aspect of Royalty performing in plays. In 1654 Mazarin, hired poet Isaac Bensérade for writing an opera with ballets interspersed between the acts and “*The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis*” was produced and King Louis XIV appeared in six roles. Torelli designed seven sets and a number of spectacular special effects (1).

The construction of “The Salle des Machines” completed in 1660 and it became the largest Theater in Europe. This Theater was 232 feet long; of this length, only 92 feet were occupied by the auditorium, leaving 140 feet of depth for stage which had a proscenium arch only 32 feet wide. The Salle des Machines was officially inaugurated in 1662 with the opera *Hercules in Love*. Interlayered with ballets, the opera featured scenery and machines, on one of which, 60 feet deep by 45 feet wide, the entire royal family and their attendants were present at inaugural show (26).

Theater and dramas were becoming popular among common people after the end of civil war and demand of place for staging drama increased and this is the time when tennis courts

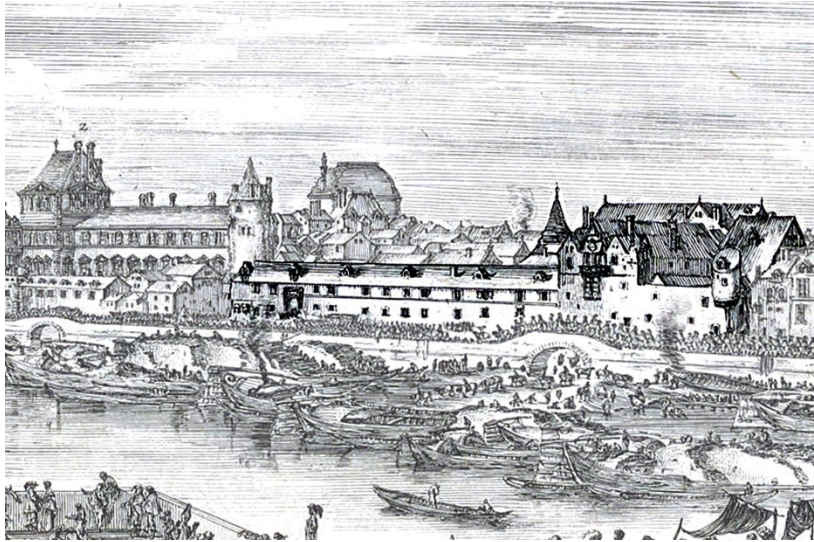


were used for performing plays because their size (about 30 by 90 feet) was not very different from Hôtel de Bourgogne (26).

### **New Narratives**

With drastic development in theatre structure also brought requirement for the content and script therefore the French Academy was established mainly for the French literature which was no more a vernacular at this point and by 1637 the Academy got the state charter. Membership in the Academy was (and continues to be) restricted to forty, apparently the most eminent literary figures of the age. The main task of Academy was the study and codification of French language and style.

Around 1597, Alexandre Hardy (26) appeared on theatrical scene as the first French professional dramatist. He was inspired by the Spanish dramatists. He wrote over 500 plays, but only 34 have survived. Hardy used neoclassical techniques like five-act form, poetic dialogue, messengers, and the chorus. He started his career by writing tragedies but felt soon that audience was not much interested in tragedies therefore, he moved to



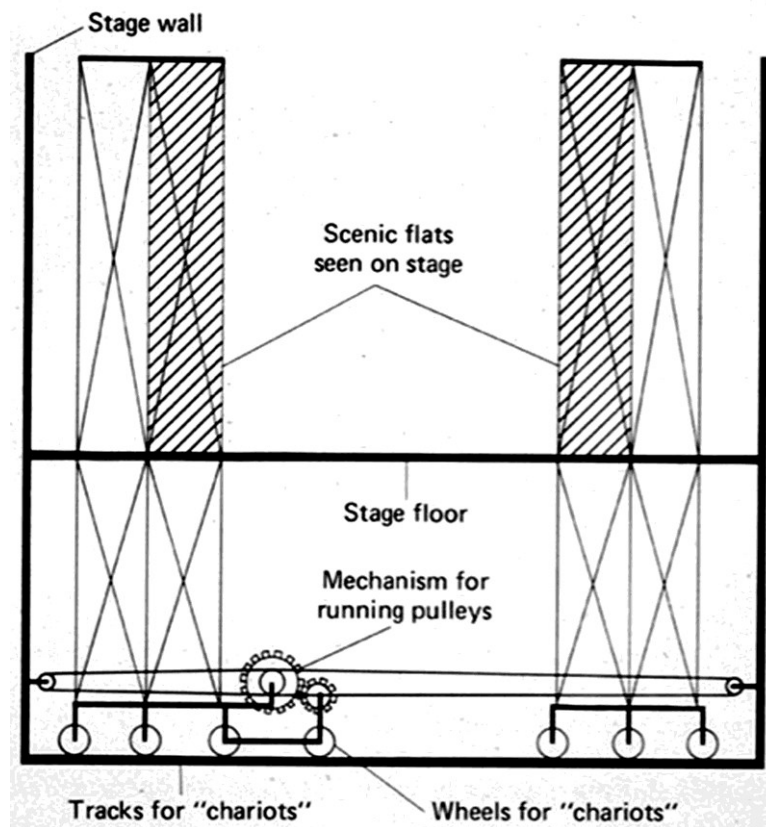
tragicomedy and pastoral.

Several theatrical companies were established outside of Paris by the mid-sixteenth century because the license of performing in Paris was only with Confraternity till 1629. A journey of theater that was only in Paris and places like Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon now had reached outside beautiful buildings and big cities.

Advertisement of plays was started and posters were being used to advertise productions, and announcements for forthcoming plays. Now Theater was on its way to become a public business as well as an institution for entertainment.

Ballet that was very popular during the Queen Catherine de' Medici but faded from the scene remerged by the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and became a popular genre because King Louis XIV appeared in many of the productions

*One of the most characteristic works, The Ballet of the Night (1653), was divided into forty-three "entries," featuring such groups as hunters, bandits, shepherds, gypsies astrologers, the Four Elements, Venus, and Aurora, each related to a different phase of the night. Finally, the Sun, danced by Louis XIV, appeared to disperse the darkness. This piece of transparent flattery was one of many works that helped to create the image of Louis XIV as the "Sun King" (around which everything revolves), a symbol promoted assiduously throughout*



*his reign* (1).

*Established in 1645 at the Petit-Bourbon by Torelli, it (Pole and Chariot system) was soon installed in numerous other Parisian Theaters*

By 1700, some important events took place in French Theater including the revival of ideas of Aristotle (Three unities) and heroism was on rise and plays portraying heroes were popular. Commedia Francaise was established (comedies and farces), that led to the development of French Professional Theater. Famous playwrights Moliere and Racine were stars at the sky of French Theater by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The French word for drama, applied to plays that are intermediate between comedy and tragedy. Diderot outlined his theory of the "drame" in the prefaces to his plays *Le Fils naturel* (1757) and *Le Père de famille* (1758).

*Diderot argued that neoclassicism was too narrow in restricting the acceptable dramatic types to traditional comedy and tragedy, and that additional "middle" genres—the drame (or domestic tragedy) and a comedy concerned with virtue* (1).

"Drame" introduced three forms which become icon for the performing art till today. Tragédie bourgeoise became popular among masses as this kind of tragedy dealt with common people and often ending in comparative happiness. Comédie larmoyante also became popular. Plays of this genre ended unhappily but provided a chance to audience to see that a "moral triumph" had been earned for the suffering heroes and heroines. There was also the comedietta that resembled the "one-actor" vaudeville. Vaudeville was a comedy without psychological or moral intentions, based on a comical situation and a dramatic composition or light poetry, combined with songs or ballets (33).

### **Turbulent times in French Theatre**

French La Fronde, series of civil wars in France started in 1648 and continued till 1653 that caused a halt in social growth and activities including drama, but drama recovered its place after the end of civil wars by late 1650s (1).

In 1588, Paris Theater had a bad phase when theatrical activities were shut down during civil war that followed the assassination of Henri III in 1588. However, after a pause of six

years, performances in Paris resumed when Henri IV entered Paris in 1594 and the usual popular genre was farce (1).

In 1402 Charles VI established "Confraternity of the Passion" that was supposed to promote drama and theater in France. He granted special permission to produce mystery plays and Confraternity had monopoly on theatrical production in Paris. Confraternity performed in a large hall at the Hôpital de la Trinité for many years and till the time religious plays were banned in France in 1548 (31). Since the Confraternity had experience for staging religious plays and it was the main genre of this group, the Confraternity lost its popularity after religious dramas were banned. It attempted to do farce and other secular dramas, but without much success. The situation put Confraternity into survival mode and it started renting theater and selling monopoly power to visiting companies during 1570s. Confraternity gave up drama production completely but monopoly rights kept with them until 1629. The Confraternity of the Passion was dissolved in 1677 (25).

### **The Fourth Wall in Theater and politics**

During the times of nobles, there was a metaphorical "fourth wall" that divided an audience from the actors. Plays were considered as illusions of reality and Theater was showing subjects only to the will of the monarchy, aristocracy, and clergy. Historians of Theater believe that the divide between spectators and performers not only reflected, but encouraged the separation between citizens and government.

During the Ancien Régime, politicized drama was under censor. The Ancien Régime is also known as the Old Regime. This was the political and social system of the Kingdom of France from the Late Middle Ages (circa 15th century) until the French Revolution of 1789.

The French Revolution was a major event in the history when people overthrow absolute monarchy and established a republic.

### **Theater after Revolution**

French theater came out of clutches of the censorship but for a brief time of period in 1791 when government legislation abolished long-standing royal supervision over the theatrical enterprise. The legislation made brief rules about issues related with presentation of aesthetics, economics of theater, censorship and proprietary rights of authors. Legislation also accepted the role of theater as an institution for social, cultural, educational, and political developments.

(33)(26). Post Republic era brought 50 new theaters and theater work became an industry. In Parterre Theater, the working class could participate in the performance by voicing their reactions in an unmediated, sometimes aggressive way, thus anticipating in some form the coming Revolution. Public became a part of theater, and this can be considered as first attempt of common man to break fourth wall (25).

Theater historians believe that people during this period used to attend Theater mostly for two reasons; firstly, its aesthetic value and secondly, because of its political suggestiveness and the drama was criticized if the factor of the political suggestiveness was absence.

Along with the theatricality of politics, the role of drama in French society is reflected in the theatrical picture of the visions and beliefs of the National Convention regarding surveillance of people. The National Convention was a parliament of the French Revolution and the first French assembly elected without distinctions of class system. This Convention seized monarchy and provided political space for plays but also introduced concept of Surveillance. Surveillance was used to protect Revolution and anything that could help directly or indirectly counter-revolutionary messages or forces; therefore a new kind of censorship was developed. Revolution was promoted through plays and military leadership was at center stage of promotion.

### **Playwrights of French Renaissance**

Popular playwrights of France during Renaissance include Voltaire, Moliere, Marivaux, La Chaussée, Denis Diderot and Beaumarchais.

Voltaire (21 November 1694 – 30 May 1778) is considered as one of the best philosopher, writer and playwright of France and his plays Socrates, Alzire, Orestes, Catiline, Sémiramis, Pandora, The Scotch Woman, Nanine, The Prude, Mérope, Olympia, The Orphan of China, Mahomet, Amelia, Œdipus, and Mariamne are still popular. He wrote 2,000 books and pamphlets and was one of the first authors commercially successful playwright of his era.

Moliere (15 January 1622–17 February 1673) was dramaturge and playwright who wrote over 31 plays and produced over 85 plays in his 14 year stay in Paris. Most popular of his plays are the Flying Doctor, the Jealousy of le Barbouillé, the Affected Young Ladies and the School for Husbands. Majority of his work are farces in the manner of the *commedia dell'arte*.

Marivaux (1688-1763) was a romantic playwright and promoted emotions but not reasoning in his plays. His popular plays include the Agreeable Surprise, Infidelities, the False Servant, Slave Island, Money Makes the World Go Round and the Game of Love and Chance.

La Chaussée (1692--March 14, 1754) was known for comedy but with tearful tragedy---Comédie larmoyante. Plays of this genre ends unhappily but with a "moral victory of Good and Good needs sacrifices. He produced 22 plays that are available.

Diderot (5 October 1713 – 31 July 1784) was philosopher and playwright. He believed theater had been too away from real life, that it should be used as an educational medium. He is popular as drama critic and Peter Elliott in his book "Drama Reloaded" believed that in 1758 he introduced the concept of the fourth wall, the imaginary "wall" at the front of the stage in a



traditional three-walled box set in a proscenium theatre, through which the audience sees the action in the world of the play.

### **German Language Theater**

(Austro Hungarian Theatre)

The study of German language theatre is critical because one must not try to find German-language theatre only in and around today's Germany rather as far as regions and lands that had been under the authority of the Austrian House of Habsburg(34), Austro-Hungarian Empire(35) and Austro-German Alliance.

The Hussite Wars(34), also called the Bohemian Wars or the Hussite Revolution, were a series of wars fought between the Proto-Protestant Christian (Hussites) and the joint Catholic forces of the Holy Roman (2) Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg (15 February 1368 – 9 December 1437). The unrest between Holy Roman Empire and Proto-Protestant Christians ignited after Proto-Protestant Christian reformer Jan Hus was executed by the Catholic Church in 1415(36). By 1419, followers of both faiths were involved in wars that continued till 1434. Sigismund was Holy Roman Emperor from 1433 until his death in 1437 and he successfully controlled the situation. He was the last male member of the House of Luxembourg. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, the Habsburg archduke Albert V of Austria who had a brief tenure and was replaced by Frederick III (21 September 1415 – 19 August 1493) of House of Habsburg as Emperor of Holy Roman Empire so the seat of Holy Roman Empire went to House of Habsburg and remained with it till its collapse.

Events followed by these wars resulted in the expansion and supremacy of the Austrian House of Habsburg over entire Central and Eastern Europe and as far as Spain and Italy, opening the path for the spread and influence of the German language as well as the German Theater.

The German-language Theater in the middle-ages and the Renaissance was religiously motivated and plays were directed by clergymen who were producing plays for the religious and moral education of society. With continued growth, German Language Theater had three different setups by the beginning of the 1600s.

Wanderbühne were established and they were travelling to German-speaking lands, religious school dramas (Jesuit

Theater) and amateur theater that was mostly staged in the halls or assembly-rooms where amateur players performed for their own enjoyment. Early important contributors of Jesuit theater as writer were Jacob Gretser (March 27, 1562 – January 29, 1625) and Jacobus (1542 –25 November 1626).

The majority of amateur performers were youth of royal families and high aristocracy but with the passage of time middle and upper-middle-class gradually took over the scene and amateur theater became popular activity by the end of the eighteenth century.

Wanderbühne were travelling German-speaking, theatrical troupes and travelling operas and they entertained the people with farces, parodies and court tragedies. Their plays had a specific structure known as Haupt- und Staatsaktion, that presented one larger ‘main’ production alongside several smaller skits and more spontaneous acts. Haupt-und-Staatsaktionen was an indigenous style of German Language plays and mostly “main production” dealt with the intrigues of high characters in high places and abounded with blustering rhetoric and gory sensationalism. The subject of their content included political and state affairs.

Unfortunately, people working at Wanderbühne were forced to struggle with a minimum wage and were socially outcasts. Even in the mid-1750s, their request to allow them to perform in the opera houses was officially denied.

*The desire of the German players to act in the opera house as the Italians do, and to be permitted to perform comedies, is denied* (37). The German-language theatrical scene was also influenced by Italian acting troupes (38) and many Italian comedy groups were present in the German-speaking region. Due to the popularity of Wanderbühne, Italian groups also included some features of Wanderbühne including the musical aspect of theatre. Italian

theater also captured the German middle class though they started their work only at court level (royal family) the middle class did not understand Italian therefore Italian Commedia dell'arte (35) performances of the Italian theatre groups developed into a kind of pantomime whose comic action was mediated by masks and exaggerated gestures and movement.

In competition with Italian theater, German language theater also enhanced its professional capacity gradually developed purely German-speaking travelling theatrical groups though in the beginning, they were borrowing English and Italian actors in plays.

By the mid of 1600s, German-language theater was catering for demands of all classes, from royalty to middle class, therefore, plays with serious content appeared for educated spectators. One example of this was the Hochdeutsche Hofcomödianten (established in 1678) that introduced important novelties in the landscape of the Wanderbühne and presented more literarily elaborate plays, dramas and introduced female actors for women's roles. At this juncture, the influence of philosophical movements was providing new content and subjects like the ideas of the value of human happiness, the pursuit of knowledge obtained by means of reason and the evidence of the senses took their place in plays. Movements like the Age of Enlightenment and the Baroque Movement both actively provided thoughts for dramaturges.

Influenced by the Baroque movement, Playwrights like Andreas Gryphius (2 October 1616 – 16 July 1664)(34) were writing excellent tragedies. The Baroque followers used enthusiastic details, deep colour, splendour sets and sceneries and attention-seeking pitch of dialogues. Starting in the 17th century in Rome, the movement spread rapidly to France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria, southern Germany, and Russia.

Playwright Friedrich Schiller (10 November 1759 – 9 May 1805) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (28 August 1749 – 22 March 1832) were promoting Weimar Classicism (34) (German: Weimarer Klassik) that established a new humanism from the synthesis of ideas from Romanticism, Classicism, and the Age of Enlightenment. It was presumably named after the city of Weimar, Germany because the leading authors of Weimar Classicism lived there.

Johann Christoph Gottsched (2 February 1700 – 12 December 1766) was one of the pioneers who introduced the philosophical aspect in German theater and his plays included sensibility in German plays. George B. Bryan and Veronica C. Richel write(39) Luise Gottsched wrote four comedies and one tragedy, all of which are moralistic enough to satisfy Neo-classism theorists and sentimental enough to charm to the middle class. His plays included moral teachings, cause-to-effect arrangement of incidents and individuality of human beings.

One can say that in the last two decades of the 1700s, German-language theatrical scene was getting its shape physically (construction of theaters) as well as content-wise.

A phase of construction of huge and beautiful theatrical buildings at the last two decades of the 1700s established theaters in Vienna (Nationaltheater nächst der Burg, 1776), Gotha (1775-1778), Mannheim (1779), Berlin (Nationaltheater, 1786) and Weimar (1891). This development changed the dynamics of German theatrical scenes.

The Burgtheater (literally meanings the Castle Theater) is the national theater of Austria in Vienna and is the most important German-language Theater. Originally set up in a tennis court as its ballroom by the Roman-German king and later emperor Ferdinand 1540, it was converted into theatre and was opened on 14 March 1741. In 1776, Emperor Joseph II elevated this theater as "German National Theater".



E. Yates in his book (38) writes Burgtheater was in a dilapidated state and poor condition when Joseph II elevated its status as the National Theatre and it was unsuitable for large-scale productions. However, Burgtheater swiftly went through a renovation in 1779 and then 1794 when further modifications were done by court architect Joseph Hillebrandt. Around 1874, further changes were done. After renovation, the theatre became one of the most beautiful places for performance and foreign dramaturgs such as Strindberg, Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, Maeterlinck, and Molnar were performed in Burgtheater.

Due to changing scenarios, by the beginning of 1800, school-theater totally disappeared, travelling companies were still around but at a smaller scale and amateur theaters were playing a role in social work. In 1776 Emperor Joseph II allowed private and commercial theaters in Vienna through the decree "Schauspielfreiheit" (38) and this encouraged the private sector to invest in entertainment. This decree also set some simple rules for theatrical performance including that anything offending politics, religion, and morality not allowed in content, scenes of death, funerals, or graves were forbidden and several plays by Shakespeare were banned. This censorship continued till the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 and was finally declared illegal by the constitutional court in 1926. After the censorship of Emperor Joseph II, several plays by Lessing (38) (22 January 1729 – 15 February 1781), Goethe, and Schiller were either banned outright or cut by the censorship authorities. Official censorship encouraged a significant degree of self-censorship, resulting quality of the repertoire declining.

Under the censorship, Vienna's commercial theaters were entertaining comedies and parodies, mostly in Viennese dialect. Competition among several theaters made financial profit more important for private companies than the quality of the product and major genres were parody and farcical comedies.

German Language Theatre that was engaged with philosophical issues and dramaturges were academic and serious, lost this texture after censorship and the factor of thinking was replaced with plain entertainment.

Around the mid of the 1800s, the dialect drama (*Lokalposse*) (38) entered the theatrical scene of operettas and operas, having roots in Italian opera. Mozart enjoyed a limited

success only, with the exception of his Italian operas. German opera did not arrive until after 1848/49 when Albert Lortzing, Richard Wagner, Jacques Offenbach, and Franz von Suppé entered into the theatrical scene.

*Lokalposse* was a local variant of the farce and characters spoke the local dialect, wore local customs and provided a local ambience with a central character as a funny person.

By 1910, genres like "Superficial comedies"(38) and "frivolous triviality" became symbols for the commercial success of theater. Superficial comedy is a style of Victorian and Edwardian writers which represents human nature under the mask of art and represents little more than the disguise itself.

The brief history of German-language Theater indicates German Renaissance did not enjoy the pleasure of experimentations and was not influenced by theatrical movements and "isms" till 1926 due to censorship and strong control of religion due to the seat of the Holy Roman Empire while other European theaters, particularly French theatre, had more philosophical aspects. Realism, anti-realism, symbolism. Though Holy Roman Empire was dissolved on 6 August 1806 censorship clamped by Emperor Joseph II in 1776 did not allow German Language Theater to do political and philosophical work in the theatrical sphere.

### **Playwrights of the German language during Renaissance**

Hans Sachs (5 November 1494 – 19 January 1576)

Hans Sachs was singer, poet, playwright, and shoemaker. His father was a tailor. He wrote several Carnival plays and tragedies. His famous plays include the wandering student in Paradise (1550), How to Hatch Calves (1551), The Hot Iron

(1551), *The Jealous Husband* (1553), *Death in the Tree Stump* (1555), and *Neidhart and the Violet* (1557).

Georg (or Jörg) Wickram (era of his work. 1505-1540)

Georg Wickram was a poet and novelist. Much is not known about his life but his work is available and he took Christianity and morals of society as main subjects. His famous plays include *Das Narrengiessen* (1537), *Der treue Eckart* (1538), *Der verlorene Sohn* (1540) and *Tobias* (1551).

Jakob Ayler (c. 1543 – death date not confirmed)

Jakob Ayler was a German playwright and author of *Fastnachtsspiele* (carnival or Shrovetide plays). His only 69 plays survived out of 106. His work evolved around Greek mythology, theological thoughts, and Roman tales. Some historians say he died in 1605 but some of them extend the date to 1625. His famous plays include *Von der Erbauung Roms* (1595), *Von der schönen Melusina* (1598), *Von dreien bösen Weibern* (1598) and *Opus Theatricum* (1618 collection of thirty plays by Ayler)

Andreas Gryphius (2 October 1616 – 16 July 1664)

Andreas Gryphius was a poet and playwright. He is the author of famous sonnets and is considered one of the most important poets of the German baroque. His famous plays include *Cardenio* and *Celine* (1647), *Leo Arminius* (1650), *Carolus Stuardus* (1657), *Catharina von Georgien* (1657), *Absurda Comica* oder *Herr Peter Squenz* (1658), and *Papinianus* (1659)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (28 August 1749 – 22 March 1832)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was a poet, playwright, novelist, scientist, statesman and theater director. His works include plays, poetry and literature. His famous plays are *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), *Stella* (1775), *Merope* (1774), *Medea* (1775), *Egmont* (1788), *Torquato Tasso* (1790) and *Die Natürliche Tochter* (1803).

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (10 November 1759 – 9 May 1805)

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller was a playwright, poet, and philosopher. He is considered the most important classical playwright of the German language. He introduced new

forms such as melodrama and bourgeois tragedy in the German language. He was influenced by the Romantic Sturm und Drang movement. His famous plays are Demetrius (1857), Don Carlos (1787), Fiesco (1783), The Robbers (1781), The Maid of Orleans (1801), and The Bride of Messina (1803).



[illegible]

## **Enlightenment**

This chapter will discuss theatrical developments triggered and driven by socio-political movements.

In previous chapters, the brief history of theater from Greek period to Renaissance has been discussed to get an understanding with phases from where theater went through and developed rules and codes for performers, dramaturges, and architects of theater buildings.

The concept of fourth wall and three unities following the philosophy of realism led the theater till 19th century that brought a quest among practitioners to break the rules and forget the established norms for doing something new and taking the theater out of style popular since Greek period. Theater critics consider 19th century an era of revolt against whatever theater had achieved during the last 2000 years. A new age of experimentation started in the beginning of 19th century and French theater led band of revolutionaries.

19th century brought experimentation in Theater that expanded theatrical boundaries beyond classical and realistic plays and French theater led the changes.

During the Classical period, basic theatrical styles were divided into four categories---Comedy; Drama; Melodrama, and Tragedy. Any other form could be used to carry these styles. However, in the last two centuries, new forms, genres, and isms had been developed in Theater through social-political movements and sometimes socio-political movements were

triggered by theatrical genres because both are intermingling with each other. Experimentation in Theater had expanded the boundaries of styles beyond Classical era's division and definition of Theater.

European theater is normally divided into three transitional stages beginning from Classical to Realistic and then Anti or Non-

Realistic. There is a huge shift between Classical and Anti-Realistic Theater although experimentation started during the Late-Classical period such as tragicomedy however; major point to keep in focus is that the anti-Realistic period started when experimentation started deliberately disobeying Aristotle's three unities. One can also question that the evolution of Theater from Aristotle's era till today had gone through several changes and several new genres came out from Comedy and Tragedy through experimentations and why one should not put them under the Non-Realistic/Anti-Realistic umbrella?

Answers to the abovementioned questions are needed for better understanding with theatrical development of last 2000 years. One must keep in mind that any deviation from practicing rules of Theater and doing any experimentation in drama/Theater against the set-tradition and rules under practice during and after the era of Realistic Theater is called "Non-Realistic/ Anti-Realistic". Any changes, deviation from practicing rules, or breaking three unities during the periods between Aristotle to Realistic Theater eras do not fall under the category of "Non-Realistic/ Anti-Realistic".

Though Classical unities have been discussed in previous chapters this is appropriate to remind that Classical unity of action is that a play should have one main action that it follows, with no or few subplots. The unity of place says that a play should cover a single physical space (geography). The unity of time indicates the action in a play should take place over no more than 24 hours.

### **Comedy as primary genre**

Comedy is a key carrier that bore the load of experimentation and becomes primary source and vehicle for all upcoming theatrical genres. Putting Comedy at the beginning of this chapter is necessary because Comedy since the time of

Aristotle has been a major source of expressing socio-political scenes and had gone through massive experimentations.

Comedy has been a central part of Theater throughout the history. Even during the classical times, comedy was the only genre/form that evolved to a level that provided ample ground for experimentation. On the other hand, Tragedy also got submerged and engulfed in tragicomedy so all the new genres and forms of Theater are true descendent of the experimentation that got birth to tragicomedy.

The genre of Comedy since Aristotle's era had gone through several changes, resulting in the birth of several kinds of Comedies and had been playing a pivotal role in delivering critical messages to the audience. It had been and is still popular for expression in societies that were (are) under censorship because it is safer to deliver a message in lighter tone provide only via comedy that could be difficult otherwise due to censorship. Mark Twain says – ‘Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand. In his “Mysterious Stranger”, Mark Twain draws the attention of readers to the critical power of humor and suggests using it carefully about how that critique might operate (40). ***Satire has the power to teach important truths about our world, but that overstating the value of satire as a tool for resistance may in fact limit its critical power (40).***

Researchers find several forms/kinds of comedies in drama and Theater. Important kinds include Slapstick, Farce, Satire, Parody, Stand-up, Black Comedy / Black Humour, Commedia dell’arte, Burlesque, Travesty, Tragicomedy, High Comedy, Comedy of Manners, Theater of the Absurd, Romantic Comedy, Musical Comedy, Sentimental Comedy, Comedy of Intrigue / Comedy of Situation, Comedy of Humours, Comedy of Character, Comedy of Ideas, Comedy of Morals, Court Comedy, Old Comedy, Comedy Greek and New Comedy. *It is hard to determine which of the later dramatic genres—tragedy, comedy, satyr-play—developed first---Aristotle (2).*

### **Black Comedy**

Black comedy is a comic work that employs "black humor" or gallows humor. Black humor expresses the absurdity, insensitivity, paradox, and cruelty of the situation by exaggerating the scene far beyond the limits of normal satire. Black humor is mostly associated with tragedy and is sometimes

equated with tragic farce. Its origins can find in Greek tragicomedies.

### **Commedia dell'arte**

Commedia dell'arte is a form of theater in which characters by using face masks represent fixed social types and stock characters (41). This form was introduced in Europe by Italian Theater practitioners in the 16th century although the use of face masks in performances in the eastern world is older than its use on the western stage (20).

### **Comedy of Errors**

Comedy of errors is a work that is humorous or satirical and usually shows a series of comic instances of mistaken identity.

### **Comedy of Manners**

Restoration Period (1660–1710) introduced Comedy of Manners. The Restoration Period is an era that started after the return of King Charles II from exile.

This genre represents characters of sophisticated and artificial society (for example characters of elites of the Victorian era). Comedy of Manners questions and comments upon the manners and social conventions followed by sophisticated elites, creating an artificial society.

### **Comedy of Situation/ Comedy of Intrigue**

It may be remembered that the Comedy of Intrigue is also known as the Comedy of Situation. Scenes are mostly circle around complicated ploys and conspiracies driven by the plot.

### **Farce**

Farce entertains the audience through plots circling around questionable situations, disguises, and the mistaken

identity of characters. A fast-paced plot keeps the audience attentive while unfolding questionable situations.

### **Romantic Comedy**

Romantic Comedy is light-hearted, based on romantic situations, sending a message at the end of the drama that true love can surmount obstacles.

### **Elizabethan Comedy**

Elizabethan comedy is generally romantic rather than realistic, festive rather than satirical. It is concerned with aristocratic characters in a foreign setting – Italy, France, Illyria (42).

### **“Isms” and Modern Genres of Theater**

Beside Comedy, there are other important theatrical genres that developed over the period of time and facilitate Theater production, including Documentary Theater, Drama, Experimental Theater, Fantasy, Historical Theater, Improvisational Theater, Mainstream Theater, Morality play, Musical Theater, Natya. Pantomime, Physical Theater, Political Theater, Popular Theater, Post dramatic Theater, Puppetry, Radio drama, Reader's Theater, Theater for development, Theater for Young Audiences, Epic Theater, Theater of the Oppressed, Theater of cruelty, Theater of the Absurd, Tragedy, Tragicomedy, Avant-garde Theater and Vanguard-style theater.

There is a general understanding that every kind or genre of Theater that came out of any experimentation is Non-Realistic/ Anti-Realistic and can be put under the Avant-garde umbrella. If so, then where can Tragicomedy fit in? because it was also experimentation of mixing Tragedy and Comedy. The instant answer is simple that classical unities were not compromised while experimenting with mixing Comedy and Tragedy for forming Tragicomedy. However, this instant answer is not the only answer but one of many answers and one should find references for understanding the Non-Realistic/Anti-Realistic Theater.

Socio-political and socio-economic spheres can either influence theater, drama, literature, and other forms of arts or art forms can influence political developments of the respective period. Therefore, this linkage should be under consideration

while documenting the political history, and the history of theater.

Since the 1800, the theatrical world had been fast-paced and new forms, genres, and isms had been developed in theater through political movements and sometimes socio-political movements were triggered by theatrical genres because both are intermingling with each other.

Major Non-Realistic and Anti-Realist movements, genres, and isms include Symbolism, Surrealism, Expressionism, Existentialism, Absurdism, Epic Theater, and Theater of Cruelty, Dadaism, and Cubism.

Before Modern/Non-Realistic Theater Classical Theater has been discussed in the previous chapter.

- Classical (Greece and Rome)
- Medieval (Mystery and Morality Plays)
- Renaissance (Italian, England, Spain, and France)

#### **Realistic Theater**

- Between 1750 and 1800, Romanticism took hold and flourished between 1789 and 1843 in Europe.
- Naturalism: Popular in France around 1870 and overlapping Realism.
- Realism in practice and early phase of Realism was also known as Romanticism
- Impression:

#### **Anti and Non-Realistic Theater**

- Symbolism: Started in France then popular in all of Europe around 1870-1890.



- Expressionism: Flourished in Germany during WWI (1906-1916).
- Cubism and Cubist Theatre.
- Constructivism.
- Dadaism: Short-lived ism that appeared in 1916 and disappeared around 1920.
- Surrealism began in 1924 in France.
- Theater of Cruelty: Originated in France in the 1930s.
- Existentialism: An idea started by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Albert Camus.
- Theater of the Absurd: small unorganized movement in the 1950s.
- Theatre of Oppressed (1970).
- Feminist Theatre.
- Queer Theatre.

### **Realistic Theater**

#### **Romanticism (1800)**

Between 1750 and 1800, Romanticism took hold and flourished between 1789 and 1843 in Europe.

This style of Theater focused on the individual actor's imagination, emotion, and appreciation of nature. Romanticism put trust in nature's goodness. Romantic poets based their plays on emotions because emotions are natural, and instinct was more important than reason. In the simple words it was a poetic drama in which metaphysical aspect was acceptable. This drama was based on human imagination rather than classical reasoning.

Critic Georges Pellissier writes in his book "The Literary Movement in France during the Nineteenth Century" that Romanticism through lyrical poetry and dramatic poetry elaborated ideas and theories and showed deliberate resentment with notions which Classic tragedy had been governed. Allardyce Nicoll writes in his book "A History of English Drama 1660-1900" that Romanticism, however, always loves the strange and

the uncanny, therefore ghosts and goblins freely mingle with more material personages on the romantic stage (43).

*The words Classicism and Romanticism took their most precise meaning from the Theater, in reality, the true battleground of these two schools (44). Romanticism took inspiration from nature, and believed in expressing strong emotions above the rational limits of respective era and society. Romanticism looked at the nature for inspiration, elevated strong emotions above reasonable restraint, and often sought to embody universal conflicts within individual figures(4)“For the classical writer, for the Renaissance painter,” wrote Maulnier, inspiration, and métier were integral: only eras of “technical decadence” could give rise to romanticism and its offspring, surrealism (45).*

### **Impressionism (1820)**

Impressionism was a European movement in painting, music, literature, and drama. Impressionism stresses the subjective reception of impressions, and the impressionist seeks to escape from the oppressive aspects of objective reality. The impressionist escapes from the world of reality and does not accept objective life as it comes to us rather creates his own imaginary land around him/her.

Impressionism believes expressions of the performer (artist) are much important than statements (dialogues).

Impressionism in theater expresses mood of character by using lighting and sound effects. Characters are often bewildered and indecisive, revolting against reality of life around them. Since performers (characters of play) want to reject reality so their movements are against normal expectations, uncertain or half-formed and incomplete and their dialogues are overlapping and fragmented. Mostly the play ends after creating an irrational world at stage where the truth is unknown and life seems silly or stupid.

*The Goncourts caught at Impressionism to render the fugitive aspects of a world which existed only as a thing of flat spaces, and angles, and colored movement, in which sun and shadow were the artists; as moods, no less flitting, were the artists of the merely receptive consciousnesses of men and women (46).*

### **Naturalism:**

The movement of Naturalism was developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is popular for creating an illusion of reality. This is considering the beginning of experimentation in revolt to Classicism and does not directly link with Theater and drama. Naturalism was popular in France around 1870 and was overlapping with Realism. As a theatrical movement and performance style, naturalism was short-lived.

Since the Theater was presenting closer reality so external details of scene (costumes, props, backdrop, stage, colors etc.) setting and of character, the portrayal was closer to the natural setting, costumes, props, and make-up - getting it to look just right like in a real situation. Structure and storyline were very important, with a focus on character allowing the audience to become emotionally involved rather than detached. Unity of Time was followed and stage time equals real-time – e.g. three hours in the Theater equals three hours for the characters in the world of the play. Costumes, sets, and props are historically accurate and very detailed to represent reality in the scene.

Naturalistic dramas normally follow rule of three unities introduced by Aristotle. The three unities are unity of time, unity of place, and unity of action therefore the *action* of the play takes *place* in a single location over the *time* frame of a single day - jumps in time and/or place between acts or scenes are not allowed. Critics say that Naturalistic drama is pessimist because often characters are victims of their own circumstances, and they are seen as helpless products of their environment. Characters of Naturalistic plays are often belonging to working-class/lower class and their circumstances sometimes get them involved in socially unaccepted acts like prostitution and committing suicides due to poverty and social injustice. Critics appreciate Naturalistic playwrights to place brutal social realities at stage because realistic drama was showing mostly middle-class characters and avoiding showing victimization of lower class of society. In Naturalistic drama, characters belong to normal life as working-

class/lower class and discuss problems suicide, poverty, and prostitution.

*The dramatist will not provide much detail of the characters' back histories, events before the play begins, what the future will hold for the characters or what is meant to be happening offstage between the scenes when a particular character is onstage (47).*

### **Realism**

Realism was in practice around 1870. Realism developed a set of dramatic and theatrical conventions with the aim of bringing a greater fidelity of real life to texts and performances. Realistic dramas offer plays closer to reality including text, set, costume, sound, lighting, performance style, and narrative structure. Realism somehow links with logical setting and perception of things as they appear to us and as they are present around us. Realism in the theater that began in the 19th-century remained present through much of the 20th century.

Realism represents realities of common man's life and experiences, therefore society and members of society are the key component of any realist art. This ultra-humanistic phenomenon created space for social realism and psychological realism. As the broader socialist movement, social realism also started from Russia and does not stopped at just society as an anchor to all human experience but also it emphasizes human experiences itself as a subjective reality for any artist endeavor.

It may be mentioned that drama became popular due to Russian Dramaturgies because they were experimenting with realistic Art for a considerable period. Aleksey Pisemsky who was first professional playwright of Russia and Leo Tolstoy began a tradition of psychological realism in Russia. "The Power of Darkness" (produced in 1886) was play of psychological realism.

The structure of Realist Theatre was that characters speak in naturalistic, authentic dialogue without verse or poetic stylings, and acting is meant to match human behavior in real life. Scripts are mostly related to day-to-day, ordinary scenarios represent normal life of middle class. There is no place of unreal or metaphysical and supernatural presences like gods, ghosts, fantasies, and script move forward in time. Sound and music are diegetic. Diegetic means occurring of dialogue within the context of the story and able to be heard by the characters.

Since realistic theater was representing scenes of real life therefore a new type of acting was required to replace the dramatic style of acting and actors were needed who could be capable of conveying the speech and movements found in the domestic situations of everyday life. That's why; a new cadre of actors was raised by dramaturses. In Russia, this need to supply actors who could perform closer to real life was handled by Moscow Art Theater (47), founded by Konstantin Stanislavski and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko.

### **The shift from Realism -----The Avant-garde**

The 19th century is the century of American and European civil wars, European revolutions, revolts, massive colonialization of Africa and Asia, political and social movements, and scientific developments directly related to human evolution and the human minds like Darwin's evolutionary theory and the work of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Massive changes in society and human outlook towards his and his relationship with the universe was altogether challenged by Darwin and Freud therefore human interests and behaviors were going through drastic changes. All these developments and events of course wedged the theatrical world. These developments influenced every sphere of life including art (Performing Art). These changes ultimately caused the end of Classism in Theater also.

Non-Realistic/Anti-Realist movement, genre, and "isms" are usually experimental and unorthodox. Lee Braver in his book "A thing of this world ---A History of Continental Anti-Realism" indicates that Non-Realistic/Anti-realism is the denial of objective reality and promotes what is speculated on and what is abstract. In the last two decades of the 1800s, Realistic Theater got involved in experimentation.

The works of Sigmund Freud (Development of psychoanalysis 1885) and Carl Jung opened doors for thinking that the human is linked with the real world around him as well as with an unseen and unreal world while sleeping. Their work opened a discussion with a question that is human hanging between the two--- Real and Unreal? This debate further extended to another debate, does the human mind work beyond the boundaries of the five senses? If it does not, then how human can experience dreams? Theater also got engaged in human psychology and the mystic dimensions of human beings. This discussion brought the thought that literary art, visual art and performing art can be produced beyond the boundaries of realistic thought and logic.

French performing art took lead in taking advantage of this discussion and got involved in experimentation at the theater followed by German and British Theaters were also standing against Realism. Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), rejected the idea that drama should be utilitarian (useful, practical)(2).

Since experimentation was in process in France, Germany, Russia, and United Kingdom and playwrights were taking advantage of each other's experiences, therefore the term 'Avant-garde' (was first used by the French utopian socialist Henri de Saint-Simon in the 1820s) was taken as an umbrella of Non-Realistic/Anti-Realistic Theatrical work. The terminology "Avant-garde" was borrowed from French military terminology. In military definition, Avant-garde is a small scouting group that moves ahead of the main force for investigating the area and determining the threats. In literature, visual, and performing arts, avant-garde is a philosophy of breaking the status quo and offering unconventional ideas. Some critics believe that the concept or philosophy of the avant-garde was the driving force behind modernism in cultural spheres (48).

Alfred Jarry is considered the first Avant-garde playwright who staged "Ubu Roi" (Ubu the King or King Ubu) in Paris on December 10, 1896. This play was in contradiction with the existing rules of writing and producing plays. This was an experiment and revolt from the traditional forms of plays. This experimental Theater alters traditional conventions of space (black box theater), the theme of plays, and conventional rules. Therefore, it is simple to say that avant-garde Theater opposes bourgeois Theater, introduces a different use of body language and content (script), and leaves behind the traditional set of rules of a performers-audience relationship (1).

This trend toward increased emphasis on aesthetic issues has continued to the present. Avant-garde today generally refers to groups of intellectuals, writers, and artists, including architects, who voice ideas and experiment with artistic approaches that challenge current cultural values.

The German literary critic Peter Bürger's in "Theory of the Avant-Garde (1974)" claims that theory has complicity with capitalism and calls it "an art as an institution neutralizes the political content of the individual work."

The term of Avant garde is sometimes taken to describe what is new at any given time. It also represents the rejection of social institutions and established artistic conventions, or antagonism towards the public as representative of the existing order (44).

*The avant-garde is essentially a philosophical grouping. There may be stylistic similarities in the work of a symbolist like Yeats, or an existentialist like Beckett—as in surrealists like Cocteau and Breton, an absurdist such as Adamov or a religious dramatist like T.S. Eliot—the essential basis of their art is antithetical (40).* The book *Staging Philosophy Intersections of Theater, Performance, and Philosophy* edited by David Krasner and David Z. Saltz stated that Avant- garde has failed to reach and attract masses.

The intellectual bases of the avant-garde and its attempts at translating the micro logical into the everyday have failed to be communicated to the masses, and outside their reception by intellectuals only the cruder, more uncontrollable effects have been received (50).

The term has shifted over time as the mainstream Theater world has adopted many forms that were once considered radical. Experimental Theater alters traditional conventions of space (black box theater), theme, movement, mood, tension, language, symbolism, conventional rules, and other elements. Avant-garde brought several “isms” and movements in art and these movements are sometimes off-shoots, off-springs, interlinked, intermingled, and overlapping each other but sometimes appeared as a reaction against each other. It is difficult to appreciate any of one in a vacuum and without having knowledge of the chronology of its emergence. Therefore, important movements and “isms” are discussed in chronological order.

### **Anti-Realistic Theatre**

#### **Symbolism**

Symbolism is the birth of experimentation in theater led by French Theater where several dramaturges, writers and poets were busy to break rule of plays but with new ideas and trying to do something new and acceptable for audience that was not too interested in classical or realistic plays.

The term symbolism is derived from the word "symbol" which originated from the Latin “symbolism”, a symbol of faith, and “symbolus”, a sign of recognition, from classical Greek “symbolon”, an object cut in half constituting a sign of recognition when the carriers were able to reassemble the two halves. In ancient Greece, the “symbolon” was a shard of pottery that was inscribed and then broken into two pieces which were given to the ambassadors from two allied city-states as a record of the alliance.

Symbolism was largely a reaction against naturalism and realism, it was anti-idealistic style. Symbolist literature's preoccupation with dream, myth, and the unconscious is not



unknown in the fine arts either (51).

When Richard Wagner (22 May 1813 – 13 February 1883) was combining music with mythology, at the same time Maurice Maeterlinck (29 August 1862 – 6 May 1949) was breaking rules of theater by adding metaphysical aspects whereas Edward Henry Gordon Craig (16 January 1872 – 29 July 1966) was experimenting with imaginative and minimalistic scenery.

In 1892, play “Pelléas and Mélisande” of Maurice Maeterlinck got the attention of entire Europe, as this drama contained less dialogue, used innovative idea of separating audience from stage with a gauze fabric and used no scenery at backdrop. He also included scene exhibited through symbols, such as a wedding ring dropped into a fountain, doves that fly away from a tower, underground pools, enveloping shadows, and bloodstains that cannot be washed away (1).

The work of Edgar Allan Poe, Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Richard Wagner, Maurice Maeterlinck, and Edward Henry Gordon Craig provided a solid base for further experimentation and their quest for finding something different formed a form of a new “ism” and new symbolistic trends emerged as “Symbolism”. Now theater practitioners felt they were no longer chained to the natural world and could do experimentation with existing forms of performing art (1).

Theater historians believe that there is no doubt that play “Pelléas and Mélisande” of Maurice Maeterlinck sat new trends and got popularity but the work of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam provided content needed for symbolistic plays. His drama “Axel” that was printed in parts in 1872 is considered an excellent example for forthcoming writers of symbolistic plays and even Maeterlinck himself said: “Everything I have done I owe to Villiers”(46). His full name was Jean-Marie-Mathias-Philippe-Auguste, comte de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (7 November 1838 – 19 August 1889) and his plays Axël, Morgane, La Révolte and Le Nouveau Monde strongly inspired French Theater and sow the seed for forthcoming Symbolism.

By 1886, symbolism became so popular that his practitioners decided to write “Symbolist Manifesto” that was published on 18 September 1886 in the French Newspaper *Le Figaro* by the Greek-born poet and essayist Jean Moréas. The

Manifesto defined a new literary movement, an evolution from and rebellion against both romanticism and naturalism.

Critics indicate that symbolist theater relied on the Wagnerian idea of the “total work” of art that was inspired by metaphysical concepts of “the enigma of life” given by Villiers de l'Isle Adam. The term “total work” is English translation of German word “Gesamtkunstwerk” that indicates an art that makes use of all or many art forms or strives to do so. Richard Wagner, who was composer and librettist, produced several opera productions. He introduced this term through his two essays published in 1849, simple understanding in English for this term is any art associated with aesthetic ideals. The term “enigma of life” is referred to a form of thought and speech that is half reveals and half conceals the soul of truth.

The enigma of life is that we find only a hint of the truth of life and everybody has own viewpoint about truth. One can emphasize the value of money while another person can consider “loss” is more profitable than gain. In other words, “subjectivity” changes the truth of life for everybody therefore there is no complete and universal truth. Therefore, symbolistic acts involve greater meaning than the literal meanings and represent something other than what is at face value. For creating ambiance where a message can be sent beyond its literary meanings through performance, the Symbolistic Theater carefully selects, color, movement, costume, and props (1). The style of dialogue and style of acting in symbolist plays are greatly unnatural and anti-realistic/non-naturalistic and they use symbols. Such as huge throne can symbolize power, a window at stage can symbolize freedom and a simple action by a character can symbolize a greater ideal in the context of the play.

The Manifesto of Symbolism talks for eliminating rules of naturalistic or imitative acting, and rejects romance and

melodrama. In theory, the actor must be a depersonalized symbol and sending a message through performance beyond what is visible on the stage. In France, the Théâtre d'Art and the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre became launching pads for plays by symbolist writers. The original works and adaptations of Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde, Maeterlinck and Rodenbach, Auguste Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, Henrik Ibsen and Paul Claudel, August Strindberg, W.B. Yeats, and Eugene O'Neill were performed at Théâtre d'Art and the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre.

### **The Colors and their meanings in the Visual Arts**

Red – Used to show rage, passion, anger, desire, energy, strength, speed, heat, power, danger, aggression, blood, fire, war, excitement, and violence.

Pink – Used to show innocence, love, happiness, healthy, romantic, content, playfulness, charming, feminine, soft, and delicate.

Yellow – Used to show knowledge, wisdom, joy, relaxation, optimism, happiness, idealism, hope, imagination, summer, sunshine, cowardice, dishonesty, betrayal, covetousness, jealousy, illness, deceit, and hazard.

Orange – Used to show energy, humor, balance, enthusiasm, expansive, vibrant, warmth, and flamboyant.

Green – Used to show soothing, healing, perseverance, self-awareness, tenacity, unchanging nature, proud, good luck, renewal, spring, vigor, generosity, renewal, youth, jealousy, fertility, envy and inexperience.

Blue – Used to show spirituality, faith, loyalty, contentment, tranquility, stability, fulfillment, peace, harmony, trust, unity, conservatism, confidence, truth, security, sky, cold, water and depression.

Purple/Violet – Used to show royalty, erotic, nobility, ceremony, spirituality, transformation, enlightenment, arrogance, sensitive, power, intimacy, mourning, and mysterious.

Brown – Used to show sensation, home, earth, reliability, outdoors, materialistic, endurance, comfort, simplicity, and stability.

Black – Used to show power, no, sexuality, formality, sophistication, wealth, fear, mystery, unhappiness, style, depth, sadness, evil, remorse, anger and anonymity.

White – Used to show protection, reverence, yes, simplicity, peace, cleanliness, humility, innocence, birth, winter, youth, sterility, good, snow, marriage in Western cultures, death in Eastern cultures, clinical, sterile and cold.

Silver – Used to show glamorous, riches, earthy, distinguished, sleek, natural, high tech, elegant and earthy.

Gold – Used to show riches, extravagance, wealth, warm, precious, prosperity and grandeur.

### **Expressionism**

Expressionism as a movement emerged in Germany in 1910 and soon influenced the entire Europe. However, by 1920, it started fading in Theater.

David F. Kuhns, in his book “German Expressionist Theater: The Actor and the Stage” writes that movement represents *anti-realistic styles of symbolic acting on the German Expressionist stage from 1916 to 1921*. The movement was in contradiction with dominant European acting tradition of realism and to the specific cultural crises that enveloped the German nation during the course of its involvement in World War I.

*Expressionism was experimentation by adopting anti-realist techniques as grotesquely painted scenery, exaggerated acting, and brief dialogue (1).*

Richard Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas are of the view that early Expressionist theatrical and dramatic movement was influenced by Dionysian and Hellenistic dramatic practices and the philosophy of Nietzsche. In their book “Expressionism in German life, literature, and the Theater, 1910-1924”, they

indicated that by 1924, movement faded away from mainstream theater.

*Murderer, the Hope of Women* by Oskar Kokoschka, written in 1907 and first performed in Vienna in 1909, was the first fully expressionist drama (52). Garten, H. F believes that Expressionism can be considered as a revolt against the government, big business, the military, family structures, and sexism, and even against traditional Theater (52).

Expressionists shifted emphasis from the text pieces (script) to the physical performance and enhance the role of director in theater who was responsible for delivering the playwright's thoughts and feelings to audiences through setting of stage, music, lighting and by creating ambiance through visualization of content. At this stage of European drama, perception faded away and visualization got its due place in the Theater (52,53).

### **Cubism and Cubist Theater**

The movement of Cubism influenced the paintings, architect, and Theater of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and one should know about the brief background of Cubism in general to comprehend the Cubist Theater that transformed our perception of the stage from a two- dimensional playing area into a three-dimensional cube. One can say that Cubism liberated both the actor and the scenic elements, allowing them to be placed anywhere within this volumetric entity, something we take for granted today.

Guillaume Apollinaire and Dorothea Eimert indicate in their book “Cubism” that Picasso’s painting titled “Les Femmes d’Alger (O. K.)” produced in 1907 was a prelude to a change the style of art of painting.



“Les Demoiselles d’Avignon” having five female figures was medium wise a lithograph on Arches paper. For this painting, Picasso split the forms into small cubes by using the idea of Cézanne who says that one should see nature out the sphere, the cone, and the cylinder as the basis for compositional ideas. Therefore, Paul Cezanne provided a base for Cubist painters with a model for perceiving the world and portraying the interaction among objects in space. Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) has inspired generations of artists. His images in the painting are the perceptual presentation while with extremely rational carefulness (54).

### **The use of term “Cubism”**

In 1909, the critic Louis de Vauxcelles talked about the usage of cubes in paintings of some of the painters and then the Cubism was born (55).

The term "Cubism" was categorically used by Louis Vauxcelles for the first time at the inauguration of the 1911 “Salon des Indépendants”. The term was used derogatorily to describe the diverse geometric concerns reflected in the paintings. The Salon des Independants is the annual art exhibition of the Societe des Artistes Independants in Paris. The Exhibition was first held in 1884 (56).

It may be mentioned that Louis Vauxcelles (born January 1, 1870 – Died July 21, 1943) who was a French art critic has credit for coning the terms Fauvism<sup>3</sup>, and Cubism in painting.

Cubism was an expression of subjective perception, of a conceived reality, and did not advance an ideology, a social cause, or any other intellectual or political concern. According to Georges Braque, Cubism was simply an aesthetic dissection of

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<sup>3</sup> *Fauvism (French for "the wild beasts"), was early 20th-century modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong color*

nature and the visual image, and the Cubist painters were not concerned with the "reconstitution" of an anecdotal fact but with the "constitution" of a pictorial fact. According to a Spanish painter who lived and worked in France for most of his active period, Juan Gris said (March 23, 1887 – died May 11, 1927); a Cubist Theater represents an aesthetic pursuit and stylistic innovations in architecture, industrial art, music, poetry, and literature. Looking closely at theatre productions staged after 1913, several theatricians, having experience of working in the Russian Theater, created a style of staging that resembled Cubist painting; it is these productions that constitute the Cubist Theater.

Content and theme were no longer important considerations, and the Cubists painted subjects that would not provoke either emotional or intellectual associations in the viewer (57).

Using ordinary subjects, such as human figures, landscapes, and still-life, the Cubists dismantled the object and displaced the fragments in space so that the images were no longer representations of the subject, but were independent visual images coexisting with the surroundings.

In its "Analytic phase", the Cubists were concerned with representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface and with the formal unity between foreground and background; their paintings, consequently, were distinguished by a shallow pictorial field. Their rationale for portraying a shallow landscape was that a three-dimensional perspective prevented the structural fusion of forms in the background with forms in the foreground. Accentuating the structural interaction of object and field, the Cubists abandoned recognizable shapes rendered in three-dimensionality but retained those aspects of three-dimensionality which could be carried over to a two-dimensional design. The Cubists abandoned illusionism for geometric abstraction and worked, in the Analytic phase, toward "a language of pure structure" (58).

Cubism underwent many evolutionary steps and painters Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso were in the lead role. By 1912, they separated their art from everything real without turning completely to abstraction, in a phase that is called Analytical Cubism. Objects were painted on canvas as a fragmented picture where shape and space melted into one another in one

composition of dissected surfaces. Colors like brown, grey, and blue hues were used extensively.

With the passage of time, Analytical Cubism faded out and Synthetic Cubism appeared as a movement in which Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso were joined by other painters of their time. It was a time when artists were doing further experiments and creating new objects with new materials. Synthetic Cubism made popular the collage as a new form of painting (55).

### **Cubistic Theater**

Garrett Glover writes in his book "The Cubist Theater" that Cubism is the pictorial expression of the theory of relativity that says man does not objectively perceive the world but invents reality while he perceives.

Cubism is an expression of subjective perception, of a conceived reality. It does not relate to any ideology, a social cause, or any other intellectual or political concern. Cubism was simply an aesthetic dissection of nature and the visual image; according to Georges Braque, the Cubist painters were not concerned with the "reconstitution" of an anecdotal fact but with the "constitution" of a pictorial fact.

In western Theater, Picasso was doing experimentation to place his Cubism into Theater and contributed through his designs for the ballet, "Parade", produced by Serge Diaghilev in 1917. Russian director Alexander Tairov explored further for implementing Cubist aesthetics in the Theater. It is believed that Serge Diaghilev in 1917, was the first who gave Cubism "concrete form," by wedding painting and movement on the stage into an "analytic synthesis" while Picasso designed costumes for Parade also became "walking Cubist canvases," in the form of huge body masks that eliminated that human figure from the stage.



Picasso's "The Reservoir" gave foundation for the transition from closed to open planar structure. The sides and tops of the buildings and columns were substantially closed and locked in space by bold, accentuated contour markings. The junctures between the frontal planes and volumes were delineated by rigid borders, preserving the autonomy of each plane and volume. Where the buildings encroached on one another, where the planes merged and intruded on one another, the definite contours prevented the shapes from merging with one another.

Cubist pictorial devices appeared on stage through theatricians, most of them working in the Russian Theater, created a style of staging that resembled Cubist painting; it is these productions that constitute the Cubist Theater.

"Victory Over the Sun", a collaborative work with text by Velimir Khlebnikov and Alexei Kruchenykh and designed by Kazimir Malevich, brought to the Theater a new synthetic artistic language that merged objects, images, text, and music into a single, unified entity. "Victory Over the Sun", Opera premiered in 1913 at the Luna Park in Saint Petersburg.

Designer Kazimir Malevich was a Russian avant-garde artist and art theorist, whose pioneering work and writing had a great influence on the development of non-objective, or abstract art in the 20th century. Malevich used the Theater as a laboratory for working out his artistic concepts. The cardboard costumes and canvas backdrops he designed for Victory Over the Sun are firmly rooted in his Cubo-Futurist paintings of the same period.

Cubist techniques were much advanced in Russian Theater than experimentations of Picasso. Alexander Tairov explored successfully the implications of Cubist aesthetics in the Theater. Tairov's search for a rhythmic synthesis between actor and set began with his production of *Famira Kifared* (1916) in which the performers' movements mirrored the decor of tumbled cubes and stately cones. One of the most striking examples of this synthesis can be seen in Tairov's 1920 production of Claudel's *L'Annonce Faite*. On the other hand, Vladimir Dmitriev was busy creating scenic designs, revealing a



strong stylistic affinity to Cubism work.

In France, Joseph Fernand Henri Léger was promoting his own brand of Cubism. His essay "The Spectacle: Light, Color, Moving Image, Object-Spectacle," published in 1924 was promoted the idea of Theater, which he saw primarily in mechanical terms. He was also more interested in a form on the stage than in the actor, whom he saw as often standing in the way of achieving complete unity in the Theater. Leger's sets for "The Skating Rink" and "The Creation of the World" postdate his essay, but both ballets reflect the ideas that he subsequently laid out in it".

Around 1920 the Tairov and Vakhtangov Theaters in Moscow had been using settings of a Cubist-Constructivist style while Vladimir Tatlin (December 28 1885 – died May 13, 1953) was also working for Cubist settings on Theater. However, the first and perhaps the finest purely Constructivist setting was designed by Popova for play "The Magnificent Cuckold" produced at Meyerhold's Theater in April, 1922. It had movable parts so that in moments of crisis in the drama the wheels and wind mill would whirl and spin. In this way the setting itself participated in the action. In Germany especially Constructivism was influential not only in the Theater but in other ways also. 59).

Russian Constructivism strongly influenced the German Theater and Russian. Suprematism was at least as important as de Stijl in transforming the German poster (59).

### **Dadaism and Surrealism**

Dadaism and Surrealism were "Avant-garde" movements. Critics believe that the horrific outcome of World War I brought the idea that everything is irrelevant and illogical.

Cubism, Expressionism, and Futurism had already contested traditional art and human mindset at large and soil was

ripe for Dada and Surrealism to contest traditional principles of human thinking and perception. Social values were already questioned therefore acceptance level of new radical ideas was high in European societies. Therefore, productions (literature, visual art, and performing art) of Dadaism and Surrealism were immediately got recognition and became known for their innovative introspective expressions.

Critics believe that both trends laid the foundation of Modernism as well as other movements in art, literature, and philosophy.

### **Dadaism**

The dada is a French word used for "hobbyhorse,". "Hobby horse" is used, mostly for referring to the costumed characters that feature in some traditional seasonal customs. Romanian poet Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), used this name for movement in resemblance to meaningless babble, word babble referring to imperfectly, indistinctly, without meaning, to talk idly, irrationally, excessively, or foolishly; chatter or prattle or uttering any word having no meanings. The advent of Dadaism and surrealism brought about a fundamental change in the direction of avant-garde experiments (60).

"The manifesto of Dada released in 1918, starts as Freedom: DADA DADA DADA, the howl of clashing colors, the intertwining of all contradictions, grotesqueries". These lines were borrowed from one of Tzara works.

Dada Manifesto says that Dada is a state of mind therefore it transforms itself according to individual and events. Tristan Tzara in his lecture of 1922 translated from the French by Robert Motherwell indicates:

*"Dada applies itself to everything, and yet it is nothing, it is the point where the yes and the no and all the opposites meet, not solemnly in the castles of human philosophies, but very simply at street corners, like dogs and grasshoppers. Like everything in life, Dada is useless".*

Dadaism (1916-1920) emerged as an impulsive reaction to the horrors of World War I. It was not a typical art movement but a defiance of the established artistic norms. Dadaists promoted the concept of "Chance" as the foundation of their ideas (61).

It was a reaction to the war that left millions of people dead and homeless while gaining nothing out of the war's adventurism. Dadaists said that if the war can (could) be justified then anything can be justified in life including art. They were of the view that if the justification of war was to secure peace then anything can be anything even a toilet seat can be used as a sculpture.

Dadaists promoted the idea that people forget everything they knew and live life according to Chance as people forgot their peaceful life before the war and now accepted the circumstances they had been going through. Meaninglessness, absurdity, and chance were the major characteristic of Dadaism and the art inspired by it.

What is the Concept of Chance?

For Dadaists, the "Chance" is the act of finding new objects and building them together in innovative mode to form unique creations. By introducing the concept of Chance, Dadaists challenged the ideas of originality of things as they existed. Taking Chance was key to works such as dada poems and collages. Chance also employed several theories including juxtaposition and condensation.

Conventional artists and writers of the time called Dadaism an anti-art movement because Dadaists rejected the use of common sense and logic in art and produced literature, visual art, and performing art giving no sense to anything.

Beliefs of Dadaism are based on having no truths, beliefs, or rules.

Dadaism paved the way for forthcoming genres such as Surrealism, Theater of Cruelty and Theater of Absurd although no theater is documented under the title of Dadaist Theater

during the four to five years span of time when Dadaism was popular.

### **Surrealism**

The term Surrealism was first used by French story writer and poet Guillaume Apollinaire in his letter written to his friend Paul Dermée in March 1917 who was a Belgian writer and poet.

In his letter, he writes that he preferred to adopt the word “surrealism” than supernaturalism, which he used first for his ideas. The first Surrealist play he wrote was the “Breasts of Tiresias” that was performed in Paris in 1918. In the preface of play Apollinaire called his play as “un drame surréliste”.

After the death of Apollinaire when he was just 38 years of age, his friend André Robert Breton who was a French writer and poet took the lead to promote Surrealism and he wrote the first Manifesto of Surrealism that was published in 1924.

Breton was of the view that the subconscious provides us with truth and automatic writing (whatever a person sometimes writes without thinking what to write and thoughts just come down to writer) and dream logic are important phenomena and must be accepted in art and literature. Many poets, writers, and playwrights like Roger Vitrac, Louis Aragon, and Antonin Artaud follow the idea and their works are against the convention of clarity and rational thought. Important plays written by them included “Upset Stomach” (Antonin Artaud), the “Mad Mother”, the “Mysteries of Love” (Roger Vitrac), and “At the Foot of the Wall” of (Louis Aragon).

Inspired by the work of Sigmund Freud, surrealist gives importance to dreams and the subconscious rather than conscious. Since surrealist writers and playwrights believe that the real world is not the only reality but another reality that lives in the subconscious, therefore, surrealist acting allows mechanical and robotic movements of actor and nonsensical dialogue, the abrupt end of scenes, terrifying atmosphere, confusing storylines, and dreamlike sequences.

There is a misconception that Dadaism is a product or offshoot of Surrealism (in French "super-realism" or "greater than realism"). Several Dadaist painters, artists, writers, poets and thinkers left Dadaism and joined Surrealism within a span of fewer than five years. Dadaism is difficult to understand as its

beliefs include no beliefs, no truths, no norms, no moral standards, and no rules. It's all about demolishing what exists around though and expanding the boundaries of art at meaninglessness and absurdity in creation (literature, visual art, performing art). On the other hand, Surrealism is an artistic expedition into the subconscious, unconscious, reality, and the unseen linkage that exists among them. Dada is considered as anti-art, dry humor, absurdity, and chance while Surrealism involves theory of Sigmund Freud, the unconscious, and dreams.

Critics believe that Surrealism was not an off-shoot or extension of Dadaism although Surrealism followed Dadaism without any significant lapse yet both are different and based on different philosophies. Dadaism denoted the mockery of available rules and shared knowledge of society by propagating meaninglessness and absurdity, while Surrealism was finding a linkage between the subconscious and the reality. Unlike Dadaism, Surrealism was not anti-art. Surrealists were of the view that the unconscious can (could) also provide unusual ideas and dreams are source of such ideas. Surrealism was finding a relation between conscious and subconscious and a quest of understanding the subconscious.

The structure of Surrealism mostly follows unconventional scenes and realistic situations, anything that is not rationale also strong elements of fantasy were included. Important surrealist playwrights include Jean Cocteau, Alfred Jarry, Louis Aragon, Antonin Artaud, and Guillaume Apollinaire).

Surrealist Antonin Artaud came up with his book "The Theatre and Its Double" that founded the Theater of Absurd". By the end of World War II, Surrealism gradually faded away as a movement but has survived as thought and the Theater of the Absurd and Theater of Cruelty were strongly influenced by surrealist thoughts and the philosophy of Existentialism.

### **Theater of the Absurd**

Theater of the Absurd is referred to philosophical movement generated out of Philosophy of Absurd presented by French-Algerian existentialist philosopher Albert Camus through his essay "*The Myth of Sisyphus*", published in 1942.

Albert Camus (1913–60) provided another analogy for existentialist meaning in meaninglessness through his 1942 essay about the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus, who is condemned in the afterlife to push a boulder up a hill, watch it roll down, and push it up, again and again (36).

In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he argues that man's quest for meaning and truth is a futile attempt. He says that man's struggle to understand the world and the meaning of life is an attempt like Sisyphus did to cheat death and he was punished for his actions.

Sisyphus was forced by god Hades to roll a boulder up a hill but let the boulder goes down to the ground and then again roll it up near the top, repeating this action till eternity. By using this mythological example Albert Camus explains that finding the meaning and truth in life is just a useless and futile attempt as Sisyphus is doing by rolling the boulder up and down on the hill.

Critics believe that the horrific World War II and human disaster it left behind compelled the people to think that life has no meaning at all because anything can happen that can terminate human life on earth while living under the threat of nuclear annihilation. The precariousness of human life takes the basis of the existential philosophy of post-World War II Europe (62).

Theater of Cruelty and Theater of the Absurd having bases in Existentialist thought had already challenged normativity of theatrical structure by 60s (2).

The Theater of the Absurd used techniques that appeared to be illogical while the arbitrary structure of the plays reflected the arbitrary and irrational nature of life. The Absurd play/drama is not a well-made play with a beginning, middle, and ending linked with the middle part of the play (63).

Under the influence of Philosophy of Absurd, Martin Esslin introduced the term Theater of the Absurd (4) and published a book in 1962 in which he refers to the work of a

loosely associated group of dramatists who first emerged during and after the World War II and their works are considered a reaction against cruelty that was seen during the World War II.

Martin Esslin believed that "All drama is a political event: it either reasserts or undermines the code of conduct of a given society" (64). *According to Martin Esslin, Absurdism is "the inevitable devaluation of ideals, purity, and purpose" Esslin. Absurdist Drama asks its audience to "draw his own conclusions, make his own errors" (63). Martin Esslin ignored the avant-garde past to constitute a post-war Parisian avant-garde that was not a historical movement. (4).*

*The playwrights Martin Esslin, Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter, Edward Albee, Tom Stoppard are primary playwrights of the absurd because they express absurd views and believe that life is senseless and the human existence meaningless. They do not believe in a rational and well-meaning universe, and they do not see any possibility of resolution of the problems they present (61).*

### **An understanding with Existentialism**

The history of visual art, performing art and literary art document several "isms", movements, forms genres, and kinds, and they are either influenced by the philosophical thought, socio-political development of the era of their birth or they subsequently influenced the social dynamics around them.

It is pertinent to mention that readers are sometimes confused that all Non-Realistic/Anti-Realistic "ism", movements, forms, genre and kind of theater are called "Avant-garde" but same time they are also called "Existentialist" although the use of the terminology of "Existentialist" was coined in the early 40s. Let me explain that any movement that appeared in 1800s and influenced by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Beauvoir are called "Existentialist" the term



existentialism came in 40s doesn't mean that existentialist only exist after 40s. Therefore, for dealing with confusion, the brief introduction of "Existentialism" has been added for providing clarity to readers and their understanding of theatrical developments.

The term of "Existentialism" was first used by the French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel in the mid-1940 but Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (May 5, 1813 – November 11, 1855) is considered as the Father of Existentialism. Kierkegaard said that every individual is solely responsible for giving meaning to life not the society or the religion.

In previous parts of this book, readers came to know that term of Avant-garde is used for all anti-realistic "isms", movements, forms, genres, and kinds of theater which represents the rejection of social institutions and established artistic conventions, or antagonism towards the public by placing meaninglessness of the world and the life at center stage. *The avant-garde is essentially a philosophical grouping. There may be stylistic similarities in the work of a symbolist like Yeats, or an existentialist like Beckett—as in surrealists like Cocteau and Breton, an absurdist such as Adamov or a religious dramatist like T.S. Eliot—the essential basis of their art is antithetical (40).*

"Existentialism" is simple in its nature but slightly challenging to understand within the parameter of "Philosophy of Existentialism".

"Existentialism" is nothing but to believe and promote the meaninglessness and absurdity of human life. It is a revolt against norms, meaningfulness of life and society, ethics, rules, and authority ---including the authority of the central character ---the God.

Meaninglessness and absurdity of life are linked with the reality of Death. If a person dies without his will, without his planning, and without his consent then why should plan his/her life for anything because nobody knows when the death would arrive and clutch him/her. As mentioned above that the concept of "Existentialism" is very simple to understand. Here is an example: Clara was a girl who dedicated her whole life to her career planning, finished her university with a straight A+ and did her work to clear an interview for her job in a promising position in a multinational corporation. After her interview, she

was told that she had been selected for the position. Excited with her achievements and thinking about her promising career, she came out of her future office and failed to watch a speedy bus heading towards her. She was hit and died on the spot. This is the reality of life—the Death. Uncertainty of life creates meaninglessness of life and this is the reason and logic behind Existentialism and that could be a reason for its massive popularity in an era where human history witnessed disasters---large-scale deaths due to any natural catastrophes or due to wars.

Martin Heidegger (September 26, 1889- May 26, 1976) who is best known for his contributions to phenomenology and existentialism explains the issue of *“Who am I?”* and says that this question is not an accidental feature of our psychology but has a philosophical inquiry into existence. *“The Approach to the Existential Question of the Who of Da-sein (which I myself)”* is detailed discussion of this question (65).

Existentialist does not believe in objectivity because it deals directly or indirectly with some rules/ethics and norms. In one of his theater scenes Sartre writes: “Garcin, Inès, and Estelle are three of a kind, cowards who fear and flee from their freedom by striving to conform to idealized, objective images of themselves - people who lived, in short, as though already dead”. (65)

Renato Poggioli in his book “The Theory of Avant-Garde”, claims that Existentialism has agonistic and nihilistic tendencies. He says Existentialism believes that it is difficult to coexist or survive within the collectivism of modern life (65).

### **The Theater of Cruelty**

Antonin Artaud was born in Marseilles, France in 1896 and contracted spinal meningitis as a young child and spent long stretches in sanatoriums during his youth.

He shifted to Paris in 1920 for finding some work and got an opportunity to perform in theater and films. However, he did not leave his passion for writing poetry and essays. He acted in over 20 films. In January 1926, he co-founded the “Alfred Jarry Theater” with his friends Roger Vitrac and Robert Aron.

He was obsessed with magic and astrology and was hospitalized as people around him thought he was a patient of schizophrenia during the Second World War. He went through the treatment with electroshock but even in a hospital, he continued writing and drawing. He was diagnosed with cancer, and he died on March 4, 1948.

Artaud produced only one play that put the theory of the Theater of Cruelty into practice. He staged and directed “Les Cenci”, adapted from the dramatic work of the same title by Percy Bysshe Shelley, in 1935 at the Théâtre des Folies-Wagram in Paris. The play ran only 17 performances.

Kathleen C. Irwin writes in her paper “Antonin Artaud, The Essence of Revolt” that the life and work of Artaud were steered by the theme of revolt. She said that Artaud devoted his life to expressing and promoting the power of human thought and the energies of human existence and passion. He believed that theater could be a place for reactivation and the deployment of the forces of life through the art of the *mise en scene*.

Artaud refused to accept the norms of classical, modern, and contemporary theater. In his essays on theater and culture, he called contemporary theater was “tyrannical western ideology that imposed its dominant cultural and aesthetic structures and a supremacy of the text on all other aspects of the theatrical production” (67).

Artaud had a firm belief that language was a poor medium to express pain and trauma.

Natasha Tripney in her paper “Antonin Artaud and the Theater of Cruelty” (67) claims that Artaud wanted to abolish the stage and auditorium. He wanted to break space between the audience and performer. Addressing the psychological rule that senses come first and then the process of thinking (mind) starts, he wanted to grab the senses of the audience to get them involved in the scene instead of sitting outside the scene. He said he could wear away the psychological resistance of the audience by using

above mentioned techniques. He believed that grasping senses is important rather than to the mind," because "the public thinks first with all of its senses."

Laurens De Vos in "Cruelty and Desire in the Modern Theater" (68) writes that all his life Antonin Artaud tried to defeat reason, order, and style and rediscover the forces of pure thought. Moreover, the phobic terror that he called "void" in his poems submitted to Jacques Rivière in 1923 for publication in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* drove his thought in Theater of Cruelty.

Laurens De Vos says that Artaud believed that he was uprooted in a world he did not belong to. "As for myself, I can truly say that I am not in the world, and this is not merely an attitude of the mind," he writes to Rivière (Poem SW, 44).

He was a thinker who found himself fixed in philosophical quest of the relation of Body and Soul and also an expression of thought through language—words. Can we express our true thought in words? has been a classical philosophical investigation (63).

Laurens De Vos further writes that Artaud was strongly influenced by the Surrealists but in 1926, he left the Surrealist movement and followed ideas based on Freud, Descartes, and Saussure to find questions he had in his mind. Despite his rejection of psychology, his theatrical project may be analyzed from a psychological or psychoanalytic angle. He was against psychological theater, but his Theater of Cruelty very often appears as a descent into the unconscious because he wants to explore the inner forces of Being. (63).

Artaud labels the "Theater of Cruelty" often in terms of magic since it tries to terminate the real world of appearances. Artaud believes that the stage should approximate a dream world,

where meaning is not attributed through dialogue, but through images juxtaposed one after the other. Like the dream, a theater performance must be composed of different tableaux speaking for themselves.

Though Artaud had been against Theater of Psychology his work indirectly shares the Freudian idea that unconsciously finds dreams as a way out for desires. In his first manifesto of the Theater of Cruelty, he said that “we do not intend to do away with dialogue, but to give words something of the significance they have in dreams,”. He said that in the theater, as in dreams, the dark layers of the mind, the repressed powers that we have long forgotten, are liberated.

Professor Dr. Gene A. Plunka claims that Artaud's theater is psychoanalytical:

*Artaud's psychoanalytical theater is based on Freud's notion that the malaise in modern society is due to the repression of our instinctive, unconscious, archetypal drives. Artaud's Theater of Cruelty seeks to allow human beings to establish contact with the dark forces of their psyches, which are repressed by social norms and values (64).*

Amanda Di Ponio in “The Early Modern Theater of Cruelty” writes that Artaud promoted cruel and violent images in his theater—not to establish conventional, repeatable patterns, but as a means to purge related emotions (69).

Amanda Di Ponio also writes that Artaud was influenced by Seneca's Tragedy and he once said that the play of Seneca “L'Atrée et Thyeste” inspired his work and the play held relevance to his Theater of Cruelty because of imagery representing violence, sacrifice, and contagious furor alongside savagery and cannibalism (69).

Albert Bermel in his book “Artaud's Theater of Cruelty” writes that while reading Seneca's plays Artaud wrote to his friend Jean Paulhan that the Seneca knew how to put into words the old mysteries of initiation and Seneca seems to me (Artaud) the greatest tragedian of history and that his tragedies provided the finest 'written example of what is meant by cruelty in the theater (70).

To know better about the Theater of Cruelty, one should read his book “The Theater and Its Double” which brought the Theater of Cruelty as a reality.

In his book "The Theater and Its Double" Artaud says that gestures, sounds, unusual scenery, and lighting can be used as tools of sensory disruption for creating a unity between actor and audience and this unity can be used to undermine thought and logic of viewer into seeing the immorality of his world.

Artaud was of the view that the cruelty he presents in his work is (was) not sadism or causing pain, but a violent and physical determination to shatter a false reality. Cruelty exists in a capacity to give a shock and confront the audience, to go beyond words and connect with the emotions for waking up the nerves and the heart.

He believed that text had been a dictator over meaning. The term "Spiritual" is used by Artaud as a physical term, and he believes that all theater is a physical expression in space.

According to Dr. Robert Vork of Arkansas Tech University, speech on the Theater of Cruelty is reduced to mumbling sounds, cries, and gibbering screams to prevent the existence of the performer. " Robert Vork cites the claim of Artaud that his characters are able to express things that others are unable to say (71).

The following para from Antonin Artaud's book "Theater and its Double" can help to understand Theater of Cruelty without any commentary, observations or subjective comments of others. He writes:

*All true feeling is in reality untranslatable. To express it is to betray it. But to translate it is to dissimulate it. True expression hides what it makes manifest. It sets the mind in opposition to the real void of nature by creating in reaction a kind of fullness in thought. Or, in other terms, in relation to the manifestation illusion of nature, it creates a void in thought. All-powerful feeling produces in us the idea of the void. And the lucid language which obstructs the appearance of this void also*

*obstructs the appearance of poetry in thought. That is why an image, an allegory, a figure that masks what it would reveal have more significance for the spirit than the lucidities of speech and its analytics.*

*"This is why true beauty never strikes us directly. The setting sun is beautiful because of all it makes us lose" (72).*

### **Theater of the Oppressed**

Brazilian Theater practitioner, drama theorist, political activist, writer, and thinker Augusto Boal (16 March 1931 – 2 May 2009) is the founder of Theater of the Oppressed (TO). He believed that dialogue is the essential part of a healthy society and relationship, and dialogue is an essential instrument to achieve good relations.

He said that all human beings desire to solve issues through dialogue and are capable of dialogue. He explained that when a dialogue becomes a monologue then oppression follows. He says that Theater is a significant tool for transforming monologue into a dialogue.

In his book "Theater of Oppressed" on page 16, Boal said that the autocratic rulers consider Dialogue as a threat to their authority because dialogue creates a discontinuity between one thought and another, between two opinions, or two possibilities because Dialogue creates more options and more possibilities. He believes that dialogue brings creation while creation is impossible in "Sole Absolute Thought". He called Dialogue is Democracy.

In 1971, the Brazilian military regime arrested Boal and sent him to exile. During this period, Boal published two books: "Torquemada" (1971) and his much-acclaimed "Theater of the Oppressed" (1973). The theatrical methods of Boal have based on "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" ----a book by the Brazilian educator and writer Paulo Freire who was a good friend of Boal. Paulo believes that traditional pedagogy is based on the "banking model of education" as it considers students as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge, like a piggy bank. He says pedagogy should treat the learner (student) as a co-creator of knowledge, not as a passive partner.

Theater of Oppressed provides an opportunity for people to participate in performance instead of only a group of professional performers are performing and others are just sitting and looking at them. Boal believes that Oppression is both

individual and general and problems related to oppression are “plural”, rather than personal. Therefore, society as a whole should perform against Oppression.

In the beginning, Boal targeted oppressive systems with visible oppressors, such as military dictatorships, landlords, and authoritarian workplaces. In these situations, there is an external oppressor who is easily identified, because this person uses violence and intimidation to control other people. Later, Boal also targeted more complex situations like gender and family relations.

Boal created new terminologies for his Theater like the facilitator/ difficultator/Joker. The term of Joker does not mean joker who mocks rather jokers are organizers, motivators, community activists, directors, technicians, and costume and prop advisors.

The protagonist is a so-called actor who is replaced by a spect-actor in a “Forum Theater”. While the Antagonist represents the one who consciously or unconsciously spreads the oppression. The Spect-Actor breaks “Fourth Wall” and joins the performance though he is sitting in the audience as a spectator. Once he joins the performance he becomes spect-actor from a spectator. In Bola’s Theater, the audience is not expected to sit passively. Boal says that making the body expressive, using Theater as a language, and using Theater as discourse can diminish the distance between performer and audience (73).

His work in Peru and Paris is based on his philosophy that only the oppressed are able to free the oppressed because oppressors would never want to help the oppressed. Therefore, he challenges the political system where the rich are leaders of the poor. He questions how can influential classwork for powerless and why should manipulator love to release manipulated?



In Paris, he had the opportunity of creating Centers for the Theater of the Oppressed and directed several plays, and also taught classes at Sorbonne University. Boal created the first International Festival for the Theater of the Oppressed in 1981.

Critics like Andy McLaverty-Robinson in the article "An A to Z of Theory | Augusto Boal: Theater of the Oppressed" indicates that Theater of Oppressed is a tool for developing Dialogue—interaction, conversation, and encounters. He uses the human body as a tool for representing feelings, ideas, and relationships.

Since many kinds of Theater of Oppressed were developed through theatrical exercises and theatrical workshops so they have unique names like "Forum Theater", "Rainbow of Desire", Newspaper Theater, etc.

Theater of the Oppressed is a mix of a collection of games, educational forums, and performative exercises initiated by activism, resistance, and trying to achieve real change in the daily lives of the common man. Boal says "the Theater itself is not revolutionary; it is a rehearsal for the revolution".

Sophie Coudray in her paper "The Theater of the Oppressed" writes that Boal's Theater of the Oppressed is a set of dramatic techniques having the resolution to bring systemic exploitation and oppression within common situations at the stage and to allow spectators to become actors.

Boal used different kinds and techniques for making Theater unique. Different techniques, including Newspaper Theater, Image Theater, and Invisible Theater are still popular in Western America.

### **Forum Theater**

Boal used the Greek terms "protagonist" and "antagonist," in Forum Theater. The protagonist is trying to deal with oppression but failing because of the one or more obstacles. Forum scenes can be one-act plays or just very short scenes. Actors perform short scenes that stage their daily issues like domestic violence – and then Actor asks the audience to find an idea that would help the oppressed character to break from the situation. Audience members are allowed to interrupt the show and intervene by standing up from their seats to suggest solutions to the actors who will immediately improvise it. As a co-

dramaturge, the spectator helps re-write the play while actors still play their part (74).

In simple words, Forum Theater is as follows:

The actors (either professional actors or nonprofessionals drawn from oppressed communities) perform a play with a scripted core, in which oppression relevant to the audience is played out.

### **Image Theater**

Image Theater is a performance technique in which one person is acting as a sculptor and one or more people are acting as statues, using only touch and resisting the use of words. Boal says Image Theater has extraordinary dimensions of portraying thought in a concrete form due to the absence of language idiom. For example, one can "embrace" another in many ways (in a tight, harassing manner or a loose soft manner) (75).

### **Invisible Theater**

Invisible Theater by its name indicates that theater is there but it is invisible. Invisible Theater is performed not in a theatrical place rather it can take place anywhere and even spectators do not know that they are watching a theater. The team of Invisible Theater can start performance in the street without announcing that they are performing. The performers attempt to disguise the fact that it is a performance from those who observe and who may choose to participate in it, encouraging the spectators to become spect-actors without knowing it (76).

*Invisible Theater presents performance in any place other than the theater and to those people who are not spectators. The people who witness the scene are there by chance. It can be a restaurant, a walkway, a public park and spectators must not know that a theater is going on in front of them (74).*

### **Newspaper Theater**

A performance transforming daily news articles into a theatrical scene to show that newspapers are censoring actual news. The Newspaper Theater was initially developed by the Nucleus Group of the Arena Theater of São Paulo and Boal refined this theater through further experimentations.

In this unique technique, any news item is chosen from any newspaper. Then it is crossed read with same news published by any newspapers, explaining its difference of publication and giving it a new dimension.

Complementary reading is when one person is reading news published in a newspaper and another is adding what parts of the news were censored, giving true uncensored news to listeners.

Rhythmical reading is a musical explanation about news with a tempo of the samba, tango, Gregorian chant, etc. Boal said the rhythm functions as a critical 'filter' of the news for revealing true content which was censored in the newspaper. "Parallel action" is mimic action of actor while the news is read.

Improvisation is a process of in which the news is improvised on stage to exploit all its variants and possibilities (74).

### **Rainbow of Desire**

Sophie Coudray writes in "The Theater of the Oppressed" that Boal in the 1980s, created a new division combining political and therapeutic dimensions that "The Rainbow of Desire". In his earlier work Boal avoided the use of Theater of the Oppressed as "drama therapy", but later began to adopt these more introspective techniques as a form of "Theater and therapy".

### **Legislative Theater**

Boal created "Legislative Theater" to give voters the opportunity to voice their opinions. The objective is to open up a dialogue between citizens and institutional entities outside parliament where only parliamentarians and politicians can go. The so-called production can discuss proposed law and spectators can take the stage and express their opinions about the proposed law. This is a kind of open talk show in which participants can express their views on the proposed law and

institutional entities are present to listen and answer the questions (77).

### **Analytical Theater**

Boal says that the Analytical Theater is, in which a story is told by one of the participants and immediately the actors improvise it. After the story, each character is given a social role like policeman, politician, bourgeois, etc. Then this person (role) is tagged with a symbol according to their conduct. For example, a character is bourgeois because he protects private property and values it more than human life— the audience for example gives him a symbol of a necktie or a top. This is a comic kind of game as well as play (74).

### **Feminist Theater**

The study of Feminist Theater or Women's Theater is complex because it has already gone through two major phases— All women's Theater /Theater led by women and work for the Feminist cause.

We cannot say that "All Women" Theater is the first of its kind because inclusion of women in Theater has long history. Such as Personal Theater which is also known as "Salon" was established in the 1800s in France. Even we can find women playwrights and Dramaturges like Hrotsvit von Gandersheim during Holy Roman Empire. The major difference between today's Feminist Theater and Theaters of the past is that Feminist Theater is well documented, scholarly performed, institutionalized, and carried features from the popular movement of Feminism and uses terminologies and trends introduced by the Women's Liberation Movement like the male gaze etc.

It is also contesting against abuse of women as characters in classical era Theater when women were portrayed as negative characters in plays and several revisions of Aeschylus and

Shakespeare have been published due to activism of Feminist Theater and tags like Bitch, the Witch, the Vamp, and the Virgin/Goddess associated with women are being contested and replaced (78).

Started up in the 1970s and 1980s, Feminist Theater is linked with the feminine political and social activism of the times and is driven by two scopes of activity: feminist critical theory and feminist performance. In simple words, Feminist Theater was born out of the 1970s Women's Liberation Movement. It was the Theater of the women, by the women, and for the women. In the beginning, women were on stage and backstage and were doing everything but now things have changed and feminist Theater is now a Theater working for positive images of women, or to improve the status of women in the Theater (even if written by men or produced by mixed-gender companies) (79).

When Feminist Theater started in the early 70s, the idea behind was that most theaters had been working under a male-dominated model where decision-making was controlled by men sitting at the top. Feminists believed that presenting the world from a non-normative perspective requires the inclusion of women in the decision-making of non-normative perspectives so a theater was formed where women would take decisions and would execute the decisions. From a feminist perspective, the absence of women playwrights produced theater that was not sensitive about respect for women and women's rights. Therefore, Feminist Theater in the start tried to perform everything by women from the text to performance at stage and backstage (attire, costume, music, the process of casting and selecting props).

Another important work Feminist Theater was to explore the contribution of women in Theatrical history and to find circumstances in which these women had been working for theater. Plays were written by women before the 17<sup>th</sup> century did not represent women's issues. There were female dramaturges, playwrights, leading female characters in ancient and Middle Age Theater but not a noteworthy discussion took place for women's issues in text and roles rather women had been portrayed as negative characters. Therefore, the study of roles of females at stage and backstage in Theater history became an important issue for researches and discussions in the early 70s and thereafter. These discussions and studies made the birth of Feminist Theater possible.

*The silence of women's voices in these traditions led feminist historians who were interested in women playwrights to concentrate on periods in which they did emerge: primarily the seventeenth century in England, the nineteenth century in America and the twentieth century in Europe and America. These studies produced, beginning in the early 1970s, a number of new anthologies of plays by women and biographies of women playwrights.(80).*

*Feminist Theater did research on female playwrights of the ancient era and promoted Hrotsvit von Gandersheim who was 'the first known woman playwright of written texts (79).*

Hrotsvit means 'strong voice'. She spent her life working in a convent in Gandersheim - thus the name Hrotsvit von Gandersheim. She wrote her six plays in the Holy Roman Empire as a feminist revision of the misogynistic images of women in the plays of the Roman playwright Terence (80).

Women are at the center of her plays' action and it is their alternative to patriarchal sexual possession which determines the development of the plots. Hrotsvit places her heroines in the classical context of objectification, use, and violence, but offers them an alternative context for their choices (81).

One should keep this point in mind while reading and watching Feminist Theater that its theories are shaped by the feminist thought of the 70s that represents a world where there are more than two sexes of people. Feminist Theater has long sought to disrupt the male gaze by dismantling man vs. woman as well as the associated binaries of masculine/feminine and gay/straight, acknowledging instead that there are more than two possible identities.

According to Feminism activists, the equality in portraying a female in front of the male is linked with the subject of the "male gaze". Therefore, contesting male gaze content became a major

subject of Feminist Theater during the 70s. Feminist film critic Laura Mulvey in her seminal essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” published in 1975 talked about ‘the male gaze in mainstream film texts. Such discussions triggered the thought that women are displayed mostly for strong visual and erotic impact by male texts producers (playwrights, dramaturges, film scriptwriters (79).

The male gaze is referred to as conceptualizing the way in which men look and women are the objects to be looked at. The gaze was pioneered in film studies by Laura Mulvey and remains useful for understanding engendered modes of looking, especially in visual art forms (82).

Image making—Theater, art, advertising, television, or film, women are assigned as passive in front of the active males. Feminist Theater is not ready to accept the passive role of women because Feminist Theater activists believe that the passive role of women is portrayed by the “male gaze”--- how does a male want to look at a woman? (82).

According to feminist theory, the male gaze is the act of depicting women and the world from a masculine, heterosexual perspective that presents and represents women as sexual objects for the pleasure of the heterosexual male viewer in the visual arts and in literature. Feminist Theater offers theories to disrupt the male gaze and avoid objectifying women by making the female character’s subjects rather than objects (79).

All Women Theater started taking its shape during 1800s. Sue-Ellen Case in her book “Feminism and Theater” mentioned that all-women plays were in practice in Paris during the 1800s and venues had been generally domestic domain (residences) and salons where women of the elite class gathered, engaged in dialogue and performances. *The audience was of personal friends and interesting acquaintances, which came specifically to engage in social dialogue with one another. The absent playwright and the passive audience member were replaced by numerous actors who created their own lines and listened to the original dialogue of the others. Plays depict both the upper and lower classes; the dramatic action was usually one of conflict rather than integration.*

Sue-Ellen Case said that two famous women outside the elite class were Rahel Varnhagen and Natalie Barney who ran

such salons where plays were performed. Natalie Barney salon was a known to place devoted to lesbians (80).

*Feminism and Theater provided a base for Queer Theater that helped further for female empowerment at theatrical arena.*

There had been three popular movements of feminism in western history, one that took place in France in early 1800s that brought salon plays as mentioned above and then second most important movement was of late 50s that brought new meanings and dimensions to feminism and the recent one that brought feminism a Theater in early 70s and it still continues at theatrical arena.

Rosalynd in her book “Feminist Theater: A Practical Application” writes that culture, society, and art influence feminism as much as feminism influences culture, society, and art. She writes that women had been struggling to find their due position and share in Theater and film but it is still hard for them to get their space. Rosalynd cites a research of BBC conducted in 2015 that indicates a woman directed only one of the UK’s top one hundred grossing films of year 2015. She said that women were underrepresented as director, writer and even as characters on the big screen as well. *“Women had less than a third of speaking parts in the most popular films last year” and only 12% of the top grossing films of 2014 featured female protagonists (BBC) (83).*

However, due to advent of online media, the participation of females drastically increased by 2021 and a media research claimed that female comprised 52% of major characters appearing on streaming programs and 45% on broadcast network programs.

A study conducted by Dr. Martha M. Lauzen in July 2021 under the title of “Women On Screen and Behind the Scenes on Broadcast and Streaming Television in 2020-21”, indicates



women working in streaming programs as creators, directors, and editors was higher than broadcast programs.

*Women accounted for 30% of creators, 31% of directors, and 24% of editors on streaming programs while 22% of creators, 19% of directors, and 15% of editors were working in broadcast network programs. The study also found that programs with at least one-woman creator featured more female characters in speaking and major roles than programs with exclusively male creators. In addition, programs with women creators employed higher percentages of women as directors, writers, and editors (84).*

By second decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century, situation had been changed and “Feminist Theater” is no more important for females to represent themselves because women have successfully proven themselves as integral part of modern media.

One cannot deny the contribution of “Feminist Theater” to protect the right of women in Theater, drama, film and media but aims and objective of the movement kept changing because “Feminist Theater” had no written Manifesto like several “isms” and “Movements” in Theater. A movement started from “All-women” Theater is now working with mixed theater where men and women are working together under the umbrella of “Feminist Theater”.

In simple words, “Feminist Theater” that emerged during the 1970s for striving to tell women's stories and resist the marginalization of women, to contest and undermine the male gaze has entered into 21<sup>st</sup> century not as a movement but a practice in which Feminist Theater that rejects hierarchical authority by empowering actors for their input and allowing them to make staging choices, rejecting linear narrative, often opting for open-ended, circular or episodic plots and placing female characters at the center of the action.

### **Queer Theater**

The Queer is the term that appeared in the early 1990s although scholarship of Queer goes back to the late 70s and early 80s.

Today, this term challenges the normativity of gender, race, color, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, caste, and creed. A Queer person wishes that society accept and respect the person as a person not as he, she, gay, straight, black, white,

married, divorced, single, in relation, transgender, natural, perverse, rich, poor, etc. In simple words, queer challenges the normativity of class, gender, marital status, social status, sexual identity, etc.

A person is a person and must be acknowledged as the "person" he/she/it wishes to be. Queer considers normativity is imposed by the state power and society to segregate humans into male or female, married or single, heterosexual or homosexual, natural or perverse, black or white, religious, agnostic, non-believer or atheist.

*Given its commitment to interrogating the social processes that not only produced and recognized but also normalized and sustained identity, the political promise of the term (Queer) resided specifically in its broad critique of multiple social antagonisms, including race, gender, class, nationality, and religion, in addition to sexuality.*(85).

It is hard to define the origin of Queer thinking but the term was first used by Teresa de Lauretis.

*Teresa de Lauretis coined the phrase 'queer theory' to serve as the title of a conference that she held in February of 1990 at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She had heard the word 'queer' being tossed about in a gay-affirmative sense by activists, street kids, and members of the art world in New York during the late 1980s* (86).

*When Teresa de Lauretis first advocated the term queer in 1991, she linked it with the responsibility of countering the masculinist bias hidden in the naturalized and seemingly gender-sensitive phrase, 'lesbian and gay'* (87).

Though the term Queer Theory was coined by Teresa de Lauretis the scholarship of theory is credited to Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa.

Gloria Anzaldúa with her concept of “mestiza consciousness” was in search of her identity. She overlaps boundaries of race, nation, language, genre, and gender—a process of mestizaje and her book *Borderlands/La Frontera* published in 1987 explain the journey, its pain while going through the process of mestizaje.

Anzaldúa said that she was inspired by the struggle of the ethnic and social community of her youth while critics claim that she got the idea of “mestiza” from the social and political movement popular as the “Chicano Movement” in the early 40s and late 50s. This resistance movement led by people of Mexican descent in the United States raised voices against structural racism they face and achieve community empowerment by rejecting Cultural assimilation.

In one of the many poems, Anzaldúa figures the crossroads she inhabits as a place of struggle:

*A Struggle of Borders*

*Because I, a mestiza,  
continually walk out of one culture  
and into another,  
because I am in all cultures at the same time,  
soul in between two worlds, three, four,  
my head rings with the contradictory.*

*I am disoriented by all the voices that speak to me  
simultaneously.*

Anzaldúa discards the clash for supremacy of one over the other; instead, she expresses the state of being both and neither, the border existence of the new mestiza, a socially specific, compound, and self-conscious articulation of identity poetics.

*In an oft-quoted passage from Borderlands/ La Frontera, Anzaldúa reworks Virginia Woolf's famous proclamation, declaring the mestiza a transgressor of boundaries and a creator of a new culture based on elements of the old ones, on components of her identity, and on interpersonal relationships both actual and potential (88).*

Erika Aigner-Varoz writes Anzaldúa constructs a “mestiza consciousness” as a dynamic “new mythos” capable of breaking

down dualistic hegemonic paradigms. Erika indicates Anzaldua in her book *Borderlands* creates a "mythos" of Mestizaje to explore and explode the ways in which socially enforced paradigms are established through the surface and conceptual metaphors as well ways in which these paradigms seem to label people as acceptable or unacceptable (89).

One of the key concepts in queer theory is the idea of "heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is a form of power and control that applies pressure to both straight and gay individuals, through institutional arrangements and accepted religious and social norms (90).

Queer Theater is the outcome of Queer Theory but mostly projects the issue of sexual identity instead of its wider implication of challenging the normativity of class, gender, marital status, and social status. Therefore, the majority of Queer Theater calls itself the Theater of Lesbian, Gays, Bisexual, and Transgender. The issues of crises faced by the LGBT community are protected through Queer Theater and mostly it is a mixture of tragedy—representing issues and problems faced by the LGBT community. Social and medical problems related to "AIDS" have been a major subject for dramaturges of Queer Theater including the history of Queer Theory.

Dramaturges of Queer Theater try all theatrical techniques and tools of meaning-making because they are saying something, but not in a way that could directly say what they are saying so their message (dialogues etc) sometimes are paradoxical, both indecipherable and full of meaning at the same time (91).

One of the oldest Queer Theater "Buddies in Bad Times Theater" of Toronto in its official introduction says that *Queer Theater is an empowering space for people to express and represent their own values and to enjoy their sense of worth without compromise. Queer*

*Theater is a space for audiences to encounter the unfettered uniqueness and authenticity of those who might be different from them<sup>4</sup>.*

An explanation that is given by Michael Billington is useful to understand what Queer Theater is actually? Michael Billington is the author of the famous book “The 101 Greatest Plays and State of the Nation: British Theater Since 1945”. He believes that Queer Theater is the accepted generic term for the Gay Theater movement: one that embraces both men and women that cover plays, musicals cabaret, and just about everything else.

In his article “Q is for queer Theater” he explains the history of Queer Theater and says that in the 60s (before the formation of diction of “Queer Theory), the LGBT community had been working for their share in Theater and they wanted to reform policies related to homosexuality, including decriminalizing homosexual acts, disseminating accurate and unbiased information about homosexuality, implementing constraints on police harassment, and demanding equal employment rights for gays.

### **End Note**

Last three decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century brought enormous changes in theatrical forms and usage of machines and technologies converted theater into a mix of science and art. Therefore, it was inappropriate to cover un-proportioned changes in the same volume where the history of theater started from Classical Greek Period.

I consider 21<sup>st</sup> Century as an era of breaking clichés and human mind is not ready to keep the burden of rules and old norms. Two significant factors of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Theater are competition of Text-based versus Devised Theater and Theater versus Performance.

Today's theater has gone beyond the boundaries of ideologies, fixed narratives and one can say that it is free from limitations of Time and Space. Shadow Theater, Mirror Theater, Light Theater and several new genres do not depend upon text and performances are backed by technological tricks. The next

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<sup>4</sup> <https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/>

*Enlightenment*

volume of this book will deal with emergence and making of such  
kinds of theaters.

[illegible]

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## ABOUT BOOK

"An Introduction to European Theater----History of Performing Arts from Greek Period to 20th Century" finds linkages of European Theater with historical perspectives, anthropological aspects, philosophical thoughts, and political movements spreading over the span of the last 2,500 years. It is believed that the theater has emerged from myths and rituals and they are the oldest available sources of any kind of performing act and are primarily based on religious practices including dance, eclectic movements, dialogues, and staged performances. The phenomenon, from totemic dance, shamanistic séance, and pagan libation all sum up to performance as a core element. The writer has tried to iron out the creases found over pages of history by solving complexities a reader usually finds while reading the history of the European theater. Placing historical events in a straight line was the most difficult passage the author Shazia Anwer Cheema had gone through for providing this simple but in-depth history of European Theater to readers.

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