



Estelle Doudet

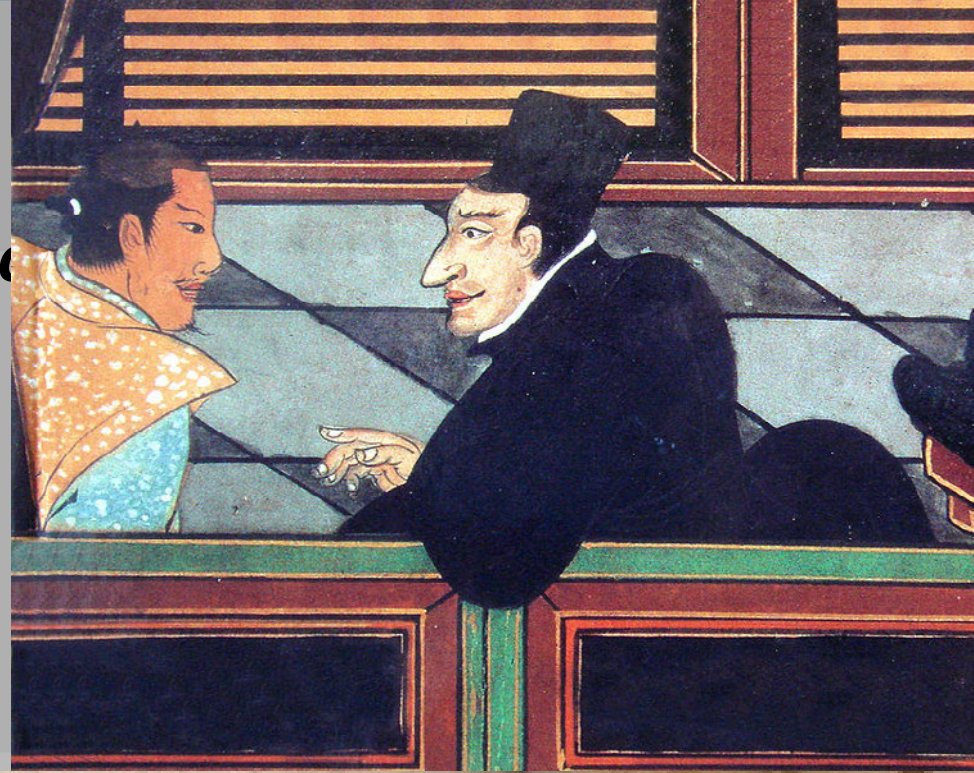
**Japanese and European Medieval Theatre and their modern revivals:
Performing Cultural Heritage in the Mirror of the Other**

Knowledge Forum, TFC, Sendai, February 2017

Introduction

✧ Luis Frois, *Treaty of Contradictions between Customs* (1585)

Chapter 13: « On Plays, Instruments »





Otojiro Kawakami and Sadda Yacco in Paris, Theatre de l'Athenee, 1901

I. Japanese and European Medieval Theatres, Exploring Differences, Searching for Similarities

A. *'It is not our Tradition' : French Audience and Japanese Troups, A Rare Encounter before 1960*



The discovery of Kabuki
Otojiro Kawakami in Paris, 1900
The Geisha and the Knight
Sadda Yacco
Production: Loïe Fuller



Sadda Yacco by Pablo Picasso, 1901



b. *'But it looks like our Past' : the Raise of Analogies with Theatres in Antique Greece Antiquity, Medieval France & Early Modern England (end 19th-beg. 20th c.)*

✧ 1873, *Things Japanese* by Basil Hall Chamberlain

✧ 1922, *The Noh Plays of Japan* by Arthur Waley

✧ 1873, *Le Théâtre au Japon* by Georges Bousquet





Jean Fouquet, *Sainte Appolline's Martyrdom*,
Representation of a Mystery Play, c. 1450

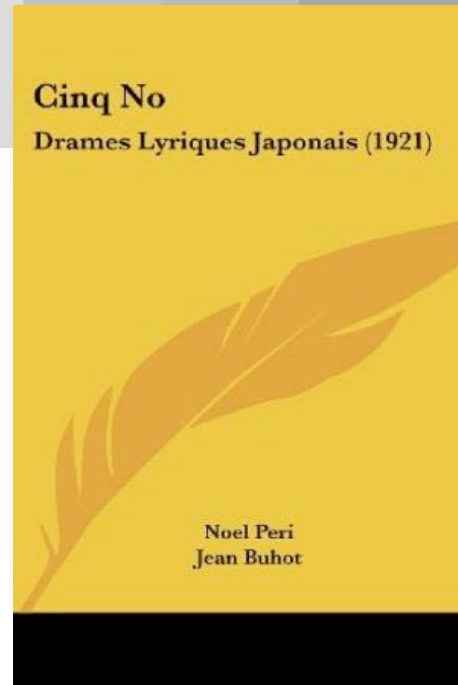
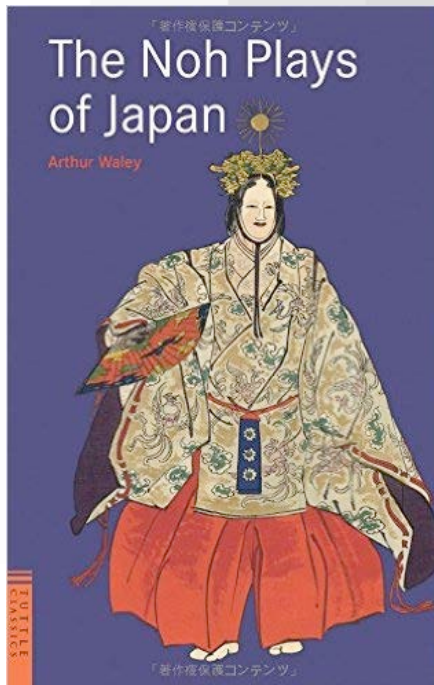
***C. Noh, Kyôgen,
Mystery plays and Farces,
at stake in their Comparison ?***

✧ 14th-16th c.

- ✧ 200 Noh plays 250 Kyôgen /100 Mystery plays, 200 farces in French
- ✧ Staging the links with the Other World
- ✧ Long performances where plays were articulated
 - ✧ Mystery play: a Community Drama
 - ✧ Farces and the Professional Technique of Acting

II. The Art of Noh and French Neo-Medievalism on Stage (1920-1950)

A. When Noh means 'No' : Jacques Copeau and his heirs or How to declare war to French Modern Theatre using Japanese Acting Technique?



Waley's Translation (1922)
Noël Péri's Translation (1921)
reviewed by Jean Schlumberger
for *the Nouvelle Revue Française*
in 1922

Jacques Copeau (1879-

1913: Foundation of the
Colombier Theatre in P

✧ **Copeau's battles:**

✧ A Theatre with less T
Body

✧ 'Bare scaffolds' of the
Modern Illusionist Stag

✧ Codification of the S
naissance (Knowledge
the Audience



Jacques Copeau (wearing
hat) and his troupe:
Charles Dullin (seating left),
Louis Jouvet (standing near
the tree),
Suzanne Bing (seating right)



Copeau playing Scapin in Commedia dell'Arte-style (Molière, *Les Fouteries de Scapin*, 1923)
At that time, he was studying Noh, 'the most rigorous technique we know of'.
The Noh play *Katan* was in preparation with Suzanne Bing and their students

Marie-Hélène & Jacques
Dasté

Grenoble, 1947: *The
Sumida River* (transl. S.
Bing, 1923)

French Cultural
Decentralisation =
'Japanese silly things'



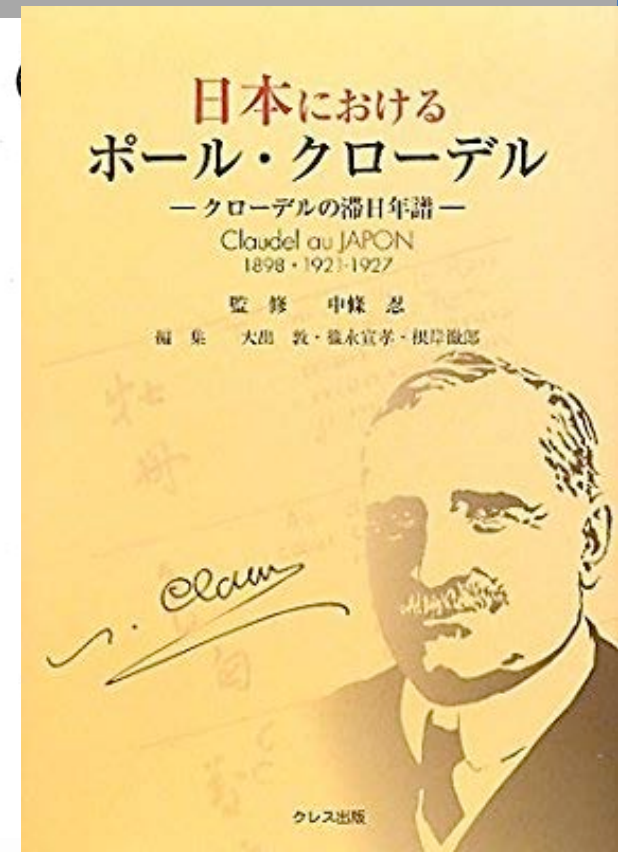
B. When Noh means 'Notre' (ours) : Paul Claudel and the Reconciliation with French Medieval Past through a Japanese Emotion

Paul Claudel (1868-1955), Ambassador for France in Japan 1921-1927

Claudel's vision of Noh

- ✧ A Path to the Other World
- ✧ A Shared Knowledge
- ✧ Communication based on Emotion

*'Drama is what happens ;
Noh is somebody who appears'.*





✧ **1923:** a Noh plot to explore 'the borders of the Worlds', *La Femme et son ombre* (*Onna to kage*)

✧ **Merging Medieval Theaters into Oratorio-Pantomime:**

✧ *Jeanne au bûcher* (1934), A. Honegger

✧ Joan and saint Dominic, the *shite* and the *waki*

La Femme et son ombre,
Waseda University 2005
Dir. Fukusuke Nakamura.
Transl. : Eiichi Suzuki



Joan and Dominic on the Bridge between the Worlds
Paris, Bastille Opera, 1992, dir. C. Régy

symphonie. Dans mon esprit, il s'agit d'un mystère qui a sa place toute indiquée sur de moyenâgeux tréteaux pour se promener de ville en ville...

'In my mind, it is a Mystery Play, perfectly suited for a staging on Medieval scaffolds...' Claudel, interview in *Comoedia* 1941



Dual Stage inspired by Mystery Plays, Carnavalesque Feast of the Ass, Japanese-style Choir and Choregraphic Interludes

Joan on the Stake, 2005

Production for the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival

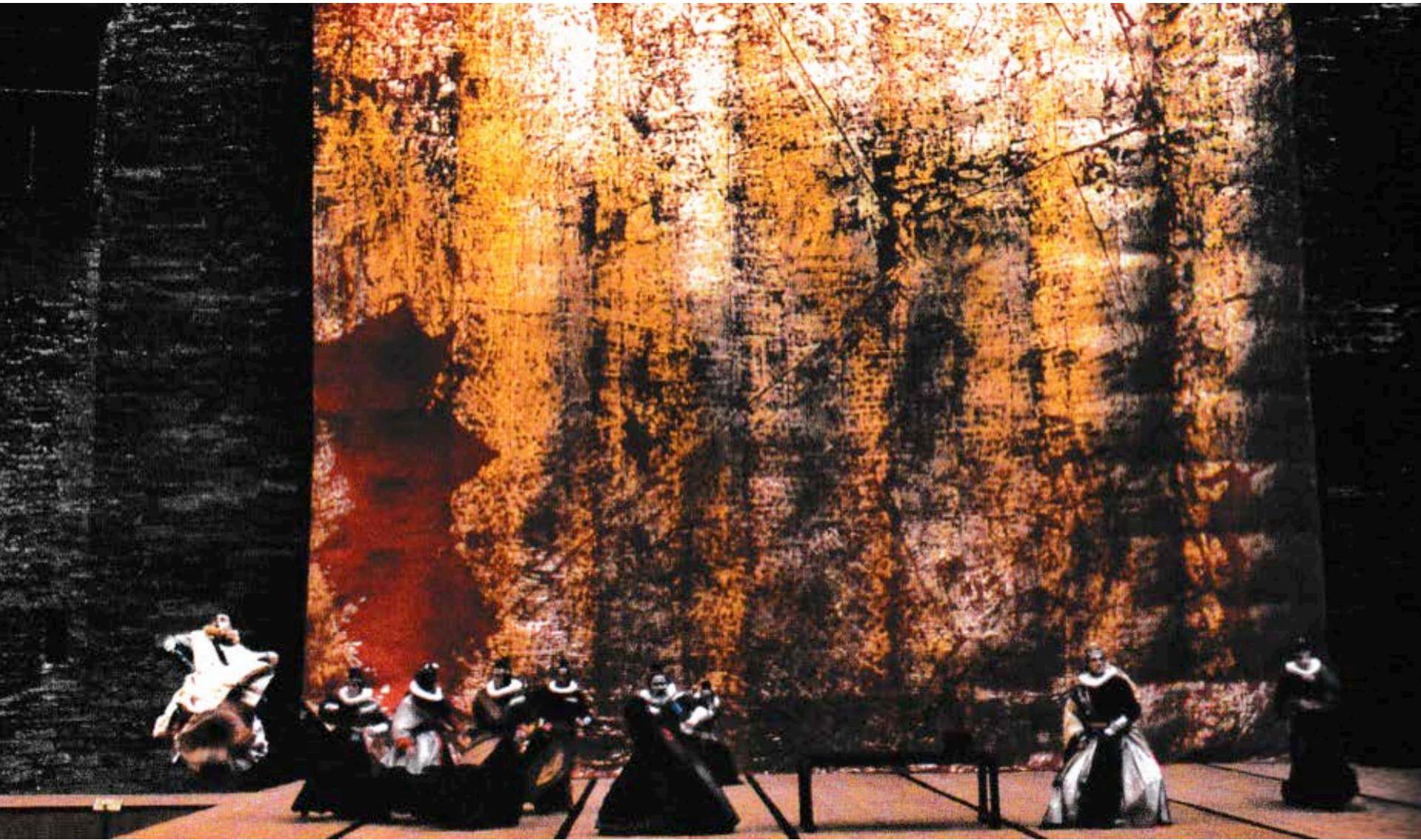
Conclusion

Interculturality and East-West Exchanges on stage : Meeting the Other or Foreignizing the Self ?

✧ « The Past is a foreign (Eastern) country » (L.P. Hartley)

✧ *Ariane Mnouchkine and
Richard II by Shakespeare in A*





Richard II by Shakespeare, dir. A. Mnouchkine, 1982, Palace of the Popes, Avignon
Performing European Past: Medieval decor + Kabuki-style Acting



✧Reconnecting West to West: The East as Self-Reflection
or as Cultural Partner?

✧*Research & Training Collaborative Project*

Le Spectacle de l'autre

「他者のスペクタクルー日仏間の移動と文化的移行」

