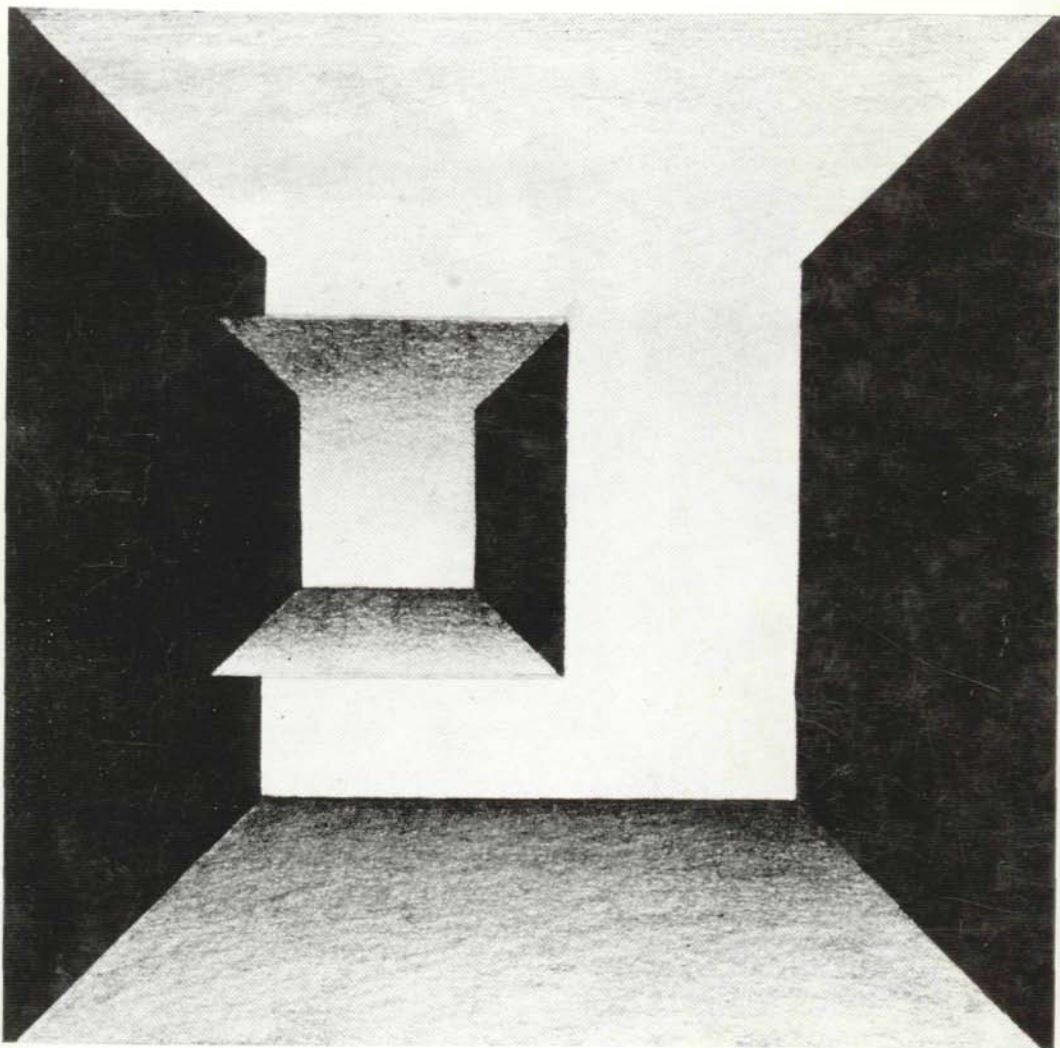


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New readers might like to learn that the motif on our cover was designed by Josef Svoboda for *Theatre Research/Recherches Théâtrales* in 1966 and presented to the International Federation for Theatre Research/Fédération Internationale pour la Recherche Théâtrale.

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Preface

The purpose of this special issue on Asian drama is to present a selection of essays to exemplify the sort of work that is now going on in Asian dramaturgy and in the theatres of Asia. Two priorities guided my selection of articles: that they demonstrate quite clearly to a western or non-Asian reader what the current preoccupations of Asian theatre are and that they also attempt to show why and how these preoccupations have come to be so. There is no denying or escaping the fact that colonialism has strongly affected the whole course of modern Asian drama. It is evident from these essays that Asian drama, in form and theme today, is more strongly influenced by western drama rather than by the traditional theatre of the East. The most crucial aesthetic problem facing the Asian writer is the problem of breaking away from the tyrannical hold of western drama. A complete break-away from the west might help to solve the Asian writers' crisis of identity, but it would be a negative course to take. The articles we have chosen illustrate that western dramaturgy and theatrical practice are now so much a part of the modern Asian theatrical heritage – the writers, directors and actors and even the audience – that the cure for the disease might turn out to be the cause of a much more serious disease, indeed even a terminal one. There is no other way but for Asian writers to learn to devise strategies for utilizing the techniques and ideas of western drama without being swamped by them. And this can only be achieved if they can also learn to salvage what they can from traditional forms of theatre native to their own countries. Both the traditional and modern Asian drama need to be revitalized and quickly too. The symbiotic relationship suggested might well lead to such a revitalization – the more modern form providing the necessary energy and the traditional form providing the identity. Perhaps one day the cycle of West/East drama might even work in reverse: contemporary Asian plays might enjoy the popularity and success in the west which western drama has enjoyed for almost a century in Asia.

Vicki Ooi is Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Studies and Comparative Literature, University of Hong Kong.

ERRATA

TRI Volume 8, Number 2, Summer 1983:

p. 178, line 27: *should read* 'Daykarhanova' not 'Däykarkhanova'
line 36: *should read* 'Boleslaw' not 'Boeslaw'

p. 179, line 35: *should read* "'Boley' himself was fond' not 'himself fond'

p. 180, line 9: *should read* 'he is at his best' not 'is at his best'