Pageant
Pageant
Forms of Drama

Forms of Drama meets the need for accessible, mid-length volumes that offer undergraduate readers authoritative guides to the distinct forms of global drama. From classical Greek tragedy to Chinese pear garden theatre, cabaret to *kathakali*, the series equips readers with models and methodologies for analysing a wide range of performance practices and engaging with these as ‘craft’.

SERIES EDITOR: SIMON SHEPHERD

*Cabaret*
978-1-3501-4025-7
William Grange

*Pageant*
978-1-3501-4451-4
Joan FitzPatrick Dean

*Satire*
978-1-3501-4007-3
Joel Schechter

*Tragicomedy*
978-1-3501-4430-9
Brean Hammond
Pageant

Joan FitzPatrick Dean
For Colin Matthew Davis
CONTENTS

List of Illustrations viii
Series Preface x
Acknowledgments xv
List of Abbreviations xvii

Introduction 1

1 The Middle English Noah Pageants 33

2 Counter-Hegemonic Pageantry: A Pageant of Great Women 67

3 Pageant as Mega-Event: Isles of Wonder 113

Conclusion 145

Notes 149
Bibliography 156
Index 172
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1 July 23, 1788: Federal ship Hamilton on a horse-drawn parade float in celebration of New York state’s ratification of the Constitution 15

2 Pageant wagon (with ark already constructed) used in a modern-day performance of “Noah’s Flood” 44

3 Mary Lowndes’s banner celebrating one of Hamilton’s famous women, Marie Curie, 1908 76

4 Illustration of a performance of A Pageant of Great Women and the Anti-Suffrage Waxworks at the Albert Hall in Sheffield. Yorkshire Telegraph and Star, October 17, 1910 85

5 A WWSL postcard reproduction of W. H. Margetson’s illustration of Justice, Woman, and Prejudice 91

6 Cicely Hamilton as Mrs. Knox in the premiere of Shaw’s Fanny’s First Play 101

7 The “Green and Pleasant Land” episode in Isles of Wonder 130

8 The “Pandemonium” episode in Isles of Wonder 131
9   Seen against a sea of LED pixels, multiple Mary Poppins fly into the stadium during “Second to the Right, and Straight on till Morning” (NHS segment) of *Isles of Wonder* 133

10   The motto of the pageant displayed in the “Thanks Tim” segment in *Isles of Wonder* 135
The scope of this series is scripted aesthetic activity that works by means of personation.

Scripting is done in a wide variety of ways. It may, most obviously, be the more or less detailed written text familiar in the stage play of the Western tradition, which not only provides lines to be spoken but directions for speaking them. Or it may be a set of instructions, a structure or scenario, on the basis of which performers improvise, drawing, as they do so, on an already learnt repertoire of routines and responses. Or there may be nothing written, just sets of rules, arrangements, and even speeches orally handed down over time. The effectiveness of such unwritten scripting can be seen in the behaviour of audiences, who, without reading a script, have learnt how to conduct themselves appropriately at the different activities they attend. For one of the key things that unwritten script specifies and assumes is the relationship between the various groups of participants, including the separation, or not, between doers and watchers.

What is scripted is specifically an aesthetic activity. That specification distinguishes drama from non-aesthetic activity using personation. Following the work of Erving Goffman in the mid-1950s, especially his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, the social sciences have made us richly aware of the various ways in which human interactions are performed. Going shopping, for example, is a performance in that we present a version of ourselves in each encounter we make. We may indeed have changed our clothes before setting out. This, though, is a social performance.

The distinction between social performance and aesthetic activity is not clear-cut. The two sorts of practice overlap
and mingle with one another. An activity may be more or less aesthetic, but the crucial distinguishing feature is the status of the aesthetic element. Going shopping may contain an aesthetic element – decisions about clothes and shoes to wear – but its purpose is not deliberately to make an aesthetic activity or to mark itself as different from everyday social life. The aesthetic element is not regarded as a general requirement. By contrast a court-room trial may be seen as a social performance, in that it has an important social function, but it is at the same time extensively scripted, with prepared speeches, costumes, and choreography. This scripted aesthetic element assists the social function in that it conveys a sense of more than everyday importance and authority to proceedings which can have life-changing impact. Unlike the activity of going shopping, the aesthetic element here is not optional. Derived from tradition it is a required component that gives the specific identity to the activity.

It is defined as an activity in that, in a way different from a painting of Rembrandt’s mother or a statue of Ramesses II, something is made to happen over time. And, unlike a symphony concert or firework display, that activity works by means of personation. Such personation may be done by imitating and interpreting – ‘inhabiting’ – other human beings, fictional or historical, and it may use the bodies of human performers or puppets. But it may also be done by a performer who produces a version of their own self, such as a stand-up comedian or court official on duty, or by a performer who, through doing the event, acquires a self with special status as with the hijras securing their sacredness by doing the ritual practice of badhai.

Some people prefer to call many of these sorts of scripted aesthetic events not drama but cultural performance. But there are problems with this. First, such labelling tends to keep in place an old-fashioned idea of Western scholarship that drama, with its origins in ancient Greece, is a specifically European ‘high’ art. Everything outside it is then potentially, and damagingly, consigned to a domain which may be neither ‘art’ nor ‘high’. Instead the European stage play and its like
can best be regarded as a subset of the general category, distinct from the rest in that two groups of people come together in order specifically to present and watch a story being acted out by imitating other persons and settings. Thus, the performance of a stage play in this tradition consists of two levels of activity using personation: the interaction of audience and performers and the interaction between characters in a fictional story.

The second problem with the category of cultural performance is that it downplays the significance and persistence of script, in all its varieties. With its roots in the traditional behaviours and beliefs of a society script gives specific instructions for the form – the materials, the structure, and sequence – of the aesthetic activity, the drama. So too, as we have noted, script defines the relationships between those who are present in different capacities at the event.

It is only by attending to what is scripted, to the form of the drama, that we can best analyse its functions and pleasures. At its most simple analysis of form enables us to distinguish between different sorts of aesthetic activity. The masks used in *kathakali* look different from those used in *commedia dell’arte*. They are made of different materials, designs, and colours. The roots of those differences lie in their separate cultural traditions and systems of living. For similar reasons the puppets of *karagoz* and *wayang* differ. But perhaps more importantly the attention to form provides a basis for exploring the operation and effects of a particular work. Those who regularly participate in and watch drama, of whatever sort, learn to recognize and remember the forms of what they see and hear. When one drama has family resemblances to another, in its organization and use of materials, structure, and sequences, those who attend it develop expectations as to how it will – or indeed should – operate. It then becomes possible to specify how a particular work subverts, challenges, or enhances these expectations.

Expectation doesn’t only govern response to individual works, however. It can shape, indeed has shaped, assumptions about which dramas are worth studying. It is well established
that Asia has ancient and rich dramatic traditions, from the
Indian sub-continent to Japan, as does Europe, and these are
studied with enthusiasm. But there is much less widespread
activity, at least in Western universities, in relation to the
traditions of, say, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle
East. Second, even within the recognized traditions, there are
assumptions that some dramas are more ‘artistic’, or indeed
more ‘serious’, ‘higher’ even, than others. Thus, it may be
assumed that noh or classical tragedy will require the sort of
close attention to craft which is not necessary for mumming
or badhai.

Both sets of assumptions here keep in place a system which
allocates value. This series aims to counteract a discriminatory
value system by ranging as widely as possible across world
practices and by giving the same sort of attention to all the
forms it features. Thus book-length studies of forms such
as al-balqa, hana keaka, and ta’zieh will appear in English
for perhaps the first time. Those studies, just like those of
kathakali, tragicomedy, and the rest, will adopt the same basic
approach. That approach consists of an historical overview of
the development of a form combined with, indeed anchored
in, detailed analysis of examples and case studies. One of the
benefits of properly detailed analysis is that it can reveal the
construction which gives a work the appearance of being
serious, artistic, and indeed ‘high’.

What does that work of construction is script. This series
is grounded in the idea that all forms of drama have script
of some kind and that an understanding of drama, of any
sort, has to include analysis of that script. In taking this
approach, books in this series again challenge an assumption
which has in recent times governed the study of drama.
Deriving from the supposed, but artificial, distinction between
cultural performance and drama, many accounts of cultural
performance ignore its scriptedness and assume that the proper
way of studying it is simply to describe how its practitioners
behave and what they make. This is useful enough, but to leave
it at that is to produce something that looks like a form of
lesser anthropology. The description of behaviors is only the first step in that it establishes what the script is. The next step is to analyse how the script and form work and how they create effect.

But it goes further than this. The close-up analyses of materials, structures, and sequences – of scripted forms – show how they emerge from and connect deeply back into the modes of life and belief to which they are necessary. They tell us in short why, in any culture, the drama needs to be done. Thus by adopting the extended model of drama, and by approaching all dramas in the same way, the books in this series aim to tell us why, in all societies, the activities of scripted aesthetic personation – dramas – keep happening, and need to keep happening.

I am grateful, as always, to Mick Wallis for helping me to think through these issues. Any clumsiness or stupidity is entirely my own.

Simon Shepherd
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The epigraph is from *The Tudor and Stuart Monarchy* © Roy Strong. Reproduced by kind permission of Felicity Bryan Literary Agency and the author. The illustration of *A Pageant of Great Women* from the *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star* © The British Library Board, British Newspaper Archive. Quotations from the Ellen Terry/Edith Craig Archive are by kind permission of the National Trust.

My research has been supported by the Department of English at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Audrey Lester provided invaluable experience and assistance. Thanks to Virginia Blanton, Laurie Ellinghausen, and Jennifer Phegley for encouraging my work and for chairing the department, an especially thankless job, between 2018 and 2021.

I am grateful to the librarians and archivists at the Newberry Library in Chicago, the Theatre and Performance Archives of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Women’s Library at the London School of Economics, the [UK] National Trust, and Special Collections at Northwestern University. Special thanks to Alexander Lock at the British Library, Beverley Cook at the Museum of London, Paul Dudman at the University of East London, Frances Horner at the National Theatre Archive, Melanie Geustyn at the National Library of South Africa, and Shawna White, Curator at the Town of Aurora, Ontario, Canada, for their very generous assistance. I owe a special debt to all the librarians and staff at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, especially Mary Anderson, Larry Ruzich, John Hern, and Liz Johnson.

I also want to thank Pat McKeown, José Lanters, Keith Hopper, Steve Gent, and Seán Moran. Marianne Wells along with my UMKC colleagues Virginia Blanton and Jane Greer
read sections of the manuscript and for their suggestions I am very grateful, although any errors are mine alone.

I greatly enjoyed and benefited from the wise counsel, warm collegiality, and steady encouragement of Simon Shepherd, the series editor of Forms of Drama. I am sincerely grateful to Linsey Hague for her diligence, range of knowledge, and care in copyediting.

My enduring gratitude for an eternity of Wednesdays. Rave on.

My greatest thanks go to my family: my brother Christopher, who provided much-appreciated technical support, and my sister Margaret. My daughter Flannery helped in many ways, especially in accessing materials during the pandemic. (I’m still not apologizing for that costume I made for your Noah pageant.) Flannery, her sister Margaret, Phoebe, Darcy, Colin, and Jack continue to change my life and only for the better.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFL</td>
<td>Actresses’ Franchise League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>American Pageant Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>Artists’ Suffrage League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET/EC</td>
<td>Ellen Terry/Edith Craig Archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOC</td>
<td>International Olympic Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC</td>
<td>International Paralympic Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCOG</td>
<td>London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA/NUIG</td>
<td>Macnas Archive, National University of Ireland-Galway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUWSS</td>
<td>National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFL</td>
<td>Women’s Freedom League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WL/LSE</td>
<td>Women’s Library at the London School of Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSPU</td>
<td>Women’s Social and Political Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWSL</td>
<td>Women’s Writers Suffrage League</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
xviii
Inevitably such a subject as pageantry is an interdisciplinary one embracing literature, art, history and iconography. ... whenever I read papers to Professor S. T. Bindoff’s seminar at the Institute of Historical Research they were received with what I can only describe as amused tolerance. He once remarked, “When we receive your thesis I suppose as we open it a triumphal arch will pop up.”

(Strong 1995: xix–xx)