

Hope in Performance

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1. Introduction

"Art is the Highest form of Hope."—Gerhard Richter.

Sigmund Freud once wrote that art is the only sublimation of repression. Artists work on raw materials of their unconscious conflicts, and audiences identify these unconscious conflicts embodied in the artwork and rendered in culturally acceptable symbolic form (Sigmund Freud, 1930) As one of the oldest forms of art, the performance also serves as a means of sublimating the repressions of artists, translating them into recognizable emotions, understandable contexts, and reflections of cultural and social issues for the audience. The term 'sublimation' originally referred to the transformation of negative or unacceptable impulses or ideas into socially acceptable actions and behaviours. (Sigmund Freud, 1930) In my interpretation, this term also implies a process of becoming positive. As a sign of civilization, art brings the hope of transforming an individual's eros into the promotion of the development of the culture and the society, the hope that the individual can be out of control by natural impulses. This hope can be effectively conveyed through art, particularly through performance.

When we delve into the history of performance practice, we discover an inherent connection to the culture and society from which it originates. When we study a practical performance, we can hardly ignore its contextual background. Undeniably, the performance, except for reflecting illusions or floating emotions, also reflects the cultural and social present situation. Especially following the entry of post-modernism and the 21st century, it is normal to talk about political or social issues in artworks. The development of Semiotics sparked new interoperation of performance. Thus, visual images, text, language and oral words, were all in the different cultural analyses. These components can offer a more insightful view into the meaning and context of a performance, and explore the connections between performance and the visual, oral, linguistic and textual elements.

However, hope is not always a positive subject. In the second part of this essay, I would like to particularly focus on the different analyses of hope, and figure out its definition not only in the psychological area but also its influence in political and social analysis.

In this essay, I would like to explore the topic "Hope in Performance" by analyzing different types of performance: Hope in Ritual Performance, Hope as a Motif in Contemporary Performance, Hope in Political Theatre and Environmental theatre.

Ritual activities, as one of the oldest performances in history have been used to invoke hope in times of difficulty. By

performing rituals, people can connect to supernatural power and hope that their wishes will be answered. Moreover, rituals can also be used to bring people together and empower the collective. Ritual performance encourages the establishment of emotional bonds in a community, which leads to the survival of the community.

Hope is also a powerful motif in contemporary performance. Musicals, plays and operas often explore the idea of hope in their storytelling, combined with the acting ability of performers and the design of the stage. For example, in the musical Hamilton, the main character sings "I have to be satisfied with the hope that tomorrow brings" – a powerful line that expresses hope even in the face of difficulty.

Political theatre is another type of performance that often conveys a message of hope. By encouraging the participants (audience) to focus on social and political issues, political theatre challenges the status of society and motivates people to fight for a better future. In this way, hope can be used as a tool to encourage change and create a more just society. The analysis of the theatre production of Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal and the analysis of Environmental Theatre brings the exploration of how political theatre delivers the idea of hope by exposing systemic injustices and advocating for social change.

In the last part of this essay, I would like to discuss how we should produce theatre work to deliver hope.

2. Hope

Before delving into practical examples illustrating how hope is expressed in various performances, it is essential to explore the very essence of the word 'hope'. The term 'hope', as an ancient vocabulary and concept, has formed various meanings throughout history. In Greek mythology, it is one of the evils in Pandora's box, whereas, in the Judaeo - Christian tradition, it is a virtue and a spiritual gift from God. In Thucydides' History, hope is "danger's comforter". In the contemporary psychological field, hope is a 'fundamental knowledge and feeling that there is a way out of difficulty, that there are solutions, and that as humans we can somehow manage our internal and external reality' (Lynch, 1965). In summary, the concept of hope is complex. I would like to talk about this from different aspects.

In the contemporary psychological field, the early concept of hope is been seen as a positive emotion, which can help individuals behave and think healthily. Lazarus (1999) describes hope as 'believ [ing] that something positive, which does not presently apply to one's life, could still materialize'. The existence of unsatisfactory life circumstances serves as a foundational prerequisite for hope, particularly in situations such as deprivation, harm, or threats. Hope implies the desire

of changing the situation, implies that the possible subject is good or positive, and also implies the necessary effort to achieve the possible subject. In other word, hope are 'the extent to which an individual anticipates a personal future' (Hinds 1984), or 'a feeling of possibility, an internal disposition and a resource for coping' (Rustoen 1995). Furthermore, hope is not only an emotional feeling but also a cognition of estimating the possibilities of achieving one goal, which only refers to the goals that can be achieved by an individual's abilities (Stotland, 1969). It also has the prerequisite that hope comes after there has been a feeling of helplessness (Brenzitz, 1986).

Thus, the idea of hope is important in the situation of recovery. The influence of past experiences extends beyond shaping future outcomes; it also impacts the interpretation of those very past experiences. Moreover, what is anticipated in the future has a significant effect on the meaning ascribed to past events. Hope, being an attitude oriented towards the future, plays a crucial role in protection. Consequently, hope becomes essential for reevaluating and transcending one's past by attributing new meanings to it.

According to Scottish philosopher Hume, Hope and Fear are "direct passions" (D. Hume). However, philosophers nowadays don't see hope as an emotion or a feeling. In J.P.Day's essay Hope, he gives a series of arguments from a philosophical viewpoint. One argument is that the symptoms of hope can't be measured as psychologists do with fear. For J.P. Day, the definition of hope is revealed when we look at the opposite concept of hope, which are Fear, Resignation, Despair and Desperation. Through the comparison, J.P.Day recognize hope similar as to "faith" or "belief".

Hope is also a popular vocabulary that has been mentioned in political areas in recent years. It equals a positive and bright future. Although the transcendent origins of hope may be disappeared, it continues to exert a strong influence as a rarely challenged driving force in political life (Delbanco 1999). But this utopian imagination or expectation is not always helpful. It may lead to blindness, delusions and overestimation of the future. The Athenians once told the Melians that "hope, danger's comforter" (5.103) in Thucydides' "Melian Dialogue". According to this passage, hope can provide solace and gratification, but it can also pose risks, even to those in positions of power. It can lead to disappointment and, due to its inherently extravagant nature, it inevitably results in ruin. The original vocabulary Elpis refers to the spirit of hope. Elpis can delude or appropriately encourage. Hope comforts its dangers, not inciting but smothering Athens so that they can forget the dangerous path they have chosen. As Thucydides commons about the Mytilenian episode with the Athenians after Pylos: "It is a habit of mankind to entrust to caress hope what they long for and to use sovereign reason to thrust aside what they do not want" (4.108).

On the other hand, in Thucydides' History, he reveals the contradiction of hope. History indicates that hope can maintain certain parts of life, even in the face of threats to one's existence. The Melians, for instance, emphasize hope as the only means of survival. In this context, hope represents a manifestation of human yearning in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges that could otherwise lead to

resignation. Even if it cannot guarantee success, hope appears necessary as a support for continued life.

In conclusion, when analyzing hope within different performances, it is crucial to recognize the diverse conceptualizations of hope that artists aim to explore through their works. Hope has multiple meanings in psychology, philosophy and politics. Hope can be a positive emotion which is helpful for mental recovery; a conclusion of the experience and an orientation to the future; a positive estimation of the potential possibilities; the courage to survive in a desperate situation; the promotion of changing the future, the delusion which leads one to the fail because of overestimation, the block of realizing the true reality. The next several parts of this discussion will focus on the central question of what kind of hope we anticipate in performance artworks and how, as performance artists, we should explore and convey this idea to the audience.

3. Hope in Ritual Performance

3.1 What is Ritual

Performances – no matter it is performing arts, sports, popular music, or everyday life – consist of ritualized gestures and sounds. Ritual as the oldest performance in human history, involves elements of performance which is interesting to be explored. Extensive evidence indicates that human ritual practices can be traced back several millennia. Cave paintings and sculptures discovered in sites like Lascaux dating as recent as 9,000 BCE and others as far back as 40,000 years ago. Roy A. Rappaport defined ritual as "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not encoded by the performers" (Rappaport, 1979). According to Rappaport, rituals typically exhibit stylized and repetitive patterns, often characterized by stereotyped behaviours. While they generally adhere to a decorous nature, it is worth noting that not all rituals strictly follow this convention. Additionally, rituals frequently take place in designated locations and are scheduled according to specific timings dictated by clocks, calendars, or predetermined circumstances.

Ritual activities are various, some are religious and sacred, such as the Passover Seder of the Jews, and the five daily prostrations toward Mecca of Muslims; some are daily and secular, which are often called "habits" or "routines". However, most of the rituals are happened among a group of participants or in a community. Ritualization, to some extent, can be seen as a result of socialization, a process of transformation from a series of specific actions to a ritual activity. Julian Huxley had done a series of research, to observe this process in animals. Through the study of "the dance of the Bee", Huxley pointed out that except instrumental behaviour, there is also communicative behaviour to help the members of a species to transmit information for their mutual benefit. In his study of the Crested Grebe, in which one partner echoes another's movement in a rhythmic, patterned dance repeatedly, Huxley identified their behaviour "as a means of establishing social bonds and mutually advantageous emotional states". This communicative behaviour is out of the original instrumental behaviour, and as Huxley pointed out, that can also be applied

in the human ritual, "ritualization". He argued that animal rituals and human rituals have similarities. According to his study, he concludes the functions of ritualization are: to enhance communication, establish territory, share food, regulate mating, and reduce intragroup hostilities among individuals (Huxley, 1966).

3.2 Hope in Ritual Performance

With the feature of the ritual activities, we can find out that these repeated, emotionally related activities lead participants and audience into a "second reality", separate from ordinary life. The performance, no matter it is a play, a stage theatre and other types of performance, also has the function of fiction the "second reality". This emotional-based space of the "second reality", combined with the behaviour and movement, transforms the participant's identity in a liminal way. In Arnold van Gennep's study "rites of the passage", he proposed a three-phase structure of ritual action: the preliminal, liminal, and postliminal. Liminal is a period when a person is "betwixt and between" social categories or personal identities. There are two important elements in the liminal process of ritual. The first is that the participants experience a temporary state of being "nothing", and enter an extremely vulnerable time that opens them up to the possibility of change. The second is that during this process, the participants recognize themselves in their new identities and are initiated into the realm of their newfound powers. In social science, the concept of liminality has been formulated and employed to analyze practices linked to transition, as well as moments or situations characterized by ambiguity, fluidity, and malleability. During this process, the participants experience the feeling that looking at themselves in mirror. They reflect their social and cultural identity, emotions and beliefs.

By weaving the reflection with specific movements, transmission happens and the community is established solidly. According to Victor Turner, the liminal entities' ambiguous and indeterminate attributes "are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Émile Durkheim formulated a theory suggesting that the performance of rituals played a crucial role in establishing and maintaining "social solidarity." He emphasized that while rituals may convey or express religious concepts, they should not be regarded as mere ideas or abstractions. Instead, rituals are enacted through familiar patterns of behaviour and textual elements.

In religious rituals or sacred rituals, the function of these ritual activities is to express or enact religious beliefs. Some involve communicating with or praying to supernatural forces, others may appealing the natural world itself. Religious rituals include the expectation of the unknown forces, and wishing that the future can be protected. The daily rituals, on the other hand, come from religious rituals but then emerged into people's daily activities. Wedding is one of the "rites of passage". No matter it is a religious wedding or a secular wedding, with the combination of two families or just about two individuals, the participants change their identity through this process. Instead of keeping their original social and cultural identity, the newly married couple is ready to exchange different habits and ideas, open to the new possibility of becoming a more responsible character. The

ritual of the wedding also represents the solidarity of the couple's relationship and the expectation of their hopeful new life. No matter it is a religious wedding or a secular wedding, the newly married couple always follow some specific and repeated behaviours from their culture. The costumes, memorial tokens, the ceremonies, are all represent the expectation of the happiness of the future life. By having this ritual activity, this positive expectation is stressed. Influenced by emotional bonds, people strengthen their hopes.

Another example is Carnival. From an anthropological perspective, Carnival is regarded as a reversal ritual where social roles are reversed and norms about desired behaviour are suspended. People get rid of their ordinary identity, get dressed into different characters, and play funny performances which most of them are about the sarcasm of the moral rules and ordinary life. The transition of identity allows participants expressing freely. There are carnivals in various cultures. Except for the amusement of sensation, the carnival also takes an important role in communication in society. The modern Caribbean Carnival, for example, is highly related to the colonial history. When slaves from Africa were transformed into Europe, they were taken their names, their language, as well as their freedom and basic human rights. Lots of immigrants were forced to forget their original identity, but can only accept cultures from their masters. At that time, the Carnival Festival was the only day for slaves to rest, the only day for them to have joy, and the only day they express their complaints of masters, by imitating the evil master and having fun of them. Even though their culture was taken, but deeply in blood, the memory and natural rituals were still there. Carnival then is the only way to remember the past for people who were forced to leave their country land and forced to forget their self-identity. The transition of identity in Caribbean Carnival reflects how the slaves identify their original culture and how they avoid the cruel reality by spiritually bonding the community together. The Carnival Festival for the immigrations is not only a memorial ritual for the past but also a spiritual solution for them to survive in the alien society. The hope here is not a luxury expectation of a new and happy life, but a solid belief in survival. It is a reflection of the profound human longing that emerges when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges, providing a counterforce to the temptation of yielding. Years past, the ritual of the Caribbean Carnival Festival helps the immigrants to carry the original culture, keep the memory, and finally have a home in a foreign country.

4. Activism, Social Change and Hope in Performance

Imagining the representation of a political future is a challenge for the theatre. Nevertheless, both Plato's Republic and Aristotle's political program utilize the theatre as a tool to channel and navigate potentially hazardous emotional content. Augusto Boal has said in his book called Theatre of the Oppressed "I believe that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that people themselves may utilize them, The theatre is a weapon and it is the people who should wield it." (Boal, 1979) In this section, I would like to talk about the hope that is particularly related to Activism and social change, and how it can be present through specific forms and techniques in

performance.

4.1 Political Theatre

Political theatre has been around since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is a form of performance that is specifically related to social and political issues and aims to promote social change. Except for the amusement or the aesthetic function, political theatre puts the concerns on activism, critique, and advocacy. It aims to raise awareness, foster dialogue, and mobilize audiences to take action.

Bertolt Brecht's *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1948) argues that the theatre no longer entertains to any productive end, and the functions of entertainment no longer work for "us". In his essay, Brecht discussed the idea of alienation or "Verfremdungseffekt" in German. This alienation technique is used in his political theatre. Through the design of his political theatre, Brecht tried to control the emotional reaction of his audience and tried to provide a logical analysis of the political issue from his viewpoint. For instance, in his *The Threepenny Opera*, the character like Macheath would speak to the audience directly as the reminding of the fictional and artificial features of the performance. By directly addressing to audience, Brecht broke the fourth wall between the stage and spectators. It creates an emotional distance between the character and the audience, avoids the immersive atmosphere, and encourages the audience to think in a logical way about social and political issues.

The "V" effect can also be achieved by using placards which reveal the events of each scene. Placards provide additional context or analysis of the events. Instead of building up the "second reality" or illusional atmosphere, Brecht would like his audience to realize the structure of the performance, and open up the critical reflection on the political issue he presented. In summary, through the "V" effect, Brecht would like to deliver the hope of the social or political issue by encouraging participants of the critical thinking from the audience. He structured his theory through a story based on a non-modern background and gave a serious hint as a guide. Here, Brecht is expecting a very realistic hope. It is not a positive emotion he would like to express, but a direct change or a solution in society. He insisted on improving the possibilities of the estimation. However, this hope for the audience and society didn't come true. In his political theatre *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1941), he wrote the experience about Mother Courage and her three children during the Thirty Year's War in the 17th century in Europe. Brecht aimed to deliver the idea of anti-war and reveal the essence of the war. In Brecht's opinion, war is the product of capitalism, the way of making benefits through the conflict. The Mother Courage is a guilty character. She commodified the war as her way of living, and her three children died because of her choices. For Brecht, Courage Mother is "the hyena of the battlefield", "It is certainly not correct to exclusively depict her as an entirely innocent victim." Thus, it was very disappointing for Brecht when he realised most of the audience was moved by the Courage Mother instead of critic her logically. "The [East Berliner] audiences of 1949 and the ensuing years did not see Mother Courage's crimes, her participation, her desire to share in the profits of the war business; they saw only her failure, her sufferings." As he

complained. Although he applied placards, avoided the dramatic plots and adopted the music as the additional commentary of this issue to create distance between the stage and the audience to inspire critical thinking without illusions, the "V" effect didn't get rid of the emotional reaction of the audience. They can realize the cruelty of the war but hardly judge the Courage Mother as an agent of capitalism because of empathy.

In my opinion, Brecht had a good starting point with the deep thinking and realization politically and philosophically. However, the intention of controlling the audience's emotional bond is hard to achieve. The nature feature of the performance is the transition of identity and emotional bonding, as I analyzed in the section Hope in Ritual Performance. Even though Brecht set a series of interventions to change these features, he still applied movements with music and costume, as well as a fictional identity in his political theatre, which happened in a specific space. These prerequisites already gave an immersive atmosphere. Audiences are expected to feel something through such a venue, according to past experience and the common understanding of a "theatre". Even if the "V" effect alienated the distance between the characters and the audience, the weakening of the emotional bonds will also weaken the information the audience may get from the empathy. "Hope", with an educational meaning for Brecht, didn't being understood by the audience in the way he wanted. However, did the audience get touched because of the cruelty of the war? Yes, even though it was from a guilty woman who was the agent of the war. They couldn't give a critical viewpoint or a wise solution to the issue, but the emotions left to the audience may spark them to notice this issue indirectly.

4.2 Environmental Theatre/Street Theatre

If Brecht tried to use the theatre space as the medium of delivering his political ideas and to challenge the established power structure, artists later in the 1960s started to move outside to find new ways of solutions. Peter Handke has written that Brecht's theatre was out of time and that it had turned everything serious, committed, definite, and final outside the theatre into a play (Handke, 1968). In Handke's opinion, the instrumentalism of theatre, its use as a means of guiding our actions and changing the world, does not work, and never has, and never will. He discusses how theatre has moved beyond traditional venues, and into unconventional spaces like streets, churches, shopping malls, and reappropriated lecture halls, to blend politics, art, and life and rekindle a sense of enchantment in politics. Which, concluded by Richard Schechner in 1968, as Environmental Theatre.

According to his article "6 axioms for environmental theatre", Schechner significantly deconstructed the established western stage practices. Environmental theatre refers to a type of theatre that aims to provide the audience with a distinct and immersive experience by utilizing non-traditional performance spaces. It is also combined with other art forms: site-specific installations, promenade performances that involve audience movement through different spaces, and the integration of sensory elements like sound, lighting, and visual effects. It utilizes the surrounding architecture, natural elements, and existing features of the chosen location to

enhance the design and concept of the production.

Unlike Brecht's V effect and his domination of the emotional engagement of the audience, most environmental theatre aims to create an immersive atmosphere. By staging in a contextualized space, arousing the senses and merging the positions between performers and spectators, Environmental Theatre creates an immersive space, encourages the audience to "feel" the performance, and delivers the concept of the performance.

In 1972, Richard Schechner and his The Performance Group produced the Environmental Theatre Commune, which was about My Lai massacre that happened in Vietnam. The production was performed in an abandoned building in New York City, which contextualized the background of the theatre as dreary and depressing. In this theatre, one of the performers had to select fifteen spectators at random to form a circle at the centre of the performance space, embodying the villagers of My Lai. Some participants followed and some refused. The performance wouldn't continue if the participants refused to join or remained seated unless the person left the room or find someone else to replace their place in the circle. Spectators were forced to take part in the performance and took responsibility for it. This persistence in transitioning the identity of spectators dragged them into the characters they were playing, opened their feelings to the temporary changing socially and emotionally. A performance is always a social process based on some specific rules. If the established rules arises the power struggle between actors and spectators, in social process becomes political. That is the temporary moment that the issue happened in My Lai transferred into the abandoned building in a protected and performed way. The transition of identity make the spectators empathetically feel the emotions from the real victims of the massacre.

However, like the audience didn't follow the intentions from Brecht, audience didn't follow the intentions from Schechner as well. One article published in New York City in 1970 commented Commune in a very critical way. The stage designed of performance was confusing. Without the clear text and the strong acting ability of performers which can directly deliver the story and emotions indicatively, the intensions of this performance—its expectation of bringing the political issues to a conversation and encouraging the engagement of audience—was failed. "Even though they address us directly, they are not telling us much directly of their communing, but hiding it behind a screen of largely overworked experimental devices", "One ducks under an American flag, re moves shoes (to, be reclaimed later if you can find them), and pads to a floor space or platform." It is easy to see that the author could hardly understand the intention of this theatre by the direct experiencing.

Compared with the political theatre made by Brecht, the Environmental Theatre is in an opposite way. According to "6 axioms for environmental theatre", the Environmental Theatre has following axioms:

The theatrical event is a set of related transactions
All the space is used for performance; all the space is used for audience.
The theatrical event can take place either in a totally

transformed space or in found space.

Focus is flexible and variable.

All production elements speak in their own language.

The text need be neither the starting point nor the goal of a production. There may be no text at all.

By transforming the theatre into a more experimental space that open to more possibilities, it allows the participants gave their understandings in their own language. The arising of the political and social issues, even through with the indictions, doesn't wait for a logical conversation which concerns about the solutions. From this aspect, Environmental Theatre admits and exaggerates the emotions from audience, which is banned from Brecht's work. The Environmental Theatre tries to arise spectators sympathy to promote their concerns of social and political issued indirectly. However, the exaggeration of sensory can't help the logical thinking on a serious political issue. People may temporarily feel the emotions, but the hope of changing can't not last too long once they leave this specific space. Sometimes, the sympathy of tragedy doesn't bring the hope of a positive future, but a triggering experience for the participants. Hope, is a psychological emotion, a representation of a predictable positive future and a strong motivation of actions. With different types of experimentation, artists are finding various ways to explore and deliver it.

4.3 Augusto Boal and his Theatre of the Oppressed

Instead of encouraging the concerns and conversations directly related with social and political issue by the context of the theatre/performance, Augusto Boal brought his idea of the Theatre of The Oppressed in 1974, aimed to provide a platform for marginalized voices and perspectives. It is an invaluable tool for amplifying the voices of the oppressed and allowing them to raise their issues in a safe and engaging environment. Through the power of performance, political theatre can help to draw attention to the lived realities of marginalized groups and build support for their struggles. The power structures and the social changes are challenged and promoted by the oppressed group itself.

In Boal's theatre, the body of the spect-actor is its chief means of expression. By combining the functions of both, it allows the participants to become both the observer and the performer, gaining a greater understanding of their own actions and being aware of the impact they have on their environment. It provides an opportunity for self-reflection, enabling the individual to assess their own behaviour and gain a deeper understanding of themselves. As Michael Kirby described, "the actions of the person himself become the object of his own attention".

For Boal, the body is the primary element of life inside and outside the theatre: "We have, before alleles, a body-before we have a name we inhabit a body!"(1992:114); "The first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body" (1985:125) Boal's analysis of the body in performance draws upon the fundamental concepts of Marxism, indicating his desire to address alienation and reclaim individual autonomy. Similar to Marx, Boal aims to abolish the distinction between actor and spectator, advocating for the emergence of the "spectactor" who actively engages in the performance. His analysis of this social deformation of the body is based

directly upon Marx's account of alienated labor. Thus, "de-specialization" of the body becomes a necessary step toward the exploration of oppression through theatre (1992:62). One has to free their body from the mechanisms of oppression by freeing their habits and behaviors shaped by those mechanisms. Through the bodily habits and behaviors, one can begin to recognize and challenge oppressive power structures. The physical presence and actions can be empowering as they can draw attention to how oppressive systems limit individual's potential, and how these systems operate.

According to Michael Kirby, this "spect-actor" activity is about self-consciousness, "can only be seen by one person and can only be viewed from within", "all art exists essentially as personal experience" (Kirby, 1996), while Boal sees it as a way to explore interpersonal experience, and by extension, ideology. For Augusto Boal, theatre is more than just a performance — it is a form of self-consciousness that has been modeled after the post-partum division or the split between the mind and body that has been explored in philosophy for centuries. Although his work has offered a radical approach to theatre by blurring the lines between actor and spectator, it cannot be said that his work removes theatre from the economy of desire, which identified by Herbert Blau is in the deep structure of the theatrical event. This economy of desire exists in the spectators' need to experience theatre as a communal event that brings them together as a collective. In Blau's idea, the central paradox of theatre is "reminding us somehow of the original unity even as it implicates us in the common experience of fracture". The arose desire (or emotions) brings the participants into a same feeling and creates a sense of community, a connection to a larger group, and a desire to understand each other. It can bring about a shared understanding of a complex issue and an appreciation of the unique perspectives of each individual. But it is also aware of the differences between people, and the fact that not everyone will agree on all aspects of the same issue. It refuses to satisfy the desire for a single belief, but instead encourages conversation and dialogue between different points of view.

Forum Theatre is one example of Boal's "spect-actor" theory. Participants are invited to take part into the performance and are encouraged to suggest alternative actions or solutions to the issues presented. Most of issues are about the social injustice, oppression, and other real-life issues which related with the community. A Forum Theatre performance typically includes a "forum scene" where an unresolved conflict or oppressive situation is presented. The scene is performed twice, with the first round showing the situation without intervention, and the second round allowing audience members to step in and enact changes. Through the "spect-actor" process, participants are involved in the changing of those issue, face a wider possibility than in the reality. The Forum Theatre brings the new opportunities of issues. Participants, instead of being expected to the logical thinking or emotionally sympathy, they reshape their oppressed body by reshaping the behavior.

Compared with the other two examples I mentioned earlier, the Theatre of the Oppressed has a careful selection of audience. People who walked into Brecht or Schechner's theatre may expect and understand the theatre as the

traditional way. Without enough contextual research, it is hard for audience who would like to entertain from a piece of theatre work to concern and engage a social or a political issue in a serious way, although they were expected to do so. However, the Theatre of the Oppressed is based on the work of a community. The emotional bonding is already existed instead of being established just through a theatre space. The structure of the Theatre doesn't create an immersive illusion. The transition of identity of the spect-actors doesn't happen, they keep the identity of their body when they engage in the theatre. The experience and the cognition of behaviors is based on their awareness of their original identity. After leaving the theatre space, the new cognition still follows the body of the participants. This technique is also been applied in psychological treatment to recover one' behavior, in drama therapy, for example. More over, Boal created a protected space which has the professional performer to lead the development of the performance, which also reminds the spect-actors that this is a fictional space, helped spect-actors to explore different possibilities without oppression. Hope, in Boal's theatre, is the cognition of behavior, the space to open the conversation, the free of the mechanisms of oppression. Boal provides a very practical way on establishing the hope socially and politically among the oppressed communities.

5. Hope as a Motif in Contemporary Performance

Hope has always been a motif in the art world. In the ancient Greek philosophy, the essence of Art is *mimemata* (imitation), the practical result is *mimesis*, including the performance. It represents the highest form of exploration of sensation, related with imagination. People imitated the reality to present their ideal beauty and goodness. It implies the emotion of expecting the positive future, the imagination of a non-existent world. Plato, however, distrusted theatre because it appealed to the emotions rather than to reason. Aristotle argued that the really real was "indwelling" as a plan or potential, somewhat like a genetic code. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle reasoned that by imitating actions, and by enacting the logical chain of consequences flowing from actions, one might learn about these indwelling forms.

Through the ancient western philosophy, hope can be conveying aesthetically. It stresses the pure beauty as art, so that we can feel the beauty of nature, the beauty of humanity, and the beauty of the soul. One can get pleasure and joy from such artworks. It is a representation of wisdom and civilization, and the respectful to the God. The ancient theatre present a such hope as well. Through the dramatic speech, the idea behind those stories spread widely with the light of the wisdom.

Nowadays, the form of performance has been developed in various. But hope as the motif still takes a very important role. The musical "Hamilton" presents the life and career of Alexander Hamilton, who immigrated from the Caribbean as a teenaged orphan and finally became a prominent figure in American politics. Through the storytelling of the musical, Alexander Hamilton embodies hope, ambition, and the belief in the transformative power of determination. Hamilton's insistence of chasing dream and fighting with difficulties pictured a touching and encouraging story, delivered the

positive attitude to the audience.

In the musical *Hamilton*, the narrative is woven with moments of hardship and adversity that enrich the story of its characters. These moments not only bring the plot forward but also provide a deeper understanding of the concept of hope. The struggles and challenges faced by the characters elicit a range of emotions from the audience, arose the empathy of audience. Through the portrayal of sad and painful circumstances, the audience is able to connect with the characters on a more profound level, forging a bond of understanding and compassion. Hope emerges as a powerful force in the moments of difficulties. The audience witnesses the characters' resilience and determination in the face of overwhelming odds, and this resonates deeply within them. It reminds them that even in the most trying of times, hope can be found and nurtured. After all, pain is an inevitable part of people's situation, and everyone has unspeakable pain and regrets in their lives. Hope soothe the audience gives people the courage to face their pain and overcome it. By juxtaposing moments of difficulty with the overarching theme of hope, *Hamilton* creates a nuanced and realistic portrayal of the human experience. It represents that hope is not immune to pain and adversity, but rather thrives in the face of it. The audience is reminded that hope is not a mere abstraction but a tangible force that can inspire resilience, growth, and the pursuit of a better future.

The context of the musical is also related with the revolution and social change. Set during a time of political upheaval, "*Hamilton*" highlights the hope for a better future that drives the American Revolution. It explores the idea that hope can be a driving force for individuals and communities to challenge the social issues, fight for their rights, and create a more just society. Also, the record historical events and the spirit of the times leads the way of thinking in history and a specific world view, and thus assume the responsibility of passing on history.

The hope as motif also has the educational function. The opera *Innocence*, which displayed a tragedy of school shooting and how the families were influenced through this tragedy. Instead of showing the encouraging like *Hamilton*, following monologue of one victim's mother, the audience get to know this tragedy from different viewpoints. With the reversal plots, audience realized that the murder was the victim of the school bullying. By showing the different viewpoints and the arguments among characters, the story promotes individual to self-reflect, expands the individual's perception of such tragedy. The solutions for this tragedy is various, but it reminds people to pay more attention on the school bullying, and also the psychological health of teenagers.

In summary, as a motif of contemporary performance, hope has multiple meanings and can be delivered in various ways. Hope can be conveyed aesthetically through art. Artists utilize different artistic mediums such as music, dance, theater, and visual arts to evoke emotions and create a sense of hope. The storytellings and the structure of the story can deeply touch the audience, arise the understanding and emotions of hope.

Through the presentation of liner-narrative stories, performances can soothe people's emotions and provide a

source of inspiration and encouragement. It can also portray characters who face adversity, overcome challenges, and ultimately find hope amidst their struggles. By witnessing these narratives, audiences are reminded of the resilience of the human spirit and are encouraged to find hope in their own lives.

Contemporary performances also play a crucial role in acknowledging and reflecting upon historical issues. They serve as a means of learning from past experiences, shedding light on important events and social injustices. Performances that related with historical narratives can ignite hope by emphasizing the progress that has been made over time and by highlighting the potential for further positive change.

Moreover, hope in contemporary performance extends beyond the exploration of the past and delves into social and political aspects of the present and future. Performances become a platform for raising awareness, addressing social issues, and promoting dialogue and action. They provide a space for critical reflection and the envisioning of a better future. By tackling social and political challenges, performances foster a sense of hope by inspiring individuals to actively engage in creating positive change.

Additionally, performance embodied hope played an educative role within the community. It encourages people to self-reflect. More over, through performances, communities can reinforce shared ideals and promote the continuity of their cultural heritage. Such performance stressing the highlights of civilization passed it on to future generations.

In conclusion, as a motif in contemporary performance, hope can be delivered through various artistic mediums and approaches. Whether through aesthetically engaging art, stories of resilience, reflections on history, or exploration of social and political issues, performances embody hope and contribute to the collective journey towards a brighter and more hopeful future.

6. Conclusion

As an artist, conveying hope is both a choice and a responsibility. Hope is a strong idea that can bring about positive changes in the world. It can be expressed through ritual performance, political theatre, environmental theatre, or can be seen as a motif in different forms of artistic expression.

In the ritual performances, hope can be conveyed through religious belief and the shared activities in the community. The ritual activity creates the liminal space for individuals, let one open up and transitioning the identity, and establish the emotional bonds in social groups. Hope in ritual performance brings unity and a sense of belonging to a particular group or community.

Political theatre is another way that hope can be expressed. Based on the establishment of the community, it promotes the positive changes socially and politically by encouraging participants to engage the reflective conversation, taking the actions to explore possible solutions for a positive future. Political theatre can be used to bring attention to injustice and challenge existing systems of power. Hope under such

conversation, refers to the physical actions.

Finally, hope can be seen as a motif in various forms of artistic expression. From music to visual art, the theme of hope can be seen throughout all forms of art. Although hope in these artistic expressions can't bring a direct change which indicates a specific issue, it can always soothing audience by the pure beauty and the respectful of the humanity. Hope is not just as a motivative factor, but also the representation of human culture and the civilization. With hope, one community can find the way in historical path.

In a world fraught with uncertainty and challenge, the contemporary performance offers a powerful platform for exploring humanity's capacity for hope and its transformative potential. Through creative expression, contemporary performance allows individuals to envision alternative futures, challenge systems of oppression, and spark social and political movements. This art form has the power to help people imagine a better world, take action, and ignite change. It can be a source of solace in dark times, giving people a way to find beauty and optimism amid despair. As a creative force, contemporary performance gives us the power to defy the status quo, challenge oppressive structures, and imagine a more equitable and just future.

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