ISSN 1347-2720

Oscillating Between Fakery and Authenticity: Hirata Oriza's Android Theatre

Kei HIBINO

Abstract

This paper evaluates *Good-bye* (Sayonara), the "first android theatre piece," which premiered in 2010. Rather than focus on technological advances, however, I will focus on the piece as artwork that reflects the aesthetics of Hirata Oriza (1962-), a Japanese playwright and director who produced this work in collaboration with roboticist Ishiguro Hiroshi. While some denounce *Good-bye* as being no better than mechanical puppetry, it encapsulates Hirata's dramaturgical principle of oscillating between fakery and authenticity, which has characterized his plays since he began his professional career in the mid-1980s. One of his representative works, *Citizens of Seoul* (1989) and its sequels serve my purpose of demonstrating this characteristic. Featuring a dying young woman and her android attendant, *Good-bye* appears to be a cheap melodrama that provokes sentimentalism, but it maintains its precarious poise by regaining authenticity through the playwright's tactful device of having the android recite poems. The thematic tension between similarities and difference in the poems recapitulates Hirata's dramaturgical focus on the juxtaposition of genuineness with falsity.

1. *Citizens of Seoul Pentalogy* as a False History

From October 29 to December 4, 2011, the Seinendan, a Japanese theatre company, mounted a five-part series of plays under the umbrella title *Citizens of Seoul Pentalogy* at the Kichijôji Theatre, Tokyo. They were all written and directed by their leader, Hirata Oriza, who is noted for his tenet of the use of colloquialism in dramatic language and his minimalist approach to the subject matter to eschew the dramatic(1).Twenty-two years have passed since *Citizen of Seoul*, the first part of the pentaptych, premiered in 1989, when Hirata, now one

(1) In this paper, Japanese family names come before their given names, as they do in real life. Hirata's works have been considered representative of the theatre of quietude (shizuka na engeki), a label which journalist Senda Akihiko aptly put on his and other theatrical productions in the 1990s to compare with "noisier" theatre in the 1960-80s.

of the representative dramatists of contemporary Japanese theatre, was twenty-seven years old and virtually unknown. Before addressing the question of how we can gauge the impact of Hirata's *Good-bye*, a fifteen-minute piece featuring an American actress and a female "android," I'd like to show how consistent Hirata has been in his ambivalent attitude toward authenticity by analyzing this monumental cycle. In arguing that the ultimate purpose of staging *Citizens of Seoul Pentalogy* is to create a piece of false history—which almost succeeds but ultimately fails in its attempt to entice audiences to accept its fictitious accounts because it does not hide its phoniness while it claims to be authentic—I hope to demonstrate that Hirata's aesthetics have been oscillating between fakery and authenticity since his early career and then propose to count his "android theatre" among such enterprises.

Set in a Japanese bourgeois dining room in Seoul in 1909, a year before the Japanese annexation of Korea, *Citizen of Seoul* weaves episodes from the everyday conversations among Shinozaki Sôichirô, a middle-aged stationery supplier who has inherited his father's business, and several other Japanese in his household and neighborhood. With no dramatic events happening and its open-ended closure, the play clearly shows how the Japanese colonizers failed to correctly understand the historical and socioeconomical contexts they were placed under with the conditions of the Japan–Korea Protectorate Treaty in 1905. The Japanese in the play are depicted as well meaning and even sympathetic toward Koreans but ignorant of the feelings of the subalterns and taking for granted their colonial rule by assuming their cultural superiority almost innocently. With the benefit of hindsight, audiences realize the evils of colonialism in general, and of the Japanese rule of Korea in particular, and at the same time feel a sense of weakness when they learn they would have known no better or have behaved no more justly if they had been in the same place as the characters. Describing people buffeted by turbulent times, *Citizen of Seoul* appears to be an authentic historical play, although it is not.

By arguing that it is not an authentic historical play, I do not intend to call attention to the fact that it does not reflect historical reality. As in many other historical plays, in *Citizen of Seoul*, poetic license takes precedence over historical accuracies. The characters speak modern colloquial Japanese. No stage directions designate what the characters should wear; in the actual productions, Seinendan's actors wore contemporary casual clothes. Still, few Japanese audience members doubt that the play presents a true representation of their deplorable past. They assume that the characters may not speak or behave exactly as the Japanese bourgeois in Seoul did in those days, but they faithfully emulate how they felt and thought.

Yet Hirata makes a self-conscious, within-the-play comment inferring that what seems to be genuine history might actually be fiction. An example of such an allusion is a reference to a plan to publish *The Glorious History of Shinozaki's Grand Store*, for which Sôichirô and other members of the family seem to take a half-hearted interest. On the visit of Hotta Kazuo, a friend of the Shinozaki family who runs a print shop, Sôichirô asks Takai Takao, a family sponger who has been assigned to write the book, about the progress. But his casual inquiry seems to be meant as a token gesture of consideration toward Hotta, who has been ready to

print the book, because Sôichirô does not mind when Takai hints—by not giving Sôichirô a definite reply—that he has made little progress. Also, when Hotta confirms the title of the book, Sôichirô apologetically admits that it is his father's request and acquiesces to the objections raised by his family. He makes no comments when Haruko, his wife, contends that the title is so grandiose as to be embarrassing. After hearing Shinji, his younger brother, protest that claiming theirs is a grand store in the title would be a lie rather than an exaggeration, Sôichirô says to Hotta (instead of giving a direct answer to his brother) that the book will lose its appeal if it is published after Japan and Korea are united by the annexation to become one, since stories of hardships in a foreign country are what such books are all about. Having admitted that the deadline is drawing near, however, Sôichirô does not seem to pay serious attention to the project; he does not ask Takai to finish the book nor does he bring up the subject later in the play. It is as if he wanted to neglect the matter until all appeals are lost and there is no longer any point in publishing such a history. Later, when left alone, Shinji condemns Takai, who confides to him that he has not written anything. But his half-joking tone of condemnation betrays his lack of genuine interest. Other family members also remain noncommittal, sharing Shinji's suspicion that the title would be a lie. By suggesting that writing history involves an act of forgery, making its accounts fictitious and nonauthentic, Hirata seems to insinuate that his very play might be a fake product that pretends to be authentic.

Another instance of suggesting the falsity of the play is the presence of a self-described magician-clairvoyant. Yanagihara Takehachirô, an elementary school classmate of Takai's, visits the Shinozaki household. Prior to his visit, Takai is surprised to find his childhood friend's name mentioned in the local newspaper. Because of Yanagihara's fame as a magician, it is presumed that his visit to Seoul has news value; however, as soon as he makes an appearance, audiences begin to suspect that he is an impostor, one of the frauds who pretends to be a top-rated entertainer in a province where nobody knows his real identity. Just as when he played the role of Professor Marvel in the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, Frank Morgan dressed as a stereotypical university professor, Yanagihara's attire resembles that of a stereotypical authentic magician: a top hat, a black cloak, and a big grin on his mustached face, which make him look all the more suspicious. When asked by the maids to perform some tricks, he declines, saying that he needs to make some preparations or that he does not specialize in the particular trick, as if to suggest that he is above such cheap displays of his mastery. Implored further to demonstrate his clairvoyance ability, Yanagihara gravely replies that the current weather in London is foggy, which impresses the credulous maids and again parallels *The Wizard of Oz*, in which Judy Garland's character Dorothy is beguiled into believing that what Professor Marvel sees in his crystal ball is true, while audiences are aware of his obvious trick of stealthily glancing at the family picture Dorothy holds.

Such phony figures also appeared in the four plays that followed. *In Citizens of Seoul 1919*, two shabby men identify themselves as a sumo wrestler and manager who traveled from Japan to stay with the Shinozaki family, but from eavesdropping on conversations between the two men and seeing the wrestler's lack of class and confidence, audiences can easily tell they

are humbugs. In *Citizens of Seoul 1929* (The more literal translation would be Citizens of Seoul: The Part of Nostalgic Shôwa Era), the Shinozaki household hosts four suspicious-looking representatives of the Manchuria-Mongolia Cultural Exchange Youth Association. The self-described leader introduces the other three members as talented athletes and dancers, but they fail to display their physical excellence. An episode of *Citizens of Seoul 1939: Love Duet* portrays how confusion is created through a rumor that an impostor blends into Japanese delegates of Hitler Youth visiting Seoul. When asked if she is a genuine Hitler Youth member, a German girl who stays at the Shinozaki household starts gibbering in German, as if to hide her consternation. The recurrent motif of impostors in *Citizens of Seoul Pentalogy* functions as a furtive signal to audiences to be cautious when accepting fictitious stories as authentic accounts of historical verity.

It is important to note, however, that Hirata does not induce audiences to see everything that happens on stage as fake. The characters are portrayed as real, and the episodes are more or less based on historical facts. All in all, they are legitimate enough for audiences to promptly suspend any disbelief. However, as a small drop of ink, after falling into a glass of water, diffuses and faintly colors the water, a doubt about the authenticity of the plays spreads in the minds of audiences and changes their attitudes toward skepticism.

Hirata's gesture of authorizing his works outside the realm of the text fuels this skepticism on the part of audiences. For instance, he tends to relate *Citizens of Seoul* and the five-part cycle to past novels of literary greatness. In the original Japanese, the title of *Citizens of Seoul* is obviously borrowed from James Joyce's *Dubliners*, whose Japanese title can be translated as "The Citizens of Dublin." He also compares his pentaptych to Kita Morio's *The House of Nire* (1964) in concept, and Kita's perennial favorite, Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1901) in scale. To some detractors, this emphasis to his link with literary inheritance corroborates his phoniness. No plays of *Citizens of Seoul Pentalogy* resemble any of the great works Hirata mentions except that some of the episodes are their poor imitations. By pointing to the spurious sources of his imagination, Hirata succeeds in aggrandizing himself.

However, in the text, he does not hide the possibility of fakery while inclining to embrace authenticity. This ambivalence has to do with the fact that Hirata started his career in the 1980s when many "original" new plays produced by young Japanese theatre companies were set in the near future and featured the theme of androids questioning their identities under the strong influence of Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner* and Philip K. Dick's original science fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. In Kawamura Takeshi's *Nippon Wars* and many other plays, androids assume they are humans and behave as such in the beginning because of their perfect likeness, but at a certain point in the plays, they realize their inauthenticity. Their feelings and actions are not their natural reactions but are programmed or controlled by humans.

The prevalent figure of androids is usually interpreted as self-portraits of the young people who were reluctant to have fixed identities in preference to more fluid selves. In the bubble economy in which the Japanese enjoyed material prosperity but suffered spiritual hunger,

young people engaged in a quest of a true self—which was another pet theme of the Japanese small theatres in the 1980s—under the illusion that they could act more freely, without any outside constraints imposed on them, if they successfully established their authentic identities and became "adults." Yet their attempts to find their "real selves" failed simply because there were no such things, and they were tormented by chronic worries that they were not real human beings but were their imitations, which is why they sympathized with the androids in which they saw their own images.

At first sight, Hirata appears to take no interest in an identity crisis; even when he was younger, he did not seem young. Usually regarded as representative works of the 1990s, whose tendency toward realistic depiction of everyday conversation distinguishes them from more fantastic representations of the plays written and produced in the 1980s, his plays do share more of the sensibilities of his predecessors than people may think. For instance, *Southward*, one of his early works which premiered in 1990, echoes the strange sense of entrapment shared by young people during the bubble economy. Set in a luxurious passenger ship bound for a southern island in the mid-twenty-first century, it portrays how spiritually disoriented but somehow euphoric Japanese passengers, as a caricature of the Japanese of the 1980s as a whole, waste time wearily on the deck because they cannot get off the ship. Their deep-seated anxiety is embodied in the figure of foreign immigrants on board and a stowaway discovered in the bottom of the ship.

Tokyo Notes is also set in the near future, although the characters sitting and chatting in an art museum lounge in Tokyo do not appear to have any serious, existential worries like those in *Southward*. In a more subtle way, it taps into audiences' anxiety or sense of weakness. In the museum, a special exhibition featuring a whole collection of Vermeer's paintings is being held because an ongoing world war has been ravaging the European world, and the masterpieces were shipped to Japan for safekeeping. At first, this backdrop has nothing to do with visitors' day-to-day talks, but audiences come to vicariously experience the anxiety and guilt that the characters feel. Shielded safely on their distant island, these Japanese people feel alienated and powerless as onlookers who are just watching the European stage of the world war. It seems as though they intentionally involve themselves in everyday trifle matters just because they do not want to face the fact that they can do nothing in a war fought in faraway places.

The sense of weakness and enclosure these plays share with the plays in the 1980s makes people feel incomplete and lost in the historical realities. Hence, a feel of fakery arises, making relevant and potent the metaphor of androids. However, Hirata's plays are more ambivalent than his precursors regarding being imitations. Instead of flat denial, he seems to acknowledge that we must live with this sense of weakness just as androids do.

From this point of view, it is noteworthy that Hirata does not clearly depict Yanagihara as a humbug in *Citizens of Seoul*. Before anything happens to confirm audiences' suspicion that he is a regular impostor, Yanagihara excuses himself from the dining room, asking if he can use the toilet. When Takai then comes home, he cannot find him anywhere. Leaving behind

his suitcase and shoes, the magician evaporates into thin air. Like so many mysteries left unsolved in Hirata's plays, Yanagihara's sudden disappearance puzzles audiences, but it also inhibits them from placing a definite label on him—after all, he might be a real magician. In presenting such an open-ended solution, Hirata seems to suggest that the boundary between authenticity and fakery is not clearly defined.

The playwright does not consider it essential to draw a line between genuine and fake and uphold one or the other; rather he chooses to sway between them. This is why he makes *Citizens of São Paul*o, the fifth part of *Citizens of Seoul Pentalogy*, a virtual repeat of the first part. The characters live in the Brazilian city and have slightly different names, but most of the episodes are borrowed from *Citizens of Seoul* and three other plays with almost all the lines the same. A cheap parody of his own works, it gives audiences a feeling of fakery, which is in stark contrast to the towering sense of authenticity *Citizens of Seoul 1939: A Love Duet* presents to them. Written twenty-two years after the first part, it shows the dexterity and sophistication Hirata has gained throughout the years. As the subtitle suggests, stories of the tenuous love of two couples are set in the Shinozaki household three decades after *Citizens of Seoul* against the background of the Sino-Japanese War, where more than 1.5 million Japanese military personnel have been sent and have been bogged down in China since the Manchurian Incident broke out in 1931. One of the main characters, Shinozaki Akio, a veteran whose indulgence in drinks and women has made him neglect his duties as a husband and supporter of the family business since he returned from China, owes a lot to the Vietnam veterans depicted in American films, such as *Born on the Fourth of July*.

However, Hirata fuses these figures with the type of prodigal young husband who is obliged to marry into his wife's family and cannot compromise with circumstances that create a gloomy lone wolf. Furthermore, the performance of Furuya Ryûta, who played the role of the young husband, was commanding and powerful enough to bring home to audiences how seriously mentally disturbed he is as a result of his trying experiences on the battleground. Precisely because Akio and many others in *Citizens of Seoul 1939* are presented as real, true-to-life characters who seem to be drawn from history, Hirata needed to make *Citizens of São Paulo* cheap and phony to regain the poise.

In the program notes, Hirata gives a different reason for why he duplicates the setting and characters of *Citizens of Seoul* in *Citizens of São Paulo*. Referring to the repetitive structure seen in Fujita Takahiro's and Okada Toshiki's plays, he declares he intentionally follows the younger generation's experiments to create something like "themes reiterated in symphonies." On the other hand, some suspect that Hirata just pulled dramaturgical punches and had to cook up the play in the face of time constraints, as he had to prepare two new plays at the same time. Both accounts may involve elements of truth worth considering, but much more relevant here is the sense of balance for which Hirata characteristically works miraculously to save the whole pentaptych from falsely claiming a genuine history cycle. In *Citizens of Seoul*, the magician's sudden disappearance makes the maids wonder if he stole anything. They are specifically concerned about the figurine of the God of Wealth placed in the entrance hall,

because it is so expensive, being made of agate. Not caring one bit, Akiko, one of Sôichirô's daughters, offhandedly admits it is a fake. This is symbolic of Hirata's dual attitude of committing himself to claiming his authenticity while revealing his phoniness.

2. *Good-bye*, or Authenticity Regained

My line of argument so far may preempt my assessment of Hirata Oriza's android theatre. It is not only misleading but also constitutes a serious oversight to evaluate the playwright's introduction of an android into theatrical space in terms of technological advances that have enabled the theatre to transform itself, like that of electric lighting, hydraulically elevated stages, close-miked amplification of actors' voices, and so on(2). Hirata's staging of an android is more personally motivated and should be seen as an artistic expression of an individual artist who chooses to navigate through a narrow path between authenticity and fakery. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of the play is necessary because it will show how the presence of an android makes it more difficult to maintain the aesthetic poise between genuineness and falsity in *Good-bye* than in *Citizens of Seoul Pentalogy*. A replica of a human, an android can be seen as a metaphor of nonauthentic copies in the space of theatrical representation. However, by having the android recite poetry, Hirata successfully recovers the precarious balance between authenticity and fakery.

The story of *Good-bye* is simple: a young female "android" (designed by Ishiguro Hiroshi, Professor of the Graduate School of Engineering Science at Osaka University) recites poems to a female Japanese-speaking Westerner (played by Bryerly Long, an American polyglot actress who belongs to the Seinendan) in a dimly-lit room, which is bare except for the two chairs in which they are sitting face to face. The android seems to be programmed to recite poems that fit the client's mood. She reads excerpts from Tanikawa Shuntarô's "Good-bye," Arthur Rimbaud's "The Drunken Boat," Wakayama Bokusui's two tankas (short, thirty-one-syllable Japanese poems), and Karl Busse's "Over the Mountain." In the meantime, the human character suggests she will die soon. After she says good-night and goes to sleep, the android begins to recite the last poem, Tanikawa's "A Distant Place."

Audience reactions to "the first android theatre" are mixed. Various negative comments expressed by some audience members all seem to come from a feeling of betrayal they experience; having anticipated an authentic work of art, they are let down by their own expectations, because what they think they see is a kind of technological hocus-pocus that glosses

(2) In the discourse of the impact of technology upon theatre the logic of incorporation is always employed to describe how technology as evil, outside force is successfully tamed to make theatre arts more significant, which has become a cliché. Even a theorist as astute as Philip Auslander seems to follow the same path when he makes a strong case for including what robots are programmed to do in the category of performance art despite the fact that we tend to exclude it from such a category in "Humanoid Boogie: Reflections on Robotic Performance," by taking examples of Sergei Shutov' *Ababus* (2001) and two others in the Russian pavilion of the 49th Venice Biennial International Exposition of Art.

over a plotless drama charged with too much sentimentality(3). Their dismay may be compounded when they know the "android" does not respond even as programmed, much less of its own accord. The timing of utterance is precise, not because it has been calculated in advance but because a human actress offstage "lip-syncs" it. Remotely controlled by her, the android is nothing but a mechanical puppet, as we see in a fairground booth.

The cheap sideshow quality of the production can be felt in the setting; the dimly lit stage successfully creates an otherworldly atmosphere yet makes everything on stage, including an actress and the android's facial expressions, indistinct and ambiguous in the murky darkness. An invalid facing death, the human character is immobile for the most part, which provides a good excuse for the android to remain motionless; if it displayed more body movements to gesticulate, it would look less like a human being. The American actress speaks her Japanese lines with an obvious English accent, providing an interesting contrast to the synthesized voice of the android; at the same time, however, their unnaturalness cancel each other out. Once aware of these "camouflage" devices, audiences cannot help but feel they have been duped, especially because they are motivated by the modern myth of omnipotent science to seek something authentic and authoritative that would not be represented in a "conventional" theatre.

Of course, as I have emphasized, delivering this "feeling of fakery" to audiences is part of Hirata's strategy. In the first place, like Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*, *Good-bye* is both a trashy imitation of the ordinary and a critique of realism that would make the ordinary special and unique through its framing effects. What is confusing is that Hirata does not allow audiences to maintain a critical distance from "fake" representations, as Warhol does his viewers. Rather, he asks audiences to empathize with them. Without such a critical distance, some audiences can hardly see any meanings in the cheap simulacra, which may result in them judging Hirata's play negatively. The dramatist's intention, however, is elsewhere. By asking audiences to interact with what he cannot authenticate, he wants to share his sense of alienation and emptiness with audiences; besieged by shoddy replicas, audiences, as well as he, are unable to get "the real thing."

In *Good-bye*, the most authentic of "the real things" Hirata and audiences cannot attain is death. Certainly the story is woven into the time-honored Romantic motif of the death drive, but showing the impossibility of dying here and now makes the play a parody of it. Although the human character is supposed to be on her deathbed, audiences know what she faces is a fictitious death. On the other hand, as long as audiences are alive and watching the play, they are also estranged from death. Thus, fake death exists, but nowhere can a true death be found.

Therefore, it is true that Hirata employs the android as a metaphor of countless inauthentic copies that surround human beings and make them unable to contact the "real." However, it should also be noted that by having the android recite poetry in *Good-bye*, Hirata successfully recovers authenticity in his work.

(3) One such negative response is Mizuushi Kentaro's "Humans and Non-Humans" ("Hito to Hito Narazaru Mono"), *Wonderland*.

At first sight, he appears to fail in his attempt to regain authenticity in the space of representation. Hirata is well aware that citation is an act of self-authorization in modern art: artists demonstrate they belong to the same community of artists by referring to great artwork of the past in their own pieces. The trouble with *Good-bye*, however, is that there is too much citation. Out of the 188 lines, including the stage directions, as many as 73 lines are citations from poems. The impression given is that there is much more, as the conversation between the human character and the android is brief, while the poems are more verbose. This imbalance can lead audiences to suspect that the play is a fake—little more than a potpourri of famous poems.

Nevertheless, as they listen to the poems being recited, audiences pay less and less attention to who is speaking or whose poem the character is reciting. For one thing, audiences can hardly see the android as the subject who thinks and speaks on her own. Just as no one wonders who is speaking when hearing the automated response of "Thank you" from a vending machine, it is difficult for audience members to assume the speaking subject when listening to the android recite poems. Since little subjectivity is detected in the android's utterances, the recitation of the poems sounds public, incongruously so, because the characters engage in a private conversation in a private room.

Furthermore, audiences are told that this type of android recites poems that coordinate with how the client feels. As I expound on them below, notice how the poems she recites are concerned about the sense of loneliness and liberation one feels in traveling alone to a distant place (which is a metaphor of the solitary journey to death). Audiences easily associate the dying young woman's mood with the emotions the poems arouse, and in doing so, they have difficulty distinguishing one voice from another. Are the sentiments being sung those of the human character, the poet, or Hirata?

The impossibility of ascribing the sentiments to a single source gives audiences an impression of multiple anonymous voices reverberating in the representational space of the play, and this impression is strengthened by what I call the thematic tension of identity and difference in the poems. By explicating them one by one, I would argue that this constant interplay of sameness and dissimilarity, which is sometimes transposed onto the scale of proximity and distance, interconnect the poems to each other, as well as the evocation of the feeling of solitude and emancipation. Presented as similar in theme and tone, they lose their unique voices in the play and become anonymous.

The first poem is Tanikawa's "Good-bye," whose title Hirata borrows for his play. It reads:

> I have to go now.
> I have to go right away.
> I don't know where to, but,
> Under the cherry trees,
> Crossing the boulevard at the traffic light,
> With the mountain I always gaze at as my landmark,

I have to go alone.
I don't know why, but,
Mother, I'm sorry.
Be kind to Father.

I won't be picky, I'll eat anything.
I will read more books, too.
At night I'll gaze at the stars.
During the day, I will talk with all sorts of people.
And I will surely find what it is I like most.
Once I've found it, I will cherish it and keep it until I die.
So even if I am far away, I will not be lonely.
Now I have to go. (Hirata 2012. p. 23)

Although the gender and age of "I" is not clear in the English translated text quoted here, the Japanese first-person pronoun "boku" used in Tanikawa's original text suggests from the beginning that the narrator is a young boy, probably six or seven years old(4).He wants to run away from home, not because he has troubles there but because he somehow feels he must. Inexplicable impulse and his growing impatience to escape from the reality that surrounds him are more keenly felt because of their impossibility. The preschool boy may leave his house without being seen but will soon be found and taken back, or he might be an introvert who likes to imagine things but cannot accomplish them in actuality. The boy's obsessed determination to go so far away that he is ready to sever his relationship with his parents fills audiences with a renewed surprise to find that their own stubbornness they had as children is still alive. On the other hand, audiences know that the boy will forget his dream of going beyond the limit some day, just as they did in their childhoods.

The android then recites the first few lines from Rimbaud's "The Drunken Boat," which reminds the human character of her father reciting it in her childhood, and she in turn recites a longer excerpt in French. Although the voice of the poem is that of the drunken boat, the wandering journey it tells can easily overlap the vagabond life led by the poet, who ran away from his domineering mother and indulged in drinks and affairs with Paul Verlaine. While naturally identifying with the drunken boat and Rimbaud, audiences realize a distance from the world the poem depicts, since in reality they cannot loaf around or lead as dissolute and unruly of a life as the poet did.

The dual sense of proximity and distance can be accentuated by the multilingual American actress's accurate pronunciation of French when reciting the original poem. Audience

(4) Although audiences cannot tell from listening, all the poems in Hadaka, including "Good-bye," are written in *hiragana*, a Japanese writing system preschool children are taught before they learn more difficult *kanji*, or Chinese characters. Because school children are instructed to use as many Chinese characters in their compositions as they have learned, it stands to reason that Tanikawa wants his reader to assume that his poems in *Hadaka* are meant to be written by young children who have not learned *kanji*.

members feel attracted to the authentic quality of the original poem, but most of them are estranged from it because they do not speak French.

When the human character says, "I think probably I'm going to die soon . . . So, please read me something more uplifting," the android recites two tankas by Wakayama Bokusui, which do not sound so uplifting.

> I shall go and see the mountains I have not yet seen.
> Will you be able to bear the loneliness?
>
> How many mountains and rivers must I cross
> to reach a country where there is no loneliness?
> Today too I am traveling. (Hirata 2012. p. 25)

A brief study of the life of Wakayama reveals that when the poet composed the two poems, he was in love with a married woman, and the loneliness he sings about is related to his unrequited love. To many audience members who do not know much about him, however, they seem to solely express the loneliness one feels on a solitary journey. Also, a careful appreciation of the two tankas will prove that the narrator, the poet himself, is not defeated by his loneliness but is determined to continue his journey. The android probably thinks they are uplifting in that they can provide the listener with the strength to bear loneliness, which is necessary for the android's mistress to face death. Yet with their inability to immediately understand the nuances, and with the constant pensive tone in which the android speaks, audiences are convinced that the android makes wrong choices and recites inappropriate poems. The response of the human character confirms their judgment: after reciting the first tanka, the android asks her mistress if she felt uplifted by it, and she answers, "Not really."

Such a cognitive discrepancy between the human character and the android may make audiences laugh, but it also shows how "distant" the characters are to each other in spite of the physical proximity and their long relationship. (The human character says, "When I was little, I didn't understand why Daddy bought you for me.") More importantly, what Hirata intimates here is not so much that the android cannot fully understand what the human character wants as that humans (including audiences) cannot comprehend what the android intends. Underlining the limitations of humans, rather than those of androids, the playwright suggests that there are unbridgeable gaps between intentions and effects in human affairs.

Listening to Wakayama's tankas, the human character remembers "a similar poem" and recites Busse's "Over the Mountain" in German. The android repeats the same poem in Japanese. Busse's poem, which has practically been forgotten in Germany, has been popular in Japan due to Ueda Bin's sterling translation.

> To wander far over the mountains,
> People say there lives happiness.

Oh, and I went with the crowd of the others,
came back with cried-out eyes.
Over the mountains, far, far away,
People say there lives happiness. (Hirata 2012. p. 26)

Although the sentiments Wakayama's tankas and Busse's poem arouse are "similar," the android points out a difference: Japanese seek a country where there is no loneliness, whereas Germans look for a country where there is happiness. A casual remark, it recapitulates how the play is built around the juxtaposition of identity and difference. Humans and androids are similar but different; audiences identify with the young boy in his dream of going to a far-away place in Tanikawa's "Good-bye," while they differentiate between dreams and reality. Audience rapport with Rimbaud's poem is breached because they realize they cannot become the French poet; the human character and the android interpret the same tankas differently. Translated into the opposition between closeness and distance, the dichotomy between sameness and dissimilarity operates not only in the cited poems but also in the representational space of the play.

The last poem the android recites after her mistress goes to sleep is Tanikawa's "A Distant Place." Like "Good-bye," it simulates the inner monologue of a young child—considering her diction in the original Japanese of a girl a little bit older—but her narrative is disjointed.

I must have come further than Yocchan.
Further than Tadashi
Further than Gorô, even further than Mother.
I may even have come further than Father and Great-grandfather.
Gorô once left home on Wednesday
And came back Sunday night, very late.
He was bony, covered in mud, and
He kept drinking water for a long time.
Nobody knew where Gorô had gone.
Where will I arrive if I keep walking on like this?
Will I have become an old woman before I am aware of it?
Will I have forgotten all about today and be drinking tea?
Will I be somewhere even further away than here?
Even if I am alone, I hope that then I will have one person that I love.
Even if that person is already dead.
I hope that I will have memories that I will never be able to forget.
From somewhere comes the scent of the ocean.
But I will surely go even further than the ocean. (Hirata 2012. p. 27)

The girl's shifting mental focus from one subject to another can be interpreted as a psycho-

logical defense mechanism; she has something she wants to forget "all about" today, which is likely the reason she has come further, thinking of disparate things that she believes could make her forget it. Many thoughts, images, and recollections are flashing through her mind while she suppresses a single distressing memory. The contrast between one and many in this poem brings the tension between sameness and difference to a conclusion: one is many, many is one. By declaring she will "surely go even further than the ocean," the girl reveals her half-conscious longing to go beyond this world (naturally, a reflection of the mood of the dying human character) on one hand, while she allures audiences to desire to dissolve the subject in a sea of multitude on the other hand.

In the space of theatrical representation where everything is a sign without entities, authenticity can hardly be acquired without turning to its associative connection to the concepts of authorship and origin. For instance, theatre directors in the twentieth century refused to regard the written script as the only origin from which theatrical representations come, and they made their theatre authentic by showcasing their "original" directorial styles and interpretations. However, they only succeeded in claiming authorship in place of playwrights, not in dismantling the myth of an author as the source of authenticity. In *Good-bye*, on the other hand, Hirata regains authenticity where no single author can be attributed to the sentiments that saturate the space; the emotions are tangible but anonymous. As is typified by Tanikawa's "A Distant Place," Hirata's staging of multiple anonymous voices reverberating in "Good-bye" is at once an authentically postmodern approach to the representation of intersubjectivity in theatre and a kitsch parody of melodrama in its self-aggrandizing manner. Oscillating between fakery and authenticity, *Good-bye* maintains its aesthetic poise.

Bibliography

1) Auslander, Philip, "Humanoid Boogie: Reflections on Robotic Performance," in David Krasner and David Z. Saltz eds, *Staging Philosophy: Intersections of Theater, performance, and Philosophy,* Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2006.

2) Hirata Oriza, "Good-bye" (Sayonara), translated into English by Hiroko Matsuda and Bryerly Long, *CTR* vol. 11, No.1 (English Issue).

3) Mizuushi Kentarô, "Humans and Non-Humans" ("Hito to Hito Narazaru Mono"), *Wonderland,* http://www.wonderlands.jp/archives/18906/ accessed on 1/4/2012.