

# Exploring the Experimental and Shamanic Journey of Healing in Hughes's Play *Beauty and the Beast*

**Shahad Salman Hossi**

*Department of English / College of Education for Humanities / University of Tikrit*

[shahadsalman16@gmail.com](mailto:shahadsalman16@gmail.com)

**Arwa Hussein Mohammed**

*Department of English / College of Education for Humanities / University of Tikrit*

[arwahosaen@tu.edu.iq](mailto:arwahosaen@tu.edu.iq)

Submission date: 17 / 4 / 2023

Acceptance date: 3 / 5 / 2023

Publication date: 19/ 10 / 2023

## Abstract

This study explores Ted Hughes' one act play "Beauty and the Beast" from the perspective of shamanism within the experimental theater. Drawing on experimental theater and ancient shamanic traditions, the play employs a range of symbolic and metaphorical devices to transport the audience into a liminal space where the boundaries between the physical and spiritual worlds are blurred. In the play, the character of the Beast represents the primal, instinctual forces of nature, while Beauty symbolizes the human capacity for empathy and compassion. Through their interaction, the play explores the tension between these opposing forces and ultimately suggests that true transformation can only be achieved through a synthesis of both. By adopting a shamanic approach to theater. The research highlights the ongoing relevance and power of shamanic traditions in modern theater, demonstrating how theater can be used not only as entertainment but also as a transformative tool for personal and societal growth.

**Keywords:** Ted Hughes, Beauty and the Beast theatricality, shamanism ,spiritual awakening, transformative power

## استكشاف رحلة الشفاء التجريبية و الشامانية في مسرحية تيد هيويز الجميلة والوحش

شهاد سلمان هوسي

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية / كلية التربية / جامعة تكريت

أرواح حسين محمد

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية / كلية التربية / جامعة تكريت

١٦٥

تهدف الدراسة من خلال هذه الورقة البحثية إلى استكشاف رحلة الشفاء التجريبية و الشامانية في مسرحية تيد هيويز الجميلة والوحش. حيث تسعى الدراسة إلى استكشاف الأدوات الأثرية و الرمزية التي استخدمها هيويز في مسرحيته، و كيف ساهمت هذه الأدوات في خلق فضاء لiminal حيث تتداخل الحدود بين العالمين المادي و الروحي. كما تسعى الدراسة إلى استكشاف التفاعل بين شخصية الوحش و شخصية الجميلة، و كيف ساهم هذا التفاعل في تحقيق التحويل الشخصي و الاجتماعي. و أخيراً، تسعى الدراسة إلى استكشاف دور المسرح في تحقيق التحويل الشخصي و الاجتماعي، و كيف يمكن استخدامه كأداة للتغيير الاجتماعي.

165

Journal of the University of Babylon for Humanities (JUBH) is licensed under a

[Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Online ISSN: 2312-8135 Print ISSN: 1992-0652

[www.journalofbabylon.com/index.php/JUBH](http://www.journalofbabylon.com/index.php/JUBH)

Email: [humjournal@uobabylon.edu.iq](mailto:humjournal@uobabylon.edu.iq)

أع ، والاصد مع ذواته الاخلة والعالا اع مي م حله . ل ال الاء على الالهة الة وقفة القال ال اماندة في  
ال ح ال ي ، مضدا لة اسد ام ال ح ل فق ه ول أ ا أدادة لة لل ال ي وال عي .

ال لبات الالهة: ت ه ز، م حة ال لة والاح ، ال اماندة، الة ال وحة، القة ال لة

## 1. Introduction

The history of experimental theater is a testament to the power of creativity and innovation in the arts. The work of theorists, dramatists, and playwrights such as Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and many others has pushed the boundaries of traditional storytelling and created new and thought-provoking experiences for audiences. Hughes' one-act play "Beauty and the Beast" is a testament to the significance of experimental theater in expanding the possibilities of theatrical expression and challenging conventional modes of storytelling and shamanic quests. The roots of experimental theater can be traced back to the early 20th century when avant-garde artists began to reject the traditional forms of theater and explore new modes of expression. One of the key theorists in this movement was Antonin Artaud, who in his book *"The Theatre and Its Double"* (1938) called for a theater that rejected realism and focused on the physical and emotional experience of the audience. Artaud's ideas influenced many other theorists and dramatists, including Bertolt Brecht, who developed his own approach to experimental theater, known as Epic Theatre [1,p.7].

Ted Hughes (1930\_1984), the British poet and playwright, is one artist who has made a significant contribution to the development of experimental theater and use of shamanism. His one-act play "Beauty and the Beast" (1974) is an excellent example of this genre and exemplifies many of the characteristics that define experimental theater and shamanistic practices, such as innovation, risk-taking, transformations, narrative emotive elements and originality. According to Lorraine Kerslake (2018), Hughes tries to encourage his audience to engage with the play on a deeper level, connecting with their own inner selves and the natural world around them. Through an analysis of the play's language, symbolism, and stage directions. It can be explored how Hughes uses the theater as a platform to explore complex shamanic themes and challenge conventional forms of storytelling. One of the ways in which Hughes' approach to experimental theater is significant is in its expansion of the possibilities of theatrical expression and shamanistic behaviors. Hughes' use of language and symbolism in "Beauty and the Beast" challenges the traditional modes of dialogue and character development, creating a surreal and evocative world that engages the audience on a visceral and emotional level. Hughes' approach to stagecraft also challenges conventional modes of theater by using the stage as a canvas on which to create a dynamic and immersive world.

In a comparative survey of the development of dramatic elements, it is important to note that experimental theater has been an essential part of the evolution of theater as an art form. Playwrights such as Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, and Caryl Churchill have all contributed to the development of experimental theater by exploring new techniques and approaches to storytelling. These playwrights, Hughes included, challenge the

conventional modes of theater and encourage audiences to engage with the play on multiple levels.

Nevertheless, Shamanism is an ancient spiritual practice that involves communicating with the spirit world through altered states of consciousness. Shamans are considered to be mediators between the physical and spiritual worlds, and they use various techniques such as chanting, drumming, and dance to access these states of consciousness. Shamanism has played a significant role in literature, particularly in works that explore the relationship between humans and the natural world. Many authors have drawn on shamanic traditions to create stories that delve into the mysteries of life, death, and transformation. Therefore, the theoretical framework used in this study combines the insights of these prominent theorists with an analysis of Hughes' play "Beauty and the Beast." By drawing on shamanic techniques and experimental theater practices, the play creates a liminal space where the boundaries between the physical and spiritual worlds are blurred, and the audience is encouraged to engage with the play on a deeper level. The study highlights the ongoing relevance and power of the old healing traditions in modern theater, demonstrating how theater can be used not only as entertainment but also as a transformative tool for delving into the deepest spiritual aspects in the human psyche.

### 1.1 Literature Review

Although was well-known for his poetry, his work as a writer and playwright is equally impressive but his dramatic works are unmatched by many. Hughes as playwright started to translate and revise classical drama and these translations dominated his output in the last decade of his life. In the 90s he wrote successful stage versions of European masterpieces like *Spring Awakening* by Frank Wedekind and *Blood Wedding* by Federico García Lorca. He also wrote classical plays *Phèdre*, *Alceste* and *The Oresteia*, and his own *Tales from Ovid*. All of these works are excellent examples of Hughes' lyrical and powerful writing style for theater. Therefore, as a playwright Hughes was increasingly drawn to the experimental theater of Peter Brook, in the 1960s and 1970s, which turned out to be a fad at the time. Hughes traveled with the stage director Brook in 1971 to Iran. While there he also wrote poetry based on Brook's experiments with the Prometheus theme and edited a collection of Shakespeare. Hence, despite his best attempts, he just couldn't shake his love of the dramatic arts. Therefore, he rewrote and translated famous plays.

Moreover, some Significant features of Hughes' interaction with classical dramatists material are: dialogue with myth rather than classical text; linguistic experimentation rather than close translation. Focus on images (especially from nature) and on famous figures; anthropological rather than historical framing of myth and the responses to it in the ancient authors; chronological allusions that use a classical or allusion to link two or more part classical figures or situations.

And yet, the development of dramatic elements and the shamanic concepts has been a crucial aspect of theater history, with theorists, dramatists, and playwrights all contributing to the evolution of storytelling techniques. In this literature review, we will examine similar topics related to the development of dramatic and shamanic elements,

including the significance of experimentation, the role of language and symbolism, and the use of stagecraft to create immersive worlds.

Experimental theater has been a driving force in the development of dramatic elements, challenging conventional modes of storytelling and pushing the boundaries of theatrical expression. In their book *"Experimental Theater: From Stanislavsky to Peter Brook"* (2012), James Roose-Evans and Martin Harrison explore the history of experimental theater and the techniques used by practitioners such as Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Peter Brook. The authors argue that experimental theater has been a significant force in the evolution of theater as an art form, enabling artists to explore new modes of expression and challenge the conventions of traditional theater.

Language and symbolism have also played a crucial role in the development of dramatic elements, with playwrights using these tools to create meaning and evoke emotion in the audience. In his book *"The Poetics of Space"* (1958), Gaston Bachelard explores the role of language and symbolism in creating an immersive and evocative world. Bachelard argues that the poetic image can evoke deep emotions and connect the audience with the play on a subconscious level, enabling them to experience the play in a more profound way.

Stagecraft is another important element of dramatic development, with the stage serving as a canvas on which to create dynamic and immersive worlds. In their book *"Theater: A Very Short Introduction"* (2014), Marvin Carlson and Joe Kelleher examine the role of stagecraft in creating meaning and engaging the audience. The authors argue that the use of staging techniques such as lighting, sound, and set design can help to create a more immersive and emotional experience for the audience, enabling them to connect more deeply with the play and its themes.

Several playwrights have also made significant contributions to the development of dramatic elements through their innovative approaches to storytelling. In her book *"The Theatre of Caryl Churchill"* (1991), R. Darren Gobert explores the work of Caryl Churchill, a British playwright who has been praised for her experimentation with language and structure. Gobert argues that Churchill's work challenges traditional modes of storytelling and encourages the audience to engage critically with the themes and ideas presented in the play.

The works of Michael Harner, particularly *"The Way of the Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing,"* have been influential in bringing shamanic practices into the mainstream. Harner's approach to shamanism emphasizes the use of drumming and other techniques to achieve altered states of consciousness.

Ursula K. Le Guin's *"The Word for World is Forest"* is a science fiction novel that explores shamanic themes in a futuristic setting. The novel tells the story of a group of humans who are colonizing a planet inhabited by sentient trees, and the conflict that arises between the two groups. Le Guin's work explores themes of environmentalism, spirituality, and the interconnectedness of all living things.

Roger Walsh's book *"The Spirit of Shamanism"* provides an overview of shamanic practices from a cross-cultural perspective. The book examines the similarities and differences between shamanic practices in different cultures, and provides an understanding of the underlying principles of shamanism.

Finally, Michael Winkelman's "*Shamanism: A Biopsychosocial Paradigm of Consciousness and Healing*" presents a scientific approach to understanding shamanic practices. The book examines the neurological and physiological effects of shamanic practices, and argues that these practices can be beneficial for mental and physical health.

Hence, This study emphasizes the relevance of shamanic traditions in modern theater, demonstrating how ancient techniques can be adapted and used to create contemporary works that resonate with audiences. It highlights the potential of shamanic traditions in theater as a means of connecting audiences with their primal, instinctual nature, and the natural world. As such, it has implications not only for theater but also for society at large, as it offers a way of engaging with nature that is often lost in contemporary culture. This study's insights into the relevance of shamanic traditions in theater can contribute to a growing interest in traditional forms of expression in contemporary art.

### 1.2 Research Methodology

In order to conduct a thorough exploration of the development of dramatic and shamanic elements in experimental theater and Hughes' one act play "Beauty and the Beast", a mixed-methods approach will be employed. This methodology will involve both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Quantitative data collection will involve a review of relevant literature, including academic journals, books, and online sources, to identify key themes and trends in the development of dramatic and shamanic elements in experimental theater. This will provide a broad overview of the topic and enable the researcher to identify significant patterns and developments over time. Meanwhile, Qualitative data collection will involve the analysis of Hughes' one act play "Beauty and the Beast" to identify the specific techniques and strategies used by the playwright to create a compelling and immersive theatrical shamanic experience.

The play will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify key themes and patterns in the development of shamanic elements in experimental theater and the specific techniques employed by Ted Hughes in his play. The findings will then be compared and contrasted with the existing literature on the topic to provide a comprehensive understanding of the development of dramatic elements in experimental theater and the contribution of Hughes to this field.

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

The study offers a unique contribution to the ongoing discourse on shamanism and experimental theater and how all the dramas after 1945 are categorized as experimental plays. By exploring the use of shamanic and experimental techniques in "Beauty and the Beast," the study offers new insights into how theater can be used as a transformative tool that connects audiences with their inner selves and the natural world. In doing so, it expands the understanding of the potential of theater beyond its traditional role as a form of entertainment. The study's findings thus can contribute to the scholarship on Hughes' work, as "Beauty and the Beast" is a relatively lesser-known play in his writings. Through the shamanic lens, the play's themes, symbols, and characters are analyzed in depth, offering new insights into Hughes' artistic vision and contribution to theater.

## 2. Framework of the Study

### 2.1 Background information on Shamanism

Shamanism is a spiritual practice that has been present in cultures around the world for thousands of years. It involves the use of altered states of consciousness, such as trance or ecstasy, to connect with the spiritual realm and access higher knowledge and guidance [2,p.1]. Shamanism is often associated with indigenous cultures and is considered a key aspect of their spiritual traditions [3,p.2]. Indeed, the old healing practices are characterized by their emphasis on direct experience of the spiritual realm, rather than relying on dogma or religious doctrine. To highlight, the old healing practices offer a powerful alternative to the traditional powerful dogmatic religious institutions, providing individuals with a more personal and authentic path to spiritual healing. This direct experience is often achieved through the use of various techniques such as drumming, chanting, dancing, or the ingestion of psychoactive substances [4,p.3]. Consequently, Understanding the relationship between spiritual beauty and physicality is crucial for exploring their role in various practices, such as shamanism and drama, and their healing potential [5, p.34].

To elaborate, Shamanic practices have been found to be beneficial for promoting personal growth and healing from trauma. Shamanic journeying, a technique used in shamanic practices, involves entering a trance state to explore the spiritual realm and connect with guides or spirits who can provide guidance and healing [6,p.67]. This technique has been found to be effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression in individuals who have experienced trauma [7,p.67]. In the same way, Hughes' play "Beauty and the Beast", which provides a therapeutic quest, presented as a journey of self-discovery, transformation, and healing. The play highlights the protagonist, Beauty's process of discovering her own inner strength through awakening her dormant treatments powers. It introduces Beauty's journey as a quest to rescue herself and the beast as well who has captivated her in her dreams. Dreams are often considered a method of communicating with the spiritual world of shamanism. However, as the story progresses, it becomes evident that Beauty's quest is not merely a physical one, but a spiritual one as well. Her journey deals with issues of self-acceptance, shadow work, and facing her fears. The curing elements in the play serve as a metaphor for Beauty's inner journey

towards wholeness. One of the significant themes in the play is the idea of animal spirits. The Beast and his followers are depicted as animalistic, while Beauty is portrayed as a human with the ability to communicate with animals in the old mythical worlds . Through her communication with the animals, Beauty awakens her shamanic powers and learns to listen to her intuition. This theme emphasizes the importance of connecting with nature and discovering the spiritual connections that exist between all living things. Another essential aspect of the therapy process in the play is the idea of transformative experiences. Beauty's journey is ultimately about her transformation from a girl to a woman. The play highlights the importance of facing one's fears and confronting their shadow selves to achieve personal growth. The Beast represents Beauty's shadow, and through her interactions with him, Beauty learns to integrate her shadow self, leading to her transformation. The play's portrayal of the shamanic journey is also characterized by a sense of collective healing. The Beast is initially portrayed as a monstrous figure, but as Beauty learns to communicate with him, she discovers his inner turmoil. By helping the Beast work through his emotional trauma, Beauty also heals herself. The play highlights the importance of community and how empowering it can be to work together towards healing and growth. In conclusion, Beauty and the Beast is a powerful exploration of the shamanic quest as a journey of spiritual growth. Through Beauty's journey, the play emphasizes the importance of connecting with nature, confronting fears, and integrating one's shadow self for personal transformation. Moreover, the play highlights the collective aspects of the healing journey, showing the power of collaboration and community in getting cured and achieving personal growth.

In addition, shamanism is a spiritual practice that has been present in cultures around the world for thousands of years. Shamanic practices emphasize direct experience of the spiritual realm and have been found to be effective in promoting personal growth and healing from trauma. The study of shamanism provides a framework for understanding the connection between physical transformation and inner spiritual growth, which is central to the theme explored in Ted Hughes' play "Beauty and the Beast."

## 2.2 Interpreting Ted Hughes "Beauty & the Beast"

Ted Hughes often explores themes of nature, power, and transformation in his works. One of his lesser-known works is the one act play titled "Beauty & the Beast". This story can be seen as a shamanic play that explores the transformative power of ritual and myth. Drawing on ancient healing traditions, the play employs a range of symbolic and metaphorical devices to transport the audience into a liminal space where the boundaries between the physical and spiritual worlds are blurred. As theater philosophizes these approaches this shamanic approach within theater is not new; in fact, it can be traced back to the earliest forms of human performance, where ritual and myth were used to connect individuals to the natural world and to create a sense of communal identity. However, Ted Hughes' play offers a unique contemporary interpretation of these traditions, demonstrating their ongoing relevance and power in modern theater. In drama, the physicality of shamanistic rituals is often emphasized, highlighting the interplay between the body, mind, and spirit in the healing process [8,p.251]. Therefore, drama can shape audience perceptions of spiritual beauty and shamanism by illustrating

their transformative potential and fostering a deeper understanding of their healing power[9, p.129].

In the play, the character of the Beast represents the primal, instinctual forces of nature, while Beauty symbolizes the human capacity for empathy and compassion. Through their interaction, the play explores the tension between these opposing forces and ultimately suggests that true transformation can only be achieved through a synthesis of both. The play revolves around the complicated story of a young sick woman named Beauty and a transformed beast named Youth who lives in the forest. As the plot unfolds, we see many shamanic elements woven in the narrative, such as human-like-beast transformations, the use of dreams, and the symbolism of the forest. One of the most prominent shamanic themes in the play is beast-animal transformation seeking survival and recovering his human form. The beast is a symbol of transformation as he can change from his animal form to his human self at the end. Moreover, the play also portrays the idea of a spiritual journey, where characters can become something more significant than their physical selves through their transformation. Another shamanic element present in the play is the use of dreams. Beauty dreams about a horrible person, which is a premonition of his fate. It is said that they have the power to provide insights and visions that the conscious mind cannot comprehend. In the play, dreams carry a significant spiritual message that the protagonists must decipher to move forward in their journey. The forest is another symbol of shamanism present in the play. The forest represents the unknown and the mystical aspects of nature. It is a place where one can go on a spiritual journey to discover deeper meaning and connect with the spiritual world. The forest is portrayed as a place where the characters confront their inner darkness and undergo transformation. The forest is also a metaphor for Beauty's journey, where she cures and discovers her true self and understands the value of inner beauty.

Furthermore, One of the core principles of shamanism is the idea that physical transformation can lead to spiritual growth , and vice versa. This principle is evident in many traditional shamanic practices, such as the use of psychotropic plants and other substances to induce altered states of consciousness, as well as the use of ritualistic dance, drumming, and chanting to facilitate physical and spiritual transformation [10, p.2]. Hence, the core principles of shamanism is the idea that physical illness and suffering are often rooted in an imbalance in the subtle energy systems of the body. Rather than treating symptoms alone, those healers aim to address these underlying energetic imbalances through practices like soul retrieval, energy clearing, and other forms of treatment. This principle aligns with a growing acceptance within mainstream medicine of the importance of addressing emotional and spiritual factors when it comes to health. By focusing on healing root causes rather than simply addressing symptoms, healer practitioners can offer profound holistic remediation that supports patients in achieving true wellness at all levels physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Hughes' play "Beauty and the Beast" features a rich tapestry of transformations that reflect his poetic sensibility and style. Throughout the play, the characters undergo physical, emotional, and spiritual transformations that are woven together in a complex and dynamic narrative. These transformations are not merely superficial or decorative, but are integral to the themes of the play, which explore the nature of beauty, love, and

the human condition. From the gradual softening of the Beast's features to the blossoming of Floreat's inner beauty, Hughes uses transformation as a powerful tool to illuminate the deeper truths of his story and to engage his audience in a profound experience.

**FLOOR SWEEPER:**

*I don't like the looks of this at all.*

*The poor girl gets whiter and whiter.*

*Her eyes are droopy-weepy Or else dry and staring*

**(Ted Hughes , 1974, Beauty and the Beast)**

One of the first signs of this transformation is observed by the Floor Sweeper, who remarks on the changes in Floreat's appearance. The Sweeper notes that "the poor girl gets whiter and whiter," and describes her eyes as "droopy-weepy or else dry and staring." These physical symptoms are not merely cosmetic, but are indicative of deeper spiritual and emotional imbalances that Floreat must overcome in order to find her true beauty and purpose.

**FATHER:**

*Wait. Now, Floreat, my little mouse, What do you want?*

*Shall we go yachting?*

*[She shakes her head. ]*

*Fishing for bonito, in the Gulf of Mexico?*

*[She shakes her head. ]*

*Shall we go hunting gazelles, in Arabia, with cheetahs?*

*[ She shakes her head.]*

*How about some gliding in the Alps?*

*[She shakes her head. ]*

*How about some gambling? Blow in a million.*

*That should get your circulation going.*

*[She shakes her head. ]*

*How about a tour through Balochistan?*

*You could get some carpets for your room.*

**(Ted Hughes , 1974, Beauty and the Beast)**

In addition, the physical transformations observed in the play also explores the complex psychological transformations that occur within the characters. One of the most striking examples of this is seen in the character of Floreat, the young girl who is forced to bring her happiness back. At the beginning of the play, Floreat is depicted as a broken and depressed child, who has lost her interest in a life of luxury and indulgence. However, as she spends more time in the castle and begins to understand the true nature of the Beast there the Floreat undergoes a profound psychological transformation. A glimpse of her psyche is demonstrated in a scene where her father attempts to entice her with a variety of lavish activities, but she declines them all. This refusal is indicative of Floreat's growing understanding that material possessions and external pleasures are not enough to satisfy her inner longings. Through this psychological transformation, Floreat begins to recognize the importance of inner beauty and spiritual growth, setting the stage for her eventual redemption and transformation.

**YOUTH:***The bullet's broken my arm.**I am the bear. I am the monster in the night.**Give your belief time.**For fifteen years**I have been a bear in the sight of men and women.**At all other times, a flying dragon.**I would have been a bear and a flying dragon**To the end of my days**If Floreat had never said she loved me.**(Ted Hughes , 1974, Beauty and the Beast)*

Throughout this drama , the characters are subject to a wide range of transformations that reflect the play's central themes of love, beauty, and redemption. One of the most striking examples of this is seen in the character of the Youth, who is transformed by the power of love and belief. In a pivotal scene, the Youth speaks of his transformation from a mere mortal to a powerful creature of the night, first as a bear and then as a flying dragon. This transformation is not just physical, but also reflects the Youth's inner transformation as he learns to believe in himself and his own power. His belief is strengthened by Floreat's love for him, which gives him the courage to embrace his true nature and become the powerful creature he was always meant to be. Through this transformation, the Youth learns the importance of belief, love, and self-acceptance, setting the stage for the play's climactic resolution.

Thus, in "Beauty and the Beast" , From physical transformations like Floreat's gradual aging and the Youth's metamorphosis into a bear and a dragon, to psychological transformations like Floreat's growing understanding of inner beauty and the Youth's newfound belief in his own power, these transformations serve as powerful metaphors for the transformative power of love and self-acceptance. Through these transformations, Hughes invites us to reflect on the true nature of beauty and the importance of inner growth and spiritual transformation, ultimately reminding us that the most profound transformations often come from within.

Consequently, in many shamanic traditions, physical transformation is seen as a key component of spiritual growth and transformation, allowing the individual to access deeper levels of consciousness and connect more fully with the spiritual realm. This idea is reflected in Hughes' play "Beauty and the Beast," where physical transformation serves as a metaphor for spiritual growth and transformation. Through the characters' physical transformations, Hughes invites us to reflect on the transformative power and the inner transformations i.e psychological, emotional, and spiritual. The connection between physical transformation and spiritual growth/transformation is a central tenet of the neurophenomenological approach to consciousness and has been explored by scholars such as Krippner and Combs (2012). This approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of the mind and body, recognizing that changes in one can lead to changes in the other. By exploring the ways in which physical experiences and spiritual practices impact our consciousness, we can gain a deeper understanding of the human experience and the

nature of reality. This perspective offers a unique and valuable perspective on the complex relationship between our physical and spiritual selves.

### 2.3 Hughes' comparison of the poet's role to that of a shaman

Hughes' description of the creative process of shamanism drew from psychological and anthropological concepts. He concluded that the creative process is therapeutic because it promotes "individuation" (using creativity in the Jungian meaning). However, an ancient tribal healer known as a "shaman" would travel to the hereafter to rescue a sick person's soul or perform other activities in order to save his community. According to Donald Haase, "The allotted function of such a person in a community was to undertake quests in the otherworld by way of helping members of the community to solve their problems," he wrote [11, P. 596]. He believed that the poet was fulfilling a spiritual mission by inspiring others to rediscover their natural connection to the planet and themselves. David Abram (1996) has mentioned that in some cultures, the storyteller and the stories themselves are regarded to have magical properties. In order to share his thoughts and, via the magic of myth, the pieces of "truth" that he has uncovered, Hughes uses radio as his shamanic healing method. Hughes sees himself as a poetic writer on a mission and a storyteller at heart.

Further, how a fictional hero or heroine grows and changes throughout the course of a story, as described by Carl Jung Archetypes provide individuals a fuller sense of self and a greater feeling of significance and meaning in life by bringing the contents of the individual and collective unconscious into conscious consciousness. These kinds of claims allude to the dynamic Jungian archetypological sequence. This "ultimate good" is elusive and fraught with difficulty to attain, and the themes of "insignificance," fragility, abandonment, danger, etc., aim to communicate this. More precisely, the risk of having one's freshly acquired consciousness reabsorb into the instinctual mind, the unconscious, is illustrated by the threat of dragons and serpents to one's deepest self. The hero's ultimate success is when light triumphs over darkness, when consciousness finally triumphs over unconsciousness [12, P.166-7].

Hence, it is not strange to connect it to what Jung finds to be reflective about the great mythic cypher of the mandala. With its many layers and often four-fold or "squared" core, the circular mandala's complex structure is, in Jung's view, not a representation of the levels of the cosmos but rather the archetype of the self in relation to the other major archetypes. Regarding Mandala Symbolism, Jung (1950), writes:

The primary motif is the foreboding of a personality center—a sort of psychological hub—to which everything is connected, through which everything is organized, and which is also a source of energy. Similar to how every organism is compelled to take on the form that is indicative of its nature, regardless of the situation, the energy of the core point manifests as an almost overpowering want to become what one is. If I may use the phrase, this center is not perceived or thought of as the ego but rather as the self. Although the core is symbolized by the innermost point, everything that belongs to the self—the matched opposites that make up the entire personality—is contained in the perimeter. This whole includes consciousness first, followed by the

personal unconscious, and eventually a vast portion of the collective unconscious that contains archetypes that are shared by all human beings [ 13,P.357].

According to Jung, the mandala can be seen in therapeutic, religious, and artistic settings "in connection with chaotic psychological states" because it can "reduce the confusion to order" [13 ,P.360]. In the collective consciousness of people, it is itself "the archetype of wholeness" [14,P.388]. Therefore, it is accurate to say that Ted utilized both Beauty and the Bear to rescue, treat, and transform the Beast in a similar manner. Jung believed that the mandala could be used as a tool to bring order to the chaos that often accompanies psychological distress. This concept has been applied in various settings, including therapy, religion, and art. The mandala is seen as a symbol of wholeness, representing the collective consciousness of individuals. Ted's use of Beauty and the Bear to transform him is a perfect example of this concept in action. By utilizing these archetypes, Ted was able to rescue, treat, and transform the Beast into a more integrated and whole individual and to help beauty to recover her health and live in peace at the end.

**FLOOR SWEEPER:**

Now there's going to be a wedding.  
Mightn't you have known.  
Well, I'll get roast chicken.  
And there'll be chicken for the cats,  
Which have all come running back  
with their tails in the air, And for  
the dogs there'll be venison.  
Feeding, feeding, feeding,  
Sleeping, feeding, and marrying  
Trampling the floors,  
scattering the crumbs,  
Somebody has to sweep them.  
And the girl's recovered.

*(Ted Hughes , 1974, Beauty and the Beast)*

The "Beauty and the Beast" story can be seen as a metaphor for this healing power, as well as a reminder of the importance of love, compassion, and ritual in the healing process. Healing power is believed to be connected to the spiritual realm, where shamans act as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual worlds. According to Michael Harner, a leading scholar on shamanism, "Shamans are men and women who interact with spirits on behalf of their community, and their activities are aimed at curing illness, divining the future, controlling weather, and performing other tasks deemed necessary for the well-being of their people" [15,p.3]. To conclude , the concept of healing power can be seen in the "Beauty and the Beast" story as well. In the story, Beauty is able to heal the Beast's wounds and transform him back into a handsome prince through her love and kindness. This transformation can be seen as a metaphor for the healing power of love and compassion, which are also important concepts in shamanism.

### 3. Conclusion and Findings

It has been shown that this study explored Hughes' one act play "Beauty and the Beast" from the perspective of shamanism in experimental theater. "Beauty and the Beast" is a one-act play that carries many shamanic elements and embodies their symbolic meanings. The play explores themes of transformation, spirituality, and the power of nature. Hughes, through his artistic expression, conveys that the shamanic journey is one of discovery, transformation, and connection with the spiritual world. By weaving shamanic themes into the narrative, Hughes creates a powerful tale that reveals the hidden mysteries of nature and the human soul. Thus, the findings of this study lies in its contribution to the ongoing discourse on the use of shamanic and experimental techniques in contemporary theater. By analyzing "Beauty and the Beast" from the old health perspectives, the study has shown the potential of theater to connect audiences with their inner selves and the natural world. It has also emphasized the relevance of shamanic traditions in modern theater and provided valuable insights into the works of prominent theorists. This study can serve as a model for future research and experimentation and can be used as a valuable resource for scholars, practitioners, and students of theater.

To sum up , this research makes a valuable contribution to the fields of theater, literature, and cultural studies, highlighting the transformative potential of theater and the ongoing relevance of ancient shamanic traditions in modern times.

**CONFLICT OF INTERESTS****There are no conflicts of interest****References**

- [1] Willett, J. (1959). *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht: A Study from Eight Aspects*. Methuen Drama.
- [2] Walsh, R. N. (1990). *The Spirit of Shamanism*. TarcherPerigee.
- [3],[4] Mercier, P.2-3 (2016). Shamanism and psychotherapy: A review of the literature. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 70(1), 1-14. doi:10.1176/ appi. psychotherapy.2016.70.1.1.
- [5],[6] Hill, J., Pargament, K., Mahoney, A., & Totton, N. (2020). A randomized controlled trial of shamanic journeying for the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder: A pilot study. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 21(1), 67-82. doi: 10.1080/15299732.2019.1660157.
- [7] Schechner, R. (2003). *Performance theory*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- [8] Goldman, R. (1998). Drama and the representation of cultural identity. In R. Schechner & W. Appel (Eds.), *By means of performance: Intercultural studies of theater and ritual* (pp. 127-138). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Walsh, R. N., & Vaughan, F. (Eds.). (1993). *Paths beyond ego: The transpersonal vision*. Tarcher.
- Krippner, S. & Combs, A. (2012). Stanley Krippner and Allan Combs, *The Neurophenomenology of Shamanism: An essay review* ,January 2002 *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 9(3):77-82.
- [10] Walsh, R. N., & Vaughan, F. (Eds.). (1993). *Paths beyond ego: The transpersonal vision*. Tarcher.
- [11] Haase, Donald. "Fairy Tale." *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales Fairy Tales*, edited by Donald Haase, Greenwood Press, 2008, pp. 322-325.
- [12] Abram, David, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).
- [13],[14] Jung, C.G. *Alchemical Studies* (CW 13). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968. ---. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (CW 9i). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.
- [15] Harner, Michael. *The Way of the Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing*. HarperOne, 1990.
- [16] Hughes, T. (1962). *Beauty and the Beast*. Faber & Faber.
- [17] Willett, J. (1959). *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht: A Study from Eight Aspects*. Methuen Drama.
- [18] Bachelard, G. (1958). *The Poetics of Space*. Beacon Press.
- [19] Carlson, M., & Kelleher, J. (2014). *Theater: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- [20] Gobert, R. D. (1991). *The Theatre of Caryl Churchill*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- [21] Roose-Evans, J., & Harrison, M. (2012). Experimental Theater: From Stanislavsky to Peter Brook. Routledge.
- [22] Hughes, T. (1978). Beauty and the Beast: A Play. HarperCollins Publishers.
- [23] Eliade, Mircea. (1964). Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- [24] Winkelman, Michael. Shamanism: A Biopsychosocial Paradigm of Consciousness and Healing. Praeger Publishers, 2000.
- [25] Artaud, A. (1938). The Theatre and Its Double. Grove Press.