

DREAM AND LIFE IN *METAMORPHOSIS* BY BEIJING OPERA

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ABSTRACT

Theatre has historically served as a space of dreaming, a place of escape or a retreat, a reflection of reality, and simulacra of existence. From Strindberg (*The Dream Play*), to Chuang-Tze (who has building his nice dream in jail to die one night before to escape from beheading ordered by the bad emperor the next morning), to Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), to Calderón (*Life is a Dream*), to Wu Hsing-Kuo (*Metamorphosis*) to any of hundreds more, playwrights and directors have used the stage to make the ethereal, metaphysical and philosophical visible. Wu, Artistic Director and Lead Actor of *The Contemporary Legend Theatre*, theatrically adapts Franz Kafka's short fiction *Die Verwandlung* (*The Metamorphosis*) in which the protagonist wakes up from his dream to find out in shock that he becomes a big insect, and represents this story viare the atricalization. Wu's solo performance (in which he plays multiple roles) in the Edinburgh International Festival in summer 2013 received considerable critical acclaims, reviews and TV interviews. In *Metamorphosis* (National Theater, Taipei, Dec. 2013), Wustages this whole story about the metamorphosed big insect by spectacular costume, performing in Beijing Opera, to manifest the metaphysical existential pain and meaning of life. As Wu's highly praised *Kingdom of Desire* (adapted from *Macbeth*) and *Lear Is Here* (adapted from *King Lear*), we look forward to how Wu's new work *Metamorphosis* represents the desert if no compassion. Alternatively, theater makes audiences "sleepno more," to face the reality, human nature, such as selfishness and carelessness, and the existence and alienation in Existentialism.

KEYWORDS: *Metamorphosis*, Beijing Opera, *The Contemporary Legend Theatre*, Dream, Life, Existence