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# Of the people, for the people: Duong Le Quy's site-specific spectacles at the 2010 Hue International Arts Festival

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**Of the People, for the People:**

**Duong Le Quy's site-specific spectacles**

**at the 2010 Hue International Arts Festival**

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**Of the People, for the People: Duong Le Quy's site-specific spectacles at the 2010 Hue  
International Arts Festival**

**Abstract**

Duong Le Quy's *Journey to Create the Motherland*, with its 1,000 performers, offered the 2010 Hue International Arts Festival a monolithic Vietnamese spectacle, designed for performance on the walls of Hue's ancient Royal Citadel. Symbolically it linked the heartland of Vietnam's nineteenth century Nguyen dynasty with contemporary Vietnam's unification; the largest flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam formed an enormous tableau above the performers, as they drummed, sang, strode, danced and set off fireworks over *Ky Dai* – The Flag Tower of the Imperial Palace.

This paper examines the use of traditional Vietnamese theatre practices, including *Cheo*, *Tuong* and *Cai luong* in Le Quy's theatrical creations and specifically in three of his works at the 2010 Hue International Arts Festival: *Dem Hoang cung (The Royal Palace by Night)*; *Huyen thoai Song Huong (Legends of the Perfume River)*; *Hanh trinh mo coi (Journey to Create the Motherland)*.

Le Quy's skills in creating festival performances across Vietnam, and his popularity in terms of the Communist government's approval of his work, lies in his eclecticism. His western theatrical experiences (1994 – 2004) have given Le Quy few qualms about splicing traditional Vietnamese theatre and musical forms, overlaid with globalised commercial technology, with popular Vietnamese music and contemporary images. As Le Quy states 'we integrate traditional and contemporary culture in a new content and form to ensure, on the one hand, that we don't lose the beauty of tradition, but on the other hand, to make tradition take on new contemporary concepts.'

In revitalising traditional performance techniques and in his quest for a new sense of national identity imbued through cultural experiences, Le Quy's work has resonances with the political uses made of *Cheo*, *Tuong*, and *Cai luong* in the 1930s by French-educated intellectuals, disseminating notions of resistance against colonial forces to a more general public. Traditional Vietnamese theatre practices have been used for nationalistic purposes at numerous times throughout Vietnamese history due to their deeply rooted recognition as popular entertainment and resulting in the many waves of renewal that these forms have absorbed since their early beginnings.

## **Of the People, for the People: Duong le Quy's site-specific spectacles at the 2010 Hue International Arts Festival**

The Hue International Arts Festival was established in 2000 as a biennial event, not only to showcase international arts practices ranging from theatre, music, dance and circo-arts to street theatre and installation arts, but also to highlight Hue's cultural heritage to an international audience. Two centuries earlier in 1802, Hue was chosen as the site for the imperial city for the Nguyen Dynasty. The imperial palace of the Nguyen's, built by their first emperor *Gia Long*, was founded on the northern bank of the Perfume River that now runs through modern-day Hue. The Hue International Arts Festival sets its main site for its festivities within the Imperial Citadel, enclosed by a ten metre thick wall and a moat. Here the festival commands five outdoor stages as well as showcasing events on the walls of the Citadel itself<sup>i</sup>. The Festival, renown as one of the more prestigious arts festivals in Vietnam, attracts mainly Vietnamese nationals. The growth of festivals throughout Vietnam has become a burgeoning means to draw international trade, international tourism and economic vibrancy. As Chris Gibson, Professor of Human Geography and researcher of the socio-economic impacts of festivals on regional Australian centres states,

Festivals have emerged as a reflection of the transformation of places, their populations and economic bases, whilst contributing to such demographic changes, building reputations for certain 'festival towns'... and attracting out of town audiences...<sup>ii</sup>

This paper investigates three of the major popular theatrical events staged at the 2010 Hue international Arts Festival, all of which were directed by Duong Le Quy. Two of the events, *Dem Hoang cung (The Royal Palace by Night)* and *Huyen thoai Song Huong (Legends of the Perfume River)* have been staged at previous Hue International Arts festivals and have now been incorporated into the biennial program as continuing popular highlights of the festival. The third theatrical event, *Hanh trinh mo coi (Journey to Create the Motherland)* was produced and staged in the 2010 festival for the first time. The aim of this analysis integrates an approach to these site-specific works through not only notions of 'place' but also of cultural memory, heritage tourism and constructs of nationalism, in order to uncover the layered negotiations that contribute to the popularity of these events.

### **Site-based Festival Performance**

Much has been written of the multi-facetted possible readings offered by site-based performances,<sup>iii</sup> due to their embedding in landscapes already redolent with social, political, historical and cultural memories. As Marvin Carlson has noted,

The physical surroundings of performance never act as a totally neutral filter or frame. They are themselves always culturally encoded, and have always, sometimes blatantly, sometimes subtly, contributed to the reception of the performance.<sup>iv</sup>

Although 'place', especially in site-specific theatre is able to 'speak louder than the human mediator or actor who enters place',<sup>v</sup> it is still, whilst a dominating feature of the event, always present in relation to the audiences' unique set of perceptions and requires that any interpretation of a site-based event remains provisional and incomplete. Julian Meyrick highlights the phenomenological aspect of any theatrical space when noting that the meaning of the theatrical event is experienced through the senses, 'based on the projective reality of the perceiving subject'.<sup>vi</sup> This phenomenological understanding of the intersecting relationship between the setting, the performers and any viewer underscores the individuality of the interpretation of these festival events, for as Joanne Tompkins points out the discourses or issues of cultural memory and cultural nationalism associated with particular spaces may be interacting with any performing bodies that are present.<sup>vii</sup> Site-based performance by its accessibility is always open to individual understandings.

To begin this paper, therefore, I need to put myself into the picture as the individual reader of the three performances under discussion. Taking this partly phenomenological approach, I acknowledge that unlike the majority of the audience at the three 2010 Hue International Arts Festival events I was a foreigner and that I came with my own historical perspectives about Vietnamese history, shaped by Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war of 1962-1975. As well, a major contributor to my readings of the three events has been the presence of their director, Duong Le Quy, with whom I have a theatrical history.

### **Duong Le Quy**

Duong Le Quy, although born in Hanoi (1968) and a graduate of the Hanoi Institute in Theatre and Cinema (1990), has spent fifteen years working internationally, much of that time in Australian theatre. He came to Australia in 1994 and was granted Australian citizenship as a writer and director under the Special Skilled Class Category in 1999.<sup>viii</sup> He has received a series of Australian awards for writing. In 1997 he gained the New South Wales Writer's Fellowship, in 1999 The Australia Council's Literature Fellowship and in 2001 a Churchill Fellowship. He graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts in Sydney with a Diploma in Directing in 1998. He was the first Vietnamese-born playwright to enter the mainstream Australian theatre, with his best known work being his post Vietnam-war play, *Meat Party* (2000). Michael Kantor, director of the play's first production at

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Melbourne's Playbox Theatre, calls *Meat Party* 'a lament for the dead'.<sup>ix</sup> The narrative follows an Australian girl who travels to Vietnam in search of evidence of her lost father, presumed dead during the Vietnam war, however the play's strength relies more on its poetic power, with the souls of the dead from both sides of the war singing throughout the dramatic action. *Meat Party* is one of Le Quy's plays in his trilogy *First Play Collection*,<sup>x</sup> all of which deal with the social and personal adjustment of modern Vietnamese following the past turmoils of both French colonisation and the destruction of what Vietnamese term the American War 1962-1975. Of the three plays in this trilogy, *Market of Lives* was developed as well as produced for performance by the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong and was staged at both Theatre South in Wollongong and Belvoir St Theatre in Sydney, which accounts for my own involvement in Le Quy's works.

In 2001 Le Quy entered a new theatrical phase, using his Churchill Fellowship to return to Vietnam to study classical Vietnamese performance forms. In November 1999 in my own meetings with Vietnamese cultural ambassadors, politicians and theatre directors, whilst on one of Le Quy's Vietnamese Australian Cultural Exchange Programs (VACEP) I heard their concerns for a young generation of Vietnamese who were no longer interested in the traditional theatrical forms. It was then that I first witnessed performances in *Tuong*, *Cheo* and *Cai luong*. With the influx of popular contemporary forms of music and film the performance traditions of the past were being swept aside in a race towards modernity. Le Quy intuitively utilised this cultural concern of the Vietnamese Communist Party on his permanent return to Vietnam in 2005 creating a new eclectic approach to his theatrical productions. Whether site-based or in theatres, he juxtaposed recognisably traditional performance forms with a more western epic approach to create popular theatre immersed in high tech lighting and sound. His production of *Secret Dreams of Teu and Kangaroo*,<sup>xi</sup> in 2005, combined Vietnamese traditional water puppetry with installation art and modern dance and was played at outdoor water puppetry venues and festivals. The narrative involves a kangaroo who visits his Vietnamese friend Tue, who suffers from nightmares about war. *Myth of the Living*<sup>xii</sup> or *Huyen Thoai Cuoc Song* stirred controversy in Ho Chi Minh City in 2005 with Le Quy's experimental form of mixing traditional Vietnamese dance techniques and traditional drumming with large scale A/V projection, experimental costumes, makeup and physically intimate movement styles. *Myth of the Living* follows the human struggle to create values in a rapidly changing world. Before launching himself into becoming the 'king of festivals' within Vietnam, Duong le Quy had already established his major artistic themes; 'the philosophic premise [that] life is a myth'<sup>xiii</sup>; the intermeshing of traditional and contemporary theatrical forms as an expression of the harmonizing of difference; and the reinforcing of the values of peace and the freedom from constricting ideologies. The move into

popular large-scale festival works, which had begun with his 'Kangaroo' series, has enabled Le Quy to extend his own theatrical visions to his broadest audience.

### ***Tuong and Cheo***

In considering Le Quy's use of Vietnamese traditional performance forms it is worth drawing attention to the fundamentally site-based and popular nature of both *Tuong* and *Cheo*, two of the earliest theatrical styles to emerge in Vietnamese cultural history.<sup>xiv</sup> *Cheo* can be traced back to its emergence in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as a combination of mimicry and song depicting daily rural life through comedy and satire. Impromptu performances mainly occurred at festivals, where a performance area was created in front of any communal house through setting out a mat with an audience seated on three sides with the theatrical props on the fourth. The stage in *Cheo* is basically bare with the performers creating the narratives through dance, song and gesture. The skill in *Cheo* lies in improvisation. Old stories are told in numerous ways, the 'clown' character is given an unlicensed freedom and as well there is an 'off-stage' voice, usually an actor seated in the audience who also contributes.<sup>xv</sup> The audience is encouraged to participate as well. In comparison *Tuong* emerged through the courts of the Nguyen dynasty as classical opera, similar in some respects to Chinese opera. From the mid 1600s plays with varying numbers of acts were written addressing the problems of royalty and the loyalty of subjects. *Tuong* troupes were established to tour provinces and the plays could be performed in any village or in the open countryside. The writers of *Tuong* were regarded as poet-playwrights distilling epic dramas through poetic language, songs and particularized movement sequences. *Tuong* narratives express thoughts, feelings and emotions with strict principles applied to this expression. Both *Cheo* and *Tuong* survived as well-recognised popular theatre forms into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even throughout the wars with the French and Americans. Dinh Quang<sup>xvi</sup> notes that during these times the travelling troupes performed in remote mountain areas with small populations; they performed even in battle trenches and scattered when enemy planes flew over.

The impacts of colonisation on traditional Vietnamese theatre included the movement of *Cheo* and *Tuong* into city centres. *Cheo*'s traditional use of the three-sided stage fitted with European style stages and as western education spread *Cheo* became westernised, moving into theatres with the addition of scenery, spoken drama, or new songs.<sup>xvii</sup> *Tuong* on the other hand, through the influence of French modern theatre, evolved into a new form, *Cai luong* or 'renovated opera'.<sup>xviii</sup> *Cai luong* utilises Western instruments whilst the singing is of Vietnamese folk songs. It incorporates both the traditional Vietnamese lyrical forms of narrative as well as more western representational forms. These divergences are united through the music of *Cai luong*.

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From the 1920s until the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam which lasted from 1954 until 1962, anti-French resistance movements garnered the popularity of the traditional Vietnamese theatre to instil nationalistic fervour into the general populace. Noelle Janeczewska notes that theatre companies touring from France influenced the Vietnamese theatrical circles of the early twentieth century.<sup>xix</sup> Nationalistic themes emerged in Vietnamese traditional forms even before 1920. *Cheo* artists were gathered to revive traditional forms and newly created *Cheo* plays were written with modern revolutionary themes. As well after the August Revolution in 1945, *Tuong* plays with particular references to Vietnamese struggles against insurgent foreign forces were revived as a means of anti-French propaganda.<sup>xx</sup>

Le Quy's directed theatrical events at the 2010 Hue International Arts Festival become interesting to consider with this background of the political use of culturally popular and recognisably site-based traditional Vietnamese theatrical forms.

#### **Legends of the Perfume River (*Huyen Thoai Song Huong*)**

First staged at the 2008 Hue International Arts Festival, *Legends of the Perfume River* is a romantic and leisurely cruise in dragon boats for 5km down the Perfume River, from beyond the *Hon Chen* temple to *Nghinh Luong* Pavilion in the centre of Hue.<sup>xxi</sup> Tourists board the fleet of dragon boats, with dragon dancers and drummers performing outside the temple precincts at the boat mooring. Onboard they can eat and drink, and as the late afternoon turns to sunset and then darkness, they are witness to a set of happenings performed on the banks of the river, in boats on the river and finally at a set stage at *Nghinh Luong* Pavilion. Le Quy speaks lyrically about the program,

The humans on the earth cannot live without rivers. The river is not only a life source for people it is also a source of emotion. Perfume River really is a legend as it is not only the source for poetry, music, paintings, religions and ritual spirit, it sticks closely to the life of many ordinary people who earn a living on the river. The Perfume River is a cradle and life source that helps Hue residents to move forward to their future.<sup>xxii</sup>

The boats stop one by one at the *Hon Chen* temple on the opposite side of the river to the boat ramps. Here a scene of a royal procession coming down to meet the boats with maids who offer fortune cards to the travellers onboard sets the historical tone of the journey. *Gia Long's* reign as Emperor is a symbol of unification, which pervades not only this event but the whole of the Hue Festival. Originally called *Nguyen Anh*, *Gia Long* changed his name in 1802 when he established his Citadel, with *Gia* representing the old name for Saigon and *Long* representing half of *Thong Long*, the



previous name of Hanoi. This is the period in which the name Vietnam emerged to represent the whole country. The boats travel on past the *Van Nien* Water Plant with a royal musical band playing there. Fishing boats on the river become part of the action with nets being cast and villagers in the boats singing. The dragon boats pass an open field where a set of historically robed warriors hold nine large torches, symbolising the nine generations of the *Nguyen* dynasty as well as *Thien-dia-Truc* –heaven and earth's axis. At *Xuoc Vu* bridge lotus-shaped lanterns are dropped from the dragon boats into the river and float luminously under the darkening sky. Each represents a prayer. The boats stop once more at the *Thien Mu* pagoda. This is the royal mausoleum of *Tu Doc*, the fourth *Nguyen* emperor. The pagoda itself is lit and monks hold lanterns spelling out the name *Thien Mu* in Chinese characters. Strangely a fairy appears and then disappears reminding those in the know of the old myth of the pagoda's auspicious foretelling by the fairy's appearance. At *Bach Ho* bridge fireworks are lit, then fireworks are set off from the dragon boats themselves as they assemble together around the *Nghihn Luong* Pavilion. Seven huge lotus flower installations in the centre of the River and one of the highlights of the Festival are alight as well. The performances at the Pavilion are of poetry and traditional dancing, costumed dragon, unicorn, and lions dancers, and small boats arriving with royal visitors alighting and embarking. The event is a mesmerising journey, evoking not only a presence of the past but also the magical and mythical feel of the river itself. *Nguyen Trong Tao*, one of Hue's famed poets speaks of the Perfume River with these sentiments, 'The Perfume River, the river of wine that makes all drunk who drink from it'.<sup>xxiii</sup>

### **The Royal Palace by Night** (*Dem Hoang cung*)

Similar to *Legends of the Perfume River*, *The Royal Palace by Night* is another highly commercialised, tourism-driven event at the Hue Festival. Duong Le Quy devised this program, set in the grounds of the interior section of the Citadel, the royal Palace and its grounds, for the 2006 Hue Festival and it has played biennially to massive crowds since then. The event offers two differing levels of participation; patrons can take part in a 'royal banquet' seated before the main stage and are waited on throughout the evening, whilst another audience mills about the royal Palace, viewing the staged performances and processions from various vantage points. The popularity of the evening rests on the fascination with the past's extravagance, the *Nguyen*'s being Vietnam's last royal family. The former South Vietnam's Republic during the separation of north and south had little truck with historical and heritage sites. Only now as Vietnam builds its economy are resources available to restore important heritage sites with programs of restoration backed by foreign investment and expertise being visibly present at the many mausoleums and temples about Hue that I visited whilst there. *The Royal Palace by Night* struck me as a pact with the audience that austere times were over,

and that Vietnam could return to its former glories. Numerous traditional arts were on show to reinforce this perception. The audience first gathers in the Courtyard of the Palace, becoming aware that the lighting consists of traditional Hue lanterns. *The Royal Palace by Night* for the 2010 Festival was lit by 1,000 of these adding a shadowy glow over the whole events. The program begins when the audience are allowed to pass through the *Ngo Mon* gate to enter *Da Noi*, the living quarters of the Nguyen royal family. There are sculptured gardens, lotus ponds, large and sparsely furnished rooms, pillared entrances, and enamelled gates. Performers dressed as guards, as serving maids and waiters, or as members of the Palace, preoccupied with their evening's games, were stationed at various places as the audience traversed the interior of the Palace's grounds. At one point the audience passes a row of young women, the mistresses of the king, waiting to be chosen as his companion for the evening. Part of the royal family is already seated at the main stage enjoying a musical performance, with traditional instruments from the nineteenth century. As the guests are seated at the banquet tables and as the first course is served, a procession begins carrying the most important members of the royal family to their places. The main stage lights up for a performance of *Tuong*. The singing is highly reminiscent of Chinese opera but the moves and masks are distinctive. There are royal dances (Luc Cung Hoa Dang), royal singing (Ca Hue) and royal court music (Nha Nhac). There is a surfeit of sensation with music, fireworks, amazingly coloured and beautifully styled costumes, lighting, and the smells of incense and food. The courses of food served continue and drinks are available as the evening winds on leaving no doubt a lasting impression of the sumptuousness of Hue's cultural heritage.

### **Journey to Create the Motherland (Hanh trinh moi coi)**

Duong Le Quy's magnum opus for the 2010 Hue International Arts Festival is without doubt his production of *Journey To Create The Motherland*.<sup>xxiv</sup> Staged by Le Quy's company in association with the Hue Monuments Conservation Centre, the entire work is a tribute to *Thang Long*, the original Hanoi, which in 2010 turned 1,000. This epic presentation with over 1,000 performers is staged at the Flag Tower-*Cot Co*, an impressive monument built into the exterior walls of the Citadel. From the start to the finish of this gargantuan performance the walls of the Flag Tower, topped by the largest Vietnamese flag in the country, are ablaze with lights, with throngs of performers stretching as far as the eye can see. They are at one time historical troops, at another time they are guards or drummers, and then as the action moves forward historically they become the contemporary citizens of modern Vietnam. At the top of the Flag Tower, beneath the flag, a huge screen reflects images of fire and fireworks when at dramatic moments these are set alight. A screen in the centre of the action has the words *Hanh Trinh Moi Coi* on it, which from publicity blurbs has been variously translated as

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*Itinerary to Develop The Country, The Process of Founding the Country, Founding The Nation and Journey To Create The Motherland.* Whichever translation, the production consists of a series of epic scenes, each outlining a vital moment in the making of modern unified Vietnam. Le Quy utilises the internal moat around the Citadel, with a landing and stage created beneath the Flag Tower. Boats with villagers drift down the moat whilst at other times the moat is filled with explorers or with troops in boats being taken to a new settlement. The water motif is a vital aspect of the action with the moat becoming a surprise setting for a comic interlude of water puppetry, the various puppet characters emerging from beneath the stage set above the water. Characters for each scene either march over the walls and down to the stage or arrive via boats and disembark to greet one another. The audience is seated on the opposite side of the moat where chairs are set for the important audience, the pavilion of *Phu Van Lau* is occupied by Communist officials and the rest of the viewers hug the banks of the moat up and down opposite the area of action.

The first scene is set in 1306 and celebrates the royal wedding between Princess *Huyen Tra*, the daughter of one of the then reigning Tran kings of the Tran dynasty. Each tier of the Flag Tower is alive with young women romantically dancing with their silk scarves. The marriage is to a king of the Champa kingdom, a kingdom to the south, and results in the Tran dynasty gaining two new regions of land around the Hue area. Le Quy's depiction places the Champa king as one of the comic *Cheo* characters, whilst the Tran clan are depicted as more traditional contemporary Vietnamese, the princess looking strikingly beautiful in her *ao dai*. Each of the scenes has distinctive music and each involves companies of dancers whose moves stylistically represent the action. As each scene moves closer towards modernity so the music moves historically as well ending in modern Vietnamese music for the final scene. The second scene is set in 1558, during a period of instability between the Le and Mac lords of the northern provinces. Lord *Nguyen Hoang* travels south exploring and setting up strong trading posts along the southern coast-line. Scenes of villagers sifting rice, and boats with villagers float past the audience. *Nguyen Hoan* still pays homage to the northern leaders. However in the following scene set in 1635, Lord *Nguyen Phuc Nguyen*, the sixth son of *Nguyen Hoang*, moves all his followers by boats to *Kim Long* Village on the Perfume River. The moat is utilised to the full with a long parade of boats disembarking the new settlers. *Nguyen Phuc Nguyen* separates himself from the northern provinces at this point and the country becomes divided into north and south. The fourth scene, set in 1698, depicts *Lord Nguyen Phuc Chu* ordering the building of a new centre and city in the south, Saigon. Finally the fifth scene takes place in 1802 with the Emperor *Gia Long* inspecting the Perfume River and choosing the site for Hue as his capital city. He also chooses the name Vietnam for the whole country. This is a vision of unification as indicated by the name *Gia Long* and his power is shown to extend to the whole country. This historical epic traces a former period of

division, struggle and then unification for Vietnam and stands as a strong metaphor for the unification that has only recently occurred (since 1975) for Vietnam today. In the final scene Le Quy allows the metaphor to materialise. His huge Flag Tower becomes alight with contemporary figures, modern music and with modern military waving Vietnamese flags. The nationalistic fervour reaches its peak at this climax and the Flag Tower becomes alight with fireworks and amazing coloured projections of light.

### **'Place-Making'**

From my viewings of these extraordinary performances I take away some further thoughts about the processes of site-specific theatre. Whilst the former two site-specific events, *Legends of the Perfume River* and the *Royal Palace by Night* offer audiences locally-placed but more broadly and tourism-led experiences (after all many of our own Australian capital cities offer tourist trips on their rivers or harbour and historical enactments in heritage sites), *The Journey To The Motherland* was a performance of a different nature. Clearly political it is unknown to me how it was received by the majority of festival goers. The Utube versions of it have received to date 487 hits with only one response and that was a dislike rather than a like. However the participation of so many involved may in itself offer multiple ways in which the audience was implicated in the action. Le Quy garnered a wealth of talented artists to assist in his production; 'choreographers Truong Van Hai, Bach Hac, Thu Huong Mai Trung, musician Dai Dung, Dao Tan tuong troupe and the martial art-music troupe of Quang Trung museum from the central province of Binh Dinh'<sup>xxv</sup> all worked on his program. As well the Hue Royal Art Theatre encouraged 1000 professional and amateur artists to perform. The size of these performances and the high-tech nature of them are means that Le Quy is utilising to press his vision home.

At each of the above described events it was apparent to me that processes of identity formation were taking place. Hetherington states that, 'certain spaces act as sites for the performance of identity'.<sup>xxvi</sup> Hue, with its cultural heritage apparent for all to see in the Citadel and in the Royal Palace within it, has become for Le Quy a site to enact performances of identity-making for his own vision of Vietnam. Intermingling traditional musical and performance forms and in effect popularising them anew with their placement within contemporary tourist attractions and high-tech led shows has enabled Le Quy to reinstate in his cultural vision of the new Vietnam what he has seen as missing through his Western sojourns in the heterogeneity of western capitalist culture. Whilst in the early years of colonisation by the French, Vietnamese intellectuals used Cheo and *Tuong* to resist cultural colonisation, Duong is resisting the inexorable move to the monoculture of global capitalism, holding on to a Vietnam with a cultural difference. Hetherington argues further that 'identity spaces as well

as being places for change or resistance are also, therefore, spaces that produce alternate social orderings'.<sup>xxvii</sup> In Le Quy's words 'we integrate traditional and contemporary culture in a new content and form to ensure, on the one hand, that we don't lose the beauty of tradition, but on the other hand, to make tradition take on new contemporary concepts.'<sup>xxviii</sup> My suggestion is that his new contemporary concepts are endeavours for a socialism more based on harmony than on ideology.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.activetravelvietnam.com/city/hue.html>

(Accessed 15 June 2011)

<sup>ii</sup> Chris Gibson, 'Music Festivals: Transformation in Non-metropolitan Places, and in Creative Work', *Media International Australia, Incorporating Cultural Policy* 123(2007):65-81.

<sup>iii</sup> See Gay McAuley, 'Introduction', *About Performance: Local Acts: Site-Specific Performance Practice 7* (2007); Michael Cohen, 'Tracing New Absence: Events for Place-Making and Place-Faking', *About Performance: Local Acts: Site-Specific Performance Practice 7* (2007); Simon Persighetti, 'Wrights and Sites and Other Regions', *Studies in Theatre and Performance Supplement 5: Site-Specific The Quay Thing Documented* (2000); Mike Pearson, 'Special Worlds, Secret Maps: A Poetics of Performance' in Anna Marie Taylor ed, *Staging Wales: Welsh Theatre 1979-1997* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997).

<sup>iv</sup> Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (New York: Cornell UP, 1989)206.

<sup>v</sup> Persighetti 9.

<sup>vi</sup> Julian Meyrick, 'Filthy Spaces: The Investment of Non-Theatre Venues in Melbourne 1990-95' *Body Show/s: Australian Viewings of Live Performance* ed. Peta Tait (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000):155

<sup>vii</sup> Joanne Tompkins, *Unsettling Space: Contestations in Contemporary Australian Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 15.

<sup>viii</sup> Biographical information about Duong le Quy has been drawn from his play *Meat Party* (Sydney: Currency Press, 2000); also Le Quy Duong <http://lequyduong.com/web/> (Accessed 20 June 2011); Australian Literary database <http://www.austlit.edu.au/run?ex=ShowAgent&agentId=A0P2> (Accessed 20 June 2011).

<sup>ix</sup> *Meat Party* iii.

<sup>x</sup> Duong Le Quy, *First Play Collection: Market of Lives, Meat Party, Graveyard for the Living* (Sydney: Currency Press, 2002).

<sup>xi</sup> Le Quy Duong <http://lequyduong.com/web/> (Accessed 20 June 2011).

<sup>xii</sup> *ibid*

<sup>xiii</sup> 'Vietnam's Annual Hue Festival Draws to a Close', (*Intellasia/ New Tang Dynasty Television*, 16 June 2010)-  
[http://64.64.19.250/news/articles/society/111297016\\_printer.shtml](http://64.64.19.250/news/articles/society/111297016_printer.shtml) (Accessed 20 June 2011).

<sup>xiv</sup> See Dinh Quang et al, *Vietnamese Theatre* (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 1999); *Vietnamese Studies: Special Edition: Vietnamese Theatre and Other Theatres of Asia*, 130 (4, 1998).

<sup>xv</sup> Noelle Janeczewska, 'They're dancing the Lambada in Hanoi', *Theatre in Southeast Asia: Australasian Drama Studies*, 25 (October, 1994):158

<sup>xvi</sup> Dinh Quang et al 7-8.

<sup>xvii</sup> Tran Bang, 'Modern Cheo in Vietnam', *Vietnamese Studies: Special Edition: Vietnamese Theatre and Other Theatres of Asia*, 130 (4, 1998):19-24.

<sup>xviii</sup> Le Duy Hanh, 'Cai luong: its national identity and modernization', *Vietnamese Studies: Special Edition: Vietnamese Theatre and Other Theatres of Asia*, 130 (4, 1998):32-35.

<sup>xix</sup> Noelle Janeczewska 153

<sup>xx</sup> Hoang Chau Ky, 'Classical Opera Hat boi', *Vietnamese Studies: Special Edition: Vietnamese Theatre and Other Theatres of Asia*, 130 (4, 1998):28.

<sup>xxi</sup> Details of the *Legends of The Perfume River* event are taken not only from my personal notes from the experience but also from the program.

<sup>xxii</sup> 'Vietnam's Annual Hue Festival Draws to a Close'

<sup>xxiii</sup> Thu Phong, 'Creating The Motherland; a Thousand Year Journey', *Heritage Fashion* (Hanoi, Jun-July, 2010):46.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Details of the scenes in *Journey To Create The Motherland* are taken not only from my personal notes of the experience but also from Thu Phong, 'Creating The Motherland; a Thousand Year Journey', *Heritage Fashion* (Hanoi, Jun-July, 2010):46-47.

<sup>xxv</sup> 'Famous Director To Chair Hue Festival's Key'

<http://www.tuanlinhtravel.com/Vietnam/newsdetail/7649/Famous-director-to-chair-Hue-Festival%E2%80%99s-key-event.htm> (Accessed 24 June 2011).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Kevin Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics* (London: Sage, 1998):105

<sup>xxvii</sup> Hetherington 18.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Le Quy pers. com. (23 January 2011).