

## *About Some of Percival's Published Plays*

*The Kingdom of Man – a Legend of Play.* That is the name of the drama trilogy by Percival, a trilogy that consists of the plays *The Night of the Statues*, *The Kingdom of Man*, and *The Last Night of the Body*. That Artaud functions as a spiritual guide for Percival seems evident to me, but whereas the work of the first-mentioned (Artaud) stands out as enigmatic and many-sided to the point of splitting, Percival's creativity can be characterized as homogeneity. In Percival's art the idea of synthesis is a central one, and in accordance with this he is active as an artist of wholeness.

*The Last Night of the Statues* is enacted in present time and on an ordinary level, then, gradually, the suspense rises and the absurd takes over. There are scenes in the play that are suggestive of the chamber pieces by Strindberg, but Percival's characters are not as psychologically complex as the Strindbergian ones. Instead they have an emblematic, allegorical function ...

... After having treated the outsider's problem and the function of art in society within this realistic framework, Percival carries the action on to a higher level where past and future meet.

There is a certain timeless greatness in *The Kingdom of Man* as well as in the *Last Night of the Body*. Man facing the mystery of life and the universe is in fact a motif that Percival can shape into a form that is poetry. It is his ability to merge poetry and drama that is his greatest asset.

*The Kingdom of Man* is an attempt to describe the history of humanity. The play is enacted between Alfa and Omega – the point of infinity. In this field of infinity humanity is present and can only be initiated through its own actions. Out of the ruins a new hope will be born, this is one of the author's messages.

*The Last Night of the Body* is a ritual drama that avakes an association of the vegetation myths in Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. *The Kingdom of Man*, on the contrary, is more like a medieval morality play, at least as far as its structural outlines are concerned.

Percival has the intention of initiating his audience – creating a theatre of initiation. He says: "Here it is a question of a dramatic art which is not limited to *one* time experience but includes both the future and the past. Yes, at the best, it is a theatre that breaks the framework of privacy so that great vistas can enter. All are taking part. Everyone ought to feel like a participant."

If you have a good faculty for visualizing, the drama trilogy is a very interesting experience. The stage directions are extensive and are clearly indicating Percival's originality as a dramatist. I really hope that someone will have the courage to stage *The Kingdom of Man* on a Swedish stage. Then only the physical side of the trilogy will be apparent. Percival has, like Antonin Artaud, realized the importance of the body in the art of drama. Above all, this is a kind of theatre that approaches the original drama and its function.

*The Kingdom of Man – a Legend of Play* is an important work of art, an essential dramatic creation that settles accounts with the destructive forces that have turned a great part of humanity into slaves and marionettes ...

Percival is the outsider who has transformed himself into an insider (an initiate), he is outside society but participating in the cosmos. To him the order of society can only signify chaos. This he wants to transform into cosmos.

Extracts from a review by Clemens Altgård  
(well-known poet and literary critic in Sweden)

*P.S.* – A somewhat abridged version of the play *Kingdom of Man* was produced by the theatre group Thalias barn (The Children of Thalia) at Hällefors, Sweden, in April 2005.