



Mr Price, or Tropical Madness and Metaphysics of a Two- Headed Calf (Routledge Harwood Polish and East European Theatre Archive)

Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz

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The Polish playwright and artist Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, known as Witkacy, is now recognized as Poland's leading theatrical innovator of the interwar years and one of the outstanding creative personalities of the European avant-garde. This volume contains two of Witkacy's "tropical" plays inspired by the playwright's trip to Ceylon and Australia in 1914 with his close friend, the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski.

Mr. Price, or Tropical Madness is a drama of heightened passion and greed among British colonists in Rangoon who seem to have stepped out of Joseph Conrad's tales of the South Seas.

Metaphysics of a Two-headed Calf, set in New Guinea and Australia, pits savage European imperialists against a native tribal Australia and pits savage European imperialists against a native tribal chieftain whose fetish of a great golden frog offers greater insight into the mystery of existence than the Westerners' shallow rationalism.

Both plays puncture the white rulers' poses of superiority and parody their images of the tropical Other. Also included in the volume are Witkacy's Foreword to *Metaphysics of a Two-Headed Calf* in which the playwright defends his concept of theatre as an autonomous art with a scenic language of its own and an appendix containing a documentary itinerary of Witkacy's journey to Ceylon.

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