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**STUDII TEORETICE**

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**THEORETISCHE STUDIEN**

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**THEORETICAL STUDIES**

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## **1.1.**

**Teatrul și politica puterii suverane**

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**Theater und Machtpolitik**

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**Theatre and Superpower Politics**



# Zivilcourage und Zensur

VERENA KOCH

(„Anton Bruckner“ Privatuniversität Linz)

## Abstract

This paper is related to my job with my search to find workable strategies for my students to be inspired and encouraged. In this case it is the surviving of moral courage in times of de-democratization and sneaking secret censorship. By giving examples through history I try to illustrate my own position towards civil courage in society and especially in theatre.

## Keywords:

hidden and open censorship; civil courage in society and theatre; strategies for self-responsible studies; autonomous thinking.

## Rezumat

Prezentul studiu este în strânsă legătura cu profesia și cu căutarea mea de-a găsi strategii potrivite pentru a-i inspira și încuraja pe studenții mei. În acest caz este vorba despre supraviețuirea curajului civil într-o perioadă de democratizare și cenzură secretă subversivă. Aducând exemple din istorie voi încerca să ilustrez propria mea poziție față de curajul civil în societate și în special în teatru.

## Cuvinte cheie:

cenzură ascunsă și deschisă; curaj civil în societate și în teatru; strategii pentru studii autoresponsabile; gândire autonomă.

*Du willst sagen (oder schreiben), was du zu sagen (oder zu schreiben) hast und was dir wahr zu sein scheint. Doch dann kommt eine Faust, die dir den Mund verschließt und dich verstummen lässt: Du schweigst, denn du beugst dich der Zensur.*

*Du würdest gern sagen (oder schreiben), was du zu sagen (schreiben) hättest und was dir wahr zu sein scheint. Doch dann kommt eine Faust, die dir droht – du kennst sie, früher schon hatte sie dich zum Schweigen gebracht, dir früher schon gedroht: und du schweigst, denn du übst Selbstzensur.*

*Irgendwann, vor langer Zeit, wolltest du einmal etwas sagen (oder schreiben), aber eine Faust hatte deinen Mund verschlossen, dir gedroht, und nun bist du (ziemlich) müde geworden. Dir scheint, als wolltest du etwas sagen... eigentlich hast du gar nichts mehr zu sagen... etwas im Zusammenhang mit der Wahrheit... doch wer kennt schon die Wahrheit...? ... Du fährst fort, zu sprechen (zu schreiben), doch dann empfindest du die Notwendigkeit, dir einzureden, daß du die Wahrheit sagst; es gelingt dir schließlich, dich selbst zu überzeugen, du glaubst es sogar – so wie du nun allmählich auch zu glauben anfängst, daß die Faust nie eine Drohung war, sondern bloß eine freundlich und voller Ermutigung wirkende Hand.<sup>1</sup>*

Das ist eine rumänische literarische Beschreibung des Phänomens Zensur, bei der ich es belassen möchte, denn ich würde auch keinem französischen Sternekoch einen *cock au vin* zubereiten. Ich möchte viel lieber darüber nachdenken, wo sich die immer gegenwärtige Zensur in der Liberalität unserer heutigen Gesellschaft versteckt und wie man junge Menschen, angehende darstellende Künstler zu Zivilcourage und einer politischen Haltung anregen kann und warum es mir wichtig scheint, die Heterogenität von Meinungen ernst zu nehmen und auszuhalten.

Die Geschichte der Theaterzensur ist so alt wie das Theater. Oder so alt wie menschliches Machtbewusstsein. Wer darf welchen Gott an die Höhlenwand malen? Plato berichtet über und befürwortet bereits die amtliche Prüfung: der dargestellte Mythos verkennt ihm zu sehr die Vollkommenheit des Göttlichen. So wurden schon damals Texte censiert und Schauspieler, die vom Text abweichen, bestraft.

Die Zensur pflegt seit der Entstehung der Schrift den sogenannten Bildungskanon, in dem wir ethnozentrisch das *non plus ultra* zu sehen glauben: die Tradition, den Fortbestand unserer kulturellen Heimat. Indem die Zensur das Gebiet absteckt, welches tradiert werden soll, wie ein Gartenzaun das fruchtbare Beet, bewahrt sie den Kanon natürlich auch vor dem vielstimmigen Umfeld, dem Wandel, der Erneuerung.

Huxley hat in *Schöne Neue Welt* beschrieben wie es funktioniert: „*Neue Theorie der Biologie*“ hiess die Abhandlung, die Mustafa Mannesman soeben zuende gelesen hatte; mit nachdenklich gerunzelter Stirn saß er eine Weile, dann nahm er die Feder und schrieb schräg auf das Titelblatt: [...] originell und höchst begabt,

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<sup>1</sup> Goma, Paul: *Zensur, Selbstzensur, Para-Literatur. Der kurze Weg von der Wahrheit zur Lüge*, in: DIE ZEIT, Nr. 39 /1972.

aber ketzerisch, gefährlich und im Keime umstürzlerisch. Zur Veröffentlichung nicht geeignet [...] es war ein Meisterwerk [...] aber solche Gedanken führten unschwer dazu [...] den Sinn des Daseins nicht in der Erhaltung des Wohlbefindens zu sehen, sondern etwa in der Vertiefung und Verfeinerung der Erkenntnis, der Vermehrung des Wissens [...] unter den derzeitigen Verhältnissen unzulässig.”<sup>2</sup>

Ich stelle mir Zensoren, um im Bild zu bleiben, wie die Zollbeamten der Überlieferung vor. Sie bestimmen das Tabu. Und nun kommen wir zur ureigensten Aufgabe, die das Theater hat, nämlich das Tabu zu brechen!

In den europäischen Grundformen der Mysterienspiele lag die Zensur klarerweise bei den kirchlichen Institutionen. Mit der Eroberung der Marktplätze wurden dann die staatlichen Kontrollfunktionen mobilisiert. Im Theater der Höfe hat der Monarch bestimmt, was an seinem Hof gespielt wurde. Wenn er die Vorstellung verließ, war sie damit beendet.

Hierarchie und das implizite Privilegienwesen des Theaters haben natürlich auch immer schon die Regulierung über die interne Struktur ermöglicht. Dem Direktor / Intendanten oblag die Haftung.

### **Französische Revolution und Aufklärung**

Das europäische Theater erlebte eine Transformation durch die Französische Revolution und die Aufklärung. Die Zensur des Adels bestand auch in der Erhaltung eines weitgehenden Analphabetismus, der verhinderte, dass sich die neuen Ideen und Denkanstöße der Aufklärung durchsetzen konnten.

Die allmähliche Ablehnung ausschließlich höfischer Dichtung, die Entstehung von Lesezirkeln und bürgerlichem Theater führte zu einem Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit und veränderte die Situation der Schriftsteller. Das Zeitalter des Hofdichters mit festem Einkommen ging zu Ende.

Der Bürger war tragödienfähig geworden. Lessing war mit seinem Prinzip der poetischen Nachahmung einer der berühmtesten Vertreter. Das Entmischen der Handlungssträngen und die Reduktion auf das Wesentliche und Typische ist in der *Hamburgischen Dramaturgie* beschrieben.

Der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit bedeutete im Theater wie z.B. bei *Nathan, der Weise*, Utopien menschlichen Miteinanders zu entwickeln.

Die Französische Revolution löste die in Frankreich seit 1477 bestehenden Zensur-Verordnungen auf, um dafür dann gleich selbst und direkt in den Spielplan

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<sup>2</sup> Huxley, Aldous: *Schöne Neue Welt*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt/M., 1981, S. 227.

einzu greifen: Alle drei Wochen im Wechsel Brutus, Wilhelm Tell, Gaius Grachus o.ä. Helden des Volkes.

Eine Renaissance erlebte die Zensur nach der Aufklärung und den brutalen Ausläufern der Französischen Revolution. Diese provozierte den Abscheu der gebildeten Kreise Österreichs und Deutschlands und führte auf diese Weise in den Vormärz.

### **Vormärz**

Die restriktive Politik des deutschen Vormärz brachte die besten und mutigsten deutschen Theaterdichter hervor: u.a. Heine, Büchner, Grabbe. Ferner seien die Göttinger Sieben mit den Gebrüdern Grimm beginnend und mit diesen die Erfindung der Germanistik zu erwähnen. Es ist mein persönliches Anliegen, Wilhelm und Jakob Grimm immer wieder in Zusammenhang mit Literatur zu setzen. Im Theater leben sie seit 200 Jahren fort, wenn auch meist unterkomplex als Weihnachtsmärchen, dabei haben sie durchaus ihre revolutionären Codes.

### **Habsburg im Vormärz ist ein anekdotenreiches Feld**

Die Erfindung einer eigens dafür geschaffenen Zensurbehörde fand bereits unter Maria Theresia statt und erreichte einen Höhepunkt unter Metternich. Neben dem Ausbau der Zensurbehörden erfand Metternich den Hausmeister neu. Der Metternichsche Hausmeister war ausgestattet mit weitgehenden Vollmachten, hatte sämtliche Wohnungsschlüssel und konnte nach Belieben die Wohnungen der anvertrauten Häuser inspizieren. Deshalb ist z.B. eines der wenigen ungarischen Worte, die ich mir merken kann: Hazmester (Haarmeschter).

Metternichs System ist einfach, heutig und vertraut - mit Beginn der Industrialisierung durch materielle Befriedigung das Bürgertum niederzuhalten und so vor systemfeindlichen Gedanken bewahren.

### **Wiener Vormärz**

Ähnlich wie im deutschen Staatenbund und in Preußen hat auch der Wienerische Vormärz trotzdem als Gegenreaktion eine großartige Dichtung hervorgebracht: In Wien wurde eine Bücherkommission eingerichtet, die darüber wachte, „dass sowohl im Lande keine schädlichen Bücher gedruckt als auch dass dergleichen Bücher nicht aus anderen Landen eingeführt werden.“<sup>3</sup>

In den Wiener Vorstädten blühte die Theaterlandschaft und ihre Protagonisten waren u.a. unfreiwilligerweise der Direktor des Burgtheaters, Josef Freiherr

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<sup>3</sup> Rieder, Heinz: *Wiener Vormärz*, Bergland Verlag, Wien, 1959, S. 10.

von Sonnenfels, der sämtliche Volkskunst aus dem Dunstkreis des Burgtheaters verbannte, sowie der berüchtigte Zensor Franz Karl Hägelin, der, wie es Nestroy ausdrückte - „der Lyra die Knute umschlang“ und sogar den Kaiser Franz zu dem Stoßseufzer veranlasste, unbedingt die Premiere eines Stückes zu sehen, denn „die Zensur könnt nachträglich ein Haar in der Suppe finden und das Stück verbieten und ich bekomms nicht zu sehen.“<sup>4</sup> Von Nestroy wissen wir, dass er französische Komödien umschrieb und diese genialisch mit dem Humus des Wiener Lebens düngte, die ihm Freiplätze für sein berühmtes Extemporieren vor allem in den Couplets ließen.

„Die Zensur ist die jüngere von zwei schändlichen Schwestern, die ältere heisst Inquisition. Die Zensur ist das lebendige Geständnis der Großen, dass sie nur verdumme Sklaven treten, aber keine freien Völker regieren können...“<sup>5</sup> lässt Nestroy im Theaterstück *Die Freiheit in Krähwinkel* sagen.

Aber weil er witzig ist und Ambiguität ein Geheimnis des Witzes ist, sagt derselbe Mann an anderer Stelle: „[...] es war eine schöne Sach. Wenn einem nix eingfallen is und man hat zu die Leut sagen können: Ach Gott es is schrecklich, sie verbieten einem ja alles.“<sup>6</sup>

Manch ein Zensor stellte sich im Publikum schlafend, was Nestroy zu waghalsigen Äusserungen veranlasste und dazu führte, dass man ihn mehrmals nach der Vorstellung am Bühnenausgang verhaftete. Das hat ihn aber nicht davon abgehalten, immer wieder Stellung zu beziehen.

### **Civilcourage**

Und hier kann ich eine Brücke bauen zu meinem eigentlichen Anliegen: die Civilcourage. Civilcourage ist der kleine David, der den Goliath der Zensur besiegen kann.

Auch einige Nächte im Gefängnis konnten Nestroy nicht von seiner Leidenschaft, der politischen Theatersatire, abhalten. Was wir heute im deutschsprachigen Theater gemeinhin für lustige Volksstücke halten, die in jedem zweiten Sommertheater verharmlost werden, war eine gewagte kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der Vereelung der Wiener Randbezirke. Die Näherinnen in Nestroys *Das Mädel aus der Vorstadt* waren eigentlich halb verhungerte Prostituierte, weswegen es dem Herrn Kauz gelingt, sie mit einem prachtvollen Essen zum Schweigen zu bringen.

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<sup>4</sup> Ebd., S. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Nestroy, Johann: *Freiheit in Krähwinkel*, Werke, Buchgemeinschaft Donauland / Wien, 1972, S. 668.

<sup>6</sup> Ebd., S. 684.

Die Revolution von 1848 beendet in Deutschland offiziell die Zensur mit dem Grundsatz der öffentlichen Redefreiheit, um sie dann durch die Berliner Theaterverordnung von 1851 wieder zu etablieren. So wurde eines meiner Lieblingsstücke, *Der Prinz von Homburg* erst zehn Jahre nach Kleists Tod aufgeführt, weil eine derart unmännliche Verzweiflung eines preußischen Heerführers nicht statthaft war.

Einer der traurigen Höhepunkte der Zensur in Deutschland war natürlich das Reichstheatergesetz von 1934.

Aber kein Gesetz kann das Spielen völlig unterdrücken. Das Theater in den Konzentrationslagern, von dem es nur wenige Aufzeichnungen gibt, hatte, wie es einige Überlebende beschreiben, lebenserhaltende Funktion: Gegen alle Erniedrigung galt es ein künstlerisches Selbstbewusstsein zu erhalten.

Die Mittel der Zensur sind einfache Antworten und einfache Regeln und einfache Perspektiven und einfache Schuldzuweisungen. Die Parallele zu dem sich überall auf der Welt breitmachenden Populismus und neu entflammt Nationalismus liegt auf der Hand. Geschlossene ideologische Denksysteme haben eine geringe „Ambiguitätstoleranz“, das heißt, sie können Widersprüche und Unklarheiten schlecht aushalten, sie bevorzugen klare Antworten.

Zum Humor und zur Kunst gehört aber die Bereitschaft, mit dem Wechsel der Perspektive zu spielen und die Möglichkeit zuzulassen, dass alles auch anders sein könnte. Brecht ließ beispielsweise im Verlauf der Proben die Schauspieler die Rollen tauschen. Aber die Vorstellung einer komplexeren, widersprüchlichen Wahrheit bereitet Starrköpfen kein Vergnügen, sondern Angst. Für diese These spricht, dass der Humor immer schmallippiger wird, je weiter man in extreme Bereiche kommt.

Thomas Mann schreibt: „Die Zensur ist ein kulturhemmender Faktor, denn sie setzt die Unterdrückung, das plumpe Verbot an die Stelle der Erziehung, deren das Publikum bedarf. Diese Erziehung zu leisten ist nur die Kunst selbst... befähigt, nicht der Staat.“<sup>7</sup>

Wahrscheinlich trifft es auch ein paar weniger Gute, aber die Guten bleiben keinesfalls verschont. Schiller nicht, Büchner schon gar nicht, Nestroy nicht. Selbst Goethe wurde gekürzt. Goethe, der zensiert wurde (*Werther*, *Faust*), hatte aber als Mitglied des Geheimen Consiliums in Weimar auch selber mehr pädagogisch als „legistatorisch“ zensiert.

Was wäre aus Shakespeare geworden, hätte er im Wiener Vormärz leben und schreiben müssen? Andererseits: wegen der elisabethanischen königlichen

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<sup>7</sup> Mann, Thomas: *Essays I, 1893-1914*, S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/M., 1987, S. 324.

Ungnade wissen wir ja bis heute nicht, wer sich wirklich hinter Shakespeare verbirgt....

Was können wir, die wir gar nicht genügend Einfälle und Genius haben, tun, um uns nicht in Gefahr zu bringen? Wir müssen uns solidarisch verhalten, um die Gedanken und den Geist der Innovation derer zu erhalten und zu verbreiten, die etwas riskieren oder etwas riskiert haben. Und dann im Spiel, auf der Probe, bei der Vorstellung zumindest dasselbe Risiko des Versuchens und Scheiterns eingehen.

### Zensurformen in Deutschland

Die DDR umschrieb die Zensur mit dem Gebot zur Förderung und zum Schutz der sozialistischen Nationalkultur.

Dies scheint in Deutschland überstanden: Das Grundgesetz beruft sich auf Art. 5, Abs. 1, Satz 3. Kunst und Wissenschaft, Forschung und Lehre sind frei. Die Freiheit der Lehre entbindet nicht von der Treue zur Verfassung.

Das schützt allerdings nicht vor Vorfällen wie bei *Der Müll die Stadt und der Tod* von R.W. Fassbinder. Ich saß damals 1985 in der Premiere und hatte mit großem Staunen erlebt, wie Herr Ignaz Bubis aufgesprungen war und das Stück mit dem Vorwurf des Antisemitismus unterbrochen hatte. Das hatte mich natürlich sofort sehr befangen gemacht und erschreckt. Worauf dann Herr Daniel Cohn-Bendit ebenfalls aufsprang und das Stück verteidigte. Ignatz Bubis hatte das Stück als Teil der politischen Auseinandersetzung im sogenannten Frankfurter Häuserkampf verstanden und manche glaubten, in der Figur des jüdischen Immobilienspekulanten Ignatz Bubis erkennen zu können, der Anfang der 1970er Jahre als Investor in den Auseinandersetzungen um die Sanierung des Frankfurter Westens verwickelt war. Tatsächlich war Fassbinder kein Antisemit, was bei den Prozessen um eine Miturheberschaft geklärt wurde. Das Stück wurde jedenfalls abgesetzt.

### Exkurs: Unsere Zeitgenossen

Es ist für mich interessant, über Zensur da zu sprechen, wo man sie nicht oder nicht mehr vermutet, z.B. die Zensur der freien Marktwirtschaft, die Zensur des Neoliberalismus.

Wenn wir heute - noch - in einem Klima der Toleranz und der Meinungsfreiheit leben, sollten wir einige Zeitgenossen nicht vergessen, denen die Zensur zu schaffen machte oder macht:

- Herbert Achternbuschs Film *Das Gespenst* wurde in Österreich und in der Schweiz verboten, weitere Fördergelder wurden dem Autor gestrichen; so hat Achternbusch in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren unter bayrischer Zensur gelitten.

- Was passiert mit Kirill Serebrennikov?
- Wie weit gehen Erdogan, Orban und Kaczynski, Duda in Europa und mit welchen Konsequenzen?
- Kann Empirie und Empathie Rassismus besiegen oder werden wir nicht mehr sagen, schreiben und darstellen dürfen, was wir denken und wo und mit wem wir leben wollen?
- Wird die Türkei ihre neu erblühte aufgewachte Theaterszene behalten?
- Wie fördern Netzwerke die Zensur, wenn durch Hacker-Angriffe, Spear-phishing-Attacken, gekaperten Accounts sensible Daten offenbart und manipuliert werden? Wie können Quellen dann glaubhaft sein oder Informationen vertraulich?
- Kann Satire alleine den politischen und gesellschaftlichen kritischen Diskurs verwirklichen und die Zensur unterwandern, wie es jetzt weitläufig nicht nur bei Jan Böhmermann, sondern auch in der arabischen Welt von Maghreb bis zu den Golfstaaten praktiziert wird?
- Nicht zu vergessen: China, wo gerade die 74jährige Mitarbeiterin der Deutschen Welle Gao Yuzu aufgrund der Ausübung ihrer journalistischen Tätigkeit zu sieben Jahren Haft verurteilt wurde.

Dieser kleine Exkurs hat keinerlei Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit.

### **Die versteckte Zensur**

Ich habe als Anfängerin am Schauspiel Frankfurt noch die Ausläufer des Mitbestimmungstheaters erlebt. Mein erster Regisseur in den 1980er Jahren am Schauspiel Frankfurt war Einar Schleef. Er hatte so inszeniert, dass die Reaktion auf die Radikalität seiner Ansichten, vor allem seiner Bilder und seiner Formsprache das aufgebrachte Publikum dazu brachte, uns mit jenen Kartoffeln zu bewerfen, die wir zuvor spielend verteilt hatten. Volles Risiko und Unbedingtheit - daran erinnere ich mich sehr gern. Es waren meine ersten Erfahrungen mit einem wirklich großen Künstler und mit Zivilcourage.

Und ich wage deshalb zu behaupten, dass die Theaterpolitik in den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten meines Berufslebens nicht transparenter wurde.

Stadttheater in Deutschland sind mittlerweile so etwas wie die letzten Monarchien mit zumeist männlichen feudalen Fürsten an der Spitze. Es ist ein Missverständnis, dass Kunst selbstgerecht sein darf. Kunst muss alles, also auch sich selbst hinterfragen und immer auf der Suche sein. Das Theater hat bisweilen einen die Demokratie verachtenden Gestus, den das Regie- und Intendantenpatriarchat à la Peymann gern als strukturnotwendig für den Prozess definiert. Ich halte das nicht

für zwangsläufig: Ein führender Kopf, ein Teamleiter zu sein, muss nicht heißen, den kreativen Prozess nicht auf Augenhöhe zu halten. Neues, Fremdes wird im Resten unserer kulturellen Orientierung immer bedrohlicher. Dabei entsteht bisweilen etwas, was ich als populistische Zensur bezeichnen möchte und was nicht schön ist, egal aus welcher Richtung es kommt. Zuhören, mehr Respekt und ein bisschen mehr Feminismus im Theater wären nicht schlecht. Und gleiche Bezahlung von Männern und Frauen.

Man hat festgestellt, dass Entwicklungshilfeprojekte in Afrika auf unterster Ebene prozentual besser mit Frauen funktionieren. Frauen kaufen in der Mehrzahl keine Waffen und keinen Alkohol, sondern investieren in die Ausbildung ihrer Kinder.

### **Machterhalt gestern und heute**

Zensur versucht Kunst zu regulieren. Dazu braucht es ein Abhängigkeitsverhältnis und da es im Theater von offensichtlichen, vor allem aber auch versteckten Abhängigkeiten wimmelt (bekomme ich die Rolle, werde ich verlängert, wird man gut über mich schreiben, wird man mir, wenn ich zu frech bin, kündigen - die passive Form dieser Zitate ist selbstredend), funktioniert im Theater noch immer eine Hierarchie, die man keineswegs als flach bezeichnen kann und in der Männer noch immer bis zu 20% mehr verdienen als Frauen.

Als Schiller *incognito* im Nationaltheater in Mannheim in der 2. Vorstellung seiner *Räuber* saß, schrieb er danach: „Ich folge meinem Gewissen und verteidige die Freiheit.“<sup>8</sup> Ich wüsste nicht welche Freiheit er unter diesen Voraussetzungen gemeint haben könnte als die des Gedankens, der genauen Beobachtung und der Beschreibung von Verhältnissen.

Die Zumutung außerordentlicher Geschehnisse, der Tabubruch, das Ignorieren des Konsenses, das Spiel mit dem Skandal gehören zu den Prinzipien des Theaters und zur Aufgabe seiner künstlerischen Innovation und deshalb ist das Theater auch eine gute Messlatte für die geistige Freiheit und den geistigen Zustand einer Gesellschaft.

Die Handgreiflichkeiten, die im Zusammenhang mit dem mittelalterlichen shakespeareischen Globetheatre berichtet werden, scheinen mir, gemessen an anonymen Shitstorm-Missfallenkundgebungen der heutigen Netzwerke, näher am theatralischen Vorgang und fairer.

Sobald sich nämlich die Skandalisierung und Ablehnung in den außertheatralischen Raum begibt, an andere Institutionen wie Medien, Netzwerke, Ämter, Gerichte

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<sup>8</sup> Siegmann, Andreas: *Friedrich Schiller privat. Lebensstation in Tagebuchaufzeichnungen*, Hans Boldt Verlag, Winsen (Luhe), o. J., S. 47.

wendet, mit dem Ziel, das Theater durch Druck von außen zu einer Revision zu zwingen, findet auch eine Art von Zensur statt.

Die Zensur, mit der wir es heute in der westlichen Theaterwelt zu tun haben, ist eine versteckte. Aus den Abhängigkeiten entstehen zensurgleiche Folgen:

- finanzielle Abhängigkeiten von Staat und / oder Land / Kommunen z.B. durch Androhung von Subventionsentzug;
- die Bestallung eines Intendanten und seine mögliche Nicht-Verlängerung angesichts von nicht genehmten Spielplänen;
- der Intendant kann durch sein Direktionsrecht zensorisch wirken, indem er bestimmte Stücke nicht zulässt;
- und seinem Ensemble gegenüber mit Angst, Druck, Ausgrenzung, Strafe arbeiten.

Du wirst nicht mehr besetzt / nicht mehr verlängert, wenn du nicht den Mund hältst. Womit wir beim Wesen der heimlichen Zensur angelangt wären.

- Theaterorganisationen (christlicher Theaterring) und Abonnementsforen können den Spielplan durch Boykottierung / Nichtraufnahme von Stücken in ihre Programme bestimmen. Aber an den Rändern meines Theateralltags bin ich doch immer wieder dem begegnet, was mich bei den verschiedensten Projekten am meisten berührt.

### **Civilcourage am Theater**

Civilcourage am Theater ist eine Utopie. Das heißt sie existiert nicht oder nur in Ausnahmefällen und temporär: eine Gruppe von Künstlern auf Augenhöhe, ein von Machtinstinkten nicht fehlgeleiteter Chef etc.

Aber das Theater ist genau dazu da, um Utopien einzusammeln in der Hoffnung, der Bodensatz der Utopie möge sich irgendwie, wenn auch fast homöopathisch in gesellschaftliche Themen hineinweben. Dazu bedarf es einer Sache, die ich gerne in einen Zusammenhang mit Civilcourage stellen möchte. Das ist Großzügigkeit. Denn ohne einen weiten Gedanken im Kopf wird man auch nicht von der Trampelfahrt der Gewohnheit abkommen. Und die Großzügigkeit im Kopf ist wiederum die Grundvoraussetzung für einen kreativen Ansatz. Man wird immer und immer wieder auf Personen und Abläufe am Theater stoßen, die die Hierarchien und Abläufe zur vermeintlichen Festigung ihrer eigenen Karriere nutzen.

Civilcourage ist immer verbunden mit persönlichem Wagnis. Aber aufpassen: Wenn alle um einen herum spießig und konservativ erscheinen, dann festigt man

seine Position als Gültigkeitsverwalter ebenso, nur mit umgekehrtem Vorzeichen. Das ist ein bisschen wie mit dem Witz: Was könnte falsch sein, wenn einem ausschließlich Geisterfahrer begegnen?

Zivilcourage ist auf jedenfall das Gegenteil von Komfortzone und sei es die im Konsens des *mainstreams* versteckte. Es weht ein Wind da, wo man nicht in Deckung geht.

Zivilcourage ist unmittelbarer Ausdruck eigenen Empfindens, Zivilcourage ist das Suchen nach authentischer Form und dient der Erhaltung demokratischer Prozesse.

Zivilcourage ist ein Element künstlerischen Schaffens.

## Heute

In Jassy (Iasi), Rumänien, wo ich im Jahr 2016 am Teatrul „Luceafărul“ für ein Festival inszenieren durfte, habe ich wertvolle Erfahrungen mit einem sehr freundlichen, aber auch anfangs sehr zurückhaltenden und vorsichtigen Ensemble gemacht. Die Annäherung war allmählich; schließlich konnten wir auch außerhalb des Theaters und bei einem Bier, über alle Sprachbarrieren hinweg, das allmähliche gegenseitige Kennenlernen der Gedanken pflegen. Und ich kann sagen, dass die Unterschiede groß waren, verwirrend sogar und sie haben die westlichen Koordinaten meiner geistigen Komfortzonen, wie etwas zu sein hat und einzuschätzen ist, gründlich durcheinandergewirbelt. Meine Ambiguitätstoleranz, momentan eines meiner Lieblingsworte, war absolut gefordert. Und jetzt ist dies übriggeblieben: Fernweh nach Jassy und meinen neuen Freunden dort. Letztlich musste ich mir eingestehen, dass alle meine Überlegungen auch der Tatsache entspringen, dass ich selbst eigentlich oft ein kleiner Feigling bin.

So bleibt Zivilcourage meine Sehnsucht, meine Utopie, meine ständige Herausforderung: Wieviel Eigenständigkeit kann und soll jemand bei der Stückentwicklung, bei der Probe, in der Wahl der Mittel haben? Das ist nicht einfach, denn SchauspielerInnen müssen abgeben, sich ausliefern können. Man soll sich beim *acting* nicht beobachten und werten, die Entscheidung über die definitive Form ist genau deshalb ausgelagert und wird aus handwerklich-technischen Gründen vom Regisseur entschieden.

Wie bleibt man da authentisch, wie verteidigt man seine Rechte angesichts von Zeitverträgen, hoher Arbeitslosigkeit und berufsspezifisch emotionalem Ausgeliefertsein?

Es ist ein schmaler Grad zwischen Hingabe und Selbstschutz und man muss lernen, da deutlich zu trennen.

## Die Ausbildung junger SchauspielerInnen

Junge Menschen in der jetzigen Zeit haben wahrscheinlich nicht nur in der darstellenden Kunst viel zu leisten: sie müssen sich vernetzen, optimieren, ein gutes Zeitmanagement haben, eigenwillig sein und doch konform. Überhaupt scheinen ihre Aufgaben aus Gegensätzen gemacht zu sein. Sie sollen intelligent, aber nicht verkopft sein, fokussiert, aber tiefenentspannt, cool, aber empathisch, netzwerken und bei sich sein, ganz authentisch, sich anpassen und trotzdem eigenwillig sein, den *mainstream* hassen, aber mitschwimmen.

Dass sie einfach eine Haltung zur Welt entwickeln, ein ästhetisches Empfinden, ein Körperbewusstsein, den Mut zu eigenständigem Denken und der Auseinandersetzung auf Augenhöhe, das ist unsere wichtigste Aufgabe.

Dass sie es lernen, sich gegen Zensur, auch die eigene im Kopf zu wehren und etwas wagen, tapfer sind, den kreativen Prozess einfordern, aber auch die soziale Gerechtigkeit, das Erfinden, das eigenständige Denken, die Spielfantasie, den Flow und die Lust, Erfahrungen zu machen - das ist unsere schönste Aufgabe.

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# **Politik und Theater – politisches Theater**

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## **Abstract**

The article tries to highlight Erwin Piscator's concept of the „political theatre“, which appears at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Starting with Piscator und Brecht a description of the documentary theatre after 1945 is offered and equal new projections of the documentary theatre after 1990 will be lined out.

## **Keywords:**

Erwin Piscator; political theatre; Bertolt Brecht; documentary theatre after 1945; Rolf Hochhuth; new documentary theatre approaches since 1990.

## **Rezumat**

Articolul își propune să sublinieze conceptul de teatru politic care apare la Erwin Piscator la începutul secolului 20. Începând cu Piscator și Brecht este oferită o descriere a teatrului documentar după 1945 și schițarea unor abordări asemănătoare de teatru documentar după 1990.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

Erwin Piscator; teatru politic; Bertolt Brecht; teatru documentar după 1945; Rolf Hochhuth; abordări de teatru documentar începând cu 1990.

Theater und Politik stehen schon immer in einem nicht zu trennenden Zusammenhang - und politisches Theater ist ein vieldeutiger schillernder Begriff. Politisches Theater war schon das Theater der Antike, weil der Auftraggeber ja der Staat, die Polis war. Theater kann man auf den verschiedenen Ebenen, die jeden Theaterprozess auszeichnen, politisch interpretieren: Ein Theaterstück kann einen politischen Inhalt haben. Eine Theaterinszenierung kann über die Arbeit der Regie und der Schauspieler eine dezidierte Interpretation des Stücks liefern, eine politische Stellungnahme abgeben. Ein Theaterpublikum kann eine Inszenierung in einem bestimmten Rahmen politisch wahrnehmen.

Der Begriff „politisches Theater“ taucht zum ersten Mal in den 1920er Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts auf, nämlich in der gleichnamigen Schrift des Theaterpioniers Erwin Piscator.<sup>1</sup>

### **Der Begriff des Politischen Theaters**

Ich will gar nicht den Versuch unternehmen, diesen schillernden Begriff neu zu definieren, sondern einen Blick werfen auf das Auftauchen des Begriffs bei Erwin Piscator. Von Piscator und den Grundpfeilern seiner Theaterarbeit – nämlich Dokument und Montage – springe ich dann in die 1960er Jahre zum dokumentarischen Theater in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit und erwähne zum Schluss Theaterformen / Theatergruppen, die seit den 1990er Jahren in den Zeiten des postdramatischen Theaters das Dokumentar-Theater weiterführen.

Der Begriff des politischen Theaters taucht zum ersten Mal zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts auf. Erwin Piscator führte diesen Begriff ein und schuf damit erstmals eine Definition, die „das Politische nicht nur vom Thema, sondern zugleich auch von der Wirkungsabsicht und der Funktion her zu bestimmen erlaubt.“<sup>2</sup> Piscators Ziel war es, Theater als Mittel zur politischen Propaganda einzusetzen.

Erwin Piscator, geboren 1893, fünf Jahre älter als Bertolt Brecht, kommt wie Brecht aus gut bürgerlichen Verhältnissen. Er war Gymnasiast in Marburg, volontierte am Münchner Hoftheater, war Theaterstudent bei dem berühmten Literatur- und Theaterwissenschaftler Artur Kutscher, Leiter eines Fronttheaters und des Theaters Tribunal in Königsberg. Seine Theatervorstellungen entwickelte er nach dem 1. Weltkrieg, in den sog. „Goldenem 20er Jahren“.

„Wir sollten das Theater wieder als ‚moralische Anstalt‘ verstehen. Kenntnis – Erkenntnis – Bekenntnis! Wie Tolstoi sagt: Die Kunst hat nur dann Zweck, wenn sie zur Verbesserung der Menschen beiträgt. Wir haben den Glauben an den Menschen verloren. Wir müssen der Vernunft wieder zu ihrem Recht verhelfen. Kunst ist nicht Dunst, sondern dient der Klärung. Von da gelangt sie vielleicht zur ‚Verklärung‘ – aber mit Vorsicht.“<sup>3</sup>

Piscator entwickelte eine Theatertheorie in der praktischen Theaterarbeit in Königsberg und in Berlin. Sein revolutionäres und episches Theater führte das Dokument als zentralen Bestandteil des Textesein, weil – seiner Ansicht nach – die von ihm behandelten sozialen Themen (Oktoberrevolution, Inflation, Arbeitslosigkeit, Konjunktur etc.) sich nicht allein mehr in der überkommenen

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<sup>1</sup> Piscator, Erwin: *Das Politische Theater*, Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1963, S. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ebd., S. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Ebd., S. 36.

Dramaturgie des Figurenstücks realisieren ließen, sondern ein gesellschaftliches Panorama der Gründe und Hintergründe entwickelt werden sollte:

„Unsere Schicksalsmächte heißen Politik und Wirtschaft und als Resultat beider die Gesellschaft, das Soziale.“<sup>4</sup> Theater als politischer Ort, in dem aufgeklärt werden sollte über gesellschaftliche Widersprüche am Beispiel aktueller politischer Themen oder in dem an geschichtlichen Beispielen die Erkenntnis für die Gegenwart entwickelt werden soll.

Neu in Piscators Theater ist der Theatertext, die Aufnahme von dokumentarischem Sprach-Material: Politikerreden, Zeitungsartikel, Werbetexte, Aufrufe, Spruchbänder, Lieder. Die neuen formalen Mittel kamen dabei aus anderen Kunstgattungen: Piscator setzte Projektionen, Filme, Filmausschnitte, Dias, Plakate und Bilder aus der realen Welt ein.

Die Bühne bzw. das Bühnenbild wurde mit bisher fremden Theatermitteln erweitert: Räder, Rolltreppen, Fahrstühle, Simultanbühnen auf mehreren Etagen. Maschinen für ein neues pädagogisch-politisches Theater. Die Einflüsse des Konstruktivismus und des russischen Revolutionstheaters sind unübersehbar.

Seine 1929 publizierte Schrift *Das politische Theater* bietet weder eine systematisch ausgearbeitete Theorie des politischen Theaters, noch stammt sie allein von ihm. Das Buch ist eine Sammlung aus Programmschrift und Rechenschaftsbericht, zusammengestellt aus Pressenotizen, Spielplänen und Essays, verfasst von Piscator und seinen Mitarbeitern, ergänzt um Dokumente zur Wirkung und Rezeption aus Zeitungen und Zeitschriften, die zehn Jahre Theaterarbeit in Berlin umspannen.

Es hat die Form einer Montage. Und Montage ist - neben Dokument – der zweite zentrale Begriff seiner Theatertheorie und seiner Theaterpraxis.

Sein gesellschaftskritischer Ausgangspunkt – und das wenige Jahre nach dem Ende des 1. Weltkrieges, nach dem Zusammenbruch eines kompletten Wertesystems - ist die veränderte Stellung des Menschen in der modernen, kapitalistischen Gesellschaft. Und diese veränderte Stellung des Menschen sieht Piscator durch eine umfassende Politisierung aller Lebensbereiche charakterisiert: „[...] eine Zeit, in der die Beziehungen der Allgemeinheit untereinander, die Revision aller menschlichen Werte, die Umschichtung aller gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse auf die Tagesordnung gesetzt sind, kann den Menschen nicht anders sehen, als in seiner Stellung zur Gesellschaft und zu den gesellschaftlichen Problemen seiner Zeit, d.h. als politisches Wesen.“<sup>5</sup> Als politisches Wesen ist der Mensch sowohl Subjekt als auch Objekt der Geschichte.

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<sup>4</sup> Ebd., S. 38.

<sup>5</sup> Ebd., S. 46.

Bertolt Brecht hat bei Piscator mitgearbeitet und letztlich aus der praktischen Theaterarbeit bei ihm sein episches Theater entwickelt. Piscator und Brecht waren nicht immer auf einer Linie, arbeiteten stets auch – unabhängig voneinander – an den eigenen Projekten. So hat Brecht in den 20er Jahren seine eigenen Arbeiten realisiert, ganz unterschiedliche Theaterstücke wie z.B. *Die Dreigroschenoper*, sein größter Erfolg aus dem Jahr 1929 und gleichzeitig seine didaktischen Lehrstücke.

Im Piscator-Kollektiv war Brecht maßgeblich an einer der erfolgreichsten Inszenierungen des Piscator-Theaters beteiligt, nämlich gemeinsam mit Felix Gasberra und Leo Lania an einer Dramatisierung des Hašek Romans *Die Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk*.

Aufgrund einer anspruchsvollen Bühnentechnik mit Laufbändern, satirischen Trickfilmsequenzen aus der Feder von George Grosz, einer episodischen Dramaturgie und einem Darstellungsstil mit Musik und Varieté-Elementen wurde dieser Abend im Jahr 1927 ein großer Bühnenerfolg.

Bereits 1924 setzte Piscator in Alfons Paquets *Fahnen* schon Filmprojektionen ein. Das Stück thematisierte den Kampf um den 8-Stunden Tag. Piscator projizierte, um die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Hintergründe zu verdeutlichen, neben Bildern auch Texte auf die Leinwand. Dieses Schauspiel hatte den Untertitel „episches Drama“.

Piscator nahm für sich als Hausregisseur an der Volksbühne in Anspruch, ein völlig neues „dokumentarisches Theater“ begründet zu haben. Die Erfindung einer dreistöckigen Etagenbühne gab es wohl zum ersten Mal in Walter Mehrings *Der Kaufmann von Berlin* (1929), drei Orte für das Proletariat, die Mittelschicht und die Oberschicht inkl. Militär, indem er auf der Ebene des Proletariats Lieder und Gesänge montierte, die über die ökonomische und soziale Lage des Proletariats Auskunft gaben. Mehring montierte hier Szenen, neben epischen Texten, neben Dokumenten, neben Liedern.

Mehrings *Der Kaufmann von Berlin*, uraufgeführt ebenfalls von Erwin Piscator, ist eine Persiflage auf die Inflationsgewinner und provozierte einen Skandal. Die SA demonstrierte vor dem Theater; Joseph Goebbels verfasste einen ganzseitigen Hetzartikel gegen Mehring, mit der Überschrift *An den Galgen*. Seine Bücher landeten bei der Bücherverbrennung am 10. Mai 1933 auf dem Scheiterhaufen.

In Friedrich Wolfs *Tai Yang erwacht*, das den Emanzipationsprozess einer jungen Spinnerin von der Geliebten des Fabrikbesitzers zur politischen Agitatorin für den Streik der Arbeiter zeigt, schrieb Wolf ein Vorspiel, das die Grenze zwischen Bühne und Realität überspielen sollte: Die Schauspieler werden in den

Garderoben gezeigt, wie sie über die Aktualität des Stückes und den Zweck der Aufführung diskutieren. Interessant ist, dass dieses Vorspiel nicht frei aus der inhaltlichen Beschäftigung der Schauspieler, also nicht improvisatorisch entstand, sondern schriftlich vom Autor fixiert wurde.

Politisch ist Piscators Theater in seiner Kritik am Kapitalismus, mit der es zur Beseitigung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und zur Erringung der Diktatur des Proletariats beitragen will/soll. Diesem Ziel werden sowohl Moral als auch Ästhetik untergeordnet: „Unterordnung jeder künstlerischen Absicht dem revolutionärem Ziel: bewusste Betonung und Propagierung des Klassenkampfgedankens.“<sup>6</sup>

Piscators Theater soll nicht nur der Aufklärung dienen, es ist parteilich, ein Vehikel zur Überwindung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft.

Letztlich sehen wir uns in den Theatergedanken Piscators auf die Geschichtsphilosophie und Gesellschaftskritik des Marxismus verwiesen.

In diesem Zusammenhang sei auch erwähnt, dass man in den Jahren nach dem 1. Weltkrieg von Seiten der Politikwissenschaft und Philosophie den Begriff des Politischen neu zu fassen suchte. Im Winter 18/19, dem sogenannten Revolutionswinter, wenige Wochen bevor Piscator sein „proletarisches Theater“ gründete, hielt Max Weber in München seinen berühmt gewordenen Vortrag „*Politik als Beruf*“.

Politik ist nach Weber das „Streben nach Macht“, also nach der „Leitung oder Beeinflussung der Leitung eines politischen Verbandes“, heute also: des Staates. „Und daraus erfolgt seine Definition des Staates: „Staat ist diejenige menschliche Gemeinschaft, welche innerhalb eines bestimmten Gebietes das Monopol legitimer physischer Gewaltsamkeit für sich mit Erfolg beansprucht.“<sup>7</sup>

Piscator nimmt mit seinem Theater Partei für die Klasse des Proletariats in der Absicht, staatliche Macht über die Klasse der Bourgeoisie zu erringen und auszuüben. Ziel: Die Befreiung der Menschheit vom Kapitalismus und der Aufbau einer sozialistischen Gesellschaftsordnung.

### **Das Dokumentartheater aus den 1960er Jahren**

Die Politisierung des Theaters in den 60er Jahren wächst aus der Demokratisierung der Gesellschaft und ihrer Institutionen. Sie verläuft zeitgleich mit dem Beginn einer historischen Aufarbeitung der NS-Vergangenheit und dem Aufbruch in

<sup>6</sup> Ebd., S. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Weber, Max: <https://books.google.at/books?hl=de&lr=&id=FEphBwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA2&dq=max+weber+politik+als+beruf&ots=8q6iDQfo7s&sig=-oLSsTxjvOiTy3s3jkYwHwWGURI#v=onepage&q=max%20weber%20politik%20als%20beruf&f=false> [letzter Zugriff: 12.11.2017].

eine neue Gesellschaft. „Wir wollen mehr Demokratie wagen“<sup>8</sup> hieß es in der Regierungserklärung Willy Brandts im Oktober 1969.

In der Theaterliteratur der 1960er Jahre zeigt sich die Wiederentdeckung der Volksstücke von Horvath und Fleisser und die Entwicklung des neuen Volksstücks von Kroetz, Sperr, Fassbinder, mit den österreichischen Varianten von Bauer und Turrini. Es sind Theaterstücke, die Lebenserfahrungen und Defizite von prekarisierten Bevölkerungsschichten zum Thema machen. Geschichten von der Schattenseite des deutschen Wirtschaftswunders. Das sozialkritische Drama.

Dezidiert politisch versteht sich das dokumentarische Theater. Es richtet sich gegen bestimmte Tendenzen im Theater der 1950er Jahre:

- Gegen die Parabeln wie wir sie in der Dramatik der 50er Jahre finden, bei z.B. Frisch oder Dürrenmatt, denen man Enthistorisierung vorwarf.
- Gegen die Überwertung des Psychischen in der Interpretation des Absurden Theaters.
- Gegen das Literaturtheater.

Die Zielsetzung dieses dokumentarischen Theaters ist, gesellschaftskritisch zu wirken und bezieht sich somit auf Piscator und Brecht.

Debatten und Auseinandersetzungen in der Öffentlichkeit lösten Stücke aus wie *Der Stellvertreter* (1963) von Rolf Hochhuth, (uraufgeführt von Erwin Piscator) oder Heinar Kipphardts Drama *In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer* von 1964.

Das dokumentarische Theater ist ein Theater der Berichterstattung. Durch die Verwertung von Akten, Protokollen, Ansprachen, Interviews sowie Filmszenen, Fotos, Tonbänder, die zum Teil direkt in die Inszenierung mit eingebunden werden, soll nach Kipphardt, größtmögliche Glaubwürdigkeit und Authentizität erzielt werden. Man darf aber dieses realistische Zeittheater nicht als reines Nachspielen von authentischen Begebenheiten verstehen.

Diese Form des Theaters bedient sich eines Sprachstils der als kühl, realistisch, präzise und objektiv bezeichnet wird. Emotionale Welten, dramatische Szenerien werden geradezu vermieden.

Neben Hochhuth und Kipphardt sind vor allem Peter Weiss mit *Die Ermittlung*, Hans Magnus Enzensberger mit *Das Verhör von Habana* oder Rolf Schneider mit *Prozess in Nürnberg* zu nennen.

Wir finden keine geschlossene Theorie zum Dokumentar-Theater, sondern meistens nur Anmerkungen, Notizen der jeweiligen Autoren. Der ausführlichste Beitrag kommt von Peter Weiss‘ „Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater“ (1968).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Brand, Willy: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/50-jahre-bundeskanzler-willy-brandt-mehr-demokratie-wagen-w> [letzter Zugriff: 12.11.2017].

<sup>9</sup> Weiss, Peter: „Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater“, in: *Theater heute*, 3/1968.

So schreibt er: „Das dokumentarische Theater enthält sich jeder Erfindung, es übernimmt authentisches Material und gibt dies, im Inhalt unverändert, in der Form bearbeitet, von der Bühne aus wieder.“<sup>10</sup>

Das grundlegende ästhetische Prinzip der Dramaturgie sieht Weiss in der Montage: „Diese kritische Auswahl, und das Prinzip, nach dem die Ausschnitte der Realität montiert werden, ergeben die Qualität der dokumentarischen Dramatik.“<sup>11</sup>

*Die Ermittlung. Oratorium in 11 Gesängen* von Weiss aus dem Jahr 1965 hat als Grundlage den Auschwitzprozess gegen das Wachpersonal des Konzentrationslagers, der in Frankfurt zwischen Dezember 1963 und August 1965 stattfand. Peter Weiss nimmt die Fakten und ordnet sie elf Themengebieten zu, den Oratorien oder Gesängen.

In Peter Weiss' *Die Ermittlung* wird das Material nicht montiert, um eine genaue Rekonstruktion des KZ-Lagers zu zeigen und / oder die Gerichtsverhandlung nachzustellen. Das Material löst sich aus dem Rahmen einer Nachzeichnung und kann / soll als ein überzeitliches Modell betrachtet werden. Nach dem Verständnis von Weiss, ist die Bezeichnung „dokumentarisches Theater“ unzureichend. Dieser Begriff ist vielmehr als Zusammenfassung von Bezeichnungen wie „Politisches Theater“, „Anti-Theater“, und „Theater des Protests“ zu werten.

Das weltweit bekannteste deutsche Theaterstück des Dokumentartheaters ist *Der Stellvertreter* von Rolf Hochhuth.

Erwin Piscator, 1953 aus Amerika nach Deutschland zurückgekehrt und seit 1961 Intendant der Freien Volksbühne Berlin besorgte die Uraufführung im Herbst 1963. Das Stück wurde das Skandalstück der 1960er Jahre mit weltweitem Echo. In diesem Stück wird Anklage gegen die katholische Kirche erhoben, der Vorwurf, nichts gegen den Holocaust des Hitler-Regimes unternommen zu haben.

Hochhuths Stück handelt von einem Jesuitenpater namens Riecardo Fontana – einer fiktiven Figur – der den Papst bestürmt, er solle offen und scharf gegen Hitlers Massaker an den Juden protestieren. Doch das Oberhaupt der römisch-katholischen Kirche weigert sich. Als der Papst schließlich auch angesichts der Verschleppung der Juden aus Rom nicht reagiert, heftet sich Pater Riccardo einen Judenstern an die Soutane und geht zusammen mit den Deportierten nach Auschwitz in den Tod.

Hochhuths Stück verfolgt zwar eine traditionelle Figurendramaturgie, kam Piscators Theatervorstellungen aber insofern nahe, da es zeigte, dass „ein historisches Drama sehr wohl ein Drama der Entscheidungen sein kann“<sup>12</sup>, also

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<sup>10</sup> Ebd., S. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Ebd.

<sup>12</sup> Barton, Brian: *Das Dokumentartheater*, Sammlung Metzler, Stuttgart 1987, S. 127.

geschichtliche Ereignisse als machbar darstellen kann. Der Dramatiker solle sich der Zeitgeschichte und Politik stellen.

Die Auseinandersetzung mit der jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit, erst Recht die mit der Rolle der Kirche im Nationalsozialismus und ihrem Verhältnis zum Antisemitismus, stand damals noch ganz am Anfang. Mit seiner effektvollen Mischung aus Fiktion und historischen Fakten hatte sich der Autor Hochhuth angreifbar gemacht. „Allzuoft erwies sich“, so konstatierte 1964 *DER SPIEGEL*, „dass dem Ankläger historiographisch einwandfreie Unterlagen fehlten, mit denen er seine Thesen belegen konnte“.<sup>13</sup>

Das dokumentarische Theater ist nicht unumstritten und hatte auch nur eine kurze Blüte in den 1960er Jahren. Max Frisch lehnte diese Form des Theaters ab, da seiner Meinung nach der Versuch, Dokumente und Fakten auf das Theater zu übertragen mit dem Ende des Theaters und dem Verlust der Glaubwürdigkeit der verwendeten Dokumente verbunden sei.

Martin Walser warf den Autoren vor, sie produzieren Illusionstheater, täuschen Wirklichkeit vor mit dem Material der Kunst, verfertigen Imitationen und gebrauchen die Bühne als Transportmittel.

Dennoch: Das dokumentarische Drama spielte keine unbedeutende Rolle in der deutschen Literatur der Nachkriegszeit. Es zeigte neue oder wieder aufgegriffene dramaturgische Möglichkeiten: die Einbeziehung von außerliterarischen Dokumenten, die Montagetechnik, eine offene Dramaturgie, epische Elemente, und es lieferte in seinem emanzipatorischen Gestus Impulse für politische, gesellschaftliche, ethische Fragen.

### **Dokumentartheater ab den 1990er Jahren**

Kunst gilt als politisch, wie der französische Philosoph und Kunsthistoriker Jacques Rancière schreibt, weil sie „die Stigmata der Herrschaft zeigt, oder weil sie herrschende Ikonen lächerlich macht, oder aber weil sie ihre angestammten Plätze verlässt, um Sozialpraxis zu werden“.<sup>14</sup>

Seitensprung: Kunst wird Sozialpraxis. In diesem Zusammenhang bin ich in Österreich auf die Gruppe „Wochenklausur“ gestoßen. Diese Künstlergruppe führt seit 1993 soziale Interventionen durch. Das heißt, auf Einladung von Kunstinstitutionen entwickelt die Gruppe Vorschläge zur Veränderung gesellschaftspolitischer Defizite und setzt diese um.

1993 lud Wolfgang Zinggl für eine Ausstellung mit dem Titel *11 Wochen in Klausur* in der Wiener Secession acht Künstler\*innen ein, an der Lösung eines

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<sup>13</sup> *Ein Kampf mit Rom*, in: *DER SPIEGEL*, 17/1963, S. 79.

<sup>14</sup> Rancière, Jacques: *Der emanzipierte Zuschauer*, Passagen Verlag, Wien, 2010, S. 7.

ortsspezifischen Problems zu arbeiten. Für die Dauer der Ausstellung sollte die Gruppe in Klausur gehen, um eine medizinische Versorgung Obdachloser einzurichten. Seither betreut eine fahrende Ambulanz monatlich über 600 Patienten ohne Krankenschein und ohne Kosten für die Betroffenen. 1994 folgte eine Einladung der Shedhalle Zürich, wo ein neu zusammengestelltes Team erstmals mit dem Namen „Wochen Klausur“ eine Pension für drogenkonsumierende Frauen aufbaute. Mittlerweile konnten mehr als 30 Projekte in verschiedenen künstlerischen Besetzungen erfolgreich durchgeführt werden, u. a. in Berlin, Venedig, Fukuoka, Zürich, Stockholm und Chicago.

Seit den 1990er Jahren gibt es wieder eine Renaissance von Theaterarbeiten, die dem dokumentarischen Theater zugeordnet werden können. Dies sind Arbeiten von Künstlern, Künstler-Gruppen, die vielfach von dem Angewandten Institut für Theaterwissenschaften aus Giessen kommen, einer Kaderschmiede des postdramatischen Theaters.

Einer der profiliertesten Vertreter des Dokumentarischen Theaters ist Hans-Werner Kroesinger. Seit 1993 arbeitet Kroesinger als Autor und Regisseur, er gilt als einer der wichtigsten Vertreter des zeitgenössischen Dokumentartheaters. Seine minutiös recherchierten Arbeiten rekonstruieren Hintergründe und Zusammenhänge zeitgeschichtlicher Ereignisse. Im Gegensatz zum Dokumentartheater in den 1960er Jahren geht es Kroesinger um größtmögliche Unparteilichkeit. „Wahrheit“ ist keine einfach zu entschleiernde Sache, sondern scheint im besten Fall punktuell aus dem Spiel verschiedener Perspektiven auf.

In seinen dokumentarischen Theaterabenden collagiert Kroesinger historische Originaltexte, aktuelle Dokumente und literarische oder theoretische Texte. „Nicht eine Zeile ist erfunden oder zwecks besserer Sprechbarkeit sprachlich geglättet, alles ist aus den Originaltexten der Dokumente montiert.“<sup>15</sup> Dokumentarische Versatzstücke werden nicht kommentiert oder ironisiert, sondern deutlich ausgestellt. Im Zentrum dieser Theaterprojekte stehen meist politische Themen und gesellschaftliche Fragestellungen, insbesondere Gewaltkonflikte.

Im Frühjahr 2017 arbeitete Kroesinger am Landestheater Linz an einem Projekt unter dem Titel *Swap – Oder wem gehört die Stadt*. Der Swap 4175 ist ein von der Stadt Linz im Jahr 2007 über die Gewerkschaftsbank BAWAG abgeschlossenes Finanzprodukt, das Währungsrisiken aus Kreditgeschäften beschränken sollte. Dieses Finanzprodukt entpuppte sich aber als Kurs-Zins-Wette, die den Verantwortlichen über den Kopf wuchs. Die juristischen Auseinandersetzungen sind bis heute noch nicht abgeschlossen, vor allem bezüglich der Frage wer

<sup>15</sup> Laudenbach, Peter: „Die Theaterzentrale für politische Aufklärung“, in: *Theater heute*, Nr. 5, Mai 2016, S. 38.

die Kreditkosten, die sich im dreistelligen Millionenbereich bewegen, zu übernehmen hat, also die Stadt Linz bzw deren Bürger oder die Bank.

Kroesingers Theaterabend war eine musikalische Revue mit Liedern über Geld, mit Szenen aus dokumentarischem Material wie Prozessunterlagen, Dokumenten aus Archiven und aus dem Netz, Abschriften von Telefonaten der Beteiligten von Stadt und Bank usw. Der Abend leistete für den Zuschauer Aufklärungsarbeit auf unterhaltsame Art: man bekam einen ersten Eindruck von diesem komplizierten Finanzprodukt SWAP und einen Überblick über die Geschichte der Gewerkschaftsbank BAWAG – und das alles auf eine witzige und unterhaltsame Art und Weise. Mitarbeiter der Bank, die diesen Abend gesehen haben, sprachen von einem befreienden kathartischen Effekt der Aufführung.

Ein Theaterkollektiv, das anders arbeitet, ist z.B. Rimini Protokoll, ein Künstler-Kollektiv (das sind Helgard Haug, Stefan Kaegi und Daniel Wetzel), das sich in konkreter Weise dem Verhältnis von Theater und Realität widmet.

Helgard Kim Haug, Stefan Kaegi und Daniel Wetzel bilden seit 2000 ein Autoren-Regie-Team. Ihre Arbeiten im Bereich Theater, Hörspiel, Film, Installation entstehen in Zweier- und Dreier-Konstellationen sowie Solo. Seit 2002 werden all ihre Arbeiten unter dem Label Rimini Protokoll zusammengefasst und angekündigt. Im Mittelpunkt ihrer Arbeit steht die Weiterentwicklung der Mittel des Theaters, um ungewöhnliche Sichtweisen auf unsere Wirklichkeit zu ermöglichen.

So erklären Haug / Kaegi / Wetzel eine Daimler Hauptversammlung zum Theaterstück oder inszenieren unter anderem in Berlin, Zürich, London, Melbourne, Kopenhagen oder San Diego mit hundert statistisch repräsentativ ausgewählten Bürgern 100% Stadt.

Rimini Protokoll möchte nicht die Wirklichkeit abbilden, sondern die Wirklichkeit konstruieren, ins Theater holen. So machen sie nicht nur dokumentarisches Material zur Grundlage ihrer Inszenierungen, sondern bringen „Realität“ in Form von sogenannten Experten ins Theater. Diese sind keine Schauspieler, haben keine oder wenig Berührungen mit dem Theater, bringen aber über ihren Beruf oder ihre Biographie Erfahrungen und Wissen zu bestimmten Themen in den Theaterabend ein. Der Text entsteht mit den Darstellern im Lauf der Proben, die Darstellung, Präsentation erfolgt auf eine möglichst neutrale Art des Berichtens, mit all seinen „theatralen“ Defiziten, um damit auch deutlich zu machen, dass hier keine Wirklichkeit behauptet, sondern konstruiert wird. So die Behauptung von Rimini Protokoll.

In Zeiten der digitalen und medialen Wirklichkeiten wage ich zu behaupten, dass fiktionale Literatur im postdramatischen Theater dennoch Erkenntnisse und Einsichten über die Welt darstellen kann, die über die schnelle, zeitgebundene Verwertbarkeit hinausgeht.

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# **1968: Political Theatre between Triumph and Failure**

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## **Abstract**

This article aims to investigate the defining movements of *political theatre*, which reached its peak during the 1960s. This cultural and performative phenomenon was determined, of course, by political movements, by active ideologies, and by the emergence and then the dominant dynamics of countercultures. The article describes the most relevant theatrical groups of that period, which radically influenced global theatrical practices and developed new theoretical and methodological frames that challenged European Modernism. My contribution also points out the illusions and disappointments that political theatre experienced in such a troubled decade.

## **Keywords:**

political theatre; popular theatre; militant theatre; revolution; myth; ideology; counter-culture; performance; experiment; Avant-garde; deconstruction theatre; documentary theatre.

## **Rezumat**

Acest articol își propune să dezbată principalele manifestări ale *teatrului politic*, care au atins punctul culminant în anii '60. Acest fenomen cultural a fost posibil datorită mișcărilor politice, ale ideologiilor active și a necesității unei dinamici puternice a politicilor contraculturale. Articolul descrie cele mai relevante grupuri teatrale ale acelei perioade, care au influențat practicile teatrale din întreaga lume și au contribuit la dezvoltarea unui nou cadru teoretic și metodologic ce a schimbat modernismul european. Acest articol se referă și la iluziile și dezamăgirile mele personale că teatrul politic a trebuit să experimenteze aşa o perioadă dificilă.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

teatru politic; teatru popular; teatru militant; revoluție; mit; ideologie; contra-cultură; spectacol; experiment; avangardă; teatru de deconstrucție; teatru documentar.

In the 1960s, political theatre began a fast-tracked metamorphosis. It had been established in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while Marxist revolution and transformation, coupled with the triumph of the working class, had been its paradigm. Its founders – Vladimir Mayakovsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht – had been exposed to Marxist revolutionary ideology and were highly receptive to it. Some of them even became involved in left-wing politics. Like the party whose flag they waved, their theatre sought to provoke political actions capable of giving rise to a fair, just society. For the West's left-wing intellectuals, the communist society of the USSR served as a model and tantalised them like a mirage. Fostered by the theatre makers' Marxist leanings in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this tradition of political theatre led to a new vision in the 1960s, propelled by the radical political movements of that decade. The communist revolutionary struggle was marked, in Sartre's words, by "an apparent eclipse" in 1958-68.<sup>1</sup> To some extent, this may sound paradoxical. These were, after all, unsettled and discontented, tumultuous and effervescent times, so much so that by the late 1960s, social tensions were to reach breaking point. That period was marked by protests and street demonstrations, against the backdrop of an ideological contest between political systems and regimes which had divided Europe into two "camps" – the communist one in the East and the capitalist one in the West. Yet the period also witnessed anti-colonial wars, high levels of unemployment caused by the rapid pace of industrialisation, and the nuclear threat. The optimism of change quickly gave way to a broad movement that challenged authority and rejected old values and institutions, but lacked a political program and, most often than not, had no political allegiance. The communist left wing was obviously losing credibility. In 1956 it was undermined by Khrushchev's report, which disclosed the abuses and atrocities of Stalinism, and was destabilised by Moscow's armed intervention against the Hungarian anti-Bolshevist revolution. The New Left was disappointing and liberalism had exhausted the largest part of its pull. In this context, and subject to an ever-increasing American influence, a spirit of revolt against bourgeois culture and against the *status quo* grew amidst the youth. This oppositional ethos was encapsulated by the *counterculture* movement, with its anti-system and anti-ideological stance. Through the voices of Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Guy Debord or Michel Foucault, ideological criticism exposed the system's violence against the individual, incriminating the repressive drives of liberal societies wherein people were oppressed by "the system" (by the repressive mechanisms of the hegemonic order) and urging increased vigilance

<sup>1</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: "Les maos en France," in: *Situations*, X, Politique et Autobiographie, Gallimard, NRF, Paris, 1976, p. 39.

against the various distortions and manipulations official culture enacted upon the citizens.

A similar shift occurred in art. Militant theatre, explicitly supporting Marxist ideology and the Communist Party, lost its momentum when it was deprived of the emblematic figures who had backed it. Brecht died in 1956 and, in France, Sartre moved away from his communist ideals.<sup>2</sup> Piscator continued to be active until 1966 but, during his last years, he committed to filmmaking. He put on stage only one more play, in 1963: Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*. Politically committed theatre was facing great challenges. As Christopher Innes has pointed out, in Germany Günter Grass attacked Brecht in the play *The Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising* (mounted by the Berliner Ensemble) because Brecht had refused to support the workers' uprising against the communist dictatorship in 1953. The uprising had been brutally repressed by Russian tanks on the streets of Berlin, right where Brecht had been rehearsing his own version of *Coriolanus*, at the Schiffbauerdamm. Brecht was criticised for his "betrayal which exposes the hollow political principles of his theatre making."<sup>3</sup>

In the 1960s, political theatre was contemplated by its own creators in a different, much subtler light. Political commitment was replaced by social commitment, which did not exclude a heightened criticism of certain mechanisms of political power: manipulation, violent repression and militarism. Although the artists' militant stance no longer had its former resolve or ideological rigidity, some left-wing theatre-makers – stage directors, from Giorgio Strehler to Patrice Chéreau and Roger Planchon, and playwrights, from Peter Weiss to Edward Bond and John Arden – continued to follow the Brechtian line, from which they had retained some of the theatrical concepts and instruments (such as the distancing effect or epic theatre) and a critical attitude rather than a sectarian ideological vision.

An intriguing point was made in Great Britain (and, in fact, in the whole Western theatre movement) by stage director Joan Littlewood, whose creation is considered by Christopher Innes "a home-grown equivalent to Brechtian theatricality."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sartre had visited the USSR in 1954. He was one of the first French intellectuals to write about Soviet concentration camps and about the executions of political dissidents. He unwaveringly condemned the Soviet forces' brutal suppression of the Budapest revolution and disavowed the "authoritarian drive" of the French Communist Party, with all its subservience to Moscow. He continued to be a leftist thinker, showing paradoxical deference both to Maoism and to the reformers of Europe's communist East, who advocated a "socialism with a human face" (humanistic socialism).

<sup>3</sup> *Apud* Innes, Christopher in: John Russell Brown (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 463.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 457.

While her play *Oh, What a Lovely War* exposed the violence and atrocities of the First World War by focusing on the criminal liability of England's ruling class, it was clearly also a scathing indictment of any and all wars. Together with Peter Brook's *King Lear*, Littlewood's play won the joint prize for the best performance on stage at the Paris Festival in 1963. On the one hand, this type of theatre used various adapted forms of popular entertainment (comic songs, ironic couplets, caricature and grotesque comedy), coupled with music hall, vaudeville and *commedia dell'arte* elements. On the other hand, it employed Brechtian fast-cutting techniques, similar to the ones used in filmmaking. Resorting to *anti-establishment* theatre principles and devices, the stage director managed to reactivate a type of political performance that had risked passing for obsolete. Precisely because of its huge success with audiences, the critics believed the play was a "Trojan horse" whereby "political theatre gained a significant foothold in Britain."<sup>5</sup>

In general, however, political militancy was replaced by humanistic activism in the 1960s. In response to the generalised unrest of their tumultuous era, many artists felt the need to take the side of the underdog in their theatrical actions. Dedicated to the Vietnam War, Peter Brook's *US* (which premiered on 13 October 1966), for example, was more than a mere theatrical experiment seeking to revitalise theatre through politics. Cast in the then-novel shape of *performance*, this play was the author's ardent testimony about the need for artistic conscience to be informed by moral responsibility. Although *US* was a play about a "huge" event that had shaken his conscience, Brook did not become the champion of some political cause. Unlike Brecht, he did not see himself as a revolutionary acting on behalf of the working class, nor did he feel the need to enlighten the masses about their alienated condition. Moreover, unlike Julian Beck and Judith Malina, he was not involved in the counterculture movement. And yet, Peter Brook felt the urge to address the crises of his time, realising that only thus could he prompt the involvement of others in solving them. *US* is the response of a conscience that, while not adhering to any political platform and maintaining its artistic compass, responded to major world events as if they were personal events. "The Vietnam War is a 'huge' event, having the weight and gravity of a Shakespearian text. It is my artistic duty to put it on stage," Brook stated. Driven by a humanistic ethos, Brook's theatrical work acknowledges that art should talk to the individual conscience, while cautioning that we cannot, or should not, remain unstirred by human tragedy.

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<sup>5</sup> See Kershaw, Baz (ed.): *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, vol. III Since 1895, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 399.

The idea that artists should join the social and political avant-gardes of their times is not a singular one. Established actors and directors got involved in civic actions and movements (such as protecting the environment) or showed their solidarity with the unions. Their rebellion was anti-ideological. Giving expression to the post-war gloom, these insurgent artists insisted, one way or another, on the need for fuelling social unrest. They counted on awakening the people's manipulated conscience and on shattering their consumerist complacency, built on oblivion and indifference.

When the separation of art from politics did occur (more frequently in communist Eastern Europe), as in the *poor theatre* of Jerzy Grotowski, it was either conjunctural or blatantly defiant. In the question and answer session following Grotowski's conference at the Théâtre Récamier in Paris, on 27 April 1973, one question regarded the political intentions of the play she had staged over the past ten years. In his answer, Grotowski disavowed the use of explicitly political themes and forms on the grounds that they were artistically rudimentary. He insisted that he did not practise a (straightforward) political theatre, but admitted that "a political stance is unavoidable."<sup>6</sup> There was an understandable forethought in Grotowski's statement. He was touring Western Europe, but would later have to return to Poland: explicitly claiming that theatre could have a subversive function would have meant condemning his own theatre. His answer reflected his experience as an artist in a totalitarian regime.<sup>7</sup>

Grotowski's artistic options were heading in a different direction, toward ritual theatre with metaphysical connotations. In the extremely politicised context of communism, his theatre did not lack, however, the potential for political commentary. His sheer avoidance of the ideological themes that party propaganda sought to enforce on everyone meant that his theatre was already, paradoxically, a political theatre. The ritual theatre he practised could also be read as a refuge from the ideological aggression of the communist regime, which could barely tolerate such resistance.

His emblematic plays did not lack political dimensions. Totalitarianism, red and brown, loomed large in *Akropolis* (1968) and *The Constant Prince* (1967). Although their topic was not borrowed from contemporary times, these plays expanded on the relationship between Power and the individual. The raw pain of the individual abused by power was displayed on stage, and spectators could

<sup>6</sup> Ertel, Évelyne: "Grotowski au Récamier", in: *Travail théâtral*, no. 12, juillet-septembre, 1973, p. 128.

<sup>7</sup> Of course, the issue of freedom, including the artist's freedom, was open to debate in the West. The question of the artist's commitment to political action was explored, for instance, in Tankred Dorst's *Toller* (1968), an expressionistic play.

surely see themselves in the protagonist. Grotowski's staged plays proposed a reconsideration of the idea of community, which was different from, or even opposed to, official ideology. The Communist Party sought to create a community that would be entirely subservient to it, a disciplined and manageable community. By contrast, Grotowski proposed a community of individuals compelled to act according to the dictates of their own conscience, a community that did not slavishly follow the party's commands, but was bent on rediscovering the moral compass of the "I." His project targeted an in-depth knowledge of the Self (which was what the party wanted to obscure). The "I" could no longer be subject to the homogenising "WE" of party principles and dogmas. Instead, it was upheld as a guarantee of authenticity, of uncompromising (self-)interrogation in pursuit of essential spiritual values, which transcended the daily commandments of party politics. We may thus speak, with Grotowski, about a "militancy of non-involvement," frequently also seen in the work of artists behind the Iron Curtain who rejected the idea of a "politically committed" theatre that power so relentlessly insisted on.

However, even in the so-called free world, political theatre had ceased to credit a political power that promised a fair society. Disenchanted, it sided with the vulnerable individual, against any form of power, against Power itself. Theatre took the side of people who had been crushed by the system, highlighting their unescapable condition of captive subjects thereof. For this reason, the *theatre of political construction* was replaced by the *theatre of political deconstruction*. More than once, this form of critical theatre used (for example, as in Dürrenmatt's plays) cynical or grotesque elements derived from black comedy, or religious meditations on the human condition. As Bernard Dort puts it, European political theatre had now regained its purpose: from a reality-adjusting instrument, as envisaged by Piscator, it had become a tool for analysing reality. It no longer sought to transform reality, but to allow the expression of moral issues.<sup>8</sup>

In Germany, a virulent generational confrontation had been triggered around the idea of responsibility and culpability for the humanitarian disaster generated by the Second World War. This generational conflict was revealed by investigative dramaturgy. The formula of *documentary theatre* (or "theatre of fact"), developed by Piscator in the 1920s, became the preferred channel for injecting political substance into theatre. Plays such as Rolf Hochhuth's *The Soldiers* (1967) or Peter Weiss's *The Investigation* (1965) revisited the past with a view to exploring how individuals and institutions could be made to assume responsibility for having tolerated the intolerable. Similar approaches appeared in France, where

<sup>8</sup> See Duvignaud, Jean; Lagoutte, Jean: *Le théâtre contemporain, culture et contre-culture*, Larousse, Paris, 1974, p. 183.

Armand Gatti wrote highly poetic “variations of Brechtian drama,”<sup>9</sup> such as *A Single Man* (1966) or *Vfor Vietnam* (1966).

The emblematic play of the genre and of those times was Rolf Hochhuth’s *The Deputy, a Christian Tragedy* (*Der Stellvertreter. Ein christliches Trauerspiel*, 1963). It was staged by Erwin Piscator himself who had returned from his American exile to West Berlin in 1951. Defined by Patrice Pavis as “theatre which now uses only authentic documents and sources, selected and ‘edited’ according to the playwright’s socio-political bias,”<sup>10</sup> *documentary theatre* espoused a righter-of-wrongs position of moral disclosure via theatrical “trials.” Various aspects of modernity also became topics of dramatic investigation. Thus, drawing on the impact of the invention of the hydrogen bomb, Heinrich Kipphardt’s *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (1964) focused on the conflict between the Oppenheimer’s responsibility as a scientist and his human responsibility, while Peter Weiss’s *The Song of the Lusitanian Bogey* (1967) tackled the exploitation of Africans in Angola by the Portuguese.<sup>11</sup>

The aim of documentary theatre was to raise awareness and to produce a change-generating moral shock. It also had a penchant for parody. Tancred Dorst’s 1968 dramatization of playwright Ernst Toller’s life exposed, according to Christopher Innes, the “slogan function of the technique, the actors being reduced to the position of mere puppets.”<sup>12</sup> In doing that, it recalled the agitprop of Soviet theatre from the immediate aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution.

Of course, we might note that political theatre attempted to reinvent itself in Great Britain by using, on the one hand, dramatic and stage innovations of the so-called “theatre of the absurd,” which transfigured the 1950s, and on the other hand, by assimilating American experiments and introducing the so-called *happening* in theatre. Thus, Edward Bond, a Marxist influenced by Brechtian principles, made his debut in 1965 with a play entitled *Saved*. Although he wrote in the vein of social criticism, he did not resort to the techniques of realism or naturalism but, in deference to the avant-garde (or even flirting with the neo-avant-garde), he used the resources of the absurd and of the grotesque. The final scene, suggesting the stoning of a child, is exemplary and unsettling. Christopher Innes finds it to be illustrative of the violence of new political theatre, which could thus render the violence of a repressive society.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Brockett, Oscar G.: *History of the Theatre*, seventh edition, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1995, p. 514.

<sup>10</sup> Pavis, Patrice: “Postdramatic Theatre”, in: Bryan Reynolds (ed.): *Performance Studies: Key Words, Concepts and Theories*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2014, pp. 397-398.

<sup>11</sup> Brockett, Oscar G.: *op. cit.*, p. 519.

<sup>12</sup> Apud Innes, Christopher in: John Russell Brown (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 463.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 456-457.

When he created *US*, a “group-*happening*-collaborative spectacle,”<sup>14</sup> in collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Peter Brook was already a *cult-director*. He had updated Shakespeare on stage, addressing, through him, the entire contemporary world. The starting point of *US* was not a play but an investigation conducted by the actors themselves. They created the “script” from documents of their own time. Brook acknowledged that what had driven him to stage such a play it was a sense of coercion rather than an artistic option. His improvised spectacle did not reflect a position of artistic iconoclasm but, according to Brook himself, from an awareness of his duty toward the audience. His initiative was intended to compensate for the resignation of other playwrights who had turned a blind eye to the challenges and crises of the post-war period. Refusing to ignore the shattering implications of the Vietnam War, Brook conceived the absence of a text not as a dramatic experiment, but as a necessity. He used a “free” form (“in motion”) that he had not sought after, but simply had to use, for it provided him with the most adequate framework for the expression of a genuinely explosive topic. The lack of a script offered him opportunities otherwise denied by the classical dramatic text. In this case, it was not the will to experiment, but the poetics of authenticity which justified the import of *happening* in theatre.<sup>15</sup> Although the spectacle became Brook’s work and bore the mark of his creativity, the director could not hide his aesthetic dissatisfaction. He acknowledged that, unlike in his stagings of Shakespeare’s plays, he had not reached artistic perfection in *US*. This stance is rather illustrative of the conceptual distance separating Brook from authors of *performances*. Nevertheless, despite having been forced on him by the context, the theatrical experiment was fruitful. Its blend of iconoclastic forms reinvigorated theatre, which could now express new contents / experiences.

By and large, *US* was not Brook’s personal reckoning with American imperialism, but a direct challenge to his London audiences, meant to jolt them out of their complacency and to make them take notice. To that end, it exposed them to a burning event (an act of immolation on the stage), which was supposed to trigger an emotional shock capable of changing the spectators’ mind-set. During a crucial dramatic moment of the show, an actor set fire to a butterfly on the stage. In the director’s view, this gesture was meant to sensitise the audience, otherwise

<sup>14</sup> Brook, Peter: *Spațiul gol*, translated into Romanian by Marian Popescu, preface by George Banu, Bucharest, UNITEXT, 1997, p. 29. (English version: Peter Brook: *The Empty Space*, Harmondsworth, 1968).

<sup>15</sup> The spectacle (performance / or production) was, in fact, quite challenging, at a time when the rules of British censorship prohibited actors from improvising during shows.

incapable of empathising with the Other, to the vulnerability of defenceless beings. This stirred the interest of journalists and of environmental organisations, whose inquiries proved, to some extent, how little they had grasped the gist of this play. Questions regarding the insect's condition prevailed (for instance, whether the butterfly was still alive or repeatedly set fire to on every performance night, or whether Brook had tricked his audiences into believing that), while the play's artistic meaning was ignored (the idea that, like the butterfly, those killed in Vietnam had been horrendously sacrificed for values other than their own).

This “misapprehension,” however, demonstrated how society could rally for its (environmental, political) goals – perhaps less significant than the global, humanitarian purposes envisaged by the artist. Thus, it became clear that the artist’s humanistic vision was incongruous with the ethical horizon of many of his contemporaries.

While Peter Brook integrated the *happening* experiment into his artistic vision, in Germany, Peter Handke capitalised precisely on its eccentric and iconoclastic nature. He presented his first spectacle, *Offending the Audience (Publikumsbeschimpfung)*, at the Experimental Festival of 1966. This anti-play was conceived, according to Christopher Innes, as a “diatribe against theatre going”, seen as an “example of social conditioning.”<sup>16</sup> The spectators were offended because they were depicted, in light of their slavish appreciation of “bourgeois” theatre, as the passive representatives of a repressive state. They showed their obedience and complacency through actions that invited their own levelling or homogenisation. They had no creative initiatives, nor did they encourage such actions, as these would have destabilised the system.

Peter Handke was also the author of an even more challenging form of street theatre. He organised something similar to a protest march of the marginalised, whose clashes with the police were broadcast on national television, enabling him to condemn police brutality and the intolerant nature of a state that defined itself as liberal but exhibited all the signs of a repressive regime. Since movement had been liberated in theatre from the text, the stage, the setting, etc., this became an implicit model of how the individual could be freed from society’s oppressive conventions.

In France, driven by neo-humanism and by a strongly leftist democratism, political theatre became concerned with the “restoration of the civic and moral role of cultural labour.”<sup>17</sup> The dynamic of cultural liberation and emancipation

<sup>16</sup> Innes, Christopher in: John Russell Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 472-473.

<sup>17</sup> Lista, Giovanni: *La scène moderne. Encyclopédie mondiale des arts du spectacle dans la seconde moitié du XX e siècle*, Paris, Editions Carré, 1997; Actes Sud, Arles, 1997, p. 21.

was set in motion by André Malraux, who was appointed Minister for Cultural Affairs by President de Gaulle at the end of the 1950s. His “cultural action” project included the establishment of a national theatrical network, connected to a network of cultural centres. These, forming polyvalent complexes, were to operate as dramatic centres hosting both professional theatrical associations and companies of amateur actors.<sup>18</sup> Malraux did not aim to challenge the conventional expectations of traditional audiences. Instead, he wanted to target a new type of audience, proletarian and peripheral, which he called “non-audience.” His strategy of education by access to culture was strengthened by the success registered by the National Popular Theatre managed by Jean Vilar, which became an alternative to both commercial theatre and bourgeois art theatre.

The end of the 1960s was marked by large protests across the world, culminating, in May 1968, in the students’ protests all across France. These were followed by workers’ strikes, which practically engulfed the whole country. Sartre emphasised that the students’ and workers’ union had enhanced the revolutionary potential of the moment.

1968 was and continues to be a controversial year. Contradictory and often divergent meanings have been assigned to it. Some analysts have talked about a “failed revolution,” while others have identified it with the birth of a new social order. What is certain is that, for all commentators of the phenomenon, 1968 was a major turning point.

This holds true for the sphere of theatrical performance. Insofar as *political theatre* is concerned, interpretations are again divergent: some believe that 1968 marked a climax, a peak moment, a crowning of its creative achievements, while others proclaim that it witnessed a resounding failure, posing a threat to the very existence of this type of theatre.

Thus, on the one hand, 1968 appears to have been a momentous year. The counterculture protest movement seemed to have successfully channelled the era’s political, ideological and aesthetic energies. In France, at least, 1968 capped a period of maximum openness, followed, as Patrice Pavis states, by “les années de plomb”<sup>19</sup> of artistic isolation.

On the other hand, 1968 seemed to attest the incontrovertible failure of the major directions of political theatre. In France, Jean Duvignaud claims, it marked the “end of an illusion, without ever acknowledging its failure.”<sup>20</sup> However,

<sup>18</sup> At that time, Germany had the largest network of theatres: one hundred seventy-five professional theatres, in the FRG. In Austria there were also thirty-six theatres. Twenty of these were in Vienna. Apud Brockett, O.G., *op. cit.*, p. 515.

<sup>19</sup> Pavis, Patrice: *Voix et images de la scène*, Lille, Presses Universitaires, 1985, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Duvignaud, Jean; Lagoutte, Jean: *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Patrice Chéreau does not shy away from describing this adventure as a “sound and exemplary death.”<sup>21</sup> Essentially, the dynamic of cultural liberation and emancipation started and steered by André Malraux in France became a crucible of protest. Paradoxically, though, virulent protests turned largely against the reformers themselves, who had for a long time been recognised as emblematic figures for the French theatrical industry: Jean Vilar and Jean-Louis Barrault. Both were to be treated as blatant conformists.

A key-point of the Paris students’ uprising was their strategic occupation, on 15 May 1968, of the Odéon, in the heart of the Paris *Quartier Latin*, which had been transformed by Malraux into the Théâtre de France. For weeks and weeks, it remained the hub of confrontations. The theatre was led by Jean-Louis Barrault, who had the students’ sympathy. Several “complicities” had brought them together. He had not called the police during a counterculture *happening* at the Odeon.<sup>22</sup> In turn, the students had backed him up in the Gênet “affair”, when *Les Paravents* was put on stage by Roger Blin (premiere: 16 April 1966, the Odéon) and when enraged far-right groups and representatives of the Army organised violent demonstrations in front of the theatre. Now, however, they criticised the iconoclastic theatre-maker, actor and director Barrault for his conservative spirit and his complicity with the violently opposed political power. “Salaud, tu bouffes avec Pompidou,”<sup>23</sup> they would scream, amidst the deafening uproar. Their slogan, “Barrault est mort,”<sup>24</sup> recalled one of the famous protests of the surrealists in the 1920s.

Two months later, Jean Vilar would find himself in a similar situation. In July-August, the twenty-first edition of the Festival of Avignon took place. An important pillar of the movement for the democratisation and decentralisation of French theatre, the Festival had become, in the insurgents’ opinion, a pole of conservatism. Because of a number of entanglements reminiscent of a black comedy of errors, Vilar had invited the protesters to Avignon in May, at a time when events in Paris had truly escalated. Because he had promised to open the Festival’s doors to libertarians and to transform the Cour d’honneur des Papes into a privileged space of free expression, he had come to be associated by the protesters with the Portuguese dictator Salazar. The Festival itself was denounced

<sup>21</sup> Chéreau, Patrice: “Une mort exemplaire”, in: *Partisans*, 1 May 1969.

<sup>22</sup> Rauch-Lepage, Marie-Ange.: “La prise de l’Odeon,” in: Robert Abirached (ed.), *La décentralisation théâtrale*, Cahier no. 8, 1968, *le tournant*, Actes Sud - Papiers, 1994, p. 71.

<sup>23</sup> Raison, F.: “Un directeur dans la tourmente”, in: *Ibidem*, pp. 58-59. This was even more confusing for Barrault, who had landed on the stage of the theatre in a failed attempt at waging peace. He was under the impression that Julian Beck and Malina, who had received his full support, were also in the hall occupied by the agitated crowd.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

as a “supermarché de la culture.” Like the avant-gardist Jean-Louis Barrault in Paris, Jean Vilar was criticised as a conservative and bourgeois spirit – in Avignon, this time, at the heart of theatrical innovation Vilar himself had fashioned.

A sense of failure was also detected by the theatre-makers. The declaration of Villeurbanne, issued by the managers of popular theatres on 25 May 1968, registered the divorce between the cultural activists’ reforming ideas and the taste of proletarian spectators (the “non-audience” targeted by Malraux’s reform), who yearned to experience “bourgeois” pleasures. The gap between reformist programs seeking to emancipate the proletariat and the narrow horizon of the masses (also an effect of their ideological alienation) was significant. Therefore, far from fulfilling its activist goals, the theatre of the late 1960s, with its citizen-oriented pedagogical tendencies, moved away from the spectators in fact. There was a clear divide between the theatre-makers’ projects, targeting political commitment, and the aspirations of their working-class audiences, who preferred entertainment, relaxation and fun.

As noted by Emile Copfermann,<sup>25</sup> the contradictions underlying the doctrine of “popular theatre” were exposed. Its promoters, mostly intellectual artists, believed that this type of theatre transcended cultural codes and structures. Moreover, they thought it could prompt a direct, immediate response, activating the workers’ self-awareness (as victims of technocracy) and, thus, enabling them to shake off the damaging influence of bourgeois ideology and to fight for their political liberation and emancipation. What intellectual artists came realise, however, was that the notion that culture had a liberating potential had not managed, in Theodore Roszak’s words, “to galvanise the proletariat.”<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, the working class seemed none too interested in their own deliverance from oppression.

1968 tested the limits of passivity encountered by political theatre. Theatre-makers engaged in transforming society found that, far from having correctly identified the real needs of the new progressive audience, they had merely projected upon the masses their own values and ideology. They became aware of the rebellious artists’ failure to speak for and on behalf of those masses. The year 1968 spelled failure for the idea of cultural emancipation, transforming, according to Patrice Chéreau, “popular theatre” into an “outdated ideology” and rendering “obsolete” the attempts to increase the spectators’ awareness or political involvement.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Copfermann, Emile: “L'avant-Mai: une crise rampante”, in: Robert Abirached (ed.), 1968, *le tournant*, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Apud Roszak, Theodore: *The Making of a Counter culture*, 1969, in: Heath, Joseph; Potter, Andrew: *Mitul contraculturii. Rebelii, consumul și capitalismul*, translation into Romanian Dan Flonta, Bedros Horasangian, comunicare.ro, București, 2011, p. 34.

<sup>27</sup> Patrice Chéreau cited by Emile Copfermann in: 1968, *le tournant*, pp. 17-18.

As accurately pointed out by Bernard Dort,<sup>28</sup> what had been discredited was not just a cultural policy, but the very notion of “popular theatre” in the service of the public. The illusion, kept alive for more than half a century, of a “final reconciliation between the theatre and the people,” had been shattered, thus bringing a radical approach to culture to an end.

That failure in theatrical practice generated “scepticism with regard to the theatre’s actual capability”<sup>29</sup> to pursue its political mission. Awareness of the theatre’s limited power to politically transform society would shake its practitioners’ confidence in a principle held so dear and intimate by most leftists. Lastly, the counterexamples of the avant-garde reconfirmed the tension between the political and the artistic: their ostensive entwinement was criticised, eventually, for having the flimsy consistency of an illusion.

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<sup>28</sup> Dort, Bernard: *Théâtre réel, essais de critique 1967-1970*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1971, p. 256.

<sup>29</sup> Copfermann, Emile: *op. cit.*, p. 23.



# **Politische Valenzen in Friedrich Dürrenmatts Theaterschreiben und -praxis**

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## **Abstract**

Politics was more than once dealt within the works of the Swiss playwright Friedrich Dürrenmatt, as well as in his theatrical practice as a director. Two of the most interesting examples in this respect are Dürrenmatt's last play, *Achterloo* (1983), and his staging of G. E. Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* (Zürich, 1974). While the first one is a complex and encrypted politics collage, the second one reveals itself on the stage as a critique of a political system that surpasses the boundaries of time and becomes relevant also nowadays.

## **Keywords:**

Friedrich Dürrenmatt; political theatre; *Achterloo*; G. E. Lessing; *Emilia Galotti*.

## **Rezumat**

Politicul este de cele mai multe ori subiectul preferat al dramaturgului Friedrich Dürrenmatt, nu doar în screrile sale, ci și în piesele regizate de acesta. Astfel, două exemple sunt relevante din această perspectivă: ultima sa piesă, *Achterloo* (1983) și ultima punere în scenă, anume *Emilia Galotti* G. E. Lessing (Zürich, 1974). Dacă prima reprezintă un colaj cu substrat politic complex, cea de-a doua este o critică la adresa sistemului politic ce surclasează granițele temporale și dobândește relevanță chiar și în zilele noastre.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

Friedrich Dürrenmatt; teatru politic; *Achterloo*; G. E. Lessing; *Emilia Galotti*.

Im berühmten Buch von Siegfried Melchinger, *Geschichte des politischen Theaters*, wird der schweizerische Dramatiker Friedrich Dürrenmatt mit fünf Dramentiteln erwähnt – darunter, selbstverständlich, in erster Linie, *Die Physiker*, aber auch *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (ein Stück, das „randvoll mit Kritik geladen“<sup>1</sup> ist) und *König Johann* (eine Shakespeare-Bearbeitung oder,

<sup>1</sup> Melchinger, Siegfried: *Geschichte des politischen Theaters* (Band 2), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1974, S. 222.

genauer, eine „Umarbeitung“, wie sie Dürrenmatt selbst nennt). Der Idee, dass die politischen Valenzen von Dürrenmatts dramatischem Werk im Schatten Brechts stehen, widerspricht Melchinger ganz deutlich: „Dieser [d.h. Dürrenmatt] hielt sich weiter von Brecht entfernt als jener [d.h. Max Frisch]; seine Neigungen lagen weniger im Lehrhaften als im Grotesken; sucht man seine Provenienzen, stößt man auf Aristophanes, Nestroy und Wedekind; aber < kritisches Theater > fordert er auf jeden Fall.“<sup>2</sup>

Aus dieser letzten Behauptung kann man schlussfolgern, dass das politische Theater nach Melchingers Meinung, zumindest in Dürrenmatts Fall, „kritisches Theater“ sei. Nun die Frage: Kritik an wem? An der Gesellschaft im Allgemeinen? An den Politikern im Allgemeinen? Dürrenmatt selber antwortet auf diese Frage: Kritik an einem „System, das uns in irgendeiner Form allen droht“.<sup>3</sup> Auf dieses Zitat werde ich im Laufe der Studie zurückkommen.

Hätte Melchinger sein Buch zehn Jahre später geschrieben, dann hätte er Dürrenmatt vielleicht für einen Erneuerer des politischen Theaters gehalten. Das letzte Stück des Schweizer Dramatikers, das dieser 1983 in einer ersten Version veröffentlicht und dann ständig bearbeitet, ist eine besondere Art von politischem Theater: Es ist eine Politik-Collage. Es heißt *Achterloo*.

Erste Anstöße für *Achterloo* gibt das Geschehen in Polen im Dezember 1981, als über Nacht aus einer Volksrepublik eine Militärdiktatur geworden ist. Lutz Tantow beschreibt den politischen Hintergrund: „Schon im Sommer des Vorjahres beginnen Arbeitsniederlegungen als Protest gegen die schlechte Wirtschaftssituation und Versorgungslage. Die Streiks nehmen ihren Ausgang auf der Danziger Lenin-Werft. Der Arbeiterführer Lech Walesa, der maßgeblich an der Planung der Protestaktionen beteiligt ist, gibt am 31. Oktober 1981 die Gründung der freien Gewerkschaftsorganisation < Solidarność > bekannt und stellt damit das bis dahin geltende Machtmonopol der Partei in Sachen Arbeiterversetzung in Frage.“<sup>4</sup>

Folglich kommt es zu mehreren Regierungsumbildungen und in der Zeit vom 11. bis zum 13. Dezember 1981 lässt der General Wojciech Jaruzelski durch Ausrufung des Kriegsrechts und die Entmachtung der Gewerkschaft „Solidarność“ die öffentliche „Ordnung“ herstellen.<sup>5</sup> „Durch diesen Gewaltakt – einen Verrat an den Bedürfnissen des eigenen Volks – wird eine Intervention

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<sup>2</sup> Ebd., S. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Dürrenmatt, Friedrich: *Macht und Verführung – oder Die Macht der Verführung*, in: *Theater. Essays und Reden*, Diogenes, Zürich, 1985, S. 229.

<sup>4</sup> Tantow, Lutz: *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Moralist und Komödiant*, Heyne, München, 1992, S. 221.

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. Knapp, Gerhard: *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, Metzler, Stuttgart, 1993, S.126.

der UdSSR verhindert, die ihrerseits zu unabsehbaren internationalen Konsequenzen hätte führen können“.<sup>6</sup>

Am deutlichsten erzählt aber Dürrenmatt selbst<sup>7</sup>, wie er zum Thema Polen kommt, und wie er das Dramenmaterial entwickelt: In der Nacht zwischen dem 12.-13. Dezember 1981 ruft ihn ein polnischer Schriftsteller - Mitglied der Solidarnosc, dessen Familie er kannte - mitten in der Nacht an. Er war überzeugt, die Polen führen Krieg gegen Russland, die Russen marschieren ein und die Polen erheben sich gegen die Militärdiktatur. Das war der erste Funke. So beginnt Dürrenmatt sich mit Jaruzelski zu beschäftigen und kommt zur Schlussfolgerung, dass der General, indem er das Kriegsrecht verhängt und damit den Einmarsch der Sowjets überflüssig machte, geradezu einen Dritten Weltkrieg vermieden hat. So entsteht die Idee für ein Stück:

„Die Frage war für mich: Wie stelle ich ein Zeitstück dar? Die erste handgeschriebene Fassung hieß: *Der Verräter* (Mai 1982). Dann stellte sich die Frage: Was ist, wenn Jaruzelski ermordet wird? Dann kommt ein anderer Verräter, es ändert sich nichts. [...] Und dann hab ich das ganze Stück umgearbeitet, und das war fertig am 3. Dezember 1982 und hieß *Napoleon will ins Bett*.“<sup>8</sup>

Dieser letzte Text wurde kurz danach in *Achterloo* umgetauft. Wie kam der Autor auf diesen Titel? „Ein verrücktes Wort für ein verrücktes Spiel“<sup>9</sup> antwortet er. Die Assoziationen mit Waterloo, der großen Niederlage Napoleons, sind deutlich. Es gäbe jedoch noch einen Bezug, so wie der Dramatiker behauptet, nämlich auf einen Ort in einem seiner Lieblingsgedichte von Conrad Ferdinand Meyer.

Gerhard Knapp synthetisiert den Inhalt des Stücks vortrefflich: „Der Handlungsablauf des Stücks umfasst 48 Stunden. Napoleon, der eingangs von Woyzeck rasiert wurde, empfängt zunächst den – sicherlich für die USA stehenden – Gesandten Benjamin Franklin, der ihm einen Nichtangriffspakt aufreden will. Der (sowjetische) Chefideologe Robespierre trägt zur weiteren Verwirrung bei. Unterdessen stellt Hus politische Forderungen und droht mit dem Generalstreik, kann aber von Napoleon verrostet werden. Dieser lässt allerdings Hus später verhaften, um einen Einmarsch fremder Truppen zu verhindern. Als Napoleon schließlich zu Bett geht, um seinen wohlverdienten Schlaf nachzuholen, schneidet ihm Woyzecks Tochter Marion – die Prostituierte aus Büchners Drama *Dantons Tod* – mit einem Rasiermesser die Kehle durch. Sie hat sich geirrt und ist als Judith (die Mörderin des Holofernes im Drama Hebbels) ins falsche Stück

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<sup>6</sup> Ebd., S. 126.

<sup>7</sup> Kerr, Charlotte / Dürrenmatt, Friedrich: *Rollenspiele*, in: *Achterloo*, Zürich, 1998, S. 210.

<sup>8</sup> Ebd., S. 211.

<sup>9</sup> Ebd., S. 212.

geraten. Richelieu verkündet derweilen, er sei der < liebe Gott >. Auf den letzten Seiten der Druckfassung [...] erfolgt dann die überraschende Wendung: Das Spiel entpuppt sich als Rollentherapie in einer psychiatrischen Klinik. Alles ist, wie dies bei Dürrenmatt zu erwarten war, gründlich schiefgelaufen. Die Rollen sind durcheinandergeraten, ein Mord war natürlich auch nicht eingeplant. Freilich sind die Ärzte auch irre, wie eben die Irren, die die Rollen von – ebenfalls irren – Politikern spielen. Dürrenmatt: < Die Welt ist ein Irrenhaus ><sup>10</sup>

Wenn man die Anspielung auf die Ereignisse in Polen des Jahres 1981 versteht, dann entdeckt man das regelnde Prinzip für das bunte Bild historischer Gestalten: Napoleon ist in der Verkleidung des Generals Jaruzelski, Jan Hus trägt die Maske Lech Walesas, Benjamin Franklin und Robespierre vertreten die zwei gegenseitigen Mächte, die USA bzw. die Sowjetunion, und Richelieu übernimmt die Rolle des Kardinals Glemp (des Kopfes der polnischen katholischen Kirche). Die Frage, die entsteht, ist, ob alle diese Assoziationen für das breite Publikum eigentlich verständlich sind. Es ist auch die Frage, die Charlotte Kerr, Dürrenmatts zweite Frau, dem Dramatiker im Text *Rollenspiele. Protokoll einer fiktiven Inszenierung* stellt: „Du machst eine Geschichtscollage, spielst mit der Weltgeschichte, plazierst sie in ein Irrenhaus, jeder kann jeder sein, jede Rolle Spielen. Das ist ein intellektueller und komödiantischer Spaß, wenn man deine Assoziationen, Parallelen nachvollzieht. Aber kann das ein normales Publikum? Wer hat schon dein Wissen?“<sup>11</sup> Dürrenmatts Antwort kommt erst später im genannten Text mit dem Hinweis auf den starken Bezug des Stücks mit der Gegenwart: „[...] Jede Figur von heute hat ihre Entsprechung in der Geschichte. [...] Die Geschichte ist immer die Geschichte von Menschen: Wie Achterloo aus der Politstory ausbricht, das Ganze ist mir eigentlich nur ein Vorwand, die Menschen dahinter zu sehen. Nur, ich kenne diese Menschen nicht, Jaruzelski, Walesa, Glemp, ich kann mir andere besser vorstellen, darum ersetze ich sie. Die Frage eines Theaterstückes ist auch: Mit welchen Gewichten spielst du? Napoleon ist mehr als ein General, Robespierre mehr als ein Parteiideologe, Richelieu mehr als Glemp, Hus mehr als Walesa. Napoleon geschichtlich, da bist du an Sankt Helena gebunden, Napoleon heute, da bist du frei. Daran arbeite ich jetzt, und das ist auch die Aufgabe der Regie: Figuren deutlich machen und das Heute.“<sup>12</sup> Der Dramatiker weist im Nachwort (zu *Achterloo IV*) auf das Thema des Verrats als Basis des dramatischen Gesamtkomplexes des Stücks hin und behauptet, dass er immer ein Interesse für den Verrat in der Politik hatte: „Den unmittelbaren

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<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Knapp, S. 127.

<sup>11</sup> Vgl. Kerr / Dürrenmatt, S. 155.

<sup>12</sup> Ebd., S. 241.

Grund, warum ich *Achterloo* zu schreiben begann, sah ich darin, dass der Verrat wesentlich zur Politik gehört. Diese spielt sich auf drei Ebenen ab, auf der ideologischen, auf jener der Wirklichkeit und auf jener der Macht, die gebraucht wird, um entweder die Ideologie durchzusetzen oder sie der Wirklichkeit anzupassen oder gar um die Macht durch Macht zu erhalten: Ohne Verrat kommt die Macht nicht aus. Auch Jaruzelskis Macht nicht.<sup>13</sup>

Das Stichwort „Macht“ führt uns weiter zu Dürrenmatts Theaterpraxis. Nein, es geht hier nicht um die Macht des Regisseurs, wobei Dürrenmatt, durch sein primäres Interesse am Schauspieler, ein ziemlich liberaler Regisseur (im Sinne Peter Brooks) war. Es geht um das Motiv der Macht, das der Dramatiker, nun Regisseur, in den Texten anderer Autoren identifiziert und szenisch verwertet. Das ist eigentlich im Falle aller drei Fremdtexte passiert, die Dürrenmatt selbstständig inszeniert hat<sup>14</sup>: Goethes *Urfauast* (1970), Büchners *Woyzeck* (1972) und Lessings *Emilia Galotti* (1974).

Von diesen drei Inszenierungen ist *Emilia Galotti* die eine, wo das Motiv der Macht auch politische Valenzen auf der Bühne bekommt.

In dem Text, den Dürrenmatt für das Programmheft der *Emilia Galotti*-Uraufführung vorbereitet hat, stellt er seine eigene Deutung des Stücks dar, die uns weiterhilft, seine Regielösungen zu verstehen. Der Beitrag trägt den Titel *Macht und Verführung – oder Die Macht der Verführung*.

Nach Dürrenmatts Meinung sollte eine Entschlüsselung des Lessingschen Dramas („*Emilia Galotti* [...] muß, als Werk eines Kritikers, nicht nur interpretiert, sondern auch entschlüsselt werden“<sup>15</sup>) zwei Grundaspekte in Betracht ziehen: Einerseits stelle dieses Stück die Kritik an einem politischen System, andererseits den Konflikt zwischen Mann und Frau dar. Beide Aspekte werden durch das Stichwort „Missbrauch“ verbunden: „Emilia wird von dem Mann, der sie zeugte, und vom Mann, der sie zum Weibe macht, gleichermaßen mißbraucht – als ‚Ding‘ behandelt statt als Mensch –, [...] Claudia von ihrem Gatten Odoardo, indem er sie unterjocht, in steter Furcht hält [...], Odoardo wiederum von der Gräfin Orsina, Orsina desgleichen von Marinelli, indem er sie, die durchs Bett an die Macht kam wie er durch die Intrige, fallenläßt, Marinelli endlich durch den Herzog Hettore

<sup>13</sup> Dürrenmatt, Friedrich: *Nachwort zu ‘Achterloo IV’*, in: *Achterloo*, Diogenes, Zürich, 1998, S. 554.

<sup>14</sup> Dürrenmatt hat selbstverständlich viele seiner eigenen Stücke inszeniert (z.B. *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi*, *Der Besuch der alten Dame*, *Frank V*, *Porträt eines Planeten* und auch *Achterloo!*), aber die übliche Regie-Situation, wo ein Fremdtext zu inszenieren ist, hat er nur am Schauspielhaus Zürich in den drei genannten Fällen experimentiert.

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. Dürrenmatt: *Macht und Verführung – oder Die Macht der Verführung*, S. 224.

Gonzaga [...]. Aber auch der Herzog wird mißbraucht, vom Maler Conti nämlich, der ihm durchaus nicht zufällig das Porträt Emilia zuspielt, Conti mißbraucht, um nicht nach Brot gehen zu müssen, gleich das ganze System: die Kehrseite des Mäzenats [...].<sup>16</sup>

In Bezug auf den ersten Grundaspekt, nämlich die Kritik an einem politischen System, schreibt Dürrenmatt über die „geniale Weise“<sup>17</sup>, in der Lessing die „Maschinerie der Macht“<sup>18</sup> darstellt: Es geht um das Verhältnis des Herzogs zu Marinelli, das der Schweizer Dramatiker in das Verhältnis zwischen dem unberechenbaren und dem berechenbaren Teil der oben genannten Maschinerie szenisch übersetzt: „Er [Marinelli] ist der Berechnende. Er berechnet, was ihn mit der Macht verknüpfen könnte, er führt aus – instinktiv, aus Furcht, seinen Posten zu verlieren –, was ihm der Fürst suggeriert, und wird damit (hier setzt innerhalb des Trauerspiels die Komödie ein) immer ins Unrecht gesetzt: [...] der Fürst [steht] prompt als Unschuldiger da, beinahe wie ein Wunder – er hat alles nie gewollt, wäscht seine Hände in Unschuld –, um so perfider, weil der Fürst durch seine Unberechenbarkeit jeden Plan zunichte macht.“<sup>19</sup>

Dieses Verhältnis des Fürsten zu Marinelli werde am besten durch den Schlussatz des Stükkes dargestellt, den die Tradition, so Dürrenmatt, ernst nehme, aber der eigentlich der zynischste Ausspruch sei, mit dem je ein Stük endete: „Gott! Gott! – Ist es, zum Unglücke so mancher, nicht genug, dass Fürsten Menschen sind: müssen sich auch noch Teufel in ihren Freund verstellen?“<sup>20</sup> Nicht Marinelli sei der Verführer, sondern der Fürst verführe Marinelli.

Ob diese Kritik an einem (vergangenen) politischen System das Publikum des 20. Jahrhunderts noch angeht, ist eine Frage auf die an anderer Stelle geantwortet wird, nämlich in einem Artikel des Zürcher *Schauspielhaus-Bulletins*, der einige Tage vor der Premiere erschien: „Was Dürrenmatt [...] an *Emilia Galotti* vor allem reizt, ist die politische Konstellation. Was ihn interessiert, ist die Dialektik der Macht, das Verhältnis des Prinzen zu seinem <Minister> Marinelli, das er mit dem Ludwig des XIII. zu Richelieu oder – heute – mit dem Richard Nixons zu Henry Kissinger vergleicht. [...] Marinelli [...] will in dieses Chaos von Macht ein System bringen, er versucht, mit Logik an die Dinge heranzugehen. Kein Mephisto, eher – auf heute gemünzt – ein tüchtiger Generalmanager, der die Dialektik der Macht kalt durchschaut.“<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ebd., S. 224f.

<sup>17</sup> Ebd., S. 225.

<sup>18</sup> Ebd., S. 225.

<sup>19</sup> Ebd., S. 226.

<sup>20</sup> Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim: *Emilia Galotti*, Editiones Helvetiae, Zürich, 1963, S. 80.

<sup>21</sup> o.A.: *Dialektik der Macht*, in: *Schauspielhaus-Bulletin*, 31.05.1974, Zürich.

Alle diese Bezüge zur Gegenwart stützen sich auf Dürrenmatts Überzeugung, dass ein „kernphysikalisches Muster“<sup>22</sup> sich in dieser Dialektik der Macht abzeichne, „das jedem Machtzentrum zugrunde liegt, auch den heutigen Machtzentren [...]“.<sup>23</sup> Er führt fort: „[...] machen wir uns nichts vor: Die Macht ist an sich unberechenbar. Was sie zu ihrer Rechtfertigung von sich gibt, ist Ideologie, Ausrede, noch scharfsichtiger gesehen: Phrase.“<sup>24</sup>

Im erwähnten Programmtext kommt Dürrenmatt zur Schlussfolgerung, dass eine Tragödie, die den Menschen als verführbar zeichnet und ihn sinnlos opfert, sich selbst als Tragödie aufhebe – „Ich spürte diesen Ureinwand gegen das Stück, während die Regie fortschritt, immer quälischer, immer beängstigender“<sup>25</sup>. Und schließlich zurück zum politischen System: „Die Opfer eines Systems für sinnlos erklären heißt das System für sinnlos erklären.“<sup>26</sup>

Dürrenmatt nennt seine Interpretation von *Emilia Galotti*, das er in der Renaissance spielen lassen wird, „finster“<sup>27</sup> und „kierkegaardisch“<sup>28</sup>, aber zugleich betont er, dass das Stück, in dieser Weise entschlüsselt, uns alle angehe: „Wer in Emilias Schuld nur den Verlust ihrer Keuschheit sieht, hat das Stück ebensowenig begriffen wie der, der im Staate Hettore Gonzagas nur ein fingiertes Fürstentum der Spätrenaissance sieht: Es geht um unser aller Schuld, und es geht um ein System, das uns in irgendeiner Form allen droht.“<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Vgl. Dürrenmatt: *Macht und Verführung – oder Die Macht der Verführung*, S. 226.

<sup>23</sup> Ebd., S. 226.

<sup>24</sup> Ebd., S. 226.

<sup>25</sup> Ebd., S. 228f.

<sup>26</sup> Ebd., S. 229.

<sup>27</sup> Ebd., S. 228.

<sup>28</sup> Ebd., S. 228.

<sup>29</sup> Ebd., S. 229.



## **1.2.**

**Voci despre teatrul minorităților**

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**Stimmen über das Minderheitentheater**

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**Voices about the Minority Theatre**



# **Die Deutsche Bühne Ungarn gestern und heute**

**ILDIKÓ FRANK**

(Pecs, Ungarn)

## **Abstract**

The German Stage in Hungary was founded in 1981 as a travelling chamber theater. Nowadays it's financially supported by the Ministry of Culture in Hungary through the Selfgovernment of Hungarian Germans.

## **Keywords:**

political context of founding; tasks; German language; artistic aspects; future perspectives.

## **Rezumat**

Teatrul german din Ungaria a luat ființă în 1981 sub forma unui teatru de cameră de turneu. În prezent este finanțat de Ministerul Culturii din Ungaria prin Autoguvernarea Germanilor din Ungaria.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

context politic instituțional; obiective; limba germană; aspect artistice; perspective de viitor.

## **DER ANFANG**

Die Ergebnisse der Volkszählung des Jahres 1980 waren überraschend und erschreckend für die ungarische Staats- und Parteiführung. Man musste feststellen, dass die Assimilation der Nationalitäten nicht aufgehalten wurde, der Sprach- und Identitätsverlust war bei allen Volksgruppen weiterhin – nun auch statistisch nachweisbar – sehr stark. Während sich der Assimilationsdruck auf die ungarischen Minderheiten insbesondere in Rumänien immer mehr erhöht hat, verlor Ungarn im Gespräch mit den benachbarten kommunistischen „Bruderländern“ also zusehends das Argument, selbst beispielhaft mit seinen Nationalitäten umzugehen und somit ein Vorbild für andere Staaten zu sein. Die ungarische Politik hat sich zum Handeln entschlossen: Die Einführung des zweisprachigen Unterrichts an einigen Grundschulen, die Erhöhung der Zahl

der Nationalitätengymnasien sollten zumindest den Schein erwecken, dass sich Ungarn für eine aktive, fördernde Minderheitenpolitik entschlossen hat. In diesen politischen Kontext fügt sich auch die Gründung der Deutschen Bühne ein.

Als Ausgangspunkt zum Entstehen gestaltete sich der Vorschlag zu einem ungarndutschen Wander-Kammertheater aus dem Jahr 1981. Der Initiator war Dr. Dénes Földessy, Journalist, Dramaturg und Theatertheoretiker.

Die Verwaltung des Komitats Tolnau hat den Vorschlag gut gefunden. Das Kultusministerium und die Demokratische Vereinigung der Ungarndutschen haben ihre Unterstützung zugesagt, mit den organisatorischen Aufgaben haben sie das Kulturhaus der Stadt Szekszárd beauftragt. Man hat mit der Arbeit im Jahr 1982 begonnen und im Prinzip literarische Abende für Schüler, sogenannte ungewöhnliche Deutschstunden, angeboten.

Der erste richtige Theaterabend fand im Jahr 1984 statt mit der Aufführung des Stücks *Anatol* von Arthur Schnitzler.

Im Jahr 1994 ist die Deutsche Bühne aus dem Kulturhaus in das ehemalige Kinogebäude auf dem Hauptplatz der Stadt umgezogen, wo sie auch heute funktioniert.

Das Jugendstilgebäude wurde als das erste Kino der Stadt Szekszárd im Jahre 1913 eröffnet und stand in den Diensten der Filmkunst bis 1991. Nachher wurde es zum Theater umfunktioniert.

## DIE DEUTSCHE BÜHNE UNGARN HEUTE

Ab dem 1. Januar 2012 wurde die Trägerschaft der Deutschen Bühne Ungarn von der Landesselbstverwaltung der Ungarndutschen übernommen. Die Aufgaben des Theaters sind in einer neuen Gründungsurkunde genau festgelegt worden.

Ich möchte Ihnen nun präsentieren wie unsere Institution heute diese Aufgaben, die in der Gründungsurkunde explizit aufgezählt sind, erfüllt.

1. „[Die Institution] trägt mit ihren spezifischen Mitteln zur Bewahrung und Entwicklung der sprachlichen und kulturellen Identität der Ungarndutschen Bevölkerung bei.“<sup>1</sup>

Als wichtigstes Mittel zu diesem Zweck dient das feste Ensemble mit muttersprachlichen Schauspielern. Die Bewahrung der kulturellen Identität des Ungarndeutschstums heißt für das Theater eine kreative Auseinandersetzung mit der ungarndutschen Literatur. Wir bringen bereits vorhandene Werke auf die

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<sup>1</sup> Gründungsurkunde der Deutschen Bühne Ungarn, 2012.

Bühne und versuchen Anregungen fürs Schreiben neuer Werke zu geben. Dazu diente unser Dramenwettbewerb im Jahr 2008, zu der 21 neue Werke eingetroffen sind. Das zum besten Stück des Jahres gekürte Werk, *Bündelball*, haben wir im Jahr 2009 aufgeführt. Heuer [2017] haben wir als neue Initiative ein Hörbuch aus Werken ungardeutscher Autoren produziert.

2. „Bietet dem sich für die deutsche Kultur, Sprache und Literatur interessierendem Publikum deutschsprachige Theatervorstellungen von sprarlicher Vielfalt.“<sup>2</sup>

Die Zusammenstellung des Spielplans wird von zwei gleichwichtigen Gesichtspunkten beeinflusst: Der Zusammensetzung des Publikums und der des Ensembles. Die extreme Vielschichtigkeit des Publikums der Deutschen Bühne Ungarn sowohl in der Hinsicht des Wohnorts als auch der des Alters verlangt eine Vielfältigkeit der Gattungen auf dem Spielplan.

Unser Basispublikum besteht aus Ungarndeutschen (generell ältere Generationen) und deutsch lernenden Kindern und Schülern. Um sie tatsächlich bedienen zu können enthält unser Spielplan in jeder Spielzeit folgende Elemente:

- deutsche Klassiker
- deutsche zeitgenössische Stücke
- Klassenzimmerstücke
- Kindervorstellungen (immer im November-Dezember)
- musikalische Vorstellungen oder Komödien (immer im Frühling)

Da unser Publikum hauptsächlich aus Kindern, Grund- und Gymnasialschülern besteht, muss natürlich der größte Akzent auf Kinder- und Jugendstückgesetzt werden.

Als Botschafter der deutschen Kultur in Ungarn ist es wichtig, deutsche Autoren in den Spielplan aufzunehmen. Die konkrete Auswahl der Stücke wird durch Aspekte wie Bekanntheit des Autors / Titels, Aktualität des Themas bestimmt.

Anhand der Erfahrungen der vergangenen Jahre kann behauptet werden, dass Komödien und musikalische Vorstellungen (Variété, Musical), und eventuell deren Kombinationen äußerst gut verkäufliche Gattungen sind, die sowohl Jugendliche als auch die älteren Generationen der Ungarndeutschen ansprechen. Das künstlerische Niveau wird durch gute Texte und wertvolle Regisseure gesichert.

Um sowohl die sprachlichen als auch die kulturellen Bedingungen auszunutzen ist es für die Deutsche Bühne Ungarn eine Selbstverständlichkeit auch Werke

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<sup>2</sup> Ebd.

ungarischer Autoren auf die Bühne zu bringen. Ein zukünftiges Ziel des Theaters kann sein der ungarischen Kulturpolitik bewusst zu machen, welches Potential in unserem Theater als Botschafter der ungarischen Dramenliteratur steckt.

Die zweisprachigen Jugendvorstellungen helfen den Schülern, die Deutsch als Fremdsprache lernen. In diesem Sinne sind sie also leicht an Schulklassen zu verkaufen.

Autoren mit großem Bekanntheitsgrad könnten manchmal die sprachlichen Barrieren sprengen: Die Bühnenadaptation eines beliebten Romans des Erfolgsautors Paulo Coelho (*Veronika beschließt zu sterben*) hat sogar das nicht-deutschsprachige Szekszárder Publikum ins Theater gelockt. Für sie, Schüler und Erwachsene, werden all unsere Vorstellungen mit ungarischen Untertiteln präsentiert.

Einmal pro Saison kann sich das Theater jedoch erlauben, auch kühnere, künstlerisch anspruchsvollere Produktionen auf den Spielplan zu setzen – diese sind, um die gewünschte berufliche Anerkennung zu erringen, unentbehrlich. Während der Zusammensetzung des Spielplans müssen wir entlang den Achsen Verkäuflichkeit - künstlerische Qualität und Publikum - Branche denken.

3. „Präsentiert Vorstellungen sowohl an ihrem Sitz als auch an anderen Spielstätten.“<sup>3</sup>

Das Theater spielt jährlich 150-160 Vorstellungen und erreicht 13-15.000 Zuschauer. Aus diesen Vorstellungen findet fast 50% als Abstecher statt.

Seit dem Jahr 2005 sind reisende Produktionen ein wichtiger Bestandteil unseres Profils: Produktionen, die mit wenigen Akteuren und minimalem Bühnenbild die Flexibilität der Präsentationen bedienen. Ähnlich den ehemaligen Wandertheater Traditionen wirken die Schauspieler in diesen Produktionen auch als Requisiteur und Techniker mit.

Auch in unseren Koffermärchen bearbeiten wir deutsche klassische Märchen, die mit einem Akteur und einem Koffer leicht auf die Reise geschickt werden können.

Mobilität ist für all unsere Produktionen ein wichtiges Kriterium.

4. „Unterstützt die einheimische deutschsprachige Laientheaterbewegung und die Aktivität anderer deutschsprachigen darstellenden Künstlergruppen.“<sup>4</sup>

Unser Theater unterstützt weitgehend die Arbeit der Schultheatergruppen, bietet einmal pro Jahr einer Gruppe Auftrittsmöglichkeit und betreibt seit fünf Jahren seine eigene Laientheatergruppe, die Junge DBU.

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<sup>3</sup> Ebd.

<sup>4</sup> Ebd.

5., „Pflegt den Kontakt zu deutschsprachigen Theatern und deutschen Bühnenorganisationen.“<sup>5</sup>

In der durchlaufenden Arbeit der Ensemblebildung spielt unsere jahrelange Beziehung zu der ZAV Agentur (Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung) eine sehr wichtige Rolle. Aufgrund dieser Beziehung vermittelt uns die Agentur jährlich mehrere deutsche Schauspieler.

Die für beide Seiten vorteilhafte Zusammenarbeit mit anderen deutschsprachigen Theatern war immer ein wichtiger Bestandteil unseres Leitungskonzepts. Das Wesentliche an diesen Zusammenarbeiten ist es die Kosten zu teilen, und uns ums gemeinsam über den Erfolg zu freuen.

Ein hervorragendes Beispiel für die Bedeutung der internationalen Zusammenarbeit war unsere *Wallenberg*-Produktion, die in Zusammenarbeit mit der Salzburger Theater(off)ensive im Jahr 2011, ausschließlich aus externen Quellen realisiert wurde. Dank dieser Koproduktion hat die Deutsche Bühne Ungarn die Möglichkeit gehabt in Salzburg zu spielen und die beste Kritik der Saison zu erhalten: „In der Sparte Schauspiel gibt es zurzeit in Salzburg nichts Besseres zu sehen.“<sup>6</sup>. Diese Aufführung wurde sogar von der ungarischen Kulturpolitik als wichtige Initiative anerkannt und von der ungarischen Botschaft nach Berlin eingeladen.

Lebendige Partnerschaften pflegt unser Theater außerdem mit folgenden Institutionen:

- Deutsch-Sorbisches Volkstheater Bautzen
- Komödien Herbst Niederösterreich
- Theater Forum Schwechat
- Theater (off)ensive Salzburg

6. „Um ihre Zuschauerbasis zu sichern, sorgt sie für die umfangreiche Bekanntmachung und Popularisierung ihrer Tätigkeiten.“<sup>7</sup>

Wir haben die Aufgabe sowohl das Publikum als auch die Branche durchgehend über unsere Tätigkeiten zu informieren.

Das berufliche Echo ist in der ungarischen Theaterbranche für ein Theater außerhalb von Budapest keine Selbstverständlichkeit – es kann aber erworben werden.

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<sup>5</sup> Ebd.

<sup>6</sup> Thuswaldner, Werner: „Brisantes Kapitel Zeitgeschichte in packender Form“, in: *Salzburger Nachrichten*, 21. Oktober 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Ebd.

Eine hervorragende Chance, um sich zu zeigen war bis jahrelang das Festival für Theater aus der Provinz im Budapester Thália Theater, auf dem wir im Jahr 2011 sogar einen Preis geholt haben. Das Festival wird leider wegen Mangel an Finanzierung seit 2012 nicht mehr veranstaltet.

Seit einiger Zeit hat sich unsere Veranstaltung Minispielzeit zu einem wichtigen beruflichen Forum entfaltet: Zum Saisonschluss werden während einigen Tagen all die Produktionen der Spielzeit aufgeführt. Während der Veranstaltung wird unsere Arbeit von einer Fachjury ausgewertet und zum Schluss der Schauspieler oder die Schauspielerin des Jahres mit einem Preis ausgezeichnet. Seit 2010 nehmen auch einige herausragende Vertreter der ungarischen Theaterkritik an der Arbeit der Jury teil.

Seit 2011 erscheinen jährlich Artikel über unsere Arbeit in der ungarischen Fachpresse, in den bedeutendsten Fachzeitschriften des Landes. Es wurde ein unterstützender Kritikerkreis aufgebaut deren Mitglieder unsere Arbeit kennen, anerkennen und verfolgen.

Der langjährige Plan der regelmäßigen Anwesenheit in Budapest funktioniert bereits teilweise, da wir unsere reisenden Produktionen öfters in Bildungsinstitutionen und Hochschulen der Hauptstadt präsentieren. Doch damit man auch für die Branche anwesend ist, würde man eine feste, repräsentative Spielstätte in Budapest brauchen. Das ist eine unserer zukünftigen Aufgaben.

7. „Pflegt besondere Beziehungen zu deutschsprachigen Bildungseinrichtungen, unterstützt die Schülertheater-Bewegung und betreut talentierte, sich für eine Theaterkarriere interessierende Jugendlichen, bietet regelmäßig Aufführungen dem jugendlichen Publikum an.“<sup>8</sup>

Die zum Basispublikum gehörenden Schüler bedienen wir nicht nur mit Vorstellungen sondern auch mit alternativen Projekten wie thematischen Projekttagen und Projektwochen in den Schulen, Workshops, öffentlichen Proben, Publikumsgesprächen und Klassenzimmer-Aufführungen.

Im Rahmen eines von der EU unterstützten Projekts hatten wir im Jahr 2014 die Möglichkeit, einige unserer bereits abgespielten Vorstellungen wieder aufzunehmen, mit mehreren Kameras professionelle Mitschnitte zu erstellen, die zusammen mit dem von uns erarbeiteten theaterpädagogischen Material für die ungarndeutschen Bildung eingesetzt wurden.

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<sup>8</sup> Ebd.

## ZUKUNFT

Als Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten sehe ich<sup>9</sup> Projekte, die realistisch sind, und nicht zum Selbstzweck dienen, sondern tatsächlich sinnvoll sind. Diese wären meiner Meinung nach:

- Steigerung der fachlichen Anerkennung (Regisseure internationalen Ruhmes, Festivalteilnahmen)
- Systematisierung des existierenden theaterpädagogischen Programms, das Sorgen für Human-Ressourcen mit der ständigen Anwesenheit von deutschen Praktikanten im Bereich Theaterpädagogik, eventuell theaterpädagogische Weiterbildung der Kollegen
- Betonung der Wichtigkeit des Theaters für Ungarn: Regelmäßig ungarische Stücke auf Deutsch zu produzieren, ein regelmäßiges Programm dem Außenministerium anbieten, der nun die Kulturinstitutionen Ungarns im Ausland übernommen hat. Mit einem solchen Programm könnte die Deutsche Bühne Ungarn nicht nur den Ungarndutschen dienen, sondern auch der ungarischen Kultur unentbehrliche Dienste erweisen, was für ihre Existenzberechtigung in der Zukunft sorgen kann.

Die Kraft und Wichtigkeit der Deutschen Bühne Ungarn besteht in ihrer Multikulturalität, Mehrsprachigkeit und unglaublichen Flexibilität. Sie ist der Treffpunkt unterschiedlicher Sprachen, Kulturen und Theaterschulen aus denen einzigartige neue Werte entstehen können.

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<sup>9</sup> Da ich die Deutsche BühneUngarn seit Dezember 2017 nicht mehr leite entsprechen diese Ideen nicht mehr den heutigen Zielsetzungen des Theaters, das zur Zeit nicht mehr als ein provinzielles Unterhaltungstheater zu betrachten ist.



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**TEATRU ÎN DIALOG**

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**THEATER IM DIALOG**

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**THEATRE IN DIALOGUE**

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# **A Comparative Study of the Chinese and Russian Presentations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in the Perspective of Intercultural Theatre**

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## **Abstract**

In 2017, one of the most famous Shakespeare tragedies, *Macbeth*, directed respectively by China's first-class director Chen Dalian and one of the leading European directors Luk Perceval, gained new forms in exotic countries and yet still displayed its eternal charisma and magnificent power. The two interpretations gave the Chinese audience an unprecedented experience due to their strong visual impact. The Chinese version marked a new level in the creation and performance of modern Chinese drama and was widely acclaimed. However, the Russian version seemed an "over-experimental" play to the Chinese audience, so it could not be fully understood and accepted. This paper compares the Chinese experimental interpretation of *Macbeth* with the Russian one from the perspective of intercultural theatre by using theories proposed by many international theatre critics, such as Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba and Richard Schechner, analyzing the stage design, directing concepts and performing skills. It then elaborates on the inner connections of the two adaptations by the two directors from China and Russia by analyzing the complexity of the relationship between audience and performance in intercultural theatre, and the transformation and reception of the cross-cultural adaptation of Shakespeare's plays in China and Russia.

## **Keywords:**

intercultural theatre; Shakespeare; *Macbeth*; comparative studies.

## **Rezumat**

În anul 2017, piesa *Macbeth*, una din cele mai renumite tragedii shakespeareiene, regizate de Chen Dalian, regizor emerit al Chinei, respectiv de unul dintre regizorii renumiți ai Europei, Luk Perceval, prinde noi forme în țările exotice, păstrându-și în același timp puterea magnifică eternă și charismatică. Astfel, aceste două montări au dat prilejul publicului chinez să experimenteze două interpretări fără precedent și cu un puternic

impact vizual. Varianta chinezescă a marcat un nou nivel de creație și interpretare a dramei chinezesti moderne, pe deplin aclamată, în timp ce varianta rusească „mult prea experimentală” nu a fost pe deplin acceptată și înțeleasă de publicul chinez. Acest articol își propune să compare cele două variante din perspectiva teatrului intercultural, pornind de la teorii teatrale dezvoltate de Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba și Richard Schechner, și analizând scenografia, viziunea regizorală și abilitățile interpretative. De asemenea, se are în vedere complexitatea relației dintre spectatori și spectacol în teatrul intercultural, precum și receptarea adaptării scenice a pieselor shakespeareiene atât în China, cât și în Rusia.

**Cuvinte cheie:**

teatru intercultural; Shakespeare; *Macbeth*; studii comparative.

Throughout the history of more than 400 years since his death, Shakespeare's plays have always been considered literary canons, as they were not only sensational in the Elizabethan Period with their rich connotations of plot, all-inclusive language and vivid characters, but are also still capable today of taking Chinese and Russian audiences to an entirely new world. Chen Dalian, an outstanding Chinese director, interpreted *Macbeth* with a contemporary view. Luk Perceval, a German Belgian director, attempted to converse with present-day audiences by staging *Macbeth* both in China and Russia, two countries with completely different drama traditions. By comparing the two cross-cultural interpretations, it is very clear that the exploration of classical plays is endless, but at the same time restricted by the appreciation level of the audience. We have to admit that in the history of drama, many great directors had their own strong personal style, but as to the experiment on intercultural theatre, they had to be prudent with reference to their local experience, especially respecting the aesthetic tastes of their audiences.

After Peter Brook set up his international centre of theatre research (Paris, 1970), Eugenio Barba built his international school of drama anthropology (Denmark, 1979), and Richard Schechner practiced his ideas of “environmental theatre”<sup>1</sup>, intercultural theatre has gradually developed into an independent branch of drama and become the mainstream of drama exploration by international directors. At the same time, European and North American drama also developed from classical “literary theatre” to modern “director theatre”. In the context of globalization, the frequent theatrical exchanges between Chinese and non-Chinese

<sup>1</sup> Schechner, Richard: *Environmental Theater*, Hawthorn Books, New York, 1973, p. 1.

productions provide an opportunity for cultivating a theory of intercultural theatre. Starting with *The Intercultural Performance Reader* edited by Patrice Pavis, the concept of Intercultural Theatre has become clearer: “In the strictest sense, this creates hybrid forms drawing upon a more or less conscious and voluntary mixing of performance traditions traceable to distinct cultural areas”<sup>2</sup>.

With the spread of this concept, many non-Chinese dramatists have indulged themselves in oriental drama. The intercultural theatre with which they experiment not only produces sparks of art and cultural collision, but also drives a group of avant-garde directors from East Asia to explore this new framework. Shakespeare’s plays, when adapted and performed in China and Russia, all belong to the category of intercultural theatre. The reception of such interpretations depends largely on the expertise and level of appreciation possessed by the audience.

### Famous Chinese Adaptations of *Macbeth* throughout History

According to written records, the earliest adaptation of a Shakespearean play in China was *The Merchant of Venice* in 1896<sup>3</sup>. Its success began the trend of adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays in China. The very first recorded performance of *Macbeth* was in 1916<sup>4</sup>. In 1945, Huang Zuolin directed *A Hero in a Troubled Time*, which was based on *Macbeth*. In the same year, the Central Academy of Drama adapted *Macbeth*. In recent years, there have been many famous adaptations of *Macbeth*, emphasizing its images of blood, desire, and evil, among others. Chinese Operas were also created following the formal styles, such as the Peking Opera and *kunqu* opera, with different titles for different interpretations of *Macbeth*. In 1986, at the first Shakespeare Festival in China, the Shanghai Kun Opera Troupe presented a scene of *kunqu* entitled *Bloody Hands*, which was directed by Huang Zuolin. The complete play was presented the following year. Consequently, the Troupe was invited to perform its interpretation at the Edinburgh International Festival, and subsequently staged it in twenty-three British cities. In the same year, the Contemporary Legend Theatre, established by an actor from the Peking Opera, staged *The State of Desire*. During the following thirty years, the play was not only staged at the British National Theatre, but also

<sup>2</sup> Pavis, Patrice: *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Wang Fengxia: “The Performance, Edition and Significance of *The Merchant of Venice* in Late Qing Dynasty and Republic of China”, in: *Journal of Guangzhou University*, No. 11, 2013, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Zhu Fanghui: *Adaptation Studies of Intercultural Opera*, National Press, Taipei, 2012, p. 73.

toured the world's major art festivals. In 1987, the Wuhan Peking Opera Troupe staged *The King of the Loot*. The Shanghai Academy of the Peking Opera staged *The Dream of King Qi* in 1995, followed by a *chuanju* performance of *Lady Macbeth* in 1999, a *yueju* staging of *General Malong* and a Cantonese Opera *The Treason of a Hero* in 2001.

Harold Bloom once commented in *Dramatists and Dramas* that *Macbeth* is the peak of Shakespeare's plays, even above *Hamlet* or *King Lear*. These adaptations not only popularized *Macbeth*, but also localized it, reflecting the social significance of Shakespeare's plays for the Chinese society and gaining practical value in China's theatre. Chinese adaptations of Shakespeare's plays have also enriched the world stage, with their unique way of dramatic expression and unparalleled pattern of combining traditional local operatic styles with the classic international style.

Previously, non-Chinese scholars tended to interpret political indications in Chinese adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in the fashion stated by Alexa Alice Joubin in *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* written in 2009. Lines from Shakespeare's plays quoted by Chinese political leaders in speeches given on various occasions were scrutinized in the book. With the publication of a Chinese translation of this famous monograph in 2017, Seto Hiroshi, a Japanese expert in modern Chinese spoken drama, arranged to have his monograph *Shakespeare in China – a History of the Reception of Shakespeare plays by the Chinese People* published in China in the same year. Chinese adaptations of Shakespeare's plays have become a primary focus in the field of international Shakespeare studies. Indeed, an article entitled *The Rise of China and the Future of Shakespeare Studies authored by Adele Lee, an assistant professor of Emerson College*, was presented at the third biennial conference of the Asian Shakespeare Association in May 2018, which perhaps inevitably aroused tension and fear among international scholars. It would appear that Shakespeare's plays, as a world heritage, are capable of either alienating or uniting different countries according to the different ideologies which underlie the adaptations. If this supposition is true, the aesthetic values of Chinese adaptations of Shakespeare's plays deserve more attention and studies in the twenty-first century.

### **The Boldness of Chinese Experimental *Macbeth***

To commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the Chong Qing Drama Arts Center staged the experimental modern dramatization of *Macbeth* in 2016. On 24 and 25 Oct. 2017, in Cheng Du, the capital city of China's Sichuan

Province, *Macbeth* achieved sensational success at the First Cheng Du Drama Festival. It was presented by the national first-class director, Chen Dalian, and the leading stage designer of the China National Opera House, Ma Lian Qing, benchmarking a new level of creation and performance for Chinese modern drama. It was the second performance of the play after its 2016 debut in Chong Qing. Because of the play's violence, cruelty and sexuality presented, it was unfortunately then banned in Chong Qing, one of four cities directly under the control of the central government.

Chen Dalian's interpretation of Shakespeare's play is a masterpiece of psychological characterization in a gloomy and mysterious atmosphere. Chen shifted the setting from an ancient battle field to a slaughterhouse. He kept the original dialogue, but the role of Macbeth was changed from a warlord to the manager of a slaughterhouse, and the monarch Duncan transformed into the owner of the factory. Altogether there are nine scenes and five characters in the play, which were performed by one actress and two actors: Macbeth was played by an actress to show his irresolution, and Lady Macbeth was played by an actor to show her ambition and lust. Another actor played the roles of Banquo, Macduff and Fleance. The incantations of the three witches haunted the slaughterhouse with their prophecy of the main character's life and tragic ending; with feminine and masculine voices alternating, the audience could imagine the constantly changing images of the three witches.

The director of the play was brave enough to challenge the conservative mode of modern Chinese drama. Brutality, bloodiness and sex are all presented, which make the audience breathlessly hooked. Every time Macbeth is too mentally weak to kill Duncan, Lady Macbeth tempts and persuades him by having sex with him. "It is neither a performance, nor a dramatic image, but a force from the bodies which are given forms"<sup>5</sup>. The three different bold postures made the old generation theatre critics uncomfortable. After the performance, a heated discussion took place among the director, players and the audience, akin to an academic seminar. One of the audience members said she could not understand how the noble and brave general Macbeth had been instigated by his greedy wife to commit the murder until she watched the play.

The murder of Duncan by Macbeth was precipitated by the starting of an electronic motor saw. Dazzling sparks, pungent smells and blinding fumes overwhelmed the audience with the tension of slaughter. Enhancing this, the roles of Macbeth

<sup>5</sup> Barba, Eugenio: "Theatre Anthropology", in: *Drama Review*, 1982, p. 8.

and Lady Macbeth were exchanged twice to illustrate Macbeth's masculine power after he became king. This performance technique constitutes a unique experimental staging of *Macbeth* by very cleverly presenting the fact that the separate natures of Macbeth and his wife are integrated into an organic whole by the process of regicide and usurpation. The aim of Chen's ingenious role-changing was to draw the audience's attention beyond the play itself and give them incentive to ponder who Macbeth really was by examining the action and characters from the perspective of a bystander.

Chen's interpretation was designed according to the theory of alienation proposed by Bertolt Brecht. Chen's intention was to break the customary emotional bond between audience and characters created in the initial part of the play in order to achieve the effect of strangeness, and thus cultivating the ability of reflection on the part of the audience. Though the effect of alienation was designed among the characters on the stage, it was also concerned with the audience's condition of watching the play off the stage. In theatre presentations of *Macbeth*, the characters of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and Banquo stand apart from the action from time to time in order to comment on the role he or she is enacting. In those moments, their lines become voiceover. The players thus behave as bystanders. Chen's interpretation, by complying with Brecht's theory of alienation, achieves even more of this desired effect, which is almost never achieved by Chinese operas in traditional forms.

In order to disclose the perceived state of the characters' internal psychology, the director Chen Dalian adopted a special type of stage expression that is often used in "the freehand brushwork of traditional Chinese painting"<sup>6</sup>. It is also the main principle for visual design of a performing space in Chen's *Macbeth*. With this distinctive and innovative concept, the stage designer Ma Lianqing created a slaughterhouse workshop as the main performing space. Many bodies of pigs were hung on red vertical chains. "A working table and two chairs, common stage properties in traditional Chinese opera"<sup>7</sup>, were set in the washing pool in the middle of the stage. With the aesthetic effect dominated by animal bodies, the associative imagination of the audience was motivated to create the expected theatrical effect.

<sup>6</sup> Xinbin, Wu: "A Director Who Directs Plays with His Right Brain: A Survey on the Artistic Features of Chen Dalian". To Perform with the style of Freehand Brushwork: A Collection of Drama Reviews. China Drama Publishing House, Beijing, 2008, p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> Dalian, Chen: "Contemporary Theatre Creation: Transboundary Mirror Images of Drama and Chinese Traditional Operas", in: *Fu Jian Art.* No.5., 2013, p. 17.

With the unfolding of the dramatic situations, the play exposed the inner conflict, the struggle, the misery and the desperation of the Macbeths as they proceeded to kill Duncan, Banquo and the whole family of Macduff. The tense relationship between the two main characters revealed the consequential absurdness of life produced by ambitious lust. The design of the setting and the costumes of the players helped to elevate the aesthetic value of the play. For example, high-tech lamps with special effects were used to create a depressing and bloody atmosphere for the slaughterhouse workshop. The resultant mottled and blurred light was projected onto the players. At crucial moments of the play, colorful light was used to produce a surprising visual change on the equipment suspended over the performing space. In this way, the inner spiritual world of the characters was expressed externally. The cadence and mood of the play were thus influenced by the “vision of mind”<sup>8</sup> lighting system, as Chen described it.

After watching the play, the audience would be completely immersed in an atmosphere of hopeless oppression and might realize that at a crucial time of life, a momentary slip would doom one eternally. To be kind or evil, upright or sinful? That is the question. In the instant of choice before slipping down, should one control lust and dismiss temptation, or step onto the wrong path and never turn back? Without thinking through this issue, anyone could be a Macbeth.

Chen Dalian’s directorial choice exposed the core of *Macbeth* to a Chinese audience, a fierce and vivid presentation of intercultural theatre. Though offered in his unique way, the play complied with the original script for the most part. The adaptation was based on the translation of Shakespeare’s plays by Fang Ping, a famous translator and former president of the Chinese Shakespeare Association. In this version, the blank verse in Shakespeare’s plays was translated into Chinese poems, which are rhythmic to read and easy to understand. The reason why Chen chose Fang Ping’s version was that Fang intended the scripts to be staged and not just read.

Therefore, the success of this performance shows that classical plays can be presented in numerous ways. A fusion of contemporary aesthetics and Chinese traditions can initiate an inner resonance within a contemporary Chinese audience and stimulate self-examination and reflection on the non-rationality and absurdity existing in the depth of human nature.

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<sup>8</sup> Here the author refers to the directing design written by Chen Dalian.

Chen Dalian thinks that Shakespeare's plays should not be high art that requires ordinary people to lift their heads and look up<sup>9</sup>. When Chinese people talk about Shakespeare at the present time, most of them still think that his plays are far away from everyday life. This attitude hinders ordinary people from exploring the essence of Shakespeare's plays. In order to bring Shakespeare down to earth, Chen's experimental *Macbeth* was a method of popularizing it so that Chinese audiences can watch Shakespeare's plays with basic knowledge.

Interestingly and coincidentally, Chen Dalian encountered Luk Perceval, the director of another interpretation of *Macbeth* in Russia, at a 2012 senior directors' workshop given by Perceval at the Shanghai Theatre Academy. Chen was able to follow Perceval's instruction with the help of a translator and enjoyed the one-week workshop very much. Every morning, yoga was practiced as warm-up before the workshop. This emphasis on the body in theatrical training in Perceval's workshop was different from the training mode of traditional Chinese performances. The combination of the European directing mode with Chinese traditions gave Chen a great deal of inspiration. At the end of the workshop, Chen presented a scene of *Macbeth* as the final production, because Shakespeare's plays are considered an international discourse that can be understood by people from different countries, eliminating cross-linguistic barriers. That very scene was the bud of the interpretation which Chen later presented, as described above.

### **The Russian Seemingly “Over-experimental” *Macbeth***

At the end of April and the beginning of May 2017, the famous German Belgian director Luk Perceval presented his Russian Theatre version of *Macbeth* in Harbin's Grand Opera House, Beijing's Centennial Opera House, and Tianjing's Grand Opera House.

Luk Perceval is famous for his ten-hour-long marathon play *Ten Oorlog* (1997), a spectacular adaptation of Shakespeare's five historical plays. After the great work was shown at the Berlin Drama Festival, Perceval became famous overnight. For many years, Perceval has been dedicated to Shakespeare's plays. In 2002, he transformed King Lear into a patient with Alzheimer's disease at a home for the elderly. In 2003, he created the image of Othello as an old man, whereas Desdemona appeared as a young girl. In 2010, at the First Lin Zhaohua Drama Invitation Show in China, the role of Hamlet alternated between two actors, and the

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<sup>9</sup> The author conducted an interview with Chen Dalian during the First Cheng Du Drama Festival on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2017. Here the author refers to the interview recorded.

stage backdrop was thousands of military coats hung vertically. Well appreciated within the profound tradition of European drama, his plays are frequently shown in China alongside other contemporary European dramatists.

Every version of a play directed by Perceval is completely different. Just as Jerzy Grotowsky practiced his idea of “Poor Theatre”<sup>10</sup>, Perceval has always chosen the untraveled path to explore his dramatizations. His three adaptations of *Macbeth* were presented in varied forms. In *Macbeth* 2004, the play began with a sudden downpour, in which Macbeth appeared as a melancholy general; glaring stage techniques and brilliant images definitely won the love of the Chinese audience. In *Macbeth* 2011, the setting was modern society, in which Macbeth was a thoughtful entrepreneur. The plot developed in a cold style, which surprised the audience of young people fond of avant-garde drama. For his third adaptation, the director was faced with a predicament, as he could not repeat the two former versions, but had to make a breakthrough and show the aspects not present in the two former versions. Perceval’s *Macbeth* on the fourth Lin Zhaohua Drama Invitation Show was originally adapted in 2014. Setting the play again in modern society, he used a lot of voice-over and monologues in it this time, while the inner storm of the couple Macbeth was presented by external bodies.

As for stage design, Perceval was apparently influenced by the renowned Japanese director Akira Kurosawa’s film *The Throne of Blood*, which was released in 1957. Before the 2017 performance started, the auditorium was filled with white fog pouring from the top of the stage, creating an atmosphere of psychological drama. On the simple avant-garde stage were placed numerous slanted interwoven steel tubes which divided the stage into several areas. Water, bucket, paper crown, bottle and knife were the only stage props. In black and white, Perceval recreated the world of *Macbeth* as one of despair, by enlarging the inner space of the two main characters to infinity. The desire became bright and clear. Perceval then subverted the aesthetics of the audience by offering Macbeth as a drunken cowardly loser with a big belly. Macbeth could thus be anyone in the real world and his tragedy could happen to anyone with endless desire and inappropriate ambition.

Working within the parameters set by Jerzy Grotowski, who believed that too much light, costume, makeup and props on stage obscure the most important element – namely “the direct confrontation of human beings”<sup>11</sup> , Perceval’s

<sup>10</sup> Grotowski, Jerzy: *Towards A Poor Theatre*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1969, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 55.

minimalist design of *Macbeth* belongs to “Poor Theatre”. As with Peter Brook, who proposed the dramatic concept of “Empty Space”<sup>12</sup> and created a spectacle which could be understood by people from different cultures, nationalities, and languages, Perceval also devoted his energies to creating a dramatic space that could be entered by anyone, by adopting a minimalist or unadorned technique which eradicates cultural influences. This is the key point to understanding Perceval’s 2017 *Macbeth*.

The theme of the play is captured in the famous line from Act 1 Scene 4: “Stars, hide your fires. Let not light see my black and deep desires.” Perceval extracted one scene from the original play, eliminated some characters and plot development, separated the remaining plot and lines, and then recombined them. The identities of the retained characters were blurred by the redistributed lines in the reworked events. The logic of the lines appeared not to be as important as in the original play, since struggle and desire were converted into Macbeth’s murmuring. In order to prove himself, Macbeth took a risk and ran for power, but indulged in alcohol while desperately searching for ways to get rid of anxiety. The audience could feel the suffering soul of a neurotic. Ambition and desire were no longer the focus of the play, but the relationship of gender and power presented by the confrontation between the Macbeths.

The role of Lady Macbeth was performed by a female student who had just graduated from a drama academy. Lady Macbeth was no longer the scheming, ambitious and vicious original character, but a suddenly mad young lady full of vigor.

The three witches who foretold the tragic fate of Macbeth were performed by five naked and silent women with long-hair. Their original spoken lines, with the function of prophecy were externalized into choreographic movements in concert with the mood of Macbeth. Compared to Chen Dalian’s *Macbeth*, Perceval’s version performed at the Harbin Grand Opera House in 2017 was intended as “black drama with a fable-like nightmare”<sup>13</sup>. The characteristics of Perceval’s works are distinctive, for he believes that “Theatre is writing in the sand”<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Brook, Peter: *The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate*, Penguin, London, 1968, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Harbin Grand Opera House. “The Most Profound Macbeth in History”. Sohu. 2017. [http://www.sohu.com/a/135030298\\_750633](http://www.sohu.com/a/135030298_750633)[last accessed 24th Feb.2019].

<sup>14</sup> Perceval, Luk: “Luk Perceval – Director of Macbeth: Theatre Is Writing in the Sand”. Gewara.2017.<http://www.gewara.com/wala/101872450>[last accessed 29th Nov.2018]

He continually pursues the contrast of two extremes. Not being interested in repeating himself, the third *Macbeth* he directed was presented as a story about life and death, told by an idiot demonstrating a heart-breaking resistance toward nature and fate. Hans Thies Lehmann, the famous German theatre critic, reviewed this interpretation as follows: “Everything that concerns rules in drama seems to be not important at all. They can be subverted and teased. The only thing that matters is the intention of a play to stimulate the audience to be more active and positive, full of freedom, personalized participation and perception”<sup>15</sup>. Perceval’s *Macbeth* was therefore a faithful presentation of the original play, not in form but in spirit. He distilled the essence of the play and put it into a modern context. From the perspective of post-dramatic theatre theories, his idea is understandable. Perceval showed his mature artistic views and skills, his in-depth understanding of Shakespeare’s plays, his disassembling of the nature of drama, his use of minimalist stage design, and his experimentation with a bizarre acting style.

After Perceval’s 2017 *Macbeth* was staged in China, it immediately aroused various mixed opinions among Chinese audiences. Some, who knew more about European drama and theatrical theories, could participate in the unique development of his interpretation. However, for most in the audience, especially the old generations who grew up with the revolutionary model performances which were the only form of drama during the Cultural Revolution. They were accustomed to glorious images of heroes on stage. The nakedness of the players could hardly be accepted. And the metaphor of blood represented by water would not be perceived by most people in the Chinese audience.

Therefore, Perceval’s *Macbeth* stands out as one of the most controversial cross-cultural plays to be staged in China. However, to some extent, that is also the cause of the play’s success. The well-acclaimed presentation in Russia was criticized by the young but experienced Chinese theatrical critic Zhang Chang, who commented: “Shakespeare is killed by the play, just as Duncan is killed by Macbeth”<sup>16</sup>. On the whole, the first reason why the Chinese audience would find Perceval’s interpretation difficult to understand is that the linear narrative is disorganized from the very beginning of the play. The montage of this *Macbeth* could be said to follow the stream of consciousness or sleep-talk of the

<sup>15</sup> Lehmann, Hans Thies: *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Li Yinan, Beijing University Press, Beijing, 2010, p. IV.

<sup>16</sup> Zhang Chang: *Shakespeare Was Destroyed by the Russians*. Teng Xun, 2017. <http://dajia.qq.com/original/category/zc20170509.html> [last accessed 23rd Feb. 2019].

Macbeths. That might initiate controversy in China, as both montage and stream of consciousness did not originate in China and gave the Chinese audience a sense of disorder. The second reason is because of the cross-linguistic feature. The original English Shakespeare play was staged in Russian in China, thus crossing two languages. Even if the Chinese audience were familiar with the plot and could even read the Chinese subtitles, it would still be difficult for them to appreciate the play if trained within the criteria of appreciation for traditional Chinese opera. The third reason is that most Chinese audiences are reluctant to accept the postmodernist choreography – Macbeth sinking his head into the water of a bucket, and then throwing his head crazily, drinking madly even from an empty bottle. All these madness and insanity instances are rare on the drama stage in China. The acceptance level of the Chinese audience would be strongly challenged.

Throughout the forty years of Perceval's directorial experience, he has known the original plots of plays very well. What concerned him the most was how to go beyond regular staging techniques and bring forth new creativity. Because of this approach, he inadvertently neglected the prospective response of his cross-linguistic audience, especially the acceptability level of the Chinese audience. Under this circumstance, even if the audience knew the plot of the play well, most of them would still unconsciously search for familiar and stereotypical images of the characters; consequently, most would be disappointed. In fact, with regard to the Chinese audience, the significance of watching this interpretation would be to hear the voice that is different from ours, to experience a different way of presenting one of Shakespeare's plays by a director who comes from abroad, and to perceive the cultural expression and dissemination of different peoples.

### **Inner Connections of the Two Presentations of *Macbeth* in Intercultural Theatre**

Both the Chinese and Russian interpretations of *Macbeth* focus strongly on the central character's dependence on the body of Lady Macbeth, in order to critique the gender power dynamic between male and female in modern society. The three different postures of sexual activity in Chen Dalian's *Macbeth*, and the act of Lady Macbeth treading on her husband's body in Perceval's *Macbeth* is intended to make manifest the psychological conquest of Lady Macbeth over Macbeth. Physical control and forceful expressions by the players are very important in displaying this. Comparatively, body language is predominantly crucial in

Perceval's *Macbeth*, weakening verbal language. It parallels Grotowski, whose theatrical theories have influenced European drama deeply, and whose ideal player is called a "Holy Actor" and a "Doer"<sup>17</sup> capable of inspiring the deepest emotion in the audience, thereby achieving 'holy presence'. Perceval always challenges the possibility of bodies in drama. Perceval's way of dealing with classical drama is very common in international theatre at present. Deconstruction of the classics means to fragment and reconstruct the original text, by eliminating the omniscient and omnipotent God perspective. The resultant language fragments are the presentation, instead of the logic and continuity of the original story. Chen Dalian once highly praised Perceval's ability in restructuring plays and his professional skills.<sup>18</sup>

When watching Chen Dalian's *Macbeth*, Chinese audiences, who are accustomed to appreciating drama from a literary perspective, are able to receive the whole story in all of its thought-provoking connotations. Conversely, Perceval exposes the nature of *Macbeth* with limited dramatic scenes, which Chinese audiences find very hard to understand: no dialogue in the first five minutes of the play, Macbeth kneeling in the front area of the stage, sinking his head repeatedly into the water bucket, and then throwing his head about madly, while naked witches silently watch the tragedy unfold from the dark. A sense of suffocation exudes from the stage to the audience.

Perceval's abstract expression appears to extend beyond the acceptability level of Chinese audiences. Perhaps influenced by one of the famous modernist absurd plays—*Waiting for the Godot*—in the process of reconstruction of the play, Perceval cuts the original powerful lines down to a quarter of their length. Even when the characters are speaking their reduced lines, they are mumbling like patients suffering from depression, signifying the famous lines in Act 5, Scene 5 of *Macbeth*:

"Life' s but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more. It is a tale, / Told by an idiot full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing."

In addition, the two interpretations also demonstrate aspects of the "Theatre of Cruelty"<sup>19</sup>. Antonin Artaud believed that cruelty is the nature of life, and theatre

<sup>17</sup> Grotowski, Jerzy: "From the Theatre Company to Art as Vehicle". *Thomas Richards' s at Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*, Routledge, London, 1995. p. 82.

<sup>18</sup> Here the author refers to the interview record.

<sup>19</sup> Artaud, Antonin: *Collected Works*, trans . V. Corti, Calder & Boyars, London, 1974, p. 52.

is a means by which an audience can realize that cruelty. In Chen Dalian's play, one can posit that it is cruel to have Macbeth performed by an actress, and then to have gender transference happen twice, making the audience confused and blinded both in eyes and heart. It is cruel that slaughtered animals are hung on red chains, and two buckets of blood are spilled over the stage by Lady Macbeth. And it is also cruel that an electronic saw is started twice to indicate the killings of Duncan and Macbeth, with sparks flying while thick smoke irritates noses and noises prevail in the whole theatre. In Perceval's play, it is unacceptable cruelty that the most masculine image in Shakespeare's play is changed into a hesitant coward, whose irresolution may be compared to Hamlet's. It is unbearable cruelty that the original plot is fragmented into pieces of illusion by means of stream of consciousness and montage. It is absolute cruelty that the stage is designed as a primitive waste land, but all the characters are dressed in modern costumes, indicating the tragedy of modern society as T. S. Eliot predicted. Both interpretations from China and Russia subvert the classical image of *Macbeth*, which is cruel to the audience but is also extremely difficult for the directors. Since directors are the main creators of theatre, the reception or criticism of an audience gives space for self-improvement for the directors.

In Chen Dalian's *Macbeth*, Chinese audiences are able to feel the cadence and pattern of Chinese traditional performance by delicately balancing intensity and relaxation. The trace of Chinese traditional performance cannot be easily removed from the works of Chinese drama directors when they present modern spoken drama, even if they had once been strongly influenced by the plays of the former Soviet Union created under the Stanislavski system. In modern Chinese spoken dramas, most players still perform their movements around a table and two chairs, with more or less transformations. Looking back now and comparing the long inheritance of Chinese traditional performances to the recent Chinese dramatists' assimilation of the Stanislavsky system, the results appear over-conceptualized and superficial, as there are still so many constraints on the stage which limit the functions of drama when shaping it to complement an ideological control. This background has undoubtedly led to the rigid pattern of appreciating modern spoken drama among contemporary Chinese audiences.

During the twentieth century, traditional Chinese performances and European-based drama experienced tremendous changes. In 1907, Li Shutong, Ouyang Yuqian and some other Chinese students studying in Japan established the Spring Willow Society, a performance group of modern drama, and performed *The Lady of Camellias* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. During the early years of the Republic

of China, modern drama, as a transnational form, became popular alongside the May Fourth Vernacular Movement. During the Cultural Revolution, model performances played the function of political propaganda. Nowadays, modern spoken drama, as an irreplaceable form of art within Chinese culture, has achieved a creative transformation. Though it is different from traditional Chinese opera, which expresses plot through singing, reading, doing action, and fighting, modern Chinese drama creates a realistic sensory vision with dialogue, body movements, and stage settings.

As for representing dramatic themes and artistic forms, there is still a deep connection between modern spoken drama and traditional Chinese opera. In 2012, Chen Fang, a successful adaptor of Shakespeare's plays by means of the form of traditional Chinese operas, published her monograph *Shake-xiqu: Cross-cultural Adaptation and Performance*, in which she gave "Shake-xiqu" a definition: "Chinese traditional operas that are adapted from Shakespeare's plays"<sup>20</sup>. The forms of traditional Chinese plays combined with the plots and spiritual core of Shakespeare's plays will gradually become a mainstream of cultural fusion in Chinese theatre, with strong oriental aesthetics and effective dissemination of Chinese culture.

Ironically, in China, many traditional dramatists and Chinese opera theorists often criticize the destruction and transformation that modern spoken drama has brought to traditional Chinese opera, by claiming that the ontological feature of traditional Chinese opera is dimmed by introducing the elements of modern spoken drama. Few of them express gratitude to modern spoken drama and most of them neglect the worth and vitality that modern spoken drama has brought to traditional Chinese opera by exaggerating the drawbacks of mingling them. It should not be difficult to admit that modern spoken drama has elevated traditional opera to a new level of theatrical art by transforming it into a comprehensive art and giving it a sense of involvement in the present. To absorb the essence of world classical plays will not result in irreparable assimilation, as these critics fear. Shakespeare's plays have become a kind of international discourse, which can improve exchanges and communication between Chinese and international dramatists. No wonder Meng Bing, a famous Chinese dramatist, calls for openness and depth for the future of modern Chinese drama. There should be more to present on the stage of Chinese drama. Chen Dalian's *Macbeth* has set a good

<sup>20</sup> Chen Fang: *Shake-xiqu: Cross-cultural Adaptation and Performance*. Taipei: Taiwan Normal University Press, 2012, p.2.

example for the upcoming modern Chinese drama, and that is why Luk Perceval is often invited to show his plays in China.

## Conclusion

We can predict the prosperous development of Intercultural Theatre as a part of modern Chinese drama, by analyzing the similarities and differences of the Chinese and Russian interpretations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Shakespeare's plays have been appropriated by different cultures as an international symbol, promoting these disparate and brilliant productions in intercultural theatre. With their anatomy of human nature, Shakespeare's plays are always bare and open, fully and vividly exposing lust, desire, glory, goodness and ugliness in various human souls. The reason that Shakespeare's plays have lasted for so long is that whether the audience members know the original text and the historical background or not, they can always find that the elements of human nature shown in the plays also exist in every one of them. What entangles Macbeth is the same inherent vice or innate evil that makes people stop at nothing and run after power forever. It is the intense conflict between the pursuit of desire under a personal Machiavellian doctrine against the moral concepts of human society. The two directors' adaptations of Shakespeare's play are actually their interpretations of human nature. No wonder Harold Bloom pointed out that Shakespeare invented us as humans in his great work, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998). In contemporary times, people are still acting out personal roles on the world stage, as shadows of various characters in Shakespearean plays. Even if cultures are transcended, human nature never changes.

In this time of globalization, with more and more studies on intercultural theatre in different countries, the phenomenon that "Asian Shakespeare is never fully integrated into the discursive conception of Shakespeare performance"<sup>21</sup> has changed, as primary research materials and knowledge about comparative theatre become accessible. Every cross-cultural play is based on its own special social and cultural background, and the way of delivering it depends on the living style and thinking pattern of a specific locale. Shakespeare's plays witness the social changes and history evolution of the places in which the plays are shown. Meanwhile, the theatrical translations of Shakespearean plays gain an "afterlife"<sup>22</sup>, as proposed by Walter Benjamin, and become everlasting.

<sup>21</sup> Joubin, Alexa Alice. "Asian Shakespeare 2.0", in: *Asian Theatre Journal*, Volume 28, Number 1, 2011, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin, Walter: "The Task of the Translator". 1923, Engl. Trans. H. Zohn, in: *The Translation Studies Reader*, Lawrence Venuti (ed.), Routledge, London, 2000, p.15.

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# Liu Danli: Visualising the Chinese Dream

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## Abstract

This essay examines how the performance art of Chinese national soprano Liu Danli narrates successfully the Chinese Dream and thus arouses new hopes and a rising sense of confidence in Chinese people's minds. Her masterpieces *Si Qing Ji*, *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui*, and *You Ai Cai You Jia* have been building our own culture from different angles. Her unique style, with elegant and poetic interpretation, is formed due to her tough training and abundant stage experience gained in early years at the theatre group. She has been integrating the scientific methods of opera singing in occidental *bel canto* to her later arias, combining Chinese *Xiqu* techniques in phrasing, singing and body movement into vivid characterization, thus making daring reforms in script adaptation, voice appropriateness, ballet footwork, action design, melody design and singing style to canonic plays and recreating new canons.

## Key words:

Liu Danli; *Xiqu* technique; The Chinese Dream; theatre performance.

## Rezumat

Acest studiu analizează modul prin care arta performativă chineză a sopranei Liu Danli aduce în prim plan cu succes Visul Chinezesc, care trezește speranțe noi și încredere în mintea poporului chinez. Capodoperele ei, *Si Qing Ji*, *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui* și *You Ai Cai You Jia* au creat propria noastră cultură prin abordări variate. Stilul ei unic, interpretarea ei poetică și rafinată, au la bază un antrenament susținut și o vastă experiență câștigată de-a lungul anilor în teatru. Soprana combină în ariile sale tehnici de *bel canto* occidental, reușind prin frazare, mișcare corporală și canto să aducă prospetime în interpretare, reușind astfel să reformeze libretul, coregrafie, acțiunea scenică și sound-ul. Asistăm la o rescriere a vechilor canoane în domeniu.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Liu Danli; tehnica *Xiqu*; Visul Chinezesc; artele spectacolului de teatru.

The Chinese national soprano Liu Danli<sup>1</sup> has been approaching the visualization of the Chinese Dream by means of various theatre productions.

<sup>1</sup> Being the direct disciple of Du Jinfang (杜近芳, 1932-) and a third-generation descendant of the Mei school founded by Mei Langfang (梅兰芳, 1894–1961), one of the major four *dan*

Due to her persistent effort, natural aptitude and highly skilled creation and recreation, her productions have gained great success all over the nation. Her theatre productions are not only in harmony with President Xi Jinping's speech on rejuvenating the great Chinese nation<sup>2</sup> and building contemporary Chinese national culture on the basis of our time-honored glorious traditions, but also have been widely accepted for her own artistic wisdom. Her masterpieces *Si Qing Ji*, *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui*, and *You Ai Cai You Jia* have been arousing people's feeling of expectation for the Chinese Dream with a sense of confidence they feel in their identity. I will analyze these three theatre productions mentioned above respectively in what follows so as to reveal Liu Danli devoting herself to this oeuvre, the connections between her art and the Chinese Dream.

*Si Qing Ji* (《思情记, Seeking Her True Love}, a moving tragicomedy telling how a maiden achieves her elopement with the farm labourer hired by her mother) is a *chuju* (楚剧, Hubei drama with a rather strong local colour) about the resentful heroine's moral dilemma and destiny, with highly convincing portrayals of people and nature, described through colourful and powerful language and elegant arias with strong local colour, taking spectators back to late Qing dynasty at a fascinating time. In her individual protest against feudal patriarchy, the young lady Zhang Er'mei (the female role played by Liu Danli) has finally achieved her independence through her courageous fight for freedom, true self and true love, yet at the cost of living remotely from her mother, which leads to her hardly seeing her mother in future. It is not convenient, in Qing dynasty, for a married woman to return to her mother's house frequently. Usually, the married woman is stuck to her husband's house and has to devote all her life to her husband and children. In Liu's adaptation, she creatively adds the moving plot in which the role Er'mei expresses her missing for her mother in the denouement. This

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schools, Liu Danli is considered a national first-class *xiqu* (Chinese theatre or Chinese opera) actress of *dan* (a female role, usually with an elegant air and poetic qualities). In 1990s, Liu Danli won Meihua Award (the Plum Performance Award, the top award in Chinese theatre arts) and Wenhua Award for her performance of *Si Qing Ji* in the field of *xiqu*. Later she stepped into the field of national opera and won Meihua Award again in 2005 with her performance of *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui*. In 2018, her performance of *You Ai Cai You Jia* has been selected into the repertoire database of National Opera Festival by the Ministry of Culture. Here I choose the three theatre productions in this essay for they respectively express people's deep feelings in different phases of contemporary China during the last three decades, thus to reveal the comprehensive big picture of the Chinese Dream.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. YANG, Jincai: "Narrating the Chinese Dream: A Cultural Interpretation of "Chinese Dream Series" in Urban Public Service Advertising", in: *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature*. Volume 1, Number 4. December 2017, p. 17.

adaptation makes the character more complex and multi-dimensional with an ethic dilemma, a decisive choice she must make between freedom and filial piety. While the theme is rather serious, there are several jests with local wit in the play. Therefore the live effect from the auditorium was that spectators were sometimes smiling with tears and crying with a smile in the end.

This is a theatre production of extraordinary intelligence. In her performance, Liu Danli employs more flexibly the techniques of the “gentle but strong tune” (透腔) and the “deep and melancholic tune” (悲透腔), the two major modes of phonating in *chuju*. The skillful control of breath and her clear and typically high-pitched voice give her the advantage of singing folk music notes with vibrant pitch changes more agilely to express diverse feelings. Her voice is impressive because her resonance chamber is wide: she can control her breath easily to sing high-pitched and long arias. If she executes a change of breath during the song, it is not really sensed by the spectators, because the breath and the capacity of air in her mouth cavity are carefully controlled.

For this production, Liu’s innovation mainly consists in her infusing dancing movement from ballet footwork into her highly stylized theatre performance. Former *chuju* artists usually pointed the ground with their heels and raised their tiptoes at the same time to make a portrayal of Er’mei, while Liu tautens her legs like a white swan in a ballet performance. She is the first actress to make this daring reform. As *xiqu* is a highly stylized art with rigid and fixed forms of singing, movement, gestures, and stage props, actors and actresses usually fear to make even very subtle changes. Liu is different from former artists with her great personal insight into performance art. She learnt ballet at a very young age and gained tough training and abundant stage experience later at a local theatre group. The innovation in *Si Qing Ji* may be considered as the first step to form her unique performing style.

In 2006, in his essay on Liu Danli’s performance art, Kang Shizhao states, drawing from former research on *Si Qing Ji*, that “Liu combines what’s daring in northern art and what’s delicate in southern art, thus has formed her own unique style”; and further, “Not only does her singing style match perfectly with the melody, but also it embodies the elegant air and poetic quality deriving from the classic Book of Songs; people are hypnotized by the mellow tone of her voice which depicts the role’s inner world to the deeps of people’s imagination”; and concludes that “she is so good at psychoanalysis that she reaches an exact understanding of the role’s actions, motives and personality. And based on this, she precisely

grasps the characteristic traits of the role on stage by means of distinctive and typical style in action design and voice appropriateness.<sup>3</sup> Actually there exists an implicit linkage between traditional Chinese wisdom and Liu's artistry in *Si Qing Ji*: all her skills and techniques help to mould Er'mei's soul, seeking the ideal of freedom, true love and filial piety. Liu's interpretation via her performance has successfully conveyed this cultural connotation, with Er'mei's image as a symbol of both liberty and virtue. Liberty represents the modern logic, while virtue is inherited from our tradition. Thus they make this play modern and traditional simultaneously. In 1990s, Liu's attempt already approached the Chinese Dream, rejuvenating the great Chinese nation and building contemporary Chinese national culture on the basis of our time-honored glorious traditions. In this sense, it anticipates today's central slogan of "Chinese Dream" through cultural lens.

As a third-generation descendant of the Mei school founded by Mei Langfang, Liu Danli has been highly recognized by professionals in *xiqu* circle, with both the Plum Performance Award and Wenhua Award in her hand during the 1990s. Yet Liu was not satisfied with all her existing achievements, so she stepped further into the opera house. Through her diligent training and hard work during the next few years, she gained the opportunity to play the heroine Han Ying in *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui* and later was generally acknowledged by the public as the third-generation actress playing the role of Han Ying<sup>4</sup>. *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui* (《洪湖赤卫队, The Red Guerrilla Guarding Honghu Lake}) has been hailed as a red canon in the field of modern Chinese opera. It is the most distinguished contribution to eulogize the heroine Han Ying who led the guerrilla force around Honghu Lake to fight against kuomintang reactionaries and the local tyrants during the Second Revolutionary Civil War in the beginning of the 1930s. This play consists of several excellent typical arias, rich in Hubei local color for the diverse melodies deriving from *Chu* tune and Hubei *huagu xi* (tunes and folksongs collected from Hubei locals).

The most impressive aria "Honghu Shui, Lang Da Lang"(洪湖水, 浪打浪 Hometown water at Honghu Lake, hit the water with a splash over, gives us

<sup>3</sup> KANG, Shizhao: "Liu Danli: the Queen of Chuju and Chinese National Opera", in: *Xiju Zhi Jia (The Journal of Theatre Performance)*, 2006 Z1, pp. 128-129

<sup>4</sup> As we have known, that in the field of Chinese *xiqu* performance, experts emphasize mentorship. Likewise, in the field Chinese national opera, the situation is identical. The first-generation actress playing the role of Han Ying in the red canon opera *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui* is Wang Yuzhen (王玉珍), the second-generation is Li Zhuhua (李祝华) the third-generation is Liu Danli (刘丹丽), the fourth-generation is Ma Yaqin (马娅琴), and the fifth-generation is Yang Juan(杨娟).

a bright patch of colour) is so renowned that, since its very first performance, every Chinese learnt to sing at least the first few lyrics of the whole aria. The melody is not only very beautiful but also easy to remember. The most elegant aria “Meiyou Yanlei, Meiyou Beishang” (没有眼泪，没有悲伤hold your tears dearly, and don’t express your mood melancholy) contains a kind of Revolutionary Romanticism connotation of “nil desperandum” for everyone in the face of any battle. Liu insisted keeping the tempo to four fourths (4/4) rather than changing it to two fourths (2/4) when she performed it in National Centre for the Performing Arts. Her reason is that this aria is a first-person memory of Han Ying’s family history with the function of persuading Han’s mother to support the revolutionary oeuvre wholeheartedly, which should be a rather slow narrative. She insists that the tempo should be fixed to 4/4. And her stubborn insistence for art’s sake proved to be proper and right. In 2005, Liu Danli won the Plum Performance Award once again for her performance in the theatre production *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui* in National Centre for the Performing Arts. At the award ceremony, a consensus of opinion among experts in this field says that “on the basis of the historical achievements by former artists, Liu has integrated Chinese *Xiqu* techniques in phrasing, singing and body movement to her operatic singing and performance according to the contemporary characteristic traits of China, combining her own artistic advantages, a full but soft emotion with novel and realistic performance, thus has made a vivid characterization of Han Ying with plain but heroic temperament, which is both traditional and modern in the aesthetic sense”<sup>5</sup>.

Different from *Si Qing Ji*, which demonstrates a certain traditional realism with innovative creations on the central concepts of freedom and idealism, *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui* pinpoints a kind of revolutionary heroism while expressing the underlying true feeling of the heroine at the same time. This is much more representative and authentic than most modern revolutionary Peking operas (革命现代京剧样板戏). The first performance of this theatre production with Wang Yuzhen (王玉珍) playing the role of Han Ying was to celebrate the first decade of the establishment of People’s Republic of China. In 1961, this national opera production was filmed in black and white, and later it won the best music award at Baihua Award ceremony (Hundred Flower Award, the most important award in the field of Chinese film) in 1962. Liu Danli’s performance inherited the quintessence of Wang Yuzhen’s performance art for the part of singing local folksongs, while she added something new from both *xiqu* and western opera arts.

<sup>5</sup> KANG, Shizhao: “Liu Danli: the Queen of Chuju and Chinese National Opera”, in: *Xiju Zhi Jia (The Journal of Theatre Performance)*, 2006 Z1, p. 130.

She holds the opinion that performance art should adopt various influences from different fields so as to be enriched and thus inclusive (博采众长, 兼容并包). Her view has further developed the cultural policy proposed by Mao Zedong in 1956 and 1957 that “we should allow every beautiful flower to bloom in full and every kind voice to be heard by all” (百花齐放, 百家争鸣). This is very important for rejuvenating and building our own culture. In this respect, Liu has provided a concrete way of thinking towards the Chinese Dream based on her own understanding of performance art and Mao Zedong’s thought.

In March 2018, *You Ai Cai You Jia* (《有爱才有家, Home is Where the Heart is}) has been performed in several great theatres all over the country. This time Liu does not only play the leading role De’fen, but also participates as director in the whole process. This is a fascinating contemporary play: it is biographical, narrating the legendary life-trajectory of a very kind dean, De’fen, in a local welfare institute. Each scene is curiously engaging and the whole play deals fascinatingly with the inspiring central belief “home is where the heart is”. The piece attempts to blend both China’s glorious tradition and its present achievements of reform and development. In an in-depth interview on *You Ai Cai You Jia*, Prof. Liu Danli told me her secret tips based on her personal performance experience through all those years’ great efforts:

a.) a theatre production, either *xiqu* or national opera, should contain a thematic melody based on a simple folk tune yet repeated in different and more complicated forms at different time points, especially at certain plot twists. This is vitally significant for any theatre production, especially for contemporary Chinese theatre. In *You Ai Cai You Jia*, the music theme of the same name repeatedly appears for several times, sung by De’fen (acted by Liu Danli), Qiu Hong (acted by Lei Yuan) and the chorus, so that it’s easy for the spectators to remember.

b.) we should pay more attention to the action design for the role’s very first appearance onstage. This action must be selected and extracted from real life to make a strong impression on the audience. And also the voice at first appearance must be appropriate to the age and psychological state of the character. In *You Ai Cai You Jia*, De’fen’s voice appropriateness helps a lot in the characterization of her at different phases or at different ages. It differs a lot from her mid-age to the last minute of her life.

c.) a wonderful unique aria composed by great talent and artistry is a must. De’fen’s solo aria, “the Last Words”(最后的嘱托), has won her great honor and

respect at the Chinese opera festival this year. She has made a slight impromptu adaptation according to the live atmosphere.

d.) a performer must convey the specific emotion in specific situation through every detail, including the slight changes of the shoulder, legs, and even from behind in silhouette.

e.) techniques and methods from ballet, *xiqu* and opera art should be an organic combination all through your performance. (This is a unique feature belonging to her own style.)

f.) be natural and smooth in the performance, especially in the transition part. Be aware of the gradations.

g.) grasp the delicate details to express something glistening in human nature.

h.) take control of the breath, use the subtle changes to express the underlying emotion and deep feeling.

i.) as a performer, you must enter the mental world of your role, do what s/he does, feel what s/he feels, think what s/he thinks, as in spirit possession.

j.) focus on precision (for precision, use the appropriate form to express your experience and deep feelings, and make the audience feel what you would like to convey) and cubicism (for cubicism, it mainly refers to the multiple facets inside the character's mind. There may exist some contradictory aspects in one's personality. A performer must dig them out and make them shown).

This communication process must be like a beam of torchlight shining all the way through the bridge between the performers and the spectators, making the whole theatre a field of psychological linkage and common aesthetic taste. For instance, Er'mei (in *Si Qing Ji*) is brave most of the time but feels embarrassed when she meets her beloved; the revolutionary heroine Han Ying (in *Hong Hu Chi Wei Dui*) is strong in general but becomes gentle in the face of her mother. Precision and cubicism may be regarded as a golden law or a principle of vital importance, which we should follow in theatre performance.

The theatre company of *You Ai Cai You Jia* consists of several professional singers in folk song and bel canto and about 80 students from School of Arts, Wuhan University. With the symphony orchestra, the theatre is now on tour all over China, mainly in Beijing, Henan and Wuhan. The performances are widely

accepted as having given rise to many performance reviews in mainstream press and media, especially in *People's Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, *Chinese Culture*, *China Society News*, and *China Arts*. These are mainly written by scholars and critics from research institutions, playwrights and directors from national theatre, editors-in-chief of opera magazines and theatre journals, and also celebrities from China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, officials from Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education. These reviews are a major contribution to current debate over whether to choose pure aesthetic drama or ethical theatre productions in Chinese academic circles. In my opinion, what characterizes this play's breakthrough is that it is able to combine these two logics, and therefore it reaches out broadly. This is an extremely important factor in its success; in that way, Liu has contributed to changing the contemporary institutional theatre. Liu says in an interview with the chief editor of *Journal of Opera*, You Weizhi: "In performance, you must first of all move yourself aesthetically and ethically from deep down inside before you try to move your spectators"<sup>6</sup>. This is why her artistry keeps appealing to Chinese people, arousing people's deep feelings with a sense of confidence they feel in their identity, making people feel proud and fortunate as Chinese, and also showing another way to visualize and approach the ideal of the Chinese Dream through contemporary Chinese theatre.

From the above, I further conclude that with devoted training and daring adaptations to canonic productions all through those years, Liu Danli has formed her own unique style of performance art with full passion and superb artistic skills, especially in the fields of *xiqu* and national opera. In a cultural sense, her theatre productions have become new canons which are shining with bright light with both aesthetic and ethic value. It is argued that the greatest challenges China now faces are those of building a set of "national" values that can progressively be considered as "universal"<sup>7</sup>. Liu's theatre productions closely associated with the Chinese Dream and "national rejuvenation"<sup>8</sup> contain exactly such values in the context of globalization.

<sup>6</sup> YOU, Weizhi: "Liu Danli: Move Yourself Aesthetically and Ethically before You Try to Move Your Spectators", in: *Chinese Culture*, January 9, 2018. 6th edition.

<sup>7</sup> YANG, Jincai: "Narrating the Chinese Dream: A Cultural Interpretation of "Chinese Dream Series" in Urban Public Service Advertising", in: *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature*. Volume 1, Number 4. December 2017. p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> XI, Jinping: *The governance of China*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2014, p. 38.

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Liu Danli, 2018, Hubei Performance Arts Group, Hubei Theatre, Wuhan,  
photo: Wang Zhimin



Photo 1:  
Dowager Concubine Yang



Photo 2:  
Liu Yulan in Lv Mengzheng Po Zhou



Photo 3: Liu Jinchan



Photo 4: Queen in Da Jin Zhi

# Voice Music in Răzvan Mazilu's Production

## *The Jungle Book*

**ROXANA-SORANA ARDELEANU**

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### **Abstract**

Maybe the most provocative personal experience regarding the musical training of the actors, certainly the most interesting, the composing of the *Jungle Book* show directed by Răzvan Mazilu, required the total involvement of the director and close collaboration with the musical producer concerning the instrumental part recorded on tape. The analysis of *The Song of the Eagles* reflects the personal contribution in the organic dramaturgy of the show.

### **Keywords:**

musical preparation; *a cappella*; personal contribution; analysis; collaboration.

### **Rezumat**

Poate cea mai provocatoare experiență personală în pregătirea muzicală a actorilor, în mod cert cea mai interesantă, compunerea spectacolului *Cartea junglei*, în regia lui Răzvan Mazilu a reclamat implicare totală și colaborare strânsă cu regizorul și producătorul muzical al negativului înregistrat pe bandă. Analiza *Cântecului vulturilor* reflectă contribuția personală în dramaturgia organică a spectacolului.

### **Cuvinte cheie:**

pregătire muzicală; *a cappella*; contribuție personală; analiză; colaborare.

Scenic language is composed of several elements involved in a relationship of complementarity – light, color, movement, sound and word, all these stimuli associate in order to excite the audience. The sung text adds to the atmosphere of affection and has a suggestive force that strengthens the delivery of the message by intensifying the vocal elements - intonation, volume, rhythm, voice inflections. The actors' musical training calls for the constant contribution of the professional musician throughout the assimilation of the score. Thanks to the vocal component

of the musical approach the most suitable solution is the presence of the pianist, because learning the score is made easier with the piano. Starting with 2014, I took over the musical training of the actors of the German State Theater in Timișoara, a very complex activity and a difficult and challenging journey.

The staging of the performance *The Jungle Book*, directed by Răzvan Mazilu, summed up long hours of musical rehearsals, in addition to the permanent communication with the director and the musical producer who made the tape accompaniment. We experienced intense moments, governed by a strong sense of belonging to the group, formed around the director. Due to the director's typical way of working, in which he makes his idea known, then listens to the opinions and advice of specialists in the field, I had a great opportunity to make an essential contribution to structuring and interpreting the musical moments.

Inspired by the stories of *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling, the original animated cartoon was directed by Wolfgang Reitherman, based on the script designed by Larry Clemmons, Ralph Wright, Ken Anderson and Vance Gerry. Also known as the latest production by Walt Disney, who passed away during the preparation stages for the film, *The Jungle Book* contains famous musical pieces composed by Richard M. Sherman, Robert B. Sherman and Terry Gilkyson, while the soundtrack is signed by George Bruns.

The presentation of the team that contributed to the performance appears on the website of the German State Theater Timișoara, in the material announcing the new premiere: "The author of the show, Răzvan Mazilu, collaborates for the second time with TGST, after his staging of the renowned *Cabaret* musical in February 2014. The design and costumes of the new production are made by Dragoș Buhagiar, with the participation of Ioana Popescu. Video creation belongs to Andrei Cozla, light design is signed by Dragoș Buhagiar and Alin Popa, musical production by Alexei Turcan and musical training by Roxana Ardeleanu."<sup>1</sup>

### **The pianist in dramaturgy - a decisive factor in the conception of musical moments**

After accepting the responsibility to musically train the actors for *The Jungle Book* production, whose premiere was set on March 11, 2017, I was made aware

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<sup>1</sup> URL <https://www.teatrulgerman.ro/ro/stiri/răzvan-mazilu-monteză-carteajunglei-la-teatrul-german-de-stat-timișoara/>, material posted on March 7, 2017, author Andreea Andrei, artistic consultant at the German State Theater [last accessed 15 August, 2018 / translation into English the author of the paper].

of the director's desire to make an adaptation of Walt Disney's animated cartoon from 1976. I received the original scores for the songs for both English and German versions of the entire production.

In the first phase, before the onset of the actual musical rehearsals, I adapted the rhythm of the original sound material in such a way that it corresponded to the number of syllables in the translation. To facilitate the activity of musical training, I had written the German text for each of the six original songs. Following the discussions between the director and the German Theater management, the way of interpreting the musical moments was established, accompanied by tape.

Răzvan Mazilu helped me connect with the producer responsible for the accompaniment, with whom I communicated by phone and e-mail throughout the preparation of the show. The professional relationship we developed proved defining for the design of the quality musical material that the public in Timișoara enjoyed with every performance.

Part of the distribution was determined by the director's designation of the actors based on previous collaboration. In order to finalize the distribution, I was invited to participate with Răzvan Mazilu in the casting organized by the German Theater on December 5, 2016. He requested that the actors and children enlisted prove their musical qualities, vocal ambit and rhythmic sense.

In the next stage, I adapted the melodic line of each song to the singing actors' vocal ambit, in order to get a comfortable interpretation, and then I delivered the tone to which the original sound material must transpose to the musical producer. The early stages of the composition of the band's accompaniment recording on tape required first of all concentration and patience to correctly identify the vocal possibilities of each actor.

Once I was in possession of the recorded accompaniment, it completed the framework of each rehearsal of direction and choreography. Depending on the directional design concept of musical moments, the producer was asked for changes to the original version, both in terms of duration and the overlapping of voices. For example, the framework of the Elephant Song accompaniment was extended by inserting four repetitive identical musical measures to accompany the stage motion of the entire ensemble throughout its duration.

At the same time, the original material was also processed from a polyphonic perspective, by overlapping the recording of the male voices of actors with vocal qualities and good intonation. This alternative was adopted due to the inclusion of

dancers in the group of elephants, and the impression created is the participation of the whole ensemble presented on the stage when interpreting the melodic line. The example described is one of the situations in which I contributed to the composition of the sound material in the show. In this case, I prepared the actors for voice recording, which I supervised, and I indicated to the producer the precise moment of insertion in the evolution of the orchestral material.

As a matter of fact, the most important component of personal input was the transmission of the director's requirements, which I made known to the producer in musical language. At the same time, in all the circumstances similar to the example described above, I analysed the accompaniment recording, the written text and the director's request, in order to correctly juxtapose all constitutive elements.

Out of the whole sound landscape, a new moment was cut out both from the perspective of its location in the economy of the show and my personal involvement in its realization. According to the directorial concept, the presentation of the show's cast accompanied by the audience applause since it happens at the very end, as imagined by Răzvan Mazilu in the fashion of Broadway musical shows. The grandeur of the moment is accomplished by the soundtrack with the famous musical fragments, along with the group choreography. The whole team of actors, ballet dancers and children participate in reciting the verses of the most famous songs of the show: the song of the elephants, the song of King Louie and the song of Baloo.

Apart from the musical preparation of the ensemble, I transposed the last two fragments into the tone of the first, so that the junction creates a unitary structure. On the other hand, analyzing the progress of the band accompaniment, I indicated to the ensemble the initial moment of the melodic line, placed at the end of the instrumental introduction. The difficulty of interpretation is due to the processing of the accompaniment at the request of the director, by overlapping the melodic-rhythmic motifs specific to the sound universe of Indian music. Originally conceived as a whole, the musical moment at the end was then fragmented by inserting the commentary of the group of eagles.

Translation of the text of the eagle's intervention:

Ziggy - *Well, all is well when it ends well.*

Dizzy - *Yes. It'll be pretty boring without the kid.*

Flaps - *Yeah ... So what do we do?*

Buzzle - *What are we doing? I do not know...*

The whole cast – *DON'T START ALL OVER AGAIN!*<sup>2</sup>

The scene has an evocative character, and the audience leaves the hall humming the famous song.

The heterogeneous collective I worked with, consisting of children and actors, with various levels of vocal experience and musical knowledge, implied the continuous adaptation of the musical training to each individual's rhythm of assimilation. On the other hand, the sound material designed for group interpretation claimed the contribution of each of them, and the common effort went in the direction of homogenization of the ensemble. Children's musical training proved to be an extremely difficult endeavor, especially since it was my first experience of this kind in theater work. In conducting rehearsals, I designed a scale of required effort based on each child's age and ability to concentrate and I used my experience gained over the years of teaching school-aged and pre-school children.

Each musical moment in the *Jungle Book* show had its own peculiarities, which I took into account from the beginning of the actors' preparation. For example, the song by Shanti, the Indian girl, is sung while she holds a clay pot above her head. The actress/girl must walk a fairly wide distance from the back to the front edge across the stage, stopping to face the audience. Even if the musical rehearsals took place in a small room, I recommended the imitation of this particular scenic movement on every occasion.

Besides focusing on getting a good intonation, I insisted on the correct pronunciation of the text. Another particular aspect I faced after the premiere was the decision to adopt the double distribution for the role of Shanti. After organizing a new casting, I chose the little girl with the best intonation and rhythmic sense.

During the musical training I once again discovered the necessity to adapt the process of the score assimilation to the characteristics of each actor and to the allocated time interval. Thus, if the first girl participated in the whole process of composing the show, carried out for two and a half months, for the distribution of the second girl, I had five weeks to train her. Apart from the disproportion in the time of preparation, the age difference between the two girls determined the

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<sup>2</sup> All English fragments quoted in this article are subtitles of *The Jungle Book* show, and are based on the original present in the archive of the German State Theatre Timișoara.

heterogeneous approach of musical rehearsals. Moreover, owing to the fact that the second little girl did not have any knowledge of the German language, I made great efforts to teach her how to correctly pronounce and memorize the text.

The decisive factor in the composition of the show, the choreography signed by Răzvan Mazilu is particularly complex. In order to identify the influence of the stage movement on vocal interpretation, I participated in the choreographic rehearsals. The scheduling of individual or group musical rehearsals was set according to the actors' availability, outside of working hours with the director/choreographer.

The defining feature of voice interpretation with bandwidth accompaniment was the stable framework to which actors had to relate to each performance. Thus, the rhythm, tempo and tone were the same every time, and the melodic line fell into an identical time frame. For this reason, the singing actors had to master the entire sound material, which meant performing musical rehearsals accompanied by the recorded negative.

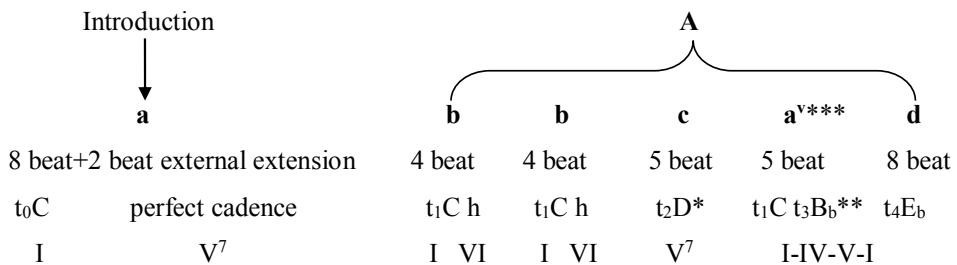
### **Structural Analysis of *The Eagle Song***

During the analysis of the original score, I identified the most important challenge, which proved to be one of my most important personal contributions to the musical performance of the whole scene of the eagles. Thus, in the score received from the German Theater, *The Song of the Eagles*, with the original title *That's what friends are for*, the composition is made of a single voice accompaniment, while in the soundtrack of the animated movie, the interpretation of the entire sound material is made by a quartet of men in *a cappella* fashion. According to the director's desire to adapt the original animated movie, I designed and wrote the score for four voices, inspired by the harmonies noted in the accompanying score and the distribution of spoken lines in the original soundtrack songs.

Due to the fact that two actors and two actresses were part of the cast for the group of vultures, I adapted the musical material for the mixed coral group. Taking into account the actors' vocal capabilities and musical knowledge, I simplified the melodic line of each voice with no detriment to the harmonic. At the same time, in the melodic horizontal vocal development I adopted a linear trajectory so that the interval sequence could be easily memorized.

The structural analysis of *The Song of the Eagles* distinguishes three composite and asymmetrical periods, the sound material of which differs from dynamic,

harmonious and rhythmic points of view. From the vocal treatment perspective, the first and last period contain similar elements. Thus, in the first period, the melodic line of the soprano had a soloist profile, while the other three voices evolve in a compact, grouped manner. The intermediate period has a concise rhythmic character, the four voices being treated equally. The third period is built on the alternation of the soprano and an alto, while tenor and bass support the harmonic pedal in unison. The schematic representation (see next page) highlights the harmonic sequence in the architectural structure of the first period **A**, characterized by cadence abundance and the adoption of distant tones:



\*the passion of major tonality is achieved by altering the stepping stone of the fourth stage of the major stage in the progressive chromatic movement of the soprano and bass  
 \*\*tonality and major bemol appears suddenly through the progressive chromatic singing of the bass and tenor: the third step of the major step is altered downward

\*\*\*the phrase **a<sup>v</sup>** contains motif material taken from the outer extension of the input phrase **a**

Figure 1 shows the incipient of period **A**, produced by the identical imitation of the sound of phrase **b**, with the modification of the text. The treatment of the melodic line of the soprano gives it a soloist character. The other three voices have a compact polyphonic deployment, and their text responds to soprano replies in identical imitation, as a confirmation that strengthens the transmitted message.

Figure 1 – the first 8 measures of the period A\*



\*the last three beats of measure 19 represent the start of phrase c

Translation of the text (fig. 1): Vultures - *Are you alone, who comes next? Who guides you? Who encourages you? Who is true to his word?*

The rhythmic values adopted are indicative, especially at the level of the singer's melodic line, whose interpretation reveals a chanted and free speech. Instead, the polyphonic speeches specific to the other three voices, along with the requirement of explicit pronunciation of the text, impart a precise rhythmic character to the ensemble's intervention. I recommended the tremulous articulation of each syllable in equal amounts and the shortening of vowels to highlight the distinct way of handling the lines. In order to achieve the simultaneous attack, I attributed to the actress, who interprets the melodic line of the second voice, the responsibility of *Auf-takt*, made by rhythmic breathing.

The intermediate period **B** has a pronounced rhythmic character, and associated choreography consists of free movements. Each actor in the group of eagles goes through a free choice route, consisting of disco style movements, ending with the choice of the group stage pose as indicated by the director/choreographer. The particularity of the fragment is also found in the arrangement of voices. Thus, at the request of the actress who interprets the melodic line of the soprano,

I transposed the soprano soundstripe to the inferior octave. The effect obtained is impressive, due to the harmonious accompaniment of the other voices, which envelops the performance of the song by positioning both inferior and superior accompaniment to it.

The chanted and expressive character of the C period is achieved by the alternation of the soprano and the alto. The effect of the moment is enhanced by the harmonic pedal supported by tenor and bass in unison, which reproduces the vocals corresponding to the text of the higher voices.

### **The complex composition of *The Eagle Song* scene**

Once the assimilation process of the sound score was completed, the choreographic dimension was added to the composition of the eagles scene. The complexity of the scenic movement, which complements the difficult musical evolution, led to the adoption of the interpretative version with tape accompaniment, unlike the *a cappella* in the original cartoon. The most appropriate solution for enhancing the vocal group performance was to record the sound of the musical material, which doubled the sound performance, giving the actors a precise intonative mark. In order to obtain the negative, I sent the producer a video recording of the group stage movement along with the music score manuscript as a harmonious-melodic landmark. I drew attention to the changes made by the initial rhythmic notation, due to the relationship of subordination to the adopted choreography.

At the request of the director, the negative replicated the sound print of the church organ, which added a monumental character to the scene, amplifying the irony of the collective character. Another clue in the direction mentioned was provided by the instrumental introduction of *The Song of the Eagles*, which contained the processing of the incipient Toccate and Fugue in D minor for organ by Johann Sebastian Bach. The fragment was transposed into the G minor tone, and the crown on the last octave anticipated the sound of the song's introduction and provides an intonational mark for the vocal group.

For the first stage entry of the eagles, which preceded the texture and the dialogue with Mowgli, the director imagined a sinuous choreographic journey that takes place in the rhythm of the song *In the Jungle*, interpreted *a cappella* and reworked in the original manner. Thus, the vocalist of the vocal group repeated the introduction of the song, over which the soprano and the other overlapped the sound of the first stage in unison, while the bass made a beatbox accompaniment<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> beatbox - represents the vocal imitation of percussion sounds, being known as the fifth element of hip-hop culture.

Besides the processing of the sound material, the director decided to modify the text in accordance with the personality traits of the collective character and the dramatic evolution. Thus, the original text *In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight*, became *In the jungle, the boring jungle, the tiger sleeps tonight*.

The strength of the dramatic economy, the whole scene of the eagles impresses at each show through the multitude and diversity of its constitutive elements, whose cumulation is addressed to all senses and excites the emotion of the audience of all ages.



Figure 2 – the stage positioning in the last phrase of *The Song of the Eagles*<sup>4</sup>  
From left to right: Anne-Marie Waldeck - Dizzy, Aliosha Cobeț - Buzzle, Radu Brănică - Flaps, Oana Vidoni – Ziggy; Midfield: Vladimir Socolovici – Mowgli

Once the assimilation process of the musical score is over, after the premiere, the pianist responsible for musical training of the actors performs the activity of maintaining the musical moments. The reprogramming of the show, which is announced 2-3 months before, involves the setting of musical rehearsals, in which I present the performance of the last play and check the stage of the sound material.

Due to the adoption of the interpretation version with band accompaniment, the vocal evolution in the performance requires the use of lavalier microphones. For

<sup>4</sup> The photo in this article is from the premiere of the *Jungle Book*, March 11, 2017, photo: Ovidiu Zimcea, archive of German State Theater Timișoara, URL <https://www.teatrulgerman.ro/ro/spectacole/carteajunglei/> [last accessed 20 August, 2018].

this reason, one hour before each show, I take part in the sound test, which takes place after the vocal warming of the group. After the sound engineers attach and check each lavalier, I help balance the volume ratio between accompaniment and solo voice by selecting fragments from the musical moments.

The musical rehearsal before each performance starts with the full interpretation of the ending, as the entire cast is involved in it. It is then followed by the musical performance of the girl, which is repeated with all the elements of the show: lights, choreography, costume and props. The eagles scene takes place at the end of the musical rehearsal and involves the vocal interpretation accompanied by the whole choreographic scene.

Performing *The Jungle Book* in a particularly qualitative manner, in which the visual, sound, choreographic and stage development of the team of actors equally participated, determined the achievement of a unique success in the Timișoara cultural landscape. For the first time, artistic production was scheduled 15 times in the premiere season, at the request of the audience, with each show performed to a full house and tickets sold out two or even three weeks ahead. Moreover, on four occasions, two performances a day were played, and for the first performance of the day, the audience was formed exclusively of classes of students from various schools in the city. The following season saw 12 performances, representing a total of 27 performances within 13 months of the premiere. The record reached by this show is hard to match and is equally attributable to all participants. The performance gained all the more importance since the staging of each performance implies the corroboration of the German Theater agenda with the program of all external collaborators who come from different cultural institutions or carry out a self-employed activity.

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<https://www.teatrulgerman.ro/ro/spectacole/cartea-junglei/> [last accessed 15 August, 2018].

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**INCURSIUNI ÎN LABORATORUL  
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**VIEW IN THE LAB  
OF PERFORMING ARTS**

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# ***The Anniversary by A. P. Chekhov – Practical Application of the Stanislavski System***

**CĂTĂLIN PĂTRU**

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## **Abstract**

This paper aims to illustrate the genesis of one of the most challenging performances organized with the students of the Department of Performing Arts - Acting (Faculty of Letters and Arts, “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu) based on *The Anniversary*, written by A. P. Chekhov. Thus, the corpus of this analysis approaches details of the process of creating the 2015 student performance, following a series of essential techniques and exercises (mainly inspired by Stanislavski’s theories) that allowed me, as a directing assistant, to guide the actions of young actors towards the stage concretization of the Chekhovian universe.

## **Keywords:**

*The Anniversary*; A. P. Chekhov; Stanislavski; exercises; performance.

## **Rezumat**

Acest studiu își propune să ilustreze geneza unui spectacol incitant, realizat cu studenții Departamentului de Artele Spectacolului – Actorie (Facultatea de Litere și Arte, Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu), producție bazată pe textul *Jubileul* de A. P. Cehov. Astfel, analiza focusează detaliile procesului de creație a producției studențești din 2015, urmărind o serie de tehnici și exerciții esențiale (inspirate în special din teorile lui Stanislavski), ceea ce mi-a permis în calitate de asistent de regie să ghidez acțiunile tinerilor actori spre a concretiza scenic universul cehovian.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

*Jubileul*; A. P. Cehov; Stanislavski; exerciții; spectacol.

Ever since I chose A. P. Chekhov’s text *The Anniversary* to work on with students, the question that took root in my mind was how could we once again read/reassemble Chekhov, who is our contemporary or, as George Banu calls him, “Our fellow”? Chekhov is, and always will be, the writer who “possesses that inner mobility, which allows successive evaluations, according to the age,

the momentum, the enthusiasms and fears of the reader. He becomes an identification test. My past Chekhov is not the same one as today's... will I maybe come into contact with a different one tomorrow? This is the question that artists who visit and re-visit him ask themselves."<sup>1</sup> In the following pages, I will try to describe, in my capacity of assistant director, the genesis of one of the most challenging shows organized with the students of the Theater Art Department (the Faculty of Letters and Arts, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu), based on the Chekhovian text *The Anniversary* (director Veronica Pătru), a performance that premiered on January 17th 2015<sup>2</sup>.

I started thinking about the story, about the people within it, to imagine it as a fragment of real life. I then imagined the characters within it and tried to understand them, to create others. There is always the risk of doing literary analysis on a text and simplifying the contradictions: real life is always quite complicated, and art can create all kinds of contradictions. These you can express only by identifying yourself with every character and seeing the world through their eyes. Chekhov had the capacity to melt into his characters, which is why they are clever, refined in speech, and think interestingly. Therefore, I chose the playing area to be a room with five offices, used the two doors existing in that area for entrances and created a space at the back of the stage to mark off the director's office. I created four female characters, and gave their actresses each a name and identity. The space is important, so that the student-actors can start to feel free and live in it. As soon as I exposed the idea of the project to the students, without knowing the text, I asked them to move freely, and to improvise. We tried to imagine the world of the to-be-shown.

I applied a different rehearsal technique to the show, replacing "the analysis of feelings" with an "active analysis". Thus, the student-actors were standing from the very beginning. I asked them to turn the rehearsal space into a bank with several offices. They thought and argued, until they decided on the simplest and most suitable staging. Thus, the collective imagination took the place of

<sup>1</sup> Banu, George: *Cehov, aproapele nostru*, Editura Nemira, Bucureşti, 2017, p. 18. Cehov „dispune de acea mobilitate interioară, care permite evaluări succesive, potrivit vârstei, momentului, entuziasmelor și temerilor cititorului. El devine un test de identificare. Cehov al meu de ieri nu e același cu cel de azi... voi avea oare acces la altul mâine? Întrebarea ce și-o pun artiștii care îl vizitează și re-vizitează.” (Translation into English by the author of this paper).

<sup>2</sup> The page of *The Anniversary* show at the "Radu Stanca" National Theater from Sibiu website: <http://www.tnrs.ro/spectacole/jubileul>

the individual one, and the decisions did not belong to every individual actor, but to the group. “Today, Here, Now” were the words that gave the impetus of imagination to the creation of roles. Improvisation became the working method. During the first rehearsals, the actors did exercises based on “extra-text”: scenes that do not appear in the play, but were improvised. I came up with characters (the door-keeper and four female employees, every one of which had a different relationship with the director of the bank), because I considered that the student-actors could in this way begin to master the reality of the play, its environment and given situations: preparing the gift for the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary since the establishment of the bank, dinner with the bank manager alongside the employees, and so on.

Then, we went on to the active analysis of the play, namely to the method of physical actions. The feeling cannot be set / fixed, but the action can, and that is why the study of the role must begin with the discovery of physical actions, simple and evident, of their logical succession and thus, the role should create itself, organically: “true feelings, profound emotions surface in this way; very quickly, on the shortest road, the actor arrives at the creation of the ‘scenic image’ (of the imagined character); and this method allows the performer to maintain and even develop the scenic image once created.”<sup>3</sup> The student-actors improvised every scene to uncover every action, counter-action, every change. They gradually incorporated the text (lines, pace, image), freely crossing from phase to phase at a pace that imposed itself, until a bigger expressiveness became necessary: the one achievable through the author’s words. I asked for improvisation to remain a permanent work-method, for the scenes not to be approached necessarily “in a different way”, but “in a new light”, without using the partners’ persuasive influence. This had worked at a former rehearsal, but here, there was the necessity for a lively, organic action every time. And whatever is organic is always new. For this, the student-actor did not have to pay attention to the Purpose of his character: the one of convincing his partner of his rightness.

As a starting point, the exact beginning of the story had to be determined: “A play never starts with the beginning; usually, from the center of a life. We have to find out what kind of life it was and where the center is. The actor cannot

<sup>3</sup> Toporkov, Vasili: *Stanislavki la repetitie*, Editura Cartea Rusă, Bucureşti, 1951, p. 160. „[S]entimentele adevărate, emoțiile profunde ies pe această cale la suprafață; foarte repede, pe drumul cel mai scurt, actorul ajunge la crearea « imaginii scenice» (a personajului întruchipat); și această metodă îngăduie interpretului să mențină și chiar să dezvolte imaginea scenică, odată creată.” (Translation into English by the author of this paper).

start from zero, he has to be actively touched by that life. Almost every good play starts with a moment of crisis.”<sup>4</sup> The show debuts with the monologue of Kusma Nicolaevic, the bank’s accountant, with which appeared the first problem of a theatrical nature for the student Udrea Alexandru. The object of his attention being on the other side of the ramp generated the feeling of a forced truth, the muscular strain producing discomfort, so that the acting became fake. The tension produced contraction, straining.

In order to remain veridical on the stage, the actor must create the dramatic self, a superego which will look and act like the real self: “Acquiring the logic of another man and imagining it on a stage, the actor responds naturally and, at the same time, lives with his own senses: touches, smells, listens, sees with the integrity of his own organs and nerves, so acts naturally, without interpreting or portraying the action.”<sup>5</sup> I chose, as a way of accession from the real self to the dramatic one, the method of physical actions and I addressed its two principles: the knowledge of the whole play, with its concrete situations and their requirements, as well as the deconstruction of the action as a whole, the uncovering of the physical motions needed in the given situations and the belief in the authenticity of these actions. Vasili Toporkov’s book, *Stanislavski in Rehearsal*, is an important document for the whole preceding history of theatre, an analysis of the physical action method, and that is why I considered it a guide in the creating process of *The Anniversary* project.

## 1. First stage of work

The first stage of work is constituted by the preparation of the physical and mental apparatus and the exploration of the play’s plot, throughout its whole run. Physical training, done on a daily basis (about an hour before the start of the rehearsal), is based on moving exercises studied in the previous years, but with relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, vocal resonance and voice projection, and diction too.

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<sup>4</sup> Dodin, Lev: *Călătorie fără sfârșit*, Fundația Culturală “Camil Petrescu”, București, 2008, p.85. „O piesă nu începe niciodată cu începutul; de obicei, de la mijlocul unei vieți. Noi trebuie să aflăm ce fel de viață a fost aceea și unde este mijlocul. Actorul nu poate porni de la zero, el trebuie să fie «pătruns» în mod activ de acea viață. Aproape orice piesă bună începe cu un moment de criză.”(Translation into English author of this paper).

<sup>5</sup> Toporkov, Vasili, *op.cit.*, p. 163. „Dobândind logica unui alt om și întruchipând-o pe scenă, actorul acționează natural și, în același timp, trăiește cu propriile sale simțuri: pipăie, miroase, ascultă, vede cu integritatea propriilor organe și nervi, deci acționează natural, fără să interpreze sau să însărișeze acțiunea.”(Translation into English by the author of this paper).

The pedagogical experience, but also the acting one, determined that I look for and prepare a training programme for the student actor, which could be done for ten minutes before every class or rehearsal, audition or even before a show. Often the student is not ready for the scenic act, hesitates to work in class or to improvise, is not in a creative state, feels an obstruction or even shame. That is why, whether he works alone, with a partner or in a group, he has to construct his own set of basic exercises which will put him into a creative mood. More precisely an actor has to like the exercises, to have fun while always looking for new motivation, and even modify exercises in order to retain a fresh and stimulant training. This process should contain physical, emotional, and mental stimuli, adapted to the play's scenes, which can help the actor in discovering that day's tensions, so that he learns to combat them. Additionally, the training should encourage colleagues to work together, to harmonize, preparing the emotion before the rehearsal/show. To create an energetic mood, the training has to cross from tension to relaxation, from difficult to easy and once again to difficult.

I will briefly display a few specific exercises of such a training programme preliminary to the act of creating the character itself, exercises which were part of the actual creation process of the play:

*1. The human clock.* Try to simulate a clock. You are the clock, not its mirrored image. Use the right arm as the minute hand, the left arm as the second hand, and the left leg as the hour indicator. Spread out and touch the most distant points of your body's diagonal. Try to find clear landmarks. 6:06:36. Always move the arm of the second hand. Change the hours as quickly as you can without creating tension or confusion. Since you are on your feet, some hours are impossible to produce, so switch the indicators around. Perform 8:45:15 using different parts of your body. Move your head, imitating a cuckoo from a cuckoo clock when you've struck the hour.

*2. The tired dog.* Begin with 10-12 bends on tiptoes. Relax. Lie back with your knees bent and your soles on the ground. Raise your pelvis 2-3 cm, until the lower back stays entirely on the floor. Keep a sensation of relaxation in your stomach and gasp like a dog, keeping your mouth opened and relaxed, as you would yawn. Stop, if the exercise causes throat or other types of discomfort. Maintain the yawn and keep the pelvis up for a while. Just like a tired dog, bark for five times slowly, while you let down the pelvis and exhale. Repeat the exercise saying "yes". Raise your pelvis slightly and inhale deeply. When you feel like your lungs are full of air, inhale some more, distance your last ribs and lay the lower back down on

the floor. Alternate this with saying “woof” or “yes” and feel the sound vibrating through your spine. Remove the tension from your body, from the abdomen. Get up and repeat the exercise.

*3. The puppet's handler.* Bend your hips and relax. Flex your knees and nod back and forth, up and down. You are a puppet. There is a string hooked to each wrist of your body, and the fingers and each vertebra. The handler delicately takes the control of the strings and raises you until you are completely stretched out. As slowly as possible, until this moment, he releases the strings in a certain sequence, isolating and relaxing each part of your puppet body, while going from your fingers to your hand, from the wrists to the forearms. To the elbows, to the biceps, to the shoulders, to the blades and to the pectorals (alternating the body parts at each isolation: the fingers of the right hand with the ones of the left hand, the right palm and the left one, the right wrist and the left one etc.). Then the handler slowly releases the body, then the neck, the muscles from the top and from the bottom of the spine, the right and the left hip, the right and the left thigh, until the entire organism seems like having collapsed in a relaxed position, with the knees bent. You change the direction and you get back upright.

*4. Give shape to an image.* Think about yourself as if you were a raw egg being cooked in a hot pan. Begin with a light pressure in your pelvis and send it to the tip of your fingers, of your toes and to the top of your head. Consciously isolate each part of your body while you send the tension. In the end, each part will be slightly tensioned. Then you feel how the heat around you strengthens the egg from the shell to the interior, until it becomes a solid mass. You feel how the fat sizzles around your shell of egg-human. Do all of these, keeping a sensation of warmth in the centre of your pelvic area and change the image to one of you being on a beach with the sun shining above you. Yawn slowly and make a sound that externalizes a pleasant feeling of relaxation and summer heat. The emotional centre is localized around the pelvic area. The mental image will form a word that mirrors the storage from the pelvic area; then the emotion or the feeling will lead your breath in or out. Imagine first that it is winter-time. It is extremely cold and you feel your entire body tensioned. Be sure that the neck muscles and the larynx keep relaxed. Make a sound as to externalize the feeling of coldness and the traffic problems during winter-time. Try to imagine yourself lost in the snow; pass through all the images that come into your mind and try again, relaxed, to express what you feel. Suddenly it is spring: you find yourself in a field of daffodils. Pass through these images and make new sounds. Replace the images with new ones each time you make this exercise, until you discover those pictures that suit you best.

### 5. Vocal isolations.

- a) *The motorboat*: the lips are tight as for a kiss; blow a constant current of air through your lips, exactly the way a horse snores.
- b) *The isolation of the lip*: move the lips one by one, checking that all the other face muscles are relaxed. The best way to find the correct position of the lower lip is to say “Why?” without any sound. Place a finger under the chin in order to verify the relaxation of the maxillary- only the lower lip has to work. Say “Why?” with sound. Isolate the upper lip in a loop, as you were saying “chic”. Throw the word in the roof of the mouth.
- c) *The karate kick*: tense the face muscles in a knot. Isolate the neck and relax it. Increase the tension and raise your right hand above the head. When you feel your face tighten to the maximum shout “aaaiiiihhhaaa” and hit the air with your hand, as you release the facial tension. Try not to let the tension of the hit invade your shoulders. Repeat the exercise with your left hand.
- d) *The movement of the maxillary*: place your fingers at the base of your ear lobe and bring the tips of your fingers over your maxillary’s wrist. Verify if you aligned the fingers correctly by chewing a bit. Open your mouth, relax the facial muscles: your maxillary has to hang. Say “yaw” a couple of times. Bend your head and say, “yaw”. Gently shake your head from one side to the other.
- e) *The soft palate*: this exercise has to be done in its own rhythm; the student actor has to control his breath using the abdominal and intercostal area, not the upper part of the lungs. Make the following sounds: “ca-chi-co” on both inspiration and expiration in a series of short breaths. Keep an imaginary tube in the centre of the body open and free, avoiding any tension in the body. Put a finger under your nostrils to make sure that hot air comes out.
- f) *The traffic light tongue*: hold the tongue with two to three fingers and pull it out until it stretches well. While out, count up to twenty, voicing each number as well as you can.
- g) *The nasal training*: block one nostril with a finger, then the other one, making short jet- like inspirations, waking up the sinuses. Say one by one: “M”, “N”, “HUMAN”, “ONE”, and “SINGING”.
- h) *The elevator*: imagine that you are in an elevator and you have your arms full of presents. The button you have to push is in the middle of the panel

in front of you and you can use your elbows only. Inspire deeply when you lean to press the button, so that the part that you stretch is full of air. Return to a vertical position, then use the other elbow, inspiring to the fullest again.

After the students had experienced these exercises, the time came for discussions on the text, where the focus was on understanding it beyond the words; the circumstances of the dramatic text, and also of the new context, had been established. We forbade the learning of the text. Then we asked the students to put into the picture simple and inartificial action. I was trying to guide the story in the direction of the future resolution of physical action issues. The students had to imagine the context of the dramatic actions described by the text with the idea of completing the dramatic image. With this exercise we wanted to see that each character had an imaginative ante and post-action design, so that at the end of the exercise the students could describe in detail the life of each character and could support the actions of the character in the dramatic course.

During another reading of the text we fixed the main theme of the play, which consists of the small themes extracted from fragments of the text (we had structured the text into themes and fragments). The action of the play was deconstructed into episodes, and the episodes into facts. The students had to identify the components that would break the action. “The thoughts, the feelings, the isolated dreams of the writer cross like a red wire all of his life and guide him during creation. The basis of the play stays on them and from these seeds he cultivates his literary work. Playing scenes of the writer’s feelings, thoughts and dreams, of his troubles and joy is the main theme of the show.”<sup>6</sup> The main theme may be formal and may give a more or less correct overall direction; or it can be rational, hallow; or conscious, born from the actor’s mind and starting from a creative thought; or emotional, which stimulates the entire being. Choosing its name is a searching process. The simple fragments and themes that get the right names gain strength and importance. Replacing the noun with a verb increases the activity and efficiency of the creative aspiration. The verb “I want to...” helps to name the core theme of the role: Kuzma - I want to finish the report and get the 300 promised rubles; Andrei Andreevici - I want to win the prize and the admiration of the commission; Tatiana - I want to reclaim my husband; Merciutkina - I want

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 553. „Gândurile, sentimentele, visurile izolate ale scriitorului îi traversează ca un fir roșu toată viața și îl ghidează în timpul creației. Pe ele se pune baza piesei și din aceste semințe își cultivă opera literară. Redarea pe scenă a sentimentelor, gândurilor și viselor scriitorului, a chinurilor și bucuriilor sale, este tema principală a spectacolului.” (Translation into English by the author of this paper).

the money and the hiring of my husband; the students who interpreted the bank employees, the porter and the Commission, invented characters and encountered difficulty in naming the core theme, but they identified it as the show was built.

Having settled the core theme, we went on to splitting the text into fragments and themes. The themes were solved by effective and purposeful action. They had to be creative, tempting, necessary. Stanislavski talks about “the necessary themes”.<sup>7</sup>

Working on the text, we encountered the problem of finding a proper title for the fragments. The denomination is the synthesis, the essence, the extract. Once the student had found the right denomination, he discovered the theme/subject. “The right denomination is the one that defines the essence of the fragment and also reveals the theme covered by it.”<sup>8</sup> I asked the students to name the pieces of fragments with a noun and the teams with a verb – “wish”. This challenge generated thoughts and feelings and the verbs led to an inner desire of activity.

The rehearsals aimed to establish the necessary actions and the purpose of these action had been long and creative, with obstacles and tensions. Each episode needed an actantial progress and every theatrical fact needed a task. The student had to discover the necessary actions of fulfillment of the scenic task. The answer to the Stanislavskian question, “if this situation were real, what would I do?” lies in every actor-student, and it is passed through the filter of personal creative skills. The student must not lose contact with himself and the answer should be found specifically at the present time: here, today, now. In order to determine the circumstances each and every one of the actor-students had answered those questions, taking notes and creating a character file.

-*Where from?* Where does the character come from before the situation given by the author? (Kuzma Nicolaevici, the doorkeeper, the female employees and Andreevici come from home, Tatiana Alexeevna from the railway station, Merciutkina also from home).

-*Where?* Where is the character in that particular moment of the action of the play? (Inside a bank where there are five offices, a hanger, a radio set and a telephone, and next to it, the director’s office).

<sup>7</sup> See: Stanislavski, Konstantin Segreevici: *Munca actorului cu sine însuși*, Vol. 1, translation from Russian into Romanian Raluca Rădulescu, Editura Nemira, București, 2018, pp. 273-274.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 278. „Denumirea corectă, care definește esența fragmentului, dezvăluie și tema cuprinsă în el.” (Translation into English by the author of this paper).

-*What?* What does the character do in the given situation? (Kuzma tries to finish the report – he calculates and writes; the doorkeeper goes to take water and valerian drops, and reads the newspaper; the female employees undress and sit at the desk, each doing a certain action – they prepare the cake dance, try to take the report, play a joke on Kuzma, arrange the room for the committee; Andrei Andreevici unwraps the received present, asks for the report, establishes a relationship with each female employee separately, dances with them, has the meal, and so on; Tatiana enters but she is sent home after Merciutkina's coming; Merciutkina asks for the 24 rubles and 26 copeici and her husband's hiring; the chauffeur enters to check the room and announces the coming of the committee; they congratulate the director and hand over the cup and the medal, and then sing the song from the radio).

-*Why?* Why does the character carry out a certain action?

-*When?* When does the action take place? At which time, day, month and year? (During the day from seven till three in the afternoon, when the committee comes; I have also included extra stage situations that happened before the beginning of the play. The season is winter: Kuzuma is wearing a pair of thick woolen socks, the female employees wear winter coats and fur caps, Andrei Andreevici a suit and a wintercoat; Tatiana wears a fur cap and a fur collar, and the committee a red dress, a fur coat and a fur cap.

-*Where* will the character go after having finished the play?

“Working on the preparation of the role, it is necessary on the one hand that you should enhance the line of physical emotion, being really useful to write it down; on the other hand, begin to courageously check its structure and third to begin courageously the action without any hesitation. As soon as you have started the action, you will feel the immediate need to justify these actions.”<sup>9</sup> These physical actions had to be in certain logic and consequence within the situation and assure a coherent and credible evolution/ development to the character.

After establishing the trajectory of the stage action each student received the task to discover what thoughts were beyond these actions, what he thinks at every

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<sup>9</sup> Toporkov, Vasili: *op.cit.*, p. 168. „Lucrând la pregătirea rolului, trebuie în primul rând, să întăriți linia acțiunilor fizice, fiindu-vă chiar folositor s-o înregistrați în scris; în al doilea rând, să începeți în mod curajos să-i verificați structura și, în al treilea rând, să începeți în mod curajos a acționa, fără să stați prea mult pe gânduri. De îndată ce veți intra în acțiune, veți resimți imediat nevoia de a justifica aceste acțiuni.” (Translation into English by the author of this paper).

moment of his stage experience. The actor student has to be able to delimit the interior monologue from the simple questions triggered by the little understanding of the text, not to go on the wrong way. There appeared many thoughts, useless parasite actions. The students had been guided to permanently answer to: Here, Today, Now.

## 2. Second stage of work

In the second important stage, the students had discovered via improvisation / improvising, doing A-B-s, establishing acting stages. I started by thinking about the text with physical actions. It was a difficult working stage: the words of the text should have been adapted to the stage actions. The clichés and formalism paralyzed the act of creation. The female students playing the roles felt themselves uncovered and clumsy, they didn't know what to do, how to act on the stage. I guided them to think and answer, through action, the question: "What would I do if?" It was necessary to understand the subconscious of each student and that is why I insisted on the connotation made by interior monologue, images and the affective memory of the creator artist. In real life, thoughts and actions are simultaneous on the stage; the student actor has to recreate this activity step by step, to recreate the entire monologue and the images of his own thoughts. Concerning the use of the affective memory on the stage, the students faced a dilemma: How is it possible to synchronize the inner self with his role? Should they feel the two sights simultaneously? The answer is given by Stanislavski in the chapter "The affective memory" from the book *An Actor's Work on a Role* (1957). I read the chapter and reached the following conclusions: with the help of the subconscious memory, that of the feelings, the actor has a special memory for feeling functioning unconsciously in his own self and for himself. "But how do we trigger the needed feeling?" the students asked. There is the voluntary memory – able to answer to any rational call and to trigger indispensable information – and involuntary memory, which offers the surprise, recalls memory that remains in the essence of the human being. Students were asked to retell the similar situations from their own life, personal experiences and thoughts about one concept or mood. This was an important part, an intimate process of the lab (process of creation), in which the truth of the experiences should be protected as the student who confessed the memory had to concentrate to keep the emotion to change in his role. The specific of the involuntary memory is not only the happening but also the speed. Stanislavski says of this type of memory that it passes fast, it is like a "falling star" or "as a flower which shrivels fast". Asking questions, we tried to provoke the student to bring himself back to where he was

in that particular moment in order to be able to search his subconscious, to be able to control his ego, to be able to fill and relive the retold moments using Chekhov's text. The students were watching and each of them searched in his subconscious trying to understand the way the actor goes on in order to trigger the emotion with the help of the affective memory. The appeal to the sensorial memory is a must: the student has to work with the five senses. Each student was asked to retell a similar moment from the character's life, then to improvise a situation in order to produce the same emotion. Different emotions where tried: the riot and the indignation concerning the director, the fury when you are mocked in public, the hurt of vanity; the suspicion of the mistress/ wife for the lover/ husband, the euphoria created by a joyful dance, the emotion provoked by a dear human being (mother, when Andrei Andreevici receives the photo), the care and despair of the husband with a cheating wife (Tatiana's unexpected coming to the bank); amazement (Merciutkina's when the director is under the table, Tatiana's when the cap and the fur collar are walking on the table as if they were alive).

Concerning the mechanism of stimulating their own emotions, I had revealed Robert Cohen's theory on stage acting to the students. He proposes a mechanism through which the actor's role aims to suppress the physiology of emotion, sometimes called "the interpretation of the contrary" or "to play against emotion"<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the actor mostly detects and first analyzes all the physiological symptoms associated with the emotional state he has to play according to the text, then tries to suppress it consciously. For example, if the text asks him to sigh weakly, the actor will strive to imagine all the symptoms coming from this state: tears, probably stomach cramps, precipitated breath, weakness in arms and legs, and so on – that is everything the actor imagines that could happen to him. Then, he will try to suppress all these imagined physiological changes: he will try to ease his tummy, to relax his lungs and stomach, to tense his muscles. If he makes this effort consciously coming back to the interpretation of his scene, the emotions will disappear, probably spontaneously. We can say we deal with a case of double self-compelling or with tricking the body. When the actor becomes aware of the character's intention/ purpose, when he tries to calm his entrails (but also the ones of his character), to breathe normally and to stop the sweat which wets his palms, he is doing exactly what the character would do, and his emotions would burst as a reaction to the character's intentions, not as their direct and conscious result.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, Robert: *Puterea interpretării scenice*, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

I worked, in this way, with a student named Udrea Alexandru on the soliloquy from the beginning of the project: I analyzed the physiological symptoms of flu - headaches, sweat, chills, the nose which is clogged and is running, and I asked him to suppress these symptoms, because he was exposing them and the play became fake and coarse. As he was trying to abolish his symptoms, the emotion and the truth came to light.

Once the emotional track had been established, we broke the ice starting to memorize and fix the actions. How can the action be memorized? After the student had found the feeling through his own “affective memory”, the action was repeated multiple times to be fixed. The actions must be memorized in the way the music is memorized; nothing must change the order of the actions after it has been established. The role is a long strand of beads that make up the action. The students were discovering the actions throughout the improvisations and they were thrilled to discover the truth of a scene and the solutions only by the simple execution of a physical action. Often, what seemed fake was diminished through the repetition of the actions in a sustained rhythm. The comic situations were executed due to an imposed rhythm, which had the role of destroying the form. “To exist in the scene means to have rhythm”, said Stanislavski’s disciple, Boleslavski. “If you do not feel the rhythm, you cannot control the method of physical actions. And this is because every physical action is strictly bound to the rhythm and the rhythm that defines it.”<sup>12</sup> What does the tempo-rhythm mean and how is the own rhythm found? There is an inner rhythm and an exterior one. The inner rhythm is given by quick or slow changes of mind, images, feelings, pulses, will. The exterior rhythm is expressed through actions and speech (slow or fast). Every action, every feeling has its own rhythmical dominance. To establish perfect relationships between the characters, the student-actor must identify and find the right tempo-rhythm, to make use of his life experience, but also of his imagination. Without taking into consideration the tempo used on the scene, he must be internally active, but also in action.

### 3. Third stage of work

In the third stage of work, I focused my attention on some aspects regarding the construction of the play, the exterior characterization of the characters, the scenic

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<sup>12</sup> Boleslavski, apud: Vasili Toporkov, *Stanislavski la repetiție*, p. 180. „Dacă nu dispuneți de ritm, nu puteți stăpâni metoda acțiunilor fizice. Și asta pentru că orice acțiune fizică este indisolubil legată de ritm și ritmul ce o caracterizează.”(Translation into English by the author of this paper).

communication and the energy of the play. I asked myself and I tried to identify whether: the track of actions is assured, following a precise logic; the direction of the characters' evolutions are well established; there exist points of climax in the evolution of the characters; there are moments of maximum intensity; there are moments of relaxation; the tempo-rhythm is established; whether in the play there exists the emotional evolution of the character from the dramatic text. The fixed forms started to replace the improvisation, meaning that the directorial and the scenic vision, the lights and the music were affected in order to create the final artistic form. The student-actor had the duty to assure that the discoveries and the revelations from the previous stages would not vanish and also to respect some imposed requirements: maximum focus, self-trust in their acting and creative abilities; without "false modesty" and anything demonstrative; clarity and immaculacy in everything (thoughts, words, diction, voice, moves); perfect focus on the scene (I had forbidden everything that was extra or unknown to our work).

However, the veracity of the actions, the faith and the scenic truth, the emotion would have had to suffer because of the blocking that intervened during the rehearsals. The blocking of the actor happened naturally through the feelings of the actors. We had done many other exercises to release tension and bad energy, to relieve the muscle strain, to relax, following the control of every muscular segment on different body-parts and trying to activate them separately, depending on the situation in hand (e.g. the student who plays the character of Kuzma must do the full split; the character falls into the full split-move by accident, which generates another type of movement; which parts of the body are contracted and which ones are relaxed?). Stanislavski proposes some working steps in order to obtain muscular relaxation and control; the awareness of the tension, its interior and exterior monitoring, the identification of the equilibrium and the center of gravity, the use of the muscle groups, the awareness of the nature of organic actions and of psychological ones which influence and determine the final expression of the acting behavior.

The debut of the play is a chain coupling of physical actions that need focus and attention on the student-actors' part. The moment of the report's theft, followed by the one of the searches, the establishment of the relationships between the director and the employees, are all achieved through "physical action". The concentration of the actor on his own space will naturally attract the concentration of the spectator on the scenic space. Through concentration, the actor limits his attention circle on a particular zone. Then, he notices, retains, reproduces and leads the spectator's attention. I created a phylum of actions (each character reacts,

answers and acts from his point of view) in order to solve the scenic problem. Every action had its motivation; every effort had, in its turn, an explanation. In order to elucidate the scene “The Report” I explained to my students which type of concentration they needed: imagine that “the report” is 100 lei; 100 lei must be followed during the play by you, but also by the spectator; it starts somewhere and gets in the same place; I must be able to follow it. The spaces of concentration are small, medium and big and Stanislavski refers to them as circles of attention. The actor must learn how to control these circles of attention because during the rehearsal/ play the concentration varies and sometimes it disappears. Once gone, the spectator is confused.

The speech is an action in itself, just like the gesture or the movement. We worked during the rehearsals on the expressivity of the speech and on its personalization, doing various breathing and intonation exercises, playing with different tempos and rhythms. We established from the very beginning the sense and the message of the replies, an aspect concerning the accents and the interpretation. During the exercises, the students discovered the joy, the necessity and the freedom of using the interjection. The representations of the play *The Anniversary* were different. We created various situations of play-comic source: if in many comedies, “the wardrobe” represents the place where the characters hide and from where they appear in order to intensify the comic situation, in *The Anniversary* we used “the table” (the unexpected coming of Tatiana surprises her husband, who hides his mistress under the table without thinking it out first). The way in which the director chooses to solve the problems coming out of this situation, their solution, cost the student-actor a lot of energy, precision and spontaneity. The comic is born due to the precision and the rigor of the proceedings, the keeping of the rhythm and the actors’ seriousness. *The Anniversary* production participated in “The meeting of the theatre schools” from Croatia and had been performed at “The International Theatre Festival from Sibiu”, but also during the project “The students from Sibiu conquer the city”.

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# The Actor and the Absence – Imagination or Memory

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## Abstract

Sense memory, emotional memory or “affective memory”<sup>1</sup> as Konstantin Sergheievici Stanislavski calls it, is a term often used in the context of the stage course. The actor / student is often asked to recall an event, a situation, or find an analogy in his past with the various scenic situations and bring them into the present. The possibility of doing so is often under the dome of accident and chance. And even if this would be a success for the actor / student with the load of that past thing, the meaning of the object in his mind and soul will crumble, disperse and eventually disappear. The actor / student will be in the face of a strange and impersonal fact, of an unimportant and meaningless event, of an absent object, absent. Why? Because remembering a memory does not only involve passing or recapitalizing an already memorized event, but also activating images, similar correspondences with it, new images, accompanied by its sensory qualities, past representations with current projective elements. Thus, the actor / student can recall images of how they show an absent object, but may, in some cases, retain “linking information”<sup>2</sup>, an indirect causal link between his previous encounter / encounters with his object and his current thoughts about it. Therefore, if in the first case we are dealing with a memory representation by memory, in the second case we can speak of a rebuilt representation and transformed by reproductive imagination, due to its causal relationship with a certain presence of the subject. Thus, the affective, emotional memory that Stanislavski speaks of does not refer to an accurate rehearsal or reheat of the actor /student’s external and internal actions, to an imitation, but to their refurbish with new elements, such abstraction and symbolism.

## Keywords:

emotional memory; memory; experience; negative feedback; reproductive imagery; updating; reconfiguration; positive feedback; self-revelation; symbol.

<sup>1</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *Munca actorului cu sine însuși*, translation into Romanian Lucia Demetrius and Sonia Filip, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, București, 1955, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Stevenson, Leslie: “Twelve Conceptions of Imagination”, in: *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 43, July 2003, p. 239.

## Rezumat

Memoria sentimentului, memoria emoțională sau „memoria afectivă”<sup>3</sup>, cum o numește Konstantin Sergheievici Stanislavski, este o noțiune des folosită în contextual procesului scenic. Nu de puține ori actorului /studentului i se cere să-și aminteacă un eveniment, o întâmplare sau să găsească un correspondent în trecutul său cu diferențele situații scenice și să le aducă în prezent. Posibilitatea ca acest lucru să-i reușească se află de cele mai multe ori sub cupola accidentalului și a întâmplării. Și chiar dacă acest lucru ar fi o reușită pentru actor / student, cu timpul încărcătura acelui fapt trecut, însemnatatea obiectului în mintea și în sufletul său se va toci, se va dispersa și în cele din urmă va dispărea. Actorul / studentul se va afla în definitiv în fața unui fapt străin și impersonal, a unui eveniment lipsit de valoare și înțeles, a unui obiect absent, absent. De ce? Pentru că reamintirea unei amintiri nu presupune doar trecerea sau recapitularea unui eveniment deja memorat, ci și activarea unor imagini, a unor corespondențe similare cu acesta, a unor imagini noi, însotite de calitățile sale senzoriale, reprezentări trecute cu elemente proiective actuale. Astfel, actorul / student își poate aminti imagini despre modul în care arăta un obiect absent, dar poate, în unele cazuri, să rețină „o informație-legătură”<sup>4</sup>, o legătură cauzală indirectă între întâlnirea / întâlnirile anterioare ale acestuia cu obiectul și gândurile sale actuale despre acesta. Prin urmare, dacă în primul caz avem de-a face cu o reprezentare a memoriei prin amintire, în cel de-al doilea caz putem vorbi despre o repezentare reconstruită și transformată de către imaginea reproductivă, datorită relației cauzale a acesteia cu un anumit prezent al subiectului. Așadar, memoria afectivă, emoțională despre care vorbește Stanislavski nu se referă la o repetare precisă sau o reîncălzire a acțiunilor exterioare și interne ale actorului / studentului, la o imitație, ci la reactualizare a acestora cu elemente noi, la sintetizarea, abstractizarea și simbolizarea lor.

## Cuvinte cheie:

memorie emoțională; amintire; experiență; *feed-back*-ul negativ; imaginea reproductivă; reactualizare; reconfigurare; *feed-back*-ul pozitiv; auto-revelație; simbol.

In his work *An Actor's Work on a Role* Stanislavski defines the emotional memory based on the example of the two travelers thrown on a rock by the sea flow. After they were saved, they recounted the impressions they had from their experience. Thus, if the first of them kept in mind all the actions he took, such as how he left, why he went, where he went down, how he set foot, where the other traveler jumped, he remembered almost nothing from all these, but only the feelings he had experienced. At the beginning, the delight, then the prudence, the

<sup>3</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *op.cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> Stevenson, Leslie: *op.cit.*, p. 239.

fear, the hopes, the doubts and finally the state of panic. Stanislavski remarks that these feelings are kept in the emotional memory and make the actor act authentic, fruitful and appropriate. Therefore, if the first traveler only repeated with unusual precision his outer actions, without warming them with inner experiences, the second manifested his “emotional memory”.<sup>5</sup>

The actor, through his imagination and memory, brings the absence<sup>6</sup> of an object into the present. This one “absence” may include a memory-based situation, but at the same time it may contain situations based on or having a starting point for the subject’s memory about this object in “absence”, but which are reproduced, represented and updated in a modified order or form. In the latter case, we can no longer speak of a fixation, reflection or faithful updating of the past or previous experiences, as in the case of memory, but rather, of a transformation characteristic of reproductive imagination. Think of something that is not perceived in the present time but which existed in real time: that something *absent* refers primarily to a memory activity, as we have seen in the example of the two travelers. A previously perceived object, engraved, is preserved in the subject’s memory and updated by its recognition and reproduction.

But does this simple reproduction stir the actor’s mind and soul? What is that “affective memory”<sup>7</sup> Stanislavski was talking about? “Absence” is, for both the actor and the viewer, the magic of a dream that expects to be revealed to them in the mind and in the body. Through what means can a dream be materialized? A succession of authentic and fantastic images. Memory and imagination. Experience and unknown, fantasy. These could be means for bringing an absent object to the present and turning the invisible into visible.

Even if memory and imagination have a common feature, namely, this updating of events, it differs by the quality they provide within each activity. If the memory in its update is appealing to images as mere memories of some concrete things that have been perceived before, reproductive imagination has the extraordinary quality of updating and reconfiguring by constantly transforming the images and details of the past.

Therefore, we are not talking about the ability of memory to reproduce an object previously perceived by a varied and complex set of details, but to the ability of the imagination to create an indirect causal link between its previous

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<sup>5</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *op.cit*, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> Stevenson, Leslie: *op.cit*, pp. 238-259.

<sup>7</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *op.cit*, p. 150.

encounter with its object and the thoughts of the person here and now. A person can remember intense sensory images about what an object looks like, but may, in some cases, only retain “linking information”<sup>8</sup>. This is the indirect causal link between someone’s previous encounter / encounters with the subject and the current thoughts of the person about it. If in the first case we are dealing with a memory representation, in the second case we can speak of a representation rebuilt and transformed by reproductive imagination, due to its past relationship with the subject.

Sense memory, emotional memory or “affective memory”<sup>9</sup> as Stanislavski calls it, is not only a memory activity but also a powerful one related to reproductive imagination. In his conception emotional memory is “a recapitulation of some memories and feelings”<sup>10</sup>, the process of “crystallization”<sup>11</sup> of them being determined mainly by the subject’s memory. What we perceive is how he starts from his memory, but is constantly supported and guided by reproductive imagination. Recalling a memory does not only involve passing or recapitulating an already memorized event, but also activating images, similar correspondences with it, accompanied by its sensory qualities. If, in the case of memory, the event unfolds according to the principle of fidelity - referring to the accuracy of situation, of reality, in the case of imagination it acquires new valences.

Memory is the psychological cognitive mechanism that faithfully preserves received receptions with a wide variety of contents. It is the basis of the individual’s psychic life. Without storing sensations and perceptions, it not only does the subject not have the ability to orient itself in the environment in which it lives, but would live every moment as if it were for the first time.

The brain possesses enormous plasticity, as Vygotski says in his *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*<sup>12</sup>, which changes under the influence of certain types of stimulation. Moreover, if the stimulation is strong enough or repeated, it keeps track of the change. Something analogous to what happens in the brain, is what happens to a piece of paper if we fold it. The crease remains even if we straighten the paper, and any new change that is going to take place bears the mark of the changes made in the past and facilitates its folding in the future. Similarly, our

<sup>8</sup> Stevenson, Leslie: *op.cit.*, p. 239

<sup>9</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *op.cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 228.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 150.

<sup>12</sup> Vygotski, Lev Seminovici: “*Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*”, in: *Journal of Russian and Eastern European Psychology*, vol. 42, no. 1, January-February 2004, p. 8

brain proves to be an organ that retains past experience and facilitates reproduction of that in the future. If the brain activity was limited to retention of the previous experience, the human being could not adapt to all new and unexpected changes and would not be able to respond or react to the environment. Memory is a varied and complex series of processes by which the individual, by appropriating them, has the ability to reproduce them when necessary. In this respect the following illustrating example: "I raise a branch a little; the bird is there, clotting the eggs. I stay still. As I can imagine- the fear of the bird and my fear of frightening slightly disappear. I breathe better. I let the branch fall back. I'll be back tomorrow. Today, joy is in me: the birds have made a nest in my garden. And the next day I turn around, walking down the alley more easily than before, I see in the bottom of the nest eight egg white red eggs. It's such an old story that I hesitate to repeat it, to repeat it. And yet, I just relived it. These real memories are so rare in a lifetime!"<sup>13</sup>

True memories? Reliving? Memory keeps, fixes, reflects, or updates past, previous information and experiences, but reproductive imagination has the ability to reproduce experiences, information and representations in a modified order or form, reconfigure them and signify them. The incontestable relationship between these two mechanisms lies in the fact that memory is the support and primary mechanism of imagination and imaginative deployments from which it will extract its material. Reproductive imagination will refresh, combine and transform this material, being confused or being at the border of some identification with creative imagination.

Another example that will help us to differentiate between the two concepts (reproductive imagination and memory) is given by Ribot.<sup>14</sup> A child playing is often an echo of what he has seen and heard from others. However, the elements of his previous experience are not reproduced exactly in the way they actually took place. A child playing is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, a reminder, but a recreation of the impressions he has gained. He combines and uses the acquired elements to build a new reality, one that is consistent with his own needs and desires. In support of what has been said, Vygotski gives as an example Ribot's statement telling a story about a three-and-a-half-year-old boy who saw a cowherd walking on the street and began to cry: "<Mother, look at the foot of the poor man!> Then he began to invent a story: the man who was riding on a horse

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<sup>13</sup> Bachelard, Gaston: *Poetica spațiului*, translation into Romanian Irina Bădescu, Editura Paralela 45, Pitești, 2003, pp. 123-124.

<sup>14</sup> Ribot, Theodule, apud. Vygotski, Lev Seminovici, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

fell from a rock, got hurt in one leg and so he needed a certain medicine to heal".<sup>15</sup> In this case, the combinatorial operation of imagination is extremely clear, and therefore we have a situation where the child has completed, recombined, and created an event without a correspondent in a personal experience.

If memory is a reproduction of reality and is always true to the already experienced material, reproductive imagination builds new realities and universes from memory data and mental representations. It develops new images "without correspondence in the previous experience of the subject"<sup>16</sup>. Reproductive imagery has the support in this case not only memory but also representation.

Imagination starts from the data accumulated in memory, from the knowledge of the subject, but it develops, updates them and has the extraordinary ability to accommodate them to a present goal.

In this sense, Stanislavski's emotional memory is more than just a copy of a lived reality. The example of the two travelers<sup>17</sup> who were thrown into a rock by the seaside, and who, after being saved, had told each other the impressions of past experience give us the best parable in this regard. If the first traveler remembered all the actions he had made (how, where, why he went, where he had descended, how he set his foot, where he had jumped), the second traveler did not remember the details of the event. Instead, he remembered and reshaped all the feelings he had had, from excitement, prudence, fear, hopes, doubts he had experienced, to the panic he had felt at the time. If the former repeated his actions only with unusual precision, the second warmed them up with inner feelings. These feelings have been preserved and updated, and so the absent object has now been brought by his emotional memory, as Stanislavski notices. But in this case, do we just deal with a memory or a reproductive imagery? The representation of the absent object of the event is generated by memory in unaltered or reconstructed state, transformed, updated and accommodated through reproductive imagery?

The above example best supports the idea that imagination is a memory that revives with particular intensity past perceptions, while ordinary memory throws them into a dead past, as Zlate argues in his publication *Psychology of Cognitive Mechanisms*. Thus, imagination and memory should not be confused, because they are subject to different internal mechanisms and logics. Therefore, if memory is focused on restoring memories as they were at the time of acquisition,

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> Aniței, Mihai: *Fundamentele psihologiei*, Editura Universitară, București, 2010, p. 166.

<sup>17</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *op.cit.*, p. 150.

imagination tends to accompany past representations with current projective elements. "In this case the imagination is for memory a restructuring factor, which separates the memories, thickens them, changes their meaning, animates them and, more importantly, transforms them."<sup>18</sup>.

Thus, the reproductive imagination has an extraordinary characteristic of updating and accommodating, which highlights the individual's ability to restructure and transform a previous experience in accordance with his present tendencies. This feature goes beyond memory qualities. If memory is the mechanism that is subordinate to the laws of fidelity correspondence, the reproduction having to be compulsory in accordance with and exact as form with the original object, the imagination even if it is based entirely on the data of the previous experience of the subject, is subordinated to the laws of transformation. In this case, the representation played a fundamental role in the systematization, structuring and reorganization of the perceptual experience, it did not make a simple reproduction of it, but an intuitive, figurative and relevant update for the subject, having the extraordinary power of "schematizing" updating and generalizing the experience in a new image or sequence of new images. Through this process the imagination reproduced the imaginative content of the lived experience (of the second traveler) in the form of a schema, selected the essential features of the object (eliminated its secondary aspects), giving them significance. Through imagination, experience and perceived event, memory has acquired a new form, has been summarized, illustrated and signified. The two functions of the imagination, of illustration and of significance, played a decisive role in this context. If the former illustrated and summarized the contents of consciousness in a figurative, intuitive and symbolic form, the significance function marked the continuity of personal experience, the latter becoming concomitant past, present and future, through evocation and anticipation.

The sensations perceived by the subject in the past experience have fueled the reproductive imagination, causing in the case of updating associative chains and new compositions. The sensation can give birth and form an image, but at the same time the imagination can provoke a sensation, evoke it, restore it and not last but not least support it. In this case, the double relation that the sensation has with the imagination, of being a trigger, a constituent and causal element, which provoked and gave the impression of reality by objectifying the sensation, was an extremely important one. When the subject updated the lived event, his imagination not only provoked the past sensations, but sustained them throughout

<sup>18</sup> Zlate, Mielu: *Psihologia mecanismelor cognitive*, Editura Polirom, Iași 1999, p. 507.

evocation illustrated them in a figurative, intuitive and symbolic form, summed them up and signified them. The subject thus created an indirect causal link between the previous encounter with the event and his current thoughts about it.

The importance of the symbolic function of imagination is also evidenced by Gheorghe Neacșu, who emphasized an important feature of imagination in stage transposition. He states that the correlations made between the imaginative and affective responses of the subjects proved that at the talented actors the elaborated images are more original, more affective, more nuanced, expressing a tendency towards the symbol. The process of imagining in the example above is "evocation of memory representations"<sup>19</sup> in the form of plastic images. In this case imagination, through the sensory impression, the perception, the representations, developed images with a strong character in the absence of the object. If memory is centered on restitution of memories as they were at the time of acquisition, as is the case with the first traveler, in the latter case imagination has accompanied past representations with current projective elements. If the first traveler, by means of memory, provided the auditor with material insignificant from the affective point of view, the second subject, through imagination, separated the details, thickened them, coloured them with the corresponding load, amplified and diminished them, in a word, gave them meaning.

Under this circumstance, imagination started from perception, extracted the material from it, relied on it permanently, but not to reproduce or repeat it, but to overcome it. The imaginative product obtained overtook the look of authentic perception. Thus we have to do with an activity of the imagination which, through its processes of schematization, approach or removal, through diminution or amplification, has restructured and transformed a past memory according to a certain present of the subject. The second traveler experienced all the feelings for the first time, in a new, authentic, fruitful and appropriate way. The memory was subordinated to transformation, thanks to the mechanism of imagination of "positive feed-back"<sup>20</sup>, it has removed and varied the elements and the imaging products from the primary data on which they were elaborated, transformed them. This event could now be brought back by the ability of the subject's imagination, the ability of the traveler to think about something previously perceived, absent in space-time reality, and to make it visible in his imagination

<sup>19</sup> Neacșu, Gheorghe: *Transpunere și expresivitate scenică*, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București, 1971, p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Golu, Mihai: *Fundamentele psihologiei*, vol. 2, Editura Fundației „România De Mâine”, București, 2000, p. 527.

and others. This indirect causal link between his previous encounter/encounters with his object and current thoughts about him was not based on the “negative feed-back”<sup>21</sup> of the memory of updating past experiences of the object, without it being subject to change. His connection was based on reproductive imagination, because “our affective states are usually arranged around the present emotion in an anonymous and confused form. Our affective experience gives us the fullness of the present moment. From so many I’s as we are and we have been, some are more transparent. There is sometimes a kind of rebirth of juvenile sensitivity; but rarely precise memories”<sup>22</sup>.

If in the first case the traveler, due to his memory mechanism, retained his unaltered previous experience, in the situation of the second subject, his imagination acted dynamically and in a transformative manner towards the removal of the imaging products from the primary data on which they were elaborated. Moreover, over and above this internal and internal dynamics, an external one, from the affective sphere, also overlapped. These emotional experiences were generated by the amplifying mechanism of the positive feedback of reproductive imagination. Perceptual experiences will be more or less accurate, but the material that has been developed most often takes the form of a symbol, a concrete-intuitive, schematic, figurative, and strongly affective image. The memory of reproductive imagery, as it is updated, will come to life in an image and will tend to materialize, because, “the more we try to remember a past pain, the more we have more the impression that we really feel it”.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, if memory, in its refreshing hypothesis, calls for images as simple memories of concrete things, previously perceived, in the case of reproductive imagination things differ in importance and quality. Imagination has the extraordinary quality not only of bringing memory back to memory, but also of updating it through “permanent transformation of images and details”<sup>24</sup>.

The above-mentioned aspects point out the value of reproducing and updating memory, but also the reconstructive-imaginative value of reproductive imagery. This feature of imagination makes the representations original. In this case, we can talk about a creative imagination that transformed representations into plastic images. They were updated “at the moment of creation in order to achieve new,

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>22</sup> Delacroix, Henri: *Psihologia artei*, translation into Romanian Victor Ivanovici and Virgil Mazilescu, Editura Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1983, p. 125.

<sup>23</sup> Bergson, Henri: *Materie și memorie*, translation into Romanian Cora Chiriac, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1996, p. 215.

<sup>24</sup> Golu, Mihai: *op.cit.*, p. 527.

original, superior models”<sup>25</sup>. In this regard, we can state that in the scenic process, memory and imagination are in constant communication, provoked, sustained and accompanied. If the first is highlighted by its power to update the information and experiences perceived by the subject, reproductive imagination, through its own, internal, dynamic, and transformative mechanism, will give it the opportunity to do something, to act with and on this material.

If for some “painters the inner vision is so precise that they can paint the portraits of those who are not present”<sup>26</sup>, for some musicians, the inner hearing is so perfect that they can listen to a symphony that was played shortly before, “remembering all the details of interpretation and the smallest deviations from the score”<sup>27</sup>, for the actors the memory of sight, smell, hearing, inner feelings and its past is constantly accompanied by his imagination. If through his memory the actor can “record and awaken the memory of visual and auditory images, human image, mimics, body lines, walking, manners, movements, voice, people’s intonations who meet them alive, of their costume, of the everyday details”<sup>28</sup> through his imagination, he is able not only to reproduce his past, but to transform it, to indicate it, to sign it, and last but not least, to bring it to the present.

Past impressions and perceptions can bring back memories of the sensations of taste, smell, feeling, hearing and emotional, affective ones, but the action of the imagination on them will give them a double value, not only one of reproduction, but also of reconstruction, updating, and accommodation. In this situation, the actor can reorganize the lived memories, create them in the sense of the necessity of the scenic situations, of his creative endeavor, they having not only a recapitulative value, but also an evocative, transformative and creative illusion.

The character’s life represented, as Stanislavski states, is built from the material chosen by emotional memory. This is often richer than the one who creates, the actor, “than the usual one, than the everyday human life”<sup>29</sup> because “actors do not differ in their roles but in their inner essence”.<sup>30</sup> Imagination highlights that mobility of the spirit, as G. Bachelard remarks, because it is not merely a reproduction of images, as in the case of memory, but it can produce images. “It is more than these images, aspiring to something new. By changing and modifying

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<sup>25</sup> Neacșu, Gheorghe: *op.cit.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>26</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *op.cit.*, p. 221.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 224.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 225.

images, by deforming them and by unexpectedly associating images, imagination frees us from the primary attributes”.<sup>31</sup>

In conclusion, in a scenic context, this feature of reproductive imagination is as important as Stanislavski’s time element. If for him time is a painter who purifies and knows how to generate poetic memories, for us the reproductive imagination is what makes them, in the scenic process, stronger, more attractive and artistic. Through it, the actor either approaches or removes the object from his real conditions. Depending on a certain artistic approach, he evokes, completes, provokes and recreates a certain material previously perceived in pictorial, vivid and significant images. Imagination is, therefore, more important than the actor’s thinking or memory, because it is the one that makes the actor dream and experience things that are beyond his every day and ordinary reality. The actor’s imagination plays a key role in the act of creation. It becomes the instrument by which the actor solves the concrete problem (role, scenic situations, actions) through images, analogies, memories and personal fantasies, through the original, expressive and organic means of incorporating and solving it, because “the words are not important, but what we do with these words, which gives life to these inanimate words, which makes them a <verb>.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, if the actor has created through his imagination the fictional world of the character, if he “has set his score as something absolutely natural, organic [...] and if, before the show, he is ready to confess without to hide anything, then each show will come to its fullness”<sup>33</sup>. Thus, through the ability to generate, combine, and create generative images with “pure” images without an apparent link to realm, or paintings and image sequences (an essential condition of actor’s art), imagination stimulates a process of self-revelation, going to the depths of the actor’s subconscious. These representations and images, whether starting from previous experience data or even creating the actor’s own generative mechanisms, highlight the creative and innovative function of imagination.

This is a primary role in the actor’s art because it favors both the novelty of the product and the effect it has on the receiver. The ability of imagination to generate, leave, or create new images leads the actor to psychological action, making it easier to create the fictional context in which he is, and the resulting effect from that context. Also, the ability of the imagination to work on the one

<sup>31</sup> Zlate, Mielu: *op.cit.*, p. 488.

<sup>32</sup> Grotowski, Jerzy: *Spre un teatru sărac*, translation into Romanian George Banuș Mirella Nedelcu-Pătureanu, Editura Unitext, București, 1998, p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 114.

hand with images stored in memory in the absence of the object or event, and on the other hand images created from the imaginary, through fantasy, performing reordering, reorganization and restructuring, emphasizes the extraordinary role which he has in the artistic process. The action of imagination to generate and combine in the absence of an object representations of memory or imaginary highlights an important feature of the actor's imagination: his ability to build a fictional world whose veracity resides in a combination of real and invented elements with the help of creative fantasy. Thus imagination becomes central to the structure of creativity.

Imagination is based on a free, unrestrained combinatorial space on reality and thus gives the actor a special freedom of construction, reconstruction, creation and recreation of new images from both the conscious and the subconscious sphere. This ability of imagining to combine pictures in paintings or sequences of images, to create analogies as true, powerful, and not just reproductions, will generate psychic actions both in the mind and soul of the actor and the spectator, will "stimulate a process of self-revelation that will go down to the depth of their subconscious"<sup>34</sup>. This power of the actor through his imagination resides in the very essence and power of the theater to make an act of self-revelation, to create a theatrical and instantaneous reality, and not an illustration of life, a reality "close to life by analogy"<sup>35</sup>.

In the context of the creative act, images generated by imagination are not based on imitation but are elements that go from previous experience data or are the very creation of their own generative mechanisms, are creation and innovation. In performing art, this creative function of imagination, combining and recombining images and representations is paramount because it favors both the novelty of the product and the effect it might have on the subject or the interlocutors. In other words, if by the mimesis the actor would only mimic an action (and therefore the result may be a counterfeit and lifeless one), through the ability of the imagination to generate, leaving or creating new images, the subject will be led to originality and to psychic action. This creative and innovative feature, through which imagination operates both with images stored in memory, in the absence of the object or event (whether we are talking about strong images, similar to an authentic perception or poor images as intensity) as well as images created by the imaginary, through reordering, reorganizing and restructuring, highlights the power of the actor's creative fantasy. The action of imagination to generate and

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.

combine images of objects or events in their absence stored in memory and to create representations emphasizes a new important feature of actor's imagination: the ability of the imagination to build a fictional world whose truth lies within, a combination of real and invented elements with the help of fantasy.

The two features of imagination, which refer to the "originality of the operating modes and of the final product (leaving patterns and templates, overcoming routine schemes) and the conventional, figurative and symbolic character of the (semiotic) designative function of the images generated in the process of imagination"<sup>36</sup> determines and classifies the creative capacities of each actor. The use of particularly complex and dynamic images that go beyond the conceptual sphere of notions places imagination in the creative sphere. The idea of the infinite space, the freedom in which imaging material can be deployed, gives the actor the independence of building, reconstructing and creating new images, both in the conscious and subconscious.

Reproductive memory and imagination (repeating and updating a previous experience) will make the actor aware and experience his perceptions, sensations and memories and put them in a permanent relationship with his current desires, thoughts and needs in building the role. The actor, by updating and restructuring them, will always find analogies and images that will make him accommodate the situation and the scenic circumstances in which that "I am"<sup>37</sup> shows that he was at the heart of the conditions he was born, that he was in the midst of it, that he was at the heart of the imagined life in the world of imagined things, and that he began to act in his own name, at his own risk and as consciously ordered.

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<sup>36</sup> Golu, Mihai: *op.cit.*, p. 518.

<sup>37</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin Sergheievici: *op.cit.*, p. 85

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**TEATRU ȘI FILOSOFIE**

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**THEATER UND PHILOSOPHIE**

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**THEATRE AND PHILOSOPHY**

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# **Indian Philosophical Motifs in the Drama *Shakuntala***

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## **Abstract**

This article aims at discovering and analyzing Indian philosophical motifs, poetically illustrated in Kalidasa's drama, *Shakuntala*. The drama is the artistic expression of the longing for the absolute, as well as of the fascinating techniques of meditation and ecstasy practiced in the ancient civilization of India. The study attempts an essential interrogation about the relation between the earthly and the heavenly hermitage, about the relation between the earthly and the heavenly Ganges.

## **Keywords:**

meditation; sacrifice; asceticism; cosmic illusion; ultimate reality; absolute; universe.

## **Rezumat**

Acest articol își propune să descopere și să analizeze motivele filosofice indiene, ilstrate poetic în drama *Sakuntala* de Kalidasa. Drama este expresia artistică a dorului de absolut, precum și a fascinantelor tehnici de meditație și extaz prezente în milenara civilizație a Indiei. Articolul își propune o interogație esențială asupra relației dintre sihăstria pământească și sihăstria cerească, asupra relației dintre Gangele pământesc și Gangele ceresc.

## **Cuvinte cheie**

meditație; sacrificiu; ascetism; iluzie cosmică; realitate ultimă; absolut; univers.

The drama written by the genius Kalidasa captures, with the beauty of its verse, all the great Indian philosophical motifs. The legend tells that the enigmatic artist implores the help of the goddess Kali to find wisdom and poetic genius. The goddess listens to his prayer and the miracle is performed. In recognition and devotion, the artist abandons his real name, becoming Kalidasa, that is, "goddess Kali's slave". Apart from *Shakuntala*, the tradition considers him the author of

two other plays: *Malavikagnimitra* and *Vikramorvasi*, while he is regarded as the founder of Indian philosophical drama. “From the little information offered by Kalidasa’s works, we can conclude that he was indeed a Brahmin, worshipper of Kali, Shiva and an adept of Vedanta.”<sup>1</sup>

In Hindu iconography, especially present in Bengali temples, Kali is the most ferocious and frightening Mother Goddess. She is depicted as a formidable naked woman, riding on the corpse of her husband, the god Shiva. Her eyes have blood tear drops, a collar of human skulls hangs from her neck, and a bracelet of human hands adorns her wrist. “The skulls symbolize the fundamental energies of the cosmos, while the hands, actions and karmic fruits are generated infinitely [...] In one of her hands, Kali holds a severed human head by the hair, signifying the death of the ego, which must precede the liberation. In the other hand, she holds a blood stained sword, symbolizing cutting off all the connections with this world.”<sup>2</sup>

Kali’s destructive dimension can be regarded in close connection with the periodical absorption, devourment and destruction of the universe. In her last level of cosmic dissolution (pralaya), Kali bears the name “Kalaratri” that is, “The Night of Time”, followed by “Brahma’s Night”, when the universe is recreated. In her capacity as devourer of time, Kali is also the primary form of any existence. “The divine mother, Kali, is the source of Vedic hymns, prayers and sacrificial forms [...] She is the creative joy of life, she is the beauty, the miracle, the temptation and seduction of the living world.”<sup>3</sup>

From the perspective of the cosmic evolution, the husband or Shiva is the first principle emanated from the supreme reality. Shiva is the seed of the entire multidimensional universe. At the Shiva-Kali level, there is no dualism, because they are in a perfect and exemplary unity. “Shiva and Kali represent the opposing yet harmonious forces of sex; their sacred marriage consecrates them as the archetypal parents of the Universe.”<sup>4</sup>

During the Vedic period, when the plot of the play is set, the universe is conceived as Brahma’s emanation, nothing outside having metaphysical consistency. He is

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<sup>1</sup> Simensckhy, Theofil: *Cultură și filosofie indiană în texte și studii*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1978, p. 216, (translation, author of this paper).

<sup>2</sup> Feuerstein, Georg: *Tantra, Calea Extazului*, Mix, Brașov, 2001, p. 72, (translation, author of this paper).

<sup>3</sup> Zimmer, Henric: *Mituri și simboluri în civilizația indiană*, Humanitas, București, 1994, p. 145, (translation, author of this paper).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 147.

divine and faceless, residing at the heart of all things. Both the gods and the humans are within and without him, because Brahma is immanent and transcendent. Brahma lives in the human heart as “atman”, which implies the identification of the true Self and the universal Being. “Indeed, in death, the atman of ‘the one who knows’ is unified with Brahma; the souls of those who are not illuminated will observe the law of transmigration (*samsara*).”<sup>5</sup> As an illustration of these philosophical theses, *Shakuntala* ends with Dusyanta’s prayer to Shiva: “Let me never have to be born again.”<sup>6</sup>

The love story of Shakuntala and Dusyanta reveals all of India’s great philosophical traditions. The prince’s access to the woods of the sacred hermitage is the same with the access to the initiatic space of meditation. Given its essence, meditation is the spiritual exercise which enables the human being to return to the true reality, to the absolute. But the absolute lies beyond the Logos and rational knowledge. That is why the coachman advises Dusyanta to leave his weapons and jewels behind upon entering the hermitage, so as not to disturb the “people of deep silences.” Entering the hermitage is the equivalent of the initiatic awakening. Consequently, Shakuntala is identified with the jasmine vine, also known as the Light of the Woods. The Upanishads considered the universe to be a reversed tree, with the root fixed in the sky and the branches spreading above the earth. That eternal tree was, in fact, Brahma himself, containing all the worlds in him. “Theye say there is an eternal fig-tree, with the roots above and the branches below, whose leaves are the Vedic hymns; he who knows them will know the Vedas.”<sup>7</sup>

Falling madly in love with Shakuntala, the prince spends a while in the silence of the hermitage. Shakuntala’s beauty, simplicity and purity are absolute, because the absolute, as Brahma’s emanation, is simple, pure and uncomposed. Shakuntala is the unique jewel polished by Brahma himself.

Wedding Dusyanta discreetly in the Gandharva ritual, Shakuntala is sent to her husband’s palace by the pious Kanya only after the fire ritual, spoken by the hermit in Vedic metre. Any mistake or impurity can be cleansed in the sacred Fire. The metaphysics of the Vedic fire is closely connected to Prajapati or Purusa, a superior demiurge who sacrifices himself to complete Brahma’s work. Satapatha Brahmana is rendered after giving birth to the living creatures of the earth, while

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<sup>5</sup> Eliade, Mircea: *Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2000, p. 157, (translation, author of this paper).

<sup>6</sup> Kalidasa: *Sakuntala*, E.P.L.U., București, 1964, p. 17, (translation, author of this paper).

<sup>7</sup> Bhagavad, *Gita*, Herald, București, 1971, p. 167, (translation, author of this paper).

Prajapati's joints are disconnected and he cannot stand up. Then the gods cure him in a (ritual) sacrifice: "In other words, the reconstruction and rearticulation of Prajapati's cosmic body happen through a sacrifice. Prajapati, who has been dismembered, is now the very altar of the fire. In short, each sacrifice repeats the primeval act of creation."<sup>8</sup>

Coming back to a life of pleasure at the palace, Dusyanta loses his memory and forgets Shakuntala. The memory loss means forgetting and ignoring the real essence, as well as sinking into Maya's deceitful waters. A fundamental concept of Indian philosophy, Maya is the cosmic illusion, irreality and self-imagining. Once inside the sacred woods, Dusyanta has the chance of an upward spiritual path, which is, however, annihilated by his return to the profane world. Back to the luxuries and pleasures of the palace, he experiences a spiritual regression. Symbolically, the ring brings together the two worlds: Maya's world, of the cosmic illusion, and the pure world of essence. Finding the ring means retrieving the lost memory and returning to the true reality.

After the grief of losing his beloved, Dusyanta curses the ring and finds refuge in the woman's portrait, seen as an illustration of lost love. From this pathetic state, he is awakened by Matali's arrival. God Indra's coachman invites him to join his master in the fight with the demons. In Rig Veda, Indra is the most popular god, no fewer than 250 hymns being devoted to him. Indra's central myth (retold in the same Rig Veda) narrates his victorious battle against Vrtra, the giant dragon, which locked the waters in the depths of the earth. Later, he continued to fight against the demons who threatened the stability of creation. „He is the hero par excellence, the supreme model of the warriors [...] But Indra is both a demiurge and a genitor, the personification of life's exuberance, of cosmic and biological energy. Tireless drinker of soma, archetype of the forces of genesis, he starts hurricanes and rains and commands all waters.”<sup>9</sup>

Obeying Indra's command, Dusyanta climbs in the celestial carriage and heads for the battle. With the power of his invincible bow and his prowess, he defeats the demons. As a reward for his heroic qualities, Indra offers him the chance of an astral journey, crossing the heavenly Ganges together. The dizzying celestial heights, the direct contact with the divinity change his perspective on earthly life completely, enabling his access to a higher spiritual level. During their journey, they reach the Mountain of Celestial Singers, from whose top springs a golden

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<sup>8</sup> Mircea Eliade, *op.cit.*, p. 240, (translation, author of this paper).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 135.

river. This is where Prajapati lives in seclusion and eternal meditation, with Aditi, god Indra's mother. This primeval couple represents "the archetypal parents" of the Universe itself. This is the sacred space of the Centre, where those who observe the vow of silence reach the ultimate perfection. "The most sacred area, the temple or the altar, is considered, in all religious traditions, the Centre of the World. Consequently, the sacrificial entrance to a sacred area is a road to the centre, to the absolute Reality."<sup>10</sup>

Leaving this sacred space behind, he continues his journey, reaching the hermitage of wise Kasyapa, the son of Marici and direct descendant of Brahma. Aiming to regenerate and save the world, Kasyapa reaches the absolute meditation: ecstasy. In this supreme moment, his body looks dead, the breathing stops and the connection with the divine is secured by a profound prayer, performed not with the lips, but with the power of the soul. "He whose mind (manas) is not troubled by pain and joy, who is deserted by desire, who lacks passion, fear and anger is said to be an ascetic (muni) with a steadfast mind. For those who cannot contemplate there is no peace. Those who contemplate reach Brahma's state (brahmisthiti) which nothing can disturb."<sup>11</sup> Finding Shakuntala and his son determines Dusyanta's return to the true reality.

If Kasyapa and Aditi are the parents of the Universe, then the royal couple have the mission to rule the earth. But harmony and perfection in the earthly kingdom are not possible without doing one's duties to the gods, for nothing moves in the Universe without Brahma's power.

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<sup>10</sup> Eliade, Mircea: *Drumul spre centru*, Anthology by Gabriel Liiceanu and Andrei Pleșu, Editura Univers, București, 1991, p. 129, (translation, author of this paper).

<sup>11</sup> Bhagavad, *Gita*, Editura Herald, București, 1971, pp. 49-50.

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# The Concept of Freedom in Jean-Paul Sartre's Drama

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the concept of freedom, illustrated both in Jean Paul Sartre's philosophy and in his drama. The study wishes to clarify Sartre's view about the pre-existence of freedom, as a metaphysical, *a priori* given, as well as the association of identity with the concepts of existence and freedom. The singularity and irrepeatablity of the Being is linked by Sartre with placing the existence within the situational and with its ability to choose among the countless existing options. The study contributes to the understanding of Sartre's drama starting from his philosophical concepts.

## **Keywords:**

choice; freedom; situation; being; existence; nothingness.

## **Rezumat**

Acest articol își propune să analizeze conceptul de libertate ilustrat, atât în filosofia, cât și în dramaturgia lui Jean Paul Sartre. Articolul caută să clarifice viziunea sartriană asupra preexistenței libertății, ca dat metafizic și aprioric al existenței umane, precum și așezarea sub semnul identității, a conceptelor de existență și libertate. Asumarea singularității și irepetabilității Ființei, este pusă de Sartre în legătură cu situarea existentului în situație, precum și prin posibilitatea acestuia de a alege între nenumăratele opțiuni existente. Articolul dorește să contribuie la înțelegerea dramaturgiei sartriene, pornind de la analiza conceptelor sale filosofice.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

alegere; libertate; situație; ființă; existență; neant.

At the heart of Sartre's philosophy lies the disquieting issue of the Being, closely connected with the concept of angst<sup>1</sup>. It is not by accident that Sartre

<sup>1</sup> See: Kierkegaard, Søren: *Conceptul de anxietate*, translated by Adrian Arsinevici, Amarcord, Timișoara, 1988.

presents himself as a descendant of Kirkegaard, the first philosopher who analyzes the human condition in terms of the existential subject's interiority. The Danish philosopher also coined the term angst, which will dominate the existentialist philosophy. Angst (or anxiety) appears in the world with the propensity for the original sin, being in fact the self-reflection of freedom contemplating the infinity of its possibilities.

For Kirkegaard, anxiety (angst) is the dizziness of freedom, which, then, looks into its own possibility, hanging on to infinity and clinging to it. In anxiety, the endless selfishness of possibilities is tempting, he goes on. The nothingness of anxiety is a mixture of feelings reflected in themselves, drawing closer and closer to the individual<sup>2</sup>. In an explicit reference to Kirkegaard, Sartre argues that anxiety (angoise) must be understood as “the anxiety about myself”, being triggered by the awareness of one’s own condition as an active subject, towards which infinite possibilities open up. Influenced directly both by Descartes and by Husserl, in the philosophy of *cogito*, Sartre postulates the existence and active manifestation of an emotional consciousness. He says that the emotional consciousness is, first and foremost, awareness about the world, because it implicitly determines a transformation of the world. It searches to give its object a different reality, another quality, or a lesser presence, by itself, without changing its real structure.<sup>3</sup>

It is also not by accident that Sartre searches into the disquieting and enigmatic issue of the Being, using the same phenomenological method. The being itself illustrates the principle of identity, because the being is Self and, at the same time, *causa sui*. The being itself is defined by the philosopher by means of a series of negations: it is neither active, nor passive, neither affirmation, nor negation, neither immanent, nor transcendent. The Being is opaque in itself, because it is full of itself. The Being – in itself, is contingent, being neither possible, nor impossible.<sup>4</sup> At the opposite end, there is the Being for itself, closely connected to the concept of nothingness. The philosopher describes nothingness as possessing an apparent being, since it can be placed neither inside, nor outside the Being. The human chance to generate nothingness by means of which it isolates itself from the Being is Freedom. Freedom precedes the human essence and has the capacity to generate its own nothingness.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, freedom is closely connected to the sphere of consciousness. Consequently, consciousness must be

<sup>2</sup> Kierkegaard, Søren: *op.cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: *Esquisse d'une theorie des emotions*, Edition Hermann, Paris, 1964, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: *L'Etre et le Neant*, Edition Gallimard, Paris, 1964, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

understood as the awareness of freedom. But the conscious interiorization of this relation triggers the anxiety. Sartre's angst also has an ethic dimension, through its connection to the value system and the implicit interiorization of their ideal nature. He argues that anxiety is the reflexive observation of freedom in itself. In anxiety, one perceives oneself at the same time as totally free and as unable to prevent the meaning of the world to flow through him.<sup>6</sup>

In Sartre's view, the description of freedom envisages the singular existing fundamental mode of connecting to the world. Hence, the conclusion that freedom expresses the uniqueness of the Being in the highest degree. He comments: "I won't be able, of course, to describe a freedom shared by myself and someone else; I won't be able to project an essence of freedom. On the contrary, my freedom is the foundation of all freedoms and I am sentenced to be free."<sup>7</sup> Essentially, this sentence to freedom implies that the only limits of freedom are imposed by freedom itself. So we aren't free to stop being free!

Continuing his analysis, Sartre identifies freedom with the nothingness developing in the human heart, which forces the individual to choose among the infinity of options. The individual always finds himself in the situational, his freedom implying the very conquest of the situational by making a choice which is determined by nothing. On the basis of this absolute and metaphysical freedom, the choice becomes totally indetermined, a gratuitous act, since what one chooses is irrelevant, only the act of choosing matters. Orestes (in *The Flies*) chooses to kill Clitemnestra and, from this moment on, the abominable deed becomes the expression of his absolute freedom. The character exclaims, then, that he is free, because he finished his deed, and that was a good deed. He will bear it on his shoulders and he will be held responsible for it. The harder it will be to bear it, the happier he will be, for this is his freedom.<sup>8</sup>

Freedom means the choice of one's own being, provided this choice implies an equivalence between values and human actions. The relativism of this equivalence leads to the abolition of any social or moral norms. Regarded in this dimension, amorality becomes morality because it is justified by the freedom of choice. Orestes shouts his inhuman matricidal freedom with infinite vanity: "Watch me, citizens of Argos, and understand that my crime is my own indeed; I take it upon myself in the face of the sun, for it is the foundation of my life and my pride

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 514-515.

<sup>8</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: *Muștele*, translated by Nicolae Minei and Any Florea, in: *Teatru*, vol I., E.P.L.U., București, 1969, p. 75.

and you can neither punish me nor mourn me, that is why you fear me.”<sup>9</sup> At the opposite end of the spectrum is Electra, who cannot find the way to her inner self, becoming the prisoner of the Erinyes, of remorses and of other people’s commands. “Free?, she wonders. I don’t feel free. Can you make all these things unhappen? Something did happen and we are not free to make it unhappen.”<sup>10</sup> Ignoring the cosmic, biological or social conditionings of the human personality, Sartre argues that the only freedom exists in the situational and the situational exists only in freedom. This means that freedom contains its own limit, which is the limit of running away from freedom.

The clash between Jupiter and Orestes is meaningful for the singular and irreversible interiorization of freedom, regarded as the basis of the Being. In a universe deserted by the gods and hostile to the humans, Orestes identifies himself with his own freedom. He comments that, all of a sudden, freedom rushed towards him, overwhelmed him, nature withdrew and he was ageless; he felt lonely. He was his own freedom.<sup>11</sup> This *cogito* of freedom, as a given of the Being, comes with a terrible and devastating loneliness.

The pre-existence of freedom before throwing the existing into the world makes the moral norms and values forever redundant. Jupiter knows that the Evil is nothing but another reflection of the Being, a deceitful mask relying on the Good. It is not surprising, then, that Goetz (in *The Devil and the Good Lord*), draws lots about the choice for Good or Evil. Tired of committing the absolute Evil, he loads dice so as to fake the Good. Although he desperately seeks God with his deeds, devoted both to the absolute Evil and to the absolute Good, Goetz understands that humans are alone in the universe. God is only the night, the cosmic night of the world before the creation of the Being. Desperate for the absolute Evil and the sweet burden of the Good, Goetz knows there is no distinction between the loneliness entailed by the Good and the solitude determined by the Evil. Even if he has been waiting feverishly for a sign or an answer from God, Goetz knows he has taken the wrong path, searching without what can only be found within his Being. He concludes that silence is God. Absence is God. God is the humans’ loneliness. It was only him: he decided the Evil all by himself; he invented the Good all by himself. He was the one who loaded dice, who worked wonders. There was no more Heaven, no more Hell: just the Earth.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 93.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 75.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>12</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: *Diavolul și bunul Dumnezeu*, translated by Mihai řora, in: *Teatru*, vol I., E.P.L.U., București, 1969, p. 365.

Beyond the appearance of Good and Evil, there is always the human freedom of choice. Death itself can't put a limit to my full and infinite freedom, because freedom never stumbles against this obstacle. This means that man is not free to die but, given his ontological condition, he is a free mortal.

Sartre's novel view on the concept of freedom can also be seen in the way he tackles the relation between the Self and the Other. One's original relation with the Other is conceived as a radical negation of one's being and of one's experience. For the Other, the self will always be an object rather than a subject, because a nothingness will rise between the self and the Other. The Other's mere existence irreparably aggresses one's being. The self's relation with the Other consists in the basic absence of any relation, because the Other's presence undermines one's Being in the world. Sartre argues that the respect for the Other's freedom is a vain notion: even if we can project the respect for this freedom, every attitude we have towards the Other will be a violation of the very freedom we pretend to respect.<sup>13</sup>

Eventually, the Other is the non-ego in whose company we are "thrown" into the world. Seen in this dimension, the original sin is the occurrence of the self in a world in which the Other already exists. Any relation with the Other triggers a major conflict between the two freedoms, where neither can affirm its own prevalence. If one's relation with the Other is based on love, one is expected to give up its Being's authenticity and accept that one's freedom will no longer be free. If one's relation is based on hatred, one gives up the illusion of creating a union with the Other from the beginning. In itself, hatred implies an indirect recognition of the Other's freedom, but it is an abstract and negative recognition. Even this type of recognition cannot alter the inexistence of the relation with the Other. The mere fact that an Other looks at the self and reflects the self's Being aggresses one's freedom because the Other's gaze is an affirmation of his freedom, ontologically opposed to the existence of one's freedom. The love story of Garcin and Estelle (in *No Exit*) cannot be fulfilled because of Ines's gaze. At first, Garcin tries to protect himself from this infernal gaze, being aware that he gets stuck in her gaze and loses the intimacy of the Being. Angry because she is rejected by Estelle, Ines "throws" the torture of her gaze upon the couple in love, saying: "Do as you wish, you are stronger than me. But remember, I am here and I am watching you. I won't let you out of my sight, Garcin; you will have to kiss her before me."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul: *op.cit.*, 1964, p. 480.

<sup>14</sup> Sartre, Jean Paul: *Cu ușile închise*, translated by de Mihai Șora, in: *Teatru*, vol I., E.P.L.U., București, 1969, p.126.

To conclude, Sartre's inferno is made up of the aggression of the Other's gaze and the painful negation of the self's freedom. Can Sartre's paradise, conversely, be an absolute loneliness, a total and final affirmation of the self's freedom?

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**5**

**RECENZII**

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**REZENSIONEN**

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**REVIEWS**

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# **Die Theatralität der Fotografie und die fotografische Magie des Theaters**

**ELEONORA RINGLER-PASCU**

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Octavian Saiu: *Clipa ca imagine. Teatru și fotografie*,  
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## **Abstract**

The review describes the publication of Octavian Saiu concerning the theatricality of the photographic art and the photographic magic of theatre.

## **Keywords:**

photographic art; theatre; visual theatre; Roland Barthes, Susan Sonntag.

## **Rezumat:**

Recenzie descrie volumul publicat de Octavian Saiu, în cadrul căruia prezintă teatralitatea artei fotografice și magia fotografică a teatrului.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

arta fotografică; teatru; teatru vizual; Roland Barthes, Susan Sonntag.

Fotografie und Theater, zwei verschiedene und dennoch sich so nahe stehende Künste, denn beide sprechen die Sinne des Betrachters/ des Zuschauers an, die mit ihren ganz spezifischen Ausdrucksmitteln Geschichten erzählen. Octavian Saiu, Theaterwissenschaftler und Theaterkritiker, bekannt auch als Moderator der Konferenzen des Internationalen Theaterfestivals aus Hermannstadt, provoziert durch seine Publikation den Leser, den er in die Geschichte der Fotografie entführt. Den zwei Themenkreise entsprechend, gliedert er sein Buch in zwei Teile. Es ist der Versuch Fotografie und Theater zu definieren, die Beziehung der Fotografie zur Kunst zu erörtern, die Entstehung einer spezifischen Ästhetik zu diskutieren und einen Überblick der wichtigsten Vertreter dieser beiden Künste

anzubieten. So eröffnet die Publikation *Der Augenblick als Bild. Theater und Fotografie* dem Leser die geheimnisvolle Welt der Fotografie als Kunst, die stets verbunden mit einem Event, mit einer Existenz, mit Gefühlen – die mehr oder weniger (er)sichtlich ist. Eigentlich gibt das Foto als solches eine Wirklichkeit wieder, die sichtbar ist, ein Spiegelbild der Welt, wobei die Vorstellungskraft des Betrachters die Geschichte weiterführen kann, wie in einem parallel imaginierten Szenario. Der Vergleich eines Fotos mit dem Theater erübrigt sich ausgehend von der Tatsache, dass nach dem Besuch einer Vorstellung die fotografische Erinnerung dessen bleibt, was gesehen bzw. erlebt wurde, oft nur eine Reihe von subjektiven Erinnerungen, in Form von Bildern, tief im Gedächtnis gespeichert.

Ausgehend von Roland Barthes' Theorien bezüglich der Fotografie, die sich auf das Erinnerungsvermögen stützt, unterstreicht Sain den subjektiven Blickwinkel, der Gefühle weckt und wiederholt, auch wenn sie sich auf längst vergangene Ereignisse beziehen. Für Barthes gilt der sehr persönliche, intime Aspekt. Dementsprechend ist das Foto ein Spiegel „unserer“ Vergangenheit, die uns auch in der Gegenwart röhren kann. Das Foto ist eine „Rune“ der Zeit, ein Fragment aus einem puzzleartigen Kontext, das über die Abwesenheit zu Fragen (ver) führt: Wer? Wann? Wie?... Gedächtnis und Vorstellungskraft – das doppelseitige Gesetz einer Kunst aus der Technologie des Betrachtens / Sehens entstammend, verbunden zugleich mit der ungesehenen Seite, die durch Abwesenheiten zur Anregung der Phantasie führt. Der Autor bezieht sich auf die Balance zwischen der „realsten“ Realität, wiedergeben in Bildern, und dem „irrealsten“ Irrealen, das sich außerhalb ihrer Grenzen befindet, im Irgendwo oder Nirgendwo. Er nennt es „Gioconda Effekt“ der fotografischen Kunst, da es die Objektivität sprengt und irgendwo in einer ungewissen Subjektivität landet. Der fiktionale Pakt des Kunstfotos eröffnet neue Perspektiven, denn jedes Foto ist mehr als das, was wahr ist, oder was es zu sein scheint, denn es ist viel mehr, stets etwas anderes, abhängig vom Betrachter und seiner Sensibilität.

Eine besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird Susan Sonntag geschenkt, der Autorin der oft zitierten Essaysammlung *Über Fotografie*, welche als Ausgangspunkt für die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Medium Fotografie und den persönlichen Erfahrungen dient. Sie betrachtet das Fotografieren der Wirklichkeit als eine Verbindung zwischen Raum und Zeit, dem „hier“ und „jetzt“ des Augenblicks und der Unbestimmtheit des Bildes, das in einem anderen Raum bzw. einer anderen Zeit neue Bedeutungen annimmt. Es ist die „transparente Selektion“ des Blicks, der aus dem Universum einen Teil entnimmt, um ihn nachträglich in einer persönlichen Form wiederzugeben. Dementsprechend ist das Foto eine Gleichung zwischen der Objektivität des Realen und der Subjektivität der Wahrnehmung.

Des Weiteren fokussiert Octavian Saiu seinen Diskurs auf die fotografische Rolle des Betrachters in Bezug auf das Theater, parallel zu der „imaginären“ Rolle der auf der mentalen Ebene entstehenden Bilder jedes einzelnen Zuschauers. Die Theaterbühne und die Bilder geben den Anschein, dass der Rezipient das gesamte Weltgeschehen in Form einer regelrechten Sammlung von Bildern im Gedächtnis aufbewahrt. Mittels der visuellen Eigenschaft festigen die Theatereindrücke und die Fotografien den *Augenblick*, wenn auch in ganz unterschiedlicher Art. Das in Bildern „erinnerte“ Theatererlebnis ist die Quelle einer persönlichen Theatergeschichte, gespeichert im Gedächtnis und im Herzen, in einem Versuch die Zeit, den schönen Augenblick zum Stehen zu bringen.

Theater ist die Kunst des Augenblicks, eines Augenblicks, der nie stehen bleibt, nicht einmal festgehalten in einem Foto. Fotos von Theatervorstellungen müssen stets im Kontext ihrer Entstehung betrachtet werden, denn nur so können sie ein Spiegelbild ihrer Zeit, eine ästhetische Perspektive vermitteln. Fotos und Theaterchroniken sind die Zeitzeugen, die von einer Vorstellung bleiben, die einem erlauben mittels der Vorstellungskraft die Magie einer Theaterproduktion wiederherzustellen. Das beeindruckende poetische Bildertheater des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts entwickelt eine neue Ästhetik des Betrachtens und Empfindens. Saiu unterstreicht die bahnbrechende Rolle des elektrischen Lichts, das im Bereich des Theaters eine Revolution bewirkte, die den namhaften Regisseuren wie Giorgio Strehler und Robert Wilson die Freiheit brachte, mit Lichteffekten ein faszinierendes visuelles Theater zu schaffen. Doch die atemberaubenden Augenblicke des erlebten Theaterevents treffen sich irgendwo in der Seele des Zuschauers, der die magischen Momente des Wahrgenommenen für sich aufbewahrt. Dies ist das wahre Theater, entstanden als Kunst, die in der Erinnerung des Einzelnen weiter lebt.

Henri Cartier-Bresson, Richard Avedon, Annie Leibovitz, Peter Brook, Giorgio Strehler, Peter Stein, Robert Wilson, Ariane Mnouchkine, Robert Lepage, Silviu Purcărete sind nur einige Namen von Künstlern, die als wahre Lehrmeister des Visuellen gelten. Als Meister der visuellen Kunst bezieht sich der Autor auf die magischen Werke der Fotografen und der Regisseure, die mittels der Theatralität der Fotografie als Kunst und der fotografischen Magie des Theaters den Blick der Betrachter / Zuschauer faszinieren, in einem überaus informativen Buch – eine Minienzyklopädie zum Medium Fotografie und Theater.



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*Development* Cluj-Napoca (2007-20013). Participation at workshops – Andrei Șerban (2005), Vava Ștefănescu (2006), David Zinder (2005), Robert Cohen (2009), Georges Baal (2006), Florin Șerban (2010), Mihai Mihalcea (2010) Vlad Massaci (2010), Adrian Damian ( 2012), Stephan Perdekamp (2014). Collaboration in journals: *Theater Colloquiums* and *Studia dramatica*. Publications: *Imagination and empathy of coalescence – transfer and implementation* –*Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, Dramatica*, Cluj-Napoca (2017).

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### **Ildiko FRANK, MA**

Studiu: Limba și literatura engleză și maghiară la Universitatea din Pécs (1996); Arta actorului în limba germană la Facultatea de Muzică, Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara (2000). Actriță la Teatrul German de Stat din Timișoara și la Teatrul Maghiar de Stat „Csiky Gergely” din Timișoara (1997-2002). Actriță la teatrul Deutsche Bühne Ungarn (2000). Directoare la teatrul Deutsche Bühne Ungarn (2004-2017). În prezent free-lancer.

Studium: Englische und Ungarische Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaft an der Universität Pécs (1996); Schauspiel in deutscher Sprache an der Musikhochschule der West-Universität aus Temeswar (2000). Schauspielerin a.G. am Deutschen Staatstheater Temeswar und an dem Ungarischen Staatstheater „Csiky Gergely“ Temeswar (1997-2002). Schauspielerin an der Deutschen Bühne Ungarn (2000). Intendantin der Deutschen Bühne Ungarn (2004-2017). Gegenwärtig free-lancer.

Studies: English and Hungarian Literature and Language at the University from Pécs (1996); Acting in German language at the Faculty of Music, West University of Timișoara (2000). Actress at the German State Theatre Timisoara and at the Hungarian State Theatre “Csiky Gergely” Timișoara (1997-2002). Actress at the Deutsche Bühne Ungarn theatre (2000). Manager at the Deutsche Bühne Ungarn theatre (2004-2017). In the present free-lancer.

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### **Franz HUBER, MA**

Studii: Literatură germană, lingvistică și journalism la Universitatea „Ludwig-Maximilians“-Universität München (1982). Producător, regizor și lector al programului muzical-literar „Pop Sunday“, Bayerischer Rundfunk, secția Jugendfunk (1975-1984). Fondatorul editurii beletristice „Huber & Klenner“,

care a publicat, printre altele, volumele autorilor Martin Sperr, Franz-Josef Herrmann și Roland Kristanell. În perioada 1984 - 1989 a activat la Münchner Volksschule și Theaterraum „BlackBox“ în centrul cultural Gasteig, unde a instituit seria *Autorentheater*. Din 1989 secretar literar la teatre, printre altele în Esslingen, Darmstadt și Münster, critic de teatru la *Mannheimer Morgen* și headwriter pentru firma de producții tv TeleNormFilm din München și Köln. Secretar literar principal la Linzer Landestheater începând cu stagiunea 1998-1999 până la 2015-2016. Din toamna lui 2002 conferențiar la universitatea „Anton Bruckner“ Privatuniversität Linz. Începând cu stagiunea 2016-2017 secretar literar artistic și PR la Landestheater Linz. Activ în calitate de autor și realizator de seri literar-artistice, printre altele despre Karl Valentin, Bertolt Brecht, Oskar Maria Graf, Stefan Zweig. Publicații: *zungenfest- gedichte* (1988); *Frankenstein – das Musical* (1997).

Studien: Neuere Deutsche Literatur, Linguistik und Publizistik an der „Ludwig-Maximilians“-Universität München (1982). Produzent, Regisseur und Lektor der musikalisch-literarischen Sendung „Pop Sunday“, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Abteilung Jugendfunk (1975-1984). Gründer des belletristischen Verlags „Huber & Klenner“, der u. a. Bücher von Martin Sperr, Franz-Josef Herrmann und Roland Kristanell herausgab. Von 1984 bis 1989 arbeitete er für die Münchner Volksschule und den Theaterraum „BlackBox“ im Kulturzentrum Gasteig, wo er die Reihe *Autorentheater* etablierte. Seit 1989 als Dramaturg an Theatern tätig, u.a. in Esslingen, Darmstadt und Münster, Theaterkritiker für den *Mannheimer Morgen* und Headwriter für die Fernsehproduktionsfirma TeleNormFilm in München und Köln. Chefdrdramaturg am Linzer Landestheater ab der Spielzeit 1998/1999 bis 2015/2016. Seit Herbst 2002 als Dozent an der „Anton Bruckner“ Privatuniversität. Seit Beginn der Spielzeit 2016/2017 Schauspieldramaturg und Leiter der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit am Landestheater Linz. Er arbeitet als Autor und entwickelt literarisch-musikalische Abende u.a. über Karl Valentin, Bertolt Brecht, Oskar Maria Graf, Stefan Zweig. Publikationen: *zungenfest- gedichte* (1988); *Frankenstein – das Musical* (1997).

Studies: German literature, linguistics and journalism at the “Ludwig-Maximilians“-Universitz Munich (1982). Producer, director and lecturer for the musical-literary programme “Pop Sunday“, Bayerischer Rundfunk, section Jugendfunk (1975-1984). Founder of the belletristic editing house “Huber & Klenner“, publishing books of the authors Martin Sperr, Franz-Josef Herrmann and Roland Kristanell. In the period 1984-1989 working at the Münchner Volksschule and Theaterraum “BlackBox“ for the cultural centre Gasteig,

establishing the series *Autorentheater*. Since 1989 literary secretary at theatres, in Esslingen, Darmstadt and Münster, theatre critic for *Mannheimer Morgen* and headwriter for the tv production company TeleNormFilm in Munich and Köln. Chief literary secretary at the Linzer Landestheater since season 1998-1999 up to 2015-2016. Since autumn 2002 assisting professor at the „Anton Bruckner“ Privatuniversität Linz. Since sesaon 2016-2017 literary artistic secretary and PR at the Landestheater Linz. Active as author and producer of literary-music entertainment evenings about Karl Valentin, Bertolt Brecht, Oskar Maria Graf, Stefan Zweig. Publications: *zungenfest- gedichte* (1988); *Frankenstein – das Musical* (1997).

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### **Verena KOCH, MA**

Studii: Universitatea de Muzică și Teatru din Frankfurt am Main (1986). Actriță, conferențiar în specializarea actorie și improvizare la Universitatea „Anton-Bruckner“ Privatuniversität Linz din 1999 și colaboratoare la grupul de teatru Theatergruppe Malaria din Gallneukirchen începând din 2013. Angajamente ca actriță la teatrele din Frankfurt/M., Göttingen, Esslingen, Nationaltheater Mannheim și Münster, iar din 1998/1999 până în stagionea 2010/2011 în ansamblul artistic la Landestheaters Linz. Din 2011 actriță și regizoare liber profesionistă. Diverse montări și spectacole: Städtische Bühnen Münster, Landestheater Linz, Brucknerhaus Linz, Deutsche Bühne Ungarn, Festival der Regionen, Landestheater Detmold, Festwochen Gmunden, Theater an der Rott, Tiroler Landestheater, Dschungel Wien, Teatrul „Luceafărul“ Iași etc. Roluri interpretate (selecție): Pauline Piperkarcă (*Die Ratten/ Hauptmann*), Karoline (*Kasimir und Karoline/ Horvath*), Sally Bowles (*Cabaret/ Kander-Ebb*), Lady Milford (*Kabale und Liebe/ Schiller*), Magenta (*Rocky Horror Picture Show/ O'Brien*), Mrs. Lovett (*Sweeny Todd/ Sondheim*), Gertrud (*Hamlet/ Shakespeare*), Charis (*Amphitryon/ Kleist*), Phoebe (*Wie es euch gefällt/ Shakespeare*), Amme (*Romeo und Julia/ Shakespeare*), Valerie (*Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald/ Horvath*), Emmi (*Angst essen Seele auf/ Fassbinder*), Silvia (*KasperHäuserMeer/ Zeller*), Deborah Singer (*Hiob/ Tachelet/ Roth*) și alții.

Studium: Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt am Main (1986). Schauspielerin, Dozentin für Schauspiel und Improvisation an der

„Anton-Bruckner“ Privatuniversität seit 1999 und freie Mitarbeiterin der Theatergruppe Malaria in Gallneukirchen seit 2013. Schauspielengagements an den Städtischen Bühnen Frankfurt/M., Göttingen, Esslingen, Nationaltheater Mannheim und Münster und 1998/1999 bis zur Spielzeit 2010/2011 im Schauspielensemble des Landestheaters Linz. Seit 2011 freie Schauspielerin und Regisseurin. Diverse Inszenierungen und Gastspiele: Städtische Bühnen Münster, Landestheater Linz, Brucknerhaus Linz, Deutsche Bühne Ungarn, Festival der Regionen, Landestheater Detmold, Festwochen Gmunden, Theater an der Rott, Tiroler Landestheater, Dschungel Wien, Teatrul „Luceafărul“ Iași u.a. Rollen als Schauspielerin (Selektion): Pauline Piperkarcka (*Die Ratten*/ Hauptmann), Karoline (*Kasimir und Karoline*/ Horvath), Sally Bowles (*Cabaret*/ Kander-Ebb), Lady Milford (*Kabale und Liebe*/ Schiller), Magenta (*Rocky Horror Picture Show*/ O'Brien), Mrs. Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*/ Sondheim), Gertrud (*Hamlet*/ Shakespeare), Charis (*Amphitryon*/ Kleist), Phoebe (*Wie es euch gefällt*/ Shakespeare), Amme (*Romeo und Julia*/ Shakespeare), Valerie (*Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald*/ Horvath), Emmi (*Angst essen Seele auf*/ Fassbinder), Silvia (*KasperHäuserMeer*/ Zeller), Deborah Singer (*Hiob*/ Tachelet/ Roth) u.a.

Studies: University of Music and Performing Arts Frankfurt am Main (1986). Actress, assisting professor for acting and improvisation at the „Anton-Bruckner“ Privatuniversität since 1999 and collaboration with the theatre group Theatergruppe Malaria in Gallneukirchen since 2013. Roles at the theatres: Frankfurt/M., Göttingen, Esslingen, Nationaltheater Mannheim and Münster; since 1998/1999 up to 2010/2011 in the acting ensemble Landestheaters Linz. Since 2011 free lancer as actress and theatre director. Diverse productions: Städtische Bühnen Münster, Landestheater Linz, Brucknerhaus Linz, Deutsche Bühne Ungarn, Festival der Regionen, Landestheater Detmold, Festwochen Gmunden, Theater an der Rott, Tiroler Landestheater, Dschungel Wien, Teatrul „Luceafărul“ Iași etc. Roles as actress (selection): Pauline Piperkarcka (*Die Ratten*/ Hauptmann), Karoline (*Kasimir und Karoline*/ Horvath), Sally Bowles (*Cabaret*/ Kander-Ebb), Lady Milford (*Kabale und Liebe*/ Schiller), Magenta (*Rocky Horror Picture Show*/ O'Brien), Mrs. Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*/ Sondheim), Gertrud (*Hamlet*/ Shakespeare), Charis (*Amphitryon*/ Kleist), Phoebe (*Wie es euch gefällt*/ Shakespeare), Amme (*Romeo und Julia*/ Shakespeare), Valerie (*Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald*/ Horvath), Emmi (*Angst essen Seele auf*/ Fassbinder), Silvia (*KasperHäuserMeer*/ Zeller), Deborah Singer (*Hiob*/ Tachelet/ Roth) etc.

**Liviu MALIȚA, Dr.**

Studii: Facultatea de Filologie, Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” Cluj (1986). Doctor în filologie. Profesor universitar, și decan la Facultatea de Teatru și Film din cadrul Universității „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj. Director al Centrului de Cercetare și Creăție „Vlad Mugur”. Cercetător științific, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundația Culturală Română (1991-1994). Publicații: studii și articole în *Apostrof, Caietele Echinox, Psihodrama, Studia dramatica, Studii de istorie a Transilvaniei, Sinhaz, Teatrul azi, THEATER, Transylvanian Review*. Cărți: *Eu, scriitorul. Condiția omului de litere din Ardeal între cele două războaie*, (1997); *Liviu Reboreanu. Crăișorul Horia*, (1998); *Ludovica Reboreanu, Adio până la a doua Venire. Epistolar matern* (1998); *Alt Reboreanu*, (2000); *Nicolae Breban*, monografie, antologie comentată, receptare critică, (2001); *Dictionnaire des relations franco-roumaines. Cultures et francophonie*, coordonator (2003); *Cenzura în teatru. Documente. 1948-1989*, editor (2006); *Viața teatrală în și după comunism*, coordonator (2006); *Teatrul românesc sub cenzura comunistă* (2009); *Paradoxurile esteticii* (2009); *Extremele artei*, (2010); *Cenzura pe înțelesul cenzuraților* (2016); *Literatura eretică. Texte cenzurate politic între 1949 și 1977* (2016). Domenii de cercetare: literatura și teatrul european; sociologie; teoria artei; estetică; istoria ideii și mentalității.

Studium: Hochschule für Philologie, „Babeș-Bolyai” Universität Cluj (1986). Doktor in Philologie. Univ.-Professor und Dekan an der Hochschule für Theater und Film, „Babeș-Bolyai” Universität Klausenburg. Direktor des Forschungszentrums „Vlad Mugur”. Wissenschaftlicher Forscher am Zentrum für Siebenbürgische Studien, Fundația Culturală Română (1991-1994). Publikationen: Studien und Artikel in *Apostrof, Caietele Echinox, Psihodrama, Studia dramatica, Studii de istorie a Transilvaniei, Sinhaz, Teatrul azi, THEATER, Transylvanian Review*. Bücher: *Eu, scriitorul. Condiția omului de litere din Ardeal între cele două războaie*, (1997); *Liviu Reboreanu. Crăișorul Horia*, (1998); *Ludovica Reboreanu, Adio până la a doua Venire. Epistolar matern* (1998); *Alt Reboreanu*, (2000); *Nicolae Breban*, monografie, antologie comentată, receptare critică, (2001); *Dictionnaire des relations franco-roumaines. Cultures et francophonie*, coordonator (2003); *Cenzura în teatru. Documente. 1948-1989*, (Hrsg.) (2006); *Viața teatrală în și după comunism*, (Hrsg.) (2006); *Teatrul românesc sub cenzura comunistă* (2009); *Paradoxurile esteticii* (2009); *Extremele artei*, (2010); *Cenzura pe înțelesul cenzuraților* (2016); *Literatura eretică. Texte cenzurate politic între 1949 și 1977* (2016). Forschungsschwerpunkte: die europäische Literatur und Theater, Soziologie, Theorie der Kunst, Ästhetik, Geschichte der Idee und der Wesensart.

Studies: Faculty of Philology, “Babeș-Bolyai” University Cluj (1986). PhD in philology. Professor and dean of the Faculty for Theatre and Film, “Babeș-Bolyai” University Cluj. Director of the Research and Creation Centre “Vlad Mugur”. Scientific researcher at the Centre for Translivanian Studies, Fundația Culturală Română (1991-1994). Publications: studies and articles in *Apostrof*, *Caietul Echinox*, *Psihodrama*, *Studia dramatica*, *Studii de istorie a Transilvaniei*, *Sinhaz*, *Teatrul azi*, *THEATER*, *Transylvanian Review*. Books: *Eu, scriitorul. Condiția omului de litere din Ardeal între cele două războaie*, (1997); *Liviu Rebreanu. Crăișorul Horia*, (1998); *Ludovica Rebreanu, Adio până la a doua Venire. Epistolar matern* (1998); *Alt Rebreanu*, (2000); *Nicolae Breban*, monografie, antologie comentată, receptare critică, (2001); *Dictionnaire des relations franco-roumaines. Cultures et francophonie*, coordonator (2003); *Cenzura în teatru. Documente. 1948-1989*, (ed.) (2006); *Viața teatrală în și după comunism*, (ed.) (2006); *Teatrul românesc sub cenzura comunistă* (2009); *Paradoxurile esteticii* (2009); *Extremele artei*, (2010); *Cenzura pe înțelesul cenzuraților* (2016); *Literatura eretică. Texte cenzurate politic între 1949 și 1977* (2016). Research area: European literature and theatre; sociology; theory of arts; aesthetics, history of the idea and mentality.

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### **Laura-Lavinia MUZICĂŞ, Drd.**

Studii: Canto (licență, 2010) și Stilistica interpretării muzicale (masterat, 2015) la Facultatea de Muzică a Universității de Vest din Timișoara. În prezent cadru didactic asociat la Facultatea de Muzică și Teatru, Departament: Muzică – Artele spectacolului, Actorie, Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara. Din septembrie 2018 doctorandă la Școala Doctorală de Muzică și Teatru, IOSUD-UVT. Solist vocal la Teatrul „Ioan Slavici” din Arad; actriță, solist vocal și antrenor vocal la Teatrul „Fantazio” din Constanța și Teatrul Maghiar de Stat „Csiky Gergely” din Timișoara; solist vocal la Centrul de Cultură Rrom, Consiliul Europei; participare la festivaluri internaționale la Avignon, Lyon, Nice, Paris și.a.; actriță de teatru și film, solistă de etno-jazz. Profesoară de canto și manager la Școala ProMuzica&Cultura Timișoara. Profesoară de canto, tehnica vorbirii, arta spectacolului la Rotary Club Opera.

Studium: Gesang (Bachelor, 2010) und Stilistik der Musikinterpretation (Masterstudium, 2015) an der Musikhochschule der West-Universität aus

Temeswar. Gegenwärtig Lehrauftrag an der Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Department: Musik – Darstellende Kunst, Schauspiel, West-Universität Temeswar. Seit September 2018 Doktorandin an der Doktoratsschule für Musik und Theater, IOSUD-UVT. Schauspielerin am „Ioan Slavici“ Theater aus Arad; Schauspielerin, Sängerin und Stimmtrainer am Theater „Fantazio“ Constanta und Ungarisches Theater „Csiky Gergely“ aus Temeswar; Sängerin am Kulturzentrum für Roma, Europäischer Rat; Teilnahme an internationalen Festivals in Avignon, Lyon, Nice, Paris u.a.; Film- und Theaterschauspielerin, Ethno-Jazz Sängerin. Gesangslehrerin und Manager an der Schule ProMuzica&Cultura Timișoara. Gesangslehrerin, Sprecherziehung und darstellende Kunst am Rotary Club Opera.

Studies: Canto (Bachelor, 2010) and Stylistics of musical interpretation (Master degree) at the Faculty of Music, West University of Timisoara. In the present associated teacher at the Faculty of Music and Theatre, Department: Music – Performing Arts, Acting, West University of Timisoara. Since September 2017 PhD student at the PhD School for Music and Theatre, IOSUD-UVT. Actress at the “Ioan Slavici” Theatre from Arad; actress, soloist, voice trainee at the “Fantazio” Theatre Constanta and Hungarian Theatre “Csiky Gergely” from Timisoara; soloist at the Cultural Centre for Roma, European Council; presence at international festivals in Avignon, Lyon, Nice, Paris etc.; film- und theatre actress, ethno-jazz soloist. Teacher for canto and manager at the ProMuzica&Cultura Timișoara School. Teacher for canto, voice trainee and performing arts at the Rotary Club Opera.

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### **Eleonora RINGLER-PASCU, Dr. habil.**

Studii: Anglistică și Germanistică la Universitatea din Timișoara (1979). Bursieră Franz-Werfel la Universitatea din Viena. Doctorat despre teatrul lui Peter Handke – Universitatea din Viena (1997). Abilitare cu teza: *Dramaturgia în secolul 20: experiment, antiteatru, teatru postdramatic sau neodramatic, reîntoarcere la tradiție* (2013). Crucea de Onoare Austriacă pentru Știință și Artă a Republicii Federale Austria (2017). Profesor universitar la Facultatea de Muzică și Teatru, Departamentul: Muzică – Artele spectacolului, Actorie (lb. română și lb. germană), Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara și Director al Școlii Doctorale de Muzică și Teatru. Președinta Societății Culturale Româno-Germane din Timișoara (2014-2017). Publicații: studii și articole în *Banatica*,

DramArt, *Estudios Filologicos Alemanes*, *Lenau-Jahrbuch*, *Symbolon*, *Thalia Germanica*, *Transcarpathica*, *Zeitschrift der Germanisten Rumäniens*. Cărți: *Unterwegs zum Ungesagten. Zu Peter Handkes Theaterstücken „Das Spiel vom Fragen“ und „Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wussten“ mit Blick über die Postmoderne*, (1998); *Österreichisches Gegenwartstheater zwischen Tradition und Innovation*, Excelsior Art, Timișoara (2000); *Österreichische Literatur ohne Grenzen. Gedenkschrift für Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler* (coeditare), (2009); *Kurzdrama – Minidrama*, (2009), *Drama der Antike*, (2010); *Österreichische Literatur. Traditionsbezüge und Prozesse der Moderne vom 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, (coeditare), (2018). Traduceri: Peter Handke: *Absență* (2000); Armin Klein: *Managementul proiectului cultural* (2005); Thomas Bernhard: *Immanuel Kant* (2013). Domenii de cercetare: teatrul austriac și german contemporan, teatrul minorității germane din Banat.

Studium: Anglistik-Germanistik an der Universität Temeswar (1979). Franz-Werfel Stipendiatin an der Universität Wien. Promotion über Peter Handkes Theater – Universität Wien (1997). Habilitationsschrift: *Dramatik im 20. Jahrhundert: Experiment, Antitheater, postdramatisches oder neodramatisches Theater, Rückkehr zur Tradition* (2013). Österreichisches Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst der Republik Österreich (2017). Univ.-Prof. an der Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Department: Musik – Darstellende Kunst, Schauspiel (rumänische und deutsche Sprache), West-Universität Temeswar und Direktorin der Doktoratsschule für Musik und Theater. Vorsitzende der Rumänisch-Deutschen Kulturgesellschaft Temeswar (2014-2017). Publikationen: Studien und Artikel in *Banatica*, *DramArt*, *Estudios Filologicos Alemanes*, *Lenau-Jahrbuch*, *Symbolon*, *Thalia Germanica*, *Transcarpathica*, *Zeitschrift der Germanisten Rumäniens*. Bücher: *Unterwegs zum Ungesagten. Zu Peter Handkes Theaterstücken „Das Spiel vom Fragen“ und „Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wussten“ mit Blick über die Postmoderne* (1998); *Österreichisches Gegenwartstheater zwischen Tradition und Innovation* (2000); *Österreichische Literatur ohne Grenzen. Gedenkschrift für Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler* (Mitherausgabe), (2009); *Kurzdrama – Minidrama* (2009); *Drama der Antike* (2010); *Österreichische Literatur. Traditionsbezüge und Prozesse der Moderne vom 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, (Mitherausgabe), (2018). Übersetzungen: Peter Handke: *Absență* (2000); Armin Klein: *Managementul proiectului cultural* (2005); Thomas Bernhard: *Immanuel Kant* (2013). Forschungsschwerpunkte: österreichisches und deutsches Gegenwartsdrama, deutschsprachiges Theater im Banat.

Studies: English and German studies at the University of Timișoara (1979). Franz-Werfel Scholarship at the University of Vienna. PhD – Doctoral studies about Peter Handke's theatre – University of Vienna (1997). Habilitation thesis: *Dramatics in the 20th Century: Experiment, Antitheatre, Postdramatic or Neodramatic Theatre, Back to Tradition* (2013). Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Arts of the Federal Republic Austria (2017). Professor at the Faculty of Music and Theatre, Department: Music – Performing Arts, Acting (Romanian and German language), West University of Timișoara and Director of the PhD School for Music and Theatre. President of the Romanian-German Cultural Society from Timisoara (2014-2017). Publications: studies and articles in *Banatica*, *DramArt*, *Estudios Filologicos Alemanes*, *Lenau-Jahrbuch*, *Symbolon*, *Thalia Germanica*, *Transcarpathica*, *Zeitschrift der Germanisten Rumäniens*. Books: *Unterwegs zum Ungesagten. Zu Peter Handkes Theaterstücken „Das Spiel vom Fragen“ und „Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wussten“ mit Blick über die Postmoderne* (1998); *Österreichisches Gegenwartstheater zwischen Tradition und Innovation* (2000); *Österreichische Literatur ohne Grenzen. Gedenkschrift für Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler* (co-editing), (2009); *Kurzdrama – Minidrama* (2009); *Drama der Antike* (2010); *Österreichische Literatur. Traditionenbezüge und Prozesse der Moderne vom 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, (co-editing), (2018). Translations: Peter Handke: *Absență* (2000); Armin Klein: *Managementul proiectului cultural* (2005); Thomas Bernhard: *Immanuel Kant* (2013). Research areas: contemporary Austrian and German theatre, theatre of the German minority of Banat.

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Studien: Schauspiel an der Hochschule für Philologie und Kunst, Abteilung für darstellende Kunst, „Lucian Blaga“ Universität Sibiu, (2002). Lehrauftrag am Departament für darstellende Kunst, Hochschule für Philologie und Kunst, „Lucian Blaga“ Universität Sibiu. Promotion mit der Dissertation *Improvisation: Techniken und Methoden für Projekte in der Theaterforschung* (2018). Schauspieler am „Radu Stanca“ Nationaltheater aus Sibiu mit über 50 Produktionen in der Regie von Silviu Purcărete, Mihai Măniuțiu, Tompa Gabor, Andriy Zholdak, Gigi Căciuleanu, Dragoș Galgoțiu, Alexander Hausvater Radu Alexandru Nica, u-a.; Teilnahme an nationalen und internationalen Festivals, Workshops. Regie für die Projekte des Departaments für darstellende Kunst und Trainer bei Theatre 4 Business, ein Zentrum für persönliche Entwicklung über Theater und Kunst.

Studies: Performing Arts – Acting at the Faculty of Letters and Arts, “Lucian Blaga” University Sibiu (2002). Associate teacher at the Department for Performing Arts, Faculty of Letters and Arts, “Lucian Blaga” University, Sibiu. PhD in Theatre with the thesis *Improvisation: techniques and methods in the theatrical research projects* (2018). Actor at the “Radu Stanca” National Theater of Sibiu in over 50 plays, directed by Silviu Purcărete, Mihai Măniuțiu, Tompa Gabor, Andriy Zholdak, Gigi Căciuleanu, Dragoș Galgoțiu, Alexander Hausvater Radu Alexandru Nica, etc.; participation at national and international festivals, workshops. Director of projects within the Department for Performing Art and trainer for Theatre 4 Business, a center for personal development through theatre for adults.

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Studium: Englische Sprache und Literatur, Heilongjiang Universität, Harbin (BA, 2004; MA, 2009). Promotion über Howard Goldblatts Übersetzung von Mo Yans Werk aus trankultureller Perspektive, Jilin Universität, Changchun. (2017). Forscher für englische und vergleichende Literaturen an dem College für Fremdsprachen, Xiamen Universität. Visiting PhD an der Copenhagen Universität (2015-2016). Visiting Scholar an der Nationalen Taiwan Universität in Taipei (2018-2019). Publikationen: Artikel in Chinesisch und Englisch in *Social Scientific Front, Studies and Exploration, Theatrical Art, Literary Studies*, etc.. Forschungsschwerpunkte: Englische literatur, vergleichende Literatur, Shakespeare Studien.

Studies: English language and literature, Heilongjiang University, Harbin, China (BA, 2004; MA, 2009). PhD - Doctoral studies about English Translations of Mo Yan's Works by Howard Goldblatt in the Perspective of Cultural Translation at Jilin University, Changchun, China (2017). Assistant researcher of English and Comparative Literature in the College of Foreign Languages, Xiamen University, Xiamen, China. Visiting PhD at Copenhagen University in Copenhagen, Denmark (2015-2016). Visiting Scholar at National Taiwan University in Taipei, Taiwan (2018-2019). Publications: Articles: over 10 Chinese and English articles in *Social Scientific Front, Studies and Exploration, Theatrical Art, Literary Studies*, etc.; Research areas: English literature, comparative literature, Shakespeare studies.

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### **Yue WANG, Drd.**

Studii: Teatrologie la Universitatea Wuhan (2007). Bursă Song Qingling și Bursă Națională ptr. studii postgraduate acordate de Ministerul Educației a Republicii China (2017). Distincția pentru excelență postgraduate și bursă academică acordate de Universitatea Wuhan University (2017). Studii doctorale despre genealogia personajelor centrale din piesele lui Ibsen, Universitatea Wuhan. Publicații: Articole: *Solvejg and Her Sisters – A Study on the Implicit Genealogy of Virtue-based Chinese Morality in Ibsen's Plays* (2016); *The Ethical Force of the Solvejg Genealogy in Ibsen's Plays* (2016); *Prospective radiotherapies for patients with oropharyngeal carcinoma* (2017); *The Brand Genealogy in Ibsen's Plays* (2017); *On the "Secrets" of Ibsen's Modern Play Writing – A Study on Ibsen's Workshop, Drama* (2017). Tranduceri: “L'Intrusdans

*les dernières années de la creation dramatique d'Ibsen*" Richard Schechner; "Goethe, Marx, Ibsen and the Creation of a World Literature" Martin Puchner (2015); "Troutenkjærighet" Toril Moi (2015); "The Structured World of Ibsen's Late Dramas" James McFarlane (2015); "Remembering Ibsen in Tennessee Williams" Ian McAdam (2016); "Shakespeare With a Baltic Accent" Kalina Stefanova (2016); A. G. Chater and William Archer: *From Ibsen's Workshop* (2016); "Ibsen's Legacy: Making the Theatre Matter" Joan Templeton (2017); "O'Neill's Poet, Touched by Ibsen," Elinor Fuchs (2017). Domenii de cercetare: studii despre Ibsen și teatrul moden, în cadrul proiectului național "Ibsen's Poetics in His Plays" și al proiectului universitar "How Ibsen propelled Shakespeare's Tragic Arts".

Studium: Theaterwissenschaft an der Wuhan Universität (2007). Song Qingling Stipendium und Nationales Stipendium für Postgraduates seitens des Bildungsministeriums der Volksrepublik (2017). Auszeichnung für Postgraduate Exzellenz und Akademisches Stipendium seitens der Wuhan Universität (2017). Doktoratsstudium zur Genealogie der Haupthelden in Ibsens Theaterstücken (2015), Wuhan Universität. Publikationen: Artikel: *Solveig and Her Sisters - A Study on the Implicit Genealogy of Virtue-based Chinese Morality in Ibsen's Plays* (2016); *The Ethical Force of the Solveig Genealogy in Ibsen's Plays* (2016); *Prospective radiotherapies for patients with oropharyngeal carcinoma* (2017); *The Brand Genealogy in Ibsen's Plays* (2017); *On the "Secrets" of Ibsen's Modern Play Writing – A Study on Ibsen's Workshop, Drama* (2017). Übersetzungen: : "L'Intrusdans les dernières années de la creation dramatique d'Ibsen" Richard Schechner; „Goethe, Marx, Ibsen and the Creation of a World Literature“ Martin Puchner (2015); "Troutenkjærighet" Toril Moi (2015); „The Structured World of Ibsen's Late Dramas“ James McFarlane (2015); "Remembering Ibsen in Tennessee Williams" Ian McAdam (2016); "Shakespeare With a Baltic Accent" Kalina Stefanova (2016); A. G. Chater and William Archer: *From Ibsen's Workshop* (2016); „Ibsen's Legacy: Making the Theatre Matter“ Joan Templeton (2017); "O'Neill's Poet, Touched by Ibsen," Elinor Fuchs (2017). Forschungsschwerpunkte: Ibsen Studien und modernes Theater innerhalb des Nationalen Projekts "Ibsen's Poetics in His Plays" und dem universitären Projekt "How Ibsen propelled Shakespeare's Tragic Arts".

Studies: Dramatic literature studies at Wuhan University (2007). Song Qingling Scholarship and National Scholarship for PhD postgraduates awarded by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2017). Honor of Excellent Postgraduates and Academic Scholarship (first prize) awarded by

Wuhan University (2017). PhD - Doctoral studies about the genealogy of the main characters in Ibsen's plays (2015). PhD candidate at School of Arts, Wuhan University. Publications: Articles: *Solvejg and Her Sisters – A Study on the Implicit Genealogy of Virtue-based Chinese Morality in Ibsen's Plays* (2016); *The Ethical Force of the Solvejg Genealogy in Ibsen's Plays* (2016); *Prospective radiotherapies for patients with oropharyngeal carcinoma* (2017); *The Brand Genealogy in Ibsen's Plays* (2017); *On the "Secrets" of Ibsen's Modern Play Writing – A Study on Ibsen's Workshop, Drama* (2017). Translation: “*L'Intrus dans les dernières années de la création dramatique d'Ibsen*” Richard Schechner; „*Goethe, Marx, Ibsen and the Creation of a World Literature*” Martin Puchner (2015); “*Troutenkjærighet*” Toril Moi (2015); “*The Structured World of Ibsen's Late Dramas*” James McFarlane (2015); “*Remembering Ibsen in Tennessee Williams*” Ian McAdam (2016); “*Shakespeare With a Baltic Accent*” Kalina Stefanova (2016); A. G. Chater and William Archer: *From Ibsen's Workshop* (2016); “*Ibsen's Legacy: Making the Theatre Matter*” Joan Templeton (2017); “*O'Neill's Poet, Touched by Ibsen,*” Elinor Fuchs (2017). Research areas: Ibsen studies and modern theatre - national funded project of “Ibsen's Poetics in His Plays” and university funded project “How Ibsen propelled Shakespeare's Tragic Arts”.

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Dominick Dunne: *Another City, Not My Own* (2000); Jade Sbow Wong: *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (2003). Domenii de cercetare: literatura americană, literatura chineză americană, studii despre Harold Bloom, politica și economia indiană, literatura indiană engleză.

Studium: Englische Sprache und Literatur, Xiamen Universität (BA, 1990; MA, 1996; PhD, 1999). Professor für Englisch Sprache und Literatur am College für Fremdsprachen und Kultur, Xiamen Universität. Prorektor der Min Nan Normal Universität, Zhang Zhou, Fujian Province. New Century Excellent Talent, Ministium für Bildung, PRC (2006). Postdoc an der Yale Universität in Boston (2003). Konsul des Generalkonsulats in Mumbai (2007-2009). Doctoral supervisor in short-term exchange program abroad, University of California, Los Angeles (2013). Publikationen: Artikel in Chinesisch und Englisch in *Foreign Literature, Contemporary Foreign Literature, Foreign Literature Studies, Social Science Studies, Journal of British & American Studies, Comparative Literature and Culture, Journal of Xia Men University, Southeast Academies* etc. Bücher: *Attribute and History: Interpretation of Chineses American Literature* (2004); *Literary Views of Harold Bloom* (2012); *Perspective on Chinese American Literature* (2012). Übersetzungen: Dominick Dunne: *Another City, Not My Own* (2000); Jade Sbow Wong: *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (2003). Forschungsschwerpunkte: Amerikanische Literatur, Chinesisch Amerikanische Literatur, Harold Bloom Studien, Politik und Wirtschaft Indiens, Indisch Englische Literatur.

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