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**1**

**STUDII TEORETICE**

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**THEORETISCHE STUDIEN**

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**THEORETICAL STUDIES**

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# The Poetic Display of Truth, Goodness and Beauty on the Chinese Stage

LI WEIMIN

(Zhejiang Yuexiu University, China)

## Abstract

Shakespeare's research on the deformation and influence of China constitutes an important field of cultural, literary and dramatic relations between China and foreign countries. This article comprehensively and systematically introduces the spread, translation, adaptation, and performance of Shakespeare's plays in China over the past 60 years. Tightly around the deformation and variation of Shakespeare's drama, from the perspective of text adaptation and stage combination, it contemplates the "Chineseization" by adaptation process. The study also examines the collision and integration of Chinese culture with the different aesthetic principles of realism and freehand brushwork for both Shakespearean and Chinese drama.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare; drama; China; adaptation; performance.

## Rezumat

Cercetările lui Shakespeare privind deformarea și influența Chinei constituie un domeniu important al relațiilor culturale, literare și dramatice dintre China și țările străine. Acest articol introduce în mod cuprinzător și sistematic răspândirea, traducerea, adaptarea și interpretarea pieselor lui Shakespeare în China în ultimii 60 de ani. Astfel, din perspectiva adaptării textului și a combinației pe diversele scene, lucrarea de față reflectă „chinezizarea” prin procesul de adaptare. Studiul examinează, de asemenea, coliziunea și integrarea culturii chineze cu diferitele principii estetice ale realismului și ale adaptării libere, atât pentru drama shakespeariană, cât și pentru cea chineză.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Shakespeare; drama; China; adaptare; performance.

Compared to other foreign plays, the performances of Shakespeare's plays on the stage in China are obviously endowed by nature with uniqueness to attract the Chinese audience, while the research remains prosperous for many years in China. Because whether in the early years since the founding of the People's Republic of China or in the era of Reform and Opening-up of China, the performances of

Shakespeare's plays on the stage in China were not only a symbol of cultural exchange, but also a dialogue with literary canons and international theatrical art, which showed the positive attitude of China towards the treasures of international literature art. At the same time it's a kind of embodiment of national cultural soft power. Especially in the era when we are far away from "salvation" and "revolution", the need for the acceptance of Shakespeare's plays and the pursuit of human nature have been far more than the need and pursuit for other foreign dramatists such as Ibsen whose "social problem drama" can directly interfere in civil life. According to various published disciplines statistics reports, citation reports and the data obtained in the statistics of this study, Shakespeare is the most commonly-studied writer in China<sup>1</sup> and his dramas are the most frequently performed foreign plays on the stage in China. Especially in the voice of "re-reading the Classics", the reinterpretation of the traditional classical writers' works is always attractive to the theatrical workers and researchers of foreign literature. For this reason, there raises a question: How do the performances and studies of Shakespeare's plays in the 20th century develop in China? This is a task which many people who are ready to perform his plays on stage and researchers have to face with. Therefore it is necessary to review the theories of the performances of Shakespeare's plays on the stage in China within the sixty years since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In the voice of "Re-reading the Classics", Shakespeare is definitely one of the classic writers who is supposed to be re-read. And to perform his plays on the stage is definitely one way to reinterpret the classic works. Shakespeare's plays were performed constantly on the stage in the history of introducing his works to China. Many among them which were adapted into Chinese dramas or operas with popularity left a memorable impression to people in the over one-hundred-year history of the exchange of Chinese and Western Dramas. Needless to say, with the further prosperity of the cultural exchange between China and foreign countries and the introduction of international performances, Chinese performances of Shakespeare's plays have been constantly tempered to maturity by the Oriental

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<sup>1</sup> Li, Tiejing: *The Advanced report On Humanities And Social Sciences in China* (1999 and 2001), Social Sciences Academic Press, 2000 and 2002; Research Group of the Institute of Foreign Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: *Humanities and Social Sciences ( Foreign Literature) scan of Frontier*, in: *Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Review*, 2002 (In recent years, Shakespeare has been listed as the most commonly-studied writer in China in many works which use biblio-metrology as the study method.); Social Science Research and Ideological Work Department of the Ministry of Education: *China Academic Humanities and social sciences research author* (1996-2000), Renmin University of China Press, 2004.

and Western theatrical theories. There are many ways to re-read the classic literary works like Shakespeare's works itself, but performing his plays in the form of Chinese dramas or operas is the best way to integrate his works with Chinese culture so that the classic works go into the midst of the common Chinese people. Shakespeare's plays are supposed to be performed on the stage of theatre, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of his plays that are different from other foreign writer's works. Therefore we must pay attention to the performances, especially to the success and shortcomings of Chinese opera versions of the plays. To pay attention to the Chinese performances of Shakespeare's plays on stage, and to make Chinese versions underline the rich cultural connotations and its own unique aesthetic characteristics.

### **The Performances of Shakespeare's Plays: The Significance of Classic Works**

According to the blundering of academic research in recent years, the voice of re-reading classical works has not ever stopped. "Re-reading" Shakespeare is apparently not limited to texts, instead it should include the continuous performances of his plays on stage and reinterpretation. That's because, from the point of view of world literature, Shakespeare's classic status in literary world shows a long-term stability. His plays not only take the first place of the studies of classic literary texts in the whole world, but also keep performing on stage continuously. And the ultimate significance of interpreting classics is just to explore the inner spiritual values and aesthetic value, enlarging and reinterpreting humanistic values of classics as well. As Harold Bloom said: "The original sign that the literary works are able to win the classics status is some strangeness, this characteristic is either not be completely assimilated by us, or has the potential to become a well-established habit which makes us blind [...] Shakespeare is the excellent example of the second possibility as mentioned above."<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare's classic status fully shows such strangeness. His plays have a unique charm of connecting popular literature and classical literature, motivating people to produce continuously new knowledge about themselves, about literature, art, and humanity as well. Shakespeare's plays have been constructed and deconstructed constantly in the communication with the world, and this process of construction and deconstruction is the important reason why he can win the classic status. At the same time, the fusion of modern dramas, Chinese operas and Shakespeare's plays produced a link of Chinese versions which have the features of classic both in ideological content and in aesthetic creation.

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<sup>2</sup> Bloom, H.: *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, translated by Jiang, N., Yilin Press, Nanjing, 2005, p. 3.

### **Activation and Amplification: The Shining Modern Drama Versions of Shakespeare's plays**

Without any doubt, Shakespeare's plays have been performed on stage in many types of dramas and operas during the past sixty years since the People's Republic of China was founded, including seventeen kinds of dramas or operas: modern drama, Peking opera, Kun opera, Sichuan opera, Shaoxing opera, Huangmei opera, Cantonese opera, Shanghai opera, Wu opera (a kind of local opera in Zhejiang), Henan opera, Luzhou opera, Hunan opera, Si'xian opera, Lantern opera, Dongjiang opera, Teochew opera, Hanchu opera, and so on. This situation can be said to be distinctive from the other foreign dramas which were adapted into Chinese versions. Cao Yu once remarked: "We performed Shakespeare's plays in all kinds of different forms, and all of these performances and creations which were shining on the stage have built a beautiful bridge between Shakespeare and the Chinese people."<sup>3</sup> If we observe the Shakespeare's plays on the stage of China, we will find out that the performances are mainly divided into three stages or exhibited three different patterns, if we take 1986 as a dividing line. In the first stage, from the early period of PRC to 1986, the performances mainly took the form of the modern drama that used Stanislavski's realistic creation methods to perform, which means that in the creation of the characters actresses and actors were required to accomplish a supreme task besides the completion of respective unit tasks - "a basic, fundamental and all-embracing target that can attract all the tasks and activate the intention of creation which involves all the elements of performers-characters such as psychological motivation and self-perception"<sup>4</sup>. The supreme task is restricted by the playwright's creative motivation, emotions and thoughts, and is also expressed by the subjects in the scripts. Although the Chinese theories of performance are also integrated into the Shakespeare's plays, this stage mainly stayed in the period of learning, however, compared with the performances in China before 1949. In the second stage, although after 1986, his plays were performed in the way of realism being still in a dominant position. This kind of plays performed in the way of Chinese operas, with both form and spirit, did not only integrated the art of Chinese operas and Shakespeare's plays, but also created a link with romantic features under the guide and influence of both the theories of Chinese operas and Brecht's theatre theories. The third stage, in recent years, brought Shakespeare's plays into the range of the commercial

<sup>3</sup> Zou, H.: *Writer, Director, Commentary: a multidimensional perspective of the Beijing people's Art Theater*, Culture and Art Publishing House, Beijing, 2008, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> Chen, X.: "Mental Space of OTHELLO", in: *Files of Life: Director Notes of Chen Xinyi*. Ed. by Mao, S., Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Shanghai, 2006, p. 184.

performances, such as adapted versions based on the stories or themes from the original works, or plays performed in the form of parody. There are formal performances, plays performed in the campus, including the Chinese University Shakespeare's Plays Festival.

Talking about the Shakespeare's plays on the stage in China within the sixty years since the founding of the PRC, the modern drama form achieved good results. We all know that the Western plays are "a set of skills and systems of acting, stage art and theatres built by realistic dramas".<sup>5</sup> All of them attempt to dig out the profound humanistic spirit implicated in Shakespeare's plays from the realistic perspective, with high achievements in the specific implementation of making the words in the scripts becoming active and making the literary images visible.

Thus the plays are regarded as "orthodox" performances of Shakespeare's plays in China. Most starring roles were played by the top performing artists of China whose performances had already been the training samples for the students of drama schools. For example, the *King Lear* produced by Central Academy of Drama and the *King Lear* produced by Liaoning People's Art Theatre were both starring famous performing artists of China. Let's take the *King Lear* starring Li Moran as an example - this version integrated the profound thoughts with realistic characterization, highlighted Lear's personality such as perversity, self-confidence, arrogance, ignorance, but once when the royal robe was taken off, Li Moran emphasized the collapse of the character's subjective perception about life. The performance of this version used reality to represent absurdity, making the audience to feel the power of symbols which showed the fate of not only one single person, but of the entire human race. And the *King Lear* directed by Yang Shipeng and starring Hu Qingshu, a famous drama artist, has incisively and vividly demonstrated Lear's helplessness, greatly discerning and apprehending, the ownership and loss of his power as well. In November 1980, the *Macbeth* directed by Xu Xiaozhong and Li Zibo from the Central Academy of Drama highlighted the cruelty of that times which have penetrated into our feelings and imaginations. The symbolic meaning of "blood" in this play "metaphorized" the tragic connotation of the play itself, and the two directors made the play show that fear is more powerful than mercy. The whole play showed the pain and suffering of a tyrant and portrayed the whole process of self-mutilation of Macbeth's soul. The *Othello* directed by Chen Xinyi created three levels of mental space - the level of ideal, the level of secularity and the level of dark revenge. Taking

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<sup>5</sup> Zhang, Q.: "Let "God" Befall", in: *China Shakespeare Research Association*, Special Issue, Shanghai, 1984, pp. 54-55.

“psychological crisis” on the three levels of mental space can create the condition for the externalization of characters’ mental world, representing clearly and accurately that the tragedy of Othello is just the loss of his faith in beauty, as he became a sinner who destroyed beauty, although being a hero who pursued and defended beauty. The *Othello* directed by Lei Guohua is not only a tragedy of personality, but an allegory that stressed the universal significance which revealed some fundamental weaknesses of human being. The relationship between Othello and Iago is no longer the simple pattern of hero and villain. In 1956, the *Romeo and Juliet* acted by the Performing Cadres Training Class of the Central Academy of Drama embodied the heroic struggle of Romeo and Juliet against the old feudal world with the aim of striving for happiness and love, and also embodied the reconciliation of the feud and the final coming of peace obtained by their death. In 1961, the *Romeo and Juliet* performed by the 58<sup>th</sup> session of acting class of Central Academy of Drama as their graduation performance, drew lessons from Chinese traditional operas by taking the methods of acting such as the performance of throwing a ball made of strips of silk and the flowing white scarf to represent the keepsake of connecting the pure love of the young man and woman. The whole play was “both subtle and deep, and was not only beautiful but pure, it can bring people’s feelings into a noble realm.”<sup>6</sup> The *Romeo and Juliet* performed by the Tibetan class of Shanghai Theater Academy in 1980 laid particular emphasis on the fate of the characters and the development track of characters’ personalities. Although the emphases of all these Shakespeare’s plays performed in the way of modern drama on expressing the themes and the means of artistic expressions are different, all attempted to dig out the humanism spirit of Shakespeare’s plays, interpreting the intrinsic factors of progressive plays well.

### **Content and Form: The Embodiment of Modernity in Shakespeare’s Plays**

For the stage of Chinese operas with an age-old tradition and various kinds of operas, Shakespeare’s plays which were performed in the way of realism made people feel unsatisfied, and therefore the adaptations became a way of some opera troupes to test their own kind of operas and the level of their directors. As soon as the Chinese opera adaptations were performed on stage, they were appreciated by the experts and the majority of fans of Chinese traditional operas. The combination of Chinese operas and Shakespeare’s plays took place in mid-1980s when the

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<sup>6</sup> Zhang, Q.: “Let “God” Befall”, in: *China Shakespeare Research Association*, Special Issue for the Establishment of China Shakespeare Research Association and the 1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting, Shanghai, 1984, pp. 54-55.

adaptations rose sharply at the China's Shakespeare Festival. But there were some people who doubted on the combination. Could Shakespearean plays be adapted into Peking operas? Are they Peking operas or are they still Shakespearean plays? Even the practice had given the answer as early as the 1920s, but it hasn't been deeply discussed in theory. Some people realized the isomorphism of aesthetics between Peking opera and Shakespeare's plays. Peking opera has various ways to express life freely, and is skilled in telling stories and depicting characters' mentality, while Shakespeare's plays were well-structured with beginnings and endings, and the virtual scene could enlighten the imagination. From the level of aesthetics, the Western tragedy is essentially an imitating art, so it forms a special style and feature of aesthetics. "The forms of expression of tragedy are the forms of reproducing life. [...] The mentality of characters is far more important than the external actions and gestures."<sup>7</sup> To Chinese tragedy, "the excitement of emotions is based on the stimulation of the external forms (the artistry of beauty), the form of aesthetics is beyond the understanding of content."<sup>8</sup> So, if we could combine the reproduction of life and strong mental conflict of Shakespeare's plays with the highly aesthetic performances of Peking opera, turning the mental activities into movements, we could, in the spectators' views, express the deep psychological meanings and perform mental activities of Shakespeare's works, deepen the connotation of characters in Peking opera, and build the symbolism, image, concreteness, aesthetics, profundity and typical category of characters.

The researchers who studied Shakespeare first noticed the similarities of the stage scenery and the viewing habits between Peking opera and Shakespeare's plays. In the 1950's, Zhang Zhenxian proposed his own views and possibilities of performing Shakespeare's plays in the style of Peking opera from the aspects of theatres, performances on stage and audience, as he thought that there were many similarities.<sup>9</sup> The audience who is very familiar with Peking opera would pay more attention to the form, even though it's the same story and the same theater company, because the plot and the narration are not that important. That is to say, the audience can ignore the stories of Shakespeare's plays to a certain extent, but focus on the charm of the form of Peking opera. Sun Jiaxiu thought it's not easy to adapt Shakespeare's plays, and it's not just to bring it back and make it over or fill something in it. Sun Jiaxiu proposed an important standard of measuring

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<sup>7</sup> Lan, F.: *Contrast between Chinese and Western Drama*, Xuelin Press, Shanghai, 1992, p. 586.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 591.

<sup>9</sup> Zhang, Z.: "Shakespearean Plays and Traditional Chinese Opera", in: *Contending*, 1957, Nr. 3, p. 24.

whether the adaptation is successful or not, that is whether the adaptation meets the realistic spirits of art. It is incompatible and ridiculous for Hamlet, Macbeth and Shylock to sing and to wear Peking opera costumes. Wang Yuanhua thought that to perform Shakespeare's plays in China "should preserve the original style strictly in the way like the Buddhist scholar Dao'an abolished the research method of case discussion or like the translation method which were proposed by Lu Xun, instead of using the method of analogy of domestic books and foreign books (case discussion) or cut some parts out (domestication). If the audience who have never watched Shakespeare's plays watch the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays in Peking Opera style and think that Shakespeare's plays is the same as Peking Opera, this is not a successful introduction of Shakespeare but a total failure."<sup>10</sup> If we really want to take Shakespeare's plays adapted for Peking opera, there are risks or possibilities of the violation against realism.<sup>11</sup> People suspected that using this form of opera cannot exhibit the humanistic spirits of Shakespeare's plays which were implicated in the original works; and if we perform his plays in the form of Peking opera, we may be worried about the audience as to accept this form of performance.

In 1986, to take the chance of the first China's Shakespeare Festival, twenty-five plays of Shakespeare appeared on Chinese stage - there were not only plays performed under the guidance of realistic thoughts, but also some performed under the guidance of romantic ideas; and there were not only plays performed in the form of modern drama, but also some Shakespeare's plays performed in the form of Chinese operas. Especially in recent years the performances have obtained great progress, and achieved outstanding results in the re-interpretations of classics. Through the continuous practice, people realized that there are many similarities not only in practice, but also in theory. For such a Chinese version of Shakespeare's play performed in the way of Kunqu Opera named *Bloody Hands*, people do not hope that "it's a version adapted from the original work strictly".<sup>12</sup> At this stage, there are successful versions which were adapted in the way of Kunqu opera, Peking opera, Shaoxing opera, Huangmei opera, Sichuan opera, or Sixian opera. The Kunqu opera *Bloody Hands* and the Huangmei opera *Much Ado about Nothing* both combined the inner experience of characters and the external performance together, which was not only faithful to the original spirit of

<sup>10</sup> Wang, Y.: *Speculative record*, Shanghai Ancient Books Press, Shanghai, 2004, p. 437.

<sup>11</sup> Sun, J.: "Some Suggestion about Shakespearean PLAYS AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE OPERA", in: *Contending*, 1957, Nr. 6, pp. 27-28.

<sup>12</sup> Herbert, I.: "Classic Western Dramas on Asia stage", translated by Zhu, N., in: *Drama-Supplement*, Beijing, 2008, p. 7.

Shakespeare's plays, but also has a strong artistic expression and aesthetic value of art. Both pursued the virtual performances, the virtual installation of space, the feeling of sculpture and stylization which can be also described in one phrase as "the freehand style with allowable deformation"<sup>13</sup>. The feeling of aesthetic was completed in the "imagination". The Shaoxing opera *Hamlet* combined the lines of Shakespeare's play and the lyrical characteristics of Shaoxing opera together, which not only blended the beautiful and deep singing and melody of Yin Faction of Shaoxing opera with the sonorous and exciting characteristics of Shaoxing opera together, but also highlighted the complexity of prince Hamlet's character, and showed the positive side of human nature of the young prince in ancient China.

When it comes to adapting Shakespeare's plays in the way of Chinese operas, the first thing that comes into mind is whether the plays, especially *Hamlet* and the other tragedies, can be adapted. Adapting *Hamlet* in the artistic form of Peking opera is a vivid presentation of the consciousness of modern aesthetics; it can be showed in the form of mobilizing the various artistic means of Peking opera to perform the human nature of the *Hamlet*, which requires the directors and actors to take the form of strange exotic culture to tell about the process of the struggling of modern people's souls and personalities by using the original stories. We think that this kind of adapting is a specific expression of having the modern consciousness of Shakespeare's plays. The adapter interpreted the birth of evilness implicated in *Hamlet* which the human being confront all the times by using the form of Peking opera, but the human being is rebuilding the humanistic spirit of our living home all the times as well – this version pursued the beauty and harmony and the embodiment of the value which is completed in this kind of breaking and establishment. The Peking opera adaptations of Shakespeare's plays have the significance of demonstration and experience to the other kinds of Chinese operas. The performance of either the Peking opera version of *King Lear* or the Shaoxing opera version of the *Prince's Revenge* is a vivid presentation of the consciousness of modern stage, which means the Chinese operas have their own aesthetic principles and habits on the aspect of how to treat the relationship between the aesthetic subject and the aesthetic object (The "Mind" and the "Substance"), even when the audience is confronted with the tragic scenes, it will cheer for the performers' touching singing voice and beautiful appearance, posture and extraordinary martial arts. How to express the glory of human nature which is contained in the plays by using the form of Peking opera is a task before the performing staff. For Chinese tragedies, the purpose is not to inspire

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<sup>13</sup> Wang, Y.: *Speculative record*, Shanghai Ancient Books Press, Shanghai, 2004, p. 169.

audience's fear and pity, but move (corrective influence) the audience by ethical virtues. In fact, the Chinese tragedies are not the noble aesthetic of purifying souls by inspiring audience's fear and pity, but are the moral influence which comes from the reasonable stories (which means the operas meet logical and ethical standards), and are the aesthetic of persuading to be good by the high-profile education as well.<sup>14</sup>

If we combine Shakespeare's reproductions of life and the fierce inner conflict with the performing style of Chinese operas, we could show the profound philosophical connotations and mental activities which are contained in his plays on the level of watching and enjoying, and also could explore and portray the images of Peking opera on the level of philosophy and aesthetics. Therefore, the Peking opera *King Lear*, the Kunqu opera *Bloody Hands*, the Shaoxing opera *The Prince's Revenge* and the other Shakespeare's plays performed in the way of Chinese operas have embodied the complexity, concreteness, aesthetics, accuracy and generality of the personality characteristics of many characters perfectly. The Chinese opera versions of Shakespeare's plays cannot exist without music and dance. The modern consciousness can be showed by mobilizing the various artistic means of Peking opera to perform the human nature of Shakespeare's plays, for the European audience who is quite familiar with them, getting the storylines is secondary, and getting the aesthetic feeling has become to be the major aspect. This situation requires the directors and actors to take the external form of strange exotic culture to perform the process of the struggling of the souls of modern people with the music and dance of Chinese operas. Therefore, the Kunqu opera, the Peking opera, the Shaoxing opera, the Huangmei opera and the Sichuan opera combine the form of performing a story with songs and dances with Shakespeare's plays together, which show the double classical artistic value in either content or form.

In this sense, Shakespeare "can teach us how to hear ourselves in the self-examination [...] teach us how to accept the internal changes of ourselves and others which including Changes of the ultimate form."<sup>15</sup> We could see that Shakespeare's plays and the Chinese plays match well with each other, and we even could notice the enormous inclusiveness and vitality of the adapted performance. The fact proves that to perform Shakespeare's plays with Chinese opera and various local operas has unique superiority. It is because the Peking opera is "a performing

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<sup>14</sup> Lan, F.: *Contrast between Chinese and Western Drama*, Xuelin Press, Shanghai, 1992, p. 596.

<sup>15</sup> Bloom, H.: *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, translated by Jiang, N., Yilin Press, Nanjing, 2005, p. 22.

system of freehand style with national characteristics of art [...] the excellent freehand art is more true than the inferior realistic art.”<sup>16</sup> In recent years, how to make the contemporary audience accept and love Shakespeare’s plays has been a research topic of the studies which attracted much attention and a connection of ancient times and modern times, and a way of combining the forms of ancient art with the concepts of modern drama as well. Thus a lot of Chinese versions of Shakespeare’s plays which were adapted for Chinese operas were loved by the Chinese audience and the Western audiences, which not only spread the Chinese traditional operas, but also repaid Shakespeare’s classical works - a win-win success. Through the performances of Shakespeare’s plays, people realize that they can not only be performed in the traditional form, but also the traditional form can take advantage to show modern life and modern consciousness and concept. Thus Shakespeare’s plays have become a bridge which linked the past and present life, ideas, ways of thinking and humanity, and an inevitable way of how the Chinese opera versions of the plays obtain modernity nowadays.

### **Deconstruction and Construction: The Contemporary Value and Commercial Impact of the Vanguard Shakespearean Plays**

The performance of Shakespearean plays has been brisked up and was no more confined to the two forms of drama mentioned above since the new century arrived. Postmodern elements such as intertextuality, parody, deconstruction, have appeared in Shakespearean plays recently. Performing Shakespeare in the new deconstruction way has gained different kinds of comments, but it has improved performing arts, for it extraordinarily appeals to the young generation, and it meets the audience’s demand for sensory stimulation, entertainment and cultural diversity.

For the past few years, Shakespearean plays, known for their avant-garde and experimental spirit, are using famous performers as selling point. They are becoming a dynamic power and are warmly welcomed by the young audience.

Lin Zhaohua’s *Hamlet* was praised for its experimental spirit. Lin, who interpreted *Hamlet* in a brand new way, had changed people’s common thinking mode of this drama. Compared to *Hamlet*, *Richard III* might arouse far more controversies. During the performance, the audiences was affected by sounds and images of a group of characters.

How did Lin Zhaohua twirl the kaleidoscope of *Hamlet*? The answer was role transition. In the first act, the new king Claudius and the queen were ready

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<sup>16</sup> Zhang, Z.: “*Shakespearean Plays and Traditional Chinese Opera*”, in: *Contending*, 1957, Nr. 3, pp. 23-24.

to leave hand in hand after consoling Hamlet, while crestfallen Hamlet was suddenly in high spirit and turned into a gloat king. Then Hamlet went off the stage arm in arm with the queen. The cocky King Claudius depressingly hung his head and changed into a new Hamlet, and then told about his agony deep inside. By changing the external images, the internal feelings and experiences of those two characters were changing simultaneously. Between Hamlet's and Claudius's spirits and souls there was a sharp contrast which revealed the complexity of human nature.

Lin Zhaohua transformed the Renaissance humanistic tragedy into a cothurn about contemporary people and life. "[The director] filled the Shakespearean plays with ridiculous illusory atmosphere. Behind all his camouflage there concealed his philosophy of life."<sup>17</sup> Lin successfully converted the Renaissance humanism into the discomfiture we are facing today. By exploring the complexity of humanity and perceiving the metaphor of the original *Hamlet* tragedy, he deconstructed the intrinsic humanism and constructed the inspiration that indicated - "everybody is Hamlet". The deconstructed well known classic work offered a new angle to cognize Shakespearean plays and human nature: the beauty and ugliness, virtues and vices, love and hate, life and death, ordinary and greatness, tenderness and anxiety were all demonstrated to the Chinese audience.

Lin deconstructed the humanism of *Hamlet* and constructed the image of a city orphan who suffered from agony and nervousness<sup>18</sup>, somehow expanding our comprehension of Shakespearean plays, especially *Hamlet*. Lin's *Hamlet* is just as what Du Qingyuan criticized: "It at least showed their creativity in two aspects: on the one hand, they reinterpreted the role of Hamlet and expressed it uniquely, on the other hand, they created new scenes on stage by exploring the meaning of the act *Cemetery*."<sup>19</sup> The deconstruction and construction of the classic work *Hamlet* showed the Chinese director's precious creativity and his consciousness of Chinese culture.

Comparing to traditional way of interpreting the theme, content, comprehension of *Hamlet*, the new method, which "discarded actual scenes, abolished lots of body language and let the performers tell the story"<sup>20</sup> was much more modernized.

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<sup>17</sup> quoted from the instruction book of the *Hamlet 1990*, which was performed in 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Meng, J.: *Files of Vanward Dramas*, Writers Publishing House, Beijing, 2000, p. 357.

Chen, J.: *Chinese Contemporary Avantgarde Drama*, China Drama Press, Beijing, 2004, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> Du, Q.: *New interpretation of the Stage*, Lin, K.: *Direction Art of Lin Zhaohua*, The north wenyi press, Harbin, 1992, pp. 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> Zhang, Z.: *Chinese Experimental Theatre*, Shanghai Century Publishing Group/Shanghai People's Publishing House, Shanghai, 2009, p. 33.

It not only showed us the immortal value of Shakespearean plays, but also conveyed the spirit of modernism and contemporary value orientation. That's the reason why we should continually put Shakespeare's works on stage, especially on the stage of modern China.

Ever since we entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, performing Shakespearean plays in traditional realistic or romantic way cannot satisfy inland stage. Instead, the artists, using the stories of Shakespearean plays, innovated boldly by applying various kinds of means of artistic expressions and wrapped them with commercial "sugar-coating". No matter if being screenwriters, directors or performers, their primary goal is to pursue visual effect and to suit the taste of young generation. Famous stars, luxury sceneries, gorgeous costumes, popular theatrical designs, modernized music - they are all so attractive to audience.

The play *Ming Dynasty*, written by the famous director Tian Qinxin, acted by Hao Ping, Chen Minghao, was adapted from *King Lear* and was disputed because of its recomposing angle and style. The story is about an emperor of Ming Dynasty who was old and wanted to give up his throne but couldn't decide which one of his three sons had the ability to be a new king. Then one of his minister recommended Shakespeare's *King Lear* as reference to the Chinese emperor. This was quite an encouraging story: King Lear was no more a king who ruled Britain but an emperor who was in charge of China in Ming Dynasty. It emphasized that no one can own the throne or the imperial authority eternally, even the emperor. Some vanguard artistic expressions such as alienation effect were boldly applied on the stage. All of those adaptations made the play no longer a tragedy but was full of ridicule and humor. In the play, chairs symbolized imperial power the best so that a couple of chairs were put on the stage instead of the throne. In traditional Chinese culture "drama" or "play" means "to dress up", it emphasized "fun", not education. Fun is an equal attitude. The corresponding role of King Lear was the Chinese Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, King Lear's daughters were replaced by Zhu Yuanzhang's sons.

The movie *Coriolanus* (adapted from Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*), directed by Lin Zhaohua, performed by Pu Cunxin, was reflecting the world we are living in. Using long lines of poetic monologues, vigorous performance of the actors, modernized stage design and the energy brought by a rock band, the tragic hero Mathews was exquisitely characterized while the Shakespearean theme of humanity was overthrown. So this bold adaptation also caused the loss of humanism.

The new style of performance drove out the original spirits and contents of Shakespearean plays, that initially used to contain humanism spirit, now have

turned into “carriers of performing arts and skills”<sup>21</sup>. The gorgeously decorated stage failed to imply the spirit of drama and humanism as the director Lin Zhaohua anticipated and thus once again deconstructed the deconstruction of the play.

The biggest controversy lies in the rock way to interpret Shakespeare: sceneries of tilt steel columns, dim lights, coarse clothes. These were “both so classical and so modernized” that strongly shocked audience’s sense of vision and hearing with rock spirit, therefore the audience doubted that if this drama was still a Shakespearean play.

It is over 60 years since the People’s Republic of China was established. During these years, there are Shakespearean plays performed on stage occasionally among colleges and universities. And performances become much more constant for language learning and cultural exchange after the Economic Reform took place in China. These plays are mainly performed in English and combining with less amount of Chinese version.

*The Twelfth Night* and *Timon of Athens* performed by Norland Drama Club of Beijing Normal University, *The Taming of the Shrew* performed by students from Nanjing University department of Chinese language and literature, and *The Merchant of Venice* performed by students from People’s Liberation Army Academy of Arts department of theatricals were English versions of Shakespearean plays that had made achievements since the new period.

For the past few years, full edition of Shakespearean plays have seldom been performed. Instead, college students usually perform segments of Shakespeare’s works or hold Shakespeare Festival by themselves. In Chinese colleges and universities<sup>22</sup>, Shakespeare Festivals are mostly held by institutes of foreign languages and dramas are usually performed in English. These performances are immature at present, however, they indicate that college students are attracted by Shakespeare and his plays and they have well grasped the language used in Renaissance.<sup>23</sup>

As a conclusion, no matter if Shakespearean plays are performed in modern drama or traditional Chinese opera, they do become an important way for Chinese

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<sup>21</sup> Chen, Y.: *Promise of Life: Ontology of Chinese Drama*, Culture and Art Publishing House, Beijing, 2008, p. 344.

<sup>22</sup> Shanghai International Studies University has held 13 Shakespeare Festivals by 2008; Sichuan International Studies University has held 3 Shakespeare Festivals by 2008. Since the year of 2005, Chinese University of Hong Kong has held 5 Chinese Universities Shakespeare Festivals.

<sup>23</sup> Li, W.: “*Shakespeare Studies in Comparative Literature*”, in: *Journal of South-Central University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 2006, Nr.5, pp. 170-174.

drama artists to communicate with the world. Looking back to the past sixty years, there emerged a batch of classic Chinese Shakespearean plays<sup>24</sup> which are as excellent as Shakespearean plays performed in other countries. Chinese directors and performers interpret the thinking and humanism spirit of Shakespeare in a unique way and even enrich the plays with Chinese drama aesthetic theories and perform the plays in different kinds of traditional operas: these are all our unique features and the reasons why performances of Shakespearean plays are constantly energetic and attractive on the stage of China.

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<sup>24</sup> Li, W.: *The History of Shakespearean Studies in China*, China Drama Press, Beijing, 2006, pp. 477-478.

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# **A Blissful Dream or a Demonic Nightmare: Spirit Possession in *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* and *Lady Rokujō's Ghost***

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## **Abstract**

Spirit possession appears in both the Yuan zaju play *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* and the Noh drama *Lady Rokujō's Ghost*. The two main characters Chang Ch'ien-Nü and Lady Rokujō respectively embody the pursuit for true love and freedom in Chinese and Japanese theatre. The two distinct characters represent and reveal different emotional tendency and pattern of thinking thus implicate different cultural connotations. In *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body*, Chang Ch'ien-Nü's blissful soul reveals the dramaturge's aspiration for the ideal love. Whereas in *Lady Rokujō's Ghost*, Lady Rokujō's ghost appears as a demonic image, who vents her spleen after being long-time tortured, all burst out in a bolt, reflecting the great depression of ancient Japanese women under feudalistic control and religious ruling. Although both have demonstrated the conflicts between human and his surroundings, having brought into light the confrontations between humanity and inhumanity, yet the discrepancies between the two productions have given us an expression of opposing values, visional divergence, distinct aesthetic tastes and cultural traditions far from each other.

## **Keywords:**

Yuan zaju play; Noh drama; spirit possession; *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body*; *Lady Rokujō's Ghost*.

## **Rezumat**

Posesia spiritului apare atât în piesa Yuan zaju, *Sufletul lui Ch'ien-Nü părăsește trupul*, cât și în drama Noh *Fantoma lui Lady Rokujō*. Cele două personaje principale, Chang Ch'ien-Nü și Lady Rokujō întruchiează căutarea adevăratei iubiri și libertăți în teatrul chinezesc și japonez. Cele două personaje distincte reprezintă și dezvăluie o tendință emoțională diferită și un model de gândire cu conotații culturale diferite. În *Sufletul lui Ch'ien-Nü părăsește trupul*, sufletul fericit al lui Chang Ch'ien-Nü dezvăluie aspirația dramaturgului spre iubirea ideală. În timp ce în *Fantoma lui Lady Rokujō*, Lady Rokujō apare ca o imagine demonică, care își vântură spiritul negativ după o tortură îndelungată,

reflectând marea depresie a femeilor japoneze din timpuri străvechi, aflate atât sub dictatură feudală, cât și religioasă. Deși ambele piese demonstrează tensiunile ce apar între om și mediul înconjurător, între uman și inuman, totuși diferența dintre ele ne creează o imagine completă a valorilor opuse, a divergenței vizuale, a gusturilor estetice și a tradițiilor culturale distincte.

***Cuvinte cheie:***

teatrul Yuan zaju; drama Noh; posesia spiritului; *Sufletul lui Ch'ien-Nü părăsește trupul; Fantoma lui Lady Rokujō.*

The river of Chinese-Japanese cultural connections runs a long course from a remote source. Both being oriental genres of drama, Yuan zaju play<sup>1</sup> and Noh drama<sup>2</sup> share nearly a thousand years' history of mutual communication and influence. Therefore, the two theatrical forms usually display certain aesthetic features in common. Ghost, as a specific type of artistic image, since the very first beginning, has existed in the ancient primitives' belief. Since infused with Buddhism and Daoism, the image of ghost has been used more widely in theatre productions. This charming and vivid image has then been active on various stages, having been glowing with its charisma up till today, in nowadays contemporary theatre world.

Due to its unique aesthetic values, ghost play has been favored by spectators all around the world for quite a long time. There even exist genres of drama focusing on the representation of ghosts. Among them, the spectators' favorite is *menghun xi* (dream and soul theatre), a subordinate genre in oriental theatre, which refers to the type of theatre in which the soul of the living wanders about to other places, which differs from the type of ghost play in which the ghost of the dead meets the living in dreams. In *menghun xi*, when the wish is fulfilled, the soul returns to its body, back into human form; the person then becomes a more experienced self with mysterious power passed through, which undoubtedly reveals greater charm than merely having become a ghost after all.

**A Parallel Study on *Menghun* Characters in Chinese Yuan Zaju Play and Japanese Noh Drama**

The two graceful ladies in the ancient oriental Chang Ch'ien-Nü and Lady Rokujō were born respectively from the Yuan zaju play *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves*

<sup>1</sup> Yuan zaju play refers to classical Chinese plays in Yuan (1271–1368) dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> Noh drama refers to classic Japanese dance-drama having a heroic theme, a chorus, and highly stylized action, costuming, and scenery, first appeared in 1871.

*Her Body* and the Noh drama *Lady Rokujō's Ghost*. They both seek for true love and freedom of marriage. And due to this reason, both of them have to endure the bitterness of spiritual tortures. While suffering from great depression, the two ladies have gradually become lost in unconsciousness, and thus the *menghun* image is splitted out under such circumstance.

Honestly speaking, *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* written by the Yuan zaju play master Cheng Kuang-tsou is rather well-known in China.<sup>3</sup> The play is based on the Tang dynasty<sup>4</sup> romance *Lihun Ji (The Story of the Soul's Leaving)* written by Chen Xuanyou.<sup>5</sup> The following is the play's synopsis: Chang Ch'ien-Nü falls in love with a young scholar Wong Wenju, but their marriage is prevented by Chang's mother for he is not well-matched to her daughter in socioeconomic position; thus Chang's mother rejected Wong and forced him to take exams at the imperial capital for an official identity, which leads to Ch'ien-Nü's great depression under patriarchal pressure, her soul leaving her body and following her lover to the imperial capital, living with him for three years before returning home to her body, back into human form, more blissful than ever. This play is a masterpiece with *menghun* character among Yuan zaju plays.

Albeit revised on the basis of *Lihun Ji*, the playscript of *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* has been revised in many ways. In the following paragraph I'll make a brief comparison.

In the first place, in both the Tang romance and the Yuan play script, the soul of Ch'ien-Nü leaves her body due to the marriage arrangement under the influence of the feudalistic patriarchal system, where the order of one's parents and the words of the matchmaker decide everything. Moreover, the play pinpoints the reason behind the phenomenon: the family preference for power and influence in feudalistic society. In *Lihun Ji*, since the love affair between Wong and Ch'ien-Nü keeps unknown to Ch'ien-Nü's father, he arranged her marriage to another person; however, in *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body*, their love

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<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Wallace also wrote: "In fact, ghosts actually play a large role in Chinese drama, crucially to continue a love affair beyond the grave or to instigate the revenge plot. So the soul of Ch'ien-Nu can leave her body and follow her lover to the imperial capital." see Jennifer Wallace: "Tragedy in China", in: *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Volume 42, Number 2, June 2013, pp. 99-111.

<sup>4</sup> Tang dynasty is a Chinese dynasty dated a.d. 618–907 and marked by wide contacts with other cultures and by the development of printing and the flourishing of poetry and art.

<sup>5</sup> Chinese and Japanese names are given in their conventional order, that is, the surname first, followed by the given name. All translations from Chinese and Japanese are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

is hindered by Ch'ien-Nü's mother due to her conception of marriage based on fame, wealth and family status. Secondly, though in both works, Wong holds deep affection towards Ch'ien-Nü, there is a little difference: in the romance, Wong leaves Ch'ien-Nü with silent rage after having learned she would marry to another person; while in the play, Wong promises to go to the imperial capital for examinations so as to win the official title and to come back with fame and wealth, which can be regarded as qualified for him to marry Ch'ien-Nü. As can be seen from the comparison that in the play, Wong's devoted efforts for love and marriage also reflects his own attitude towards honor, fame and wealth. Thirdly, Ch'ien-Nü's thoughts in Yuan play is much more complicated than in the romance. Although in both texts, Ch'ien-Nü leaves her body to follow her love, yet in the play, her inner self reveals a much more anxious look. The reason behind her anxiety is her worry about Wong's infidelity after his successful entrance into the official circle. Thus Ch'ien-Nü's rich inner life has come to full play in Yuan play. Lastly, in the romance, Wong's reaction towards Ch'ien-Nü's soul is "full of delight and joy"<sup>6</sup>, while in the play, Wong maintains Ch'ien-Nü is to be blame for "wife marries in the sun, whereas concubine follows the man in secret", "who rushes behind him secretly is considered immoral"<sup>7</sup>, which highlights the difficult situation Ch'ien-Nü is in: she is not only under extreme pressure due to her mother's social-economic bias, but also is required to combat with the feudalistic thoughts from her true love. This modification also accelerates the dramatic pace and therefore reinforces the dramatic conflicts.

The soul image of Chang Ch'ien-Nü on stage is glowing with the unique light in her blissful beauty. *Hundan* (female ghost impersonation, female performers who specialize in portraying female character's soul in Chinese theatre), a distinct female role with specific design in aesthetic presentation, expresses herself with unique performance techniques in various facets, mainly in singing, acting, speaking and dancing. Therefore, *hundan* is unparalleled in all of the Chinese female role types. The stage direction in the second part (*zhezhi*) of *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* writes: "on stage, *zhengdan* (the leading female role) dresses up as her leaving soul"<sup>8</sup>. Albeit the two types of *dan* (*hundan* and *zhengdan*) appear to be different with each other, both are rather beautiful with delicacy, exquisiteness, elegance and grace. In Yuan playscripts, the most typical texts depicting *hundan* are the parallel use of AABB reduplication in four-character words "going with the wind stealthily, covertly and lightly in fear

<sup>6</sup> Lin Yutang: *China's Wisdom*, Wanjuan Publishing Company, Shenyang, 2013, p. 182.

<sup>7</sup> Jiang Lihua, (ed.): *Selected Yuan Plays*. Fudan University Press, Shanghai, 2013, p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 191.

of being caught by something horrific from the cosmos”<sup>9</sup> and the inserted ABB word-structure in symmetric lyrics formation “walking slowly in dimness and darkness, like flowing in swirling whirling gust of wind. Locked and buried in the mist and cloud, hurried off in the shape of soul or ghost”<sup>10</sup>, which naturally reveal the vivid and charming *menghun* images with great aesthetic value: no matter it’s Ch’ien-Nü or any other female souls, such as Dou’e, Li-niang and Hui-niang. To be more specific, a perfect depiction for Chien Nü’s (or her soul’s) character could be seen through the words written by the prestigious contemporary Chinese writer Siren: “Speechless, strong, and sad... With the flying joy and unforgettable shadows, that unwilling and untamed woman who insists on refusing to comply with anybody or anything -- even if you saw her hardness and strength, your utmost feeling for her can still be her loneliness and sadness -- that is, you’ve seen her weakness, but you would never believe she is in fact a weak person.”<sup>11</sup> This could be regarded as today’s interpretation for the meaningful connotation conveyed, embodied and expressed by those dreamy female images in traditional Chinese theatre.

Though highly conventionalized as Yuan play is, Noh drama uses techniques and methods more abstractive and ambiguous. Noh drama is “less narrative, sometimes even lack unity or wholeness; characters are not striking or vivid enough in a considerable amount of it; what it seeks for is not reflecting or representing the realistic life, but conveying the author’s subjective experience and creating the corresponding atmosphere”<sup>12</sup>. In *Lady Rokujō’s Ghost*, Aoi the gravely sick lady is metonymically represented by a costume lying in the middle of the stage. The sudden appearance of a female role interrupts the audience with her self-introductory soliloquy confessing herself as Lady Aoi’s rival in love -- Lady Rokujō, in this context, we may understand why she begins striking Lady Aoi (in fact the costume) with long-standing rancor and hatred. Kneading a few beads, Kaminoko the hermit addresses his prayers aloud. Then Lady Rokujō changes her mask of young lady into a demonic “Prajna mask”, showing the audience a hideous face with long horns on her head, which looks like a ferocious beast, while insists on striking Lady Aoi outrageously. If the spectators did not grasp the detail meaning of the plot, they would mistakenly believe that Lady

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Guan Hanqing: “*Dou’e Yuan*”, in: *The Volume of Chinese Classic Plays*. Juvenile & Children’s Publishing House, Beijing, 2005, p. 97.

<sup>11</sup> Siren: Self-preface to the anthology *Speechless, Strong and Sad*. Baihuazhou literature and art publishing house, Nanchang, 2019, pp. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Zheng Chuanyin: *Ancient Xiqu and Oriental Theatre*. Wuhan University Press, Wuhan, 2007, p. 133.

Rokujō's affection is horrific to the extreme, or misunderstand her jealousy as an underlying spectre at the innermost of human's dark side, which may turn into a ferocious monster. However, the unignorable fact is that Lady Rokujō has been enduring the humiliation and pains of both being tortured by lovesickness and having been abandoned by her true love. It is exactly the harm and insults from Prince Genji and Lady Aoi's servants that results in her violence. By means of mask change, Lady Rokujō in Noh drama not only tells the audience her identity but also represents her *menghun* image, in an extremely simplified or even conceptualized way, showing almost theatrical signs to the audience. Different from the beautiful and dreamy *menghun* images in Yuan play, "Prajna mask" in Noh drama shows the demonic image to the audience, reflecting the manipulated forceful power rooted in ancient Japanese feudalistic thoughts and religion notions which keeps on exterminating female's desire. Nonetheless, the spectators can still recognize the beauty of Lady Rokujō through the demonic "Prajna mask". Noh drama, with the help of mask-centred performance techniques, can always express itself in a rather concise way.

The Noh drama *Lady Rokujō's Ghost*<sup>13</sup> derives from *The Tale of Genji*, the utmost precious Japanese treasure as well as a peak in oriental literature, which is also of great significance in world literature. Murasaki Shikibu who composed this great novel had learned ancient Chinese poems from her father since her childhood. She was so familiar with ancient Chinese codes and records that she was not only an expert in Bai Juyi's poems, but also learned advanced knowledge of Buddhism Sutras. Before Shikibu composed *Lady Rokujō's Ghost*, there's no records of *menghun* in Japanese literature. Before *The Tale of Genji* appeared, people had been lacking true knowledge about spirit possession. The vivid depiction of Lady Rokujō's ghost actually was an innovation by the author Shikibu<sup>14</sup>. As is said by Lin Wenyue, the Chinese translator of *The Tale of Genji*, without Bai Juyi's *Changhen Ge* (*The Everlasting Regret*, or *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*), there will be no such great work as *The Tale of Genji*. So it was clear that the image of Lady Rokujō's ghost was composed under the direct influence of Chinese culture and literature.

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<sup>13</sup> The title of the Noh drama *Lady Rokujō's Ghost* (written between 1950 and 1955 by Yukio Mishima) is translated by the author of this essay to emphasize the importance of the ghost image, in other places it is translated as *The Lady Aoi*, for instance, in: *Five Modern Nō Plays*, trans. Donald Keene (1957; reprint, New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 143-171. *Aoi no Uye* was sung in 1956 as a Western-style opera.

<sup>14</sup> Zhang Longmei: "A Comparative Study of *Lihun* Phenomena (the phenomena of human's soul leaving the body) in Chinese and Japanese Literature", in: *Japanese Pedagogics and Research*, 1999, no. 2. pp. 52-56.

The ancient Chinese authors were rather good at achieving human's impossible wishes through creating *menghun* characters. For instance, in feudalistic times, ladies could not leave their parents and go out with their lovers, as is said by Wong Wenju, that "concubine follows the man in secret", "who rushes behind him secretly is considered immoral", but *menghun* character could achieve this love wish of the depressed persons. The ancient Japanese authors could also use *menghun* image to vent the frustration, indignation and anguish of the depressed persons. So from these we can see that using a *menghun* image which leaves the human's body to achieve people's intention is the common ground of Yuan zaju play and Noh drama. The different thing is that what *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* emphasizes is that *menghun* is born out of love, and love fights everything in the end. This not only has something to do with the tradition of Chinese *xiqu* (classic plays) of a happy ending, but also has reflected people's knowledge about the objective world and human's spiritual activities at that time. Records from *Jiao Te Xing* of *The Li Ki (Book of Rites)* have shown that "*hun qi* (the air of human's spirit) turns back to the heaven, while *xing po* (the psyche of human's body) comes back to the earth. Therefore the essence of rites consists in the definition of *yin* and *yang*". Once Zhu Xi had ever said: "For a living person, *hun* carries his or her *po*, *po* examines the *hun*. For a dead person, *hun* wanders around and returns to the heaven, *po* falls down and returns to the earth."<sup>15</sup> The ancient Chinese divided human's soul into *Yangqi hun* and *Yinqi po*. *Hun* is responsible for human's spirit and *po* is responsible for human's body. Human's life forms from the combination of *hun* and *po*. Death comes after the dispersion of *hun* and *po*. Due to the special quality of *hunpo* as a kind of *qi*, the dispersion happens not only at the point of death, but also at the moment when the living person's soul leaves the body due to a certain kind of strike. *Hunpo* is immortal. The end of human's life doesn't mean the vanishment of *hunpo* itself. The writing principles of *Zhi Guai* and *Zhi Yi* (strange stories), romance and playscript are all based on this theory.

### The Unique Charm of the Illusional World

Hegel wrote in *Aesthetics* that situations full of conflicts is particularly fit to be shown by theatre arts.<sup>16</sup> Dramatic conflict is believed by some researchers to be the essence of drama. It is not only the representation of the life flow,

<sup>15</sup> Zhu Xi: *Annotations to Elegies of Chu (Guo Shang)*, Yi Wen Press, Tai Wan, 1984, p. 59.

<sup>16</sup> Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich: *Aesthetics*. Vol. 1. The Commercial Press, Beijing, 1979, p. 260.

but also the result of writers' pondering over realistic life. Dramatic conflict plays a particularly important role in playwriting, which means a lot for theme deepening, plot expansion and characterization. The conflicts between human and soul in Yuan play *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* and Noh drama *Lady Rokujō's Ghost* actually are very unique in aesthetic quality. The conflicts between human and soul are human's eternal conflicts which reflect human's expression in the face of life and death, humane and inhumane. According to the ancient's understanding, it is because people's living environment has been alienated into inhuman, that the soul wanders around and returns to the heaven, and fails to calm down the *zhongfu* (central core) of the body. That's how people are forced to the edge of death by the living environment. While the loving couple Wong Wenju and Chang Ch'ien-Nü are forced to part by feudalistic etiquette and the concept of *mendi* (the opinion that a couple should be well-matched in a socioeconomic position), Chang Ch'ien-Nü is depressed into sickness and thus becomes a *menghun*. However, when Chang's *menghun* has experienced the hardships and pains to follow her beloved scholar Wong, she has only received his cold refusal which says: "as the old saying goes, wife marries in the sun, whereas concubine follows her man in secret. The senior lady has already approved our engagement, you should just wait for me back and get married with me, and let our marriage be perfectly justifiable. However, now you are rushing behind me here secretly, which is regarded as immoral by social conventions, why are you doing this?"<sup>17</sup>. Yuan zaju play master Cheng Kuang-tsou changed Wong's reaction towards Ch'ien-Nü's soul "full of delight and joy" in the romance, into Wong's lines of "as the old saying goes...", which reveals the brilliance of the writer to incisively describe the suffocating social environment which imprisons people's lives to the extreme. Chang Ch'ien-Nü has already become a soul due to her sincere love, but only to find herself rejected and ridiculed by her lover, which hurts her so much that she is later changed into a ghost. As for *Lady Rokujō's Ghost*, although Lady Rokujō is an imperial concubine, she is also threatened by her living environment. Even her simple wish of leaving off with her daughter could not be achieved. What's more, it's hard for her to avoid the disaster of her soul leaving her body. Nonetheless, in this way, Lady Rokujō under long-time depression has fully vented her resentment and indignation, which has also responded to the lyrics in Yuan play: "Nothing is softer than the stream water, nevertheless, it flows aloud on the uneven ground". *Menghun* character has achieved human's unachievable ideal: via flying across time and space, one can

<sup>17</sup> The second fold, *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body*. To Jiang Lihua (editor): *Selected Yuan Plays*, Fudan University Press, Shanghai, 2013, p. 192.

put aside the shackles of etiquette, persistently be attached to his or her ideal, or express his or her own willings; and by means of the conflicts between human and soul, or we may say, the confrontation between *menghun* and the environment, the writer has demonstrated the nonhuman world which human beings live in. In this world, the soul embodies human's essence of freedom, thus has become the emblem of ideal life. This mixed juxtaposition of real life and illusional *menghun* has demonstrated the unique and rich artistic charm of this kind of theatre.

*Menghun* theatre not only possesses unique aesthetic values in the facet of dramatic conflicts, but also glows with enduring artistic charm. Since these ancient *menghun* characters have experienced such longstanding stage history, what on earth are their aesthetic values? Prof. Tong Qingbing maintains that the values consist in human's collective consciousness: "The noumenon of art in essence is the primitive image. If the artist intends to grasp the spectral primitive images which perform actively in cosmos, he or she has to think beyond individual consciousness and entre the collective unconsciousness."<sup>18</sup> *Menghun* characters belong to those primitive images. Our ancients believe that dreams are mysterious; if people in dreams have gone across the world of the living and the world of the dead so as to speak to the dead persons, their souls must have left their own bodies. "If a person doesn't have dreams in sleep, his or her spirit must stay in a safe place. *Po* dominates *yin*, *hun* dominates *yang*. If neither of them is repressed low nor soar above high, they each have the capability to keep the soul in peace."<sup>19</sup> That is to say, the Chinese ancients believe that the dreaming phenomenon is the uneasy expression of people's *hunpo*. As long as we don't drive our spirit hard, we would not have dreams, so that our *po* will not fall down, and *hun* will not leave our bodies. Here what we speak of *meng* (dream) and *hun* (soul) as well as their relationship is a kind of "primitive images". As Carl Gustav Jung said, the primitive images, sometimes we also call them archetypes, are the psychological fragments of countless experiences of the same type. Each of them is a fragment of human's spirit and destiny, which has a little remnant of joy and sorrow repeated for numerous times in the history of our ancestors.<sup>20</sup> The primitive image, i.e. archetype, derives from the same type of experience repeated by human ancestors for countless times. It is in itself the outcome of human's psychological structure shaped on the basis of those experiences. *Meng* (the dream) and what the ancients

<sup>18</sup> Tong Qingbing: *The Literary Theory*. Higher Education Press, Beijing, 2000, p. 113.

<sup>19</sup> Liu Wendian: *The Collection of Huainan Honglie*. Zhonghua Book Company, Beijing, 1989, p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Jung, Carl Gustav: *Psychology and Literature*. SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, 1987, p. 84.

named *hun* (the soul) certainly belong to the “psychological fragments”, thus *meng* and *hun*, as the most significant content of the collective unconsciousness, are provided with the common content and behavior of everybody in every place, which also embody people’s most fundamental psychological patterns. That is to say, *menghun* characters have close connections with the primitive images. When *menghun* characters appear on stage, the collective unconsciousness accumulated in the depths of everyone’s mind will be activated. In other words, the *menghun* archetype remaining in everyone’s heart endows the *menghun* characters with the enduring artistic charm.

It should also be noted that, although the primitive *menghun* images belong to everyone’s collective consciousness, which may explain why both *The Soul of Ch’ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* and *Lady Rokujō’s Ghost* are *menghun* theatres, every nation may differ regarding the same primitive *menghun* images. Out of this reason, we have such differentiation between oriental theatre and occidental theatre. Albeit both belong to oriental theatre, Yuan zaju play and Noh drama come from different nations. The *menghun* in *The Soul of Ch’ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* finally obtains a true-love marriage that no one could get under the social conditions at that time, while the *menghun* in *Lady Rokujō’s Ghost* tears apart her own painful mind in front of the spectators. The two different *menghun* denouements exactly reflect two different collective consciousness in different nations. As Wang Guowei wrote in *Remarks on “A Dream of Red Mansions”*:

“The spirit of my people in my country, is in the mortal world, with an optimistic attitude. Therefore our Chinese theatre and romance which represent the spirit, all take in this optimistic color without any exception. The one beginning with the sorrowful, finally get a happy ending; the one beginning with the departed, finally get a united ending; and the one beginning with the difficult, finally get a prosperous ending.”<sup>21</sup>

This typical happy ending of Chinese classic theatre carries the collective unconsciousness of the Chinese people, implicitly coincides with the expectations of the audience, and presents the distinctive national characteristics of “decorating this world with ‘beauty’”<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, it has been sparkling on theatre stage with enduring glistening light and glory ever since. Japan is an island country in the Pacific Ocean. Its country land and natural resources are quite scarce. Because

<sup>21</sup> Wang Guowei: *Remarks on “A Dream of Red Mansions”*, in: *The Collection of Wang Guowei’s Academic Classics*, Jiangxi People’s Publishing House, Nanchang, 1997, p. 58.

<sup>22</sup> Lin Yutang: *My Country and My People*, Shaanxi Normal University General Publishing House Co. LTD, Xi’an, 2002, p. 80.

Japanese live at the seaside, they are good at sailing and have the courage to explore the mysteries from far-away places. They are used to taking in exotic things. The blood of marine culture is also surging in the psychological accumulation of oriental culture, thus the primitive images inevitably contain the elements which are closer to the west and distant from the east. The Noh drama *Lady Rokujō's Ghost* possesses the identical connotation with western tragedy, placing extra emphasis on demonstrating human's psychological pain and disillusionment, which coincides with the desolate and pathetic collective unconsciousness for life and death.

### **The Poetic and Fantastic Stage Arts**

Although both *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* and *Lady Rokujō's Ghost* belong to oriental theatre, they each have their own distinct stage performance conventionalizations. In its evolvement, Yuan zaju play has already given *hundān* (a female role particularly demonstrating *menghun* characters) an independent position, which dominates everything in performance conventionalizations, such as the singing arias, the dancing steps, the body movements as well as the dressing costumes, etc. Therefore, *hundān* has an artistic charm unmatched by others. *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body* is undoubtedly a masterpiece of *hundān* theatre (aka. *menghun* theatre).

The stage art effect of theatre is closely connected with the audience's aesthetic psychology and forms an interactive relationship. For *menghun* theatre, it should not only enable the audience to obtain emotional and moral aesthetic enjoyment in the performance, but also should bring beauty to the audience in stage design, such as stage action design and characters' costume design. The stage design of *menghun* theatre is often based on its own artistic qualities. In the mean while, it focuses on creating a fantastic atmosphere, so that the audience can obtain a sense of fantastic beauty. In *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body*, the stage action of Ch'ien-Nü's *menghun* in pursuit of her lover travelling afar over difficult terrain, is the playwright's design based on the mysterious color and unreal features of *menghun* as well as the aesthetic expectations of the audience, which differs much from other characters' action. If the performance action remains still without any changes, it's impossible to display the uniqueness of *menghun* character's quality, so is impossible to receive the aesthetic identification from the spectators. The biggest difference between *menghun* theatre and ghost theatre is that *menghun* will eventually return to her own body, that is to say, the final scene comes with *menghun* and its body appearing on the same stage. So here the stage design should mobilize various artistic elements in a systematic approach, such as stage action, characters' costume design, aria design and stage structure.

In *The Soul of Ch'ien-Nü Leaves Her Body*, the scene of Ch'ien-Nü's *menghun* returning to her body is depicted rather directly and vividly. For this purpose, the playwright broke through the traditional conventionalization in which only one *zhengdan* (the elegant leading female role) or one *zhengmo* (the protagonist, the leading male role) could sing a full set of singing arias in one *zhezi* (fold) of Yuan *zaju* play, and specially arranged two *dan* (female role) characters onstage: one is *hundun*, playing Ch'ien-Nü's *menghun*; the other is *zhengdan*, playing Ch'ien-Nü's body. In the former part, *zhengdan* acts only as a body without a soul, so she doesn't have to sing; only until her soul comes back to her body has she expressed her own feelings. During the performance, firstly, *hundun* sings the aria confiding the bitterness of her soul leaving her body, then as she tells her story, she acts out the plot of her soul returning to her body. When *hundun* enters her chamber, meeting *zhengdan*, she sings:

[*Huangzhong Gua Jinsuo* (Name of the fixed tune)] Unexpectedly I enter the yard, standing and walking unstably, stumbling and staggering all along my way. With a glimpse of the jewelry, uneasiness and anxiety overwhelms me. Young maids are over there, occupied with trivial things; embraced in their arms, lies a half-dead lady, eyes closed tightly, indulging so deep in sleep; everybody calls her up, but only to find zero response.

[epilogue] All of a sudden the soul returns to the body, with a lonely light sitting at the bedside. Soulless shaking, under the dim light, she could not catch a clear sight of the thin silhouette from the accompanying person.<sup>23</sup>

After *hundun*'s aria is finished, she gets off stage as the possessed spirit, leaving *zhengdan* onstage singing the tune of *Huangzhong*, so as to express her sadness of losing her soul. Having written the plot of *menghun* returning to her body with such a moving touch is rarely seen in traditional Chinese theatre. To compare with ghost theatre, *menghun* theatre has adopted more effective artistic techniques, so as to achieve the fantastic artistic effects much more fully, and to better satisfy the audience, and to shape the aesthetic objects with higher artistic value.

*Lady Rokujō's Ghost* is a representative work in Noh drama. The stage performance of Noh drama is highly conventionalized, which is even depicted as extremely mechanic by overseas spectators. Albeit also highly conventionalized, Yuan *zaju* play appears to be more vitalized due to its richer and more frequent stage actions with a larger range. However, in Noh drama, the situation is rather different.

<sup>23</sup> Jiang Lihua, (ed.): *Selected Yuan Plays*. Fudan University Press, Shanghai, 2013, p. 199.

After the actors get onstage, they stay at their own positions, some even remain still until the end of the whole drama. “The protagonist sits still at the centre of the stage, speaking or singing for quite a long time.”<sup>24</sup> There are also dances in Noh drama: “Most dances in Noh drama are like *Taiji*, with very slow move, slowly raising the arms, slowly turning the waist”, “the leading roles are like this, not to mention the supporting roles. Singers in the chorus sit seriously with prudence, and they can only wriggle together two or three times in an hour-long performance.”<sup>25</sup>

Researchers who have watched *Lady Rokujō's Ghost* describe the stage structure of Noh drama with a simple and plain style: “There is a roof above the protruding stage of about six square meters.”<sup>26</sup> Noh drama was originally performed in the open field, but now it’s moved into the indoor theatre. Thus this “roof under the roof” has become a kind of decoration. There is no ornament on the stage except for a pine painted on the “mirror plate” which is equivalent to the sky curtain. There is a long “bridge corridor” on the left side of the stage, and the three pine trees that are gradually decreasing in size are decorated on the side of the bridge corridor. At the end of the bridge corridor is the “mirror room”, where a five-color “curtain” is hung. The backstage of the “mirror room” and “music house” is the place where actors rest and brew their emotions, and it is also the place where the main actors’ “transformation” happens – where the soul leaves the body and becomes the *menghun* character.

Before Noh performance begins, the theater atmosphere is mysterious and silent. The music band comes onstage first. They are one flute player and three drummers: snare drum, bass drum, and taiko drum. Everyone puts their hands closely along the trouser seam, wears a “white foot bag”, and walks out with a “folded foot” where the sole of the foot does not leave the floor. The movement is extremely slow. At the same time, the small door on the right side of the stage opens. The chorus formed by eight persons come out, kneel down and sit on the ground seats to the right of the stage. Up till now, people onstage and offstage all hold their breaths. We can only hear clothes humming when people walk, which adds something more to the tranquility.

From the moment you walk into the Noh hall, you can feel the quietness and solemnity of the auditorium from the beginning to the end, and the atmosphere of silence and integration on and off the stage reflects the unique stage art effect of Noh. Japanese audiences experience the simplicity, elegance, sophistication

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<sup>24</sup> Weng Minhua: “An Investigation Report on Traditional Japanese Theatre Performance”, in: *Theatre Arts*. 1991. no. 1, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 51.

and subtle beauty of Noh with a sacred and solemn feeling. This is a unique aesthetic quality of Noh which is difficult for foreign audiences to understand and experience. Noh artists regard the life and death of *Youxuan* (mysterious and profound) as its philosophical proposition, and the primitive image of humanity's universal love for life makes it permeate a faint sorrow when celebrating the "death". Comparing *menghun* characters in Noh drama with the vivid and vitalized ones in Chinese *menghun* theatre, although we have seen the differences of different cultural traditions and different theatrical expressions, we can also "see and appreciate by heart" through the subtle expressions of motionless and prudent conventions, as oriental theatre, Noh drama's artistic connotation of *Youxuan* and elegance is revealed.

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# Iago's Recognition and Rehabilitation. A Post-Hegelian Perspective

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## Abstract

This article focuses on Shakespeare's play *Othello* in relation with different facets of Hegel's Recognition in order to offer a new perspective of understanding the iconic Shakespearean play. It analyzes the various ways the relations between the characters of the play are shaped and reshaped through the multiple processes of Recognition, Non-Recognition, respectively Mis-Recognition. It provides an innovative perspective on the characters of Iago and Othello, giving a coherent explanatory view on Iago, and rehabilitates this character, usually identified by both readers and critics with the 'villain' of the play.

## Keywords:

Shakespeare; *Othello*; Hegel; Theory of Recognition; Non-Recognition; Mis-Recognition.

## Rezumat

Articolul se concentrează asupra piesei *Othello* a lui Shakespeare în relație cu diferite fațete ale Recunoașterii lui Hegel pentru a oferi o nouă perspectivă de înțelegere a acestei piese iconice. Se vor analiza modalitățile diferite prin care relațiile dintre personajele piesei sunt formate și transformate prin multiple procese de Recunoaștere, Ne-Recunoaștere și Falsă Recunoaștere. Intenția articolului de față este de a propune o perspectivă inovatoare asupra personajelor Iago și Othello, oferind o viziune explicativă coerentă asupra lui Iago și reabilitând acest personaj care de obicei e considerat de cititori și critici ca fiind antagonistul piesei.

## Cuvinte cheie:

Shakespeare; *Othello*; Hegel; Teoria Recunoașterii; Ne-Recunoaștere; Falsă Recunoaștere.

*“The tale [Othello] is contagious in the sense that it creates a frustrated desire for coherence, one which can never be satisfied except by certain self-defeating acts of textual repression”.*(Christopher Norris: *Post-Structuralist Shakespeare*)

The basis of my interpretation of the Shakespearean play through the perspective of Recognition is the Hegelian theory of Recognition,<sup>1</sup> to which I will constantly refer to in my analysis. My intention to dislocate the traditional interpretations of this play is inspired by another text: Jessica Benjamin's article "*Recognition and Destruction*".<sup>2</sup> Following a Derridean model of thinking, I intend to deconstruct the dichotomized hierarchy which locates the character of "the villain" Iago in a peripheral position, while centralizing the "good" character of Othello.

The title of Benjamin's article already suggests the author's aim to sustain that Recognition goes together with Destruction, even if they are separate entities. Still, Recognition doesn't *mean* Destruction, but also it doesn't exclude it. I find this idea fundamentally appropriate for the relation between Iago and Othello in special, but also between Iago as an interrelated subject and the world in general. In order to apply Benjamin's theory about Destruction as the other of Recognition, after a short introductory view on Iago's character in relation with Othello, I will analyze how the process of Recognition between the characters takes or doesn't take place along the scenes of the play. The consistent body of analysis of this study will be divided in five subunits corresponding to each act. Afterwards, I will resume which is the relation between Recognition and categories of Race, Gender, Religion and Class, while referring to different critical texts which will be compared to the coherent system already obtained.

### 1. Introducing Iago

Iago's Non-Recognition is from the first place, pre-textual: Shakespeare himself did not Recognize the importance of this subversive character, naming the tragedy after the static and less intriguing character of Othello. Following Jessica Benjamin's model of naming her article "*Recognition and Destruction*", the play should have been named, at least, "Othello and Iago". Why "at least"? Because

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<sup>1</sup> Hegel, G. W. F.: "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage", in: G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. According to Hegel's famous theory, Recognition is a struggle of life and death between two subjects. One of the subject dies or loses his autonomy, becoming Slave / Recognizer to the other one, the Master. The Master does not receive Recognition either, because the Recognizer became a Slave, instead of an equal. Mutual Recognition can never be obtained.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin, Jessica: "Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Subjectivity", in: Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects - Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference*, Yale University Press, 1995, pp. 27-48.

Iago, not Othello, is the dynamic element of the play, the active principle, or, if we think about the Renaissance traditional symbol of the Three Graces, he is the Giving Grace, Activia, the energy giver.<sup>3</sup>

My first aim is to detect the Recognitions, Non-Recognitions and Mis-Recognitions present in the play, as it will be revealed by deconstructing the stereotypical interpretations of the characters, Othello being situated in the sphere of central and positive models,<sup>4</sup> while placing at the periphery of the morality (from a social/military perspective, but also from the perspective of Iago's becoming<sup>5</sup>) the '*malefic*' or '*villain*' character of Iago. I will present the peripheral character of Iago as being on one hand central and, on the other hand, not necessarily condemnable. There will be a different type of differentiation between the two characters, not a literally "black and white dichotomy", but a differentiation that does not put in light the tragic character of Othello as a model. Othello's literal blackness is not the ink which provides the writing of this text, or, to put it in Derridean terms, not Othello is the writer, the one who puts black(ness) on white. I want to prove that Othello deserves the emptiness of his initial, while Iago also deserves his 'I'. For me, Othello is just an *O*<sup>6</sup>, almost nothing, while Iago is

<sup>3</sup> Wind, Edgar: *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980.

<sup>4</sup> This is an example of the most classical / traditionalist interpretation of Othello's character: "Othello - The play's protagonist and hero. A Christian Moor and general of the armies of Venice, Othello is an eloquent and physically powerful figure, respected by all those around him. In spite of his elevated status, he is nevertheless easy prey to insecurities because of his age, his life as a soldier, and his race. He possesses a "free and open nature," which his ensign Iago uses to twist his love for his wife, Desdemona, into a powerful and destructive jealousy."(<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/othello/canalysis.html>)

<sup>5</sup> This "periphery" makes Iago an exception in the long series of Shakespeare's villains and, on the other hand, constitutes the exceptional modernity of the character. This is the story of someone that has an obscure job (an ensign/ancient), becomes lieutenant for a short time and then ends without getting anything. On a social scale Iago starts from periphery and ends in periphery, while Shakespeare's great villains start from a relative periphery (Richard III, Macbeth) to end as kings.

<sup>6</sup> Andrea Dworkin dedicates chapter 3 to the deconstruction of a pornographic novel entitled *Story of O*, by Pauline Reage. Dworkin's explanation for the heroine's initial O (initial that also gives the title of that novel) is: "she is woman, and to name her O, zero, emptiness, says it all. Her ideal state is one of complete passivity, nothingness, a submission so absolute that she transcends the human form (in becoming an owl.", p. 57. My view on Othello's character is very close to the one of "O, zero, emptiness", although he is male, and he should not be excused for his naivety / stupidity *via* a race complex. Dworkin, Andrea: *Woman Hating, A Radical Look at Sexuality*, E. P. Dutton, 1974.

the *I*, the writer of the story, which transforms the play into the negative of the traditional writing: it is not black on white, but white on black. Iago is the *I*, the subject, but his quality of being a subject is not Recognized.

The handkerchief is also central to my study. It represents the key-object, the scenic object of Recognition, and most important the “incarnation” of the ‘Gift of Death’. The handkerchief is on one hand the Writing, the *Ecriture* and, on the other hand, the ultimate proof of Recognition. Its embroidery / sewing is impossible to be reproduced by the hand of a human being (Diana). The way it goes from one hand to another and the irreversibility of this way are both relevant, and so are the consequences of its coming back into the hand it was before. Such returning challenges Death and its uniqueness. On the other hand the person who gets it also obtains the Other’s love and his / her Recognition through love: Desdemona initially has Othello’s full Recognition and love, and Emilia, Iago’s wife, also gives it to Iago altogether with her submissive affection and the Recognition of his marital authority (only that this is not the type of Recognition Iago is longing for). Iago had to take the Recognition by force, by stealing the handkerchief.

The final words of Iago announce the definitive sealing of the Secret: “Demand me nothing: what you know, you know, / From this time forth I never will speak word”.<sup>7</sup> The latter question of Lodovico “What, not to pray?”<sup>8</sup> does not get any answer. This absence/refusal of prayer demands the Recognition of this character’s irreligious and evil mind, in opposition with the Moor, Recognized as a good and well-adopted Christian.

But is Iago fully Non-Recognised by Shakespeare? No, if we take on who is the storyteller of the play. Shakespeare usually pays attention to such details: Hamlet, for example, asks Horatio to perpetuate the sad story of the play. If the play / story must remain veridical, then it demands an explanation about the way it was preserved. We are supposed to believe that “the truth” is revealed by the means of “a letter / Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo”<sup>9</sup>. But obviously Desdemona’s hopeless suitor could not know the relevant aspects of Iago’s strategy, including, by instance, the character’s monologues and the unpleasant reflections on Roderigo himself. The suitor could just enumerate a few facts that were more or less already known. If we connect these with the fact that actually Iago doesn’t die during the play, although it is told that he will be punished later, it’s easy to conclude that the whole play is Iago’s story. Still, Iago doesn’t unveil

<sup>7</sup> Shakespeare, William: *Othello*, in: *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, The Shakespeare Head Press Edition, Oxford, 1996, 5.2.309-10.

<sup>8</sup> *Othello*, 5.2.311.

<sup>9</sup> *Othello*, 5.2.315-6.

himself in order to get at least the audience's Recognition: he resumes to present his deeds and plans in an almost journalistic manner, without sharing his inner motivations.

Jessica Benjamin sustains that the loved and Recognized Other is always destroyed in imagination / phantasy, and that aggression and destruction represent a necessary moment of psychic life. In a symbolic space, paradoxically 'destruction' is not merely destructive, but on the contrary, it is creative and, in conclusion, the Destruction becomes the Other of Recognition, while Creativity itself is the Other of Aggression. I consider the character of Iago as a proof of Benjamin's thesis. In the next section I will analyze how the process of Recognition between the characters takes place along the scenes of the play, following step by step how Destruction interferes within the Process of Recognition between Iago and Othello.

## 2. Scrutinizing the play

In his article "*Reading Othello backwards*",<sup>10</sup> Jay L. Halio raises an important question: if Shakespeare had already the Moor's story (contained in Giraldi Cinthio's seventh novella of his *Hecatommithi*, Venice 1566), why did he add the first two acts, including two trials? The author demonstrates that these two acts invented by Shakespeare play a very important role for clarifying the characters, by including a standard of behavior and justice (of honesty) against which actions through acts 3-5 might be judged. In my view, the significance of the first two acts goes further than an ethical and moral judgment. As we will see in the following, the first acts show how Iago's striving for certain kind of Recognition did not include in the beginning any villainous murder plan. While scrutinizing each scene of the play in order to analyze how the Recognition is gained or lost by each of the characters, we will also see how an involuntary good advice transformed the play into a massacre in which, according to Francis X. Kuhn,<sup>11</sup> there are used eleven deadly weapons, eight armed confrontations, two domestic brutality scenes, the play being truly a sample of Elizabethan 'cold-blooded' violence, and in A.C. Bradley's view, it is the most painfully exciting of Shakespeare's works<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Halio, Jay L.: "*Reading Othello backwards*", in: *Othello – New Critical Essays*, Philip Colin (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Kuhn, Francis X.: "*My cue to fight – Stage Violence in Othello*", in: *Othello – New Critical Essays*, Philip Colin (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> A. C. Bradley, *Lecture V*, in: *Shakespearean Tragedy*, London: MacMillan and Co., 1919, p.177.

### 2.1. Act 1: Looking for a Significant Master

In the first scene of the play, Iago offers a lesson of how Recognition can be obtained by means of a persuasive argumentation. The first words of the play belong to Roderigo, who asks Iago to stop talking: “Tush, never tell me!”<sup>13</sup> These words are revealing that the character refuses to Recognize Iago, but also that he feels already tempted by the words the ensign told him before the play started. Obviously he will go on talking, orchestrating his arguments in order to transform the other still independent human being into his slave (in the Hegelian meaning of the word). Iago knows the hopeless suitor’s wishes and values and he gets use of these, faking that *he* Recognizes Roderigo: while telling the subjective story of how Othello deprived himself from the formal Recognition he actually deserved, Iago gains Roderigo’s sympathy.

The verbal and scenic tricks performed by Iago convert him into a director of many small plays within the play: “The structure of Othello develops in a series of improvised, undeclared playlets in which Iago organizes roles for his victims”, notices Anthony Brennan.<sup>14</sup> In the following I will show how important is each of Iago’s ‘playlets’ for the continuous dynamics of Recognition, which constitutes the whole play.

If we take a close look on the first of these “playlets” which is represented by the discussion Iago-Roderigo, we have to admit that the process of transforming the independent Self which Roderigo was supposed to be before meeting Iago is fascinating in itself: line by line, word by word we see how Roderigo loses his Selfness, becoming the ensign’s Slave and Recognizing him as his Master. What changes in Iago, what happens to Iago, when he gains so easily Roderigo’s complete Recognition and moral submission? Not much, because Roderigo is not a valuable Other for Iago, one whose Recognition was desired. Iago’s striving for Recognition addresses, as we already find out from this first scene of the play, to Othello, the one who refused to fulfill this infinite desire of Iago, and even worse than that, he actually Recognized Cassio, an Other perceived by Iago as being absolutely inferior to himself.

What kind of Recognition actually gave Othello to Cassio? On a military scale, Othello made Cassio his second in command, his first subordinate, his highest subordinate, if we can call him so. Othello Recognized Cassio the way the Master Recognizes the Slave, within the Hegelian model. And this is the kind

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<sup>13</sup> *Othello*, 1.1.2.

<sup>14</sup> Brennan, Anthony: “*Iago, the Strategist of Separation*”, in: *Shakespeare: Othello, a Selection of Critical Essays*, John Wain (ed.), London, 1994.

of Recognition Iago longs for. While being instantly Recognized as master in the relation with Roderigo, Iago needs and desires to be Recognized as Slave by Othello, as the “highest Slave” indeed, but still as a Slave. Actually Iago never claims Othello’s place, he never demands the full Master’s role: he asks to be Recognized by the Significant Master Othello seems to be for him. The role of the Slave of a Significant Master is preferable, for Iago, to the one of the Master of the Insignificant Slave Roderigo is for him.

Iago’s somehow paradoxical need for being Recognized as “the most valuable Slave” by “the most valuable Master” which is represented for him by Othello is, in my view, the starting point of the whole avalanche of strategies, acts and discourses culminated with the final catastrophes of the play. Iago found the special Other whose Recognition would have been able to provide him the self-consciousness, and he was ready to Recognize that special Other not just as a Consciousness, but as his Master. But, for mysterious reasons never mentioned in the play, Othello didn’t manage to see the movement done by Iago as a Consciousness and, as a consequence, wasn’t able to mirror Iago’s Recognition back, in a movement of reciprocity. The dialectical interaction didn’t take place, and this is why Iago, in the moment when the play begins, is looking for other ways of convincing and even forcing Othello to Recognize him as a Consciousness.

After transforming Rodrigo into his Slave, Iago witnesses how the same process is repeated at a smaller scale: Roderigo will face Brabantio, Desdemona’s father, and he will transform this Other into his Slave. If in the beginning of the discussion Brabantio is reluctant, fully rejecting Roderigo and refusing even the discussion, later on he will be persuaded by Roderigo in the same way Roderigo was by Iago in the very beginning. Iago is the spectator of the same play he just performed before, only that the roles changed: he was the leading actor and now he is the director, and his Slave Roderigo became the leading actor.

Does this mirroring satisfy Iago? No, because he didn’t want to be the director, the Master from the shadow. He didn’t need either Roderigo or Brabantio, who is even a more Insignificant Other than Roderigo, to Recognize him. He needed just one Significant Other to Recognize him as his “higher Slave”.

What signifies Othello for Iago? Othello is everything that Iago is not. Othello is everything Iago cannot be. Iago is aware of all these and that’s why he doesn’t demand Othello’s place. Even from the portrait *Via Negativa* made by Iago in the first scene we understand where he actually locates Othello in his consciousness: first, Othello is a Moor, while Iago isn’t and cannot be; second, Othello is a Captain, a Master, a Ruler, a natural born military commander, while Iago isn’t and doesn’t even claim that he would either deserve or desire to be; third, Othello

is a self-made Christian, a defendant of Christianity, while Iago is “formally” a Christian, he is born Christian, but all his deeds and words show that he doesn’t believe in the Christian religion; fourth, Othello is in love with his wife, and their marriage is based on a seemingly egalitarian and reciprocal Recognition, while Iago’s marriage is far from being like this, and so on.

In the second scene, Iago and Othello are shown together: Iago plays the role of the “good advisor”, letting Othello know about the fact that Brabantio is looking for him, with a precise purpose: to make Othello speak to him, trust him, Recognize him as his closest advisor. Othello has the feeling that he was helped by Iago’s warning, but actually he is wrong: Iago did not help him at all, and nothing could have happened if he wouldn’t warn Othello that Brabantio hunts him. The discussion is just “words, words, words”, it doesn’t change anything in terms of Recognition between the two. Brabantio’s outburst doesn’t also bring any change in the interpersonal relations of the play because the soldiers, who came to bring Othello in the Duke’s Council, interrupt it.

Before moving to the next scene, I would like to stop on the denominations that are attributed to the two characters that represent the center of our discussion. I find relevant how the formula of addressing already contains in itself information about how/if the character is Recognized, Mis-Recognized or Non-Recognized by the Other. Neither Othello, nor Iago are usually called by their proper names: while Othello is called (by the soldiers, by Brabantio, by Iago) “the Moor”, Iago is called by Othello “Ancient”. These denominations are relevant for the way the characters are remembered constantly who they are and that they couldn’t move on, they couldn’t evolve. Even if he became Christian and the defendant of Christianity, Othello remains for the Others “the Moor”, and his skin color will be Recognized before his deeds and values. Even if Iago wanted so much to become Othello’s lieutenant, he remains on a lower level on the hierarchic scale, and every time Othello addresses Iago like that, he reminds Iago how he failed in being Recognized, in convincing the Other to Recognize him.

In the third scene of the first act we are in the Council of Venice, witnessing Othello’s full Recognition as a warrior and, as a consequence, as Desdemona’s husband. The city desperately needs Othello in order to defend it by the Ottoman army and because of the political crisis Brabantio’s complain that the Moor seduced his daughter is Non-Recognized and dismissed. This scene is relevant for the kind of Recognition Othello gets from the authorities of the city: in war time he is seen as the Master, the city depends on him and for this reason his Race is put in brackets. Probably in a peacetime Othello would have gone to jail for seducing Desdemona, considering that Brabantio is an honorable wealthy

Venetian. The circumstances are on the Moor's side: he gets a double formal Recognition from the authorities, first as the commander of the army and second as the legal husband of Desdemona. The old father doesn't get any Recognition; even his presence passes unnoticed by the Duke of Venice ("I did not see you."<sup>15</sup>). This scene is important from a gender perspective: the woman is invited to testimony about her love and apparently her will is respected. Only that the authorities of Venice already know that Othello's will happily coincides with hers and for this reason, they accept it. The end of the first act just mimes the Recognition of Desdemona's agency and the woman as a subject. I can't stop myself from asking what would have happened if she said that she doesn't love Othello, what would the authorities have done then? But Desdemona had to say what she said in order to let the play continue.

The attitude of Othello towards Iago has radically changed after the Council scene: he addresses Iago differently ("Honest Iago" instead of "Ancient"), a way of addressing which already implies a kind of Recognition. More than that, he suddenly trusts Iago as much as he asks him to take care of Desdemona during his absence: "My Desdemona must I leave to thee: /I prithee, let thy wife attend on her: / And bring them after in the best advantage."(I, 2)

Actually at this point Iago almost got what he wanted: Othello Recognizes him as a "valuable Slave". He is the one who will take care of Desdemona, he is though the "higher Slave". But the human striving for Recognition is infinite, so Iago wants more: he wants the official Recognition, namely Cassio's job. At this point, Iago needs to convince himself that he must continue, and here comes the monologue about how much he hates Othello because he suspects him that once the Moor had an affair with his wife. It's unsurprisingly that many critics found that "reason" unconvincing:

"I hate the Moor:  
And it is thought abroad, that ,twixt my sheets  
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;  
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,  
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;  
The better shall my purpose work on him.  
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:  
To get his place and to plume up my will  
In double knavery." (I, 1)

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<sup>15</sup> *Othello*, 1.3.385.

Iago knows well at this point that he already got Iago's informal Recognition as his "beloved Slave". Still he aims for the formal Recognition, which is Cassio's place, and for this purpose he develops a plan, which will be described and then fulfilled step by step in the next acts. An important feature of Iago is that he doesn't devalue either Cassio (he admits that Cassio is a "proper man", implicitly Recognizing his moral qualities) or Othello (who is, according to Iago's description, "a free and open nature"). Still, this doesn't and cannot stop him from following his desire for being Recognized by Othello the way Cassio is. In other words, Iago's objective evaluation of both Cassio and Othello's moral qualities isn't stronger than his striving for Recognition: this desire is much stronger than his rightful judgment. It can be said that the only will that Iago cannot persuade and tame is his own.

## 2.2. Act II: Looking for a formal and non-temporary status

The second act shows Othello coming back from the battle in glory and he is publicly Recognized when the herald shouts on the streets of Cyprus: "Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!"<sup>16</sup> Meantime, Iago's urge for his Recognition coming from the general increases, so he exercises once more his persuasive powers on Roderigo, convincing him that Desdemona is in love with Cassio: this speech is nothing more than a rehearsal for Iago, who prepares the "real performance" for Othello. The only aim of the performer is to "make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me"<sup>17</sup> and the "reward" he aims for is the formal Recognition: Cassio's place.

The first step for Iago in achieving what he longs for is to free Cassio's title of lieutenant, purpose that he easily fulfills by manipulating him in the drunkenness scene; then, he has to make the second step: to take the free place. Iago accomplishes the first part of the plan while parodying Recognition of the lieutenant as his Master. While getting Cassio drunk, Iago performs the "kind Slave" for the lieutenant, and he even sings in order to entertain his "Master". The result is the duel masquerade that makes Cassio lose Othello's respect.

Iago is very much aware that he plays a role in order to obtain what he wants, actually he openly declares that "I play the villain", statement that implies that he actually *is not* a villain. Basically the whole traditionalist visions of Iago as the "villain" of the play can be questioned because of this statement. In the following, Iago realizes that he might have got out of the villain's role while giving the good

<sup>16</sup> *Othello*, 2.2.1126.

<sup>17</sup> *Othello*, 2.2.1109.

proper advice to Cassio – and actually this is the moment that generates the whole tragic death of Desdemona: Iago accidentally gave the good advice and he has to protect himself and his purpose from the possible follow-ups from it.

“Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,  
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find  
Soliciting his wife: ay, that’s the way  
Dull not device by coldness and delay.” (II, 2)

Before making the second step in order to achieve the special Recognition he longs for, Iago has to assure himself that the first step was properly done, by means of making Othello jealous on Cassio. And so, the whole tragedy generates from one accidental good advice.

### **2.3. Act III - When the Slave becomes a Master against his Will**

The third act shows Iago as being already the right hand of Othello, only that he did not get yet the formal Recognition of this quality and he is not sure how long this situation will last. When both Othello and Iago see Cassio leaving Desdemona after having a private conversation with her, Iago’s exclamation “Ha! I like not that”<sup>18</sup> doesn’t have to be the beginning of the theatrical performance he prepared for Othello in order to make him hate Cassio, but a sincere shout of despair caused by the fear of losing the Recognition he had longed for so much. Cassio either fights for regaining both his military position and his place in Othello’s heart, namely Othello’s Recognition: he declares to Desdemona that he is afraid that “I being absent and my place supplied,/ My general will forget my love and service”<sup>19</sup>. Is Cassio already aware that Iago is the one who “supplied” his place?

While witnessing the discussion between Othello and Desdemona, in which she pleads for Cassio’s forgiveness, Iago understands that the power balance in this couple inclines actually on Desdemona’s side: within the reciprocal Recognition between the two, the beloved master’s position seems to belong to Desdemona, who almost convinces Othello to absolve Cassio. Worried for the temporality of his status, Iago is in a rush to exercise his persuasive power on his Master, the way he did sooner on Roderigo and Cassio.

In this moment the whole hierarchy of Recognitions and the interpersonal dynamics of the play will change dramatically: step by step, Othello will lose not

<sup>18</sup> *Othello*, 3.3.1664.

<sup>19</sup> *Othello*, 3.3.1644-5.

only his faith in Desdemona, but also his only beloved Mistress/Master. At the same time, instead of the Significant Master he was longing for, Iago will get a Slave fully dependent on his words and judgments, an Insignificant Slave which Iago did not need, because he already had others: Roderigo, Cassio (for a while) and nonetheless his wife Emilia.

The second accident that calls for tragedy is that Emilia finds Desdemona's handkerchief and she gives it to Iago. As I already showed in the beginning of this study, the handkerchief represents the key-object of the play, being scenic object of Recognition, the illustration of how the chain of interpersonal dynamics of Recognition move from one Consciousness to another. Having a mythical and magical force, it symbolizes the power of love. The handkerchief is the ultimate proof of Recognition: the one who gives it to another Recognizes at a symbolic level his status of Significant Slave, a Slave by his/her own will, a Slave of love. Its way from one hand to another, the irreversibility of this way and the damaging consequences it provokes are relevant, illustrating at a theatrical level Jessica Benjamin's theory about love seen as destruction and destruction<sup>20</sup>. On the other hand the person who gets it also gets the love and the Other's Recognition through love: Desdemona initially gets Othello's full Recognition and love, and Emilia, Iago's wife, also gives it to Iago altogether with her submissive affection and the Recognition of his marital authority (only that this is not the type of Recognition Iago is longing for). Iago had to take Recognition by force, by stilling the handkerchief.

The last scene of Act III shows how the power balance between Iago and Othello reverses completely after just one discussion. If in the beginning Iago is the Significant Slave, the Loving Servant willing to please his Master, in the end of it, after waking up Othello's jealousy and suspicions, he will turn into the new Master, the one who gives the orders and directions for the future actions, as it follows:

“Though it be fit that Cassio have his place,  
 For sure, he fills it up with great ability,  
 Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,  
 You shall by that perceive him and his means:  
 Note, if your lady strain his entertainment  
 With any strong or vehement importunity;  
 Much will be seen in that. In the meantime,  
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears--  
 As worthy cause I have to fear I am--  
 And hold her free, I do beseech your honor.” (III, 1)

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<sup>20</sup> See Jessica Benjamin's “*Recognition and Destruction*” quoted at note 2.

This is the tone of a Master, not of a Slave: the demanding voice ordering concrete commands belongs to another sort of general than Othello was, a “general of the hearts”. What Othello is able to add to all these commands listed above is just a simple line: “Fear not my government”<sup>21</sup>, which does not infringe any of Iago’s anterior program of action, but vaguely reminds of the Master Othello was once. But Iago’s triumphant change of roles doesn’t last much: Desdemona comes to Othello and turns again into his Mistress/Master. It is a huge discrepancy between the public image of Othello – the one of the Commander, the Ruler, the courageous defendant of the city – and the private image offered by the third act of the play: he turned into a Slave oscillating between one Master and the other. For a moment Desdemona’s power is stronger than Iago’s and Othello turns to her, but meantime Iago was given by his wife the handkerchief Desdemona accidentally lost. Having on him this new and invincible weapon of persuasion, Iago affords to make a scene, playing (once more) the Significant Slave that was treated unjustly by his cruel Master:

“O grace! O heaven forgive me!  
 Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?  
 God be wi’ you; take mine office. O wretched fool.  
 That livest to make thine honesty a vice!  
 O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,  
 To be direct and honest is not safe.  
 I thank you for this profit; and from hence  
 I’ll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.”(III, 3)

After playing the faithful and unjustly humiliated Servant, Iago gives to Othello the story about how he saw the handkerchief in Cassio’s hand. The fact that the magic object is not anymore in Desdemona’s possession is a material proof that she did not deserve the position of a Significant Master for Othello: losing it, she had lost his Recognition as his Master/Mistress and she is perceived till now on as an Insignificant Slave – an Object, instead of a Subject, an Object which can be even killed in the real life, once killed in Othello’s consciousness. The perspective that she gave the handkerchief to Cassio means for Othello that she had chosen Cassio to be her Beloved Master.

The magic object of Recognition is, in the moment of the discussion, on Iago: having the handkerchief on him, Iago also regains Othello’s trust and Recognition – but this is not the kind of Recognition he was longing for. Once his faith in Desdemona is lost, Othello needs another Master, not the Significant

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<sup>21</sup> *Othello*, 3.3.1916.

Slave Iago wanted to be. Till now on, these interpersonal dynamics will not pass through a major change till the end of the play: a sum of unfortunate accidents (Othello meets Desdemona when she gets out of Cassio's house, and he also sees his handkerchief in the hand of Diana, Cassio's mistress) will make his new convictions and views stronger and the situation worse.

The gender relations in the other two couples present in the play - Iago-Emilia and Cassio-Diana are in conformity with the traditional patriarchal hierarchy, underlining the uniqueness of the initial relation between Desdemona and Othello. There is also a reciprocal Recognition in the traditional couples mentioned above, but the woman is always the more or less significant Slave (in the case of Iago-Emilia, the woman is treated explicitly as the Insignificant Slave).

#### **2.4. Act IV – As far as Recognition Gets**

The fourth act starts in the middle of a discussion between Iago and Othello, conversation that unveils from the first words how far did Iago manage to go with his powerful poisoning discourse in eroding Desdemona's image. Now Othello doesn't even protest against Iago's allusions to the physical contacts that were supposed to have taken place between Desdemona and Cassio, and he doesn't even ask for a proof of these speculations about the presupposed "kiss in private" of the two suspects, or, more than this, for how Desdemona presumably managed "to be naked with her friend in bed/ An hour or more, not meaning any harm" (IV, 1).

After getting to the revelatory idea of making Desdemona confess her guilt, Othello has a shock, falling into a sort of epileptic trance. He cannot distinguish anymore between the reality he sees and Iago's affirmations, which are taken from granted: while peeping at the discussion between Cassio and Bianca, Othello doesn't even notice that the woman he sees is not his wife and the laughter he hears is not Desdemona's laughter. The clearest proof that Othello is not even able to see anymore is that he doesn't even notice the handkerchief hold by Diana as his own one, his major proof for Desdemona's betray, and Iago has to tell him later on that it was his handkerchief. This statement, as we know, happens to be right, but basically Iago didn't actually need to use the real proof in order to convince Othello: in his estate of mind he would have believed any handkerchief he was shown by Iago as being his own.

Iago fully masters already the Slave Conscience of Othello. Even the detailed advice about how he should and how he shouldn't kill Desdemona will be followed without any diversion:

*Othello*: “Get me some poison, Iago; this night: I’ll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again: this night, Iago.”

Iago: “Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.” (IV, 1)

In the end of the day, Othello will transform Iago’s demand into a fact, as a completely subdued conscience. The Slave Othello transformed himself in doesn’t even demand the reciprocal Recognition coming from his Master he fully Recognizes. I consider this quick and full submissiveness of Othello’s conscience generates Iago’s violent strategies: if in the beginning Iago didn’t even think about killing anyone, right now he suddenly turns to be dependent on his Slave’s complete validation of his power: if Othello needs Iago’s “medicine”/“poison” he is addicted with, Iago is nonetheless addicted with to this new relation he had never dreamt about. He was looking for a Significant Master in Othello, and he found a Slave instead, a Slave that turns out to be Significant, in the end of the day: Othello fully gave up with the need to be Recognized; he gave up with his Self while totally Recognizing the Will of the Other. There is no clash between the two wills, but Iago is still interested in the game because he has the chance to experiment how far can his Will go, how much power to change destinies he has. The doctor poisoned himself by poisoning his patient.

The powers Iago has over his Slave’s Conscience would have been unimaginable in the beginning of the play: the whole second scene from the fourth act contains different proves of Othello’s dependence on Iago’s “medicine”, starting with the public humiliation of Desdemona to the private one (when her husband simply calls her a “whore” without explaining such denomination), and rejecting Emilia’s testimony he had asked for, just because this testimony doesn’t coincide with Iago’s.

### **2.5. Act V – When Destruction Becomes the Other of Recognition**

The last act starts the same way the first two acts of the play started: with a discussion between Othello and Roderigo, which generates a duel between Cassio and Roderigo, a duel planned and directed by Iago, who needs the lieutenant’s death in order to be sure that Cassio will not regain his position back ever. But Iago couldn’t calculate also the result of the duel, and the winner will not be the one he betted for: Roderigo fails to kill Cassio and as a result Iago kills him in order to not unveil the ensign’s implications in the fight. At the same time, Othello strangles his wife without managing to squeeze out from her the confession he was longing for: dying not guilty, she has nothing to confess.

In the end all the characters gather, the truth is revealed and, as a follow-up, when he is unmasked, Iago stabs his wife who confessed against him: he feels betrayed by his Slave Emilia, whose submission he thought to be unquestionable. Left without a Master, Othello kills himself, understanding that he lost the Loving Master/Mistress for good, and that the second Master whom he gave his obedience is not a Significant and Trustful one. More than that, he is left without any validation of his identity: by strangling his innocent wife he lost both his Christian identity and his public validation.

The thing Iago fails to understand is that once his deeds are perceived as immoral and unethical, he loses his quality of being a Significant Master for Emilia, who denounces him, for Othello, who hurts him, and for Roderigo who calls him “O damn’d Iago! O inhuman dog!” (V, 1) Even if he manages to make the distinction between good and evil, Iago’s struggle for Recognition goes far beyond the principles of good and evil. Why, while being already Recognized by “other Others”, did Iago need especially Othello’s Recognition? He needed that because, for Iago, Othello seemed to be the only Significant Master. Who wins and who loses in the play? The only truly ambiguous result concerns the character of Iago. Does Iago win? No, actually he doesn’t get what he desired: Othello doesn’t Recognize him as a Significant Slave, he doesn’t manage to kill Cassio and he doesn’t get the lieutenant place. But he doesn’t lose either: first, he is not killed in the play, and second, he does get a public Recognition – the one of the “villain”.

### 3. Recognition in Relation with Different Categories of Analysis

In the following I will resume the relations between Recognition and categories of Race, Gender, Religion and Class, the way they follow from the coherent system already obtained in section 2. We will also see which categories prevail, shadowing the others, and the way these categories are entangled and interdependent one upon the other within the construction of the text. The conclusions resulted will be compared to different critical readings of Othello.

**3.1. Recognition and Race.** Giving an interview, the stage director Kent Thompson,<sup>22</sup> the renowned Shakespearean director, while characterizing Iago’s chief drive as a “nihilistic envy, an evil trait” that destroyed the lives of all,

<sup>22</sup> Thompson, Kent: *Interview*, in: *Othello – New Critical Essays*, Philip Colin (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2002.

claims that “it wasn’t the interracial marriage that was sick”.<sup>23</sup> Jyotsna Singh<sup>24</sup> shows that Othello is honored for his military skills, but still marked as a ‘barbary horse’ or an ‘old black ram’ by the Venetian exponents of the racist European ideology. Singh questions Desdemona’s love for the real Othello: she actually fell in love with a character from his stories, not with him. In this case Desdemona’s Recognition of Othello can be also questioned as being actually Mis-Recognition.

The reciprocal Recognition between Desdemona and Othello, in which the woman is the Hegelian Master and the man the Hegelian Slave can be explained in two opposite ways: the first one is to consider race as having a major importance for Othello’s Self-Consciousness as inferior, the second is to attribute Othello’s quality of behaving as a “feminist” as the result from his respect for his mother and his particular (maybe matriarchal) family tradition. If presupposing that Othello does have a racial complex, and in this case Singh is right when claiming that “in this world, discourses of resistance to racism and sexism often work in opposition rather than in collaboration with one another [...] Desdemona, like Miranda, colludes in creating the ‘otherness’ of the black man”.<sup>25</sup> I do not consider this first interpretation wrong, but personally I prefer to not interpret Othello through a perspective that certifies a disjunction between Race and Gender. As a conclusion, I incline for the second interpretation instead of Singh’s, agreeing with Thompson’s words, “it wasn’t the interracial marriage that was sick”<sup>26</sup>.

**3.2. Recognition and Gender/Marriage.** The initial couple relation between Desdemona and Othello is, in my view, very different from gender relations in the other two couples present in the play - Iago-Emilia and Cassio-Diana - are in conformity with the traditional patriarchal hierarchy: the man is the Master, while the woman is always the more or less significant Slave, even if there is a mutual Recognition in the traditional couples mentioned above.

Critics don’t necessarily make this distinction between the couple Othello-Desdemona and the other couples presented in the play. As an example, Sara Munson Deads considers that Othello is an exponent of doctrine of absolute

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 450.

<sup>24</sup> Singh, Jyotsna: “*Contemporary African Rewritings of Othello*”, in: *Othello – Contemporary Critical Essays*, Lena Cowen Orlin (ed.), New York, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 185.

<sup>26</sup> Thompson, 442.

patriarchal power<sup>27</sup>, while Desdemona is not treated in a different way than Emilia. Due to the doctrine of obedience, Desdemona dies defenseless. David Bevington<sup>28</sup> is less critical about this marriage, underlining the major importance of the masculine anxieties: he shows that Othello is dependent from Desdemona, he loves himself because she loves him. Going further, Bevington considers that both Othello and Iago instable because they lose control over their women, and in the end Othello kills his wife because she is the image of his own insufficiency as a man. Othello's deep anxiety might come from his mother and the way she subdued his father, and the same male anxiety makes Cassio categorize women into saints and whores.

I consider that the gender and marriage relation between Othello and Desdemona is very different from the other gender relations because in it the gender issue is intertwined with race, religion and class/social status issue. Each category depends on the others, but the result seems to be fully equilibrated, till Iago comes on stage.

### 3.3. Recognition and Religion

“Handkerchief--confessions--handkerchief!--To  
confess, and be hanged for his labour;--first, to be  
hanged, and then to confess.--I tremble at it.  
Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing  
passion without some instruction. It is not words  
that shake me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips.  
Is't possible?--Confess--handkerchief!--O devil!—“(IV, 1)

The confession scene shows how important are for Othello the Christian values. In the beginning of the play Othello is after a long process of Self-transformation from a “barbarian” to a “Christian”. Virginia Mason Vaughn<sup>29</sup> shows that by Shakespeare's day ‘the Turk’ represented all that was barbaric and demonic, in contrast to the Christian's civil and moral rightness”. If in the beginning of the play Iago became, from a ‘natural born Turk’, a ‘self-made Christian’, when he strangles Desdemona, he does the irreversible step back. He only solution of

<sup>27</sup> Deads, Sara Munson: “*Truly, an obedient lady*”: *Desdemona, Emilia, and the Doctrine Obedience*, in Othello, in: *Othello – New Critical Essays*, Philip Colin (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2002.

<sup>28</sup> Bevington, David: “*Othello: Portrait of a Marriage*”, in: *Othello – New Critical Essays*, Philip Colin (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2002.

<sup>29</sup> Vaughn, Virginia Mason: *Othello - a Contextual History*, Cambridge 1994, p. 13.

getting rid of ‘the Turk’ awoken in him is to commit suicide, but even though, Othello will never become a Christian again.

The categories of Race, Class and Religion are very much connected in the character of Othello: Class – meaning in his case military status – and Religion manage to shadow altogether the Race (and its stereotypical negative connotations). By crime (of killing a white woman), Othello loses both class and religion privileges, being reduced and although self-reducing himself to a ‘Turk’, a ‘barbarian’, a ‘non-Christian’.

**3.4. Recognition and Class.** Brian Reynolds and Joseph Fitzpatrick show how Iago paradoxically opposes *and* reifies Venetian State Ideology<sup>30</sup>. He is against the State, when the State gives the military authority to a black man, but in the end of the play he will help the State, getting rid of a mentally disturbed commander.

In the beginning we see how Othello becomes the leader of Christendom: a non-European has an authoritative position in the Venetian army. His social position is practically unquestionable, being far stronger than the race prejudices of the time and, as a consequence, he is allowed to marry Desdemona against her father’s will.

As we saw already, what Iago aims is actually a class confirmation, a formal Recognition, a raise in the military hierarchy. It could be concluded that the class ascension is the core of Iago’s actions. Iago never affirms that he has some special personal merits, and he also Recognizes the qualities of both Othello and Cassio. As Reynolds and Fitzpatrick notice, there is no evidence in the play that Iago passed over for the promotion or that he was even considered for it. Iago just wants the promotion, he longs for that official Recognition of being Othello’s lieutenant. The class Recognition, the thing Othello got from the very beginning, is the only aspiration of Iago. Ironically, he will never get it.

### Conclusion

Jessica Benjamin’s article from which this study emerged sustains that Recognition goes together with Destruction, even if they are separate entities: even if Recognition doesn’t mean Destruction, it also doesn’t exclude the Destruction. I found this idea being reflected theatrically by the complex scenic relation between Iago and Othello. Benjamin shows that the loved and Recognized

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<sup>30</sup> Reynolds, Brian and Joseph Fitzpatrick: *Venetian Ideology and Transversal Power – Iago’s Motives and Means by which Othello Falls*, in: *Othello – New Critical Essays*, Philip Colin (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2002.

Other is always destroyed in imagination / phantasy, and that aggression and destruction represent a necessary moment of psychic life. In a symbolic space, paradoxically ‘destruction’ is not merely destructive, but on the contrary, it is creative and, in conclusion, the Destruction becomes the Other of Recognition, while Creativity itself becomes the Other of Aggression. This is an appropriate description of Iago’s actions, only that he cannot stop at the symbolical level, destroying his Other also in reality. Still, drama is in itself a symbolic site, and this is an additional reason why I consider the dramatic character of Iago as being an incarnation of Benjamin’s thesis.

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# Perception and Appearance in Thomas Bernhard's *Immanuel Kant*

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## Abstract

The present paper approaches Thomas Bernhard's *Immanuel Kant* from the perspective of the relationship between perceptions and appearances. Starting from the model of the German philosopher Kant, the paradigms in which the Bernhardian character functions in the play are analyzed. The analysis places in juxtaposition the characters Kant and Hamlet in an attempt to suggest a different interpretation of the final scene of the play. At the same time, the paper includes some directorial ideas inspired by Bernhard's play.

**Keywords:** Thomas Bernhard; Immanuel Kant; Hamlet; appearance; perception.

## Rezumat

Această lucrare abordează piesa de teatru *Immanuel Kant* de Thomas Bernhard din perspectiva jocului dintre percepții și aparențe. Pornind de la modelul filozofului german sunt analizate paradigmele în care personajul bernhardian funcționează în piesa de teatru. Analiza propune o comparație între personajul Kant și personajul shakespearian Hamlet pentru a oferi o nouă posibilitate de interpretare a modului în care se încheie piesa. În lucrarea de față sunt cuprinse și câteva idei regizorale inspirate de textul supus analizei.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Thomas Bernhard; Immanuel Kant; Hamlet; aparență; percepție.

## Documentation for putting on stage the play *Immanuel Kant* by Thomas Bernhard

There is the opinion that "... Bernhard [...] was not a philosopher and did not write his [...] plays according to any set of philosophical precepts"<sup>1</sup>. However, his dramatic texts cannot be put on stage according to our first impression often produced by a superficial reading, or relying on the quality of his writing to stir

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<sup>1</sup> Dowden, Stephen D.: *Understanding Thomas Bernhard*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1991, p. xiii.

hilarity, for Bernhard “... was unquestionably a well-read and thoughtful man”<sup>2</sup>. He inserted, on different levels of reading, numerous cultural references and discussed many philosophical precepts. The limited space of this paper does not enable an exhaustive illustration. Nonetheless, in this regard, our main objective is to arouse the interest for a rigorous analysis of Thomas Bernhard’s play: *Immanuel Kant*.

In this play, Kant (1724-1804), the exemplary philosopher of modernity, travels from Europe to America on a passenger ship. The captain provides us with the information that his ship is named *Pretoria*<sup>3</sup>. *A ship with this name, built in 1897 at Voss K. G. Hamburg, initially used by the shipping company Hamburg Amerikanische Pakerfahrt Aktien Gesellschaft<sup>4</sup> and, after the First World War, taken over by the United States Shipping Board, was ceded to the Ellerman Line in the United Kingdom. It is well known that Immanuel Kant never left the surroundings of the city of Königsberg. More than that. It would have been impossible for him to embark on a steamer – Pretoria was a steamship – as he died in 1804.*

*At a brief retrospective, we identify the data necessary for interpreting the temporal coordinate of the dramatic text. Heron of Alexandria, in the first century of our era, created the first steam engine: aeolipile<sup>5</sup>. The first self-propelled vehicle was invented by Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot in 1769<sup>6</sup>. The first steam locomotive was built by Richard Trevithick in 1804<sup>7</sup>. Robert Fulton was credited with the invention of the first steam-powered vessel (1807) though the work of several inventors contributed to this achievement. The first steamship to cross the Atlantic in 1838<sup>8</sup> is *Sirius*, built in 1837. After the contribution of Josef Ressel, the inventor of the screw propeller, and that of Isambard Kingdom Brunel who built in 1838*

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: *Immanuel Kant*, traducere și postfață de Eleonora Ringler Pascu, prefață Daniela Magiaru, Brumar, Timișoara, 2013, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.navsource.org/archives/12/179998.htm>, [accesed: 11.02.2019].

<sup>5</sup> Papadopoulos, Evangelos: *Heron of Alexandria in Distinguished Figures in Mechanism and Machine Science – Their Contribution and Legacies – part I*, Editor Marco Ceccarelli, Springer, Dordrecht, 2007, p. 217.

<sup>6</sup> Lienhard, John H.: *The Engines of Our Ingenuity – An Engineer Looks at Technology and Culture*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 95.

<sup>8</sup> Chadwick, F. E.; John H. Gould; J. D. J. Kelley; William H. Rideing; Ridgely Hunt; A. E. Seaton: *Ocean Steamships – A Popular Account of Their Construction, Development, Management and Appliances*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1891, p. 72.

“... the first steam-ship which made regular voyages across the Atlantic...”<sup>9</sup> and in 1843 “... the first large iron steam-ship...”<sup>10</sup>, and after Cunard Line operated a passenger service between Europe and America, we can talk about the transatlantic passenger transport on a regularly scheduled basis.

Immanuel Kant did not embark on a transatlantic ship, but the character of Kant does. In this respect, Thomas Bernhard places the action in an apparently unhistorical space, in fact, in a conceptual space, annihilating any attempt of a realistic-psychological reading.

What if, thinking in Stanislavskian paradigm, we take a look at the lists of ships’ passengers<sup>11</sup> who crossed the Atlantic Ocean between 1844 and 1956? We can identify 513 people with the surname Kant. We even find out that in 1952 one of the passengers’ name was Emanuel Kant<sup>12</sup>. Could Bernhard inspire from this reality?

All the same, what is possible to be acknowledged is the fact that it does not seem entirely unimaginable that a person with a surname similar to that of the philosopher crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the twentieth century. That way, we plunge in the territory of the possibility and not of the reality as such. The attempt to integrate into a rationally valid context, which can be acknowledged as possible, information that seem to certify the improbability appears to be the basis on which Thomas Bernhard builds his comic mechanism in his play *Immanuel Kant*.

At the same time, the presence of dystopian echoes may be identified in this play. Dystopia can be understood as the opposite of a utopia, or, rather, the result of the utopia put into practice. The fundamental aspect of dystopia consists in the way in which a political authority deforms reality and imposes arbitrary criteria of behaviour to a population.

Is Kant’s character an authority? Kant is an authority in philosophy. But does the philosopher intervene in and change social reality? Is he a political authority? Or is he one that contemplates reality? Contemplate to understand reality. Does he create a different reality through contemplation?

Taking into consideration that Pythagoras, “... the first who called himself a philosopher...”<sup>13</sup>, was somehow involved in the government of Croton, which

<sup>9</sup> Brunel, Isambard: *Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Civil Engineer*, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1870, p. 231.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 232.

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/passenger-result>, [accessed 11.02.2019].

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> Iamblichus’: *Life of Pythagoras or Pythagoreic Life*, translated by Thomas Taylor, J. M. Watkins, London, 1818, p. 28.

led to the conflict with Cylon<sup>14</sup>, it becomes noticeable that the philosopher, from the beginning of philosophy, does not limit to the description of the truth of the social reality, but, through his writings, intervenes in the social reality. The same characteristic is identifiable in the writings of Immanuel Kant who even exclaims: "... this age is the age of enlightenment or the century of Frederick"<sup>15</sup>? Evidently, the philosopher referred to Frederick II, King of Prussia between 1740-1786.

Thomas Bernhard seems to exploit a dramaturgical device that can be described as a *congruent nominal allusion* by which the characters have names that make reference to contexts in which the dramatic action receives meanings different from the concrete narrative context. For example, the character Kant's parrot is called Friedrich.

Another example is "His servant Martin Lampe, who worked for him [Kant] from at least 1762 until 1802..."<sup>16</sup>, who, in the play, is given the name Ernst Ludwig, possibly referring to the expressionist painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, the founder of the "Die Brücke" movement whose name is derived from the Nietzschean expression: "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal..."<sup>17</sup>. This is not to say that the Bernhardian character is an emulation of the famous painter, but rather that Bernhard wrote his play alluding also to the second part of the Nietzschean phrase: "... what is lovable in man is that he is an *over-going* and a *down-going*"<sup>18</sup>. The name Lampe seems not to be completely ignored as in the play there is an allusion to the *Lantern Festival*<sup>19</sup>, *Saint Martin's feast day celebrated on November 11. On the other hand, the allusion may be to the 4th of July, the St. Martin's day in summer, which coincides with the United States of America's Independence Day. And the examples may continue.*

*In all probability this dramaturgical device also emphasizes the precarious character of the philosopher's endeavour to communicate the results of his contemplation. Can he communicate his philosophical theories without imposing*

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<sup>14</sup> Fideler, David R. (edited by): *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library – An anthology of Ancient Writings...*, introduced and edited by David R. Fideler, translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, Grand Rapids, 1988, passim.

<sup>15</sup> Kant, Immanuel: *Practical Philosophy*, translated and Edited by Mary J. Gregor, introduction by Allen Wood, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1999, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Kuehn, Manfred: *Kant – A Biography*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002, p. 222.

<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common, introduction by Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, The Modern Library, New York, 1917, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, pp. 82, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116.

*his own perspective? There is an insurmountable distance between subjectivity and objectivity from the point of view of psychologization. It seems that the self stays in itself. In this respect, it can be considered that: "The Kantian formulation [Ding an sich] stakes out a world about which the philosopher can say that it is known to exist, but about which nothing meaningful can be said"*<sup>20</sup>. Kant's lines, in Bernhard's play, sometimes seem to correspond to the assertion stated above.

But what if the philosopher, by definition, reaches the incommunicable? Is the awareness of the incommunicable, ultimately, the reason of his philosophy? Nonetheless, the incommunicable appears to be the result of the finite and relative state of existence of the human being who does not have the capacity of engaging, neither individually nor in a group, precisely because of his/its limits, in a communication of everything about everything.

From this perspective, we may notice points of contact between Thomas Bernhard and Eugène Ionesco who remarks: "A work of art is the expression of an incommunicable reality that one tries to communicate – and which sometimes can be communicated"<sup>21</sup>. In this case, we may refer to the Kantian writings, as to works of art, to which the Bernhardian character makes frequent references, such as, for example: *New Estimation of Living Forces*<sup>22</sup> which refers to *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces (...)*, writing in which Kant defines the concept of *world, or eccentricity of the planets*<sup>23</sup> referring to the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens (...)*. The difference from Ionesco's assertion is that the incommunicable cannot be communicated through language. Are there things that cannot be uttered because of the limits of the human language? Is contemplation subjective by definition? Kenneth Tynan answers Ionesco, drawing attention to the ideological aspect, as follows: "You may wonder why M. Ionesco is so keen on this phantom notion of art as a world of its own, answerable to none but its own laws"<sup>24</sup>. In this regard, do we have to choose between ideology and phantom / phantasm?

In Bernhard's play there are important references to the idea of *phantom*. The philosopher Kant investigated, with a critical eye, this idea in his work *Dreams*

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<sup>20</sup> Thier, Allen: *Revels in Madness – Insanity in Medicine and Literature*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2002, p. 170.

<sup>21</sup> Ionesco, Eugène: *A Reply to Kenneth Tynan: The Playwright's Role*, in: *Drama in the Modern World: Plays and Essays*, edited by Samuel A. Weiss, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, 1964, p. 484.

<sup>22</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 16, 24, 26, 31 and 94.

<sup>24</sup> Tynan, Kenneth: *Ionesco and the Phantom*, in: *Drama in the Modern World: Plays and Essays*, edited by Samuel A. Weiss, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, 1964, p. 485.

of a *Spirit-Seer*. We may notice here a subtle irony of Bernhard. Does the contemplation of philosophical ideas resemble the ability of seeing phantoms? Can the philosopher's realm of contemplation be defined as: "The land of shadows [which] is the paradise of dreamers"<sup>25</sup>? Is it possible to remark that the playwright conceived a play about a Kantian apparition that haunts the world's seas? In a machine-haunted world, the character of Kant appears to be more than a "... human being, who is now more than a machine..."<sup>26</sup>.

Another aspect of the incommunicability possibly to be noticed in Bernhard's play derives from the first aspect under discussion. Kant wrote in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "All our cognition starts from the senses, goes from there to the understanding, and ends with reason..."<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, can reason, once deduced, be transmitted to the other without being altered by the mediation of language? Can the Aristotelian essence (οὐσία), once sensed, understood and reasoned be transmitted in the same way it has been sensed, understood and reasoned? Does Plato's form / idea, ἰδεῖν, regard the capacity of the thing to be seen? Or the capacity of the one who sees to see it? Or both?

Plato says about form: "... not only is the form itself entitled to its own name for all time; but there's something else too, which is not the same as the form, but which, whenever it exists, always has the character of that form"<sup>28</sup>. Is there *something else* regarding the form that has *the character of that form*? When we transmit our understanding of the form, that *something else* than the form is also transmitted? Or only the understanding of the form? Or both of them at the same time? Or, in fact, none? And actually we cannot transmit, but only signal the existence of this form as it is accompanied by *something else that has the same character of the form* without being the form itself?

Aristotle observes: "... there must be something besides the concrete thing..."<sup>29</sup>. In this respect, is there, for us, something beyond the concrete? Or is this the burden

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<sup>25</sup> Kant, Immanuel: *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer illustrated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, translated by Emanuel F. Goerwitz, edited and introduction by Frank Sewall, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1900, p. 37.

<sup>26</sup> Kant, Immanuel: 1999, p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of pure reason*, translated and Edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 387.

<sup>28</sup> Plato: *Phaedo*, translated with Notes by David Gallop, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, translated by W. D. Ross, The University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 2015, at <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/metaphysics/book4.html>, [accessed: 07.14.2019].

of free will? Should this be the sense of the Leibnizian question: “Why is there something rather than nothing”<sup>30</sup>? Kant sees this idea in terms of consciousness: “... the consciousness of my own existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me”<sup>31</sup>. Do Leibniz and Kant refer to the fact that *outside me*, the contemplator, there must be something rather than nothing? Is there something outside me? Or is it the fruit of my imagination? Does Leibniz draw the conclusion that it exists? Does Kant seem to understand that we cannot become aware of our existence if we do not differentiate ourselves from what is outside us?

Perhaps Kant trying to solve this conceptual problem searched for a way out of the paradigm of subjectivity by introducing the concept of *Schema*. “The schema is in itself always only a product of imagination; [...] the schema is to be distinguished from an image”<sup>32</sup>. Recently, the concept of *Schema* has been questioned: “Like some others commentators, I find the Schematism especially opaque...”<sup>33</sup>. However, Umberto Eco, on Kant’s idea, “The transcendental schema is a product of the imagination”<sup>34</sup>, notes: “Imagination is the capacity to represent an object even without its being present in the intuition (it is ‘reproductive’ in the sense that we have called to imagine), or it is *synthetis speciosa*, productive imagination of a species, figure”<sup>35</sup>. Eco’s statement seems to take into account the two aspects of the image: the image can be perceived through senses and the image can be thought to be conceived.

We see and imagine. On the one hand, we observe the object in reality, on the other hand, we can bring into reality, by engineering, new objects. We not only perceive an image, but also create it. In this respect, Eco stated: “Kant would have liquidated the problem of perception by stating that knowledge hinges on propositions and not objects”<sup>36</sup>.

Bernhard seems to have noticed the Achilles’ heel in the different images created around the philosopher Kant. If “For Leibniz, incommunicability

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<sup>30</sup> Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm: *The Principles of Nature and of Grace*, in: *The philosophical works of Leibniz...*, translated with notes by George Martin Duncan, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, New Haven, 1890, p. 213.

<sup>31</sup> Kant, Immanuel: 2000, p. 327.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 273.

<sup>33</sup> Dicker, Georges: *Kant’s Theory of Knowledge – An Analytical Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004, p. viii

<sup>34</sup> Eco, Umberto: *Kant and the Platypus – Essay on Language and Cognition*, translated by Alistair McEwen, Harcourt, Orlando Fl., 2000, p. 81.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 70.

is fundamental...<sup>37</sup>, as regards Kant, the character of Bernhard's play, incommunicability derives not only from the philosopher's incapacity to transmit knowledge, but also from the fact that perceptions can be vitiated, either by altering the senses or by deliberately deceiving the content of communication.

### **Between *to be* and *to seem***

When we refer to the alteration of senses, on the one hand, we have in view the *extreme* forms generated by physiological causes and, on the other hand, the *light* forms resulted from each individual's personal history. What exists cannot be recognized as such due to the fact that the senses are altered. What seems to be and not what is as such becomes the only reality of the perceiver. The relationship between *to be* and *to seem* was commented by a philosopher in reference to a playwright (as not only playwrights have referred to philosophers in their creations), a playwright for whom this relationship is essential in his dramaturgy. Plato, in his comment: "That will teach him how much better it is to seem virtuous than to be so. In fact those lines of Aeschylus I quoted are more fitly applies to the unjust man, who, they say, is a realist and does not live for appearances: 'he would be, not seem' unjust..."<sup>38</sup>, refers to the following line: "... for his will is not to seem the bravest, but to be..."<sup>39</sup>. If in the case of a virtuous individual it is more important to be than to seem, in the case of an unjust individual it is more important to seem virtuous than to be.

Aeschylus approaches this idea in another of his plays: "... since 'tis of the highest advantage for one that is wise not to seem to be wise"<sup>40</sup>. Not to seem wise when one is wise probably also highlights the idea that the wise man does not create false impressions to accomplish certain objectives concealed behind his discourse or actions. However, the reality perceived is according to each perceiver's consciousness. The relationship between perception and appearance looks like a perpetual play in constant move and change.

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<sup>37</sup> Vezeanu, Ion: *Leibnitz – comunicare, limbaj și cunoaștere*, in Revista de filosofie, nr. 4/2016, București, 2016, p. 387, original text în Romanian: „Pentru Leibnitz, incomunicabilitatea este fundamentală...”, [our translation into English]

<sup>38</sup> Plato: *The Republic*, translation with introduction and notes by Francis Macdonald Cornford, Oxford, New York, University Press, 1970, p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> Aeschylus: *Seven Against Thebes*, introduction, critical notes, commentary, translation By T. G. Tucker, University Press, Cambridge, 1908, p. 121.

<sup>40</sup> Aeschylus: *Prometheus Chained*, in *The Tragedies of Aeschylus*, translated, notes and introduction by Theodore Alois Buckley, Henry G Bohn, London, 1849, p. 13.

In another version, Aeschylus's line translated, "To wear one's wisdom with a cloak is best"<sup>41</sup> implies the idea of dissimulation which, in fact, is a *concealment*. In Plato's case we deal with an *addition* while in Aeschylus' case with a *diminution*. In this respect, the appearance does not function only as a symbol of something, but also as part of something. Undeniably the moment of the intentional falsification of perceptions is much more complex than the situation we have described above in order to draw attention to the fact that not only something which is added but also something which is omitted from a context can signal the presence of a simulated reality.

The complexity of this phenomenon appears to be masterfully revealed in one of the character Kant's lines<sup>42</sup>. In this case, the alteration of perceptions may be generated not only by perceptive dysfunctions, but by the very fact that the idea, that generates the will to perceive, to experience reality through senses according to an expectation horizon, rejects any possibility of experiencing what is beyond this horizon. As a consequence, we do not see but what we want and we can see?

There are probably three steps in the process of altering the perception: the first step, to add, the second step, to diminish, and the third, to limit. As might be expected, what is added is not identical to what is diminished. Does this *modus operandi* resemble the technique of montage? "The montage is, in fact, the technique exploited in making a performance specific to the second half of the twentieth century"<sup>43</sup>, the period in which Bernhard lived and created. Can we consider the perceptive alteration similar to a montage technique applied to reality? Are the film of reality and reality as such the same?

According to these steps the consciousness isolates itself and the perception proves useless. This is the context in which Bernhard's universe seems to function: "... in Lederer's analysis, Bernhard effectively portrays the perception of the absurdity of perception, within a consciousness which is aware of the absurdity of its own perception. To do this, he blurs the distinction between subject and object, or between imagination and reality, on which language relies, and substitutes for

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<sup>41</sup> Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound*, translated by Robert Whitelaw, introduction and notes by J. Churton Collins, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1907, p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, p. 39: „Dacă rezumase mai multe fraze nerostite [...] simulase aparența unui simplu principiu de bază”, our translation from Romanian into English: “If he had summarized several unspoken sentences [...] he would have simulated the appearance of a simple basic principle”.

<sup>43</sup> Cozma, Diana: *Dansul efemer al acțiunilor actorului*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, p. 29, original text: „Montajul constituie, în fond, calea de structurare a spectacolului, respectiv a textului spectacolului, specifică jumătății de secol XX”, [our translation into English]

it a system of symbols”<sup>44</sup>. This observation may lead us to the idea that, through senses, during the perceptive process, the consciousness cannot become aware of the reality of the thing in itself and establish an objective relationship with the exterior reality.

This presumed vulnerability of the consciousness makes human being dissimulate his feelings and thoughts in the act of communication. It is precisely this dissimulation that makes the true awareness of reality impossible. If the human being cannot become truly aware of the reality outside him, then the reverse may also be valid: “Bernhard operates under the assumption that we cannot fathom the true interior of human being”<sup>45</sup>. Nevertheless, this problematic is not a preoccupation of beings involved in carrying out activities to reach certain personal and social objectives, but of beings capable of a deep understanding of the relationships and reality in itself.

We may say that: “His typical protagonist [...] is a genius who is obsessed with an impossible project and is eventually destroyed by the tension between the desire for perfection in his work and the knowledge that it is unattainable”<sup>46</sup>. In the case of the character Kant, the impossible project may be identified in Bernhard’s assertion: “One never knows who one is. The others tell you who you are”<sup>47</sup>. May this be a consequence of the failure of perceiving reality as such? Do we perceive only the appearance of what is communicated? Is Kant’s character perceived not as he himself is, but according to the usefulness society sees in him? Then, does it matter who you are or you are only what the others say you are? And this is a consequence of the fact that you are not only in relationship with yourself, but also in relationship with the others. Are you what you are for yourself and someone else for the others?

### **The mirror’s mirage**

In Bernhard’s play, there is a line of the character Millionaire which refers to the *Little Red Cap*<sup>48</sup> fairy tale. *Why is this reference to the Brothers Grimm in*

<sup>44</sup> Martin, Charles W.: *The Nihilism of Thomas Bernhard*, Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam / Atlanta, 1995, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Dowden, Stephen D.: 1991, p. 32.

<sup>46</sup> Franklin, Ruth: *The Art of Extinction – The Bleak Laughter of Thomas Bernhard*, at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/12/25/the-art-of-extinction>, published: 12.17.2006, [accessed: 11.24.2019].

<sup>47</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: in *From One Catastrophe to the Next – interview with Asta Scheib*, translated by Anja Zeidler at <http://www.thomasbernhard.org/interviews/1986intas.shtml>, 1986, [accessed: 11.24.2019].

<sup>48</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, p. 97: „Nu știu de ce-mi vine în minte / povestea cu Scufița Roșie” - “I don’t know why it comes to my mind / the story with the Little Red Riding Hood”. [our Translation into English]

*Bernhard's play? Is it because the wolf disguises as grandmother and in this situation we deal again with the action of disguising one's true intentions? Is the wolf a wolf to himself and a grandmother to others? Or does he no longer know who he is? Making reference to another of the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales, namely, Snow White, we notice that to the question: "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, / who in this land is fairest of all?"<sup>49</sup>, Bernhard's answer, in his play, is not: "You, my queen, are the fairest of all"<sup>50</sup>, but rather: *I am the most beautiful, my queen.**

To analyse Bernhard's possible answer implies to take into discussion two possibilities. The first possibility raises a question: what if the mirror is beautiful in itself, and the beauty does not belong to the one whose image is reflected in the mirror? Thus anyone can be beautiful as much as anyone can be ugly. The second possibility refers to the fact that when you ask the mirror, it is also you who give the answer. In Bernhard's world, these two possibilities do not exclude, but entwine one another. The mirror is not an object like other objects. In the absence of light, the mirror remains a simple object. But in the presence of light, it has the capacity to capture the image of the one reflected in the mirror. Thus the mirror draws a portrait of the one who is reflected in the mirror. For the Bernhardian play, the act of looking into the mirror seems more like an act of looking at a portrait, and our reference here is to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

There is a consubstantial identity of appearances, reflections, deduplications, copies and patterns. Looking in the mirror may bring about the act of forgetting one's identity. Does the act of mirroring induce a separation between appearance and content in the mind of the person who looks into the mirror? The one who looks at himself in the mirror probably reaches the limits of aesthetic judgement and plunges into his own inner world where this judgement no longer exists? However, the act of mirroring creates the illusion of consubstantiality between the outside and the inside, based on the appearance as a boundary between the interior and what exists outside it. In this case, everything becomes object of sensations, the existence being reduced to the sensitive universe. Because: "... of the outward world, we know and can know absolutely nothing, except the sensations which we experience from it"<sup>51</sup>. Thus we find ourselves in a perfect ambiguity.

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<sup>49</sup> Grimm, Brothers: *Little Snow White in The Complete First Edition of The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of The Brothers Grimm*, translated and edited by Jack Zipes, Princeton University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. 171.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>51</sup> Mill, John Stuart: *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*, vol. I, John W. Parker West Stand, London, 1851, p. 74

On the one hand, we know the world through senses, on the other hand, knowledge dwells in concepts. Here, in the world of the appearances manifestation, the perceptive space, through which the signals of sensing the surrounding world enter the individual's consciousness from which, then, his creative ideas manifest in the surrounding world, seems to be the playground of Bernhard's characters in the play *Immanuel Kant*. Within this perceptive space of transition from reality to knowledge, the beautiful and the ugly change places. Within this space aesthetics probably reaches its limits for here the judgement takes the form of discernment. It is more important if something exists, as object of perception in the physical reality, than the way it exists. Here judgement seemingly does not mean a definitive decision, but a sort of understanding. Does the idea that "... the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good..."<sup>52</sup> mean that beauty does not exist in itself, it is not even an attribute of an object, but a symbol of something else?

Does the aesthetic beauty marked by arbitrariness exist only in the imagination? Is beauty, by definition, something imagined / dreamed of? Is it an appearance having an existence independently of its source? Or a symbiotic existence? Can an appearance exist independently of its source? An imaginary existence? "In an aesthetic judgement the object is considered in its formality, which is to say, in Kantian terms, that the object is reflected in the imagination rather than enjoyed in sensation or cognized; and this disinterestedness – the absence, in other words, of any judgment as to the object's existence, meaning, or purpose – causes the judging subject to believe in the universal validity of the judgment"<sup>53</sup>.

What is an aesthetic judgement? It can be understood as follows: "A pure aesthetic judgement, that is, a pure judgement of taste..."<sup>54</sup>. The taste as perception that satisfies the expectations extracts, in a first phase, the aesthetic judgement from the discernment necessary to differentiate what exists in reality from what exists in the imagination, and then, in the second phase, to make the description of the attributes of the perceived object useless.

To understand the aesthetic judgement as a judgement of taste entails to superimpose an imagined form on the attributes or on the concrete modalities through which the perceived object manifests itself? "Aesthetics is thus the model of all ideology..."<sup>55</sup>. That being so, "The beautiful constantly threatens to degrade into the agreeable..."<sup>56</sup>, and the agreeable implies to establish a convention which is always arbitrary within a social group.

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<sup>52</sup> Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Judgement*, translated, introduction by Werner S. Pluhar, Foreword Mary J. Gregor, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1987, p. 228.

<sup>53</sup> Redfield, Marc: *Phantom Formations*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1996, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 20.

This convention cannot be established otherwise than by using the language not only to communicate information, but also to generate emotion in the conversational partner, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to obtain recognition from the conversational partner. To speak implies to transmit information. Conversation involves something else than transmitting information. Does it involve, for instance, to negotiate a certain position in the social hierarchy? Bernhard states as follows: “When talking is supposed to become conversation, that’s when things get gruesome”<sup>57</sup>! Echoes from Schiller are to be found here: “Don’t converse with those fellows! That Kant has turn’d them all crazy; / Speak to me, for in hell I am the same that I was”<sup>58</sup>. Probably, the talking that becomes conversation is no longer based on transmitting information, but on the consolidation of social hierarchy, on assuming multiple identities according to the social roles one person plays for another person. In this context, we no longer deal with a single social identity of a person.

### **Biological machine versus social machine**

The Kantian idea to separate, conceptually, *appearance* from *phantom*, according to the following observation: “It is not a hallucination, not a phantom which would be a product of individual cognition. Appearance is an *unavoidable* illusion”<sup>59</sup>, can be questioned? Probably from Bernhard’s perspective, the statement: “Descartes banished magic from the understanding, but the possibility for deception, through the imagination, is unlimited”<sup>60</sup>, is valid in Kant’s case.

Deception is not understood as an exclusive attribute of the magical thinking. Deception in understanding reality can be also the inevitable consequence of the imaginative process of thinking. The play between appearance, illusion, phantom seems to be Bernhard’s choice when he projects his characters in a world in which delimitations are unclear.

His characters manifest themselves in a universe marked by failure. Failure generated precisely by inevitable deceitful approaches of reality. Accordingly, the individual is incapable of truly living in a world haunted by deceptive appearances in which nothing is what it seems.

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<sup>57</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: *Thomas Bernhard for Life*, interview by Werner Wögerbauer, at <http://www.signandsight.com/features/1090.html>, 1986, published: 11.12.2006, [accessed: 11.24.2019].

<sup>58</sup> Schiller, Friedrich: *Poems of Schiller*, translated by Edgar A Bowring, George Bell and Sons, London, 1874, p. 287.

<sup>59</sup> Gulyga, Arsenij: *Immanuel Kant – His Life and Thought*, translated by Marijan Despalatović, Birkhäuser, Boston, 1987, p. 104

<sup>60</sup> Thier, Allen: 2002, p. 98.

The individual no longer has the capacity to truly interact with others, not even with the environment. Eleonora Ringler Pascu, the author of an excellent translation of Bernhard's play, *Immanuel Kant*, in which she succeeds admirably to transpose Bernhard's poetic language into the Romanian language, remarks: "... the failure of the individual in an indifferent, meaningless world, in a desperate attempt to overcome the self-imposed isolation that leads him to failure, madness or even self-destruction"<sup>61</sup>. The individual is trapped in a framework of manifestation within which his freedom is annihilated.

This framework / machinery, on the one hand, can be understood as natural, biological, according to Kant's statement based on the Leibnizian perspective: "But nature's machines, that is, living bodies, are machines even in their smallest parts *ad infinitum*"<sup>62</sup>, and, on the other hand, can be understood as being engineered, artificial.

Can freedom be found in the machine condition? Biological machine or gear in a social machinery? To which hypostasis does Heiner Müller refer when his Hamlet exclaims: "I want to live in my veins, in the marrow of my bones, in the labyrinth of my skull [...] My thoughts are wounds in my brain. My brain is a wound. I want to be a machine. Arms to grasp legs to walk no pain no thoughts"<sup>63</sup>? Bernhard's play seems to reverberate like *Hamletmachine*'s text: "... disarmed and hopeless in front of a society that has gone the way of decay, he considers that his only solution is to become a machine"<sup>64</sup>.

### ***West-northwest wind***

In Bernhard's play, the discussion about *phantom* seems to be extremely important. It is noticeable that the line *west-northwest wind* is repeated many

<sup>61</sup> Ringler-Pascu, Eleonora: „*Thomas Bernhard – teatrul eșuării*”, in: Thomas Bernhard: *Immanuel Kant*, traducere și postfață de Eleonora Ringler-Pascu, prefață Daniela Magiaru, Timișoara: Brumar, 2013, p. 156: „... eșecul individului într-o lume indiferentă, lipsită de sens, în încercarea disperată de a depăși izolarea autoimpusă care-l duce spre eșec, nebulie sau chiar autodistrugere” [our translation into English].

<sup>62</sup> Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm: *The Monadology*, in: Leibnitz *The Philosophical Works*, translated with notes by George Martin Duncan, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, New Haven, 1890, p. 228.

<sup>63</sup> Müller, Heiner: *The Hamletmachine*, translated by Dennis Redmond at [https://www.academia.edu/39708442/Plays\\_poems\\_and\\_prose\\_by\\_Heiner\\_Mueller](https://www.academia.edu/39708442/Plays_poems_and_prose_by_Heiner_Mueller), 2001, [accessed 09.06.2019].

<sup>64</sup> Ringler-Pascu, Eleonora: *Hamletmachine – O simbioză între „Teatrul de autor” și „Teatrul de regizor”*, in: Symbolon, Târgu-Mureș, nr. 22 / 2012, p. 11: „... dezarmat și lipsit de speranță în fața unei societăți care a luat drumul decăderii, consideră că unica lui soluție este aceea de a deveni o mașină.” [our translation into English].

times throughout the play<sup>65</sup>. In this regard, "... the often cited, essentialized indication *west northwest* might remind of Hamlet's bon mot..."<sup>66</sup>, namely, "I am but mad north-north-west..."<sup>67</sup>.

The philosopher Kant observes: "... the west winds in all regions of the Earth are the cause of wet weather..."<sup>68</sup>. Do the west winds which bring precipitation generate different temperatures in the strata of the air? Do these strata of different densities produce mirages? Mirage is a deceptive image, still it has an objective cause. Something concrete creates the mirage. Something real is reflected in this deceptive image. *Under the sign of the west winds*, do the characters of these two plays act in a time that favours the illusoriness? A parallel between the character of Hamlet, "an educated prince-philosopher, a cultured courtier-player, a ferocious fighter-rhetorician"<sup>69</sup>, and the character of Kant, inspired by the philosopher's life and work, may be fruitful. If Hamlet says *...I am [...] mad...*, Kant is welcomed on the quay by *asylum doctors and nurses*<sup>70</sup>. *At the same time, both characters try to escape from the deceptive relationship between what it is and what it seems to be.*

From this relationship the following categories can be drawn: some seem and exist, others seem and do not exist, others seem to exist in one way and exist in another way, and others exist and do not seem. How do we deal with the relationship between appearance and reality? We can simplify everything treating it as a problem which belongs to pathology. But this would make worthless the direction of these plays which raise a fundamental question: How can we know that what we know, we really know? A question that, in turn, raises other questions:

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<sup>65</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, pp. 15, 22, 25, 27, 28, 34, 36, 44, 47, 59 and 145.

<sup>66</sup> Schößler, Franziska und Ingeborg Villinger: *Über den „wahren Abgrund der menschlichen Vernunft“*. *Thomas Bernhards Einspruch gegen Immanuel Kant*, in: Franziska Schößler und Ingeborg Villinger (ed.): *Politik und Medien bei Thomas Bernhard*, Königshausen & Neuman, Würzburg, 2002, p. 131; original text in German: „... die refrainartig beschworene Himmelsrichtung „West Nordwest“ könnte zugleich auf ein Bonmot Hamlets zurückgehen...“ [our translation into English]

<sup>67</sup> Shakespeare, William: *Hamlet – Prince of Denmark*, bilingual edition, Romanian Translation by Vladimir Streinu, Pandora, Târgoviște, 1999, p. 96.

<sup>68</sup> Kant, Immanuel: *Plan and announcement of a series of lectures on physical geography... with an appendix containing a brief consideration of the question: Whether the West winds in our region are moist because they travel over a great sea*, in: Immanuel Kant, *Natural Science*, edited by Eric Watkins, translated by Olaf Reinhardt, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012, p. 395.

<sup>69</sup> Davies, Michael: *Hamlet Character Studies*, Continuum, London/NewYork, 2008, p. 50.

<sup>70</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, p. 147.

Only if we know what really exists can we treat appearances as what they are? Appearances, in their intimate nature, are clues of something's existence? Can we have two types of appearances? Those that indicate something's existence and those that mislead us about the existence of something? To know, consequence of fully experiencing existence, excludes doubt?

May be this what underlies the Hamletian dilemma? Is *to be or not to be* a consequence of the failure to notice the difference between to know and to seem? Or is the moment when the appearance ceases to be appearance anymore: "... I know not *seems*..."<sup>71</sup>? Does *to know* exclude *to seem*? How can we differentiate between what exists and what seems when our senses deceive us? The character of Kant suspects that perceptions are representations: *the brightness of the optics... deceives*<sup>72</sup>. For him, no matter the perspective, everything has a single meaning: *the meaning in itself*<sup>73</sup>. Even so, he realizes that he is trapped in illusion. If something else but illusion he cannot experience, as senses deceive, he tries at least not to delude himself, unlike Hamlet who seeks to destroy the illusion not only for himself but also for the others.

Hamlet's line: „I am but mad north-northwest: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw”<sup>74</sup> in this Romanian translation the line is as follows: „Eu sunt nebun dinspre nord-nord-vest, însă când bate vântul dinspre sud, pot foarte bine să deosebesc un □oim de un uliu”<sup>75</sup>. Hence, in Romanian, the comparison made between a *hawk* and a *falcon*, emphasizes the idea that it is difficult to discern between two similar elements, between two birds of prey, in flight. In this German translation the line is as follows: „Ich bin nur toll bey Nord oder Nord-West; wenn der Wind von Suden bläßt, kann ich einen Falken sehr wol von einer Hand-Säge unterscheiden”<sup>76</sup>. In the German translation, the comparison is made between two different elements: *Falken* and *Hand-Säge*. In English the comparison is between a *hawk* and a *handsaw*, word used as a corrupt linguistic form for *heron* or used to designate the tool of a carpenter.

<sup>71</sup> Shakespeare, William: 1999, pp. 22, 31.

<sup>72</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, p. 29: „Strălucirea optică (...) înşală”, - “the brightness of the optics... deceives” [our translation into English].

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52, original text in Romanian, „Tot ceea ce nu este / nu este / Tot ceea ce este / este”, - “Everything that it is not / it is not / Everything that it is / it is...” [our translation into English].

<sup>74</sup> Shakespeare, William: 1999, p. 96.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

<sup>76</sup> Shakespeare, William: *Hamlet, Prinz of Dänemark*, Übersetzung von August Wilhelm von Schlegel, Outlook Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 2018, p. 45.

This line has aroused countless discussions about its meaning such as: “The meaning generally given to this passage is, that birds generally fly with the wind, and, when the wind is northerly, the sun dazzles the hunter’s eye, and he is scarcely able to distinguish one bird from another”<sup>77</sup>. However, this is not a definitive idea as the debate continues: “There is now apparently general agreement that the *hand saw* in that line was originally *heronsaw* a dialectical English form of *heron*, meaning that Hamlet was contrasting two types of birds, rather than a bird and a carpentry tool. It’s also possible that he meant *heron* to symbolize the prey of a hawk, as he had, at this point in the conversation, figured out that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, his childhood friends, had been corrupted to his detriment by his murderous uncle”<sup>78</sup>. In this discussion on the meaning of the line, there are questions which stimulate the imagination: “Does Hamlet mean that he can recognise the King’s bird of chase flying on an ill wind?”<sup>79</sup>. Also, one of the opinions caught our attention: “Hamlet would appear to imply that he was not as stupid as his auditors seemed to believe, that when their subterfuges were so baldly plain, he at least could detect a spying *hawk* from an old man all full of ‘buzzes’ as a *handsaw*”<sup>80</sup>. In this case, reference is made to Polonius’ hoarse voice which resembles the sound of a handsaw.

Still, what if Shakespeare’s reference is not only to the visual perception, but also to the aural perception? What if Hamlet refers to the sharp piercing sound of the hawk different from the sound of the heron which resembles the sound of the handsaw? In this regard, there is the possibility that the birds are not only seen, but that their sounds are also heard. The characters in *Hamlet* hear rumours. Rumours brought by the ill wind. Wind that blows in times when one is capable no longer of distinguishing the sound of a heron from the sound of a handsaw.

In Kant’s case, the wind seems to blow from the direction of his destination. It may be that the wind brings with it the sounds of New York. Whatever Kant would say in the direction of the wind, New York does not hear him. He wastes his breath.

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<sup>77</sup> Mertins, Emma A.: in *Shakespeare and Chaucer – Examination*, edited by William Taylor Thom, Ginn & Co., Boston, 1888, pp. 34-35.

<sup>78</sup> Morris, Evan at <http://www.word-detective.com/2012/02/hawk-from-a-handsaw/>, publised: 29.02.2012, [ accessed: 27.08.2019].

<sup>79</sup> Dowden, Edward: in: William Shakespeare *The Works of Shakespeare*, edited by Edward Dowden, Methuen & Co., London, 1899, p. 82.

<sup>80</sup> Braddy, Haldeen: *I know a hawk from a handsaw*, in *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, The Shakespeare Association of America, Inc., New York, Vol. XVI, no. 1, January 1941, p. 32.

In this regard, Bernhard's play suggests points of contact with *North by Northwest* film directed by Alfred Hitchcock, screenplay by Ernest Lehman, in 1959. Roger Thornhill, the central character, strives to describe the facts occurred a day before, but nobody believes him. Whatever he says, no one listens to him, and whatever he is told, he cannot admit it as true. The wind blows, and when the wind blows, people become confused. With their perceptions altered, they can no longer distinguish between reality as such and set-up. Between reality and imagination. Between natural and unnatural. Between what it is and what it seems. Thomas Bernhard, like Ernest Lehman, exploits this myriad of possibilities. The character of Immanuel Kant is put in a situation in which the meeting between the sensations and thoughts causes short circuits. It is not only him, as individual, who is affected by the relationship between appearance and reality, but also the entire community on the ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

### **Not everyone that seems to be Kant, is Kant**

In the following text, we propose to describe, briefly, some elements of our directorial vision inspired by Bernhard's play:

*As regards the actors' interpretation based on the line wind west northwest we propose the following scene: The Steward says something. No one hears what the Steward says. The spectators see how his lips move, but do not hear a sound. Kant says something and the spectators hear what he says. Then there is the sound of the wind. The sound of the ship's siren. The Steward makes three steps to one side. Now his line is clearly heard. After a few moments, the Steward returns to his place. Kant is on the point to speak to him. He changes his mind. They switch places, and now we see Kant's lips moving, but we hear nothing. They return to the places they occupied at the beginning of the scene. Now Kant's line is heard clearly. This play is repeated also in other scenic situations. The idea of the scene is that they cannot engage in dialogue but in certain places on the deck.*

*If we take into account the fact that at the beginning of the play the action takes place at the bow of the ship, then on the middle deck, and finally on the stern of the ship, our objective, in certain scenes, is to induce in the spectator the illusion that while the ship advances, Kant and his companions stay still.*

*At the end of the first act, the mast is replaced with a funnel by the machinists, who play the role of the sailors; at the end of the second act, the funnel is replaced with a more modern one and at the end of the third act is replaced with a mast with satellite antennas.*

*In another sequence, the ship's siren sounds like the song of the sirens. Kant does not move as he is well covered / bound with a blanket, but we hear him singing the*

*song softly. The others slowly begin to dance. At a certain point, they even give the impression of jumping overboard into the water. When the song of the sirens ends, they return to their previous actions. "Whoso [...] hears the Sirens' voice, he nevermore returns [...] the Sirens beguile him with their clear-toned song..."<sup>81</sup>, Homer's words are projected on the ship's deck.*

*The Steward and Kant's Wife, carrying the folding chair, traverse the stage behind a screen on which their image carrying the folding chair across an apocalyptic realm is projected. It would be best not to notice any difference between the size of the characters in the projection and that of the characters crossing the stage, in order to create the illusion of the reality of the projection. The folding chair is not empty. There is a skeleton on it. In the projection, the characters throw the skeleton into a pile of corpses over which fabulous animals rotate. The two actors enter the stage, the images on the screen disappear, and only a small red spot is visible on the folding chair.*

*Kant, Kant's Wife and Kant's Servant give seeds to the parrot. The parrot does not eat. Kant's Wife wears a hat. Noticing that the parrot does not eat the seeds, she takes a few and eats them. Instantly flowers grow from her hat. Kant also eats seeds. Mechanical wheels grow from his head. The Servant also eats seeds. A bonsai fruit tree grows from his head. Kant picks a fruit from the head of the Servant and throws it to his Wife; she catches it and throws it to the Captain, the Captain throws it to Kant, Kant throws it to the Servant, the Servant throws it to Kant's Wife. In this game, at one point, a shark jumps out of the water and swallows the fruit. This is only an imagination game, an example of creating possible series of scenic actions throughout the performance.*

*Kant slaps Ludwig a few times. The Servant lowers his head to avoid being hit and exits. Mrs. Kant and then the Steward enter the stage. When Ludwig reappears, with his head covered in a coat, he seems to be a headless body. This scene prepares a following scene when Ludwig, hiding his face behind Friedrich's cage, traverses the stage. The spectators see Ludwig, a bipedal character whose head appears to be a cage with a parrot behind the bars.*

*In the final scene, the doctors and nurses, waiting for Kant on the quay, put him into a wheelchair. Suddenly the ship's siren sounds. While the doctors and nurses are taken by surprise, the old man, in his underwear, jumps from the wheelchair, runs and disappears backstage. Kant's clothes are left on the chair. All of a sudden the whistles of the policemen are heard. The old man, in his underwear,*

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<sup>81</sup> Homer: *The Odyssey*, vol I., Translated by A. T. Murray, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1945, p. 435.

*rushes on stage being followed by a bunch of Keystone-cops. The spectators hear Kant's-song played on the piano.*<sup>82</sup>

In conclusion, from the analysis undertaken so far, we notice that the character of Kant reacts to a social set-up also with a set-up emphasizing the idea that Immanuel Kant's character is different from the philosopher Immanuel Kant. According to Matthias Weigel's remark, we deal with a character named „... Kant – or rather, with a character who believes he is Kant”<sup>83</sup>. In this respect, from the perspective of pathology, we may say that the character is a fool who believes he is Kant. But in this case, we ignore the last line of the play in which Kant's character asks if he has been recognized<sup>84</sup>. We propose the idea that Thomas Bernhard's character is an impostor. An individual who pretends so well to be Kant that some believe he is Kant, while others believe he is crazy. For Thomas Bernhard, probably as for Brecht, “The individual is object of study, his actions are put under the microscope, and analysed according to behavioural attitudes”<sup>85</sup>.

The story of the character of Kant may be that of a man who, noticing the others' superficiality and imposture, lack of knowledge, run after riches, honours and pleasures, and, at the same time, fascinated by Kant's personality, decides to borrow his identity and to pretend that he is Immanuel Kant, the philosopher. The fact that the Bernhardian character does not end up in honours and triumph but instead he is taken to an asylum, makes us think that the idea of the play could be as follows: not everyone that seems to be Kant, is Kant.

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<sup>82</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqHkrzbb6jU> published: 05.08.2014, [accessed: 10.27.2019].

<sup>83</sup> Weigel, Matthias: *Hören Sie die Mühsal hupen* at [https://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5066&catid=38&Itemid=40](https://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5066&catid=38&Itemid=40), published: 12.19.2010, [accessed 11.03.2019], our translation into English from the original text in German: „... Kant – oder besser: den, der sich für Kant hält.”

<sup>84</sup> Bernhard, Thomas: 2013, p. 148.

<sup>85</sup> Cozma, Diana: *Tehnici fundamentale de creație scenică*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, p. 44, our translation in English from the original text in Romanian: „Individul este obiect de studiu, acțiunile lui sunt supuse examinărilor, investigate în seriile atitudinilor comportamentale”.

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# **Jelinek: *Am Königsweg*. Die alte gute neue Welt als Parodie**

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## **Abstract**

This analysis focusses on the illustration of the “new” world in Elfriede Jelinek’s most recent play inspired by President Trump’s surprising victory. Discussing the production directed by Falk Richter, I will point out the parodical characteristics of a world under the leadership of an undisciplined, uncouth monarch who has been propped up by obscene wealth: an unimaginable crisis for modern democracy.

## **Keywords:**

Elfriede Jelinek; Falk Richter; Trump; political theatre; postdramatic theatre; democracy.

## **Rezumat**

Acest studiu radiografiază imaginea „noi” lumi relevată în cea mai recentă piesă a autoarei Elfriede Jelinek, inspirată de victoria surprinzătoare a președintelui Trump. Analizând producția regizată de Falk Richter, voi evidenția caracteristicile parodice ale lumii sub conducerea unui monarh răzvrătit și grosolan, sprijinindu-se pe o avere indecent de mare, care stârnește o criză de neimaginat pentru democrația modernă.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

Elfriede Jelinek; Falk Richter; Trump, teatru postdramatic, democrație.

Wer Elfriede Jelineks Theatertexte kennt, weiß schon, dass die Autorin ihre Inspiration aus aktuellen wichtigen gesellschaftlichen und politischen Ereignissen bezieht. Wer Elfriede Jelineks Theatertexte nicht kennt, kann sich dennoch einen Reim darauf machen, worum es in einem von den Ereignissen des Jahres 2016 geprägten Text gehen könnte. Im Drama *Am Königsweg* wurde ein neuer König „gesät, geerntet, gewählt“<sup>1</sup>. Dieser wird nicht beim Namen genannt, aber das

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<sup>1</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede: *Am Königsweg*, Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg, 2018, Regie: Falk Richter (zitiert nach dem Text der Aufführung).

sprachliche Universum Jelineks bringt auf möglichst subtile Art die schrillste weltweit bekannte politische Persönlichkeit, die 2016 zum Präsidenten der USA gewählt wurde, auf die Bühne: Donald Trump. Der Dramaturg und Regisseur Falk Richter ist derjenige, der sich dieser Herausforderung stellt und dem kryptischen Text durch eine Inszenierung am Schauspielhaus Hamburg am 28. Oktober 2017 das Rampenlicht schenkt. Ein weltanschaulicher Text. Falk Richter und Elfriede Jelinek bilden zusammen ein kongeniales Duo. Dies wird auch dadurch deutlich, dass im Rahmen der Kritikerumfrage der Zeitschrift „Theater heute“ (2018) *Am Königsweg* zur Inszenierung des Jahres gewählt wurde. Trumps selbstbewusstes Auftreten ist an sich ein spektakuläres Ereignis, welches die passendste Grundlage für eine Parodie darstellt.

Doch wie kämpft man sich als Theatermacher durch ein etwa 100-seitiges Textflächenkaleidoskop durch? Falk Richter hat sich dazu entschieden, das Textmaterial auf etwa 40% zusammenzustreichen, in dem Versuch, diese neue Welt, die auf uns zugebrüllt kommt, so authentisch wie möglich darzustellen: als eine Parodie. Und diese neue Welt scheint uns zwischen einer Dystopie und einer Utopie hin und her pendeln zu lassen: Einerseits finden wir die aktuellen politischen Erschütterungen durch die immer präsenteren rechtspolitischen Bewegungen, die ermutigten faschistischen und rassistischen Denkweisen, die religiöse Autokratie und andererseits die fallenden Intellektuellen, die Denker und Dichter, Elfriede Jelinek selbst. Dies alles versteckt und entfaltet sich in einer endlosen Textflächenverdichtung, die fasziniert und gleichzeitig Angst einflößt. Wie Falk Richter auch in einem Interview bemerkt: „Es hat mich sofort interessiert, zu sehen, wie Elfriede Jelinek diesen erdrutschartigen Sieg eines neuen völkischen Nationalismus auf ihre Weise inhaltlich und formal bearbeiten würde.“<sup>2</sup>

Glücklicherweise hat sich Falk Richter ein passendes Heer für diesen Kampf ausgewählt: zum *Königsweg*-Ensemble gehören mehr als nur Schauspieler, besser gesagt: es treten Individuen als Schau-Spieler auf, die mit ihren eigenwilligen Persönlichkeiten und ihren eigenen künstlerischen Mitteln der „inszenierten“ Show die passende Diversität verleihen. Die groteske Parodie wird von der Theaterpersönlichkeit Ilse Ritter, dem Schauspieler Benny Claessens, der Youtuberin Idil Bay und dem Tänzer Frank Willens kontextrelevant dargestellt, aber auch vom Videokünstler Michel Auder, der während den Nixon-, Bush 1- und 2-Regierungen schon einiges miterleben musste und nun Trump auf der Bühne

<sup>2</sup> Richter, Falk: *Im Erkenntnisrausch*, Falk Richter im E-Mail-Gespräch mit Sabrina Weinzettl, Zur Uraufführung von *Am Königsweg* am Deutschen Schauspielhaus Hamburg, in: Janke, Pia: *Jelinek[Jahr]buch 2018-2019*, Praesens Verlag, Wien, 2019, S. 288-289.

mitdarstellen darf, und nicht zuletzt von den stark präsenten SchauspielerInnen Matti Krause, Anne Müller, Tilman Strauß und Julia Wieninger gestaltet.

Und wer handelt in dieser neuen Welt? Handeln kann nur einer, der neue König der neuen Welt natürlich. Denn: „Achtung, hier kommt der neue König!“<sup>3</sup>. Es handelt sich tatsächlich um einen Einzigartigen und Alleinherrschenden, einen popanzmäßig vorgestellten und eingeführten Erlöser, der, wenn nicht beim Namen genannt, schon sehr eindeutig ist: Donald J. Trump ist jetzt das neue Opfer eines Jelinekschen Textes, aber trotz allem nicht wirklich die Essenz davon.

Und wer kann in dieser neuen Welt sprechen? Zu Beginn des Stückes tritt die Autorin als blinde Seherin auf, zusammen mit anderen blinden Sehern, die aussichtslos zu verstehen versuchen, wie ihre Prophezeiung in Zeiten wie diesen, in Umständen wie diesen, lauten wird: „Erst mal würde sich ja Schweigen anbieten, das wäre mir lieber, es macht keine Arbeit. Blind sein: auch sehr praktisch. Laßt von mir ab, das macht ihr ohnedies, laßt von mir ab, denn ich bin krank und verstehe nichts, ich sehe nicht, ich sehe doch, nein, doch nicht, Netzhaut vor, noch ein Tor!, ich arme Blinde verstehe nicht, was ich da bestellt habe. Ich weiß nicht, was kommt. Ich weiß nicht, was kommt.“<sup>4</sup>



Elfriede Jelinek: *Am Königsweg*, Deutsches Schauspielhaus, 2017  
(Foto: Arno Declair)

Der ironische Ton der Einführung ergibt sich jedoch bald als ideales Theatermittel im Umgang mit dieser Art von Problematik: Während der ganzen Aufführung

<sup>3</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede: *Am Königsweg*, Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede: *Am Königsweg*, Rowohlt Theater Verlag, Hamburg, 2017, S. 2.

wird der Glitsch im System immer wieder durch das zum Körper dissonante Sprechen der DarstellerInnen deutlich gemacht. Das verleiht den Themen, die angesprochen werden, umso mehr Schwere- angesprochen wird der Fehltritt der Globalisierung, der chaotische Finanzkapitalismus, die Weltfinanzkrise 2008, die Ausbeutung ärmerer Länder durch die industrielle Produktion. Um diese sich immer wuchtiger schwankende Weltordnung im Griff zu halten, braucht man neue Vorkämpfer. Und diese muss man dafür auch dementsprechend massenhafterzeugen und erziehen lassen.

Jelineks dichter Text ruft zahlreiche Diskurse und Kontexte auf, die von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart reichend, die dazugehörigen unzähligen Standpunkte wie Skelette im Schrank aufrufen. Da Jelineks Textfassung auf keine Aufteilung der SprecherInnen hinweist, sprechen in Richters Vision folgende Gestalten: Der König, der keine Pflichten hat, nur Recht(e), Elfriede Jelinek selbst als Stimme der DichterInnen und DenkerInnen, der verzweifelte Chor, der als Masse nur eine Stimme zur Wahl verfügbar hat, die Intellektuellen, die verstummen, umso mehr sie reden, die Bank selbst, die den Armen dabei hilft, mehr Schulden zu machen, Trumps White Supremacy-Anhänger, die Antisemiten, die Armee und ihre Generäle, Kermit, der Frosch, die vom Internet besessenen TwiternutzerInnen- und KommentatorInnen, die konservativen Christen, die Demokraten und viele, viele mehr. Es geht also um ein Menschheitsdrama, über welches man gleichzeitig lacht, weint und welches einem einen kalten Schauer über den Rücken laufen lässt.

Die Weissagungen des Königs, dieses neuen Herrschers, sind in einer sicheren Scheinwelt des Hier und Jetzt gültig, in einer Realität, geprägt von der Abwesenheit eines Krümchens an Vision. Eine Realität, in der ein in die Geschichtsbücher als längst vergangenes historisches Ereignis zurück in das gegenwärtige kollektive Gedächtnis heraufbeschwört wird: „Wir wollen im Wandel wandeln, endlich was Neues, so geht das nicht weiter, aber was wir in Wirklichkeit wollen, ist, daß das alte Gute jetzt das Neue ist, damit wir es erkennen. Und das Alte ist immer gut oder immer noch gut, wir verstehen, daß Sie es dem Neuen vorziehen, wir sollten Sie dafür nicht kritisieren, auch wenn damals Millionen daran krepieren sind.“<sup>5</sup>

Trump's Figur erhält im Jelinekschen Text das Spiegelbild des Ödipus von Sophokles, der ihn in der philosophischen Lesart von René Girard<sup>6</sup> als das Eigenbild eines Opfers, geprägt von einer aus Unschuld stammenden Schuld erscheinen lässt, das die gesellschaftliche Einheit wiederherzustellen hat. Die

<sup>5</sup> Ebenda, S. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Girard, René: *Das Heilige und die Gewalt*. Übersetzung ins Deutsche Elisabeth Mainberger-Ruh, Patmos, Ostfildern, 2012, S. 111.

blinde Seherin auf der Bühne prophezeit, dass dieser König selbst zum Opfer werden wird, dass aber bis zu diesem Moment noch viele als Opfer fallen werden. Falk Richter übersetzt diese Prämissen in eine Inszenierung, deren Zentralfigur ein unbändiger Autokrat ist, der macht, was er will, weil er von einer demokratiemüden, hasserfüllten Gesellschaft gewählt worden ist. Diese suizidale Haltung kommt ebenfalls in den Stimmen der abendländischen Wähler immer lauter zur Geltung, wie auch Donna Haraway in ihrem letzten Buch als Anstoß für die Veränderung dieser lethargisch aktuellen Existenz im Neoliberalismus bemerkt: „Als Einzelne, mit unseren eigenen Expertisen und Erfahrungen, wissen wir viel zu viel und zu wenig; also überlassen wir uns der Verzweiflung oder der Hoffnung, obwohl weder das eine noch das andere eine kluge Haltung ist.“<sup>7</sup> Und eine kluge Haltung hat der König nicht, seine Weltanschauung ist relativ, die Aussagen, die von seinen öffentlichen Auftritten auf die Bühne übertragen werden, erscheinen als leere, durch theatralische und linguistische Mitteln überarbeitete Worte zu sein. Alles, was ihn nicht persönlich betrifft, ist irrelevant: „Was spricht denn der Gott, was sagt er, jetzt können Sie ihn ja endlich sehen, er sagt Ihnen eine glänzende Zukunft voraus, was Sie schon vorher gewusst haben, dazu brauchen Sie keinen Gott: eine Zukunft, die jetzt keine mehr ist, sondern Gegenwart.“<sup>8</sup> Und wenn mal etwas nicht genau nach seinem Plan läuft: „Na schön, dann findet sie halt statt, die blöde Zukunft, von mir aus, ich werde sie eh nicht mehr erleben.“<sup>9</sup> Diese krasse Opferhaltung des Königs erhält in Richters Inszenierung mit Hilfe von Benny Claessens Leistung eine entfesselte, kindliche, haltlose Verkörperung und steht als totale Entgrenzung da. Somit schwirrt in der Luft des Abends die Frage nach einer möglichst minimal präsenten moralischen Haltung dieser Figur, die lügen darf, Frauen misshandelt, Menschen rassistisch diskriminiert, die Pressefreiheit einschränkt, die Natur zerstört und viele andere unberechenbare Taten begeht. Alles an Trumps Ästhetik und seinem Umfeld ist so opulent, dass es wie eine Parodie der Realität wirkt. Dass Trump selbst aus der Trash-TV-Industrie kommt, diesen Aspekt nimmt Claessen in seiner Darstellung unter dem Vorwand der garantierten Vormachtstellungen weißer, heterosexueller, reicher Männer mit. „Ich bin die Wahrheit, und das Leben, wer mir folgt, ist okay, wer nicht, ist nicht okay.“<sup>10</sup> Der König gibt den Ton für eine neue Haltung an, die stark nach rechts deutet. Eine radikal rechts orientierte politische, nein, eher eigene ideologische

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<sup>7</sup> Haraway, Donna: *Unruhig bleiben. Die Verwandtschaft der Arten im Chthuluzän*. Campus, Frankfurt am Main 2018, S.13.

<sup>8</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede: *Am Königsweg*, 2017, S. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ebd., S. 33.

<sup>10</sup> Ebd., S. 23.

Haltung, die über eine unerwartete Anziehungskraft verfügt, die in ihrem Sog auch Gefährliches mit sich hineinzieht. Eine Skepsis gegenüber der Demokratie soll zur Allgemeinhaltung werden, womit die Gefahr für die Pressefreiheit, für die Kunstfreiheit, für die Gleichstellung der Frauen, für die LGBTQ-Community, für alle Nichtweißen ersichtlich wird. Daraus entfesselt sich triumphierend das männliche Ego, das nach eigener Lust und Laune die Werte aller anderen Menschen und des gesamten Planeten ohne Widerrede niedertRUMPelt. Ein Dialog ist nicht möglich.



Elfriede Jelinek: *Am Königsweg*, Deutsches Schauspielhaus, 2017  
(Foto: Arno Declair)

Neben der Zentralfigur, dem König, der in seiner kitschig-prunkvoll, billig-fake-ausgestatteten Umgebung, in seinem goldenen Turm, eines der vielen Trump-Immobilien, mit einem Weltball wild herumtobt und zum Volk herabschaut, das Theater der Welt durch einen Kasperle-Theater-Filter anschaut oder als Monster-Horror-Picture-Show jubelnd bejaht, drängt sich die zentrale Frage der Inszenierung: „Was machen eigentlich Menschen mit richtig viel Zeit, die sich wertlos fühlen? Die Antwort: sie wählen jemanden, der ihnen Wert verspricht: Make America great again!“<sup>11</sup> Richter löst damit dieses hoffnungslose Bild der Figur nicht auf, sondern bekräftigt es durch die von der Komödiantin Idil Baydar geschaffene Kunstfigur Jilet Ayşe. Sie ist die Vermittlerin zwischen

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=14571:am-koenigsweg-falk-richter-inszeniert-die-urauffuehrung-von-elfriede-jelineks-trump-textflaeche-in-hamburg-als-kindertheater-des-grauens&catid=56&Itemid=100089](https://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14571:am-koenigsweg-falk-richter-inszeniert-die-urauffuehrung-von-elfriede-jelineks-trump-textflaeche-in-hamburg-als-kindertheater-des-grauens&catid=56&Itemid=100089) [Letzter Zugang: 12.10. 2019].

dem Jelinek-Text und dem Publikum. Sie öffnet das Stück zwischen der auf der Bühne realitätsnahen entstandenen Dystopie und der im Publikum auf Hoffnung basierenden Utopie, die den Auftritt des Königs umso lächerlicher erscheinen lässt. „Öffnet ruhig die Augen, es gibt da draußen eine Unterschicht, und die wird es euch richtig besorgen!“<sup>12</sup> Das ist auch der Moment, wo das Komische sich sichtlich Platz schafft – es wurde ja schon deutlich zu ernst. Die Figur Jilet Ayşe, eine deutsche Staatsbürgerin mit Migrationshintergrund, steht für die von Königen wie Trump angesehene Unterschicht. Als Stellvertreterin der Masse, des Kollektivs mit Objekt-Status, versucht sie eine Verbindung zu den Angehörigen der Hochkultur, dem Publikum des Deutschen Schauspielhauses Hamburg ganz spezifisch, mit hochwertigem Subjekt-Status, herzustellen, in der Hoffnung, offen über Probleme, die in Deutschland ebenfalls präsenter werden, zu sprechen: Der rechtspopulistische Aufstand, die Klauen der Kolonialherrschaft, die Verschlechterung der Arbeits- und Lebensumstände bei Nichtweißen, die Diskriminierung von Minderheiten, die Verbreitung des neuen europäischen Bildes unter der Lupe einer weißen Vormachtstellung werden in die Runde geworfen. Denn sie, die Weißen, die „Anti--Intellektuellen“ wie Jilet sie nennt, diejenigen, die im Publikum sitzen, besitzen das Privileg des Individualrechtes, also das Privileg sich dagegen einzusetzen und für ein gemeinsames Wohlbefinden zu kämpfen. Werden sie es aber tun?

Ein Raster von rhetorischen und furchteinflößenden Fragen hält das Gewebe einer möglichen Lösung zu dieser problematischen Situation zusammen, denn ständig dringt eine andere elementare Frage in den Vordergrund: „Wohin führt diese Bewegung aus Hass, Wut und Gewalt: zu einem Rückfall der Geschichte? Auf ein Schlachtfeld, das wir begraben glaubten?“<sup>13</sup> Wer wohl die Antwort darauf hat? Ist es das Publikum, der Chor, die kollektive Kraft, oder du und ich als selbstständige Individuen? Jelinek stellt aus ihrer Position als alte blinde Seherin fest: „Weg mit ihm, weg mit dem Wort, mit jedem Wort, wir wählen lieber ein andres Wort, damit wir auch das verlieren, wir haben alles verloren, jetzt gehen uns auch noch die Worte aus und dorthin, wo noch Platz für Unterhaltung ist.“<sup>14</sup> Dieser destruktive Impuls erweckt einen üblen Nachgeschmack, der die letzten Worte der Seherin und somit das Ende der Aufführung begleiten. Was bleibt ist der bittere Geschmack der Selbstironie des Dichters in dieser neuen Welt als Parodie.

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<sup>12</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede: *Am Königsweg*, 2018, (zitiert nach dem Text der Aufführung).

<sup>13</sup> Vgl. Programmheft *Am Königsweg*, Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Text von Dramaturgin Rita Thiele; 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede: *Am Königsweg*, 2017, S. 92.



Elfriede Jelinek: *Am Königsweg*, Deutsches Schauspielhaus, 2017  
(Foto: Arno Declair)

Die Dynamik und Wechselwirkung zwischen diesen drei in den Vordergrund gestellten Zentralfiguren ergibt die Rahmensituation, in der sich Jelineks Text in Richters Vision parodistisch entfalten kann. Die langen robusten Textblöcke werden kontextgemäß mit kurzen humorvollen Textpassagen aufgelockert. Somit wird man Zeuge einer Schau, die einen nicht passiv bleiben lässt: Man wird hin und her gerüttelt zwischen zwei Extremen: Mal haut der ernste, dichte Textblock einem die Realität aufs Auge, mal passt eine nervig alberne, aber humorvolle Textpassage wie die Faust aufs Auge und verleiht dem Ernst der Sache die passende Interpretation als Beistand und Erlösung. Richters Feingefühl für eben diese komischen Passagen schenkt dem ernststen Angehen des Gesamtprojekts umso mehr Wert. „Am Ende kommt alles, was Jelinek geschrieben hat, in meiner Inszenierung in gewisser Weise vor, wenn auch nicht immer als Text, und ist ins Video, ins Bühnenbild, in den Tanz oder ins Kostüm eingeflossen.“<sup>15</sup>

Jelineks Text trifft in dieser Inszenierung auf Richters distanziert-ästhetischen Regiestil: ein Mosaik aus Tanz, Musik und Video projiziert auf ein opulentes Bühnenbild, das Richter zusammen mit der Bühnenbildnerin Katrin Hoffmann und dem Kostümbildner Andy Besuch entworfen hat – eine Herausforderung für ein neuartiges Regiekonzept. Ein Wirrwarr an Sich-Verkleiden und etwas Vorspielen, eine frenetische Ausstattung von Masken und Video-Material bricht los, die Muppets-Show inklusive, Hauptsache Trash und Perücken, die

<sup>15</sup> Richter, Falk, <https://taz.de/Falk-Richter-zurueck-am-Schauspielhaus/!5454364/> [letzter Zugang: 23.10.2019]

schlimmer als die Originalfrisuren sind. Das In- und Aufeinanderstoßen von Zeit und Stil verleiht diesem realitätsfernen Charakter, Trump, ein dazu passendes Gesellschaftsbild, das nur als Parodie einen echten Sinn ergeben kann. Man weiß nicht mehr was wahr oder was falsch ist, was eigentlich hinter dem Rauschen der Medien propagierten Schocknachrichten steckt, oder versteckt wird. Man weiß nicht mehr, was Vergangenheit oder Gegenwart ist, man versteht nicht mehr, was sein wird: „[...] alles ist Zukunft, und heute ist schon bald zu Ende.“<sup>16</sup> Als Zuschauer wird man mit dem Anschein konfrontiert, dass unsere gemeinsame gegenwärtige Existenz das Echo einer politischen Farce sei, die mit den Affektionen und Emotionen aller direkt und indirekt Beteiligten spielt und manipuliert.

Ja, es wird bei dieser Aufführung viel gelacht. Manchmal aber auch laut nachgedacht. Und hart geschwiegen. Dargestellt wird dieses Schweigen durch eine Szene, in der das Publikum zum gemeinsamen Schweigen und Nachdenken angeregt wird, eine Szene, die das Gewicht einer *Hommage* an all die bedeutenden Denker und Intellektuellen hat, die in dieser neuen Ära nicht mehr zu Wort kommen dürfen. Die neue Welt im Rampenlicht: kann man sie nur als Blinde(r) auch richtig sehen? Viele Fragen bleiben offen. Wie kam es denn dazu, dass Könige wie Trump nun die Welt regieren? Wie man die Antwort dazu findet, bleibt den ZuschauerInnen überlassen. Entscheidend ist, dass wir von nun an Könige wählen sollten, die unsere Demokratien auch demokratisch lenken.

Wie anfangs schon erläutert, drehen sich das Stück und die Inszenierung von Szene zu Szene immer weniger um Trump, umso mehr aber um uns, die ZuschauerInnen eines unreal scheinenden Weltspektakels. Richter verpackt seine Andeutung auf die Unzulänglichkeit des Menschen in der heutigen radikal gespaltenen Gesellschaft als Pop-Art-Theater und schafft als Gegenimpuls zu Jelineks kritischem Text eine mögliche Stellungnahme zu dieser Krise: ein fiktives Universum. Das Menschheitsdrama erhält somit einen passenden Rahmen, um sich auf die Suche nach einer Antwort zu begeben: Welche Erkenntnis gewinnt man nach diesem Theaterbesuch? Richters Idee dazu ist die Parodie, deren fiktionale Ansätze eine pragmatische Analyse dieses Weltproblems zulassen. Und das scheint schon mal ein erster lohnenswerter Versuch zu sein, die neue Welt zu verstehen und selbst eine Stellungnahme zu geben und dementsprechend zu handeln.

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<sup>16</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede: *Am Königsweg*, 2017, S. 31.

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2

**PERSPECTIVE INTERDISCIPLINARE**



**INTERDISZIPLINÄRE PERSPEKTIVEN**



**INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES**





# Commonplace Book Compilation and Early Modern Reading: The Case of *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden*<sup>1\*</sup>

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## Abstract

*Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden* is a 17<sup>th</sup> century manuscript commonplace book compiled by John Evans, now collected mainly at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. The commonplace book has been known primarily for its Shakespearean connections. Borrowing Gunnar Sorelius's useful term "spontaneous editing," I discuss it as a way of reading. According to Robert Darnton, the early modern segmental reading contrasts with the modern sequential reading. I maintain that the commonplace book compilation process, as can be inferred from the extant manuscripts, offers an intimate peep into a particular type of early modern reading practice. Hopefully a detailed analysis of the reading activities of John Evans can add to our understanding of the nature of early modern reading, especially commonplace reading. I argue that the defining features of commonplace reading include the fluidity of the text, the subjectivity of the reader, and the multiplicity of the authorial intention.

## Key words

*Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden*; commonplace book; early modern reading; manuscript study; William Shakespeare.

## Rezumat

*Hesperide sau grădina muzelor* este un manuscris din secolul al 17-lea, compilat de John Evans, care se regăsește acum colecțiile Bibliotecii Folger Shakespeare din Washington D.C. Cartea a fost cunoscută mai ales pentru conexiunile sale shakespeariene. Am împrumutat termenul lui Gunnar Sorelius „editare spontană”, privind-o ca pe un mod de citire. Potrivit lui Robert Darnton, lectura segmentară modernă timpurie contrastează cu lectura secvențială modernă. Susținem că procesul obișnuit de compilare a cărților oferă, după cum se poate deduce din manuscrisele existente, o privire intimă din perspectiva

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<sup>1\*</sup> The Chinese version of this article has been published in the author's monograph "*Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden: The Study of an Early Modern English Commonplace Book*, Peking University Press, Beijing, 2014.

unui anumit tip de practică de lectură modernă timpurie. Sperăm că o analiză detaliată a activităților de lectură ale lui John Evans poate contribui la înțelegerea noastră asupra naturii lecturii moderne timpurii, în special a lecturilor cotidiene. Susținem că trăsăturile definitorii ale lecturii obișnuite includ fluiditatea textului, subiectivitatea cititorului și complexitatea intenției auctoriale.

**Cuvinte cheie:**

Hesperides sau Grădina Muzelor; manuscris; citire timpurie; studiul manuscrisului; William Shakespeare.

*From the most able, to him that can but spell...  
the fate of all Bookes depends vpon your capacities.<sup>2</sup>*

John Evans compiled the manuscript commonplace book *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden* in the 1650s and 1660s.<sup>3</sup> As a commonplace book compiler, Evans exhibits a special paradigm of early modern reading. Different from other early modern commonplace book keepers such as Francis Bacon and John Milton, whose commonplacing prepares them for their literary creation, Evans stops at borrowing. His role is that of a compiler, not a writer. I shall demonstrate how every extract in *Hesperides* provides valuable evidence on early modern reading practice and the particular nature of commonplace reading. In his famous essay “What is the history of books?” Robert Darnton points out that “Reading remains the most difficult stage to study in the circuit followed by books.”<sup>4</sup> This article attempts to tackle with the issue of reading from the perspective of the commonplace book culture, with *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden* as the illustrating example.

Gunnar Sorelius writes concerning the manuscripts of the fragmented version (referred to as *Halliwell*) of *Hesperides*: “Their greatest value... consists in the light they shed on the nature of what may be called spontaneous editing, containing as they do the earliest extant examples of a number of emendations, and, in fact, anticipating several cherished improvements of Shakespeare’s text.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Heminge, John; Condell, Henry: “To the Great Variety of Readers,” Shakespeare’s First Folio, 1623.

<sup>3</sup> Hao, Tianhu : “*Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden* and its Manuscript History”, in: *The Library* 7<sup>th</sup> ser. 10.4 (Dec. 2009), p. 384.

<sup>4</sup> Darnton, Robert : “What Is the History of Books?”, in: *Daedalus* 111.3 (1982), p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> Sorelius, Gunnar: “An Unknown Shakespearian Commonplace Book”, in: *The Library* 5<sup>th</sup> ser. 28 (1973), p. 298. Concerning the two extant versions of *Hesperides* (*Halliwell*

While the notion of “spontaneous editing” has implications for the practice of scholarly editing, my interest here lies in spontaneous editing as a way of reading. An early modern reader takes great liberties with and makes various alterations of the text he is copying. What factors govern the alterations? Are there any patterns perceivable in the alterations? The alterations, intentional or unintentional, are an expression of the reading habits of an early modern reader and his relationship with the text /author. Is spontaneous editing a corruption of the quill or an improvement of the mind? What does it mean to be a commonplace reader? Like modern theorists of reading,<sup>6</sup> I shall argue that early modern reading practice challenges “the reader’s subordination to the author and the text, positing the reader as more of an equal partner in the creation of meaning and value.”<sup>7</sup>

There are at least eleven types of spontaneous editing discernible in Evans’s commonplacing.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1. Change of word order.

Let mee beare with mee y<sup>e</sup> knowledg of my fault [the knowledge of my fault beare with me],<sup>9</sup> if with my selfe I hold intelligence, or haue acquaintance with mine owne desires, If y<sup>t</sup> I do not dreame, or be not frantick, (as I do trust I am not) then deere unkle never so much as in a thought unborne, did I offend your highnes. AL (540)<sup>10</sup>

Command it as yo<sup>r</sup> owne thoughts [as your own thoughts, command it]. RfH (540)

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at Stratford-upon-Avon and *V.b.93* at Folger) and the relationship between them, see: Tianhu Hao, “*Hesperides, or the Muses’ Garden* and its Manuscript History”, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> For a brief summary of modern theoretical approaches to reading, see: William H. Sherman, 1995, pp. 54-59.

<sup>7</sup> Sherman, William H.: *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance*. University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1995, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> The letter long *s* and the letter *f* are easily confused. In the following two instances LION makes mistakes in printing the words as “sire” and “sorms” (a word non-existent); Evans is right.

Heate not a furnace for yo<sup>r</sup> foe so hot y<sup>t</sup> it do sindge yo<sup>r</sup> selfe. Wee may outrun by violent swiftnes y<sup>t</sup> which [we] run at, & lose by overrunning: know you not y<sup>e</sup> fire [sire] y<sup>t</sup> mounts y<sup>e</sup> liquor till it run ore in seeming to augment it, wastes it? H8 (553)

When will my sufferings, make my attonement with my angry goddes? do you celestiall formes [sorms] retaine an anger eternall as yo<sup>r</sup> substance? IL (553)

<sup>9</sup> I insert the original text in square brackets.

<sup>10</sup> Folger MS *V.b.93*, *Hesperides, or the Muses’ Garden*, p. 540. Citations from this manuscript are documented in brackets directly in the text.

## 2. Change of verb form.

Thy promises are like Adonis garden, y<sup>t</sup> one day bloom'd & fruitfull was [were] y<sup>e</sup> next. H6. (568)

Shall common beauties, & meaner faces enjoy these ioyes w<sup>ch</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> selves deny unto yo<sup>r</sup> selves, no, let yo<sup>r</sup> gentle harts embrace y<sup>e</sup> sweets due to so faire deserts: yo<sup>r</sup> liberall features were bestow'd on you by liberall nature, to be enjoy'd, & twere a sin to be niggardly, where shee hath [have] bin so free of her best graces. CA (571)

## 3. Change of diction.

My body budding now no more, cold [seer] winter hath seal'd y<sup>t</sup> sap up, at y<sup>e</sup> best & happiest I can but be yo<sup>r</sup> infant: you my nurse. MT (542)

As gentle oyle <...> upon y<sup>e</sup> stormes [Streams] doth glide

Not mingling w<sup>th</sup> them, though it smooth y<sup>e</sup> tide. CP (553)

Vnarme yo<sup>r</sup> [her] noble hart of y<sup>t</sup> steely resistance against y<sup>e</sup> secret [sweet] blowes of loue. A. (571)

## 4. Paraphrasing.

With silence & patience (like a faire gorgeous armour, hammered on by an ill favoured smith) shee abode her pittiless dealing [their pittiles dealing with her]. A (563)

ffie, fie, how wayward is this foolish loue, y<sup>t</sup> like a testy babe will scrach his nurse and by and by [presently] all humbled kiss y<sup>e</sup> Rod. 2 G of V. (565)

K Lewis y<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> beeing thoroughly informed &c bound it with an oath, that they were better men then hee or his people. (693)

Cf. King *Lewis* the twelfth...this good king being informed...and bound it with an oath, that they were honester men then himselfe, or the rest of his Catholike people.<sup>11</sup>

Another early modern reader, the Warwickshire magistrate Sir John Newdigate makes both “verbatim quotations from, and summaries of, authors he has read.”<sup>12</sup> In his commonplace book Milton also often paraphrases the passage he reads in Latin, French, Italian, or English.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Perrin, J. P.: *Luthers fore-runners*. STC 19769. London, 1624, sig. Oo2r-v.

<sup>12</sup> Qtd. in *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance*. University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1995, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Mohl, Ruth (ed.): *Commonplace Book*. Vol. I of *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, Ed. Don M. Wolfe, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1953, p. 350.

5. Clarifying the reference.

When hee (K Richard) & y<sup>e</sup> ffrench K passed over y<sup>e</sup> bridge at Lyons, on y<sup>e</sup> fall of y<sup>e</sup> bridge, this conceit was built, that: (543)

Teutonicks] They were more cordiall to y<sup>e</sup> Christian cause, then y<sup>e</sup> templers, who somtimes to saue their owne stakes, would play booty w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Turke. (549)

The Turks] haue an order of Monkes, who are called Dervises who will often dance in their Mosques on Tuesdayes & ffrydayes many together, to y<sup>e</sup> sound of barbarous Musick, dances y<sup>t</sup> consist of continuall turnings, untill at a certain stoole they fall upon y<sup>e</sup> earth; & are thought to be rapt in spirit unto celestiaall conversation. ST. (549)

6. Slips of the pen, or rather, of the quill.

How ever great we are, honest and valiant, are herded w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> vulgar; & so kept, as we were only bred to consume corne; or weare our [out] wooll, to drinke the Cities water; ungrac'd, w<sup>th</sup>out authority or marke; trembling beneath their rods, to whom (if all were well in *Rome*) wee should come forth bright axes. Ca. (547)

A captain called Hares—enioyning his souldiers some labour upon his fortifications, & seeing they undertook it coldly, because they feared to mar their garm<sup>ts</sup>, w<sup>ch</sup> were handsome enough, he presently commanded they should uncloath, & every one take y<sup>e</sup> apparell of his fellow. That done & all y<sup>e</sup> souldiers being perswaded y<sup>t</sup> Cassocks would not be <perswa> spared by those who put them on, they wrought in good earnest, & very quickly imposed y<sup>e</sup> task imposed upon them. Max. (559)

*King Lear*, 1448: blindning (“This spelling may be a scribal error caused by attraction to the preceding ‘lightnings’”).<sup>14</sup>

The first “imposed” in the second example is an error, which should be “finished” or “completed.” The scribe makes this error because his eye jumps to the following word “imposed.” The error is similar in nature to the crossed-out “perswa” (i.e. “perswaded”), where the eye wrongly lingers at a preceding word. Only the scribe immediately realizes the error in the middle of the word and corrects it, whereas “imposed” remains an error. We may see that slips of the quill result from slips of the eye.

7. Change for reasons of meter. In the following stanza words are omitted to rectify the iambic pentameter.

<sup>14</sup> Sorelius, Gunnar: *op.cit.*, p. 308; James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps: “Notes upon the Works of Shakespeare,” *King Lear*, i.35.

As when a pile of food p<sup>r</sup>paring fire  
 The breath of artificiall lungs embraves,  
 The caldron prison'd waters strayte conspire  
 And beate y<sup>e</sup> hot brass w<sup>th</sup> rebellious waues,  
 He murmurs, & rebukes their bold desire;  
 Th' impatient liquor frets & foames & raues,  
 Till his oreflowing pride suppres y<sup>e</sup> flame,  
 Whence all his [high] spirits & hot courage came:  
 So boyles y<sup>e</sup> fired Herods [blood-] swolne brest  
 Not to bee slak'd but by a sea of bloud. StT. (561)

8. Expansion.

You may cut her throate [do it] safely; shee hath no bloud left y<sup>t</sup> will bee spilt, 'twill only make another passage for her wind. S. (542)

9. Omission.

Would you be deafe w<sup>th</sup> coughing?

Wouldst see a nest of [new] roses grow

In a bed of reverend snow? (542)

Had her sad oration inscribed in pale characters upon her [tristfull] countenance. CA. (556)

Those damask roses y<sup>t</sup> did strive w<sup>th</sup> white, both fade upon <her damaske roses> my [sallow] cheekes. QE (556)

In the last example we observe a slip of the quill: "her damaske roses" are written down, and then deleted.

10. The conversion of verse into prose.

Nor ranke nor file unless when wee goe a maying, all in a row, or play at course a parke, or tell a tale, to y<sup>e</sup> rank'd lasses at a Whitson ale. CA (564)

Cf. Nor ranck, nor file, lesse when we go a maying

All in a row, or when we be a playng

At Course a Parke, or telling of a tale

To the Ranck't Lasses at a Whitson ale.

What needed such high spirits build such mansions? or what do they heere obtaine wrap'd in flesh, but y<sup>e</sup> glorious name of wreched humane kind, balls to y<sup>e</sup> starres. A (568)

*Cf. What needed so high sprites such mansions blind?  
Or wrapt in flesh what do they here obtaine,  
But glorious name of wretched humaine-kind?  
Balles to the starres,*<sup>15</sup>

The transformation of verse into prose saves space, in conformity with the principle of space economy.<sup>16</sup> One of the consequences of such a transformation is an elimination of stylistic characteristics, and poetry is poetry no more. Obviously early modern readers do not regard the formal feature of poetry (i.e. lineation) as inviolable, as their modern counterpart does; instead, they freely manipulate the forms of language and mold them into whatever shape they like. The fluidity of texts characterizes such an action. As John Kerrigan comments, “The level of textual variation in seventeenth-century manuscripts is too high for us not to conclude that what was transcribed was often corrected in the sense of ‘improved.’”<sup>17</sup> The text is not the sole property of its originator (i.e. writer), but lies at the mercy of its reader, who claims the text as his or her own by reworking it. While the writer creates, the reader re-creates. It seems that early modern readers enjoy more freedom and pleasure than modern readers with the text they are reading. It might be argued, however, this freedom and pleasure is realized at the expense of literary forms. Rather than re-creates, therefore, the early modern reader de-creates.

The fluidity of texts is a rule in early modern reading practice, for the reader actively participates in the process of writing. In the last two examples the compiler reads poetry as prose and dictates that the reader do the same. The act of reading is always already mediated. In other examples the reader makes changes for various reasons—grammatical, metrical, and contextual—and competes with the writer. Evans turns the plural verb form into singular (or vice versa) for grammatical reasons; he omits (or adds) certain words for metrical reasons; he clarifies the reference and expands the original for contextual reasons. He changes the diction and paraphrases in order to vie with the author. Except for slips of the quill, all the variations are intentional. Authorial intention is not as respected as in modern times; rather, readerly intention is put on a par with authorial intention.

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<sup>15</sup> In this instance, change of word order also happens: “Or wrapt in flesh what do they here obtaine” becomes “or what do they heere obtaine wrap’d in flesh.”

<sup>16</sup> For more examples and a discussion of space economy, see: Tianhu Hao, 2014, pp. 62-77.

<sup>17</sup> Kerrigan, John: “The Editor as Reader: Constructing Renaissance Texts”, in: *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 118.

The reader consciously and deliberately re-creates and de-creates. Commonplace reading has an impact on the act of writing as well as the act of reading, for it revises our notions of early modern reading and writing. We cannot ignore the factor of readerly intention, which functions in the realization of authorial intention and conditions the act of reading.

The opposite of the conversion of verse into prose also happens. For example, in John Cotgrave's commonplace book *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (London, 1655), "not more than four or five percent"<sup>18</sup> are disguised prose. This commonplace book is a collection of verse drama, and sometimes the compiler rewrites prose into verse.

In the last example cited above, Evans emends "blind" into "build," which is the result of a misreading. By "such mansions blind," Sidney means the human body or "flesh" in the next line, and the line mourns the gap between spirituality and physicality. Paradoxically, humankind is both "glorious" and "wretched," "high" but "blind." Evans misreads the line and replaces "blind" with "build," a natural association of "mansions." Consequently the sentence is grammatically wrong: "What needed...build...?" It is clear that not all Evans's emendations are good or right. John Kerrigan cautions, with Thomas Lodge, that "The editing reader should be prudent, lest he multiply error."<sup>19</sup>

Emendation is the eleventh type of spontaneous editing, and perhaps the most important type. In Sorelius's "List of Variants," we find many emendations of Shakespeare's texts made by Evans, some of which anticipate "several cherished improvements of Shakespeare's text."<sup>20</sup>

*Measure for measure*, 1111:<sup>21</sup> had. Sorelius notes that "There have been various attempts to emend this line. The compiler's solution agrees with Knight's."

*Much ado about nothing*, 2094-5: beard, bid sorrow go, cry. Sorelius notes that "the compiler anticipated an interpretation which has won wide acceptance."

*A midsummer night's dream*, 484: chill]<sup>22</sup> chinne. Sorelius notes that the compiler "anticipated Grey's emendation."

<sup>18</sup> Bentley, Gerald Eades: "John Cotgrave's *English Treasury of Wit and Language* and the Elizabethan Drama", in: *Studies in Philology* 40 (1943), p. 187n.

<sup>19</sup> Kerrigan, John, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> Sorelius, Gunnar, *op.cit.*, p. 298; the "List of Variants" occurs on pp. 301-08.

<sup>21</sup> The line numbers are those found in Charlton Hinman's edition of the facsimile of the First Folio (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1996).

<sup>22</sup> The reading of the First Folio(1623) is given after the lemma.

*The winter's tale*, 641: drank. Sorelius notes that "Stevens's Variorum likewise emended to 'drank.'"

*King John*, 1190: chafed] cased. Sorelius notes that "Theobald likewise emended to 'chafed.'"

*Henry V*, 1090: summon] commune. Sorelius notes that "Rowe likewise emended to 'summon.'"

*Coriolanus*, 3418: candied] curdied. Sorelius notes that "Daniel and Schmidt conjectured 'candied.'"

*Romeo and Juliet*, 881: vast shore wash'd. Sorelius notes that "The compiler here hit upon the form adopted by modern editors."

*Macbeth*, 2037: catch] latch. Sorelius notes that "Rowe also substituted 'catch' for the obsolete or dialectal 'latch.'"

*Hamlet*, 3858: infernall] eternall. Sorelius notes that "The 1676 Quarto and some later editors have also preferred 'infernall.'"

*Cymbeline*, 1399: Rocks] Oakes. Sorelius notes that "Seward and others (including Peter Alexander) have also changed 'Oakes' to 'Rocks.'"

Spontaneous editing seems here to be an improvement of the mind rather than a corruption of the quill.

The precise nature of Evans's alterations of Shakespeare's texts is clarified by Sorelius's identification that Evans uses the First Folio. His proofs are the following variants:

*As you like it*, 1801: If ever you meete in some fresh cheek the power of fancy, then shall you know the invisible wounds that Loves keene arrowes make. (meet F1; met F2-3)<sup>23</sup>

*All's well that ends well*, 654: They move under the influence of the most receaved star: and though the Devill lead the measure, such are to be followed. (and moue F1; and more F2-3)<sup>24</sup>

*Henry VIII*, 163: wishes you (wishes towards you F1; wishes towards your F2-3)

*Henry VIII*, 2041: requite (F1; require F2-3)

*Romeo and Juliet*, 2726: this day an (thisan day an F1; this winged F2-3)

*Julius Caesar*, 1878: appoint (point F1; print F2-3)

*Macbeth*, 300: Wing (F1; Wine F2-3)

*Cymbeline*, 788: defended (F1; descended F2-3)

<sup>23</sup> Folger MS V.a.79, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Folger MS V.a.79, p. 12.

Those examples in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Macbeth* are particularly persuasive. Still another variant in *Romeo and Juliet* can be cited as telling evidence. In line 672, “My lips to blushing Pilgrims did ready stand,” Evans emends “to” (F1) to “like,” while the obvious reading “two” (F2-3) escapes him. Were he using F2 or F3, he would have no reason to emend “two” to “like.” I agree with Sorelius that Evans uses F1 (1623) rather than F2 (1632).<sup>25</sup> According to my dating of *Hesperides*, F3 (1663) and F4 (1685) are too late for Evans to use. If we study the above passages more closely, we find that the changes severally fall into the ten types we have discussed. For example, the first passage examined above (from *As You Like It*) reads in F1 as:

If euer (as that euer may be neere)  
 You meet in some fresh cheeke the power of fancie,  
 Then shall you know the wouuds [sic] inuisible  
 That Loues keene arrows make.

A quick comparison tells us that Evans converts verse into prose (including a change of word order) and omits the words in the brackets, in addition to the correction of a typo. Some modernization also occurs, for Evans spells “fancie” as “fancy.” More examples are found as follows:

#### 1. Modernization.

3 *Henry VI*, 755: recount] F3; tecompt F1; recompt F2. Sorelius notes that “The reading of F1 is a compositorial error. The compiler seems to have modernized the word in the same way as the editor or compositor of F3. According to the *O.E.D.* ‘recompt’ was current in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.”

3 *Henry VI*, 1663: lave] lade. Sorelius notes that “The verb *lade* ‘To empty by “lading”’ (*O.E.D.* ii.6) had become obsolete by the time of the compiling of the *Commonplace* book. ‘Lave’ was used here in the sense ‘to ladle’ (*O.E.D.* 3).”

*Troilus and Cressida*, 571: would] Should. Sorelius notes that “‘Would’ is the more modern usage here.”

#### 2. Change of word order. Sorelius does not record the “simple changes of the word-order of the original verse to prose word-order.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Sorelius explains that “In cases in which the *Commonplace* book agrees with F2 or F3 rather than F1, the compiler independently seems to have made the same, usually obvious, emendation as the editors or compositors of the later *Folios*” (301n).

<sup>26</sup> Sorelius, *Gunnar*, p. 302.

*As you like it*, 1776: be sterner.<sup>27</sup>

*Troilus and Cressida*, 551: evill Planets. Sorelius notes that “Q likewise has the normal word-order.” This line is quoted twice, both with the same change.

### 3. Singular or plural forms of verbs, nouns and pronouns.

*King John*, 523: do. Sorelius notes that “Rowe likewise emended ‘doth’ to ‘do.’”

*2 Henry VI*, 2047: turne. Sorelius notes that “Pope likewise corrected to ‘turn.’”

*Henry VIII*, 2260: these] This. Sorelius notes that “Pope likewise emended to ‘These.’”

*Troilus and Cressida*, 1653: Pallat tastes. Sorelius notes that “Modern editors also put ‘palate’ in the singular.”

*Coriolanus*, 2639: seeme. Sorelius notes that “The subject is plural.”

*Macbeth*, 723: Sea] Seas. Sorelius notes that “Pope likewise preferred the singular here.”

*Cymbeline*, 2314: were] Was.

### 4. Change of diction.

*The tempest*, 652: lock’d] bound.<sup>28</sup>

*The two gentlemen of Verona*, 1276: dull] dumbe. Sorelius notes that “‘Dumbe silence’ may have seemed tautological to the compiler.”

*Measure for measure*, 436: Virgins] Maidens.

*The comedy of errors*, 1585: favour] grace.

*As you like it*, 1034: purge] Cleanse.

*Romeo and Juliet*, 673: gentle] tender.<sup>29</sup> This is perhaps a scribal error caused by attraction to “gentle” in a preceding line.

### 5. Omission.

*Measure for measure*, 2767: Whole line omitted.

*The comedy of errors*, 519, 523: Whole line omitted.

*The merchant of Venice*, 14: Whole line omitted.

<sup>27</sup> Folger MS V.a.79, p. 15; Folger MS V.b.93, p. 735.

<sup>28</sup> Folger MS V.a.80, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Halliwell-Phillips, James Orchard: “Notes upon the Works of Shakespeare,” *Romeo and Juliet*, i.21.

*All's well that ends well*, 62-64: Lines 62-63 plus first half of l. 64 omitted.  
*2 Henry IV*, 1432: Whole line omitted. Sorelius notes that “Perhaps because the compiler did not understand this line which is very obscure in F1 (and F2). F3 is clearer.”

*Hamlet*, 784-6: Records—that. Sorelius notes that “The compiler inserted the dash to indicate the excision he made in the text of the Folio.”

#### 6. Slips of the quill, or scribal errors.

*Measure for measure*, 1027: throng. Sorelius notes that “This seems to be a slip. The context requires the plural.”

*Measure for measure*, 1837: thousands. Sorelius notes that “This seems to have been a slip, perhaps caused by attraction to the preceding ‘millions’ and ‘volumes.’ On the other occasion this was quoted the Commonplace book agrees with the Folio.”

*3 Henry VI*, 430-1: chains, it, could. Sorelius notes that “The second comma seems to be a slip.”

*Henry VIII*, 671: on] One. Sorelius notes that “This seems to be a scribal error in the Commonplace book.”

The compositorial mistake may be included in this category. Paleographical knowledge helps us resolve a textual crux.

*Henry VIII*, 2940: precipice.<sup>30</sup> Sorelius notes that “The compiler’s emendation supports the theory that ‘Precipit’ in F1 was a compositorial mistake, *t* and *c* being alike in secretary hand and sometimes confused.”

#### 7. Change for the reason of meter. In line 672 of *Romeo and Juliet*, Evans omits the word “did” to normalize the iambic pentameter.

“My lips to blushing Pilgrims did ready stand” (F1)

“My lips like blushing Pilgrims ready stand”<sup>31</sup>

8. Changes for contextual reasons. When entered into the commonplace book, passages undergo a process of decontextualization. The new context, or the lack of context, demands some necessary textual changes. Instances of this category are many.

*A midsummer night's dream*, 1214: who more engilds the night (F1)

You more enguuld the night (Evans) Sorelius notes that the changes are “caused by the lack of context.”

<sup>30</sup> *Idem*, *Henry VIII*, ii.12.

<sup>31</sup> *Idem*, *Romeo and Juliet*, i.21.

*All's well that ends well*, 64: May thy] thy. Sorelius notes that “The addition of ‘May’ was made necessary by the omission of the preceding lines.”

*The winter's tale*, 107: think] seek. Sorelius notes that “This change seems to have been made to adapt the line to the heading under which it was included.”

*I Henry VI*, 2030: Which] Who. Sorelius notes that “This change was caused by the lack of context in the Commonplace book.”

*Richard III*, 397: my finger] F2-3; thy Finger F1.<sup>32</sup> Sorelius notes that “This quotation is found under the heading ‘Presenting & Presents.’ The compiler may have had in mind a situation in which the wearer of the ring was going to present it to somebody.”

*Henry VIII*, 3371: I wish all comfort and joy. Sorelius notes that “‘I wish’ was needed because of the lack of context in the Commonplace book.”

Sorelius contends that Evans’s changes are “very small” and “occasionally of interest.”<sup>33</sup> I think that the readerly alterations, though small, are interesting everywhere, for they vividly reveal early modern reading practice. Sorelius’s list records substantive variants only and omits accidental changes.<sup>34</sup> From the angle of scholarly editing, the latter have no authority; yet from the perspective of early modern reading practice, every readerly alteration matters. Taken together they define the characteristics of early modern reading practice, which include the fluidity of the text, the subjectivity of the reader, and the multiplicity of the authorial intention. The early modern notions of the text, the reader, and the authorial intention are plural, not singular. The reader takes an active part in the production of texts, and different readers read the same text differently. Even the same reader reads the same text differently at different times. Sorelius provides many examples where the compiler copies the same extract differently on different occasions. Sorelius studies the fragmented version *Halliwell* only; sometimes the readings vary from one version of *Hesperides* to another. For example, “A marble to her tears” in *V.b.93* (*Measure for measure*, 1450) changes to “A Marble to my teares” in *Halliwell*;<sup>35</sup> “for every pelting officer” in *V.b.93* changes to “for every petty pelting officer” in *Halliwell* (“petty” is inserted in different ink),<sup>36</sup> while the

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*, *Richard III*, iii.100.

<sup>33</sup> Sorelius, Gunnar, p. 301.

<sup>34</sup> But Sorelius is not consistent with himself when he records the variant “y<sup>u</sup>” for “thou” (*Cymbeline*, 1103). The former is merely an abbreviated spelling of the latter.

<sup>35</sup> Folger MS V.b.93, p. 532; Folger MS V.a.79, p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> Folger MS V.b.93, p. 735; Folger MS V.a.79, p.7.

original in F1 reads “For euery pelting petty Officer” (*Measure for measure*, 869). The reader seems not to follow the authorial intention closely, if we accept that F1 represents Shakespeare’s intention best (after the missing manuscripts), and the practice has a strong scent of casualness and plurality. The production of the text and the materialization of the authorial intention both vary with readerly practice, which in itself varies from reader to reader and from time to time.

The manual corrections in the manuscript reveal the processes of reading and pondering on the part of the reader. Examples are as follows:

*Twelfth night*, 2382-84: O my deare Anthonio! how have the howres rack’d and tortur’d me since I lost <you> thee? (“You” is first written, and then crossed out, replaced by “thee,” the reading in F1.)<sup>37</sup>

*The two gentlemen of Verona*, 212: his] the. Sorelius notes that “This line is quoted twice. In the second instance the scribe first wrote ‘his’ but corrected to ‘the,’” the reading in F1.

*I Henry VI*, 2030: Which] Who. Sorelius notes that “‘Which’ is the first word in the compiler’s quotation. He first wrote ‘He’ but crossed this out.”

*Coriolanus*, 3418: candied] curdied. Sorelius notes that “The compiler first wrote ‘curdied’ but deleted it and wrote ‘candied’ over the line.”

*Macbeth*, 247: “seated” omitted. Sorelius notes that “This line is quoted twice. In one of the quotations the compiler first wrote ‘seate’ and then crossed out the word. The second quotation agrees with the Folio.”

Whether he agrees with his copy (F1) or not, the compiler shows himself as an intelligent reader, intelligent and alert. In the last example, for instance, he decides to delete the word in the middle of writing it (*seate-seated*). These fascinating traces of reading and thinking would be lost without the evidence preserved in the manuscript. We see how an early modern reader exercises critical judgment by deleting one word and inserting another. It could be argued that the critical reader gradually emerges through the practices of spontaneous editing and commonplace reading. As Ann Moss comments, “Indeed the commonplace-book may be said to have invented the critical reader, in a modern sense.”<sup>38</sup>

However, the early modern critical reader is of a segmentalized mind, for commonplace reading is what Robert Darnton calls “segmental reading,” in contrast with the modern sequential reading. The rise of the novel encourages

<sup>37</sup> Folger MS V.a.79, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Ann Moss, 1993, p. 56; 1999, pp. 111-2.

“the habit of perusing books from cover to cover,”<sup>39</sup> whereas Evans reads the romance, the precursor of the novel, in small chunks. Darnton thus describes segmental reading: “Unlike modern readers, who follow the flow of a narrative from beginning to end, early modern Englishmen read in fits and starts and jumped from book to book. They broke texts into fragments and assembled them into new patterns by transcribing them in different sections of their notebooks. Then they reread the copies and rearranged the patterns while adding more excerpts. Reading and writing were therefore inseparable activities.”<sup>40</sup> In the early modern segmental reading, the reader drags fragments out of their original contexts, imposes his own patterns on them, and writes his own book by “jump[ing] from book to book.” In the process the plot is sacrificed; the concept of the organic whole does not hold; the only sequence that works is the alphabetical order of commonplace headings. While it may be argued that the heading and the various extracts listed under it create a new context—what David R. Parker calls “manuscript context”<sup>41</sup>—for each of the excerpts, a commonplace reader reads essentially in decontextualized fragments. Some say that a man is what he reads; I say: a man is how he reads. The culture of the commonplace book cultivates a commonplace mentality, which saturates every aspect of early modern literature and culture.

Because of the critical judgment involved in it, the commonplace book may be said to facilitate the invention of the modern critical reader. First, to decide which text to commonplace and which extract to enter under what heading, a reader must exercise critical judgment. Like reading and writing, selection and evaluation are inseparable activities. Second, as a spontaneous editor, the compiler of a commonplace book uses critical judgment to determine the verbal form of his excerpts. A commonplace reader not only reads, copies, edits, and compiles, but also selects, judges, evaluates, and writes. He writes a commonplace mind; he also writes an early modern literature and culture in the mirror of the commonplace mind.

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<sup>39</sup> Darnton, Robert, p. 86.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 82.

<sup>41</sup> Parker, David R., p. 164.

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# **The Beginnings of the Modern Festival: the Post-war Edinburgh Theatre and Music Festival. How a Community Recovered through Culture<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

After the end of the Second World War, the cultural and social context in Europe was austere, altered by death and destruction. The lack of communication had set in between nations. This appalling disruption is seen as a ripple effect of the distance imposed by the Iron Curtain, the Cold War and the period of tensions, as well as political and ideological confrontations that followed.

One of the most important performing arts festivals in the world, the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), dates back to 1947 and takes place annually, in August, in Scotland. The main purpose of initiating this event immediately after the end of the Second World War was driven by the ambition of providing a platform for the flourishing of the human spirit, as well as overcoming the horrors of war, relaunching a community by means of culture.

**Keywords:** Edinburgh International Festival; EIF; festival; Scotland.

## **Rezumat**

După încheierea celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial, contextul cultural-social în Europa era unul auster, marcat de pierderi și distrugere. Lipsa de comunicare se instalase între națiuni, cauzată și de distanțarea impusă de Cortina de Fier, de Războiul Rece și de perioada plină de tensiuni și confruntări politice și ideologice care a urmat.

Unul dintre cele mai importante festivaluri de artele spectacolului din lume, Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), datează din 1947 și are loc anual, în luna august, în Scoția. Scopul inițierii acestui eveniment imediat după încheierea celui de-al Doilea Război

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<sup>1</sup> The article is based on adapted texts from the book by Ion M. Tomuș: *O instituție culturală: Festivalul Internațional de Teatru de la Sibiu*, Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române, București, 2013.

Mondial a fost ambiția de a oferi o platformă pentru înflorirea spiritului uman și de a trece peste ororile războiului, relansând un dat urban prin cultură.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Festivalul Internațional de la Edinburgh; EIF; festival; Scoția.

After the end of the Second World War, Europe was left with an austere cultural-social context, marked by loss and destruction. Nations were not communicating with each other, also because of the distancing instated by the Iron Curtain, the Cold War and the ensuing period of political and ideological tensions and confrontations.

One of the world's most important performing arts festivals, the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), goes back to 1947 and takes place annually in August, in Scotland. The reason this event was initiated right after the end of the Second World War was to create a platform allowing for the human spirit to flourish, move on from the horrors of the war and relaunch urban life through culture.

From the standpoint of the local identity of the space where this event takes place, one would not say that the city of Edinburgh had much to offer, while its isolated geographical position, as well as the vagarious weather were clear drawbacks for organizing any event there. However, director Rudolf Bing was adamant to give life to the plan of organizing the festival. He risked a lot, as he had no certainty that it would be a success, and the city, with all its history and architecture, became the ideal framework for what would become the Edinburgh International Festival, encouraging dialogue between peoples and cultures from the very start. At the inaugural editions, Sir John Falconer, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, stated: 'History will dictate if the year 1947 has been a focal point in the history of our city'. What followed were over 70 years of presenting artists from all over the world, giving rise to other festivals too and turning Edinburgh into a world-renowned festival city.

The first editions enjoyed excellent responses, with cultural promoters and local authorities realising that good communication and strategic cultural collaboration were the recipe to draw the attention of the whole of Great Britain and to make their event known outside its borders.

The Edinburgh International Festival grew and generated a series of satellite festivals, such as Edinburgh Fringe, Military Tattoo Festival, Jazz and Blues Festival, Book Festival, Film Festival, Mela Festival. All these coexist in good health on the same territory, manifesting no competition or rivalry and solely focusing on presenting quality cultural events to the audience.

As previously mentioned, the Edinburgh International Festival was organized as an antidote to the austerity suffered by the population during the war. Its initiators wished to give the chance to people of all nationalities to come together in peace and celebrate arts.

Local stories say that the idea of the Edinburgh International Festival was born in 1942, when the then director of the Glyndebourne Opera, Rudolf Bing, and soprano Audrey Mildmay walked on Princess Street after having watched the opera show *Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay. Under the moonlight, the Edinburgh Castle was especially charming. The soprano allegedly said that that would make a wonderful place for a festival. Her husband, an influential man of wealth of the time, financially supported the Glyndebourne Festival for six years (1934-1939).

As the war had just started in 1939, Rudolf Bing incessantly looked for solutions to attract funds, but the possibilities for his festival to survive looked ever dimmer. However, he got the idea to use the resources of the Glyndebourne Festival to organize a small-scale music and theatre festival. Considering the context of the time, it was obvious that organizing a large-scale event was out of the question. Big cities that hosted such events before 1939 were bombed, and the population was too traumatized and devastated from living through the war. Bing tried to get support from the Oxford Town Hall to materialize his plan, but the local authorities could not or did not want to grant him the necessary resources.

During a meeting with the British Council members in London, in 1944, the representative of Scotland, Henry Harvey Wood, suggested that the event should take place in his native town, Edinburgh, a provincial town that had not been destroyed in the war, was rightly sized to walk through, and was situated close to the picturesque Highlands, in a beautiful, green environment, also boasting impressive history. Moreover, it could host as much as 150,000 visitors in theatres, concert halls, museums, galleries, and hotels. At first, Bing did not think Edinburgh could provide the ideal space, as he believed it was too big to offer an intimate framework for the warm ambiance of a festival, but having no other variants, he visited Edinburgh to get to know the local supporters of his idea: the representative of Scotland in the British Council, Henry Harvey Wood, Murray Watson, who worked for the newspaper *Scotsman*, Lady Rosebery, the wife of the Regional Commissioner for Scotland, patron of the arts and music enthusiast, and Sidney Newman, professor at the Edinburgh University. This group of initiators was fully supported by Sir John Falconer, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, an art amateur and lawyer well-connected to the local administration, who was aware of the importance of organizing such a festival with a real potential to improve international relations and build up its city's reputation on the artistic world map.

The help granted by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh was priceless, as he had huge influence and could convince his colleagues in the city council of this event and solve unforeseen situations faced by the initiators. The local artistic community started to throw spanners in their work for fear of competition, while the budget was also problematic. Therefore, Bing came up with a draft programme, emphasizing the quality of performances and getting a realistic picture of the costs.

The next organizing stage consisted in finding a way to attract partners. In 1945, Bing met the representatives of the Edinburgh Hotels Association, the Edinburgh Travellers Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the theatres, who were all thrilled with his proposals and approved his contacting foreign companies through the Glyndebourne Society and discussing the possibility of their participation to the Edinburgh Festival, asking for details regarding the costs. It was not an easy endeavour, especially since the artistic community in Edinburgh showed little appreciation for the fact that Bing, who was not a local, was trying to intervene in their artistic sector. What is more, he made a major mistake by calling the inhabitants of the city 'English', and then suggesting that the festival should open with a religious service at Saint Giles Cathedral. In a city strongly influenced by religion, this initiative sounded unimaginable and blasphemous.

Having Murray Watson, the editor of the *Scotsman*, among his supporters, Bing designed the publication of a number of press releases announcing the event he was preparing for 1947. The aim of this action was to prepare the local community for what he was planning as a grand project for the time, but also to mend his previous mistakes which brought him the anger of the people. The reactions were positive, as the only concerned group were hotel owners, uncertain that they could accommodate a massive number of tourists.

In 1946, Bing came up with the first budget proposal: £20,000. Supported by the Lord Provost, he got the approval to organize the event between 24 August-13 September 1947. *The Festival Society* was therefore set up, presided over by the Lord Provost, with Rudolf Bing as artistic director, and Ian Hunter, a well-known agent, his assistant. This was the first organizing team.

Nevertheless, obstacles were far from over. In the following, we will see that some of the difficulties faced by the 1946 organizing team are still valid today for performing arts event organizers: budget constraints, shortage of accommodation, shortage of or underequipped venues, insufficient staff, etc.

As mentioned above, one of the main problems they faced was the logistics of accommodating a great number of visitors in the city. As per the Lord Provost's call, inactive hotels were put into service, additional beds were made available in pensions, guest houses, student residences and hostels, and the community

made available about 6,000 beds in their own households. Suddenly, all the city dwellers were enthusiastic about how their town was preparing for celebration.

Another major problem was the shortage of venues. The City Council only owned *The Usher Hall*, as the other venues were private and none of them was sufficiently equipped technical-wise. Thus, *The Festival Society* had to rent, through complicated contracts with the owners, spaces such as *Freemason's Hall*, *Lyceum*, *King's Theatre* and *Empire*.

Then, there was another sensitive problem of bringing highly regarded artists to the festival. Bing had to convince them to accept his invitation to an event that was utterly unknown, that had no tradition or name, that might not even go according to plan. His good Austrian friend, Bruno Walter, at the time living in the USA, was immediately interested in conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, with which he had collaborated in the past. The British company *Old Vic* presented *The Taming of the Shrew* and, although the audience expected a second show, organizational problems prevented it from taking place.

Besides, Bing was extremely worried about Edinburgh not being capable to generate a festival ambiance, as it happened in big European capitals. The fact that he wanted to bring high-quality performances was no guarantee that the audience would feel the celebration and the spirit of the festival.

Despite all these uncertainties and difficulties, the city became packed with open, happy elegant spectators, who expressed their delight in taking place in a well-organized event and with a very good programme. Post-war rigidity was put aside, and an impressive number of people went to Edinburgh, mainly convinced by the press releases managed by Harvey Wood in *Scotsman*.

An iconic location for the city, the Edinburgh Castle, was threatened by a decision of the Department of Energy to no longer illuminate it, as this was considered a groundless waste at a time when the people suffered from shortages. The community had an unexpected reaction to this decision, offering to reduce the ration of coal in their households to support illuminating the castle. In the end, the Department of Energy agreed to illuminate the castle for four days, conferring the much-needed warm ambiance.

The first edition was inaugurated on 24 August 1947 by *L'Orchestre des Concertes Colonne*, conducted by Paul Paray, a concert which enjoyed a huge response from the audience, and which was presented as a consecration of the relationship between Scotland and France. The concert of the Vienna Philharmonic, conducted by Bruno Walter, had six representations, one of which was attended by the United Kingdom's Queen Elizabeth II.

The *theatre* section included the highly successful performances *The School for Wives* and *Ondine*, by the French company Louis Jouvet. As per the Queen's request, the performance *The School for Wives* was presented a second time, as Princess Margaret had wished to see it. All tickets for all representations were quickly sold out.

The festival ambiance was rounded up by the unofficial events organized by local artists, as suggested by the Lord provost, which contributed to the diversity of the festival and showed the audience the local identity of the city.

The press echoed the event massively, as journalists from all around the world attended the festival (275 journalists from 153 publications). *Radio Diffusion Paris* made numerous transmissions from Edinburgh and connections were established with 45 European radio channels. Even though there were some complaints regarding the programme - that there was too little ballet and that visual arts and choir music had been neglected, the festival's triumph was certain.

The local community was very content with how their city had filled with events and they were happy to help, while private volunteering associations contributed to the smooth running of the artistic events.

The festival club, initiated by the organizers and hosted by the Edinburgh Council Hall, was an informal platform allowing for artists to meet during the festival, discussing, debating, and starting future collaborations.

From a financial standpoint, the estimated budget of £20,000 was not exceeded. The organizers considered the audience's direct requests and observations: creating categories for poetry, exhibitions, traditional Scottish music, etc.

Perhaps the most important satellite generated by the Edinburgh International Festival was *The Fringe*, i.e. the unofficial section of the festival. Six theatre companies whose performances were not admitted in the official selection hired venues on their own account and presented their shows during the festival. Despite the fact that initially this initiative was a beautiful addition to the local cultural landscape and the celebration ambiance, it quickly became a kind of a thorn in the side of the greater festival, presenting the newest and most controversial productions. The performances included in the festival took place especially during the day and in the evening, while *The Fringe* programme unfolded during the evening. At the same time, the Edinburgh Film Festival was born, competing with similar events in Cannes and Venice.

*Quality* has always been the main selection criteria for the shows presented at the Edinburgh International Festival, and the artistic management never compromised on this topic. In certain situations, it was necessary to consider geo-

political criteria when selecting the events, but in order to promote the political rapprochement between cultures, the organizers carefully planned all the *sensitive* participations at the EIF.

The fact that the first edition was a huge success and that the city inhabitants were directly involved in the organizing effort by receiving participants in their own houses, and by their willingness to renounce their ration of coal to illuminate the castle proved how a community can develop through culture. As active and voluntary participants in the preparations for the celebration, their optics on the event changed completely: if at the beginning they were sceptical and wary of this “invasions” of their city, in the end, they looked enthusiastic and glad to receive guests. This is a perfect sum up of the joy of new beginnings and how the urban environment can be populated by artistic events, helping to regenerate the spirit of a community. Going back to the extremely difficult situation faced by the people after the end of the war, it was clear that Great Britain, as well as all European countries needed this change.

Therefore, exploiting local identity and promoting geographic space represented both an engine for social, cultural, and economic development, and a relevant business card to access the Scottish cultural offer.

Over time, the international dimension and the rich cultural diversity resulted from the presentation of performances from France - with its artistic elegance, Italy – with its century-old tradition in the art of improvisation and *commedia dell’arte*, Japan –with its in Europe at that time unknown *nō* theatre, Germany – with its characteristic stage precision and force, the United States – with its constant interest for social current affairs and pop culture, Great Britain – with their characteristic rigour, always preoccupied to maintain a high artistic level. Besides these countries, there have been many others, all of them with a strong local flavour: Greece, Russia, Latin American states and last but not least Romania, which has been present at the Edinburgh International Festival many times.

*Translated into English by Camelia Oană*

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# Reflections on the Recovery of the Romanian Theatrical Heritage

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## Abstract

The study presents a series of reflections on the Romanian theatrical heritage, shaped by taking into account the Romanian cultural, social, technological and economic context and the theatrical trends. Over time, with respect to this context, artistic management has undergone technological, cultural, and social changes that have influenced the processes of selection, conception, construction, planning and representation of theater performances, the processes of creating and transmitting artistic messages, involving the public in the artistic process of creation and establishing the repertoire, the relationship between the public and the artists, and so on. The reflections on the recovery of the theatrical heritage concern both macro-culture and micro-culture levels, even if these can be separated only in an artificial manner, for didactic purposes, in order to be analyzed. In fact, there is a two-way 'communication' between them since they are interrelated and provide a functional integrative-dynamic unity in order to ensure the value of the art that is promoted.

## Keywords:

theater; theatrical heritage; artistic management; macro-culture level; micro-culture level.

## Rezumat

Studiul prezintă o serie de reflecții referitoare la patrimoniul teatral românesc, formalizate prin luarea în considerare a contextului cultural, social, tehnologic și economic specific României, și tendințele din domeniul teatral. În timp, în funcție de acest context, managementul artistic a suferit modificări, schimbările tehnologice, culturale și sociale influențând procesele de selecție, concepere, construcție, planificare și reprezentare a spectacolelor de teatru, procesele de construcție și transmitere a mesajelor artistice, implicarea publicului în procesul de creație artistică și de stabilire a repertoriului, relația artiști-public ș.a. Reflecțiile referitoare la recuperarea patrimoniului teatral sunt organizate pe nivelurile macroculturii și microculturii, deși ele nu pot fi separate decât într-un mod artificial, didactic, în scopul analizei acestora. În realitate, între ele există o „comunicare” bidirecțională; ele sunt interrelaționate, asigură o unitate integrativ-dinamică funcțională și interacționează reciproc, în vederea asigurării valorii artei promovate.

## Cuvinte cheie:

teatru; patrimoniu teatral; management artistic; nivelul macroculturii; nivelul microculturii.

Performing arts represent cultural public goods that also have educational and social components. Therefore, the responsibilities of theatrical institutions that lie at the basis and promote cultural theatrical production are increasing. Theaters are cultural institutions that provide cultural programmes and complex artistic experiences, which are based on scientifically grounded interactions and balanced by theatrical performances. Theatres provide cultural programmes, projects and activities, educational programmes, projects and activities as well as complementary activities taking into account the spatial-temporal, social, cultural, economic contexts, etc.

Theatre education is an integral part of artistic education, which in turn is “an essential integral part of aesthetic education that capitalizes on the formation of human personality, the educational potential of beauty in art (literature, music, drawing, painting, dance, choreography, theatre, etc.), aiming to develop and enhance the creative capacities specific to each genre of art, artistic skills, as well as artistic behavior. Thus, artistic education represents a complex, continuous and systematic process of educating people to understand the creative arts and their influence in human development”<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, one could state that in building and developing cultural capital the theatre can be considered a cultural and an educational tool, an extension of education, from which it follows that, at the level of macro-culture, it is necessary to have systematic and consistent preoccupations for the elaboration of cultural policies and strategies that would ensure the achievement of the theatres’ mission and the assertion of the national cultural identity through performing arts.

Discussing the instrumental value of theatre, Federico García Lorca, promoter of the concepts of democracy and cultural democratization, stated that “the theatre is one of the most expressive and useful tools for educating a country and that it is the barometer that marks its grandeur or its decay. A sensible and well-targeted theatre in all its dimensions, from tragedy to vodevil, can change in a few years the sensitivity of people from a country; a destroyed theatre, where hooves replace wings, can make ugly and put to sleep a whole city. Theatre is a school of tears and joy, a free tribune where people can highlight community moral values or mistakes and can explain in a lively manner the eternal norms of man’s hearts and feelings. People who do not help or encourage their theatre, if this has not already died, then it is surely dying; just as a theatre that does not take the social pulse, the

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<sup>1</sup> Bocoș, Mușata-Dacia (coord.); Răduț-Taciu, Ramona; Stan, Cornelia: *Dicționar praxiologic de pedagogie*, Vol. II:E-H, Pitești, EdituraParalela 45, 2016 (my translation).

historical pulse, the drama of its people, and the real color of the landscape and the spirit, with laughter and tears, does not have the right to be called a theatre, but a gaming room or a place where one is engaged in that horrible thing that is called wasting time”<sup>2</sup>.

A diachronic analysis reveals that the theatrical genre retained its specificity over time, its essential elements remaining the same, but it has diversified its language, methods and techniques of artistic expression, which has led to changes in the concept of the public’s role in the creation and development of events. “Essentially, the Western theatre, music and dance performances have not undergone major transformations over the past 2500 years, as the show has ultimately been a direct encounter, a transfer of emotions between performers and their audience. From this point of view, the creation and representation of a show, from ancient Greece to the present day, involves the same stages. The Athenian people’s Theatron continues even today to be the same place where artistic action is contemplated, where comedy, tragedy, dance and music are used to express states of mind, concerns, conflicts, and themes of major social interest for individual and for humanity. What has changed in addition to the obvious ideological, aesthetic, social, political, and religious differences that distinguish our time from that era refers to both creative and social concepts, as well as the managerial processes and technology required to produce and stage a performance. On the one hand, producers and interpreters have deepened and diversified their language, methods and techniques of artistic expression. On the other hand, the producer-spectator relationship has also undergone substantial transformations over time. In recent decades, for example, a unidirectional relationship has been pursued which, in the best case, aimed at facilitating access to culture on the basis of democratic principles, to strategies for concrete engagement of the public in the process of creation or establishing the repertoire.”<sup>3</sup>

Over time, arts management has undergone changes due to technological, cultural and social changes that have influenced the processes of selection, creation, construction, planning and representation of theater performances. In practice, there have been coexisting two complementary ways of generating impulses, orientations and tendencies to adapt, change and transform the management of theatrical activities. These have specific roles in producing ameliorative and strategic, reactive and anticipatory changes:

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<sup>2</sup> Bonet, Lluís; Schargorodskz, Hector: *Theatre management: models and strategies for cultural venues*, editor coordonator: Carmen Croitoru, translation: Carmen Stanciu, Alexandru-Emil Avram, București, Editura Pro Universitaria, 2017, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

- on the one hand, the audience finds itself in a permanent dynamic and wants to engage in total artistic experience, thus determining the reconsideration of the artistic values and options;

- on the other hand, the emergence of new intrinsic needs of expression, creation and artistic innovation in the field of performing arts leads to the diversification of forms of artistic expression and artistic events and acts.

Taking into account the current specific cultural, social, technological and economic context of our country, we present a series of reflections on the recovery of its theatrical heritage, as well as the trends in this field. These are organized on the levels of macro-culture and micro-culture, even if these can be separated only in an artificial manner, for didactic purposes, in order to be analyzed. In fact, there is a two-way 'communication' between them since they are interrelated and provide a functional integrative-dynamic unity meant to ensure the value of the art that is promoted. These vertical structures of interaction also highlight that:

- top-down relations have a legal determination, i.e. from the context and formal conditions at the macro-level (legal, political, cultural, social, economic and technological) towards artistic institutions and structures, cultural policies and strategies and the artistic results obtained at micro-level; these interconnections exert a control function in the sense that from the macro-level to the micro-level there is a continuous information and decision flow, monitoring and controlling the ways of capitalizing on the existing regulations at the macro-level;

- bottom-up relations, i.e. from artistic institutions and structures to national public policies, from the operative management to strategic management, from artistic results to medium and long-term strategies, and towards the restructuring of the performance market; these relationships exert a feedback function in the sense that from the micro-level towards the macro-level, a flow of information is generated, referring to the artistic management decisions, which makes it possible to follow, verify and evaluate the quality of the artistic events, and then, to regulate the managerial activity.

### **A) At the level of macro-culture**

The social role of the theatre is to increase the cultural capital of the community and the society, thus contributing to the development of the community.

The aims and the objectives that guide the activity of theatres are also determined by the characteristics of the community, of the cultural patrimony, cultural heritage, the consistency and the vitality of the local artistic domain and the

artistic life of the community, cultural traditions and customs, cultural needs, the interest in culture of the community members, as well as the social, political, economic and technological environment.

### **B) At the micro-culture level**

Shared experience indicates that the institutional and organizational management of theaters, namely the paradigms which they refer to, significantly influence the quality and viability of artistic projects and cultural practices. Nowadays, professional cultural management is carried out with management teams of professionals who are specialized in management and in other related scientific fields and who have specific competences that can be used in taking different actions and managerial decisions.

- The theatre asserting itself as a cultural standard of the community, as an institution and an emblematic and defining construction of the city, a community symbol (cultural, aesthetic, social, and architectural) which the members of the community take pride in. Modern theatre becomes a space for social, cultural and artistic participation and finds itself on an ascending path.
- Promoting a strategic and a proactive management.
- Promoting a management for artistic performance understood as:
  - a strategic process, which addresses the general problems of the theatre and the achievement of its strategic objectives;
  - an integrated process, since it gathers all the levels of artistic performance management and aims to merge organizational objectives with individual and team goals. In addition, this integrated process involves a collaboration between the artistic and the production strategies, and an interaction with the general social system, the aesthetic system, the moral system, the geographic system, the technological system, etc.;
  - as a continuous, evolutionary, iterative, and cyclical process since it is forward-looking, towards development, aiming at reaching a continuous improvement of artistic performances and the achievement of superior results, as well as the continuous professional development of all the members of the organization;
  - as a process based on continuous *feedback*, as all decisions taken are based on feedback obtained by measuring artistic performance at all levels - strategic, operational and individual; the measurement of

artistic performance represents a reference activity, according to which managerial approaches and actions are designed;

- as a transparent, community-based process, that is internally and externally assessed, in order to improve the efficiency of the organization.

The artistic environment is characterized by the fact that its constitutive elements (programmes, projects, events, performances, etc.) have a material and a concrete dimension, as well as a symbolic and abstract dimension corresponding to the area of creativity. Thus, the management of artistic performance supposes the appreciation of the artistic values and aspects in addition to the aesthetic, philosophical and axiological values and aspects.

- Redefining the profile of loyal consumers and ensuring a balance between the loyalty of longtime spectators (on the one hand) and the attraction, cultural literacy and education of new audience segments (on the other hand), with regard to the requirements of the artistic act and the delivery of quality and variety.

We believe that it is not only the number of viewers that is important, but also the number of performances, the “life” of a show, and the shows scheduled at the public’s request. Moreover, the management of theaters must be concerned with identifying strategies for public communication based on good knowledge of the community, of audience categories, and the typology and spectators’ profiles.

- Increasing the contribution of artistic education to human development through policies and strategies meant to stimulate the activity of pre-university education institutions that organize instructional theatre arts activities, as well as cultural and / or research centers in the field of arts education (theatre) and the preservation of cultural heritage.

In this respect, the Barometer of Cultural Consumption states that: “[...] the landscape of performance arts does not seem to include a concern for the age groups at which consumer habits are formed, namely 14-18 years, since our analysis of these categories indicate that there isn’t any explicit offer”<sup>4</sup>.

In conclusion, theatre represents a cultural and an educational tool whose characteristics can efficiently be capitalized on, given the fact that at macro-cultural level there are some systematic and consistent preoccupations for the elaboration of cultural policies and strategies that take into account the cultural, social, technological and national economic context and also the theatrical trends.

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<sup>4</sup> *Barometer of Cultural Consumption 2014. Local Culture and Global Culture*, National Institute for Research and Cultural Training, Bucharest, Editura Pro Universitaria, 2015, p. 96.

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**INCURSIUNI ÎN LABORATORUL  
ARTELOR SPECTACOLULUI**

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**EINBLICKE INS LABOR  
DER DARSTELLENDEN KÜNSTE**

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**VIEW IN THE LABORATORY  
OF PERFORMING ARTS**

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# The Challenges of the Scenographer. Designed Costumes - Crossed Costumes

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## **Abstract**

This article sums up the secrets of the scenographer's work, his or her dreams in art, his or her techniques, to offer the imaginary valences of the real world, the ins and outs of stage design, the thinking patterns of a costume and setting creator and, not least, excerpts of artistic memories which involve the profiling, layout of common creation situations amongst artists (stage designer – director, stage designer – actor, director – actor) and which serve to shape the idea of need in art, in theatrical art – the need of a common, high, creative goal, supported by the whole team of creators.

## **Keywords:**

theatre; art; scenic design; set design; costume; fine arts; plastic arts; performing arts.

## **Rezumat**

Articolul însumează secretele muncii unui scenograf, credințele sale vizavi de artă, tehnicile sale, prin care oferă imaginarului valențele realului, dedesubturile creației scenografice, tiparele gândirii unui creator de costume și decoruri și, nu în ultimul rând, fragmente de amintiri artistice care implică conturarea, creionarea situațiilor de creație comună dintre artiști (scenograf – regizor, scenograf – actor, regizor – actor) și care servesc decupării ideii unei necesități în artă, în arta teatrală – necesitatea unui scop comun, înalt, creativ, susținut de întreaga echipă de creatori.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

teatru; artă; scenografie; design; costum; Arte Frumoase; arte plastice; arte performative.

*“The dislike, but also the curiosity, inspired by a wax museum – aren't they due to the body's representation in motion?”<sup>1</sup>*

There are, in other cultural spaces, scenographers who have only mastered in making the setting, costumes or props. I myself was invited by the Opera

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<sup>1</sup> Appia, Adolphe: *Opera de artă vie (The Work of Living Art)*, Editura Unitext, București, 2000, p. 86.

in Stockholm in order to make the props of an opera. My opinion is that great managers lead and make the whole specter of a scenic design for a show. When I worked with Charles Muller for the show *Scene dintr-o căsnicie (Scenes from a Marriage)*, at Theatre d'Esch Luxembourg, I was offered the possibility to choose – and I chose to create both the set and the costumes. I had assistants for each and every department, but it was me to coordinate the whole scenic design. When two scenographers work for the same show, they will sometimes try to go different directions in order to exhibit their own work, and to receive a larger part of the budget, which is most of the times counterproductive. I have also met scenographers who decided they would never make the costumes, but only the set. Some of them managed to team up well enough, to join others with common interests, and to create the scenic design together.

Regardless of the type of scenographer (with studies in plastic art or design), they all have, at a certain point, the task to design the costume in a show, whatever the show may be: theatre, dance, opera, classical ballet, musical etc. Each and every such genre will benefit from a specific approach. The issue with costumes is very special in the artistic activity of a theatre creator. The phrase I used, “theatre creator”, goes beyond defining the person who graduated from a theatre school, but it regards any artist which is part of the theatrical phenomena, if there is an interest in such art form. A scenographer is in charge with the whole visual concept of the show, with designing the space and the costumes – he is a complex artist, with multiple facets. I insist upon him being an artist found amidst arts, in charge with each and every nuance of the show aesthetics. For a scenographer, costumes may be the most sensitive part of his creation, as approaching such topic gets much more intimate and out of the ordinary. As well in case of the setting, in his artistic pursuits for making the costumes, the scenographer will start by discovering the text (or the music) and by joining the vision of the director.

The design of costumes is directly and tightly related to the human body, which is not just a construction in motion, but it's perfection itself created by the divinity. On stage, the human body can turn into unexpected, almost infinite shapes, and when coordinated by the mind of a good actor or dancer, it gives birth to magical expressions. “The costume always there in shows, as a sign of the character and its disguise, too long settled for a role which only served to dress the actor in order to match a certain condition or situation. These days, the costumes have within a theatre show a much more ambitious role, it multiplies its functions and blends into the overall with direct connections to the scene significance.”<sup>2</sup> In the light of such

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<sup>2</sup> Pavis, Patrice: *Dictionnaire du théâtre*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2019, p. 120. (translated into Romanian by the author of this article).

things, costumes do not exist *per se* and we will not consider them mere products to be exhibited on the actor's body. From the very beginning of the process to imagine a costume, the scenographer needs to discern its purpose, that is, to fulfill the actor's performance and to help him or her define the character, once the show evolves; it becomes a shadow of the character, follows and fulfills its motion. Better than that, costumes need not to be a burden or invariable the actors have to acquire. Scenographers are not the absolute creators offering clothes to bodies, in order for them to act on stage. It needs to be valid regardless of the theory or belief beyond the creation and irrespective of the type of costumes made. I mean, in this particular case, crossed-costumes or hybrid-costumes. Such terminology is not only a tagline but carries the significance of the epiphanies I had with time. It is the organic result of my discoveries as a scenographer, of my work over a long period of time. Crossed-costumes and hybrid-costumes are remarks which pertain to my rides in my career along other artists, but also to the complexity and availability of the actors I worked with. Just like scenographers, actors as well are entities who create theatre: some are eager to discover and develop ideas, others are containers absorbing the team's ideas which bond together and may be useful for the show. Regarding the show *Povestea prințesei deocheate (The Scarlet Princess)*, the decision made together with its director, also main creator of the show, was the absence of the setting. We invested more money in costumes and several elements for the setting to highlight and particularize the scenes, but, bigger than that, to allow the actors to carry out actions. The furniture on the stage is not decorative, but strictly functional for the actors. With respect to the aesthetic, I turned to a different type of creative solutions, like objects built from paper and unconventional fabrics, brought on stage in order to define both the narrative and emotional journey of the characters.

Costume making is a comprehensive process and involves manifold facets. Costumes need to be neutral, other times, by joining the actors in larger or smaller groups, they will become the setting itself. I saw many shows where the setting competed against the costumes. It is not always bad but can do bad to the show. An image on stage may emerge from the proportion between costumes and the play space. They need to shape and be part of a chromatic coherence. Alongside the multiplication process, a postmodern procedure, spectacular images and composition will emerge out of it. The repetitive element has also emerged out of such idea of postmodernism: the multiplication of a character or of a costume. When we grow characters or costumes, in numbers, they become a living setting. The scenographer is a creator of images which are tightly connected to the proportions of the stage and, not least, the character of the characters, the size of

the actors and even details, like the nuance of an actor's skin, the psychosomatic model of an actor etc. These are only few of the reasons why I believe that the work to create costumes for a show is much more complicated and analytical than creating the setting.

The scenographer needs to help the actor. First of all, to define really well an actor's size in relation to the play space and to his or her mates. The costume needs to be created and built on his or her body. The construction of a costume starts from the actor's part, from the text he or she will interpret. I sometimes need to emphasize the qualities of an actor's body, other times, I need to hide them from sight, and other times to remove parts of the actor, only allowing on stage elements the director needs, but we always discuss in terms of proportion: between costume, color proportion, the quality of the fabric, proportion in report to the stage, to the space. The costumes can sometimes kill the actor on stage, not by weight or complexity, but by being too violent and out of the topic, so that they can cancel the actors, no matter how good they may be. They can also destroy a setting or a chromatic harmony on stage. Or they can prevent a director to go for a certain type of staging. Just like the universe and nature, the human body as well has proportions. I believe that documentation and the science to adapt cuts lies at the heart of building a good costume. After all, a scenographer's sensitivity is mainly recognizable in relation to costumes. In creating a costume, its unicity and particularity is found in the character's personality, in its past, the history of the costume in such society. There are so many details to be used. What is the significance in designing a detail like a watch, a brooch, of an accessory? The unicity of a costume comes from documentation and research. The costumes enter into dialogue and dare each other; they are creators of sound and feelings, amongst others.

Thinking time as well needs to be flexible, as there are several ways, more times, more ways to think about theatre costumes. A part of us do our homework at home, with books around, with a thorough documentation, we draw well or less well, we make pretty sketches and we help the directors exploit, have ideas, we guide the actors into imagining the way a character will look like, the theatre managers and workshops into being able to draft a budget for the show. But it is also possible for the way from the drawing board to the premiere to be much longer than expected, and much more difficult, with major opt-outs and changes. Because the budget might not allow to have the fabric you thought about, or the geographical, theatre space might not offer such materials, or a theatre may not work, inside the theatre, with certain materials, due to technical reasons or else. And then, the scenographer will make decisions for the show and creation to

benefit from. There are lots of scenographers, extremely inventive and spectacular in the moment of the setting and costume planning, but who lose their coherence during the actual work.

At the same time, my desire is to relate to a different type of scenographers. I'm not saying that the first may be wrong. I have already been there. There are moments when you can bring your own concepts from home, but only when you know for a fact the situation of the concerned theatre, the budget and technical capacity and, finally, elements of local geography. Each and every theatre space is accompanied by its own possibilities, as related to procurements. I know the workshop I can count on and who are the competent people within. The way for me to approach costumes is that when they are made during rehearsals, alongside with the director's work and with the actors on stage. The scenographers develop their creation alongside with the staging, they build the costumes in real time, alongside with the actors, alongside with laying out the characters. Such type of approach is much closer to what some creators say theatre is, that is teamwork, real time work, which is done from an organic discovery of the text – working, giving up together with the actor, with the director, with the composer, with the choreographer. These are needs coming out from the fact that the director is assisted by a choreographer who needs to develop the movement of a group of actors or of one single actor. Such movement creates technical needs which are to be settled by the costumes – either they allow ample movements, or they do not, either they let loose or limit a character. You start from point zero, which is the text, and raise it vertically or horizontally, practically raise the creation. The setting develops in the same way.

We need to know that some objects or materials have different significance in different cultures. Paper means one thing on stage in Japan, and something else in Europe. Wood, some objects, some colors follow the same journey. It's not the same significance all over the world. In Japan, for example, colors and prints on stage go beyond decoration. They mean something. Some prints can only be worn by a certain type of character, they cannot migrate and don't go together, because they are tightly related to certain characters, and if blended in, they become unrecognizable, they no longer define a character, a state of mind or an action. It is a different type of language which related to culture. It is a fact all over the world. The names of characters as well may be changed. For example, in Shakespeare's work, names are changed in order to be adapted to the notions of knowledge to be understood and connected by the tradition of various cultural regions (Russia, Japan, Hungary etc.), for a better assimilation of the action, of the story. Not least, it is also about a technical area. A scenographer will know

in detail the way he needs to complete objects or costumes. He needs to be up to date with their way of construction and to be informed on the technologies used in a mechanical or carpentry workshop in Tokyo, or in Sankt Petersburg, or in Luxembourg. The scenographer is always *wuthering crafts*, as he needs to document and access various fields of activity, to adapt his speech depending on the nature of the crafts people he gets in contact with have, in order for the show to happen (stage technicians, carpenters, engineers, tailors, light masters). Such skills assume intellectual flexibility and versatility, good knowledge of the human nature and the artist's capacity to mold his speech depending on the context.

### 1. TREND AND TRENDY

Many years ago, more precisely more than 25 years ago, the director Alexandru Dabija had launched against me, quite abruptly, the following food for thought: is costume related to fashion, to the trend? Most of our colleagues are tempted to align a trend given by fashion or by the technology of fabrics. One will be tempted to say, at a first glance, that there is a tight connection between the two fields: theatre and fashion. Such question is within reason. The technological fight is larger than the fight of ideas. Such contrast is found in theatre –it is related to the show, to the industry we are part of. “I would like to underline the issue of stage equipment: modern techniques allow you to do it all: we deal with an extraordinary choice of mediums, crowbars are an amazing machinery to change, handle the setting and there is no reason to condemning them, on grounds that they were used by the Italian stage; there is the possibility of a new use for such crowbars. Traveling cranes, revolving stages can also be used. There is no need to be afraid of the technique, even if there is a certain fear these days, in the world of theatre, to use machinery, especially if they are modern and extra-theatrical.”<sup>3</sup>. We entered, around the 80s, according to some theoreticians, the postmodern age, which came up with good things, but also some less favorable for the stage, which I am about to name. In my view, a dangerous term which emerged into theatre is the term “concept”, imported from the advertising industry and forced into art, theatre and its adjacent forms, brutally trying to replace the term direction, the vision of the director. We no longer call it creation, but concept. What does this new term bring, what does it include?

In a certain period of my life, somewhere at the beginning of the 90s, more or less accidentally, I crossed my way with the most commercial side of clothes design,

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<sup>3</sup> Allio, René: “*Le théâtre comme instrument*”, in: Bablet, Denis; Jaquot, Jean: *Le lieu théâtral dans la société moderne*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 2002, p. 105. (translated into Romanian by the author of this article).

the catwalk. I was really interested back then in high-end fabrics, like artificial leather, with an extremely tough visual impact, fabrics quite difficult to control, with either tough and bright texture, or matt, thick and thin. This fabric had various qualities. The process to know and tame such fabric ended up in an Haute Couture collection created when I participated to the National Fashion Festival. The theme I had thought about was to manage for the whole collection to be reduced in chromatic, and to use exclusively shades of white and one single fabric, artificial leather. I practiced my focus on details, on the texture of the fabric, on making the patterns and combining the fabrics. It was an exercise of style when we blended in patterns and volumes of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century technologies. There resulted a crossover product. I tried to mix *handmade* to large series products. I assume the postmodernist thinking pattern. I blended in elements of the fashion world in the 90s. And now I know for sure that such combinations would not be valid anymore, as the world of fashion is perishable. It is not like theatre, which gets printed in, which gets to stay. Theatre climbed steps, branched, discovered, rediscovered, and such discoveries stayed. There have been lots of memorable technical trials in the world of fashion, as technology has always been pushed ahead due to necessity. Back then, I was extremely eclectic as an artist, undefined, in a permanent pursuit. I used to be caught between theatre and fashion, but I failed in realizing that theatre had no connection to fashion and that the design of theatre costumes actually needed a different approach. I convinced myself relatively quickly that there are fabrics the stage rejects. There is this type of fabric which works in a concert or in a different type of show, but not on a theatre stage. The theatre and film director Horia Popescu, who had been invited, by chance, as member of the jury at the International Fashion Festival, saw my collection and came up with the idea to transfer this experiment on the main stage of the National Theatre Bucharest. Which was concretized by the show *Ondine*. We are talking about a king size show, a show which exploited the main stage of the National Theatre at its maximum. I transferred back then the working method and fabrics on stage, in different colors and shapes, and the costumes were incredibly well sewed in the theatre workshop. The cast was pretty large. The setting was inexistent. The costumes, due to their fabric and size, but also to the multiplication, could make, alongside several objects, a setting per se.

*Ondine* encompassed two worlds: the aquatic world and the terrestrial world, that of the palace. I chose artificial leather for the terrestrial world, in several nuances of red – a warm color which used to represent, in the old days, royalty and the gap between social classes. The result of such theatrical exercise consisted from a type of hybrid costumes which blended in epoques, patterns from different ages. Supported by metal parts (crinolines) or combined with armor pieces made

of inox, excessively accessorized by metal buttons, chains, metal adornments, these costumes proved to be heavy presences, difficult to accept on stage and unbearable. The stage rejected them. In order to get the effect of fluidity required by the aquatic world and in order for it to contrast with the chromatic rigidity and violence of the terrestrial world, I designed my costumes of flax and parachute silk. The result was the fluidity of clothes which was accentuated by the stage movement of the actors. Such proposal indicated a solid direction of things, but it was to be proven once the costumes were brought on stage.

I realized something was wrong with the fabrics. I initially thought they were too shiny, and therefore I used patina. It was about varnished and semi-varnished artificial leather. I tried to use patina, to correct the lights, but the result failed to please me. However, the show was, back then, a triumph out of which the costumes were integral part. A great part of the audience was absolutely charmed. It was one of the few shows in my career when people applauded for 25-30 minutes at the end of the show. It was a real success. At the other end, a specialist opinion, that of the late theatre critic Cristina Dumitrescu, tore down my creation as a scenographer. I did not have the needed arguments in order to contradict her. The day of the premiere, I felt my work was not fulfilling. The theatre critic must denote lucidity, objectivity and a good capacity to collect and synthesize information, in order to assess and judge the artistic act, the show, in depth. We are entitled to tear down a show, to say our opinion about it, but it needs to be coherent and well documented, because, as the case may be, it can lead to a change, a crisis or absolutely nothing.

I can explain what was wrong. The costumes were not wrong, but the stage rejected their fabric. Even after we brought them out into the light, I realized they did not work. At a certain point, we decided to intervene on them, on their color and structure. I initially thought they had an industrial look, as if not made by people, so I added patina and burnt them. I almost destroyed some. But the fabric was so violent, that it didn't work. The theatre manager, the director, the audience, they were all satisfied. I was not. It was a negative discovery, and I instantly assumed it. It was a must for my evolution. This scenic design was one of the most uninspired of my career. The advantage was it happened a time when I was paying attention, I did not develop my ego, but I was trying to stay in a space of discovery. Therefore, I realized there were materials which had nothing to do on the theatre stage. Unfortunately, no one had warned me. Although I had very good professors in school, but back then the discussions revolved around plastic terms, like shape and color. I believe that few of us, theatre people, succeed in getting close to the truth, during the creation process, the truth we are supposed to look for. I, for one, am still looking.

## 2. COSTUMES – FROM TEXT TO STAGE

Theatre is based on a set of rules which a scenographer, like any other artist, needs to meet. Regardless of the genre, a show is born from a written text, which can be classical or contemporary, a collage consisting of various authors, a libretto, a part etc. The author, even if no longer alive, is a member of the team, and his or her creation underlies the other artistic gestures on stage. The principle I have always supported when discussing about setting and play space is equally valid in case of the costumes as well: the text is the bottom line of the creation, followed by debates with the director and the other artists. The actor is the main factor in the process of costume design, in a way different from his or her involvement when we discuss about the theatre space. First of all, the ideas of the director and of the artists he creates with get on the ramp through the actor. He or she represents the entity which processes data that come from all the team members; regardless of his or her artistic skills, the actor reveals and sends ideas to the show creators.

I come back now to the studies of the scenographer, in order to discuss the different methods to think and make theatre costumes. The creators who graduated from schools of graphic, fashion design or painting have a different approach in the artistic team and put greater emphasis on the costume itself, as if the actor only represented a body carrying it and they present it as the materialization of their ideas. But for me, in my capacity of scenographer and member in a permanent theatre team, such approach is wrong. Vanity in a scenographer's mind is part of the capital sins of theatre. I believe a creator is wrong when he or she draws the first sketches of the costumes and considers them well-settled up to the premiere, with an almost pathological tenacity, without taking into account the discoveries emerged during the rehearsals (either personal or belonging to the whole team) or when they ignore that the characters change under the baton of the director. In fact, he can reinterpret the text depending on the sociopolitical context, his personal baggage or cultural space where he creates such production. A good scenographer pays attention to the director's and actors' needs. They do not create costumes in order to show their artistic ideas on stage, without being willing to adapt them to the real needs of working during rehearsals.

Theatre is a living organism, just like the team which creates the performance on stage. It is about a living energy and about a series of discoveries which continues up to the night of the premiere. Regardless of the culture and level of understanding of such phenomenon, each and every theatre creator needs to be like a receptacle which stores information alongside such artistic journey, like a file on the computer which is added new data every time. The scenographer needs to be alert up to the night of the premiere, to notice the actor's body or

the mistakes which, most of the times, lead to valid solutions. Such types of occurrences subordinate to the permanent need to look for the truth, need which is present in the belief profession of great creators. Ideas start to show after the discussions, when the scenographer has pores all opened and gets information from the director, composer, actor, even technicians. Many times, the technicians notice important aspects related to the changes and accents of the characters and can give solutions which shall help the actors' evolution on stage. As previously mentioned, the human body is the supreme creation and needs to be respected. We cannot treat it as an object exhibited in a museum. The actors need not be treated as windows exhibitions or put on pedestals, do not have the quality of such statues, of simple vehicles which bear the ideas of the creating team. The actors fulfill the director's staging, give life to the scenographer's creation, carry the sounds of the composer. The actor's body, perfected by his science, becomes a living mechanism, a theatre animal which gets developed, a vehicle by which the whole creation gets to the ramp. By his creation, the scenographer does not need to cancel or defeat an actor, nor to send it to the gallery of a museum. The costumes are good when they actively support the creation of characters and are organic part of the aesthetic of the show. They are just insinuated, in a balance with the setting (as related to the chromatic and proportions), regardless that these two compartments are coordinated by the same scenographer or not. The main function of the costume is to define a character, to help the staging and to facilitate the spectator's understanding the story. "A costume is defined, within the staging by the similarity and opposition of the shapes, materials, cuts, colors, in relation to the other costumes. What matters is the evolution of the costumes alongside the show, the meaning of contrasts, the complementarity of shapes and colors. The internal system of such reports is (or should be) highly coherent, in that giving the public the *fibula* it needs to read."<sup>4</sup> The actors on stage cannot be considered living pictures, but entities which make the watchers understand a story. They are characters which evolve under the baton of a creator, living creatures which make noise, breathe, sweat or laugh; such phenomena, purposeful or part of the subconscious, need to be possible. The actor does not need to be added weight, either we talk about physical or metaphysical weight. In case of such constructions, significances lose their validity, as they do not come from the text or from the vision of the director. The costume needs to support the story as told by the director and actor; it does not need to be camouflage or a shield, but it needs to carry the character's "skin". Like the setting, which needs not dominate space, nor the costume needs to be strident. The spectators need to

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<sup>4</sup> Pavis, Patrice, *op.cit.*, p. 121. (translated into Romanian by the author of the article).

see the actor, above all, to see the actor and to get involved in the character's life, and then to notice how good, important or beautiful his or her clothes are. The importance the costume has for the actor needs to be great, but subtle.

Regardless the tools of the scenographer and the approach he or she practices, the process to create the costumes is directly related to the movement the actor is invested with by the director, with the staging or with the actors' suggestions to settle the themes of the show, combined with its own discoveries as costume creator. It is valid for any type of costume: either hybrid, when the scenographer blends in elements from different ages, having as result representative images for the creator's personality and for the theme the theatre team planned; either it's about costumes made out of different fabrics or unconventional shapes. The quality of the costumes does not consist of a spectacular formulation, but of the process of making them, from the imaginary to the material dimension. Finally, I will reiterate that the approach of costumes needs to be nowhere near decoration but as close as possible to the creative pulse of the show. Actors will not execute artistic gestures just like marionettes, as they are artists who fulfill the creation of the scenographer, who, for his part, fulfills the creation of the director – the man who is in charge with the whole concept of the show. I will say it here as well that there is no other formula for making theatre but teamwork, even if temporary. The ideal is to be part of a permanent team, but not each and every creator wants it or has such an opportunity. I need to admit that, I was afraid of costumes at the very beginning, as I believe they reflect best the sensitivity of the scenographer. Each and every creator has, at the beginning of his or her career, an area where they feel vulnerable.

Costumes do not exist per se, but have a meaning only starting from the textual. Next to the actor, they can define a character. The costumes have the capacity to give birth to a character, resulted directly from the text or created by the director's staging. I insist upon the primordially of the text as a starting point for creation. The text must be assumed, and the character and actor's body, understood. This is a different type of balance, which is very important for the creation. A scenographer cannot create any type of costume, without taking into account the body. When they put too much on it and create a strong image, dissonant to the character, it may compromise the role. It is not the costume that is important, but the support the actor receives in order to build the character, and this is not proof of modesty, but a purpose of stage design. The costume does not need to be advertising for the scenographer. The creator's success is when the costumes are good and they work well, without *burying* the actors. I saw shows where the actors were canceled by costumes and turned into beautiful shapes, but without substance. An image can

be beautiful for some minutes, but, without dynamics and evolution, it loses its relevance. Like the setting and space, costumes as well evolve with the show and its characters. I firmly believe that a costume must not be the same from the very beginning of the show to the end. It is open and interacts with space and with the other costumes. Either the actor loses or adds elements, or it is that it deteriorates in coherence with the character, gets dirty or destroyed, the costume will benefit from an organic and active participation to the direction process. Of course the text is at the heart of the show, but also the director's and actors' needs will be paid attention. In case of divergences, the purpose is to lien them up. From this point of view, a turning point was the show *Jacques and His Master*, a text by Milan Kundera, staged by Peter Bokor. I needed to work with a minimal budget, so that the solution chosen was to use the fabrics and materials in the costume shed of Teatrul Mic, where we staged the show. My idea was not revolutionary but was a beneficial decision for the aesthetic of costumes and, especially, for the way I started to think about the evolution of the costume, to see with different eyes the creation and making of the theatre costume. I processed some capes which I subsequently retailored, as, during my work there, I discovered different information and patterns. I better understood such patterns and learned the way the human body works. It's useless to insist: the scenographer can help an actor or can spoil its role.

### 3. HYBRID COSTUMES

*Elisaveta Bam* is a different show with a special statute in my career. First of all, because the director, Alexandru Tocilescu and I met a unique writer: Daniil Harms. We entered an area of surrealism and Dadaism. *Elisaveta Bamis* not a dramatic text; it was dramatized by the director, Alexandru Tocilescu, a daring director, who keeps questioning the moment. We are, therefore, in front of an extremely difficult text, with no dramatic logic, which was not written as a text for theatre (with a beginning, a presentation of the characters, a normal evolution, a dramatic structure). I had to invent costumes for the actors, but also to elaborate characters unable to be interpreted by actors, as they concretized in objects which interacted with the actors. Although they had no soul, they had to embody characters cut from Harms' text. One example, in this respect, is the convict, which materialized by the elements underlying travel, motion and freedom. I translated it into a cello (which means sound – going away and impossible to stop) which I put on two wheels (concept of the motion) and which had two wings. The character of the convict was connected to the *crossover* area, it was a crossing between the costume and the object. A different object like that was a door which opposed opening. It was an anthropomorphic object,

as it included human elements (limbs of the body). This door became a table. These are examples of crossed objects which did not depend on costumes, but could exist *per se*. I also built a tower eye, the eye of security (oversized, all-seeing, almighty). A different hybrid object was the world egg, which gave birth to characters. The feminine character, Elisaveta Bam, also title of the show, was hidden there, like in the Virgin's womb.

The concerned objects acquired the valences of hybrid characters, getting more meaning alongside with the creation of director Alexandru Tocilescu. Taken out of context, and transposed in an exhibition, they generated a different type of emotion, unrelated to the magic of the theatre space, without the possibility of a miracle. They were objects *per se* which had lost a lot of what had been on stage. The scenographer taken out of context, with such objects, costumes, loses parts of his art. The objects, costumes need to have a meaning. The scenographer – theatre creator is a fashion designer. He is part of a system, of a team, and together with such team, he makes a show, art. The scenographer is a little wheel of such structure which plans such artistic act.

#### 4. SOUND-GENERATING COSTUMES

In a warehouse at the periphery of Bucharest, in Jilava, I had at a certain point to choose a huge quantity of real animal leathers. I needed them for the costumes of the show *The Orphan of Zhao*. It was important for the thickness of the leather to be similar in order for them, sewed together, to move coherently and to deform uniformly in time. The 40 costumes had to move and have an echo together, even if each of them was made of more pieces. And I did it when my experience as a scenographer was minimum, in my first years of scenography. It does not mean I was born with special qualities; it only means I had an interest, alongside the director, alongside the composer. We realized that by multiplying a costume with a certain type of cut and certain sizes, it will generate a sound. This aspect was debated and assumed from the very beginning, with the director of the show, Alexandru Dabija. It was not a procedure discovered on stage -it was a deliberate artistic act. The discussions with the director were organic, the basis of the show was good, we prepared and documented well in order to make this show.

There are moments when one discovers some needs during the rehearsals. You discover at a certain point that a character should get on stage unseen, for example. It determines, besides technical settlements (the use of a special color or its emergence in a certain moment, in a certain type of choreography, of stage movement) the need of a different type of mindset, of a different type of approach.

*Translated into English by Carmen Tărniceru*

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# Thoughts on the Actor's Craft

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## **Abstract**

The actor's craft brought me on two continents performing in six languages and it all started with Stanislavski's method. The searches were directed to the actor of the contemporary theatre. Thus, in this essay I present my personal experience which constantly asks me the following question: Show biz, superficial study, or research and laboratory? The sum of all the actions, studies, searches that built my personal experience leads me to a first conclusion: we come to the truth through the arguments discovered in the studies of great masters in the world of theatre – Konstantin Stanislavski and Jerzy Grotowski, taken over and applied in practice by Thomas Richards. I discovered the answer to my question in years of work and study, the concepts of the great personalities from the world of theatre being materialized through two workshops: "Modern Times Stage Company" in Toronto, Canada, and "Odin Teatret" – Nordisk Theaterlaboratorium, Denmark, where we deepened various theatre techniques.

## **Keywords:**

actor's craft; physical action; organicity; method; study; workshop; energy; emotions.

## **Rezumat**

Pasiunea pentru actorie m-a purtat pe două continente, unde am jucat în șase limbi diferite, totul începând cu metoda lui Stanislavski. Căutările s-au îndreptat către actorul teatrului contemporan. Astfel, în prezentul eseu prezint experiența personală, care îmi ridică permanent următoarea întrebare: show biz, studiu superficial, sau cercetare și aprofundare? Suma tuturor acțiunilor, studiilor, căutărilor care mi-au construit experiența personală mă conduce la o primă concluzie: la adevăr ajungem prin intermediul argumentelor descoperite în studiile unor mari personalități din lumea teatrului – Konstantin Stanislavski și Jerzy Grotowski, preluate și aplicate în practică de Thomas Richards. Răspunsul la întrebarea mea l-am descoperit în ani de muncă și studiu, după care conceptele marilor personalități din lumea teatrului le-am materializat prin intermediul a două ateliere de lucru la „Modern Times Stage Company” în Toronto, Canada, și Odin Teatret – Nordisk Theaterlaboratorium, Danemarca, unde am aprofundat faptic diferite tehnici de teatru.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

meseria actorului; acțiunea fizică; organicitate; metodă; studiu; atelier; energie; emoție.

“Artists who do not go forward go backward.”

(Konstantin Stanislavski)

“There is no standing still, only evolution or involution.”

(Jerzy Grotowski)

In my career as an actor, with over twenty-five years of experience expending on two continents and performing in six languages, each performance is a new white page on which you start drawing your character. Every time you do it, you have to adapt and change to the requirements and conditions of the play, starting from point zero. I was trained in a traditional Russian school in a Stanislavski method and his students’ variations. During my career I had the chance to meet different masters and to continue my training with them in different styles, learning new tools for my craft. I gained a large variety of different approaches and tools that can be used on stage. Now I ask myself, how much of that can I bring from my box of tools and use by the rules and conditions of a contemporary theatre performance, when you have four or less weeks of rehearsals? How much is show biz and how much is discovery or laboratory? I shared my career years with both of them, I wish that we could find ways to bring more research and laboratory into contemporary theatre, so that the actor’s work will be more thorough and more impactful, but under the current operating conditions of the theatre companies in our times, it is almost impossible.

In this idea, I will highlight resemblances of two great masters of theatre – Konstantin Stanislavski and Jerzy Grotowski, who dedicated their lives to research the craft. They worked with extraordinary stamina and persistence of personal effort, arriving at great achievements and discoveries in their art. They created their study laboratories and gave themselves the necessary time for the research process to reach the great discoveries in the theatrical creation process. Yet their respective processes of work are often greatly misunderstood. Why? The answer is not easy. Maybe if we start from the idea of Thomas Richards<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Richards, a performing artist, became Jerzy Grotowski’s assistant in 1986, when the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski was founded in Pontedera, Italy. Richards draws a parallel between the research of the two directions – superficial study or deepening the acting process in the laboratory, highlighting both the common points and the ideas that differentiate them, concluding that, in the actor’s work, the creation of his own method is important.

according to which “[a] filter stands between the individual and life”<sup>2</sup> we will be able to find it. Richards concludes in his book *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Action*: “We live in an epoch in which our inner lives are dominated by the discursive mind. This fraction of the mind divides, sections off labels – it packages the world and wraps it up us <understood>. It is the machine in us that reduces the mysterious object that sways and undulates into simply <a Tree>. Since this part of the mind has the upper hand in our inner formation, as we age, life loses its taste. We experience more and more generally, no longer perceiving <things> directly, as a child, but rather as signs in a catalogue already familiar to us. The <unknown>, thus narrowed and petrified, is turned into the <known>. A filter stands between the individual and life. Such as it is, the discursive mind has difficulty tolerating an alive process of development.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the inner aspect of the whole process of becoming conscious of what happens in life and how it is filtered by the individual’s mind is underlined, important for the actor’s experience for the theatrical art.

In fact, the transformation of the unknown into the known is one of the great attractions of mankind, a temptation that constantly crosses the history of humanity. Let us remember that one of the great figures of Greek mythology, Asterius (Asterion), also known as the Minotaur, succumbs to the temptation to know the other Asterius, his favorite game in the dark Labyrinth being the one with “the other Asterius”, with the one who lives hidden in himself. It is the game with the unknown that he must overcome in order to reach knowledge. Extrapolating, we can say that Richards does nothing but translate, objectively and strictly dedicated, a valid mechanism of humanity, to the process of self-knowledge of the actor through which he becomes able to tolerate and understand a living process of development.

Richards even confesses his position towards the giants of the theatre - Stanislavski and Grotowski – whom he admired, but also accepted the challenge to find his own way as a theatre practitioner exploring the mysterious field of performing arts.

In acting, the immense danger that lurks in every corner of the stage is our reduced ability to see beyond appearances, beyond what we are able to see. The discursive mind that governs our daily lives, makes us put labels, believe we have solved and understood processes that are, in fact, much broader, deeper and more

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<sup>2</sup> Richards, Thomas: *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Action*, Taylor & Francis e-Library, New York, 2004, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

sensitive than they seem to be in our immediate reality. And Richards pointed out and explained this danger in an extremely clear and concise manner:

“Like a small dog trying to hold a river by grasping it between its jaws, this mind label the things around us, and claims: <I understand>. Through such <understanding> we misunderstand, and reduce that which is being perceived to the limits and characteristics of the discursive mind. Such misunderstanding often occurs when we study the work of another person. The danger is that we limit, reduce, and cage that person, seeing only what we wish to, or are able to see. At the outset, I should like to state that for me Stanislavski and Grotowski are like that raging river. I shall try my best not to be like a small dog face with them and their life’s work.”<sup>4</sup>

As Thomas Richards did in his book, I will look inside the actor’s craft, the practicability and the hard work that it is used to create that structure which stays underneath the actor’s emotional flow and helps bring the magical moments on stage. I also have the same challenge and difficulty of translating into writing my understanding of practical work in the acting craft.

Considering my training in Stanislavski’s method, studying the laboratory processes of Stanislavski and Grotowski seems essential to me, in my continuing development as an actor. The research of the two represents, in terms of personal effort, a living, continuous process, in which I consider it extremely important to study the final area of their work. My motivation lies in the belief that only in this way are the personal conclusions of each of us revealed to us, after we have felt what are the most important elements of our work. Grotowski was often considered a declared opponent of Stanislavski, although he actually continued Stanislavski’s work, devoting the last years of his activity to exploring physical action.

“Create your own method. Don’t depend slavishly on mine. Make up something that will work for you.”<sup>5</sup> These are the words of Stanislavski and this is exactly what Grotowski did. The axis of this text is a method, or better yet, a practice, finally central to the work of Stanislavski and later developed by Grotowski: physical actions. In the last ten years of his life, Stanislavski placed a new emphasis on what he called “physical actions”. He stated a clear opinion of what he considered to be the core of his research: “The method of physical actions

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin: *An Actor’s Work on a Role*, apud: Richards, Thomas: *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*, with a preface by Jerzy Grotowski, Taylor & Francis e-Library, New York, 2004, p. 4.

is the result of my whole life's work.”<sup>6</sup> Why he was using the word “physical” instead of “psycho-physical”? Why, at the end of his life, was he speaking about “physical action”, when so much of his earlier research had been based on the attempt at calling forth precise emotion?

In practice, many actors prove that they forget what Grotowski has publicly pointed out countless times: the connection of his work with Stanislavski's work. The reasons behind this “forgetfulness” can be various, starting from the desire to obtain immediate results and reaching such a sickly laziness, thus ignoring what Stanislavski considered absolutely necessary: the existence of a consciously prepared structure: “Sure, the whirlwind of inspiration can carry our ,creative airplane‘ above the clouds [...] without running down the runway. The trouble is that these flights do not depend on us and do not constitute the norm. It is within our possibilities to prepare the ground, to lay the rails, that is to say to create the physical actions reinforced by truth and conviction.”<sup>7</sup>

It is very easy and comfortable to dream of doing something deep and profound, but is much more difficult to actually do something profound. An old Russian proverb says, if you go to your porch, look up at the sky and jump to the stars, you will just land in the mud. Often the stairs are forgotten. The stairs must be constructed.

My first steps towards “building the stairs” and different ways of working were taken by participating in a workshop organized by Modern Times Stage Company in Toronto, led by Vahid Goossun, one of the assistants of Eugenio Barba. These emblematic figures of the theatre of the twentieth century, Grotowski and Barba, were tied by a strong friendship and had a close collaboration in Opole in Poland and at Odin Teatret in Denmark. They shared the same theatre philosophy, the same manner of working with actors and view of performance dynamics. Before this experience I watched some of the workshops and performances in Europe, let's say, “a la maniere Grotowski” and I was very suspicious to that kind of work. To be honest, I have my doubts and a lot of questions even now. But what happened further made me rethink and be more open to different ways of approaching our craft.

Two weeks after starting the workshop in Toronto, we had one day with open doors, where people could come and watch our work. Under the direction of our instructor we were using our score of physical action we built in the first two weeks. We were striped of the usual acting tools, were not permitted to use any

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

emotions and improvisation skills; we just tried constantly to go through our score. After an hour and a half of working with the audience, the lights came on and we saw that people were really moved, some of them having tears in their eyes, others were deep in their state of being. Then the director asked them firstly what they understood and secondly if they believed. We were completely surprised that the audience embarked in our journey, and at the same time that the stories were so different, each person having his own interpretation. We realized that an emotional battle happened in the audience, something more visceral and much deeper above our understanding. That was the first time I was provoked and attracted by this way of working.

As a result of this special experience, I was invited for a first phase of an intensive workshop at Odin Teatret in Denmark. The participants were selected after a series of workshops in different countries, coming from the United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Spain and Denmark and - as unreal it sounds - I was invited to represent Canada. We started a very intensive physical program that was from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, with a few brakes in between. After a week our bodies were full of bruises and blisters, our brains were on the limit, but we kept going with our rigorous training. We were building our score, like a dance and we were not allowed to use any improvisation skills or any range of emotions, we just had to repeat daily our score. After a month our bodies and minds were so tired that the score became our second breath. One day the director told us: you can improvise and use your emotion now. In that moment I had one of my greatest revelations of my life in a theatre space, my body started firing with energy, I was full of emotions and the images were more alive than ever. I had the feeling that I have “to push the brakes” to control and canalize the flow of energy. Every day after that was the same and in the process of rehearsals that flow of energy and richness of emotions were the same. And this was after just four weeks of work. Imagine after months of this kind of training, how deep and profound an actor can plunge. That was the second time I was deeply moved and started to reconsider the discipline an actor should possess. Through this hard physical work, both masters were trying to bring the actors to that level of losing the social body and look for what Stanislavski was calling “organicity”.

”What is organicity? It is to live in agreement with natural laws, but on primary level. One mustn’t forget our body is an animal. I am not saying: we are animals, I say: our body is an animal. Organicity is linked to a *child aspect*. The child is almost always organic. Organicity is something which one has more of when is young, less of as one gets older. Obviously, it is possible to prolong the life of organicity by fighting against acquired habits, against the training of common life,

breaking, eliminating the clichés of behavior. And, before the complex reaction, returning to the reaction which was primary.”<sup>8</sup>

The education acquired first in the family, then in school, the “civilizing” elements, the social customs seem to move us more and more away from organicity. However, I consider this statement to be false. Organicity remains in our subconscious level and through sustained training the actor can appeal to it to find himself and to find his personal equilibrium on stage. And this equilibrium also involves maintaining the right balance between will and emotion. Hence the question: is conditioning actions by emotion a wrong way, or not?

In our traditional way of working we are driven by the first exploration of emotions that we discover on stage, then through rehearsal we are trying to find exactly that wave. In this way we are distancing ourselves from every day discoveries and risk to become more and more general on stage. I am not judging and I understand why this happens. In this short period of rehearsal time, you barely get used with *mise-en-scene* and you start getting comfortable with the structure of the performance only at the end of the show.

We rely only on our emotions being far away of building that rigid structure inside where we can let our emotions ramp. In his conference in Liege (1986), Grotowski said: “Normally an actor thinks of intentions, he thinks it is a question of pumping an emotional state in himself. It is not this. The emotional state is very important, but it does not depend on the will. I don’t want to be sad: I am sad. I want to love this person: I hate this person, because the emotions are independent of the will. So, everyone who looks to condition actions through emotional states makes a confusion.”<sup>9</sup>

And Stanislavski comments on his turn: “We cannot remember feelings and fix them. We can just remember the line of physical actions...”<sup>10</sup>

When we talk about theatre, most of us say that theatre means, above all, emotion and feelings. This conclusion is not wrong when we think about what the theatre transmits to the spectators. But, as Grotowski and Stanislavski show, in order to induce emotions and feelings the actor must work and train intensely on a field where will and emotion are on different levels, using complex mechanisms that seem to be part of a rigorous mathematical system, in which effort and will are the supreme constants.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Grotowski, Jerzy: *apud* Thomas Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin: *apud* Thomas Richards, *op. cit.* p. 61.

One day in our seminar the following topic was brought into discussion: what should theatre do? Reinvent? And why is it losing vertiginously terrain in favour of film and TV? In film, leaving aside all the technical and digital innovations, I believe it is the montage that can bring a close up of fine and precise emotion in your living room. That's exactly the same montage Grotowski was talking about, translated to stage rules, combining all the elements of the performance you bring to the public in a live performance, that fine touch and precise emotion like in front of the screen. In theatre we don't have editing table. The editing table for creating of a live performance is rehearsal and the need for more time to build the structure that unfortunately don't have.

Now, at the end of my essay, I take again into consideration the opinion expressed by Thomas Richards in the book mentioned above, as well as other researches. Realizing that what he had experienced is the fruit of an extensive work with a great master during an inspiring collaboration years and years in a laboratory. Those works sometime never come on the lights of stage being only the result of deep research, not open for the large audience. As to quote Thomas Richards: "don't try this work in commercial theatre".<sup>11</sup> My question remains the same, how much of this work can be brought? Which tools I could use as an actor in the rules of contemporary theatre?

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.

# *dontcrybaby: Auf der Suche nach Identität.* **Ein innovatives Theaterprojekt**

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## **Abstract**

*dontcrybaby*, written by Eugen Jebeleanu and Catinca Drăgănescu is a contemporary text with which every reader can, at least partially, identify with. The performance of the master students from the Music and Theatre Faculty of the West University of Timisoara may be considered an analysis of the society, where every individual is trying to put forward his or her own existence. It is a fight for survival, where people lose their individuality, merging with a world without values. The characters are looking for their identity, straying between truth and lies, life and death, living so fast that it becomes impossible to stop and think about what really matters. This text and the performance too are relevant because the audience tends to identify with the life style of the characters: living in the century of speed, being egocentric and blind towards the truth, but foremost towards the own true self.

## **Keywords:**

*dontcrybaby*; Eugen Jebeleanu; Catinca Drăgănescu; contemporary innovative theatre, analysis of the society; identity; truth; individuality.

## **Rezumat**

*dontcrybaby* de Eugen Jebeleanu și Catinca Drăgănescu este un text contemporan în care fiecare cititor își poate găsi propria indentitate. Spectacolul studenților masteranzi de la Facultatea de Muzică și Teatru, Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara, poate fi considerat o radiografie a societății noastre în care fiecare individ tinde să își pună în valoare propria existență. Este o luptă de supraviețuire în care oamenii se pierd fără să își dea seama, contopindu-se într-o lume lipsită de valori. Personajele acestui spectacol sunt în căutarea identității, mișcându-se abil între adevăr și minciună, viață și moarte, fiind mereu într-o viteză ce nu le permite să se oprească și să reflecteze la ceea ce contează cu adevărat în viață. Acest text și spectacolul creat sunt relevante tocmai din cauza faptului că oamenii se identifică cu aceste personaje, trăind în secolul vitezei, egoiști și orbi în fața adevărului și mai ales în fața propriului eu.

## **Cuvinte-cheie:**

*dontcrybaby*; Eugen Jebeleanu; Catinca Drăgănescu; teatru contemporan inovativ; analiza societății; identitate; adevăr; individualitate.

*doncrybaby* (2012) von Eugen Jebeleanu und Catinca Drăgănescu ist ein Theaterstück, inspiriert vom Grimm'schen Märchen *Rotkäppchen*, das auf die Problematik und die Schattenseiten der heutigen Gesellschaft ausgerichtet ist. Die Thematik der Zensur und Selbstzensur von unterschiedlichen Menschentypen steht im Vordergrund, wobei diese in einer Welt der Macht, des Opportunismus, der Korruption und der Manipulation ihren eigenen Weg durchlaufen, auf der Suche nach ihrer Identität. Beide Autoren experimentierten zusammen mit den Schauspielern des Odeon Theaters Bukarest anhand einer Textvorlage innerhalb eines Theaterlabors, wobei die Künstler die Möglichkeit hatten zu improvisieren, imaginäre Interviews mit den dramatischen Figuren zu führen, neue Aspekte in die Rotkäppchen-Story einzufügen, nämlich was vorher und nachher hätte geschehen können. Catinca Drăgănescu war für die Dramaturgie zuständig, während Eugen Jebeleanu die Regie der Vorstellung führte; so entstand ein innovatives Theaterprojekt, inspiriert von der aktuellen rumänischen Wirklichkeit.

Die Gestalten des Theaterprojekts werden mit ernststen Problemen konfrontiert: Rotkäppchen, ein verwöhntes Mädchen, beschäftigt sich mit Schmuggeln von Handys und landet schließlich als Geliebte des Wolfes in seine Arme; ihre überaus beschäftigte, eitle Mutter, Staatsfunktionärin im Ministerium, versucht ihren Mangel an Zuneigung und Kommunikation mit Geld zu ersetzen; ein jobloser Ex-Student / Jäger wirkt als schwarzarbeitender Chauffeur der Staatsfunktionärin; der Wolf erscheint als skrupelloser Dealer; die halbgelehrnte, verängstigte Großmutter wünscht sich über Euthanasie aus dem Leben zu scheiden; ein von der Situation überrumpelter Priester versteht die Welt nicht mehr; ein nach Erfolg lüsternder Fernsehmoderator bricht alle Gesetze der Ethik; eine Staatsanwältin, die bemüht ist die Wahrheit zu erfahren, doch schließlich scheitert.

Die Aktualität des Textes war einer der wichtigsten Gründe, warum ich, zusammen mit meinen beiden Kollegen, innerhalb des Masterstudiums an der Hochschule für Musik und Theater der West-Universität Temeswar gewählt haben, diesen Text als Gegenstand unseres Studiums werden zu lassen, um danach eine Inszenierung<sup>1</sup> vorzubereiten. Es ist ersichtlich, dass die zwei Dramatiker Rollen für mehrere Schauspieler vorgesehen hatten, wobei unser Entschluß war, zu dritt mehrere Rollen zu übernehmen und zu interpretieren. *doncrybaby* hatte uns somit die Möglichkeit gegeben, so manches auszuprobieren und miteinander zu spielen, wobei sich die Arbeit an dieser Vorstellung durch die Vielfalt der Themen, bzw. den vielen Doppelrollen zu einer wahren Herausforderung entwickelte.

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<sup>1</sup> Drăgănescu, Catinca; Jebeleanu, Eugen: *doncrybaby*, Regie: Petru-Silviu Văcărescu, Premiere: 8. März 2018, Nationaltheater Temeswar.

Ich hatte somit die Aufgabe fast alle weiblichen Gestalten darzustellen: Rotkäppchen (1 und 2), alias Sonia Duță, die Mutter, alias Eleonora Duță, die Staatsanwältin und die Geliebte des Wolfes. Die Arbeit an diesen Rollen bedeutete meine inneren Ressourcen zu suchen, bzw. zu entdecken, damit ich die verschiedenen Typologien entsprechend darstellen kann. Zugleich appelierte ich an meine persönlichen Erfahrungen, an sämtliche Situationen und Beispiele, die in der Konstruktion behilflich sein konnten. So begann die Suche nach diversen Identitäten.

Aus dem Wunsch heraus jede Rolle entsprechend zu verkörpern, appelierte ich an verschiedene Schauspieltechniken, die eine Differenzierung der sämtlichen Gestalten hervorheben sollten. Der Fokus lag auf der Individualität jeder einzelnen Figur, so dass ich und auch das Publikum bewußt die Einzigartigkeit wahrnehmen, ohne dass es Gemeinsamkeiten / Überlappungen geben sollte.

Rotkäppchen ist eine der wichtigsten Gestalten, die im Mittelpunkt der Geschichte steht und dadurch zum Wegweiser des gesamten Stückes wird. Auch während ihrer Abwesenheit ist sie dennoch gegenwärtig, da sie wie in einem Netzwerk alle Szenen verbindet. In diesem Sinne trägt die Gestalt des jungen Mädchens eine große Verantwortung für das gesamte Bild der Vorstellung, die es dem Zuschauer erlaubt, ihre Entwicklung Schritt für Schritt zu verfolgen.

Damit der Übergang von einer Rolle zur anderen besser gelingt, hatten wir eine Art schauspielerisches Tennisspiel entwickelt, um einfacher in den Körper der Gestalten schlüpfen zu können. Natürlich entstand dadurch ein wahres chaotisches Spiel, aber das Schöne daran war immer die Ordnung in unserer Unordnung zu behalten. Unser Rezept dafür war immer die Szenen so ernst wie möglich zu spielen: Je mehr Ordnung in einem Spiel herrscht, desto mehr Unordnung kann dem Zuschauer vorgetäuscht werden.

Der Text ist in zwei Teile gegliedert, bestehend aus Dialogen jeweils zweier Gestalten, getrennt durch mehrere *Intermezzos*, die in Form von Monologen strukturiert sind. Die Vorstellung beginnt mit einer selbstgeschriebenen Einleitung, in der sich die Schauspieler in einer humorvollen Art vorstellen. Zweck dieser Selbstdarstellung war, das Publikum in einer spielerischen Form in die Vorstellung einzuführen und zugleich für den Ablauf des Geschehens vorzubereiten: „Guten Abend! Mein Name ist Isa Berger, ich bin Schauspielerin ... und ich möchte ihnen ganz offen sagen, dass ich noch nicht für die den UNITER Preis nominiert wurde ... aber das ist doch nicht so schlimm ... es wurden andere Kollegen nominiert...“<sup>2</sup> Ich habe mich persönlich für diese Sätze entschlossen,

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<sup>2</sup> Voneafca, Isabella (Künstlername: Isa Berger): Eigentext in eigener Übersetzung.

weil die Gestalt des Rotkäppchens in ihrem späteren Monolog darüber spricht, nämlich, wenn man kein Preisträger ist, wird man als Verlierer dargestellt. In jedem Beruf gilt diese harte Regel, die auch im Bereich des Theaters gültig ist – meistens ist nicht die Anzahl und die Qualität der gespielten Rollen wichtig, sondern die Anzahl der gewonnenen Preise.

Das Einfügen einiger autobiographischen Passagen am Anfang der Vorstellung, mittendrin und auch am Ende (eine von den Dramaturgen im Theaterprojekt suggerierte Anleitung), führte zu dem Gefühl, dass es sich um ein sehr persönliches Theaterereignis handelt. Der über das Filter der eigenen Lebenserfahrung geführte Text verwandelt sich zugleich in eine private Performance, die als Spiegel für jeden einzelnen fungiert – Schauspieler und Zuschauer.

„Ich bin Rotkäppchen und heiße Sonia Duță. Mit nicht einmal einem Jahr habe ich gelernt, was es bedeutet langsam zu sterben. Tag für Tag langsam zu sterben. SIE haben mir beigebracht, Formalin [Formaldehyd-Lösung] zu trinken. Zu viel Formalin. Sie haben mir beigebracht, dass ich schweigen muss. Sie haben mir beigebracht, dass man nicht darf. Dass du nicht darfst. Dass ich nicht darf. Dass ich um Erlaubnis fragen muss. Wen? Warum? Frag’ nicht, das darfst du nicht. Und so langsam wirst du ein Zensierter.“<sup>3</sup>

In diesem ersten Teil sind fünf wichtige Szenen dargestellt, fünf sogenannte Rahmenbilder für die Geschichte des Rotkäppchens. Innerhalb der einzelnen Szenen habe ich die Geschichte der Figur wiedergegeben, ihre psychologischen Grenzen identifiziert, ihre Reaktionen studiert, mich mit ihrer Denk- und Handlungsweise auseinandergesetzt. Eigentlich stellt diese eine ganz spezielle Typologie dar und dennoch der Gegenwart entsprechend. Vorteilhaft war dabei für die Darstellung der Bezug zu dem von mir bekannten Alltag.

Der Übergang zum zweiten Teil der Vorstellung wird über ein *Intermezzo* gesichert, in dem die Schauspieler nacheinander in den Spielraum kommen und für einen Augenblick auf ihre Maske verzichten, um den Zuschauern im Brecht’schen Stil

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<sup>3</sup> Drăgănescu, Catinca; Jebeleanu, Eugen: *doncrybaby*, nach dem Märchen *Rotkäppchen* von den Brüdern Grimm, inspiriert durch die Improvisation der Schauspieler: Conrad Mericoffer, Ștefan Huluba, Nicoleta Lefter, Camelia Pintilie, Cristina Drăghici, Silvian Vălcu, in: Irina Wolf (Hg.): *Machtspiele. Neue Theaterstücke aus Rumänien*, Übersetzung aus dem Rumänischen ins Deutsche Daria Hainz, Theater der Zeit, Berlin, 2015, S. 90. „Sunt Scufița și mă numesc Sonia Duță. Și la nici măcar un an am învățat cum e să mori încet. Pe zi ce trece să mori încet. Am învățat, m-au învățat să înghit formol. Prea mult formol. M-au învățat că trebuie să tac. M-au învățat că nu e voie. Că nu ai voie. Că eu nu am voie. Că trebuie să cer voie. Cui? De ce? Nu întreba, n-ai voie. Și încet, încet devii un cenzurat.“

die Verfremdung der Menschen hinter der Gestalt zu zeigen. Der Kommentar der Sprecherin, als *Intermezzo* eingefügt, bereitet dieses Auftreten, mit einem nachdenklichen Unterton vor: „Wenn du kein Kind mehr bist, das bedeutet, du bist längst tot. Ich bin längst tot. Du bist längst tot. Er / Sie / Es ist längst tot. Wir sind längst tot. Ihr seid längst tot. Sie sind längst tot. Wenn du nichts mehr fühlst, wenn du alle zum Tode verurteilen wirst, dann erst verstehst du, dass du ein Mensch bist, ein Homo sapiens. Und du bekommst Hunger. Hunger nach Geld! Den Hunger eines Menschen als Biest ...”<sup>4</sup>

Den Übergang zum zweiten Teil der Vorstellung übernimmt eigentlich die Großmutter, eine eher episodische Rolle, die hiermit Teil der Erzählung wird. Danach folgen vier andere Zweier-Szenen, mit deren Hilfe andere sekundäre Gestalten auftauchen, die nur punktuell eine Rolle im gesamten Geschehen übernehmen: die Staatsanwältin, der Priester, die Geliebte des Wolfes. Diese Gestalten werden in einer komischen Art und Weise dargestellt, aber widerspiegeln dennoch die spezifischen Probleme der heutigen Gesellschaft. Der zweite Teil wird durch einen Song beendet, der die Geschichte des Rotkäppchens nochmals wiedergibt:

„Es war einmal eine hübsche Kleine,  
Die schon recht bald spreizte ihre Beine,  
Und trotz der guten Schule, auf die sie ging.  
War es bloß Torheit, die sie sich bei ihr verding.  
Der Wolf hat ihr den Geldhahn zugedreht,  
Und ihr die Oma ausgeraubt, so gut es geht.  
Hinauf auf die Hütte hinterm Berg  
Ging auch die Presse und tat ihr Werk.  
Zum Glück kam ein Jäger auf einem rosa Pony vorbei  
Und schoss dem unmöglichen Wolf direkt in sein Ei.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ebd., S. 90. „Atunci când nu mai ești copil înseamnă că ai murit demult. Eu am murit demult. Tu ai murit demult. El/ea a murit demult. Noi am murit demult. Voi ați murit demult. Ei/ ele au murit demult. Asta când nu mai simți nimic, când îi vei condamna pe toți la moarte, atunci vei înțelege că ești om, un homo sapiens. Și ți se face foame. Foame de bani. Foame de bani! Foame de om animal...”

<sup>5</sup> Ebd., S.108. „A fost odată ca niciodată / O fetiță mică ce-a făcut-o lată / Deși studia la institut / Ea tot de proastă a căzut / Lupul i-a tăiat din fonduri și din casă / Și i-a mâncat și bunica grasă / Și în cabana de după dealuri / A venit și presa să facă valuri / Noroc c-un vânător cu un ponei roz / Ce l-a-mpușcat pe lup direct în găoz.”

Bevor sich die Vorstellung dem Ende nähert, hat man bei der Inzenierung die Möglichkeit ein falsches Ende einzubringen und, weil der Text so großzügig geschrieben ist, hatten wir das auch mehrmals wiederholt: eine Szene in Form eines Hörspiels, wobei das Publikum das Originalmärchen nochmals verfolgen konnte oder eine andere Variante in Form eines kurzen Zeichentrickfilms. Diese Erinnerungsszenen führen die Handlung zu einem wichtigen Punkt: das Gespräch des Rotkäppchens / Sonia Duță mit seinem / ihrem *Alter Ego* (Rotkäppchen 1 und Rotkäppchen 2). Dieses wird in Form von Puppentheater dargestellt - deshalb war es für mich persönlich die schwierigste Szene überhaupt, weil ich dafür meine Puppe verstehen und beherrschen musste. Aus diesem Teil erfährt der Zuschauer, was mit dem Mädchen passiert: dass es das Land verlassen möchte, um sich ein besseres Leben zu sichern, aber dafür braucht es ein Visum, wie viele Menschen, die ins Ausland verreisen (auswandern) möchten. Das imaginäre Gespräch zwischen Rotkäppchen 1 und Rotkäppchen 2, eine Schlüsselszene, thematisiert sehr subtil diese Problematik:

„Ich werde das Visum bekommen.

Du wirst das Visum bekommen.

Ich werde wirklich das Visum bekommen.

Ich werde auch das Visum bekommen.

Und was, wenn ich das Visum nicht bekomme?

Und was wenn *ich* das Visum nicht bekomme?

Ich werde das Visum bekommen.

Du wirst das Visum bekommen.

Wir werden das Visum bekommen.

Werden wir sicher das Visum bekommen?

Sicher werden wir das Visum bekommen. Ich habe das Visum nicht bekommen.

Ich habe das Visum bekommen.”<sup>6</sup>

Fazit dieser Szene ist, dass Menschen eine Art Visum für ihr eigenes Leben brauchen: was sollte das bedeuten? Vielleicht liegt die Antwort in der Art und Weise, wie man sein eigenes Leben selbst gestaltet. Das einfach anmutende Wortspiel, auf ein Minimum der Aussage reduziert, suggeriert die Etappen, die ein Mensch durchleben muss, falls er sein Land verlassen möchte. Zugleich bereitet diese Szene den Übergang zum Finale der Vorstellungen vor, in der die Gestalten

<sup>6</sup> Ebd., S. 111. „O să iau viza. / O să iei viza. / Chiar o să iau viza. / Și eu o să iau viza. / Și dacă nu iau viza? / Și dacă nu iau eu viza? / O să iau viza. / O să iei viza. / O să luăm viza. / Sigur luăm viza? / Sigur luăm viza. / N-am luat viza. / Am luat viza.”

ihre fiktiven Rollen verlassen und die Schauspieler erneut als Privatpersonen auftreten.

„Ich, Isa Berger, wurde im Kreisspital am 7. Juni 1988 geboren und hatte bei der Geburt nicht geatmet wegen der doppelten Nabelschnur um meinen Hals.“<sup>7</sup>

„Ich erkläre auf eigene Verantwortung, dass ich 10 Punkte [...] bei meiner Geburt bekommen habe.

Und dass ich ein Foto und das Datum am Sterbeort hinterlassen werde

Damit alle wissen, dass

ich

Nicht danach verlangt habe, ICH zu sein

Dass ich nicht sein wollte

Ich trage keine Schuld an dem, was ich als ich tue

Ich wurde nur davon in Kenntnis gesetzt, dass ich ich bin

Dass ich zu dem geworden bin, was ich bin

Ich habe die Vergangenheit des Ichs nicht gewählt

Ich bin nicht ich

Ich bin das, was andere Ichs ausgesucht haben, dass ich bin

Durch Gegensätze

Durch ihre ICHS

Gegen ich

Im Gegensatz zu meinem Ich

Verglichen mit deinem.

Weil es der einzige Zweck des ICHS ist, meinem Ich

Die Vergangenheit deines Ichs vorzuschlagen.

Ich bin nicht, was ich sein will.

Ich bin ein anderes Ich

Du

Ich

Homo homini lupus est.

Ein Wolf ist der Mensch dem Menschen.

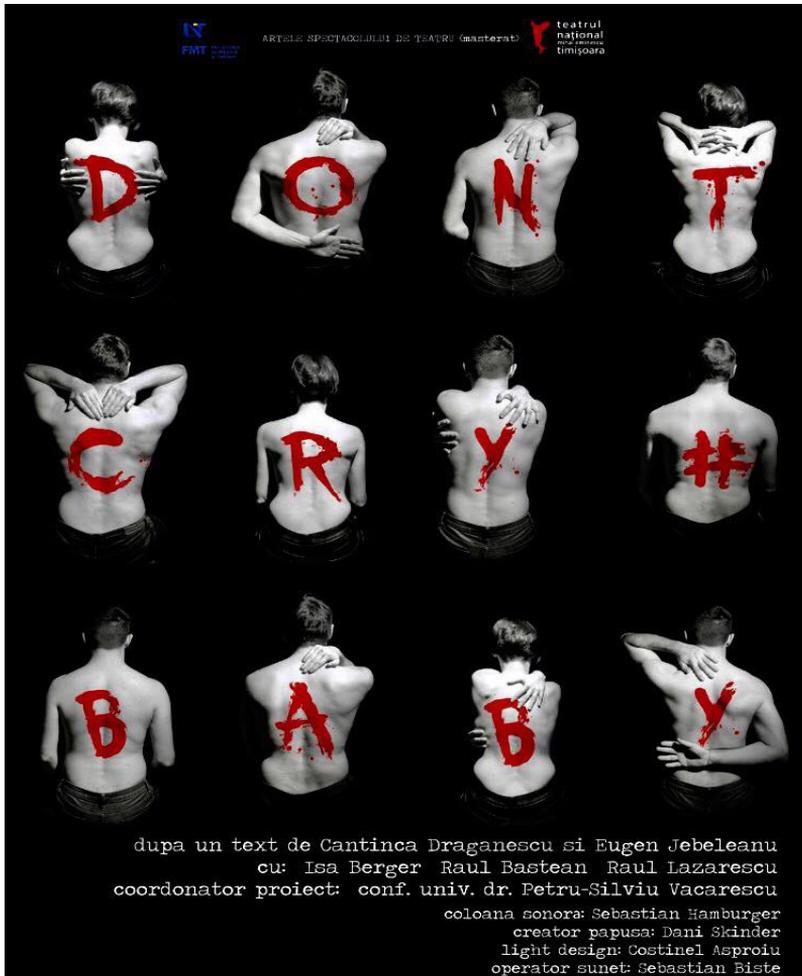
Das bin ich.

Ein Mensch – dem ich ein Wolf!“<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Voneafca, Isabella (Künstlername: Isa Berger), eigene Übersetzung. „Eu, Isa Berger, m-am născut la Spitalul Municipal din Orșova, pe data de 7 iunie 1988 și nu am respirat la naștere, pentru că am avut dublă circulară de cordon în jurul gâtului.“

<sup>8</sup> Drăgănescu, Catinca; Jebeleanu, Eugen: *doncrybaby*, S. 113-114. „Declar pe propria răspundere că am avut 10 la naștere / și că voi pune poza și data la locul decesului / Să știe tot neamul că / Eu / Nu am cerut să fiu EU / Că eu nu am dorit să fiu eu / Nu am vrea vina că fac ce fac eu / Eu am fost doar informat că sunt eu / Că am devenit cel ce sunt

Schlußfolgernd sei bemerkt, dass die Vorstellung *dontcrybaby* durch eine schöne Zusammenarbeit mit meinen Kollegen entstand. Diese Art von Arbeit hat uns das Zuhören gelehrt, die Ideen des anderen zu akzeptieren und am Ende alles



in einer persönlichen Art schauspielerisch wiederzugeben. Von Anfang an war uns klar, dass wir einen zeitgenössischen Text brauchen. Aber was bedeutet

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eu / Nu am ales trecutul lui eu / Eu nu sunt eu / Eu sunt ceea ce alți eu au ales sa fiu eu /  
 Prin antonime / Prin al lor EU / Contra lui eu / Opusul eului meu / Comparativ cu al tău.  
 / Pentru că singurul scop al lui EU e de a propune eului meu / Trecutul Eului tău. / Eu nu  
 sunt ce vreau sa fiu eu. / Eu sunt un alt eu / Tu / Eu / Homo homini lupus est. / Omul e lup  
 pentru om. / Asta sunt eu. / Omul lup pentru eu !”

zeitgenössisch? Die Theaterstücke werden sehr oft metaphorisch dargestellt, aber dieser Text widerspiegelt die wahre Gesellschaft, in der wir leben, ohne Rücksicht auf jedwede Zensur. Das zeitgenössische Theater ist ein sich immer weiter entwickelndes Phänomen, das sich der Zeit anpasst und die spezifische Problematik thematisiert.

Das Theaterprojekt *dontcrybaby* ist eine Analyse der heutigen Gesellschaft, denn jede Gestalt, sowie jeder Einzelne im wirklichen Leben kämpft mit dem Wunsch, sich in den Vordegrund zu plazieren, sucht aber zugleich auch seine eigene Identität. In einer ständigen Balance zwischen Wahrheit und Lüge, Leben und Tod, einem akuten Kampf ums Überleben, verlieren sich die Individuen, ohne wahrzunehmen, dass sie sich mit einer Welt identifizieren, die ihre Werte verloren hat. Dabei gibt es in der Schnelllebigkeit der Existenzen keine Zeit mehr stehen zu bleiben, um nachzudenken, was wirklich im Leben wichtig ist. Das Theaterstück *dontcrybaby* ist erschütternd wahr, von der Tatsache ausgehend, dass sich die Zuschauer mit den vorgestellten Figuren identifizieren, die über Egoismus und Blindheit die Wahrheit und ihr wahres Ich nicht mehr erkennen. Der Zweck unserer Arbeit an diesem Stück war nicht nur Theater zu spielen, sondern uns auch als Menschen selbst zu analysieren, um unsere eigene Identität in der heutigen Gesellschaft zu finden. Die Schlußfolgerung lautet: „Selbstakzeptanz, Toleranz und Nachdenken des Zuschauers, der aufgefordert wird, sie bei sich und bei den anderen zu finden.“<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ciobanu, Alexandru: „*dontcrybaby*. Teatrul tipologiilor umane și al propriei acceptări“ (Theater der menschlichen Typologien und der Selbstakzeptanz), in: FITS „aplauze“. Zeitschrift des Internationalen Theaterfestivals aus Hermannstadt FITS „aplauze“, XXVI / Nr.5 / 18. Juni 2019, S. 16.



4

**CRITICĂ DE TEATRU**



**THEATERKRITIK**



**THEATRE REVIEWS**





# Herta Müller's *Niederungen* and The Dramaturgy of The Body<sup>1</sup>

**JOZEFINA KOMPORALY**

(University of the Arts, London)

## **Abstract**

This performance review discusses Mihaela Panainte's innovative stage adaptation of Herta Müller's visceral first book, premiered at the National Theatre in Iași. As an intimate studio piece, *Niederungen* [*Lowlands*] explores corporality in a mesmerizing installation that tests the boundaries of autobiographical writing in and for performance. Panainte's production celebrates the precision of carefully chosen words and theatrical images, and foregrounds the universal potential of the source material, dismantling the illusion of innocence often associated with village life and defying nostalgic reminiscences of times and events past.

## **Key words:**

Herta Müller; *Niederungen* [*Lowlands*]; stage adaptation; Mihaela Panainte; dramaturgy of the body; performance installation; autobiographical writing (for performance).

## **Rezumat**

Această cronică analizează adaptarea Mihaelei Panainte montată la Teatrul Național din Iași, bazată pe prima carte scrisă de Herta Müller. *Ținuturile joase* este un spectacol de studio de o intimitate rară, care urmărește tema corporalității prin intermediul unei instalații-performance ce tatonează în același timp limitele scriiturii de natură autobiografică în contextual artelor spectacolului. Evenimentul semnat de Panainte operează cu o precizie deosebită în ceea ce privește imaginile vizuale și textul rostit pe scenă, și subliniază valențele universale ale materialului care a inspirat adaptarea.

## **Cuvinte cheie:**

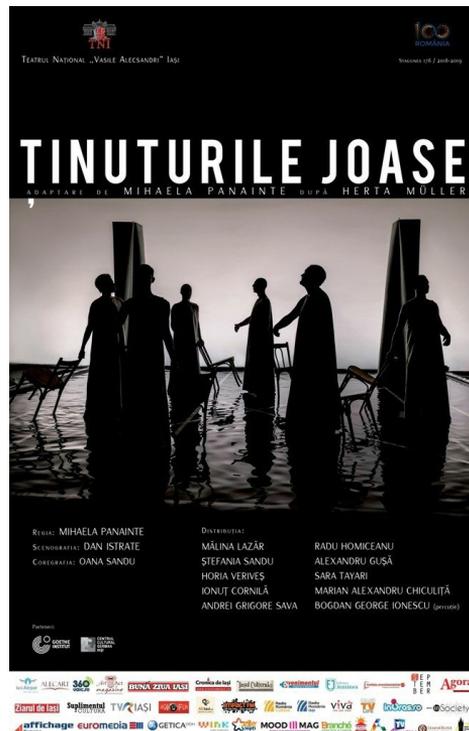
Herta Müller; *Ținuturile joase*; adaptare scenică; Mihaela Panainte; corporalitate/dramaturgie corporală; instalație; performance; scriitură autobiografică.

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The talented Romanian director Mihaela Panainte adapts Nobel laureate Herta Müller's visceral first book for an intimate studio performance that capitalizes on the dynamic energy of a young and well-oiled ensemble, and explores corporality in a mesmerizing installation that tests the boundaries of autobiographical writing in and for performance. By turning to an initially censored piece of literary fiction that is also rather economical with words, Panainte's production celebrates the precision of carefully chosen words and theatrical images, and highlights the universality inherent in the source material, dismantling the illusion of innocence often associated with village life and defying nostalgic reminiscences of times and events past. Produced at the studio of the National Theatre in Iași, operating as a creative hub mainly for younger artists, this sell-out production has proven appeal to a remarkable cross-section of the local population, and is successfully enticing new audiences to contemporary experimental theatre-making that intersects the tradition of text-based drama with visual arts and forms of movement-based performance.



*Ținuturile joase* [Lowlands] Publicity poster.

Photo: Odin Moise

*Ținuturile joase* [*Lowlands*] premiered on 13 October 2018 at the Vasile Alecsandri National Theatre in Iași, Romania. It was adapted for the stage and directed by Mihaela Panainte, based on a volume of short stories by Herta Müller, originally entitled *Niederungen* and translated into English as *Nadirs*. This collection was the Nobel Prize-winning author's first book, written in German in 1982 and published in Romania in censored form, the full text appearing in Germany in 1984 (as published by Rotbuch), and in Romania only after 1989 – in Alexandru Al. Șahighian's excellent translation that formed the basis of the current adaptation. The book focuses on the perspective of a child narrator, by way of a series of stories that centre on life in a remote village against the backdrop of the oppressive atmosphere of mid-twentieth-century Romania. It is important to stress that, in a further layer of intertextuality, Müller's work was in turn inspired by East German poet Johannes Bobrowski, whose focus on 'shadow lands' is in direct association with death and decay, the title thus referencing both low-lying lands and the lowliness and misery of life.

As a German-speaking author writing in eighties Romania, Herta Müller conjures up the world of her childhood in the Swabian community of the Banat region, situated in the western part of the country, along the border with Serbia and Hungary. This is a frank and penetrating view of an isolated population, on the verge of dissolution due to ethnic cleansing achieved by accelerated immigration to Germany, perceived with reticence by some Banat-Swabians who found Müller's portrayal of village life unsympathetic. Indeed, Müller makes no attempt at idealizing this childhood or the climate in which it takes place; her aim is a declared exercise of free speech, which she also practiced on a directly political level as a member of Aktionsgruppe Banat, a group of German-speaking writers in Romania who spoke up against censorship under Nicolae Ceaușescu's dictatorial regime. Müller will return time and time again to this subject matter, most famously in the novel *The Land of Green Plums*, and will receive the 2009 Nobel Prize for depicting the 'landscape of the dispossessed' with 'the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose'.

It is this frankness and concentration of lyricism that Mihaela Panainte's production succeeds in capturing most eloquently. Rather than privileging historical accuracy or the local flavor of a particular place, the director explores the philosophical notion of one's relationship with childhood, childhood being seen here as a universally valid inner personal space that is at the root of our becoming as human beings. The variety of stories covering multiple aspects of daily life in the book are pulled together as a multiplicity of interconnected and overlaid theatrical images, that invite spectators into parallel worlds in a dream-like space

where reality and illusion are situated side by side. The child protagonist at the centre of this universe is the ultimate observer of this world, and this observation is carried out in minute detail and signposted for the audience by way of a tight choreography that interweaves sight, sound, gesture, and movement. Taking into account ritualistic aspects of village life, such as the mother's obsession with sweeping, the weekly family bath or the funeral sermon, the production confronts adult behavior with the candid fear and curious imagination of a child observer, and as Panainte declares, this rural universe stands in for a cosmic universe, and her concern is with the transformative potential of the child protagonist. In this sense we are dealing with a process of initiation, given that the child is the only figure that shows indignation at troubling events and the only one who has the potential to engineer change by making use of creative imagination.

The ultimate threat to childhood, according to the production, is witnessing the cruelty of others, and the narrator (played by third-year acting student Mălina Lazăr) finds herself immersed in a world of extreme tension, sadness and decay. Despite her innocence, this child is continually confronted by the nightmare of lived reality, and her heightened abilities of perception make any attempts at detachment impossible. Panainte taps into the ambivalence inherent in the source text, and amplifies it as the defining note of her *mise-en-scène*. Preoccupied with painterly images, she constructs visually stunning tableaux that elaborate on the complex themes of Müller's work without the ambition to narrow them down to one particular manifestation relevant only in the here and now. Thus, concerns with memory, history, identity, absence and the ephemeral establish intertextual links with other Panainte projects, and this staging of Müller evokes some of her other productions, such as the adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial* (National Theatre of Cluj) and the collage based on the works of Romanian avant-garde author Urmuz (Teatrul de Vest, Reșița).

Fascinated by a sense of cyclical time, rather than its chronological counterpart, Panainte dramatizes emotional memory and braids snippets of seemingly fragmented action to foreground a stratification of history that in the director's words is both 'revelation' and 'concealment' at the same time. Arguing that we can only find ourselves if we are able to return to our childhood, as a repository of potential resources and of revelations to come, Panainte has taken the directorial decision that all characters are mirror images of this child. This decision is motivated not by a desire to explore personal histories as such but by the endeavor to adopt a child's perspective when it comes to engaging with the world and by addressing the impact of emotional and geographical distance from one's homeland. Müller's entire career is situated at the interface between two cultures

and languages (German and Romanian), and Panainte herself was residing away from Romania at the time of conceiving the project.

Visually, the production maps out this multiplicity by way of parallel reflections, of bodies in the shallow water in which the action takes place, and of repetitive physical actions that all characters perform. Panainte directs an ensemble of young performers, half of whom are still studying at the local conservatoire. In the original concept, the director imagined a scaled-up performance involving up to forty actors, but in its final manifestation the production succeeded precisely due to its studio configuration, juxtaposing nine performers in an intimate space, with water assuming the role of the tenth protagonist. Owing to its slippery qualities, water is metaphoric for ambivalence: it has the potential to reflect and amplify but also to modify and destroy; therefore, its connotations as a life-giving matter are doubled by those to the ephemeral and transient. The one association this water does not have, is with cleansing, as the iconic scene of the 'Swabian Bath' sees all members of an extended family immerse themselves one by one in the same tub of water, everything turning out black and opaque in the end. In one of the most tightly choreographed aspects of the show, the entire cast is seen pouring endless jugs of water as they move in circles, reflecting and amplifying one another's movements until a ritualistic intensity is achieved.

The 7m by 7m stage is flooded with water approximately 10 cm deep, and surrounded by four tetrahedral columns in each corner. This minimalist space is the work of scenographer Dan Istrate, a trained sculptor whose main expertise is working in marble. It excels in juxtaposing lightness and fluidity with the material qualities of sculptural objects, as a visual counterpart to Müller's lyrical text that offers a unique braid of extremely concrete details and deeply poetic images. As Istrate observes, his design was influenced by 'the principle of mirroring, perceived as both a physical and educational phenomenon'. Drawing on the work of Gombrich, Istrate points out that we rarely tend to perceive mirrored images as optical illusion, and even though the reflected image undergoes transformations, we only notice these if involved in actual experimentation with the phenomenon. Thus, the reflection of the columns is temporarily disrupted as the actors keep moving about in the water, but it reappears time and time again once stillness sets in, or movement is directed to other areas of the set. For Istrate, childhood is a unique time when one's personal mirror is being constructed, and the memory of childhood is that state of grace where we search for ourselves in reflection, attempting to come to terms with our own selves.

Ultimately, as Panainte argues, the performance space needs to have an organic and sensorial quality, able to conjure up a dreamscape. Although this set is constructed

in a black-box studio, it is reminiscent of the site-specific environments the director often chooses for her productions, where light and shadow overlap, and where the stylized, draped costumes and the actors' faces painted white evoke the menace and emotional distortion of expressionist cinema. Beyond this focus on the visual, the production bears the hallmarks of the director's training in classical music. Created with the precision of a musical score, the production braids sensations, perceptions and stimuli that are aural as well as corporeal, and as the village world comes to life in the shape of a chorus from antiquity, the protagonist's journey through childhood comes full circle. Despite fear and astonishment at events, the child sublimates personal experience into inner growth, and learns to live with the facts of life, albeit bleak and many a times uninviting. Witnessing this cycle conducted in a quasi-hypnotic mode draws in the audience seated at an arm's length from the stage, spectators finding themselves tempted to reconstitute details of their own lives, and, arguably, interrogating their own often ambivalent and contradictory selves.

# Desert, Spiritual Heritage

## *Isabella's Room* by Jan Lauwers

**RAOUL ANDREAS HORN**

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### **Abstract**

*Isabella's Room* is an inheritance of the contemporary theatre, a time-capsule in which the main character, Isabella, a strong-willed old woman, tells her life story with passion. She dreams of her father, a Desert Prince. Isabella becomes an explorer who is running through the artefacts of her time, keeping the same sensuality and magnitude in every aspect of the play. Written and directed by Jan Lauwers, *Isabella's Room* invites you into the coatings of one's life.

**Keywords:** Jan Lauwers; heritage; explorer; will; dream; play; theatre; life.

### **Rezumat**

*Camera Isabellei* este o moștenire a teatrului contemporan, o capsulă a timpului în care Isabella, o femeie puternică, vârstnică, își povestește viața cu pasiune. Visează despre tatăl ei, Prințul Deșertului. Isabella devine un explorator care călătorește alături de artefactele timpului, păstrând aceeași senzualitate și magnitudine în fiecare aspect al spectacolului. Scris și regizat de către Jan Lauwers, spectacolul *Camera Isabellei* te invită să descoperi înveliturile unei vieți.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Jan Lauwers; moștenire; explorator; voință; vis; spectacol; teatru; viață.

Everything started with a misfortunate, but natural occurrence: death. The passing of Jan Lauwers' father made his son, both author and director, receive, besides the fabulous inheritance of 5,000 African artefacts, a spiritual heritage as well. Heritage which included an image and a powerful feeling of creation.

Image has the most sacred role in the spiritual site of theatre. We might say that the actor is the most important, as he or she is the engine driving trepidations within the audience. But is it possible for an actor to be alive without an image? A vision? The image fecundates the energetic pores of the actor and makes him or her worthy to be looked at and felt as well.

By means of the image, the actor is able to create a game. But a director who lets him / herself pervaded by its nuances creates a show, a structure due to boost the human spirit towards perfection. Such perfection can come every moment of one's life. It can be long awaiting, as a small part of our being is inclined towards waiting, relaxing. And when relaxed, we tend to postpone and, therefore, perfection suffers from lag. We might never encounter it this life, but for us, people, attempt is amongst the never-dying aspects. We are left only to *just go on and on and on*. Just like Isabella, Alexander, Frankie, Anne and Arthur. Just like the director, Lauwers, who shows us a little piece of his intimacy, the atmosphere of an anthropology, paternal study room. The 5,000 artefacts pursue Jan and urge him with their looks and statures to whip up a story. A story of the most sacred human order. Family is therefore born.

A creature who charms from the very first second of the show is Isabella, interpreted by Viviane de Muynck. Cool and confident, she starts telling the story of her life. Sitting at a white table, Isabella is looking for her life again. She wants to rediscover it by her other senses, her sight being gone. But there is no need to see in order to look at your own life. Its white image lingers on forever in front of your heart. It is white because this color is actually a composition, the mixture of all the other colors in one thread which probably crosses the universe.

Isabella is not looking for regrets but tends towards the exploration of living matters. Even more, the objects bedside her are alive: A turtle's head, Horus' eye, the whale's penis and her gold necklace are just some creatures who dictate her awareness. The human being assigns life to objects and, in the desert surrounding them, everything gets this particular attribute by a simple breath of wind. The compass is just a thought, the camel is hope and the sand is her mystery.

If one looks in the sky, while in the desert, they will never find the sun. It is always behind you and you cannot turn back to see it. You can only feel it. Nature did not give us eyes in the back because we need to guess a never-ending riddle. What is behind us is a matter of the riddle, of the assumption and of the art of asking questions. This is what Isabella does when she decides to discover who her father was, the Prince of the Desert. She asks herself so many questions that the answers take refuge in the shade of a palm tree and create the impression of mirage. The answer is a mirage surrounding the questions asked in vain.

And yet, what have the great explorers of the desert, Burke and Livingstone, found while crossing the stretch of sand? Nothing did they find, besides life. Some disappeared, others made it all the way in the sand which actually signifies our particles, thoughts and doubts. Along with the sandstorm, we're carried towards the sky, closer to our dreams, but when it stops, we settle back on the ridge of the

dunes and keep looking for the smallest swirl to lift us out. We sit back on the dune, just the way Isabella rejoins the white of her table.

*Kiss me, Livingstone!* – a line that would suit perfectly the ambience of Isabella's room. It shows her passion and fire which makes her go her way. She will fall in love, with the same passion, with Alexander, married with five children, and they go with the searing wind of eroticism. They will meet on the way of a bullet. While asleep on a chair, Alexander's gun fell and its contact to the floor pulls the trigger. Alexander's madness touches Isabella. The woman's desire not to tie herself to a man is falling apart. The twenty-seven men were just warm-up.

She is carrying a child who proves to be mixed-race, to Alexander's not quite pleasant amaze. She tells the man the episode with no regret. She assumes what she did and goes on. Isabella's powerful and all-pervading personality partly owes to the actress, Viviane de Muynck, a stage veteran, who, despite her respectable age, proves to be sensual and amazingly elegant. Viviane's white smile has Isabella's spark dancing within.

A significant detail of the show is time. The clock fails to show the time, but shows the year when sandstorms left the ground and carried people to the chaos. The years of the World Wars, of death, years crossing the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a century hungry for the so-called evolution we need to go for. Several events with a powerful impact are presented: the Hiroshima bomb, the city where Alexander was held war prisoner of the Japanese, and the invention of the neon light. That way, signaled the technological evolution reaching outstanding evolution to the final of the century.

Isabella's love is failing in ardor. Even Frankie, her grandson, finds his body in his grandmother's arms. Incest can be regarded as family togetherness beyond appearance. The kiss of the two doesn't bother, it raises the dramatic and challenging potential of the scene. There are two bodies noticed, one is old, and one is young, and they tie by a simple kiss.

Jan Lauwers' mastery to make delicate situations worthy of being enjoyed, without disturbing the circumspect spectator, is exceptional. The text has a direct character, is not loaded with tinsels to make it difficult to flow but scattered here and there with suggestive metaphors.

Besides being a lab, the scene has the role to allow its interpreters the freedom to dance and to show us organic physicalities, movements too fluid to be described by the rigidity of words. Music is as well a pillar of the performance. Sharp, tough noises, which change at a slow pace, and allow Hans Petter Dahl to reveal the warmth of his voice. Tunes like *Song of Budhanton* will never stop haunting that part of my brain in charge with imagination, as the image of the Man with the Beard at the end, the Desert Prince caught in a sublime dance, is that cathartic

moment in every sense of the word. The simplicity of such act draws our attention to the core of an essence, to the union of body and soul. Special microscopes and neon lamps are at hand for the researchers on stage to analyze objects. The artefacts themselves were telling a story, even if inert, petrified, and can only be seen in their depth by *the man who never stops*.

And this man who never stops searching can be everybody in the theatrical assembly. Isabella's left and right parts of the brain were symbolized by two women, out of which one was testing the flow of frailty and the other, with outstanding body building and a tough, wild voice, embodies preciseness. There is precision and frailty. There is this anthropologist digging inside himself using questions instead of a shovel.

The Desert Princess daydreams about Africa. About the sun-soaked land of beasts, of the deserts. Isabella has never been to Africa, but is determined to break its soil, to feel the dust of the savannahs stubbornly passing through her pockets. The dust carrying the image of her real father, of the explorer. But the travel is always postponed, up to the moment when Frankie is shot in Africa. When death forces you, there is a millennium ahead of you.

Being 89, Isabella loses her sight and her money. After almost a century when she only "looked at the outside", without fearing the inside of things, she starts considering selling her objects. The mere thought causes pain. How could anybody sell his or her own life?

We've gotten to the point when Internet comes out of the blue. The echoes of the new millennium get into Isabella's room and, strong as she is, she adapts. She will shoot her artefacts, actually record a part of her life on video. But "Who the hell would ever buy a whale penis?" Sure thing someone will, as changing lives on the Internet has been "trendy" lately. Subtle irony of the director.

The absurd of the situation, taking Isabella's pulse and breathing, burns a black and white image into the spectator's mind (the performance being recorded in black and white filter has been a great advantage), a family made of searching, singing and dancing and of the atemporality of a performance on its way towards perfection.

At the end, Isabella, Alexander, Frankie, Arthur and Anne sing and draw a line, a thread connecting us all. The forever young storyteller, whose job was to deal with history along the performance, gives us a moment of immortality, a thousand years deprived of mysteries, a new millennium to ask questions, the lighthouse on the island lighting our way up, even in a storm.

*Translated into English by Carmen Tărniceru*

# **Jung-Schauspieler im Wettbewerb Festival der Universitäten für Kunst und Kulturmanagement 14.-23. Juni 2019\***

**ELEONORA RINGLER-PASCU**

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## **Abstract**

The present theatre review describes the competition of young actors, students from diverse performing arts schools - acting, that had been present at the Festival of the Arts and Cultural Management Universities, section included in the International Theatre Festival from Sibiu in June 14-23, 2019.

**Keywords:** Festival of the Arts and Cultural Management Universities; International Theatre Festival from Sibiu; competition; performing arts; acting.

## **Rezumat**

Prezenta cronică de teatru descrie competiția tinerilor actori, studenților din diverse școli de artele spectacolului – specializarea actorie, prezenți la Festivalul Universităților de Artă și Management Cultural, secțiune inclusă în Festivalul Internațional de Teatru din Sibiu, 14-23 iunie, 2019.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Festivalul Universităților de Artă și Management Cultural; Festivalul Internațional de Teatru din Sibiu; competiție; artele spectacolului; actorie.

„Die Kunst des Schenkens“ – unter diesem Motto trafen sich Studierende der darstellenden Künste aus Bulgarien, Deutschland, Großbritannien, Litauen, Republik Moldau, USA und aus Rumänien, um bei dem renommierten Internationalen Theaterfestival aus Hermannstadt (14.-23. Juni 2019, 26. Auflage) mitzuwirken.

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Constantin Chiriac, Vorsitzender des Internationalen Theaterfestivals aus Sibiu / Hermannstadt, der *spiritus rector* dieses einmaligen jährlichen Events, ist es gelungen, in Zusammenarbeit mit der „Lucian Blaga“ Universität und dem Nationalen Theater „Radu Stanca“ innerhalb der Sondersektion des Festivals der Universitäten für Kunst und Kulturmanagement den jungen darstellenden Künstlern aus aller Welt die Chance zu gewähren sich zu treffen, sich auszutauschen und nebst namhaften Künstlern aufzutreten. Das Ziel - einen Dialog der werdenden Künstler zu erlangen, die sich in der *community* der darstellenden Künste eingliedern. Begeisterung, Freude und Professionalität sind stets präsent gewesen, denn es ist zugleich die Begegnung mit einem besonderen Publikum, dem Festivalpublikum, mit berühmten Künstlern und Kulturmanagern – ein Sprungbrett für die zukünftige Laufbahn.

Zum Auftakt traten die Vertreter des Aura Dance Theaters aus Litauen mit ihrer beeindruckenden *Blossom* Tanzperformance (Regie: Biruté Letukaitė) auf, gewidmet der Künstlerin Frida Kahlo. Ebenfalls im Bereich des Tanzes bot die junge Künstlerin Maria Popova (Konzept, Regie und Darstellung) von der Leeds Beckett Universität aus Großbritannien ihre sich „bewegende“ Installation *Seite 127*, eine neue Ausdrucksform, die mehrere Kunstsparten vereint.

Es folgten Produktionen inspiriert von der Geschichte der Antike – *24 August* (Regie und Konzept: Miklós Bács, Irina Wintze und Carmen Curuțiu) meisterhaft interpretiert von den Schauspielstudenten der Babeș-Bolyai Universität, eine dynamische, energiegeladene nonverbale Vorstellung, die auf den Kollaps der Stadt Pompeji im Jahr 79 n. Chr. zurückblickt und zugleich den Untergang eines gesamten Universums darstellt.



*24 August*, Konzept: Miklós Bács, Irina Wintze und Carmen Curuțiu;  
Foto:© Raul Stan FITS 2019

Zum Kanon der dramatischen Literatur gehörende Werke wurden ebenfalls aufgeführt. So präsentierten die Studenten der Nationalen Universität für darstellende Kunst und Film „I. L. Caragiale“ in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Kleinen Theater aus Bukarest Tschechows Drama *Die Möwe* (Regie: Tania Filip), eine moderne, gefühlvolle Inszenierung. Die Studierenden der Universität aus Craiova brachten Tschechows Komödie *Der Kirschgarten* (Regie: Hariclea Nicolau), das Geschehen gesehen aus der Perspektive der Gestalt Charlotta Ivanovna.

Shakespeares Tragödie *Hamlet*, kombiniert mit Aldo Nicolajs Hamlet Variante (Regie: Octavian Jighiriu), stellte das Können der Schauspielstudenten der Nationalen Kunstuniversität „George Enescu“ auf die Probe.

Die Freiburger Schauspielschule wagte sich an das satirische Theaterstück *Die Irre von Chaillot* von Jean Giraudaux heran (Regie: Grete Linz), indem es den Theaterpart mit Zirkuselementen auffrischte und die Tragik der Situation ins Groteske überführte.



*Die Irre von Chaillot* von Jean Giraudaux,  
Foto: © Kim Runa Linz FITS 2019

Spannend waren die Vorschläge des Festivals Gegenwartsstücke zu präsentieren, einige sogar in Anwesenheit der Autoren. Die Masteranden der Hochschule für Musik und Theater der West-Universität Temeswar beeindruckten das neugierige Publikum mit der Produktion *doncrybaby* von Catinca Drăgănescu und Eugen Jebeleanu (Regie: Petru-Silviu Văcărescu), einer modernen Version des

Grimmschen Märchens *Rotkäppchen*, projiziert in die aktuelle Welt, dominiert von Macht, Korruption, Opportunismus und Vereinsamung – eine Radiographie der heutigen Gesellschaft.



*dontcrybaby* von Catinca Drăgănescu und Eugen Jebeleanu,  
Foto:© Daniel Opreș FITS 2019

Die Anwesenheit des Schriftstellers Matei Vișniec bei der Inszenierung seines Theaterstückes *Clowns gesucht*, gespielt von den Hochschülern der Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst – Falmouth Universität in Zusammenarbeit mit The Void Theatre Company (Regie: Eusebiu-Mihail Tudoroiu), sorgte für Überraschung bei den Anwesenden – Darsteller und Zuschauer, die ein Zusammenspiel von Theater, Tanz und Zirkus erlebten.

Die Projektmanagerin Luminița Bîrsan vom Departement für darstellende Kunst der „Lucian Blaga“ Universität leitete zwei Produktionen: *Love Stories* von Joël Pommerat (Regie: Marius Gilea, Diana Fufezan, Adrian Neacșu), eine Collage von vierzehn Szenen, die sich dem Thema Liebe mit ihren Tief- und Höhepunkten widmet, verbunden mit den von den Darstellern interpretierten Beatles Songs, die das Liebeskaleidoskop abrunden.

Die Hermannstädter Studenten derselben Universität spielten in Anwesenheit der Dramatikerin Elise Wilk ihr erfolgreiches Jugendstück *Die grüne Katze* (Regie: Eugen Gyemant), eine beeindruckende Geschichte über die Welt der *teenies*, denen die elterliche Zuneigung fehlt, und die versuchen in einem imaginären Universum Zuflucht zu finden, doch ohne die erwartete Freiheit zu erlangen.



*Clowns gesucht* von Matei Vişniec, Regie:  
Foto: © Eleonora-Melissa Ivana FITS 2019



*Die grüne Katze* von Elise Wilk, Regie: Eugen Gyemant;  
Foto: © Dragoş Dumitru FITS 2019

Die Masteranden der Kunstuniversität aus Târgu-Mureş füllten mit ihren Körpern und Stimmen den Spielraum in dem performativen Stück *Ablaufdatum* von Alina Nelega (Regie: Gavril Cadariu), während sie über einzelne Wörter und Sätze eine Narration aufstellten, – eine Art freie Übung, die das Publikum einbezog.

*The Lost Generation* von Robert Patrick (Regie: Sava Dragunchev Jr.) bot den Studenten der Nationalen Akademie für Theater- und Filmkunst aus Sofia den Ausgangspunkt für einen Frage-Reigen, der an den Verlust des amerikanischen Traumes anknüpfte und die Ausweglosigkeit der jungen Generation der Zukunft gegenüber hervorhob.

*How I Learned to Drive*, der von Paula Vogel mit dem Pulitzer Preis ausgezeichnete Text, provozierte durch die Darstellung der New Yorker Studierenden der Pace University (Regie: Borna Barzin), eine puzzle artige Story über das Mädchen Lil' Bit, das sich an ihre traumatische Kindheit erinnert und an den sexuellen Missbrauch seitens ihres Onkels, wobei sie als Erwachsene gelernt hat zu verzeihen.

Zu den Schauspielstudenten gesellten sich auch zwei erfolgreiche Schülergruppen – Amprente aus Kronstadt mit dem Stück *Waschen wir das Kind oder zeugen wir ein anderes* von Christopher Durang (Regie: Anca Maria Băcanu) und Acting-Up aus Bukarest mit der Produktion *Phantomerinnerungen* von Diana Mănăilă (Regie: George Lepădatu, Diana Mănăilă) – beide mutige Inszenierungen, die sämtliche aktuelle Fragen bezüglich der mangelhaften Erziehung der Kinder aufwerfen, ihrer Vereinsamung in einer Gesellschaft, die an den Verlust der moralischen Werte leidet.

Ausser den im Studio (CAVAS) der „Lucian Blaga“ Universität aufgeführten Projekte gab es auch eine *open air* Veranstaltung – *La lilioci* (Bei den Fledermäusen) – eine Collage nach Marin Sorescus Texten, vorgeführt von den Hermannstädter Schauspielstudenten unter der Leitung von Marian Râlea.

Fazit: Es ist eine außerordentliche Chance im Rahmen des Internationalen Theaterfestivals aus Hermannstadt aufzutreten, das Künstler aus aller Welt vereint, denn die Studierenden der darstellenden Künste von heute sind die Schauspieler von morgen, die erwartet werden erneut bei den zukünftigen FITS-Auflagen ihr Können und ihr Talent unter Beweis zu stellen.

## AUTORII



## AUTOREN



## AUTHORS

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Studii: Licențiat în Arte Plastice și Decorative, specializarea Scenografie, în cadrul Facultății de Arte și Design a Academiei de Artă din București (1992). În prezent doctorand al Școlii Doctorale IOSUD-ULBS din Sibiu, cu teza de doctorat „Scenograful la răscruce de arte”, profesor coordonator – prof. univ. dr. habil. Constantin Chiriac. Scenograf la Teatrul Mic din București (1992-2019) și la Teatrul Național București (1994-1998). Profesor invitat în cadrul Universității Naționale de Artă Teatrală și Cinematografică „I. L. Caragiale“ din București (1997-2019). Artist independent (din 2019). Scenograf al Operei Naționale din Timișoara (2019-prezent). Colaborare cu regizorul Silviu Purcărete pentru numeroase producții. Factor cheie în realizarea și dezvoltarea Fabricii de Cultură din Sibiu, transformând clădirea unei vechi fabrici într-o sală de spectacol disponibilă pentru Festivalul Internațional de Teatru de la Sibiu și pentru Teatrul Național „Radu Stanca“ din Sibiu.

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Studii: Engleză-Franceză la Universitatea București, BA (1991); Master în Studii Culturale Britanice la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai din Cluj (1995); Master în ‘Gender, Literature and Modernity’ la Universitatea Warwick (1997); Doctorat

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Studien: BA in Englischer and Französischer Sprache und Literatur – Universität Bukarest (1991); MA in British Cultural Studies – Universität Babes-Bolyai, Klausenburg (1995); MA in ‘Gender, Literature and Modernity’, Universität Warwick (1997); Doktorat in Vergleichender Literatur, Universität Warwick (2002 – ausgezeichnet für das Projekt „Configuration of Motherhood in Contemporary British Theatre”); Postdoc Studien in Übersetzungswissenschaft an der Universität Hull (2004). Unterrichtet darstellende Kunst an der Kunstuniversität London und übersetzt aus dem Rumänischen und Ungarischen ins Englische. Publikationen (Selektion): Monographien: *Staging Motherhood: British Women Playwrights, 1956 to the Present* (2006); *Radical Revival as Adaptation: Theatre, Politics, Society* (2017); Kritische Anthologien: *Matéi Visniec: How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients and Other Plays* (2015); *András Visky's Barrack Dramaturgy: Memories of the Body* (2017); Essey ‘*The Ghosts of History Redux: Intertextuality, Rewriting, Adaptation*’, in: I. A. Orlich, *Subversive Stages: Theatre in Pre- and Post-communist Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria* (2017). Übersetzungen: ‘*The Golden Round*’: *Essays on the*

*Politics of Power in Shakespeare* (2018) und *Act(ing) and Mimesis: ESSAYS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACTOR* (2019) von Mihai Măniuțiu, beide Übersetzungen in Zusammenarbeit mit Nicoleta Cinpoes; *Mr K Released* von Matei Visniec (2019); Texte von rumänischen und ungarischen Autoren – Mihaela Miroiu, Matei Vișniec, András Visky, Andrea Tompa, Gábor Vida. Teilnahme an der ersten Ausgabe für Übersetzungsprogramme [*Foreign Affairs*] *Translates!*; ihre Übersetzungen wurden von Ensembles wie z. Bsp. [*Foreign Affairs*] London und Theatre Y Chicago inszeniert. Forschungsschwerpunkte: Performance Studies; Britisches und Europäisches Gegenwartstheater; Übersetzungsstudien; Frauenliteratur.

Studies: BA in English and French Language and Literature – University of Bucharest (1991); MA in British Cultural Studies – University of Cluj, Romania (1995); MA in ‘Gender, Literature and Modernity’ – Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies and the Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, University of Warwick (1997); PhD – Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick (2002 – awarded for the project “Configuration of Motherhood in Contemporary British Theatre”); postdoctoral studies for translation at the University of Hull (2004). Lectures in performance at the University of the Arts, London, and translates from Romanian and Hungarian into English. Selected Publications: Single-authored monographs: *Staging Motherhood: British Women Playwrights, 1956 to the Present* (2006); *Radical Revival as Adaptation: Theatre, Politics, Society* (2017); Critical anthologies: *Matéi Visniec: How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients and Other Plays* (2015); *András Visky’s Barrack Dramaturgy: Memories of the Body* (2017); Essay: ‘*The Ghosts of History Redux: Intertextuality, Rewriting, Adaptation*’, in: I. A. Orlich, *Subversive Stages: Theatre in Pre- and Post-communist Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria* (2017). Translations: ‘*The Golden Round*’: *Essays on the Politics of Power in Shakespeare* (2018); *Mr K Released* by Matéi Visniec (2019); texts by Romanian and Hungarian authors – Mihaela Miroiu, Matei Vișniec, András Visky, Andrea Tompa, Gábor Vida. Participation in the inaugural edition of the translation mentorship programme [*Foreign Affairs*] *Translates!*, and her translations were staged by companies such as [*Foreign Affairs*] London and Theatre Y Chicago. Research areas: Performance Studies; Contemporary British and European Theatre; Translation and Adaptation Studies; Women’s Writing.

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**Weimin LI, Dr. / PhD**

Studii: Limba și literatura chineză, Open University of China, Sichuan (1986). Profesor la Universitatea pentru Limbi Străine Zhejiang Yuexiu și Universitatea pentru Studii Internaționale Sichuan; director adjunct China Shakespeare Studies Association, membru în International Shakespeare Studies Communication Committee, director Shakespeare Studies Institute, redactor șef *Journal Shakespeare Studies in China* și redactor șef adjunct la Journal Editorial Department, Sichuan International Studies University. Publicații: *Glory and Dream: Shakespeare in China*; *The History of Shakespearean Studies in China*; *Shakespeare in the Chinese and Western Cultural Contexts*; *Shakespeare Study in China: on Shakespearean Scholars' Thoughts and Theoretical Construction*; *Acceptance and Acculturation of Shakespearean Drama on Chinese Stage* și peste 200 articole importante. Aree de cercetare: studii shakespeareiene; studii comparate despre teatrul chinezesc și teatrul vestic; cercetare despre Wu Mi.

Studien: Chinesische Sprache und Literatur, Open University of China, Sichuan (1986). Professor an der Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages und an der Sichuan International Studies University; stellvertretender Direktor China Shakespeare Studies Association, Mitglied im International Shakespeare Studies Communication Committee, Direktor Shakespeare Studies Institute, Redaktionsleiter *Journal Shakespeare Studies in China* und stellvertretender Redaktionsleiter Journal Editorial Department, Sichuan International Studies University. Publikationen: *Glory and Dream: Shakespeare in China*; *The History of Shakespearean Studies in China*; *Shakespeare in the Chinese and Western Cultural Contexts*; *Shakespeare Study in China: on Shakespearean Scholars' Thoughts and Theoretical Construction*; *Acceptance and Acculturation of Shakespearean Drama on Chinese Stage* und über 200 wichtige Artikeln. Forschungsschwerpunkte: Shakespeare Studien; Vergleichende Studien zu chinesischem und westlichem Drama; Forschungen zu Wu Mi.

Studies: Chinese Language and Literature, Open University of China, Sichuan (1986). Professor of both Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages and Sichuan International Studies University, vice director of China Shakespeare Studies Association, member of the International Shakespeare Studies Communication Committee, director of Shakespeare Studies Institute, editor-in-chief of the *Journal Shakespeare Studies in China* and vice editor-in-chief of the Journal Editorial Department, Sichuan International Studies University. Publications: *Glory and Dream: Shakespeare in China*; *The History of Shakespearean Studies in China*; *Shakespeare in the Chinese and Western Cultural Contexts*; *Shakespeare Study*

*in China: on Shakespearean Scholars' Thoughts and Theoretical Construction; Acceptance and Acculturation of Shakespearean Drama on Chinese Stage* and over 200 important papers. Research field: Shakespeare studies; comparative studies on Chinese and Western dramas; research on Wu Mi.

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### **Patricia NEDELEA, Dr. Dr. / PhD**

Studii: Jurnalistică-Engleză la Universitatea de Vest Timișoara, BA (1996), Master în Lingvistică Română la Universitatea de Vest Timișoara (1997). Actorie (Română) la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj (2002), master în Studii Europene la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj (2003). Master (2004) și doctorat la Universitatea Central Europeană Budapesta, Departamentul de Studii de Gen – Teză pe Queer Theory aplicată pe Shakespeare (2008). Master (2009) și Doctorat la Institutul Universitar European Florența, Departamentul de Istorie și Civilizație, Teză despre Cărțile de Tarot ca sisteme ale memoriei renaștentiste (2012). Bursă doctorală Marie Curie la Universitatea din Bologna (2007). Publicații: *Femina Ludens Re-Con-Queering Shakespeare* (2012), *Three Shakespearean Graces – a Queer Perspective* (2012), *Ochiul care privește – ochiul care plătește* (2012), *Femina Ludens Playing Shakespeare* (2017). Arii de cercetare: Shakespeare, istoria Renașterii, femeile în Renaștere, arta memoriei, teorii queer și feministe.

Studien: BA Journalistik und Anglistik (1996), Masterstudium in Romanistik an der West-Universität Temeswar (1997). Schauspiel (in Rumänisch, 2002), Masterstudium in European Studies an der Babeș-Bolyai Universität Cluj (2003). MA (2004) und PhD an der Central European University, Department für Gender Studien – Dissertation über Queer Theorie angewandt an Shakespeare (2008). MA (2009) und PhD am European University Institute, Department für Geschichte und Zivilisation – Dissertation über Tarotkarten als Orte des Renaissance Gedächtnisses (2012). Marie Curie Doctoral Fellowship an der Universität Bologna (2007). Publikationen: *Femina Ludens Re-Con-Queering Shakespeare* (2012), *Three Shakespearean Graces – a Queer Perspective* (2012), *Ochiul care privește – ochiul care plătește* (2012), *Femina Ludens Playing Shakespeare* (2017). Forschungsbereiche: Shakespeare, Geschichte der Renaissance, Frauen in der Renaissance, Kunst des Gedächtnisses, Queer und Feministische Theorie.

Studies: BA Journalism and English at the West University of Timișoara (1996), Master Degree in Romanian Linguistics at the same university (1997). Acting

(Romanian) at Babeş-Bolyai University (2002), Master in European Studies at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj (2003). Master (2004) and PhD at Central European University, Department of Gender Studies – Thesis on Queer Theory applied on Shakespeare (2008). Master (2009) and PhD at European University Institute, History and Civilization Department – Thesis on Tarot Cards as Renaissance Memory Places (2012). Marie Curie Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Bologna (2007). Publications: *Femina Ludens Re-Con-Queering Shakespeare* (2012), *Three Shakespearean Graces – a Queer Perspective* (2012), *Ochiul care priveşte – ochiul care plăteşte* (2012), *Femina Ludens Playing Shakespeare* (2017). Research areas: Shakespeare, Renaissance History, Women in the Renaissance, Art of Memory, Queer and Feminist Theory.

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### **Andrada-Maria OLARIU (Cazan), MA**

Studii: Licență (2011) și masterat (2013) în cadrul Departamentului de Artă Teatrală de la Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu. În prezent, studii doctorale la Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu, pe tema: *Strategie și management în organizarea unui festival de artele spectacolului: Festivalul Internațional de Teatru de la Sibiu*. Din 2012, asistent manager pentru Constantin Chiriac în cadrul departamentului de marketing al Teatrului Național „Radu Stanca” Sibiu și în cadrul Festivalului Internațional de Teatru de la Sibiu. Coordonator pentru oaspeții VIP de la festival și responsabil pentru comunicarea cu structuri oficiale precum: Administrația Prezidențială România, ministere, ambasade, institute culturale, centre culturale, etc. În ultimii doi ani a coordonat conferințele speciale lunare, secțiunea de conferințe speciale și film în cadrul Festivalului Internațional de Teatru de la Sibiu.

Studien: BA (2011) und MA (2013) an der Abteilung für Darstellende Kunst und Theaterstudien der „Lucian Blaga” - Universität Hermannstadt. Zurzeit Doktoratstudien an der „Lucian Blaga” - Universität mit dem Thema *Strategien und Management in der Organisierung eines Festivals für darstellende Künste: das Internationale Theaterfestival Hermannstadt*. Seit 2012 Assistentin des Intendanten Constantin Chiriac im Rahmen der Marketingabteilung des Nationaltheaters „Radu Stanca” Hermannstadt und am Internationalen Theaterfestival Hermannstadt; verantwortlich im Rahmen des Internationalen Theaterfestivals für die VIP-Gäste und für die Kommunikation mit den öffentlichen Behörden, u.a. die Rumänische

Präsidialverwaltung, Ministerien, Botschaften, Kulturinstitutionen und anderen kulturellen Einrichtungen. In den letzten zwei Jahren koordinierte sie die monatlichen Konferenzveranstaltungen und die Sonderkonferenzen und Filmreihen im Rahmen des Internationalen Festivals.

Studies: Bachelor's Degree (2011) and Master's Degree (2013) at the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu. PhD studies at the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu with the topic: *Strategy and Management in Organizing a Performing Arts Festival: The Sibiu International Theatre Festival* – in progress. Since 2012, the assistant manager of Constantin Chiriac in the Marketing Department of the "Radu Stanca" National Theatre in Sibiu and for the Sibiu International Theatre Festival. Coordinator for VIP guests within the festival and also in charge with the communication between the festival management and the official structures such as: Romanian Presidential Administration, ministries, embassies, cultural institutes, cultural centres etc. In the past two years, she has also coordinated the monthly special conferences, the special conferences section and film section of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival.

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### **Eleonora RINGLER-PASCU, Dr. habil. / PhD**

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*, Universitatea de Arte Târgu-Mureș (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 Filológicos 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* (2000); *Österreichische Literatur ohne Grenzen. Gedenkschrift*

für Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, Attila Bombitz, Renata Cornejo, Slawomir Piontek, Eleonora Ringler-Pascu (ed.) (2009); *Kurzdrama – Minidrama*, Excelsior Art, Timișoara (2009), *Drama der Antike* (2010), *Österreichische Literatur. Traditionsbezüge und Prozesse der Moderne vom 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, Laura Cheie, Eleonora Ringler-Pascu, Christiane Wittmer (ed.) (2018). Traduceri: Peter Handke: *Absența* (2000); Armin Klein: *Managementul proiectului cultural* (2005); Thomas Bernhard: *Immanuel Kant* (2013). Arii 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* Kunstuniversität Târgu-Mureș (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 Filológicos 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*, Attila Bombitz, Renata Cornejo, Slawomir Piontek, Eleonora Ringler-Pascu (Hg.) (2009); *Kurzdrama – Minidrama* (2009); *Drama der Antike* (2010), *Österreichische Literatur. Traditionsbezüge und Prozesse der Moderne vom 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, Laura Cheie, Eleonora Ringler-Pascu, Christiane Wittmer (Hrsg.) (2018). Übersetzungen: Peter Handke: *Absența* (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*, University of Arts Târgu-Mureș (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 Filológicos 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*, Attila Bombitz, Renata Cornejo, Slawomir Piontek, Eleonora Ringler-Pascu (ed.) (2009); *Kurzdrama – Minidrama* (2009); *Drama der Antike* (2010), *Österreichische Literatur. Traditionsbezüge und Prozesse der Moderne vom 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart*, Laura Cheie, Eleonora Ringler-Pascu, Christiane Wittmer (ed.) (2018). Translations: Peter Handke: *Absența* (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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### **Adrian Strâmtu, MA**

Studii: Artele spectacolului de teatru, BA, Facultatea de Litere și Arte, Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu (2013); master „Actorie și regie” (2015) și studii doctorale la Facultatea de Teatru și Film, Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca. Experiență profesională de peste un deceniu ca dansator de *tap dance*. Realizarea, pe bază de voluntariat, a Cursului de mișcare și *tap dance* (din 2015 până în prezent), Facultatea de Teatru și Film, Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca. Organizare de producții artistice: spectacolul concert *Steps*, care a integrat, în premieră națională, *tap dance* într-un show teatral (2018); producția independentă *That’s entertaining Broadway Style* (2017). *Tap dance* performance: *Tedx Cluj-Napoca* (2017); *Jazz in the Street Cluj-Napoca* (2017). Momente coregrafice: *Balul Operei Cluj-Napoca* (2017); Festivalul de Teatru

*C'artfest*, Cristian, Braşov (2017). Workshop-uri de *tap dance*: „Noaptea porţilor deschise”, Teatrul Naţional Cluj-Napoca (2016). Publicaţii: *The Finalities of Teaching-Learning Tap Dance to Actors*, în: *Journal Plus Education*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2019); *Procesualitatea demersului creativ în context artistic*, în: *Colocvii teatrale. Theatrical Colloquia*, Vol. 27 (2019), *Tap Dance – From Neliniary Evolution To Definitive Affirmation*, în: *UNATC Journal of Drama Teaching*, Nr. 4/2019.

Studium: BA Darstellende Kunst – Schauspiel, Hochschule für Philologie und Kunst, „Lucian Blaga” Universität Hermannstadt (2013); MA in Schauspiel und Regie (2015) und Doktoratstudien an der Hochschule für Theater und Film, Babeş-Bolyai Universität Klausenburg. Langjährige professionelle Erfahrung als *tap dance* Tänzer. Freiwillige Leitung des Kurses für Bewegung und *Tap Dance* (ab 2015 bis heute), Hochschule für Theater und Film, Babeş-Bolyai Universität Cluj-Napoca. Organisation künstlerischer Produktionen: Konzert-Vorstellung *Steps*, die als nationale Premiere *tap dance* in eine Theatershow einführte (2018); eigenständige Produktion *That's entertaining Broadway Style* (2017). *Tap dance* performance: *Tedx Cluj-Napoca* (2017); *Jazz in the Street Cluj-Napoca* (2017). Choreographische Momente: *Cluj-Napoca Opera Ball* (2017); *The C'art fest* Theater Festival, Cristian, Braşov (2017). *Tap dance* Workshops: “Night of the open gates”, National Theater Cluj-Napoca (2016). Publikationen: “The Finalities of Teaching-Learning Tap Dance to Actors”, in: *Journal Plus Education*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2019); “The processional aspect of the creative approach in the artistic context”, in: *Theatrical Colloquia*, Vol. 27 (2019), “Tap Dance – From Neliniary Evolution To Definitive Affirmation”, in: *UNATC Journal of Drama Teaching*, No. 4/2019.

Studies: BA Performing arts – acting, Faculty of Letters and Arts, “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu (2013); MA in acting and directing, Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca (2015); doctoral studies, Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca. More than a decade of professional experience as a *tap dance* dancer. Achievement, based on volunteering, of the Movement and *Tap Dance* Course (from 2015 to present), Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca. Organization of artistic productions: *Steps* concert performance, which integrated, as national premiere, *tap dance* in a theatrical show (2018); independent production *That's entertaining Broadway Style* (2017). *Tap dance* performance: *Tedx Cluj-Napoca* (2017); *Jazz in the Street Cluj-Napoca* (2017). Choreographic moments: *Cluj-Napoca Opera Ball* (2017); *The C'art fest* Theater Festival, Cristian, Braşov County (2017). *Tap dance* workshops: “Night of the open gates”, National Theater Cluj-Napoca

(2016). Publications: “The Finalities of Teaching-Learning Tap Dance to Actors”, in: *Journal Plus Education*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2019); “The processional aspect of the creative approach in the artistic context”, in: *Theatrical Colloquia*, Vol. 27 (2019), “Tap Dance – From Neliniary Evolution To Definitive Affirmation”, in: *UNATC Journal of Drama Teaching*, No. 4/2019.

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### **Radu TEAMPĂU, Dr. / PhD**

Studii: Artă teatrală, specialitatea regie de teatru, BA (1996) și master în Filosofia Culturii și Artele Spectacolului la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca (2006). Diploma de doctor în Teatru și Artele Spectacolului cu teza *Narațiunea regizorală* (2015). Regizor și asist. univ. la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca. Colaborează, ca regizor, la mai multe teatre din țară: Teatrul Național, Cluj-Napoca; Teatrul Puck, Cluj-Napoca; Teatrul Elvira Godeanu, Târgu Jiu; Teatrul Municipal, Turda; Teatrul Tineretului, Piatra Neamț; Teatrul Maghiar de Stat Csiky Gergely, Timișoara; Teatrul Național Radu Stanca, secția germană, Sibiu; participare la festivaluri și workshopuri de teatru naționale și internaționale în Austria, Belgia, Elveția, Germania, Italia; spectacole în cadrul teatrului independent. Colaborare la revistele: *Colocvii teatrale*, *Steaua*, *Tribuna*, *Echinox*. Cărți: *Logolatria* (2003); *Taifasuri mileziene* (2007); *Teatru* (2010); *E-mail-uri teatrale* (2014); *Carena în cer – narațiunea actorului din perspectivă regizorală* (2015); *Nașterea unei pietre – narațiunea spectacolului din perspectivă regizorală* (2016); *Fly Butterfly – Three Short Plays*, traducere în limba engleză de Nadia Dimofte (2017).

Studium: BA Darstellende Kunst, Fachrichtung Theaterregie (1996) und MA in Kulturphilosophie und Darstellende Kunst an der Babeș-Bolyai Universität Klausenburg (2006). Promotion mit dem Thema: *Die Narration des Regisseurs* (2015). Regisseur und Univ. Assist. an der Babeș-Bolyai Universität Klausenburg. Projekte als Regisseur an verschiedenen Theatern: Nationaltheater Klausenburg; Puck Theater Klausenburg; Elvira Godeanu Theater, Târgu Jiu; Landestheater Turda; Jugendtheater Piatra Neamț; Ungarisches Staatstheater Csiky Gergely, Temeswar; Nationaltheater Radu Stanca, deutsche Abteilung, Hermannstadt; Teilnahme an Theaterfestivals und Workshops in Österreich, Belgien, der Schweiz, Deutschland, Italien; Projekte für unabhängige Theater. Mitarbeit an den Zeitschriften: *Colocvii teatrale*, *Steaua*, *Tribuna*, *Echinox*. Bücher: *Logolatria* (2003); *Taifasuri mileziene* (2007); *Teatru* (2010); *E-mail-uri teatrale*

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Studies: BA Performing Arts, theatre stage directing (1996) and MA in philosophy of culture and performing arts at the Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca (2006). PhD paper: *Narration of the Stage Director* (2015). Stage director and university assistant at the Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca. Collaboration as stage director at diverse theatres: National Theatre Cluj-Napoca; Puck Theatre Cluj-Napoca; Elvira Godeanu Theatre, Târgu Jiu; Municipal Theatre, Turda; Youth Theatre, Piatra Neamț; Hungarian State Theatre Csiky Gergely, Timisoara; National Theatre Radu Stanca, German department, Sibiu; participation at theatre festivals and workshops in Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Italy; stage direction for independent theatre. Collaboration with journals: *Colocvii teatrale*, *Steaua*, *Tribuna*, *Echinox*. Books: *Logolatria* (2003); *Taifasuri mileziene* (2007); *Teatru* (2010); *E-mail-uri teatrale* (2014); *Carena în cer – narațiunea actorului din perspectivă regizorală* (2015); *Nașterea unei pietre – narațiunea spectacolului din perspectivă regizorală* (2016); *Fly Butterfly – Three Short Plays*, translated into English by Nadia Dimofte, (2017).

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Studii: Regie și Actorie, Facultatea de Teatru, Teatru și Arte Plastice, Academia de Muzică, Chișinău, Republica Moldova (1995). Asistent universitar, Facultatea de Muzică și Teatru și doctorand la Școala de Muzică și Teatru, Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara cu tema: „Actorul tăcut”. Actor la Teatrul Național Timișoara. Colaborări în calitate de cadru didactic asociat la Școala de Teatru Pygmalion, Viena, York University, Film Department, Toronto. Actor-colaborator la Teatrul Pygmalion, Theatre L’Utopie, Montréal, Modern Times Stage Company, Toronto; instructor – Montreal School of Performing Arts, Québec, Cirque du Soleil, Montreal; – trainer – Essential Training & Consulting, Timișoara; regizor – Teatrul Național Timișoara. Actor – clown, Circul de Stat Chișinău, Republica Moldova (1994). Ateliere și clase de specialitate: Arta Actorului, Școala de teatru, Shukin Moscova (1990 – 1993); Lupte Scenice, Adrian Pavlovschi, R. Moldova (1994

– 1995); Comedia dell’Arte, Piccolo Theatre Milan (2000); Pantomimă, Laurent Decole, France (2002), Jean Asselin, Ecole du Mime, Montréal, (2006); Curs de clown, Nicolas Cantin, Ecole National du Cirque Montréal (2004). Fonetică – limba franceză, Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, Montréal. Mimă, Improvizație, Jean Asselin, Montreal, Étienne Decroux School (2006 – 2007). Improvizație pe Mișcare, Andrew Hammerson, din Marea Britanie, Montréal (2007); Atelier de Arte Martiale Kalaripayattu G. Sathyanarayanan din India, Montréal (2008); Teatru mișcare, Soheil Parsa, Modern Times Stage Co., Toronto (2008); Hamlet Zar Vahid Gossun, Odin Theatret (2009); Joc în fața camerei, Method acting, Alan C. Peterson, Toronto (2010 – 2011).

Studien: Regie und Schauspiel, Hochschule für Theater, Theater und Kunst, Musikakademie, Kischinau, Republik Moldau (1995). Universitätsassistent, Hochschule für Musik und Theater und Doktorand seit 2016 an der Doktorschule für Musik und Theater, West-Universität Temeswar mit dem Thema: „Der schweigsame Schauspieler“. Lehrauftrag an der Pygmalion Theaterschule, Wien, York University, Film Department, Toronto. Schauspieler am Nationaltheater Temeswar. Mitwirkender Schauspieler am Pygmalion Theater, Theater L’Utopie, Montreal, Modern Times Stage Company, Toronto. Ausbilder – Montreal School of Performing Arts, Quebec, Cirque du Soleil, Montreal. Trainer – Essential Training & Consulting, Timișoara. Spielleiter – Nationatheater Temeswar. Schauspieler – Clown, State Circus Kischinau, Republik Moldau (1994). Workshops und Masterklassen: Schauspielkunst, Theater School, Shukin Moscow (1990-1993); Bühnenkampf, Adrian Pavlovschi, R. Moldova (1994-1995); Comedia dell’Arte, Piccolo Theater Milan (2000); Pantomime, Laurent Decole, Frankreich (2002), Jean Asselin, Ecole du Mime, Montreal (2006); Clown Kurse, Nicolas Cantin, Ecole National du Cirque Montréal (2004); Phonetik – Französisch, Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, Montreal (2006-2007); Mime, Improvisation, Jean Asselin, Montreal, Étienne Decroux School (2006-2007); Improvisation mit Bewegung, Andrew Hammerson aus Großbritannien, Montreal (2007); Kampfkunst Workshop Kalaripayattu G. Sathyanarayanan from India, Montreal (2008); Physical theatre, Soheil Parsa, Modern Times Stage Co., Toronto (2008); Hamlet Zar Vahid Gossun, Odin Theater (2009); Spiel vor der Kamera, Method acting, Alan C. Peterson, Toronto (2010-2011).

Studies: Directing and Acting, Faculty of Theatre, Theatre and Fine Arts, Academy of Music, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova (1995). Assistant professor, Faculty of Music and Theatre and PhD student at the Doctoral School of Music and Theatre at the West University of Timișoara with the topic: “The Silent Actor”. Collaborations as an associate teacher at Pygmalion Theatre School,

Vienna, York University, Film Department, Toronto. Actor at the National Theater Timisoara. Actor-collaborator at Pygmalion Theater, Theater L'Utopie, Montreal, Modern Times Stage Company, Toronto. Instructor - Montreal School of Performing Arts, Quebec, Cirque du Soleil, Montreal. Trainer - Essential Training & Consulting, Timișoara. Director - National Theater Timisoara. Actor - clown, State Circus Chisinau, Republic of Moldova (1994). Workshops and masterclasses: Actor's Art, Theatre School, Shukin Moscow (1990-1993); Stage fights, Adrian Pavlovschi, R. Moldova (1994-1995); Comedia dell'Arte, Piccolo Theater Milan (2000); Pantomime, Laurent Decole, France (2002), Jean Asselin, Ecole du Mime, Montreal (2006); Clown course, Nicolas Cantin, Ecole National du Cirque Montréal (2004); Phonetics - French, Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, Montreal (2006-2007); Mime, Improvisation, Jean Asselin, Montreal, Étienne Decroux School (2006-2007); Improvisation on the Move, Andrew Hammerson, from Great Britain, Montreal (2007); Martial Arts Workshop Kalaripayattu G. Sathyanarayanan from India, Montreal (2008); Physical theatre, Soheil Parsa, Modern Times Stage Co., Toronto (2008); Hamlet Zar Vahid Gossun, Odin Theater (2009); Playing in front of the camera, Method acting, Alan C. Peterson, Toronto (2010 - 2011).

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Studium: BA Darstellende Kunst – Schauspiel in deutscher Sprache (2013), Masterstudien der Darstellenden Kunst – Theater (2019) an der Hochschule für Musik und Theater, West-Universität Temeswar. Schauspielerin am Deutschen Staatstheater Temeswar seit 2013.

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Studii: Drama, Wuhan University (BA 2011; MA 2015). Studii doctorale la School of Arts, Wuhan University despre genealogia personajelor principale în teatrul lui Ibsen (2019). Lector univ. în Scriere creativă și filologie la School of Chinese Language and Literature, Hubei Normal University. Bursă Song Qingling National Scholarship acordată de Ministerul Educației din Republica Populară China (2004); Bursă National Scholarship for PhD Candidates, First Prize – Ministerul Educației, RPC (2016-2017). Membru în redacție și peer reviewer – *Annals of Short Reports, Clinics of Oncology, Hematology and Oncology, Annals of Hematology and Oncology, British Journal of Cancer Reports* etc. Publications: articles in Bulgarian, English and Chinese in *ARTizantin, DramArt, Foreign Literature Studies, The Lancet Oncology, Confluent, Drama (The Journal of the Central Academy of Drama), Writing (Journal of Chinese Writing Association), Yangtze River Academic, China Literature and Art Criticism, Sichuan Drama, Foreign Studies*. Traduceri: A. G. Chater and William Archer: *From Ibsen's Workshop* (2016); Edmund Gosse: *Henrik Ibsen* (2018). Aria de cercetare: studii despre teatru și critică; literatură pentru copii; creative writing; studii filologice; medicină și literatură.

Studien: Drama, Wuhan University (BA 2011; MA 2015). Doktoratsstudien an der School of Arts, Wuhan University über die Genealogie der Hauptgestalten in Ibsens Theater (2019). Dozentin für Kreatives Schreiben und Philologie an der School of Chinese Language and Literature, Hubei Normal University. Stipendium Song Qingling National Scholarship des Ministeriums für Bildung der Volksrepublik China (2004); Stipendium National Scholarship for PhD Candidates, erster Preis des Ministeriums für Bildung, VRC (2016-2017). Redaktionsmitglied und Peer Reviewer für *Annals of Short Reports, Clinics of Oncology, Hematology and Oncology, Annals of Hematology and Oncology, British Journal of Cancer Reports* etc. Veröffentlichungen: Beiträge in Bulgarisch, Englisch und Chinesisch in *ARTizantin, DramArt, Foreign Literature Studies, The Lancet Oncology, Confluent, Drama (The Journal of the Central Academy of Drama), Writing (Journal of Chinese Writing Association), Yangtze River Academic, China Literature and Art Criticism, Sichuan Drama, Foreign Studies*. Übersetzungen: A. G. Chater and William Archer: *From Ibsen's Workshop* (2016); Edmund Gosse: *Henrik Ibsen* (2018). Forschungsschwerpunkte: Theaterstudien und Kritik; Ibsenstudien; Kinderliteratur; philologische Studien; Medizin und Literatur.

Studies: Dramatic literature, Wuhan University (BA 2011; MA 2015). PhD – Doctoral studies at School of Arts, Wuhan University about the genealogy of the main characters in Ibsen's plays (2019). Lecturer of Creative Writing and Philology at School of Chinese Language and Literature, Hubei Normal University. Song Qingling National Scholarship awarded by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2004); National Scholarship for PhD Candidates, First Prize by Ministry of Education, PRC (2016-2017). Editorial Board Member and Peer Reviewer of *Annals of Short Reports*, *Clinics of Oncology*, *Hematology and Oncology*, *Annals of Hematology and Oncology*, *British Journal of Cancer Reports* etc. Publications: articles in Bulgarian, English and Chinese in *ARTizantin*, *DramArt*, *Foreign Literature Studies*, *The Lancet Oncology*, *Confluent*, *Drama (The Journal of the Central Academy of Drama)*, *Writing (Journal of Chinese Writing Association)*, *Yangtze River Academic*, *China Literature and Art Criticism*, *Sichuan Drama*, *Foreign Studies*. Translations: A. G. Chater and William Archer: *From Ibsen's Workshop* (2016); Edmund Gosse: *Henrik Ibsen* (2018). Research areas: theatre studies and criticism; Ibsen studies; children's literature; philology studies; medicine and literature.

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### **Andreea WOLFER, MA**

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Studium: BA Darstellende Kunst – Schauspiel in deutscher Sprache an der Hochschule für Musik und Theater der West-Universität aus Temeswar (2011) und MA in Germanistik – Deutsch im europäischen Kontext an der Hochschule

für Philologie, Geschichte und Theologie (2015), Doktorandin seit 2019 an der Doktoratsschule für Musik und Theater, West-Universität Temeswar mit dem Thema: „Elfriede Jelinek: auf der Suche nach einem neuen Theater (Theater anders). Text und Auflehnung“. Schauspielerin am Deutschen Staatstheater Temeswar (2009-2011) und am freien Auăleu-Theater (2011-2016); Dramaturgin am Deutschen Staatstheater Temeswar (2017-2019); gegenwärtig freischaffend im Rahmen des Kunstzentrums Misc. Publikation: Moral über All. Studie zu Arthur Schnitzlers dramatischem Text *Reigen*, in: *DramArt* Nr. 3, 2014. Forschungsschwerpunkt: österreichisches Gegenwartstheater – Elfriede Jelinek.

Studies: BA Performig Arts – Acting in German language at the Faculty of Music and Theatre at the West University of Timișoara (2011), MA in German studies – German language in the European context at the Faculty of Philology, History and Theology (2015) and doctoral studies since 2019 at the Doctoral School for Music and Theatre, West University of Timișoara with the topic: “Elfriede Jelinek: searching for a new theatre (another theatre). Text and revolt”. Actress at the German State Theatre Timișoara (2009-2011) and at the independent Auăleu-theatre; in the present free-lancer within the Misc. Arts Centre. Publication: Moral über All. Studie zu Arthur Schnitzlers dramatischem Text *Reigen*, in: *DramArt* nr. 3, 2014. Research area: contemporary Austrian theatre – Elfriede Jelinek.

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