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Between Shaping Mirrors: Discourses on Performing Arts

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by Anton Chekhov.
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Between Shaping Mirrors: Discourses on Performing Arts

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Foreword

From the *Nāṭyaśāstra* or Aristotle's *Poetics* to social media posts or the new online review aggregators, discourses about theater have shaped the course of the art's evolution, reflecting and influencing aesthetics, modes of production and models of social and political involvement.

The emergence and spread of "practice as", "practice-led" or "practice-based" research paradigms, the growing interest for the performative function of arts archives, the fluidization and democratization of critical discourses, as well as the ripple effect of the performative turn define, nowadays, a climate in which theory and practice intermingle, seemingly re-bridging the gap between artists and scholars, between creators, historians and critics.

For this current issue of *Studia Dramatica* we've focused our attention on the rhetoric surrounding the performing arts, in an attempt to identify and chart some of the ways in which today's artists, scholars, and managers think about, relate and reflect their art and practice.

In her paper, *Cultural Managers on Cultural Management Practices in Romania*, Ivona Tătar-Vîstraș, a theatrologist interested in theater management and marketing, through a series of interviews with prominent Romanian theater managers, paints a synthetic picture of the decision-makers' mindset and of the way it reflects on repertoires, ensembles and production practices.

Critic and professor Miruna Runcan, in *The Rhetorical and Stylistic Evolution of Theatre Reviews at the End of the 50s. The Disobedient – Case Study*, offers both an analysis of the discourse of theater criticism in the early years of the Romanian communist regime, and a sample of archaeological methodology.

Actor and acting professor Filip Odangiu explores in his article, *The Actor Lost in Translation? Competence vs. Presence in the Teacher-Director's Stage Directions*, the ways in which the indications, directions and subsequent feedback occurring during the acting course can help shape a fertile relationship between teacher and student, encouraging the latter to, in the author's own words, "acquire an *ethos* that involves two paradoxical dimensions: the madness of throwing him/herself 'in the gulf with his/her eyes bound', … but also the awareness that the actor is ultimately an artist, partner of the director, co-author of the show.

Award-winning actress, dancer, and choreographer Andrea Gavriliu, in her paper *Finding Words for Dance from a Choreological Perspective*, critically addresses the problem of understanding / misunderstanding in contemporary dance and performance and attempts to put in conceptual order the often vague and diluted vocabulary employed by critics, the performers themselves, and the audience.

Taking Kūcipūḍi, an Indian Classical dance, as the focus of her study, artist and scholar Sindhuja Suryadevara analyzes the ways political ideologies, especially the rise of Indian nationalism, have revived, altered and used the heritage of classical dances in order to fill the newly-independent state's need for cultural symbols.

Director and directing teacher Răzvan Mureșan analyzes the ways in which, in the 1950's and 1960's, the world-famous Royal Court Theatre, following the vision of its artistic director George Devine, has designed and built its enduring identity as a writer's theater, encouraging a revival of new and original dramaturgy, as well as promoting a wave of new and extremely influential playwrights.

Actress and acting teacher Camelia Curuțiu attempts, in her article entitled *What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?*, to describe, define and make operational the concept of "talent" in the field of the performing arts, by relating it to the actor's capacity for imagination.

By investigating the "poetics of politics" in Nigerian playwright AbdulRasheed Adeoye's plays, Stephen Ogheneruro Okpadah discusses the mutually reflecting and mutually influencing relationship between Nigerian theater and Nigerian post-colonial politics.

Raluca Blaga amply analyzes Romanian director Theodor Cristian Popescu's production of Roland Schimmelpfenning's *The Bee Inside the Head* by engaging in an "analytical dialogue" with both the director's, and the playwright's discourses.

In her article, *How to "read" a dance theatre performance?*, director, playwright and creative writing teacher Alexandra Felseghi discusses the emerging field of dance dramaturgy, its importance and the ways it and its necessity are defined by its practitioners.

In *Rencountering Oneself. Reshaping the Body-Mind Unity in the Acting Classroom*, by joining theory with classroom experience, actress and acting teacher Raluca Lupan describes the ways Viewpoints Technique exercises, when used in the process of training acting students, can create body awareness and produce lifelong effects concerning the body-mind relationship.

While in no way exhaustive or all-encompassing, the contributions in this issue are glimpses into the sphere of discourses about the performing arts, a hall of shaping mirrors that not only reflect a more or less accurate picture, but also have the agency to define, redefine and influence their subject.

Issue Editor

STUDIES AND ARTICLES

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Cultural Managers on Cultural Management Practices in Romania

IVONA TĂTAR-VÎSTRAȘ[1]

Abstract: This article proposes a synthetic analysis of the cultural management practices in Romanian theaters, as mentioned in interviews by managers of state or independent theaters. The focus is on main topics of interviews and on the managers' acknowledged concerns: space management, management of human resources and "success" management. The managers' discourse analysis points to important aspects of the cultural management practices in Romania and it supports a better understanding of the Romanian theater landscape.

Keywords: cultural management, theater managers**,** Romanian State Theater, cultural practices, post-communist Romanian theater.

Introduction

The starting point of this article is a series of interviews conducted in 2014-2017 with managers of Romanian state theaters and managers of independent companies, about homegrown cultural management. The interviewees' discourses are varied, with different rhetoric, but they converge, perhaps surprisingly, to the same topics and they raise vastly similar problems occurring in institutions whose organization and cultural specificity are different.

Beyond the precise answers received in the interviews, we believe that the analysis of the managers' discourse reveals important aspects of the Romanian cultural management practices and contributes to a better

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understanding of the Romanian theater landscape. Our research has sought to collect a set of information required for the completion of the case studies included in a fuller work. The nature of the work did not allow an analysis of the managers' discourses, but, in our opinion, the material obtained from the interviews is valuable and it deserves our attention in the attempt to gain better understanding of the specifics of the Romanian cultural management environment. Ever since the interviews, changes have occurred in the organizational charts of the theaters; thus, Alina Nelega, who was the artistic manager of the Liviu Rebreanu Company (Târgu Mureș National Theater) at the time of the interview, has been replaced by the actor Nicu Mihoc, while Liviu Timus, manager of Teatrul Tineretului of Piatra Neamț has been replaced by the stage director Geanina Cărbunariu. Despite the fact that the two no longer occupy management positions, we believe that the interviews continue to be valid and valuable as regards the information offer; therefore, they will be used in this material. The interviewed managers are: Dorina Lazăr (Bucharest Odeon Theater), Gavril Cadariu (Târgu Mureș Ariel Theater), Alina Nelega (Liviu Rebreanu Company, Târgu Mureș National Theater), Ștefana Pop-Curșeu (Lucian Blaga National Theater, Cluj-Napoca), Liviu Timus (Teatrul Tineretului of Piatra Neamț), David Schwartz (artist and independent contractor), Mihai Pintilei (Teatrul Fix of Iași). The semi-structured interviews had several key-questions regarding the manager's responsibilities, the theater's condition upon the occupation of the position, the management models implemented in theaters during their headship, the institution's organizational culture, the relationship with the funding institutions. The full interview transcripts can be found in the annexes to my doctoral thesis and they are available for consultation.

Who are the cultural managers in Romania?

The highest position in all the organizational charts of Romania's national theaters is occupied by the general manager/managing director. With very few exceptions (Teatrul de Nord of Satu Mare and, starting from 2016, "Marin Sorescu" National Theater of Craiova), those in charge of the said institutions are primarily artistic professionals. For this reason, the concept of manager-artist acquires a major importance in the understanding of the

Romanian administrative system, and it outlines one first aspect of the cultural managers' discourse. Were we to use a stereotype, the professional "artist" training dominates the discourse used by theater managers, leaving little room, for example, to the economic or administrative language, which, in fact, is not surprising.

Following the talks on management, several general guiding points stood out and, in our opinion, seem to make up the frame of the Romanian management practices. Translated into operational systems, they could be called as follows:

1. Space management
2. HR management
3. "Success" management.

The first and perhaps widest of these items relates to the theater space, premises. Without exception, whether we talk about state theater managers or about representatives of independent companies, they related continuously to this aspect. It is constant in their speech, regardless of the nature of the question. The second major indicator is given by the human resources. Mainly, we deal with the managers' constant focus on the degree of satisfaction, professionalism and continuous training of the artistic staff and of the technical one. As to the third category, things are much more ambiguous. Although it is not always an overtly undertaken matter, the pressure of "success" rests on the shoulders of theater managers, mainly, precisely because of their somewhat duplicitous position of double representation. Ultimately, there will always be an attempt to lay down the coordinates of success. Any talk about cultural management in Romania starts from the same issues, which, undoubtedly, is the root of the current management practices, i.e. the institutional form. The "management model" found in state institutions is completely different from the one applied by the independent companies. Nevertheless, following the interviews conducted in the research period, we could see several items constantly present in the discourses of those engaged in the management act, whether we are talking about state theaters or about independent ones. Despite this fact, in our discussions with the theater managers, we were seldom able to "find out" about the type of management implemented in their corresponding institution. The reasons of such failure may only be guesses or read between the lines of the interviews. In our opinion, the core reason is the lack of grasp of the theoretical terms that are relatively new in the Romanian administrative language. The manager-artist does not manage, yet, to overcome a certain complex of "artist" in the business sector, an artist who acts on instinct or based on empirical experience acquired during the exercise of their job, rather than on set management and economics knowledge.

Theater as a family

To the question "Is there a management model in your theater different from other theaters? How would you define it?", we got the following answers:

Liviu Timuș Manager of Teatrul Tineretului of Piatra Neamț	Loyalty and a lot of love.[2]
Dorina Lazăr Manager of Bucharest *Odeon* Theater	Well, I don't know about management elsewhere, it's very important that, beyond these frictions and I don't know what else, there's a team actually working well together. I mean, I'm on very good terms with P.R., Tamara and Cristina, with the accounting service, with the legal advisor, with the technical department, we are like a… family, and, it's true, that how I've raised them.[3]
Alina Nelega Artistic Manager of Târgu Mureș National Theater	Yes, there is. Because we care about the city's specific nature, on the one hand; no, there isn't, on the other hand, because there are some management-related things we need to consider, the last effective management courses I took were in 1996, I think, courses I took abroad and

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2. Liviu Timuș (General Manager of Teatrul Tineretului, Piatra Neamț) in discussion with the author, January 2014, online interview.
3. Dorina Lazăr (General Manager, Odeon Theater, Bucharest) in discussion with the author, Aprin 2014, Bucharest.

	which were actually thorough, but the case of Romania looked nothing like what we learned during the courses. Now I strive to remember some things I knew back then but could not apply, because there was nowhere to apply them. So, there are some matters to be learned in management, too, and they are learned because most often than not you act on instinct. I regret it, because what happens now, after 20 years, should have happened back then. I was much better trained, younger and had more energy than I have now; but this is the country, that's the train speed.[4]
Gavril Cadariu Manager of *Ariel* Theater of Târgu Mureș	In my view, theater is like a family. The relationships among us are very important, given that we stay here more than we stay at home. Especially during the season, we are here most of the time. For this reason, Ariel Theater has this very friendly bearing. (...) If you don't pay them really well, you have to give them something else. You have to love all of them. This is one of the very important things when you are a manager. Because you bear the responsibility. The opportunity of some things. Give them purpose.[5]
David Schwartz	The management strategy has been built throughout time, rather intuitively, because none of us is trained in this sector. Basically, we operate in two ways: with some projects supported by public funds and other projects conducted on a volunteer base and by various crowdfunding methods.[6]

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4. Alina Nelega (Artistic Manager, National Theater, Târgu Mureș) in discussion with the author, February 2014, Târgu Mureș.
5. Gavril Cadariu (General Manager, Ariel Theater, Târgu Mureș), in discussion with the author, February 2014, Târgu Mureș.
6. David Schwartz (Theatre director and cultural entrepreneur) in discussion with the author, May 2014, online interview.

Mihai Pintilei Teatrul Fix, Iași	The management strategy is to develop theater-associated economic activities (consumer activities, meals, accommodation), which should ensure a stable budget, covering or replacing the theater administrative and utility expenses.[7]

The "Family" or "Theater as family" motif is constant in the discourse of state theater managers. As long as, in most of the cases, before taking over the administrative position, theater managers were members of the artistic staff of the theater, of course the current position "confuses" or perhaps even "disturbs" the artist who has become a manager. The confusion is all the more significant when we analyze the theater manager's status regulated by the applicable legislation. The manager is not the representative of the artistic/technical staff in front of the funding authorities; instead, he/she is the authorities' representative in the team he/she leads. In other words, the artist who, before taking over the job, was part of an artistic team that he/she now steers, does not represent the team, but the authorizing officers in front of the team. The incongruity is obvious, but beyond, let's say, the overt absurdity, a major degree of confusion lingers, and it will act, undeniably, both on the manager's activity *de facto* and on his/her speech. The need to always emphasize the familiar, intimate nature of the colleagues' relationship is closely linked with this confusing aspect of his/her position. In the interviewees, we can see clearly that, despite their management position, the director or the manager believes that he/she is a team member, a family member or, at best, "the head of the family". Undoubtedly, any manager, regardless of the sector of activity, needs to be part of a team, but in the case of creative industries, teamwork somehow seems idealized and lifted to a level of familiarity different from the other sectors of activity.

Things look different in the case of managers of independent theaters or theatrical initiatives. The definite focus is on the drawing of funds and on the acute need of financial stability. While state theater funding is table, independent theaters inhabit a much more unstable and unpredictable

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7. Mihai Pintilei (General Manager, Teatru Fix, Iași) in discussion with the author, May 2014, online interview.

reality. When asked about the management strategy of Teatrul Fix, Mihai Pintilei talks about the established artistic objectives, but clearly separates them from “management” – which he links exclusively to “related economic activities”.

Gavril Cadariu confirms the aspects we were already fathoming and speaks about the cultural manager’s necessary “charisma” – which is first of all useful in the relationship with the funding institution’s representatives, most often people unrelated to the artistic environment, political representatives. Cadariu recalls an interesting episode in relation to the new building of Ariel Theater. He says:

> We had support, respect, consideration. We asked for money in a down-to-earth fashion. I got support, proof that this transition from one building to another has occurred. It’s a great opportunity for me, to make such a building, together with them. Money was not all it took, it also took willpower. Because you know how to do it, you want to do it and you prove it and you deserve to receive it; it’s a theater that works, enjoys recognition, etc. That’s how I tackled things and I got support; while I was outside the political. I do have my likings for some people, but publicly I do not have political opinions. If you do not have your finger into someone else’s pie, you might get a share… Once we go past the political, a man’s charisma is also important. This is a small theater, there is not too much scramble over it. If you struggle to become a manager in a theater for children and the young, you must be really hungry, politically speaking. From the very beginning, this position is not such a great asset, from a political viewpoint.[8]

We can see clearly, from the fragment above, how discourse, intent and willpower can change radically the fate of a theater, perhaps much more than long-term strategies and forecasts. This paves the way to the unavoidable discussion on a definition of the cultural manager and on how he/she should be, in the politicized and often unstable local landscape.

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8. Gavril Cadariu (General Manager, Ariel Theater, Târgu Mureș), in discussion with the author, February 2014, Târgu Mureș.

The literature on cultural management talks unanimously about the mediating manager. Perhaps more than in any other sector, this phrase defines the essential trait to be owned by the individual aiming for such a position. The said *mediation* is not necessarily linked with the quality of ambassador or of representative, but it is linked with the intercession, at large, between two adversaries, in theory, but complementary parties, in practice, *i.e.* the economic dimension associated with any market enterprise and the artistic dimension specific to our sector of activity[9]. In Romania, several analysts approached our topic. For example, in her book *Cultura ca piață [Culture as Market],* Oltița Cîntec tries to paint a sketch portrait of the ideal cultural manager. In her opinion, three categories of qualities are necessary: professional, temperamental, and moral qualities. However, we believe that the traits listed by the author are necessary to any kind of manager, regardless of the sector of his/her activity. Since hers is not a scientific treatise and is somehow relieved from the rigor required by such a format, the author inserts a surprising mention that to be a manager is not a privilege – as considered by some of those who see a sinecure in a public office. Cultural management, she says, entails huge responsibility in relation to the institutional resources and to the community[10].

The need to make such a mention tells, in itself, of a severe issue in the internal system of office appointments and of naming a cultural administrator. In the educational economy of the book, the statement acquires tones of reprimand as regard the great distance between practice and theory. In his doctoral thesis, the stage director Theodor-Cristian Popescu speaks about the excessive politicization of the cultural sector in the 1990s, claiming that the party, or the party alliance making up the government pushes its loyal people or allies down to the minor positions in the Ministry of Culture and local cultural directorates, and sometimes even to the level of theater manager, generating a lack of continuity[11].

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[9] Milena Dragićević Šešić and Sanjin Dragojević, *Arts Management in Turbulent Times. Adaptable Quality Management* (Amsterdam: European Cultural Foundation Boekmanstudies, 2005), 24.

[10] Oltița Cîntec, *Cultura ca piață: elemente teoretice și practice de management și marketing cultural [Culture as Market: Theoretical and Practical Elements of Cultural Management and Marketing]* (Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2012), 27.

[11] Theodor-Cristian Popescu, *Surplus de oameni sau surplus de Idei [Too Many People or Too Many Ideas]* (Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2012), 36.

Unfortunately, in 2014, *i.e.* two decades after the installation of democracy, Alina Nelega likewise mentions and disapproves the strongly politicized system of naming the theater managers. At the end of the interview, she denounces the current Romanian practice and says that the manager positions are "political currencies".

Therefore, the fact that theater managers speak about their teams as if they spoke about a family starts to appear adequate and, perhaps, to shield some kind of fellowship, a closing of the ranks in front of the political instability and of the lack of long-term vision emanating from the funding authorities. In fact, this shows us the facts on site. The artistic teams remain, while the management and the political influences are constantly shifting. On the other hand, of course, such an approach cannot replace the management *per se.* At best, it tells of a failure to master the theoretical concepts of management or of the avoidance to use them in an official environment. Certainly, however, the theater managers' discourse gives away, without necessarily seeking to do it, a fissure in the system, a puzzle piece failing to fit perfectly in the overall picture.

To the question "How is the relationship with the funding institution?", most of the interviewees answered, "very good". The following table shows the answers offered by the state theater managers.

Dorina Lazăr	I don't have any complaint about the mayor's office, except for this wretched period of January, February, March, when they cannot come to an agreement on the budget and can only give you a fraction of what you ask. And then, for years and years, January, February and March strike hard the theater, when you do production and I ensure the production money from the amounts I cash in. Odeon Theater is the Bucharest theater recovering 70% of the costume and setting costs from what it puts in the shows.[12]

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[12] Dorina Lazăr (General Manager, Odeon Theater, Bucharest) in discussion with the author, April 2014, Bucharest.

Ștefana Pop-Curșeu	The relationship with the ministry is very good. We have seen positive assessments of the results, from the point of view of the audience, of the receipts. However, the budget allocated to what we are doing is very small. And there have been enormous cuts. More than 40%. There is autonomy. The ministry does not seek to enforce any point of view. Except for the financial level. It is money coming in with a precise final destination and it has to be complied with. Thereafter, money coming in for productions is at the discretion of each manager for the right productions. The ministry can control or, better said, can verify and assess the compliance with the minimal plan drafted at the beginning of each season. Until now, it has always been observed. So, there is a permanent dialogue, an evaluation. There is also support from the Ministry for events such as the Cluj International Meetings. We must request sponsorship constantly, because we are not allowed to discount the accommodation, cocktails, etc., which, from a legislative point of view, is anomalous. But for this reason, there are related associations or others that may help the theater to conduct its activity normally.[13]
Alina Nelega	Ministerius. Non-dialogue. It's an administrative, cold, soulless relationship. I do not talk directly with the ministry, I propose solely the minimal plan, I do the budgets for the minimal plan, the financial manager takes the minimal plan to them and the general manager support it (...) The ministry approves the minimal plan and the budget we propose. Aside from this minimal plan and its budget, there is also a budget called goods and

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[13] Ștefana Pop-Curșeu (Artistic Manager, National Theater, Cluj-Napoca) in discussion with the author, April 2014, Cluj-Napoca.

	services involving the building management, the guest shows, the business calls, etc. That's our relationship with the ministry through the general manager who, generally, goes to the minister when there's no money. Our relationship is somehow defined by boney. We have also won an international project, called FabulaMundi, where, according to the European protocols, the Ministry of Culture should bring the matching funds, i.e. half of them, aside from the budget allocated to the theater. Last year, there was a commission to which you could apply, but we did not apply, because the maximum amount we could request was 5000 euros and we said that, for the 2500 balance, we would apply now. In the meantime, in January we found out that the commission has been dissolved and no one known anything. So… we have a minimal plan, I have also budgeted these things in other projects, I'll do them differently, I'll try to rework them… But what will the NGOs do? They don't have this kind of money we could, nonetheless, have. What happens to them? That's the relationship with the ministry… so, where's the dialogue when they dissolve a commission to which I was entitled to apply… regardless of whether it's a public institution or not, they will dissolve it and not even bother to notify this to me; so I call to see about the deadline and they tell me: "Oh, don't bother, there's nowhere to apply to." And what do you do? You manage...[14]

The answers point clearly to the fact that the authorizing credit officers are not involved in the artistic strategy of state theaters. The relationship is based strictly on budget items and its object is the cooperation on this financial component. Certainly, the financial backer is not consulted as regards the theaters' artistic objectives, which, apparently, is satisfactory for the theater managers. The theaters' high degree of artistic freedom is natural and prevalent in Western Europe and beyond it and, in fact, it led to the "arm's length" model. The managers' dissatisfaction seems to be linked with money; they are either underfinanced or they complain about delays or difficult communication with the authorities. Once again, the managers' reactions show that the facts are different from what is put on paper. However, such freedom has a price. The lack of vision and mission of the Ministry of Culture or of the relevant institutions across the territory leads to the transfer of strategic responsibilities to state theaters and, thus, cultural policies become lottery; they become artificial, simply overlapping the immediate reality in theaters and they fail their reason of existence or their objective of becoming the guidelines in matters of repertoires, teams, etc.

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[14] Alina Nelega (Artistic Manager, National Theater, Târgu Mureș) in discussion with the author, February 2014, Târgu Mureș.

The Theater and the Building

In the first chapter of this book *Resetting the stage*, Dragan Klaic notes that the importance of the theater "venue" is owed especially to the new cultural consumer practices, most of the times falling in the category of recreational/social experiences[15]. Moreover, Klaic draws the attention to the low popularity of theatergoing (as social activity) in Europe. The author does not sigh necessarily over the theater's loss of popularity, but he does try to show that, in the 21st century, we can no longer talk about cultural activities without considering the place occupied by this segment on the market of recreational activities and about the new forms of development of the economic sector on leisure time.

A view on the theater buildings in Romania can reveal the same basic elements, regardless of the building's venue or its size. It is the space where the audience is received/where they relax; most of the times, this space is a lounger, the main auditorium (frequently called Sala Mare [the Main Hall]) and a smaller hall usually operating as a studio.

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[15] Dragan Klaic, *Resetting the Stage. Public Theatre between the Market and Democracy* (Amsterdam: Intellect.Ltd, 2012).

In Romania, nowadays, the discussion about the importance of the theater building is barely present in the public space or in the media, and when it is, it is often linked with the lack of funds allocated to the buildings' maintenance and renovation, since these are old building classified (most often) as historic heritage buildings. The most frequent problem is the modernizations and/or fit-out of new spaces.

However, the managers' discourse is shaped by this problem. In absolutely all the cases w have interviewed, the space, the fit-out of the halls or of the related spaces, the shortages or the difficulties encountered by the "recently" appointed managers have made the key aspect of the discussions. For example, Dorina Lazăr offers a long series of thorough details regarding the condition of the theater building, the immediate renovation she coordinated after she took over the management of Odeon Theater. Gavril Cadariu, also, for a significant part of our meeting, talked about the process of changing the theater venue. Obviously, the interest in the building, renovation, extension is a significant part of the theater's resources and it is a top priority for the managers. Anecdotally, Dorina Lazăr recalls how, during a meeting, when she announced that the theater budget had decreased so some changes were needed, a dissatisfied colleague said: "Stop it with the renovations already, artists need money, too".

Ștefana Pop Curșeu proposes a different approach of the building. In this case, too, the discussion about the rehabilitation and modernization of the building was unavoidable, but it also offered another perspective which we called an "integrated" one. Since 2008 and until now, TNCluj has been organizing, usually on the International Theater Day, the event *Ziua Porților Deschise [Open Doors Day]*. The organizers' intuition is very good, the main aim being the general audience's familiarization with the theater areas to which, usually, they do not have access. This type of event first appeared in France, in 1984, and then it was borrowed by many other institutions across the world. The initial event's philosophy is backed by the promotion of the European architectural heritage and the general audience's access to spaces to which, usually and in the current activity, they would not have access. The type of event spread significantly in Romania; such events occur in many state cultural institutions (and not only), such as art, history, ethnographic museums, universities, the Palace of the Parliament, etc.

> There is also another type of familiarization of the audience with the building… A whole strategy of reintegration of the National Theater building has begun ever since the office was held by Mr. Măniuțiu; this reintegration was not an institutional reintegration, but an artistic one. This makes the most of the space, in connection with the representation, with what actually happens. This is why the *Open Day* was organized; we are already at its 6th edition. These things have been extremely useful, because people come and no longer show that hesitancy in relation to an old, crumbling, unfriendly building. On the contrary, they can now come, see the backstage, the settings, they can enter the control room, they have access to places they usually cannot visit. On the other hand, the venue as such, the lounge becomes full of life when small music recitals, various activities for children, adults, and the young are organized. The theater opens and becomes a public space, as it should be at all times. An intimate, we may say, connection with the National Theater building has been created.[16]

The same philosophy is also suggested by the discussion with Gavril Cadariu who, several times during the interview, felt the need to state that the theater (including the building) belongs to the audience and this should be undertaken by it. The theater manager explains at length the meaning of the venue modernization and the opening to the audience by other means than the contact with the theatrical shows as such.

> For example, the coffee house. You have the coffee house, because you bring the spectator, a child or a young man or a teenager, or an adult, near the theater show. (...). These kinds of projects, which, first of all, put us face to face with the audience. And we could talk directly to each other, know each other. And without aiming too high, you may get ideas from them, because they know you and thus come to visit your theater. (...) To see how alive it is, how it is. It is very important for the audience to assume this space. It's not mine! It's theirs. It should be open at all times. Not only during the season. What happens here in the summer? An exhibition, we managed to have a bookshop, there are also shows for the summer season. The theater needs to stay open.[17]

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[16] Ștefana Pop-Curșeu (Artistic Manager, National Theater, Cluj-Napoca) in discussion with the author, April 2014, Cluj-Napoca.

[17] Gavril Cadariu (General Manager, Ariel Theater, Târgu Mureș), in discussion with the author, February 2014, Târgu Mureș.

The examples may go on, the more that, at present, we may talk about a trend regarding the redefining of theater halls. Most of the state theaters also have a studio hall (or sometimes more than one) or a venue as an alternative to the main hall. Without a doubt, the methods for the management of alternative venues are different from one theater to another. Without downplaying the positive effects of studio venue inaugurations, we need to note the national tendency of extending the theater areas and of launching as many new play venues as possible. This, at first, may seem extremely beneficial. However, problems may arise when such an approach swallows up all the energies and resources of a theater. The attempts to imitate the cultural "hub" model, especially for publicly subsidized theaters, become frequently a mere diversification of the repertoire and a greater amount of shows on the market. Or, we cannot ignore the (at least intuitive) model toward which the theater institution goes, in such cases, namely the one of film multiplexes (which have been present in Romania for some years and have changed significantly the film consumer experience) where many films are screened at the same time, attracting an extremely diversified and numerous audience. Or, in the case of the multiplexes, artistic values blend less with the economic reasons, the latter being the defining factors in each case, while the former are only sometimes a guarantee of quality. Of course, the complexity of the model is vaster, but the philosophy does not change substantially.

What is success now?

The definition of success in theater is very challenging. Can it be quantified? Which are its variables? How can one obtain success? We do not believe there are homogeneous answers in Romania or, while they may be expressed in a particular manner, the statements risk being extremely general or would borrow the form of recipes. Because of the volatility of the concept, we chose to narrow down its meaning and to focus on the big picture including the precise comprehension of the interviewees' reasons.

For example, Dorina Lazăr associates the word "success" with harmony in theater, with a well-being that should include the whole team of the theater, regardless of their position in the institution. The same opinion is shared by Alina Nelega and Liviu Timuș; they all say that a theater's success stems from within and that good staff management spells "success". Alina Nelega and Liviu Timuș focus more on teamwork and on the preservation of constant feedback from them to the management, but also the reverse, from the management to the employees.

Alina Nelega	Success is the outcome of working with people. You need to be an inspirational leader. I do not believe in dictatorship, I do not believe in hierarchy, I believe in modular work.
Liviu Timuș	Motivation and coherence. The company's and the audience's feedback.

Ștefana Pop Curșeu's position is much more concerned with the relationship with the audience and she looks at things from the viewpoint of the repertoire offer and of its success with the audience. In the end, the audience's involvement allows the "success" of theater.

> The offer in our repertoire is very diverse. If we were not subsidized, we could not keep such a big company in which all members are extremely busy. In the end, the audience may choose from dozens of shows. At some point, we calculated, we could not even play all our shows in a single month. It would be impossible to perform them all, to perform the whole repertoire.[18]

While Ștefana Pop-Curșeu talks about repertoire diversity, Alina Nelega supports programmes with a higher extent of involvement in the local community's life. The measures implemented by the artistic manager of Târgu Mureș also involve another type of success. The first project about which she talked to us is dedicated to the young people of Mureș and it aims to draw teenagers to theater, not by marketing and sales methods, but by the development of educational projects for their commitment to the artistic act. Then, in the same line of thought, the project *Teatrul de Risc*

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[18] Ștefana Pop-Curșeu (Artistic Manager, National Theater, Cluj-Napoca) in discussion with the author, April 2014, Cluj-Napoca.

[Theater of Risk] was developed in Târgu Mureș, for recently graduate young directors, operating as a potential launching platform for them, but also for their real support in the labor sector. Nelega recalls how the show *Stardust*, made with young amateurs under the direction of the Scottish collaborator, professor and director Scott Johnston, was a success with the audience and, thus, was included in the company's permanent repertoire. To a very large extent, these extra-repertoire programmes aim at the continuous training of the audience; they do not have a solely commercial purpose, they also try to supply the acute absence of educational theater syllabi from the school curricula. Another measure for the cultural institution's strengthening in the Mureș local community (characterized, of course, by interculturality) was the adoption of a policy of reciprocal subtitling, so that shows in Romanian have Hungarian subtitles, and the reverse.

> People were surprised. Even the colleagues at the Hungarian section asked why I needed subtitles for the shows in Hungarian, because all the Hungarians need to understand Romanian. And I said, yes, maybe they do know or they don't, some use the language, others don't, but I am not doing it for the Hungarians, I am doing it for the Romanian. Because, when they see the Hungarian subtitles, they remember that they are not the only ones in this city. And I am interested in that. That's the lever I want to trip. And that's beyond the fact that it's a sign of respect and that no everyone speaks Romanian so well.[19]

None of our interviewees discussed the form of success validated by an award or by another kind of national or international distinction. We may say this is surprising, especially because the presence in festivals and competitions is appreciated by the funding authorities and many times it is essential in the annual management evaluation.

As to the independent theater, success is frequently anchored in its ability of resistance on the market, but also in the consistency and the continuity of the artistic offers. Mihai Pintilei says: "To have a coherent artistic direction, to be known and respected as brand, and to have an economic solution for the coverage of sustenance, regardless of the artistic activity."

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[19] Alina Nelega (Artistic Manager, National Theater, Târgu Mureș) in discussion with the author, February 2014, Târgu Mureș.

In the investigation started by the cultural magazine *Observatorul Cultural*, which was published in the magazine supplement no. 764/2015 on the topic of re-runs of theatrical productions, Oltița Cîntec and Iulia Popovici signal a severe deficiency of the system, which, in our opinion, also stems from the "pursuit of success" or from this ambivalence in the definition of success. Oltița Cîntec explains the "quick success" practice by the superficiality of the backer's assessment and by the lack of management vision. Such a system issue may reveal other defects and oversights of the Romanian managing manners, another face of the great autonomy of the management in the decision-making process.

> If theaters accept it… Why do theaters accept it? One first answer: because the performance standards required by the financial backer as evaluation indicators focus especially on quick success. And the shortest way to get in the festival, to receive awards and reviews is the work with a prestigious, very busy stage director who is in high demand and has a full schedule. This whole subject may also be seen from the viewpoint of the artistic power relations in the Romanian theater, where, for the state theaters, the stage director is the tutelary authority. All the resources are made available to him/her, re-runs are allowed, and the critics easily forgive his/her potential aesthetic fractures. In some cases, some factors are also given by convenience, by the lack of managing creativity, encouraged indirectly by the authorizing officers via the annual assessment grid. For a positive assessment, the managers choose the short path: the premiere signed by top directors.[20]

Conclusions

The Romanian theater landscape continues its period of transition. The single theatrical model, inherited from the communism, is enduring, but it is more and more challenged by the new independent theater companies, as well as by the audience. The need to train the management teams is inherent and the state theater management teams experience this need. From this point of view, the evolution in the last 20 years is incontestable, but its definition is still in progress, as we can see from the statements of the theater managers.

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[20] Oltița Cîntec, "Radiografia unui scandal," *Observator Cultural*, 2015.

In the absence of clear, operational cultural strategies well known by the subsidized theater institutions, the roles undertaken by the state theaters are widely different from one case to another. The management teams of the institutions are free to set their own artistic or economic priorities.

In the end, we are talking about the correct and efficient capitalization of the resources at hand. The venue (space) and the staff are the most important ones and they define an institution's direction of development. While in the independent theater the ownership of a space is almost a luxury, in state theaters, this aspect is not a problem in itself. They face, however, the struggle for rehabilitation and restoration funds, often to the detriment of investments in the cultural production. For the independent theater, the human resource is vital in the construction of its identity, but also the advantage it has when compared with state theater, since independent theater teams are very dynamic, ready for new experiences and own a high level of creative energy. In the state theater, the construction of a team is infinitely more complicated, and it depends on a series of multiple variables, such as the projection of the repertoire, the institutional objectives, the need of the local audience, the relationship with the financial backer, the managing objectives and, last but not least, the legislation in force.

The state supports actively the cultural production by direct funding and, thus, it is immediately involved in the creation of the conditions favoring cultural consumer practices. These practices are leftist rather than liberal, despite the fact that the European umbrella "encourages" the Romanian state toward a liberalization of the internal markets (which, in fact, no one wants here).

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The Actor Lost in Translation? Competence vs. Presence in the Teacher-Director's Stage Directions

FILIP ODANGIU[1]

Abstract: This article carries on a research approach started years ago by the author, investigating the necessary conditions for producing a creative environment, favorable for the development of the actor in the acting school. Aspects of the relation between the teacher-director with the student-actor are discussed, and a series of possible interacting means and effects of the orality between the two are revealed.

Keywords: actor training, directing, teaching art, stage directions, sidecoaching, shadowing, feedback loop, rehearsal, communication, status

On court coaching

Without being a very competent and assiduous fan of tennis matches - whose prevalence, in the general interest, seems to be replacing the traditional hegemony of football in recent years – there is a particular aspect of the game that captivates me, something which I watch for every game I see: the moment in the competition when a player, facing a difficulty, calls his coach from the platform to help him out of the stalemate.[2] The coach has only a minute or two to mobilize the player. In several whispered, often monologous

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2. The "court couching" procedure, adopted and accepted only in some competitions since 2009, provides that tennis players are allowed to talk with coaches during breaks between games.

words, the coach sums up objectively the situation on the court, amends uninspired playing decisions or motivates the player. Almost every time the player's game improves.

As a coach/ teacher of actors, I can only be fascinated by the effectiveness of this minimal interaction between the “actor” on the tennis court and the “director of his game”. Often, indications do not concern the technique, but are rather stimulus for self-reflecting such as “play what your tennis”, “relax” etc.

The person in front of us is and will always remain a mystery. We can never comprehend or predict, with absolute certainty, the effect our verbal and non-verbal signals will have on the Other. The more enigmatic is the effect of our actions when we try to change the Other. The teacher, as well as the director, is seen as a “guide in the darkness” (Peter Brook), a “fisherman” (Robert Cohen), a “fountain master” (Charle Dullin), or a “hunted-hunter” (David Zinder). These metaphors share the same idea: confrontation with the Unknown, the relationship with an unpredictable “target”. Actor's pedagogy, as well as directing, involves the initiation or modification of behaviors of an individual towards another individual. Someone, “someone else”, wants to change what you're doing. Resistance is a natural response in such a situation. As any learning situation implies an initial resilience of the subject, there are different techniques to address this problem. The famous reformer of theatrical pedagogy, Viola Spolin, suggests that the student-actor cannot be "put in motion" but by his/her very nature. He/she will not respond to manipulation: “To transform or alter an object requires total absorption without meddling.” In conclusion, the author of *Improvisation for the Theater* urges the teacher: “Let it happen! Stay out of it!”[3]

The teacher's art and the art of the director. Correspondences and delimitation

The condition of the acting teacher is, as Viola Spolin wrote, a dichotomous one, the teacher being moreover a “teacher-director”, as the directors are often pedagogues. We can also place under the sign of dichotomy the specific activity of the two related professions. Two interdependent dimensions support them. The first is what could be called *the visionary dimension* - illustrated, in the case of the director, by the fantasy of the future show that haunts him and which he seeks to translate in terms of performance. Similarly, teachers aim to materialize a projection of an ideal model of the student. Each student-actor (as well as each actor in a casting situation) provokes, in the mind of the person who observes and guides him, a vision, an expectation - the teacher sees in his student a superior model, a potential still in a unmanifested state, "the hidden promise" (what the coach sees in some athletes). A second shared aspect of teaching and directing is *the interactive dimension* – the exploration of the way and means of materializing the initial "vision". As the well-known Romanian theatre specialist George Banu notes, communication - through oral and even direct physical activity of the director - is the basis of the meeting with the actor: "Orality - here is the destiny of the theater director! It can flood, drowning in the waves the actor, or it can be stingy, reduced to a few words. It may invade or perhaps almost disappear, but repetition outside of this orality, prior to any exchange, does not exist."[4] (...) or "Any theater director produces and develops a physical activity (...) that conveys a secret energy that contaminates the team."[5]

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[3] Viola Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theatre*, 3rd ed. (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 46.

The act of communication with the actor, beginner or advanced, takes place by virtue of that ideal pattern designed on him and which the teacher-director tries to bring him closer to. But if one looks closer it may find several possible differences: while, for the director, the referential "dreamt" model is the "character", for the acting teacher, the reference is the future artist. Despite the many resemblances, the fundamental purpose also seems to be different and, as a result, the means of approach must be distinct. Constrained by a contract to open a show within the time agreed with the producer, the director is working toward a certain type of response or - even if it sounds harsh - a "product". The acting teacher, instead, is about triggering a *psychophysical process*, setting up an *ethos,* a professional and artistical behavior. It is crucial *what*, and especially *how* we communicate with a beginner in order to stimulate him/her to "grow", to fulfill him/her "hidden promise".

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[4] George Banu, *Dincolo de rol sau actorul nesupus. Miniaturi teoretice, portrete, schițe* (Bucharest: Nemira, 2008), 162.

[5] Banu, 168.

The methods of working with the actor have grown and developed steadily with the twentieth century so that Eugenio Barba rightly regards it as a phenomenon of modern history of the theater. Appearing with Stanislavski's research, the phenomenon has led to the unprecedented proliferation of studios, laboratories and, implicitly, methods of experimentation and theatrical training to this day. The tendency suggests some degree of autonomy of the practice or the actor's training towards the study of preparing a role for a show. The idea behind and generating this current is that exercises have begun to be considered as a set of practices necessary for the transformation of the actor's *daily body-spirit* into a *stage-body-spirit*.[6]

Obviously, these mutations have led to a reconsideration of the relationship between the teacher-director and the actor. Starting from the premise that the director's work with the actors inherently contains a pedagogical component, George Banu, in the issue no. 70-71 of the magazine *Alternatives Théâtrales* - dedicated to the theatrical pedagogy -, made a typological classification of the theater directors. Thus, according to Banu's view, one can distinguish two types of theatrical personalities: the ″master″, associated to the model of the oriental guru, and "the conceptual teacher" ("le penseur de *l'enseignement")*, the master's Western counterpart, each operating differently.[7] The features of the two types, highlighted by George Banu, can be systematized as follows: in case of the "master", the experience is transmitted vertically in one way. The Master establishes himself as a model. He does not practice a pedagogy necessarily assumed and preaches certainty. The conceptual teacher, on the other hand, creates contexts and experiences that transform both the student and the teacher. The teacher, as a "guide in obscurity" (according to Peter Brook's formula), admits that he is no different from his students than by the degree of advancement in the territory of the Unknown. The teacher articulates his/her approach to a logic of the *process* and is always interested in the origins of creation, the creator and the conditions of maintaining creativity. He is concerned about the (re) birth of

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6. The finding belongs to Eugenio Barba and appears in the chapter "The drifting of the exercises" in *O canoe de hârtie. Tratat de antropologie teatrală,* Editura Unitext, Bucureşti, 2003, p. 165-171.
7. George Banu, "Les Penseurs de l'enseignement," *Alternatives Théâtrales*, no. 70–71 (2002): 2–4.

the artist in a student, but this process is not a one-sided process. The re-birth effort leaves traces both in student and teacher. Redefining the position of the teacher makes Keith Johnstone, one of the most authoritative voices in the improvisation technique, to proclaim the need for the acting professor to act as an "expert of the status", turning off the traditional role of prescriptive and judiciary[8]. He/she becomes a "partner-player" (V. Spolin), facilitator / "witness" (Anatoly Vassiliev), of his/her student development.

Aspects of communication in rehearsals and training

How do you communicate with your student when you are his/her partner? How do you tell him that his/her answer is sometimes wrong and that he/she must try again and again, on new paths? How do you define the mistake? What are you reporting? To his own artistic experience, raised to the rank of general norm? Theoretical precepts? Are you a teacher or rather a director? Orality, remarks George Banu, is also defined by the intervention power of the stage directions, so far, it can become the main resort of of mutations: finding other words is to suggest to actors other tasks that have been inaccessible to them until then.[9] Each student, says Viola Spolin, is a separate "development center". Consequently, the pedagogical discourse is required to be tailored to individual needs of individuals and balanced between the indications given to the ensemble and those aimed at individuals. Possible solutions to these problems come from the current "Creative drama", where a relationship is proposed between the assessment of the student's progress (assessment) and the evaluation of the effectiveness of pedagogical action.

Throughout the work together, the teacher-director and student-actor are constantly engaged in a feedback loop (as stated by the American pedagogue and director Robert Cohen), in which *observer and observed* hypostases are relative and interchangeable. Both are alternately and simultaneously positioned as *observed observer* and *observer observed.* The director watches what the actor does, but also the actor, during the interpretation of his role, is noting the director's reactions in order to meet his expectations.[10] In the theater school, this dual conditioning has a determining role. The tension of the relationship presupposed by the social situation of learning makes the mutual attention between the two actors involved often reach significant odds. Everything gains importance in this informational exchange, at the verbal level of the discourse and especially at the paraverbal and corporeal level.

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[8] Keith Johstone, *Impro. Improvizația Și Teatrul* (Bucharest: Tracus Arte, 2014), 41.

[9] Banu, Dincolo de rol sau actorul nesupus. Miniaturi teoretice, portrete, schiţe, 164.

When interacting with the student-actor, it seems that having the "vision" is less problematic than to find the ways to share this vision in order to spark off a living reaction, but also to reinforce in the student a certain type of attitude in the theatrical environment, teach him how to *receive* and *use creatively* the stage directions.

We could consider that, during the training/rehearsal, the communication between Observer and Observed, has three forms of manifestation, each with its specificity and determined by their chronological layout during the process of creation. We will have this as follows:

I. **The *prospective* stage direction**, which precedes and guides the act / interpretation, formulated by the teacher-director as a suggestion, exploration theme, task, working hypothesis, direction, desideratum, target etc. George Banu speaks of "Guidelines to root the fiction (...)"[11] classifying the directors orality in "**novelistic orality" -** characterized by a continuous discursivity, an abundant accompaniment, an orality driven by formative intentions (as examples, are indicated directors like Patrice Chéreau, Peter Stein and Giorgio Strehler) - and "**poetical orality**", developed through brilliant metaphorical stage directions, a fragmentary, enigmatic and discontinuous orality (the chosen example is Klaus Michael Grüber).[12]

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[10] In this context, I recommend an excellent doctoral thesis devoted to this subject, Observer and Observed in the casting process. Socio-psychological determinations of the "face-to-face" relationship, a thesis written by Diana Aldea, Faculty of Theater and Film, Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca.

[11] Banu, *Dincolo de rol sau actorul nesupus. Miniaturi teoretice, portrete, schiţe*, 164.

[12] Banu, 163.

II. **The simultaneous stage direction** - the famous "sidecoaching" or "shadowing" (Viola Spolin), which involves the teacher / director's intervention simultaneously with and parallel to the stage action through a stream of whispers in the actor's ear, or from the sides, without the actors interrupting their playing. In this situation, the teacher / director himself undergoes a transformation, being forced to live at the same level of energy or even higher than the actor, in order to be able to adjust the interpretation. Tadeusz Kantor, the director – conductor, acting among the actors, is the emblematic example.

   Interruption of the scene by the teacher-director and the demand to resume parts of variable length, sometimes even one word, although it is a frequent method, is an event that fractures the actor's interpretation and is one of the most problematic aspects of the interaction between the teacher-director and actors. While, for some actors, interruption act as an inhibitor, for others may be stimulating. The decision to interrupt the play, requires responsibility, depends on the professional experience of the director, the knowledge of the actors and the stage of work.

III. **The *subsequent* feedback** – known as the "debriefing" or "discussion" is a mandatory step in the act of forming the actor, the epilogue of each exercise, rehearsal or show. This retrospective analysis, meant to enhance the quality of future interpretations, is of crucial importance in forming the actor's self-monitoring mechanisms. Often, actors at the beginning of their career, accustomed to such assessment, develop a form of addiction to it, and are disconcerted when it is lacking. In the case of castings and auditions, the absence of this kind of reflection is one of the most often cited reasons for frustration of actors. Another interesting point to be made here is that movie actors are apparently less attached to feedback than those working in the theater. In the theater, actors are accustomed to benefiting from both an immediate response from the director / audience (applause, laughter, sigh, tension), and then through subsequent feedback. Asked how he actually felt this difference, the famous film director James Cameron confessed,

> Yes, it took me a long time to realize that [for these actors] you have to give the 'Atta boys'. But you can't go too far because if you do, no one will believe what you're saying. The second I say, 'Cut', is when my work begins. We've just done a take, now what worked and what didn't work? The first thing to say to the actor is, 'What did you think about that?' never, 'Oh baby, that was great!' because after a week of that, nobody's going to believe a damned thing you say.[13]

As Stephen Nachmanovitch, a well-known jazz musician - author of a book dedicated to improvisation[14]- put it, feedback may be *constructive*, based on "what worked", "what should be developed / avoided", making positive predictions, or obstructive – the well-known "criticism" - focused on errors, confusions, and making negative predictions. The first type of evaluation advances simultaneously with the time of creation, in a parallel flow of consciousness facilitating action, the second is interposed as a perpendicular line on the axis of creation.[15] Both evaluation methods have advantages and limitations of effectiveness. There are student actors who respond better to one or other of the methods, but also situations where either one or the other approaches can become operational.

The information content of the stage direction and its emotional effect

One cannot deny the stimulating or destabilizing potential of feedback. On the other hand, the value of the stage directions is not an intrinsic one, it cannot be detached from the situation and purpose of the value-judgement emitter. For the feedback receiver, the information has a strong emotional impact almost always, so it's useful for actors to be trained to handle this circumstance correctly.

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13. Karen Kondazian, The Actor's Encyclopedia of Casting Directors (Hollywood: Lone Eagle Publishing Company, 1999), 449.
14. Stephen Nachmanovitch, Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art (New York: Penguin-Tarcher, 1990).
15. Nachmanovitch, 134.

The way in which students learn to take over and apply a stage direction or a critique is of paramount importance in their artistic development and in the configuration of their future communication attitude during rehearsals. The ideal desideratum is that of a *creative actor-director partnership* in which the two engage, in a spiral of *improvisational offers and counteroffers*. In many cases, however, this model proves to be a utopia. Repetition or show seem all too often to be rather a field of status dispute. The inspired director and theatrical pedagogue Radu Penciulescu once confessed: "At one point, teaching directing has ceased to interest me. Teaching direction is to teach students how to take power."[16]

Actors deprived of the power to influence the performance, lacking confidence in their own capacities, may either seem inert, not making proposals, or take "mechanically" the stage direction - to translate it literally without "artistically" digesting it, or to offer an avalanche of irrelevant solutions for the meaning and purpose of the scene. Instead, an inspired stage direction is like a seed in a fertile land, it gives fruit. The response of the talented actor, confident in his own powers as well as in the direction indicated by the director, has the beauty of germination. The highly acclaimed Ukrainian theatre director Andriy Zholdak comes up with a radical perspective on this, talking about the director of the "god of insemination, of fire" who has to enter the "vagina actor", leaving the actor "pregnant"[17]. More nuanced than this masculine vision of the relation between the director and the actor, Stephen Nachmanovitch states that:

> The work comes from neither one artist nor the other, even though our own idiosyncrasies and styles, the symptoms of our original natures, still exert their natural pull. Nor does the work come from a

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16. Radu Penciulescu, "Să predai regia înseamnă să-i înveți pe elevi cum să ia puterea," Yorick, 2017, https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&ei=uAnQXNmBM6WLjLsP9IWKoAg&q=Les+penseurs+de+l%27enseignement+alternatives+theatrale&oq=Les+penseurs+de+l%27enseignement+alternatives+theatrale&gs_l=psy-ab.3..33i160l4.4617.9764..9875...0.0..0.184.2842.0j22......0....1..gws-wiz.......35i302i39.nlqXcGEqNjM.
17. Diana Armăsaru and Alina Mazilu, "Matrioșca gigantică: Andriy Zholdak," in *Repetiţiile Şi Teatrul Reînnoit. Secolul Regiei*, ed. George Banu (Bucharest: Nemira, 2009), 310.

> compromise or halfway point (averages are always boring!), but from a third place that isn't necessarily like what either one of us would do individually. What comes is a revelation to both of us.[18]

Authentic creation depends to a large extent on the artist's ability to access resources from the subconscious and unconscious. In psychoanalytic therapy, the revelation of truths buried in the underground of the self requires long and careful preparations of the patient, while in rehearsal, often by ignoring the natural mechanisms of self-protection, the actor is required to react "spontaneously" and totally. Self-revelation is a sacrificial act and the actor will be willing to do so as long as he trusts the honesty and professional competence of the person who asks him to completely surrender to his project. Sometimes, during the actor's training period, the teacher-director's unprofessed mental schema is: I *know the* "right" solution, I want to lead the student actor there. And then he uses indirect, manipulative means to attain this goal. But one cannot stop to ask oneself how would it be if genuine curiosity and patience will prevent the teacher-director to lead the student-actor directly to the target, letting the later to find and reveal unexpected solutions on his own? What if the teacher would "improvise" with what the actor-student has to offer *now* and *here*? Stepen Nachmanovitch, convincingly pleads for an "art of teaching" that requires connection in real time with the living bodies of the students and the living body of knowledge.[19] The musician encourages the teacher: "use your training; refer to it, understand it, ground yourself in it, but don't allow your training to blind you to the actual person who is sitting in front of you. In this way you pass beyond **competence to *presence*.**"[20]

The range of resources and means available to the teacher-director is very varied, ranging from concrete indications to cryptic suggestions, from briefs to extensive theoretical exposures, from questions and heuristic to parental advice. In the extreme and much disputed are the approaches by which the teacher-director takes full control, intervening directly, physically, on the student's body, or by taking temporary the actor's place; when the teacher-director takes over the interpretation and "shows how to do" directly.

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[18] Nachmanovitch, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*, 94.

[19] Nachmanovitch, 20–21.

[20] Nachmanovitch, 20–21.

George Banu addresses this problem uncompromisingly:

> Let's say it from the very beginning: any director, at one moment or another, *shows how to do it*, and thus manifests itself corporally in order to shape a character or to suggest a relationship, either to be imitated, or to help the actor overcome a jam. Then, for a moment, the director acts as a double of the actor. He knows what to do and dares to do it(...) For a long time publicly challenged, especially under the pressure of ideological arguments inspired by the optimism of playwrights or the hopes of "collective creation", the custom that the director "exemplifies" using his own body was charged as a reactionary ... In reality, never really disqualified or finally banished, the method persisted, more or less camouflaged. Today, the director shows again *how to do it.* The famous director Giorgio Strehler serves as the best example.[21]

In the actor's training period, "to show how to do", the traditional method of teaching, frequently used even today, risks, through its authoritarian character, to lead to the emergence of teacher's clones. When teaching acting means transmitting "ready-made" knowledge, the teacher is just a "monkey trainer", warns Jacques Delcuvellerie.[22]

Of course, some methods favor concrete indications, physical themes meant to stimulate an emotional response, the *outside-in* path. Others use the opposite technique, like the *inside-out,* by calling to the artist's personal memory, to his imagination, in order to generate forms, expressiveness. But the question that generated this article concerns aspects beyond the method, related to the "directorial" type of stage direction versus "trainer's" stage direction in the first years of the actor's formation, aspects related to the opportunity and effectiveness of one or the other. For example, how extensive and permissible is the use of sensitive information the teacher has about the private person of the student-actor with whom he/she works?

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[21] Banu, Dincolo de rol sau actorul nesupus. Miniaturi Teoretice, Portrete, Schiţe, 170.

[22] Jacques Delcuvellerie, "Le Jardinier," Alternatives Théâtrales, no. 70–71 (2002): 40.

Every teacher-director establishes, from the first meeting, a code of communication with those with whom he will work, and proposes himself in one of the roles mentioned above: master, partner, more experienced colleague, friend, etc. Actors / students must accept this code in order to work with that teacher/director. The stage directions are part of this code, and the type of stage direction preferred by a teacher-director is a brand of his/her personal style. George Banu, aware of the fact that the future working climate depends on this director's communication code, suggests: "It is desirable that each director, before forming a team or a cast, tests the impact of his stage directions on the actors he has chosen. Otherwise, there is the risk of lack of productivity and failure, because his orality does not work effectively."[23] By transferring George Banu's call in the field of acting studies, one can say that the admission exams should also be understood as a double choice, in the sense that not only the master selects his future disciples, but also that they get to choose their future guide. In particular, replacing the traditional admission exam, practiced today, with a longer-lasting workshop system, would facilitate such a double choice, so necessary for a fruitful journey to both sides.

On the other hand, as some directors often seem interested in the iconographical rendering of their vision and less in their interaction with the actors, let's take, at least theoretically, the hypothesis of replacing the director with a directorial tandem, analogous to that of the playwright-dramaturg, in which the first is the author of the play and the second one deals with the adaptation of the dramatic text to the needs of the cast and the director. In the "directorial tandem" we could have a director who assumes the translation of spectacular fantasy into an architecture of ideas and images, and another director who, having an additional training, acts on a micro scale, reformulates the requirements of the visionary director in terms and stage directions that take into account the human material with which they work. The second director would be called to translate the director's "dream" into the "actors' language". I have successfully experienced this kind of creative tandem in my personal pedagogical practice for over 15 years.

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23. Banu, Dincolo de rol sau actorul nesupus. Miniaturi Teoretice, Portrete, Schiţe, 165.

“Actors' language” vs. “directors’ language”

A certain director knows/doesn’t know how to speak in the “actors' language”, this is a frequently heard expression in the jargon of theatre practitioners and refers to something that directors either know instinctively or through studying acting, either learn with experience or choose to ignore. It is nothing more than a concrete translation of the principle of *presence* that prevails over competence. One can also speak of a “language of the directors”, which contains some key words including most probably the verb “I want”. Anne Bogart, the inspirational theoretician and practitioner of the Viewpoints discipline, points out the shortcomings of this way of expression:

> The word “want” is generally used too often and too carelessly in our working environment. Is it correct to assume that the actor's job is to do what the director “wants” and the director's job to know above all else what s/he wants and demand it? The specific language used during a rehearsal impacts the quality of relationships between people as well as the tone of the environment. The word “want” —much overused and abused in our American-system-of-rehearsing a play—implies a right and wrong. It encourages artists search for a single satisfying choice, driven by seeking approval from an absolute authority above them. (…) How often can an actor ask a director: “Is this what you want?” before the contribution of that actor is completely negated? Why not ask instead what the play wants? The director and the actor are then united in a mutual endeavor. The word “want” used habitually and without consciousness of the consequences, constructs a parent/child relationship in rehearsal. This parent/child relationship limits resiliency, rigor and maturity in the creative process and inhibits true collaboration.[24]

The constant reference the “good-bad” category pair is also a disruption factor for the climate needed to grow an actor. Viola Spolin unreservedly attacks this method of evaluating interpretative performance, warning that:

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[24] Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition* (New York: Theatre Communication Group, Inc., 2006), 16–17.

> In a culture where approval/disapproval has become the predominant regulator of effort and position, and often the substitute for love, our personal freedoms are dissipated. Abandoned to the whims of others, we must wander daily through the wish to be loved and the fear of rejection before we can be productive. Categorized "good" or "bad" from birth (a "good" baby does not cry too much) we become so enmeshed with the tenuous threads of approval/disapproval that we are creatively paralyzed.[25]

As Keith Johnson observes, differences in status, between teacher and student, that interfere with learning, can jeopardize the workplace and evolution. Using the "like-dislike" categories as value judgements for an artistic act is so frequent that has almost become a reflex. Sensible to this reality, researchers at the Academy of Theater and Dance at Amsterdam University of Arts have set up a collective evaluation protocol called Feedback Method – affirmative, not critical feedback, whose stated aims are:

> to empower the artist who is getting feedback on his or her work, to go beyond the pronouncement of judgments, to allow fundamental criticism, to create a sense of (self-) discipline for the sake of precision and clarity, and, last but not least, to increase the enjoyment of giving and receiving feedback.[26]

Replacing the director with a team that evaluates the actor's interpretation is useful as an indirect instructional tool during the actor's training and sometimes in rehearsals but cannot become operative as a general method. The basic training of the actor can never be achieved by an equal distribution of power, rightly remarked Jaques Delcuvellerie.[27] But, as I pointed out earlier, the mission of a teacher-director is to make his students acquire an *ethos* that involves two paradoxical dimensions: the madness of throwing him/herself "in the gulf with his/her eyes bound" (the expression belongs to the well-known Romanian director Mihai Măniuţiu), but also the awareness that the actor is ultimately an artist, partner of the director, co-author of the show.

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[25] Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theatre*, 7.

[26] "Feedback Method," Amsterdan University of the Arts. Academy of Theatre and Dance, n.d., https://www.atd.ahk.nl/en/theatre-programmes/das-theatre/feedback-method/.

[27] Delcuvellerie, "Le Jardinier," 39.

The work of the teacher - the director is a tantalizing grope in the dark, the blind leading the blind - as in the Brueghelian parable, but unlike the painting, the two do not go to the abyss, but must guess when they reach the crossing, to correctly choose the road that goes up toward enlightenment. The inspired stage direction appears as a revelation to the director when it generates an epiphany.

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The Rhetorical and Stylistic Evolution of Theatre Reviews at the End of the 50s. The Disobedient – Case Study

MIRUNA RUNCAN[1]

Abstract: This paper aims at analysing the way in which the structure and stylistics of theatre review influenced the evolution of critical thinking during the short thaw that took place in all Socialist countries after Nikita Khrushchev's February 1956 speech in which the Soviet leader exposed the crimes of Stalin's rule. We therefore analysed the reviews and essays of some of the most dynamic and most professional young critics who published in the *Teatrul* Journal: I. D. Sîrbu, Șt. Aug. Doinaș, Ecaterina Oproiu and Florian Potra. Symptomatically, all the four critics subsequently moved away from this profession, for dramatic reasons related to the political circumstances, and during the following decade, they became famous writers of poetry, literary criticism, dramaturgy or film criticism.

Keywords: Theatre History; Theatre Criticism; Cultural Policies; Arts in Communist Romania

It is extremely difficult to trace - at least for the period under study in this paper - the evolutionary line of Romanian theatre criticism discourse, from the point of view of structures and stylistics, whether dominant or particular. Of course, one could first ask oneself why such an evolution would be "presumable", but it's easy to find an answer to such a presumptuous question: as long as the theatre world, in its entirety, evolved, despite the surges caused by the re-freeze that took place between1958 and 1960, we should assume that criticism evolution was proportional. However, an overview on the landscape of theatre criticism, despite its great richness in the decade under discussion, does not show many signs confirming this hypothesis. Or, to be more explicit, after the short moment between 1956-1957, in spite of an evident professionalization, both discourse structures, as represented through the journalistic genres used, as well as the rhetoric and stylistics of the texts as such, go into a quite long "conservation" process, drawing some net limitations, that were certainly very carefully watched by the censoring ideological bodies. That is why, on one hand, even when talking about talented critics who had real analytical potential, or at least good intentions in reflecting the local theatre environment, their discourses always appear to strictly follow the genre's specific and rigid structures; and, on the other hand, their content and axiology are in line with the vision rigours dictated by the party. Therefore, the mapping we shall propose is based on nuances and tones rather than on the real volumetry of a rhetorical analysis in a broad sense.

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In the case of the years 1956-1964, when talking about rhetoric, three constant features stand out: first of all, a certain sobriety of discourse constructions which, without referring to academic stylistics and its rigours (rich references in footnotes, Aristotelian logical argumentation, conclusive synthesis, etc.) in an intentional and assumed manner, still keep a certain protocolary, "objectifying" distance in relation to the reader. This is, of course, a particularity directly related to the general-cultural perspective of the time over the formative attributions of criticism, ex cathedra, over "the masses of beneficiaries", even in a niche area such as theatre journalism. This is the reason why some critics' small escapes during the thaw and after 1960 seem, as we will see, so unusual compared to this stiff tone. I would even go as far as to say that this is also why, overall, Valentin Silvestru's ironic-comical tablettes, or some of Horia Deleanu's editorial opening statements of the review section sound like relatively jarring attempts to freshen a barracks-style journalism, which is rusty decorated with caricatures and at times with bulletin board-like drawings.

The second constant characteristic, in relative terms, stems from the tribute the authors must pay, willingly or not, to the interpretative rigours related to socialist realism. From this viewpoint, especially in longer, synthesis texts, references to the principles of Gorki, of Lunacearski or to Stanislavski's method, in its normative-narrow sense, are abundant until 1961-1962. They concurred by clear references to Lenin in the difficult years 1958-1959; while, from that moment on, references allude to the guidelines on culture issued by Gheorghiu-Dej himself, in party congresses and plenaries. Surely, less complex genres, such as the theatre review, do not have to include as many such references. But this doesn't mean that, especially during the re-freeze years, partisan positioning doesn't cast its shadow over a great part of the review practice (thus, we often find quotes from Lenin, Marx, Engels or even Soviet aestheticians, even in the introduction or in the content of works analysing performances based on plays by Shakespeare, Ibsen or even contemporary authors).

In fact, nowadays it would be invalid (and even ridiculous) to draw up, at least for the interval under analysis, an evaluative list of signatures, based on how often the theatre publicists include in their texts (regardless of their genre) references to and quotes from the party's canonical or occasional texts, or to the soviet works considered to be the ideological foundation of one theory or another, one opinion or another. In the case of "guiding" editorials, "cursives" or synthetic-thematic essays written by officials, these references are an integral part of that work's argumentative corpus. In the case of other genres, especially in that of the review, there are many explanations as to why normative references were employed: besides the fact that they work as marks for the critic's assumed partisanship (which had to be somehow ostentatiously exposed, especially in 1958-1960, as it was insistently requested by the governing bodies), they sometimes establish the perspective on which the argumentation is to be built. In most cases, this point of view is rooted in the dramatic text, in the way in which it was interpreted by the classics of Marxism or by canonical aestheticians, as long as the "Diamat" theatre aesthetics fully focuses on the message of the literary text, while the performance itself is a translation, a more or less "just rendition" of this. Anyway, the classification of critics depending on how often their texts show this "collaborationism", whether in structure, or circumstance, is in no case a pertinent criterium for their writing as such, nor for the judgments. As long as their positions in the political hierarchy are a sufficiently important factor in this equation, they align to the rhetorical rules of the moment: and these positions are to change in time, proportionally with their own rhetoric, sometimes bringing unexpected surprises.

Finally, the third constant characteristic is the evasion of the stylistic manifestation of their own personality in the critical text, regardless of its genre. Not only that, including in the case of reviews or stories, reports and interviews, the author-critic has no doubts, questions or other personal, more or less emotionally charged feelings, but - excluding small and rare slips (which we will tackle at the right time), even travel journals avoid enthusiasm and subjective notes, with the exception of those in the Soviet space, where laudatory tone is the norm. From this point of view, the typical Romanian critic is, up until 1962, in principle, not just sober (even when allowing themselves some ironies), but also hesitant in making themselves visible in the text: he/she aims at staying impersonal by default.

Actually, I don’t think this particularity is only limited to art criticism in Soviet satellite countries: the rule of journalistic discourse staying as objective as possible, tending to make the auctorial ego most transparent probably has to do with a certain ethos of European post-war press writing; and in the case of criticism, it constantly feeds the illusion of a distant authority legitimizing/validating the value judgment – despite the fact that stylistic specificities make the writing of a critic or another recognisable in the eye of consistent readers. In the European Communist East, however, this feature is more evident because of the extreme ideological normativization of the entire cultural environment. “Expressing oneself” in one’s inherent subjectivity probably looked like a bourgeoise flaw and could prove potentially dangerous. Gradually, after 1960, the canonical armour of “impersonality” would dilute in Romania as well, though it won't disappear, at least not in the theatre world (this will result in the major range difference between the types of writings published in the more popular and friendlier journal *Cinema,* and in the restrictive-conservative *Teatrul*, after 1963).

The Disobedient of Re-theatricalization. Case Study

It is necessary to cast a more careful glance, first of all because, during the short thaw in 1956-1957, in parallel to the debate on re-theatricalization[2], some of the reviews in the *Teatrul* journal achieve perhaps the most applied and most free tone of all the years before 1962, often constituting, as we will see, real models of applied, hermeneutic re-melting of the relation between text and its representation. Let us remember that, for almost two years, I. D. Sîrbu[3], Ștefan Aug. Doinaș[4], Dan Nasta[5], Ion Negoițescu[6] (former members of the „literary circle in Sibiu" and friends of Radu Stanca[7], one of the top theoreticians of the time), Florian Potra[8], Ecaterina Oproiu[9] published reviews in *Teatrul*, and that they were all (more or less openly declared) supporters of re-theatricalization. Thus, Dan Nasta's text about the (now) famous performance by Horea Popescu[10], *Domnișoara Nastasia* (staged at CFR Giuleşti Workers' Theatre), includes a programmatic fragment that seems straight out of the ethos of the Young Directors' Report (where it probably came from):

> We wonder whether a *theatre review* (even a *dramatic* one) could start from the (critical) *description* of *those elements in the play used by the director to understand it, and based on which he built his show*. Thus, we wouldn't speak of a theatre *play* and then about a theatre *performance*, but without identifying them, we would interfere, imply them based

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[2] On this topic, see Miruna Runcan, *Teatralizarea și re-teatralizarea în Romania. 1920-1960* (Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2003).

[3] I. D. Sîrbu (1919-1989), Romanian philosopher, novelist, essayist and playwright. He was a victim of the communist regime, spending about 6 years (1957-1963) as a political prisoner.

[4] Ștefan Aug. Doinaș (1922-2002), famous Romanian poet and essayist, member of the Romanian Academy. In 1957-1958, he was a political prisoner, a victim of the communist regime.

[5] Dan Nasta (1919-2015), Romanian actor, theatre director, poet and essayist.

[6] Ion Negoițescu (1921-1993), Romanian literary critic and historian. He spent three years (1957-1960) as a political prisoner.

[7] Radu Stanca (1920-1962),7 Romanian poet, playwright, theatre director, theatre critic and theoretician.

[8] Florian Potra (1925-1997), Romanian theatre and film critic, translator.

[9] Ecaterina Oproiu (born 1929), Romanian film and theatre critic, also a famous playwright.

[10] Horea Popescu (1925-2010), Romanian theatre and film director.

> on their real life report – which is more organic than comparing the two separately in a theatre review and a performance review, put aside in an unnatural manner and with the risk of them remaining parallel. [As emphasized by the writer][11]

The above urge has recognisable effects in many of the reviews dating from the beginning of the journal, which actually confirms a certain kind of underground programme that was not declared in editorial policy texts, but was largely applied by some of its editors. In the case of I.D. Sîrbu, for instance, his natural inclination towards a surgical analysis of the text sometimes intertwines with the description of the performance in direct relation with the effects of the reception: thus, it induces a complex, almost indistinguishable critical texture. In the case of a review about *Boieri și țărani* (*Boyars and Peasants*) by Al. Sever (Pitești Theatre, directed by Constantin Dinischiotu), an epic-like text dedicated to the 1907 Peasants' Revolt, this zooming effect looking at what the spectator perceives also includes theoretical-aesthetical considerations, which makes this cut-out ever more sapid:

> The innermost pot of composition contains a confusion: the dramatic premises (of negative heroes) mixed with the comical premises (of positive heroes). The conflict seems to be the result of the meeting between heroes of two different plays, of two different ways of living. This confusion becomes downright painful in the scene captured by the painter Băncilă: a gruesome sky, flames on the horizon, the tragic figures of stone-still peasants waiting, shots fired, wails. At this very moment, a kind of John the Mad shows up, a drunkard and an idiot. The audience is baffled: still under the tragic shock caused by the shots, he suddenly feels the urge to laugh. He is the village drummer, inebriated and a little dumbfounded, and launches himself in a hazy monologue, only so that, when he falls under the bullets (more emotions!), people spontaneously start laughing. The drama is left behind: (...) for – look! – people notice the red nose of the kulak Bordei who, after a series of sly moves, finds nothing better to do than steal the hats and the shoes of the dead.[12]

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11. Dan Nasta, "Simple note pentru detectarea poeziei regizorale," *Teatrul*, no. 3 (1957): 28.
12. I. D. Sîrbu, "Teatru epic sau roman teatralizat?," *Teatrul1*, no. 3 (1956): 70.

The irony in the fragment above, subtly slipped under the mask of a scandalized spectator, is by no chance an accident, as the author would exercise it with sufficient obstinance in these apparently more luminous years, though at the end of this period, he would pay for it in a more drastic manner than he imagined[13].

Most reviews by Ștefan Aug. Doinaș (who sometimes signed with his real name, Ștefan Popa, because the press law forbade the publication of more than two materials in the same number of a journal; in fact, until 1989, the publication's editors used to sign everything above the legitimate number of contributions with initials or pseudonyms) also show that the intentions of the editorial policies were very good, in line with the general revival and professionalization movement proposed by Romanian directors. Paradoxically, in his short period as theatre critic, Doinaș even stood apart from his colleagues in the literary circle, as he probably made the most applied performance analysis; actually, he sometimes visibly reduced the section dedicated to the literary dimension of the play in the benefit of a careful evaluative description of the staging. We can use as an example a review from the first issue of the journal, dedicated to a performance based on *Zorile Parisului* by Tudor Șoimaru and directed by George Dem. Loghin at *Teatrul Tineretului*. The play seems to have been an ambitious one, but failed in its attempt to render the tragedy of the Paris Commune. However, due to mysterious reasons[14], Doinaș's review is published in cursive/italics, as if the editors tried to isolate and propose it as a model for not complying with traditional structures. It starts abruptly, with a provocative intro, whose premises also show its evaluative conclusion.

> Could it be true that every play finds the artistic direction it deserves? Is the interdependence of the two so close that qualities and lapses have a close parallel determination? (...) The alignment between the

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[13] I.D. Sîrbu was imprisoned for political reasons for seven years.

[14] Considering the theme of this play, I suspect an intervention by Camil Petrescu, the honorific director, rather than an editorial decision by Horia Deleanu, the editor-in-chief. The great playwright and novelist's documentary interest for revolutionary and communal France could somehow support the odd decision to treat a simple review as a sub-editorial, graphically speaking.

> text and the artistic vision – that is, the echo of the play's purely scenic cascade of situations in theatrical effects, the resolving of the series of expository pictures about the Paris Commune into the material elements of the staging; lastly, the character interpretation from the viewpoint of the external movement and the colour intended by the author – are so close that the performance's strong points and its weaknesses seem to deny each other, accusing one another.[15]

Further on, the review becomes a very applied, yet very acid analysis of all the elements of the performance – scenography, lights, music, actors' interpretation – imperceptibly melting the play's narrative and conflict into the very corpus of this withering critical operation, focusing on the representation's stylistic heterogeneity and its vulgarizing superficiality. Only in the final part does the author go back to Șoimaru's text, tearing down its structure and writing-related errors, and thus closing the circle of the interdependence between a bad text and the sadly corresponding performance. The acidity of the irony and the subversive fineness of comparisons is also noteworthy.

> The famous statements of the time, the political mistakes made by Communards are recited brilliantly or monotonously, like a well-rehearsed lesson that fails to infuse the sentences with an authentic feeling. The figures of the main Communards (...) are brought like panels to a meeting and pass before our eyes without fully revealing themselves to us. The articles published in Le Cri du Peuple are read quickly, like posters, as romances and revolutionary songs grant just emotions, but block access to the characters' inner torment. The expression of class hatred remains nothing but mere invective against Thiers. (...) The fundamental mistake of Tudor Șoimaru's play is therefore the absence of living characters, of representative and thus artistically valid figures.[16]

Another structural technique which is very unusual for the time, embedded by Doinaș, involves a short diagnosis, followed by the flat, metronome-style rendition of the main situations in a theatre play. The tone itself, served by regular step-by-step enumerations, simultaneously conveys to the reader both the essential information about the play's cliché features, and a condensed image of what they could see in the show itself. About Lucia Demetrius' play *Atențiune copii!* (*Attention, Children!*), all we get is this apparently prudent summary, lacking adjectives that openly reveal any critical frown, but which sarcastically brings down the entire dramaturgic construction:

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[15] Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, "O temă majoră, o realizare minoră," *Teatrul*, no. 1 (1956): 81.

[16] Doinaș, 83.

> Maria Pricopie is a static character. Her central position allows for little axle-like movements, supporting an entire revolving system. Maria Pricopie is like a mirror in front of which the other characters have discussions or monologues about their own dramas: in Act 1, Petru Damian, a factory director, more preoccupied with production problems than with caring for and educating his children; in Act 2, the same Petru Damian, this time the head of a family in which the son - a retained high school pupil and a dreamer, hurt by his father's sternness - runs away unexpectedly; in Act 3, Olga Ceaușu, cheated in her love for Victor, or workers such as the Preda family, or Catrina Ponor, worried about their children's fate.[17]

On the other hand, the content of this review is dedicated to the way in which, at the Theatre in Brașov, one actress, Eugenia Eftimie-Petrescu, helped by director Ion Simionescu (who otherwise seems to have been a good trainer of actors in his days) still managed to create an emotional and partially credible performance, despite the aridity of the literary quality and in contrast with the cliched dramatic situations. The whole review sounds like a homage to the actor's filigree work - and by reducing the interest in Lucia Demetrius' play to the above-fragment shows the implicit literary evaluation.

A distinct style in the journal's period of infancy comes from Ecaterina Oproiu's reviews. At the same time, the journalist shared the film review in the *Contemporanul* journal with the venerable critic D. I. Suchianu, a job she would stick to after the stormy year of 1958, when she stopped writing for *Teatrul* precisely because of her very frank stylistics. Nevertheless, the passion for theatre accompanied her throughout her life, and she turned it into a short, but highly successful at the time dramatic work, which can still be retrieved today - see the rousing success and the translation/performance in several foreign languages of her best-known play, *Nu Sunt Turnul Eiffel* (*I Am Not the Eiffel Tower*) (1965); other plays are worthy of attention too, such as the frequently staged *Interviu* (*Interview*) (1976) or *Cerul înstelat deasupra noastră* (*The Starry Sky Above Us*) (1984).

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[17] Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, "Adevărul e simplu," *Teatrul*, no. 3 (1956): 71.

Ecaterina Oproiu is probably one of the rare theatre and film critics of that period whose voice has a recognisable personality, and its subjective perspective is not shackled by a circumstantial sobriety. The critic naturally creates a haptic presence, her very own touch, felt in her text at all levels of analysis. And this can be seen in her very first article published in the journal, a review of a recent performance called *Nota zero la purtare* (*Conduct Grade: Zero*), by Virgil Stoenescu and Octavian Sava, directed by Ion Lucian at Nottara Theatre (nowadays *Teatru Mic*). The play was extremely popular in its time, and for good reason: it is a moralistic, but not significantly ideological, comedy for young people (the action takes place in a high school) - which is rare in Romania, even our days. More than that, the radio recording of mainly the same period played a fundamental contribution to its real mass success. From the beginning of her review, Oproiu borrows the play's young, frolicsome tone, starting with a comment on the title. In fact, the intro is the author's polemic expression about her own occupation, and about the stiff 'objectivity' pretences in exercising a critical evaluation, and the final comparison, both feminine, and virulent, is a typical mark of her unmistakable stylistics:

> The reviewer is not allowed to grade. If we were, we would say, for instance: the text gets a 7+, actor X "magna cum laudae", while actress Y is held back - but this would upset both colleagues and actors. However, the review (sure, except for those made up of the summary and the list of actors, whose interpretations were "warm", "thrilling", "highly internalized") basically consists of several grades and an average level based on the critic's intellectual capacity and training. Sometimes, the assessment is very direct; otherwise, it comes wrapped in lots of nappies, like an overdressed child, whose face you can't see, but whose cries are clearly heard.[18]

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[18] Ecaterina Oproiu, "A fi sau a nu fi în notă," *Teatrul*, no. 2 (1956): 74.

After all, in reviews, Ecaterina Oproiu's approach mostly starts from a direct, and at the same time very personal observation, which can somehow be generalized, or even from a certain feeling that plucks the readers by the sleeve, inviting them to a kind of an informal chat. Such a stylistic attitude does lead, on the one hand, to a democratization of the relation with the targeted-audience, but simultaneously, not just in the context of dominantly normative and standardized discourses of the time, to a familiarity implying an investment of trust. For example, this review dedicated to the play *Cadavrul viu* (*The Living Corpse*) by Leo Tolstoy staged at Teatrul Tineretului (directed by Constantin Sincu), starts with new darts shot at circumstantial critique:

> We do not like reviews stating with: "Admirable intentions, very topical theme, excellent ideological level, but unfortunately, an abysmal rendition, with puppets for characters, and a dreadful conflict." Still, in some cases, the reviewer's lack of reaction is somehow excusable, for some performances seem to be deliberately constructed in such a way as to screen spectators from any strong emotion or from worries. In these cases, revolt would nevertheless be unjust, while enthusiasm would be excessive. The reviewer grows sullen, like a muse-less poet. By saying this now, while writing about the performance *Cadavrul viu* (Teatrul Tineretului), I am not making a general statement, but - if I may - a confession.[19]

Moreover, beyond this confidential intro, the author insists in her complicity with the reader - presumed to be a theatre professional, or at least an inveterate spectator. She highlights that she will avoid (refuse?) to do the things normally expected from a theatre critic, i.e. quench or even repress her personalized meditation, "put a damper on it", with the aim of recap Tolstoy's famous play, and even mocks the stereotypes of telling "a few stories about the old count dressed in his Kosovorotka who ploughs the land of the muzhiks"[20]. The purpose of the sarcasm used in this turn of phrase is of course threefold: on the one hand, it's a slap in the face of fixed, normative structures in theatre reviews, then it's an irony to Soviet-style stereotypical references to the great writer, and last but not least, a wink to the receiving partner, implicitly suggesting that the beneficiary of the text is cultured enough as to not need a retelling of a classic text, nor any encyclopaedia entrance about the count dressed in his Kosovorotka. Evidently, the content of the review includes arguments supporting a mediocre staging, with some quality actors nevertheless (Al Critico, Olga Tudorache).

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[19] Ecaterina Oproiu, "Virtutea și viciul cuminţeniei," *Teatrul*, no. 3 (1956): 77.

[20] Ibidem.

In her short period as collaborator of *Teatrul*, almost none of the author's reviews seems dry, or at least obsequious. And when they are concise (which happens quite rarely, compared to her colleague Ștefan Aug. Doinaș), her titles are striking, while her writing is responsive, sometimes showing clear enthusiasm doubled by searching observance, as it happens with what may be her most inciting review, the one about *The Rainmaker*, by Richard Nash, directed by Liviu Ciulei[21] (his debut as theatre director in fact). Other times, her texts exhibit sharp humour, like this description of the atmosphere in F. Vinea's melodrama, *Secretul doctorului Bergman (The Secret of Dr. Bergman)*, staged at Giulești Theatre:

> Students seem like the pupils of a Târgu Neamț high school on a Thursday afternoon in a public garden. Of course, they are lively and talkative, for who could imagine two teenagers sitting silently on a bench (...)? Each side is treated in the same colour, i.e. either white-silver and translucent, or as having the dark shade in which the creatures of hell deserve to be shown. Virtues and vices were also handed out with no compromise.[22]

In some cases, the review reaches almost essay-like dimensions, and the author feels the need to give special attention to the writer, trying to re-contextualize his presence and extract him from the clichés of understanding now-canonical literature. In one of these, Ecaterina Oproiu even gets carried

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21. Ecaterina Oproiu, "Ca să pornești o ploaie," *Teatrul*, no. 6 (1957). Notice the 'loving key' in which the author reads not only the direction, but especially Clody Bertola's interpretation, a homage worthy of an anthology.
22. Ecaterina Oproiu, "Piese fără întrebări," *Teatrul*, no. 11 (1957): 67.

away by accolades and cloak-and-dagger-like penmanship, far exceeding the real dimensions of the theme and of the topic - i.e. a review about *Omul cu mârțoaga* by George Ciprian, staged at the National Theatre, in which the imperative need to retrieve the author comes before the value of the show itself (the merits of Al. Finți's direction "are first and foremost passive"!):

> Here, joviality is harsher than anywhere else, as it is a joviality typical of a pub situated across the street from Bellu Cemetery, where an infernal folk band accompanies those leaving this world with sinister renditions of: "*Tarabumbara!*" or "*La moară la Hârța-Târța*" (...) That's why, in this very version, Chirică exudes apostolic kindness. His face, pale as ashes and forever sad, makes one think of Christ's expiation of all human sins...[23]

On the other hand, we must highlight that Ecaterina Oproiu's rhetoric, with its jaunty twists, always ready for strategies to catch the reader's attention for an imaginary, inter-subjective dialogue, remains an exception. Because the general tone of publications, generally reviews making up almost half of an issue, remains dominated by the implicit requirement of the objectifying sobriety. However, it's important to remember that, at the beginnings of the journal *Teatrul*, many of the editors show a proclivity to re-balance the textual relation between the review's two levels. Moreover, their texts often try to jump the normative-ideological constraints, or at least squeeze through them, with the good intention of granting argumentative consistency and thoroughness to the critical spirit.

In this period, Florian Potra for instance, who will in his turn focus more on film criticism over the next few years, writes a lot of theatre reviews, and his nice, careful, detailedly descriptive articles fall into the same spiritual family as those written by members of „the literary circle in Sibiu", in direct relation to the ethos of re-theatricalization. This however does not stop the critic, a fan of Radu Stanca, from openly arguing his reserves regarding one of his shows:

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[23] Ecaterina Oproiu, "Poezia lui Chirică," *Teatrul*, no. 2 (1957): 71–73. In the show, Grigore Vasiliu Birlic played Chirică.

> Consistency is a fragrant plant regardless of where it grows, but it feels more refreshing when found in the art field, especially in the art of the director from Sibiu. This Sibiu-based director is one of those people who put their money where they mouth is, whose written or spoken word is seen in the artistic act. The other day, he pleaded for the re-theatricalization of theatre and now he reasserts this in a straightforward, resolute performance like *Maria Stuart*. (...) Thus, *Maria Stuart* remains an admirable show designed by the director, a performance of honest simplicity, of a theatre engraved in a classic writing - let us not forget the elegant translation made by Radu Stanca himself - but lacking matching protagonists, and the fulfilment that can only be obtained by great actors.[24]

Potra is an often extremely observant and practical analyst; for him, the descriptive, detailed effort is the starting point of any assessment attempt - however, it is obvious, even at this young age, that besides his clear interest for classic texts, he has a visual mind, as he likes to recount everything he sees, costumes, gestures, mimicry. And even though his stylistics is less spectacular than that of his colleague, Oproiu, he too proves unhesitant when it comes to arguing his critical diagnoses, even aiming at an openly dismantling repetitive ideological discourse:

> Reading the play *Nach dem Gewitter (After the Storm)*, and especially seeing the performance based on it staged in Timișoara, causes justified confusion: is it natural for the dramaturgy and the performing arts in a minority language to undergo, or more precisely to retrace - a few years later - a road closed and left behind by Romanian literature and theatre? Would it not be natural for a theatre like the German Theatre in Timișoara, for example, to fully embrace the indefeasible conquests of our culture in general? For this play by Johann Szekler suddenly places us within the coordinates of the first, timid attempts at realist-socialist dramaturgy. The thorough observation on reality, mainly its staging, are substituted by a political and moral thesis, and insufficiently filtered

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[24] Florian Potra, "Scânteile unui foc posibil," *Teatrul*, no. 1 (1958): 60–62. We should note, even as an anecdote, that the role of Mary Stuart was played by the director's wife, Dorina Stanca.

> through an artistic feeling. (...) Such a setting could only result in a superficial, naturalist performance. With very few exceptions, the actors' movement was clumsy and cumbersome, groups formed badly, lines were rudimentarily delivered, with no clear direction. The end of *all* the scenes was set against energy or even material gaps, after the stage had been inert and empty for minutes on end (...) In short, a complete lack of direction.[25]

As this article is dedicated to rhetoric, we cannot not notice the author's merry belief in having "left behind" the vulgarly schematic phase of socialist realism and moving on to "the indefeasible conquests of our culture", based on deep observation and artistic filtering. The fact that this review was published just three months before the beginning - in May 1958 - of the new virulent-normative attack on culture in its broad sense (arts, sciences, education, media etc.), a rereading of the fragment above later in time gives it a touch of involuntary naivete and, in retrospective, a dramatic thrill.

Because, as we already know, in the spring of 1958, a new virulent freeze started, and Romanian culture - theatre criticism included – had to revert, for another three years, to ideological and stylistic stereotypes characteristic of the beginning of the decade. For I.D. Sîrbu and Ștefan Aug. Doinaș, the re-freeze meant not just shorter or longer periods of detention, or publication bans, but also their permanent parting with theatre criticism - Doinaș returned after 1964, but only as a poet and essayist, while I.D. Sîrbu dedicated himself to dramaturgy, poetry and memoirs (the latter published posthumously).

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Finding Words for Dance from a Choreological Perspective

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Abstract: What is the difference between dance theatre and physical theatre? What kind of vocabulary best describes this theatrical field which is so difficult to define in words? As a doctoral student, the necessity of explaining the creative layers - those abstract elements an artist works with - encouraged taking the decision to talk about movement through the vocabulary of choreological studies. First, this scholarly study of dance offers a valuable terminology for every researcher or practitioner in the performative arts area. Secondly, it separates the perspectives from which movement and ideas can be referred to: the creator's initial intention, the performer's embodiment of the material and the spectator's interpretation of the work. Finally, the best way to discuss about movement is to see it. Therefore, making references to different dance works is an essential perspective which gives an efficient tool for understanding the ways in which movement communicates.

Keywords: choreology, dance, movement, choreography, vocabulary, creator, performer, spectator

Introduction

> *The dance form is not determined by dance (only)... On the contrary, it is more of a compromise which has its origins in theatre, where the main accent is no longer on the dance itself but on the total stage event.*[2]

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[2] Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Ana Sanchez-Colberg, "Dance and the performative. A Choreological Perspective – Laban and Beyond" (Hampshire: Dance Books Ltd., 2010), 9

As a pioneer of Expressionist Dance, Mary Wigman began formulating a description for her works in the 1920's, when herself, along with Kurt Joos and Lisa Ullmann, as students of Rudolf Laban, were trying to break from the traditional ballet and seeing dance more as a form of expressing human feelings. Today, almost one hundred years later, intending to give definitions to certain performative art forms is still a subject of debate. As a theatre-based choreographer, it became a necessity to determine a work's identity by situating it in a certain genre. This necessity is a result of a slight discontentment towards the reputation of contemporary dance in the Romanian performative arts field. Works labeled such as "contemporary dance performance", "dance theatre" or "physical theatre" may sometimes suffer from premature unsuccess due to the unclear opinions that spectators have, which make them misjudge a work before even seeing it. Some creators give even more varied titles to their works, like "movement theatre", "choreographic theatre" or "dance performance", trying to induce a correct type of expectation from their audiences.

In 1986, Lloyd Newson also felt discontent towards the phase contemporary dance was going through at that time and named his own company "DV8 Physical Theatre", long before "physical theatre" became a labeled genre for academic studies and research. DV8 (Dance and Video 8) Physical Theatre's work "is about taking risks, aesthetically and physically, about breaking down the barriers between dance and theatre and, above all, communicating ideas and feelings clearly and unpretentiously. It is determined to be radical yet accessible, and to take its work to as wide an audience as possible."[3] Through this brief and powerful description of their artistic mission, the company encloses the three main perspectives a theatrical performance can be seen through: the creator, the performer and the spectator. They are aware of the complex web of inter-relationships between the creator's initial intention of the work, its embodiment by the performers and its interpretation by an audience. This way of perceiving movement in general, no matter which label we use to categorize it, is known in dance practice and theory as a "choreological" perspective.

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[3] "Artistic Policy," DV8 Physical Theatre, n.d., https://www.dv8.co.uk/about-dv8/artistic-policy.

A Choreological Perspective

Making a brief synthesis on this vast research domain, "choreology, as a general term, is regarded as the scholarly study of dance. The term was first introduced by Rudolf Laban in 1926 in the curriculum of his newly opened *Choreographisches Institut*..."[4] The parameters of the choreological perspective on dance as a form of theatrical art were exposed for the first time by Valerie Preston-Dunlop in 1987. Valerie Preston-Dunlop is a consultant at "Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance" in London where she pioneered the development of choreological studies. A practical scholar, she received her initial training from Rudolf Laban, Lisa Ullman, Kurt Jooss and Albrecht Knust. She perpetuated her research not only through her written works, but also through training future choreologists who can spread the knowledge through the world of theatre and dance. One of her former students, Olga Masleinnikova, is a dance-theatre maker, choreologist, movement director, teacher and artist coach. Her practice combines Laban's contemporary developments for performing arts, somatic practices and her research around body energetics. She turned to this research field after the discontent she felt when seeing herself acting on video. The discrepancy she observed between her knowledge of the initial creative intention, the awareness process as a performer in her own work and the recorded product which she was able to criticize in the end, alarmed her and decided to discover new tools of analyzing this multi-stranded medium creators find themselves in.

By participating in the 2015 edition of "Dance Summer School" at "Trinity Laban", the opportunity of receiving the first choreological studies "toolbox" helped widen the points of view from which movement can be comprehended through matters of shape and intention. This workshop was led by Olga Masleinnikova in a very well-structured manner, in order for participants to experience in a practical way all tools she was able to reveal to them in a two-week study. More precisely, each theoretical issue was given several practical examples, which the participants themselves had to create in order to "address the issues through the symbiotic relationship of practice and concept"[5].

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[4] Valerie Preston-Dunlop, Ana Sanchez-Colburg, and Sarah Rubidge, *Dance and the Performative, a Choreological Perspective. Laban and Beyond* (Los Angeles: Verve Publishing, 2010), 1.

[5] Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, 3.

Thanks to this first encounter with choreological studies, participants were also encouraged to take a deeper look into this complex world of movement analysis by researching further and reading the literature which speaks about this type of practice. Two of the books which were recommended then became the foundation of the future doctorate dissertation in theatre and performing arts, its title being "Seen dance. Danced dance. Created dance. Choreological Perspectives"[6]. Their titles are *Dance and the Performative* and *Looking at Dances*, both written by Valerie Preston-Dunlop, and revealing a very complex, yet very accurate way of interpreting movement and its medium, understood as "the stuff that an art object is made in."[7]

Looking for The Right Words

As a doctoral student, the necessity of putting into words the creative layers - those abstract elements an artist works with - encouraged taking the decision to talk about movement through the vocabulary of choreological studies. This choice has made things much clearer in terms of agreeing upon using certain terms to describe concepts which can be easily misinterpreted due to nuances. Preston-Dunlop not only uses very clear and simple vocabulary to "express that which lies outside language, the 'unsayable things' which Pina Bausch has so often referred to"[8], but also brings constant references of essential works made by essential artists in the field of contemporary dance.

The terminology is so right, the examples are so valuable, but finding their equivalent in Romanian is quite a challenge. Following the *triadic perspective* (creating, performing, appreciating processes) from which the work analyzes different forms of performances made over the years, firstly, it is very important to establish an appropriate vocabulary for accurately naming these three representatives who are involved in the same artistic event.

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[6] Translated from Romanian, "Dans văzut. Dans dansat. Dans creat. Perspective coreologice" by Andrea Gavriliu

[7] Valerie Preston-Dunlop, *Looking at Dances: A Choreological Perspective on Choreography* (Binsted, UK: The Noverre Press, 2014), 1.

[8] Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, *Dance and the Performative, a Choreological Perspective. Laban and Beyond*, 10.

The creator can be found under the title of "director", "choreographer", or "author", depending on the amount and type of responsibility he or she considers taking upon him or herself within a performative event. Many creators take even more than writing the script, directing and choreographing. Some also choose to design their own space, props, costumes, lights and even contribute totally or partially to their choice of sound. There is still that tradition which encourages the problematic assumption that choreographers only create, that performers only perform and that audiences only appreciate. But the changing theatre and dance practice over these last one hundred years show us how much the three processes are overlapping and sometimes unifying.

From a personal point of view, as a creator, the choreographic process includes working with the movement material as a performer, experiencing it from an actor's and a dancer's perspective. One reason lies in the fact that performing involvement is always a method of empathizing with the body exposed to effort, technical challenges, emotional pressure of all sorts and vulnerability towards public judgement. In the same time, this procedure is a tool for efficiency, especially when it comes to lack of time when working on a production or (and) lack of physical skills when demands are higher than the performers are capable of (willing to). This last aspect represents an issue in the Romanian performative arts field as time is very often extremely limited when it comes to mounting a production. Having an average of one month for the entire creative process in an ordinary state-funded theatre, many creators choose to prepare their material in a quite detailed manner in order to save time. Therefore, a considerable amount of original ideas may never be discovered during rehearsals due to the time-consuming process of memorizing and embodying spoken and (or) movement material.

The performer's roles are traditionally seen as those who either act, or either dance in a specific artistic work and do not create, nor appreciate. Finding an equivalent of the term "performer" in Romanian is highly problematic, as the only words available to describe its function are that of "executant" and "interpreter". The first one brings along a sense of non-creativity, of someone who irrationally follows specific directions and obeys compulsory rules. The second word in Romanian, "interpret", also has the same meaning as in English, that of a translator, but it also refers to a person being cast in a role of a theatre or music production. This means that he or she gives an interpretation to that specific part or score, without being allowed to reshape it drastically. For instance, if an actress plays Ophelia, the lines that Shakespeare wrote may be changed or even eliminated, her physical appearance might be far from that of a traditional perspective, but the idea of embodying a character outside that actress's personality and experience remains untouched. In dance, "embodying a role requires a similar layered process of assimilation and investment in which the dancer's habitual inscription adapts to the choreographer's demands."[9] As a dancer, it is obvious that working with renowned companies like "Netherlands Dans Theatre" or "Ballet Prejolocaj" requires special movement techniques which clearly identify him or her with that technique's unique culture. Even if a choreographer with a different vision towards dance practice and medium chooses to collaborate with such a company, he or she will rather think of a work suitable for those specific bodies than try to reshape them. For example, Canadian choreographer Crystal Pite adapted her aesthetic views towards her preferred type of performers while working with NDT 1 dancers for productions such as "Parade" (2013) or "The Statement" (2016).

Therefore, the term "performer" is preferred, borrowed and utilized in Romanian as it is, to be able to speak of the bodies that make a performative context happen. Focusing on dance theatre and physical theatre, "productions of this sort see the medium of dance as a way to deal with matters physical, physically."[10] In consequence, these current genres emphasize *corporeality* which

> sees the human body as a body that is personal, social, emotional, animal, mineral, vegetal, sexual, biological and psychological, as well as an agent of motion, and one that is given a context, a space, which is in itself socio-personal, political, domestic, abstract, conscious, unconscious, etc. Movement in *tanztheater* arises from the interplay of humans in these diverse at times incongruent manifestations."[11]

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9. Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, 8.
10. Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, 9.
11. Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, 9.

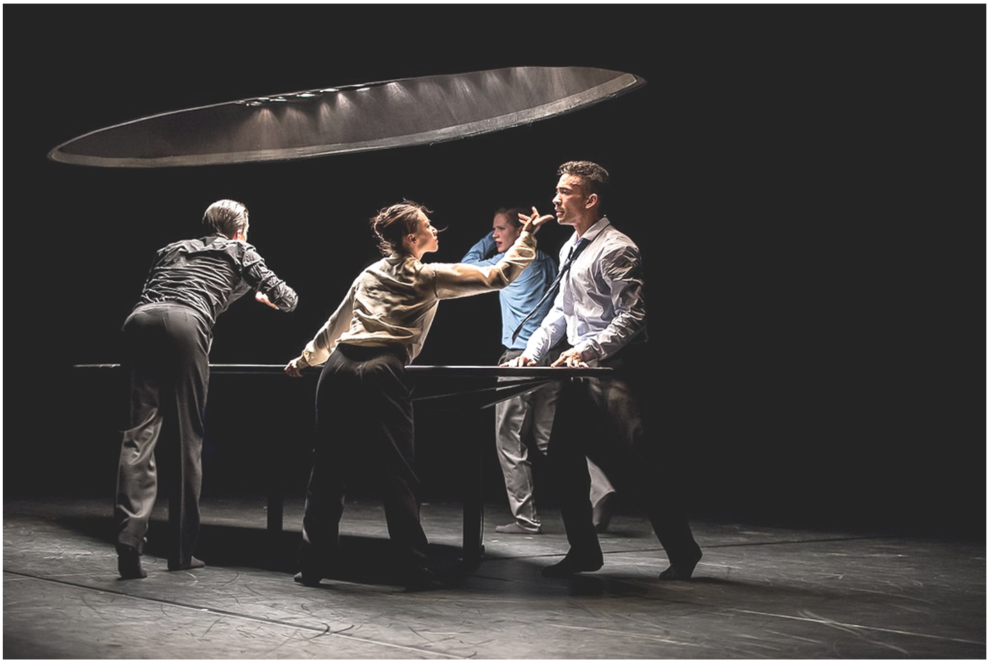

Figure 1. Scene from "The Statement" by Crystal Pite.

Companies such as NDT do not rely on human diversity, even if they state that each one of their dancers excels in their solo qualities. This is only true from a purely technical and virtuosic point of view because they are all carefully selected, weight and measured, to match a cultural identity very similar to that of classical ballet. Lloyd Newson's works, on the other hand, are rather "content-based, he casts according to subject matter and performers' suitability for each new project."[12] In the company's latest works, such as "To Be Straight With You" (2007-2009) or "Can We Talk About This?" (2011-2012), they deal with social issues like freedom of speech, gender and sexual orientation inequalities, religious extremism in a "documentary-style dance theatre production"[13]. "Newson is known to cast people not normally regarded as dance people."[14] The same situation is present in the case of choreographers like Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and his "Eastman" Company, and almost every work of the companies "Peeping Tom" or "Les Ballets C de la B", all three examples happening to be from Belgium. And as a parenthesis to that, Belgium also means Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's "Rosas" Company and P.A.R.T.S. (Performing Arts Research and Training Studios, Brussels), Wim Vandekeybus' "Ultima Vez" Company, which makes Belgium a theatre and physical dance's paradise.

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[12] "DV8 History," DV8 Physical Theatre, n.d., https://www.dv8.co.uk/about-dv8/dv8-history.

[13] "Can We Talk About This?," DV8 Physical Theatre, n.d., https://www.dv8.co.uk/projects/archive/can-we-talk-about-this.

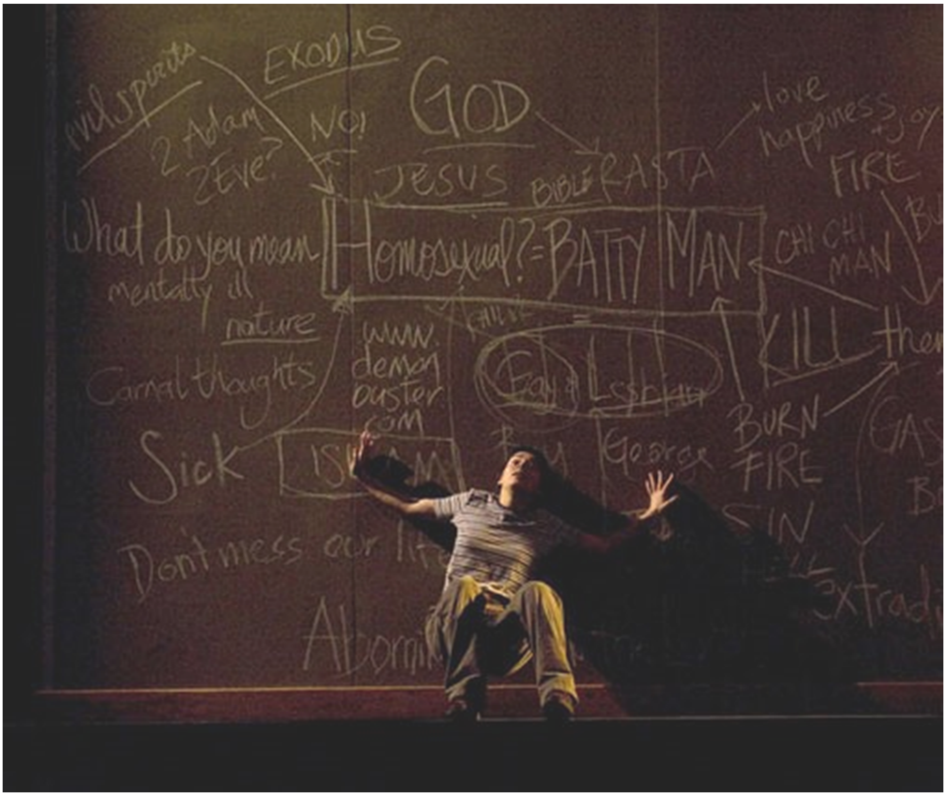
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Figure 2. Ermira Goro in "To Be Straight With You". Photograph: Tristram Kenton

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[14] Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, *Dance and the Performative, a Choreological Perspective. Laban and Beyond*, 4.

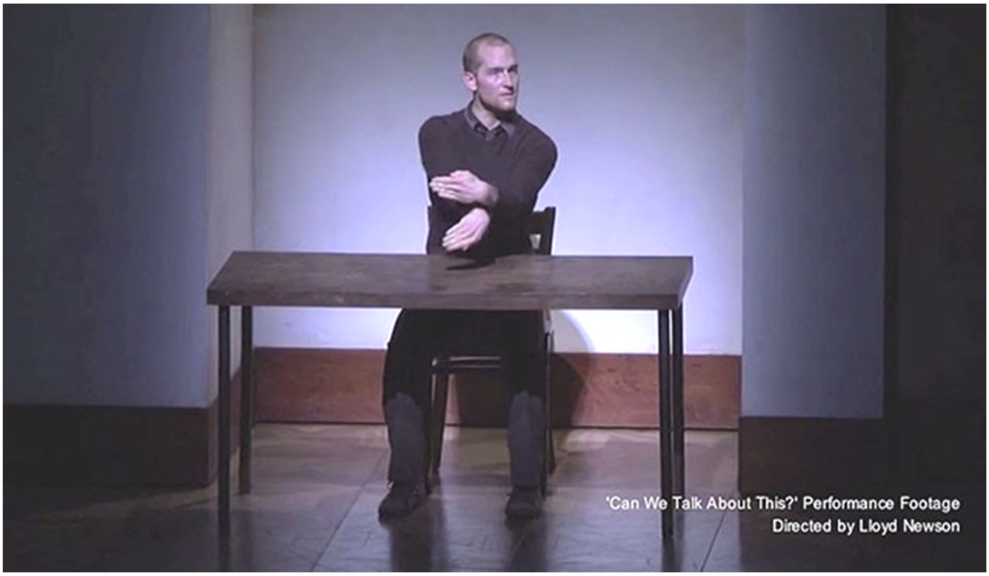
'Can We Talk About This?' Performance Footage
Directed by Lloyd Newson

Figure 3. Hannes Langolf in "Can We Talk About This?"
Source: www.dv8.co.uk

The third party of the triadic perspective is generally referred to as *the spectators*, and, from the traditional point of view, they are known as the audience, which are also bodies, but which do not interfere in the artistic process in any way. And by saying this, there is a return to the discontentment this article began with, the one regarding the unfortunate reputation of contemporary dance in Romania. This conservative idea is still widely spread among art consumers who expect a well spent evening at the theatre and find it difficult to be challenged in any way. It is a quite voyeuristic way of perceiving performative art, in the sense of not being willing to waste any intellectual, emotional or physical energy for the sake of it. People still prefer sitting in the dark on comfortable chairs and, very sadly, sometimes access their phones or discuss with their neighbors as if they were at the cinema. But leaving this sort of ridiculous frustration aside, it is the difficulty of comprehending movement as a language which lays at the roots of this issue. Being used to the straight-forwarded type of vocabulary most of the visual media world uses, people tend to feel discontent when facing a performative action: they either underestimate their intelligence or they are unsatisfied by the clarity of the message. Each complaint can be easily understood or empathized with as long as the subject can relate to other similar cultural experiences. This being said, it is appropriate to admit that many types of movement performances cannot stimulate each person in the same way, due to their various cultural and social backgrounds. In every community, there needs to be a kind of pioneering in every domain to attract interest and appreciation, even if it is not always a positive one.

"Dance as a language, a phrase used by Laban, Wigman and Jooss, should not be taken as a methodological premise, but mere metaphor which describes dance's ability to express (taken to mean, bring out, make manifest) that which lies outside language."[15] This performative way of expressing should serve to effect a transaction between the parties. Nowadays, there is a big number of productions that rely on the spectator's involvement not just intellectually, but sometimes even physically. In Ohad Naharin's famous "Decadance" (World Premiere: 2000, Suzanne Dellal Center, Tel-Aviv), seen at The Sibiu International Theatre Festival in 2014, the dancers come off the stage and pick audience members to be their partners for the upcoming sequence. The entire idea is so simply, yet so ingeniously managed by the dancers, that they make *mundane*[16] bodies seem aesthetically expressive. The audience really seemed to enjoy what was happening and, perhaps, only someone extremely shy would have refused the invitation to go on stage and dance next to those incredibly talented dancers. By drawing this conclusion, it is correct to say that excellence is always responded to, even if it comes in shapes people are not accustomed to, as Preston-Dunlop

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15. Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, 10.
16. Term used by Preston-Dunlop which refers to non-performative, life-like behaviour. It is another problematic term used in the Romanian theatrical vocabulary as this type of behaviour is named "civil", relating to ordinary citizens and their concerns. This term also embeds a pejorative meaning as it is too often used to criticise actors of not being sufficiently focused or bodily involved in their creative process. A similar negative conotation is widely given to the term "theatrical" and it is found when judging an artistic view or behaviour which seems aesthetically exagerated. It also happens when life-like forms are being desired inside that work.

affirms: “For the aesthetic function to function, the dance needs to be an excellent example of itself whatever its genre, whatever its type. The spectator will respond to excellence even if it is an unfamiliar excellence.”[17]

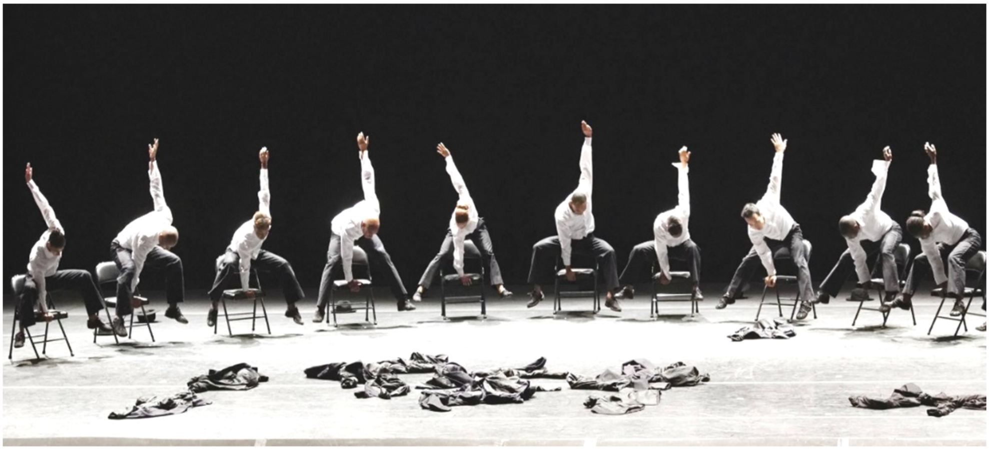

Figure 4. Scene from *“Decadance”* by Ohad Naharin

A similar experience, from an engaged spectator's perspective, is seeing / participating to Wim Vandekeybus's “Go Figure Out Yourself” (World Premiere: March 22nd 2018, “Les Brigittines”, Brussels), seen at “Fabbrica Europa” International Festival in Florence, just two months after its world premiere. This work truly relies on the audience's response to the physical demands the space and the performers have. Being in an unconventional space, a former railway station's building, buying the ticket does not involve comfortably sitting on a chair and having the same visibility from all angles. On the contrary, the production relies on chance from a comprehensive point of view. People are asked by the performers to follow them to various corners of the space in order to be seen and heard. So, in order to witness all five stories, it would mean seeing the show five times and trying not to be “seduced” by the same performer twice.

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[17] Preston-Dunlop, *Looking at Dances: A Choreological Perspective on Choreography*, 29.

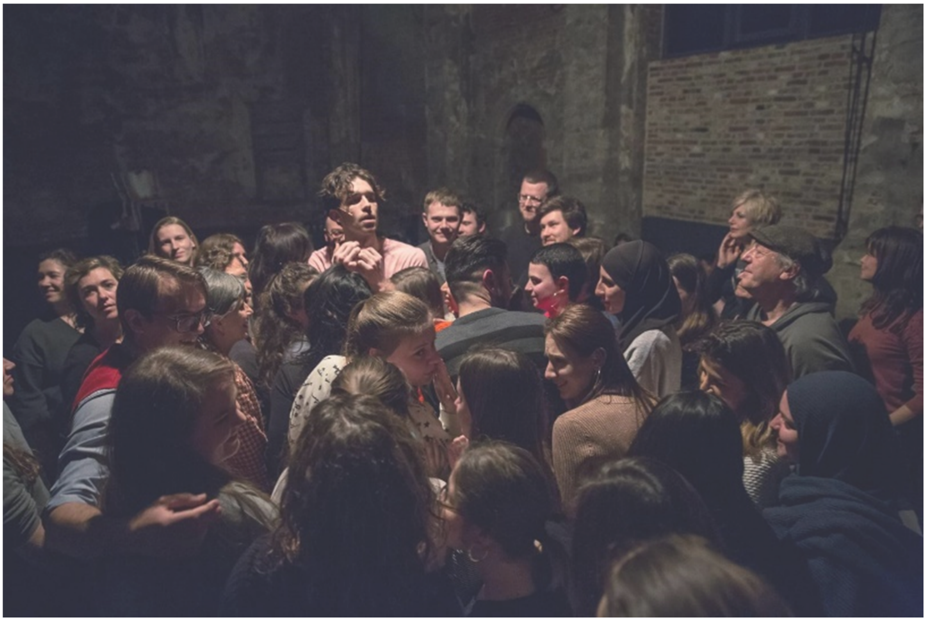

Figure 5. Tim Bogaerts in *"Go Figure Out Yourself"* by Wim Vandekeybus

Being in the situation of standing as an audience, not to mention being pushed, pulled and danced around, is not necessarily something that everyone enjoys, but it definitely minimizes the need to judge a performative act from a narrative aspect. "Theatrical codes are entered into by artists and spectators alike. The expectation of being interested, moved, shocked, bored, or appalled, is present for an audience as soon as they enter the theatrical space."[18] When a member of the audience is not familiarized with certain sets of codes, or simply with the idea that various art forms can be synthesized and put together simultaneously, the work's message and intention can be invisible or misinterpreted.

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[18] Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, *Dance and the Performative, a Choreological Perspective. Laban and Beyond*, 4.

Practice Aspects – Initial Intension, Process and Response

The choreological perspective refers to dance as an embodied performative art, and its study

> locates it within the field of theatrical framework organised by theatrical codes, in whatever venue that happens to take place. (...) Choreologists may be found practising as, an calling themselves, choreographers, teachers, notators, reconstructors, performers, historians; that is, in professions where corporeal and verbal knowledge is integrated.[19]

It is a highly valuable tool for answering important questions every artist should have regarding his or her work: “Does my creation communicate? What? How? Do spectators see what the creator sees?” It is sometimes frustrating for an artist to realize his or her work has had a smaller impact on the public than expected, but it is essential to discover the cause. From a personal experience, the questions which are applicable in the attempt of dance and physical theatre making are: “Is the choreographic material too simplistic?”, “Are the performers not skilled enough?”, “Is the idea uninteresting?” All these questions seem to have in common a sense of underestimation or/and underappreciation towards one's ability to express him or herself artistically. And it is, of course, advisable to try to improve things from the inside, whether it is technical skills, manner of materialization[20], or choice of theme/ narrative/concept. But, sometimes, it is also correct to question whether we are addressing the right audience, or not...

Working on “The Recipe for Perfection in Too Many Steps That Lead Nowhere”[21] in 2018 has raised questions regarding the general reception and, more exactly, the interpretation of the message(s) within the entire production. Regarding the main topic of the work, what was initially meant to ridicule people's current lifestyles, ended up being taken for granted by many viewers. The irony towards excessive physical training and healthy living, the hunger for professional fulfillment and public success, seeing personal development books as literature and other aspects of neurotic behavior of the 21st century, was obviously taken as advice, and the confirmation came by hearing several opinions while exiting the theatre, such as: "I really need to go to the gym!". A work's impact upon people is something common to be different, as a review of the production says: "Everyone will look at it from a personal perspective. Everyone will refer to it according to their own experience..."[22] The same review also innocently rises a more important issue of comprehensibility which is directly linked to the question whether the work addresses a suitable audience:

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[19] Preston-Dunlop, Sanchez-Colburg, and Rubidge, 3.

[20] “Mm”, the Manner of Materialization is used by Preston-Dunlop in *Looking at Dances* (page 133) and refers to “how it is made”, those specific ideas and methods which are embedded in the active work process and which give shape to the finished product.

[21] Translated from Romanian, “Rețeta perfecțiunii în foarte mulți pași care nu duc nicăieri”, a physical theatre performance by Andrea Gavriliu (Teatrul de Nord Satu Mare).

> I have written (so far) almost 800 words, but just a maximum of 50 about the show itself. It's not that I didn't like it. It's just that it is really hard to characterize. It is physical theatre, it's different from everything I've seen so far (also different from everything that has been seen on stage in Satu Mare), which makes it extremely hard to characterize. How could I describe the way actors interpreted? How could I characterize their processes?[23]

From a choreological perspective, this review contains some key words that are essential in the analysis of a performative event: "to like" (appreciation), "to characterize" (labeling), "interpret" (confusion towards the performer's contribution to the work).

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22. Emil Călinescu, "Reteta Perfectiunii in Foarte Multi Pasi Care Nu Duc Nicaieri – Tranzit Feszt 2018," lateatru.eu, 2018, https://lateatru.eu/reteta-perfectiunii-in-foarte-multi-pasi-care-nu-duc-nicaieri-tranzit-feszt-2018/.

23. Idem.

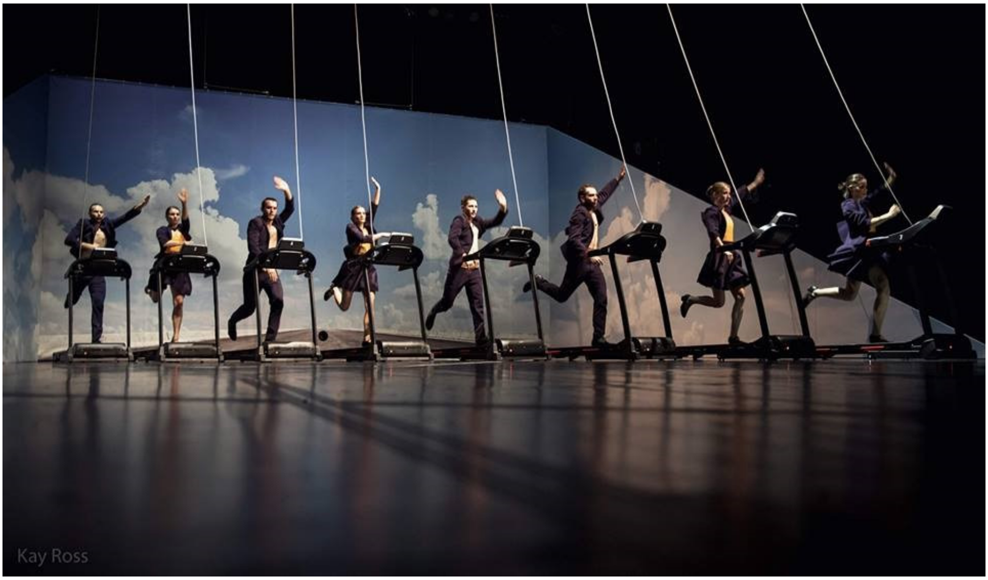

Figure 6. Scene from *"The Recipe For Perfection In Too Many Steps That Lead Nowhere"* (Photographer: Kay Ross)

When it comes to appreciating a performance, such a reaction requires that the work contains elements which deserve to be seen, heard and felt. The concept of "merit" was developed by Roman Jakobson, Russian linguist and literary theorist, a pioneer of structural linguistics. He described communication to be dependent on the codes shared by both artists and spectators. Spectators can recognize originality even if it is unfamiliar to them: innovative movement material, originality of the soundtrack, surprising ideas, and so on. Being able to appreciate a work for its aesthetic values is very often fractured by the need to label that certain artistic event. Another "while-exiting-the-theatre-after-the-show" comment saying: "Now, what am I going to tell my daughter when she asks me what kind of play I have been to?", brutally proves this sense of being lost in a world where everything has to correspond to something. Roughly said, making physical theatre for communities where this genre has not been popularized (yet), can make the creator look like he or she is not "theatre director" enough to make plays, but not choreographer enough to make dances. Furthermore, it makes the performer feel neither an actor, nor a dancer. This constant decision dance and physical theatre makers are pushed to take reveals the absence of a variety of such creations and the perpetual denial of dance and theatre people to connect and create common vocabulary.

Being involved in the creative process, it is clearly difficult to be detached and to observe own work. This matter is understandable since every artist wishes to be a great example of him or herself. For this reason, the choreological perception upon one's work can be a very efficient and objective way of analyzing creative products and processes. But, since the term "choreology" does not exist in the Romanian dictionary, spreading it in both theatre and dance academic fields is probably going to be a challenge due to its very complex features.

> It goes almost without saying that writing a book about dance practice without dance there in front of you to refer to is destined to fail. It is certainly like trying to get over a very high wall with no ladder. (...) Movement described in words is awful. It is, after all, indescribable as is the smell of a rose and the taste of a good wine.[24]

Therefore, this is the reason why experiencing various performative events has such great importance from all three perspectives: the making, taking part of, witnessing. The codes we get accustomed to by participating to as many forms of art as possible are the ones responsible for making us more open, more appreciative, and more entitled to bring criticism of any kind. Therefore, besides seeing, making and taking part of such creations, the constant experimenting of movement workshops through Europe is also a consistent part of a personal research which makes the analysis more accurate. Being conscious physically and intellectually of various forms of dance and techniques which are now available "for testing" around the world is an essential point of view when it comes to integrating movement vocabulary in a debate.

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24. Preston-Dunlop, *Looking at Dances: A Choreological Perspective on Choreography*, Introduction.

No matter how compatible artists are with their public's demands and expectations, giving a voice to their creativeness using whatever tools they have at hand is essential. Even if, sometimes, it involves taking certain risks of being misinterpreted or judged - because bringing an authentic vision in one's work is a sensitive matter – "the artistry lies in saying what you want to say while allowing the spectator to be touched uniquely by his own life experience. That takes maturity."[25]

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[25] Preston-Dunlop, 23.

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"Ours is not to be a Producer's Theatre, nor an Actor's Theatre; it is to be a Writer's Theatre"

RĂZVAN MUREȘAN[1]

Abstract: Royal Court has forged its reputation of being one of the most influencial companies that discovers, produces and promotes new writing. The history of this company is practically the history of contemporary British theatre. This article follows the start-up period, the `50s and the `60s, when the company built a longstanding identity as a "writers' theatre", through innovative and provoking plays and performances, that often reflect the political, social and cultural climate of the era. The pattern designed by George Devine, the first artistic director of Royal Court, proved to be one of the most outstanding and successful, despite the financial difficulties or the obstructions of the official censorship.

Keywords: Royal Court Theatre, British theatre, contemporary drama, new writing, censure

The British stage after 1945 is dominated by commercial productions, especially light comedies or American musicals, classical revivals or plays written by successful writers, which can satisfy both the economic interests of the theatre owners, and the conservatism of the British audience. "Any show which does not reveal immediate signs of a long run is whipped off at once. The twin mottoes of the London Theatre are: long run or sudden death."[2] In the `50 Shakespeare is a very actual playwright and very often a "vehicle" through which the stars of the stage show their abilities in acting.

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[1] *Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babeș-Bolyai University, razvanmuresan@yahoo.com*

[2] Philip Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14.

A good example in this respect is 1951, the year of the *Festival of Britain*, when on the stage could be seen important productions such as: *Richard II*, with Michael Redgrave, *Henry IV* with Richard Burton, *Hamlet* with Alec Guinness, *Othello* with Orson Welles, *Antony and Cleopatra*, with Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier or *The Winter's Tale* with John Gielgud[3]. Such an offer, supported by an impressive gallery of great actors, could only create the impression of a theatre in one of its best moments. The great playwright, synonymous with British theatrical tradition and a consistent part of the national identity, has been a constant presence for centuries, but as many voices have noticed, the obsesive revival on such a large scale (in 1953 an English critic commented 24 premieres of Shakespeare's plays on London stages)[4], hides in fact a pitching, an obsolete theatrical system, where Shakespeare is "both the glory and the curse of British theatre"[5]. He is a convenient refuge, that hides the failure of producing new drama, but "a nation's drama cannot be fully alive unless it is being continually created"[6]. In the terms proposed by Peter Brook, he was "deadly theatre".

In the early '50, George Devine was a well known personality in London's theatrical realm and had gained over twenty years of experience as a pedagogues, actor and director. He had studied acting either from Russian perspective with Fyodor Komissarzhevsky[7], and from the French one with Michel Saint-Denis[8] and had worked with British stage personalities such as John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier or Peggy Ashcroft. He had also participated at the Old Vic project, the first post-war attempt to set up a permanent company, and at the same time, the starting point for the future National Theatre. These experiences made him convinced of the necessity of profound reforms, because "the urgent need of our time is to discover a truly contemporary style"[9], meaning a place "where contemporary playwrights may express themselves more freely and frequently than is possible under commercial conditions"[10]. For Devine, the new writing is the only way through which theatre can stay vital. This is the principle that he would never give up and on which the consistent searches of the next period are based on.

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[3] Robert Tanitch, *London Stage in the 20th Century* (London: Haus Publishing, 2007), 150–51.

[4] Dominic Shellard, *British Theatre Since the War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 32.

[5] Michael Billington, *State of the Nation. British Theatre Since 1945* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007), 51.

[6] Billington, 51.

[7] Fyodor Komissarzhevsky (1882-1954), director and stage designer. He worked from 1906 to 1908 with Meyerhold and Evreinov, and in the 20s and 30s he moved to London where he directed especially Chekhov and Shakespeare, performances considered "revolutionary".

[8] Michel Saint-Denis (1897-1971), actor, director and pedagogue. He studied theatre guided by Jacques Copeau, his uncle, at Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier. In the 30s , he sets up London Theatre Studio, and after war Old Vic School, two important moments for Bristish theatrical pedagogy. In 1962, he joins Royal Shakespeare Company as a director, respectively adviser and sets up an experimental theatre studio.

His approach seemed almost impossible to be accomplished at that time, but some meetings and coincidences would become salutary. Firstly, in 1952, a young producer convinced him to take part in a TV production by BBC. This the beginning of the friendship with Tony Richardson, the one who, although not having connections with the theatre, joined him in this adventurous project: "a radical new theatre company, the objective of which was to get writers, writers of serious pretensions, back into the theatre"[11]. The attempts of the both of them to find a place and financial support to cover the initial costs, failed one by one, until 1954, when he is asked to become the artistic director at English Stage Company. This newly established company, took over an old Victorian theatre, Royal Court, with the purpose of promoting and producing non-commercial plays. Although, in the meantime, he had received the offer to take over the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Devine would choose to risk with the new company, after he had managed to assess to the managers a first schedule for the new season, where three of the eight productions would be original plays written by British playwrights. For Devine the first season was a crucial moment for setting a coherent and clear repertoire policy tending the new drama, in spite of the artistic council that was rather cautious and not so willing to give credit to unknown playwrights. There come divergences of opinions, intense disputes that will persist for a long time from now on, in the game being the status of the artistic director, his role, his importance, and his limitations in the hierarchy of the company. His way will be a sinuous one, but he will gain more and more freedom of action and, since 1961, the full control of artistic strategy. First of all, Devine organizes auditions, selects twenty-two actors, most young people, appoints Richardson as associate artistic director, and releases a dramaturgy contest. Of the 750 texts recieved[12] only one attacts his attention, *Look Back in Anger,* written by a young actor, aged 27, named John Osborne. Although the artistic council was not entirely convinced ("it was thought to be a very promising find, although a difficult play to swallow"[13]), this play was to be the third production of the season.

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[9] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage*, 9.

[10] Roberts, 10.

[11] Tony Richardson, *Long Distance Runner – A Memoir* (London: Faber & Faber, 1993), 60.

Even from the rise of the curtain, the audience are having a shock: the deplorable image of a cramped room, cluttered objects, and three young men in ordinary costumes in everyday life. A toneless microcosmos whose mark is the ironing table, near which Alison spends much time in the first act of the play, an activity which afterwards comes into Helena's interest as well. Probably the next shock for the audience was to hear Jimmy Porter speaking, strident, irreverent and with a non-BBC accent. Almost nothing escapes his attacks: "the official" attitude, the passivity of people (including his own), taboo topics, like the church and homosexuality, anguish induced by a possible nuclear war, vulgarity or preciousness in media. The play is not just a domestic drama, but rather a radiography of the moment that captures the spirit of the era and the division of the British society in the 1950s: workers and the upper class, americanization and tradition, new *Welfare State* universities and traditional universities (Oxford), jazz and classical music. In the end, this divison was found in journalists' reactions, from the most hostile ones, to the extremly favourable ones. Jimmy Porter "was a character who should have gone to a psychiatrist rather than have come to a dramatist"[14]. "Osborne was a good dramatist who had somehow written the wrong play"[15]. On the other side, the influential journalists Harold Hobson and Kenneth Tynan express without reservation, even passionately, the admiration for the production at the Royal Court: "a minor miracle", "that rarest of dramatic phenomena, the act of original creation", "I doubt if I could love anyone who did not wish to see *Look Back in Anger*"[16]. Despite these positive signals, the adherence to the public was initially low, and only six months later, when the BBC presented an 18-minute fragment, the interest started to increase[17]. The theatre began to be assaulted by young people, who through their behaviour suggested that they were for the first time in such a place[18]. They found themselves in Jimmy, the new "rebel without a cause", in his revolt, in his anger, in his anarchic accents, in his dispair, and, ulimately, in his passivity. Massive mediatization released a phenomenon of unprecedented magnitude in the history of British theatre, opening the way for a whole generation of playwrights who bring on stage realities and tensions latent before that. It was an impulse for young people not only to come to the theatre, but also to write for the theatre and "Jimmy himself quickly became a dramatic archetype to be copied and emulated"[19].

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[12] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage*, 47.

[13] Roberts, 33.

[14] Gibbs, Patrick, *A Study of an Exhibitionist*, Daily Telegraph, 09.05.1956, *apud* Shellard, British Theatre Since the War, 53.

[15] Wilson, Colin, *This actor is a great writer*, Daily Mail, 09.05.1956, *apud* Shellard, British Theatre Since the War, 53.

The distinctive mark of this new direction is rebellion, questioning established myths and the *establishment*. The prototype launched by *Look Back in Anger* is continued in more radical formulas by John Arden, Joe Orton, Arnold Wesker, or Shelagh Delaney (and many others, known as *kitchen sink drama*), and further away by left-wing dramatists in the '70. "The anger" brought on stage by Osborne is transferred beyond the theatre world, becoming omipresent in the newspapers, on the radio and on TV. The phrase "angry young men"[20] will soon be able to gather together filmmakers, novelists, poets and philosophers, although there is no common programme, and most of them decline their belonging to the movement.

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16. Tynan, Kenneth, *The Voice of the Young*, The Observer, 15.05.1956 Shellard, British Theatre Since the War, 55-56.
17. Estimated audience was five million viewers; Shellard, British Theatre Since the War, 56.
18. Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage*, 49.
19. Billington M., *op.cit.* p. 99.
20. The media officer from Royal Court, dissatisfied with the play, would have told Osborne: "I think that you really are an angry young man". Subsequently the expression was used in promotional materials and then taken over in the media. V. John Osborne, Almost a Gentleman: An Autobiography, 1955-1956 (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), 20.

Look Back in Anger is still one of the most controvesial plays, its importance and its qualities are always analyzed and nuanced, although it is almost unanimous that May 8, 1956, the date of the opening night, is the moment that separates two eras into the British theatre. Even if the play is traditional in its structure, its mesage and its energy are different from everything written before. But the great change that Osborne brings is the language, exuberant and lacking of artificialism, a legacy that will help young playwrights get out of monotony and sterility. As he himself admits, the play was "a formal, rather old-fashioned play"[21] and for that reason it has not left such deep marks in modern drama as the plays written by Brecht, Ionesco or Beckett. But, Aleks Sierz says, that it is "the foundation myth of the Royal Court theatre and British new writing in general […] also represented the revenge of English naturalism on European experimentalism."[22]

The May 8 1956 moment will not immediately produce major changes in British theatre and in particular at the Royal Court. Clearly the company did not have a constant audience in the first seasons, and the funding from the Arts Council, although rising from year to year, was at a low level[23]. The repertory theatre formula will be abandoned in favour of a model based on exploring a show as long as it is effective in terms of tickets sales. It will often work under conditions of financial uncertainty, some shows producing considerable losses, while others are profitable and, as Devine says, "the new contemporary theatre was saved by a classical revival"[24]. Opening towards commercial theatres in West End is inevitable, as transfers provide to be a true "breath of fresh air" for the company and in the meantime assures some extra visibility, how equally necessary is sometimes working with famous actors for some shows, a concession that Devine explains: "We tried a series of star productions to fill in the gaps and make money. They didn't always work, and we were said to be betraying our cause, although we never declared an

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21. Billington, *State of the Nation. British Theatre Since 1945*, 102.
22. Aleks Sierz, *John Osborne's Look Back in Anger* (London: A&C Black, 2008), 6.
23. In the late 50s, funding from Arts Council was approximately 7-8 % from the total income obtained by selling tickets.
24. *Apud* Lacey, S., *British Realist Theatre: The New Wave in its Context 1956-1965*, London and New York, Routledge, 1995, p. 75.

anti-star policy at the beginning [but] it seemed implicit in our attitude. These misunderstandings always occur when you are dealing with idealists"[25].

Designing a programme that would ensure the financial balance, implicitly the survival of the company, while preserving its identity was the great challenge for Devine. New plays usually attracted higher costs, while a diversity of productions was difficult considering the limited number of permanent actors. Despite these limitations, Royal Court is at this moment the main, if not the only, theatre in the UK where new playwrights and innovative dramaturgy on the continent can find a place of expression. After Brecht (*The Good Person of Setzuan* having the opening night at the end of 1956), in the second year of existence, the company proposes Beckett, Giradoux, Ionesco and Sartre, a substantial and risky step as well:

> When we had a success with the Osborne, I said I am not going to pursue that line exclusively. I am going to introduce this other line, the line of Beckett and Ionesco and all that, because I believe that the truth lies somewhere between these two points. […] From the audience's point of view, it is not so easy because... one minute it is Beckett, the next minute it is Osborne, the next Arden, then Jellicoe, then Brecht... In fact, the two major events that have transformed the British theatre in my opinion were the production of Waiting for Godot in 1955 and the production of Look Back in Anger in 1956. These are what I call the two lines... these were the two main influences [which] changed the face of the theatre.[26]

Due to some circumstances, Beckett would be on the stage of Royal Court earlier than Devine predicted. The two had already been talking about translating in English and putting on stage *Fin de partie*, play which was at that time in rehearsals in Paris directed by Roger Blin. The Théâtre de l'Œuvre, where the opening night was about to take place, suddenly withdraws its commitment, so Devine proposes the transfer of production to the Royal Court and undertakes to cover all the necessary costs. The event in London, in April

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[25] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage*, 60.

[26] Roberts, 56.

1957 – six performances in French (in *coupé* with *Acte sans paroles*) - is the beginning of a unique collaboration in the history of British theatre. “The Royal Court was the home of Beckett”[27], the place where thirteen of his plays will be performed, including three world premieres (*Krapp's Last Tape* in 1958, *That Time* and *Footfalls*, both of them in 1976) and from where his sober, iconoclastic and poetic aesthetics will constantly diffuse in the next decades. “Over his career in the theatre Beckett would be extraordinarily fortunate to find producers and directors who have respect for the writer: Roger Blin in Paris, Alan Schneider in the United States, and, perhaps chief among them, George Devine in the UK”[28].

Endgame, the English version, needed a long time for being translated and for getting the censors' license. The translation was made by Beckett himself, but even under these circumstances he was reserved for the outcome: ”the French is at least 20% undecantable into English and will forfeit that much of whatever edge and tension it may have”[29]. Much more complicated seemed to be the interaction with Lord Chamberlain's office, who at that time was known for mutilating the first play, *Waiting for Godot*, in 1955. If he did not have any objections for the French version, instead, some parts of the translation were considered “blasphemy” and less offensive equivalences were required. Beckett agreed to make only partial changes, and so, for six months negotiations were held, but the outcome would ultimately be in favour of the censors. An intensely disputed subject was the scene in which Hamm, Clov, and Nagg were praying, then gave up, where the line “He doesn't exist. The bastard!” was replaced by a more inoffensive one: “He doesn't exist. The Swine!”[30].

Devine's interest in European avant-garde drama is also confirmed by the presence of Eugène Ionesco's plays on the stage of Royal Court, starting with *The Chairs* in 1957, then in the next years *The Lesson*, *Rhinoceros* (directed by Orson Welles, with Laurence Olivier playing Bérenger), *Jacques or The Submission* and *Exit the King*. The two exponential voices of the theatre of the absurd would not bring commercial success (ticket sales did not exceed an average of 30% of the total capacity)[31], but in turn, they would generate a more visible interest for experiment in British drama. We also mention that in nine years, Devine managed to produce more than forty foreign plays[32], mostly playwrights from Europe, and this significant and constant infusion contributes to revitalizing the theatre with new themes and forms. *The Times* noted the unique place that Royal Court had won among theatres in London: "a steady output of sophisticated cosmopolitan drama and pilot staging of work by home authors of promise"[33].

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[27] Gresdna Doty and Billy Harbin, *Inside the Royal Court Theatre. 1956 - 1981: Artist's Talk* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 208.

[28] David Tucker and Trish McTighe, eds., *Staging Beckett in Great Britain* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016), 41.

[29] Tucker and McTighe, 40.

[30] Terry Browne, *Playwrights' Theatre: The English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre* (London: Pitman, 1975), 58.

The other direction that Devine had set in his programme, to encourage and produce new dramaturgy, was and would remain the first mission of the Royal Court, named in a statement that would make history: "ours is not to be a producer's theatre, nor an actor's theatre; it is to be a writer's theatre"[34]. So that, he tried to create a supportive environment and to develop an infrastructure to attract and train young talents. He began by organizing lectures, followed by discussions, to which were invited both the internals of the company and the members of the English Stage Society - the club of the theatre supporters. The very large number of unsolicited plays that the theatre received, many of them not suitable, required the organization of a department to analyze these texts and to manage the programme for lectures.

An important step was to propose that the new plays, that hadn't been put on stage before and considered "risky", to be produced with a minimum of costs "in a simple way without scenery"[35]. They had the chance to reach the audience, to be tested and eventually to be transferred to the programme of the theatre, but they were also a good occasion for playwrights and directors to improve their style and to experiment. Such shows, called *The Sunday Night Productions*, benefited from the financial support of the English Stage Society members and, in addition, only addressed to them, they did not require a license from Lord Chamberlain. Some of those who made their debut that way were playwrights as Ann Jellicoe, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, but also Lindsay Anderson, John Dexter, William Gaskill or Anthony Page, important names for British theatre directing.

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[31] John Elsom, *Cold War Theatre* (Waltham: Focal Press, 2016), 61.

[32] Elaine Aston and Mark O'Thomas, *Royal Court: International* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 7.

[33] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage*, 64.

[34] David Pattie, ed., *Modern British Playwriting: The 1950s: Voices, Documents, New Interpretations* (London: Methuen Drama, 2012), 59.

[35] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre and the Modern Stage*, 58.

"A characteristic of vital theatres was that they all had a dramatist or a group of dramatists attached to them"[36], said Devine. He was also convinced that the education and training of all those involved in producing the show are essential for a theatre to develop. In the light of this and as an extension of the "non-setting productions ", he founded in 1958, *The Writers' Group*, practically a "school" for playwrights from Royal Court. It has evolved from group discussions, to dramatic writing and improvisation workshops, animated by Keith Johnstone[37], mime classes led by William Gaskill (Étienne Decroux's student[38]) or those of moving and using mask coordinated by Devine. They come to improve playwrights' training, but they are also informally important because they stimulates creativity and cooperation within the group. In the words of Ann Jellicoe: "Everyone appreciated the talent of the other and encouraged him, although it is said that this is so rare among the writers. The meetings were fun and never boring. […] Everyone shared the idea of a direct theatre - a theatre of action and images rather than one of words."[39] The existence of this group also shows the fact that from this moment on, the theatre has an increasingly important role in the process of creating the dramatic text, of searching for new voices, and in producing and promoting of the final result. Existing plays are less used, in favour of new plays written by associatted playwrights (employees or residents), but also by those outside

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36. Philip Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre 1965-72* (London: Routledge, 1986), 10.
37. Keith Johnstone (b. 1933), actor, director, pedagogue, one of the most important practitioners and theorists of improvisational theatre,the creator of Impro system and Theatresports.
38. Étienne Decroux is considered "the father of modern mime". Some of his students are Jean-Louis Barrault and Marcel Marceau.
39. Richard Findlater, ed., *25 Years of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court* (Derbyshire: Amber Lane Press, 1981), 55.

the theatre, alongside the increasing interest in collective work. Royal Court becomes a complex institution, both a performative space and a "training field" where the playwright occupies a privileged place. This "cult" for the author, or at least for the dramatic text, is expressed by the directors of the theatre, such as William Gaskill: "we were constantly fixed on the idea of the play and that nothing should interfere with the play, nothing should make a statement beyond the play, and the design was always at the service of the play"[40]. The director does not try to bring on stage a personal aesthetics, but the show that somehow the play itself bears, "what is important is not the 'sort of theatre' - but the PLAY" (Linday Anderson)[41].

However, as British theatre commentators point out[42], a great gain brought by Royal Court comes from an aesthetic point of view. Due to the stage designers and directors, the visual puritanism promoted by Devine's theatre gradually becomes deeper and deeper and undermines decorative excesses specific for West End. If we take into account the fact that John Dexter and William Gaskill will be Olivier's assistants at the future National Theatre and that a whole generation of actors trained at Royal Court will follow them here, we will have at least partially the dimension of this influence.

In an essay about theatre in 1955, Devine set the visual aesthetics he intended to follow: "What is needed, however, is not adaptability, or a synthesis of the past but for the theatre to create a new milieu in modern terms which will be a completely fresh restatement of the old traditions. […] The stage must have space and air and freedom"[43]. The stylization of the stage design, that he brings at Royal Court and that will be a landmark for the shows, mostly in the 5th decade, has its roots in the theories of Copeau and Craig, about the acting place purged of ornamentation and illusionist conventions. As a matter of fact, he had always kept in touch with Craig through a steady correspondence and numerous visits to France, Craig being a guiding mark and a shadow advisor. From here, he acquired the idea of a simplified, practical and yet elegant stage device in which light and colour are indispensable plastic elements, a conception that at that time had few supporters in the British theatre.

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[40] Doty and Harbin, *Inside the Royal Court Theatre. 1956 - 1981: Artist's Talk*, 185.

[41] Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London: Routledge, 1999), 87.

[42] V. Billington, *State of the Nation. British Theatre Since 1945*, 119–20; Shellard, *British Theatre Since the War*, 81.

[43] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre 1965-72*, 24.

Materializing these ideas and developing them into a new, distinct formula is due to Jocelyn Herbert, considered "the most influential figure in the new theatre, and the first British scenographer"[44]. She made her debut in 1957 with the scenography of the show *The Chairs*, and next year, with *Endgame*, she begins a lasting and extremely fertile collaboration with Beckett. The minimalism of the text was undoubtedly in conjunction with the stage purism promoted by her: "when you have a bare stage it's very beautiful, like a bare canvas. You put one thing on it and it changes the entire dimensions. One chair and you have all sorts of possibilities."[45] She used textures and layers, combinations of curved and straight lines, angles, diagonals, which produced distortions of space and forms, somewhat in the direction of cubism in the Fine Arts. Herbert was interested in highlighting the actor's performance, she disliked the decorations, and eliminated any unnecessary details. She tried to bring the equivalent of poetic realism on the stage, which proved to be a perfect counterpoint to Wesker, Arden, or Osborne's plays. The impact, visual in the first place, produced by the shows from Berliner Ensemble, is also seen at Royal Court in the feeling of authenticity transmitted by materials, objects and costumes or by integrating in the stage design, light devices or stage installations. As Herbert herself says: "Brecht was a very large influence on all of us – my generation – visually and in general staging… the idea that you didn't have to hide anything, didn't pretend you were somewhere you weren't, and yet you created a visual image that was interesting and exciting, evocative of something."[46]

In 1965, Devine gave up being artistic director due to some health problems: "the weight of this edifice has driven me into the ground up to my neck, like poor Winnie in "*Happy Days*"[47]. He managed to make Royal Court a vital theatre for the new dramaturgy, he discovered and promoted young playwrights, who have an important place in the history of British theatre, he provided new, urgent, challenging and risky plays to the audience, he was the mentor of a generation and a visionary leader. Devine's term is impressive: 145 shows and 87 productions without setting - *Sunday Nights* – of which, 126 belong to contemporary British authors.

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[44] Pamela Howard, *What Is Scenography?* (London: Routledge, 2001), 64.

[45] Jarka M. Burian, "Contemporary British Stage Design: Three Representative Scenographers," *Theatre Journal* 35, no. 2 (May 1983): 215, https://doi.org/10.2307/3207150.

[46] Burian, 216.

[47] Burian, 100.

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Devine's successor, proposed by him, will be for the next seven years William Gaskill, a product of the Royal Court, the fervent defender of the new drama and "a fighter who always stayed loyal to the writers in whom he passionately believed"[48]. These qualities will prove to be essential for the theatre in an extremely difficult period characterized by permanent financial crises, internal tensions and much more pronounced competition from the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theater. From the very beginning, Gaskill appeared willing to give credit to wholly unknown authors, saying that he had to keep the position of a theatre "where you can take risks in a way that big companies cannot afford". Such an author was Edward Bond, one of the members of *The Writers' Group*, whose play, *Saved*, would have its opening night in November 1965. As in Devine's case, the third production of the season will generate violent reactions in media and among the audience, and later it will be considered a major landmark in the history of British theatre, being decisive in the process of abolishing censorship. Royal Court had at that time a rich experience with Lord Chamberlain's office, "the most undemocratic institution in our public life […] this antiquated absurdity"[49], as Devine publicly stated. The license for Wedekind's play, *Spring Awakening*, was obtained only after two scenes had been cut, but subsequently received "two warnings about kissing between boys"[50]. For *Meals on Wheels* by Charles Wood, the censors had to request a revised copy of the text, because the pages had become unreadable due to numerous observations and corrections[51]. *A Patriot for Me* was considered too provocative and important changes were required but the author, John Osborne, refused to make any. In their report, the censors said that ″this is a serious but not a good play about homosexuality″[52], the objections being mainly: the travestite ball and a deliberately provocative way of Osborne's tone (″he almost never misses a chance to be offensive″[53]) and the many licentious details which might ″corrupt″ the audience. The only possible option was that the play was acted in club conditions, although officials had expressed their disagreement with this subterfuge at the limit of legality. It will be awarded for Best Play of the Year, and it will also have an important success among the audience: ″in eight weeks 25,000 or 30,000 people saw *A Patriot for Me* and they went through this elaborate farce of becoming members″[54].

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[48] Michael Billington, "William Gaskill: A Fighter Who Stayed Loyal to His Writers," *The Guardian*, 2016.

[49] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre 1965-72*, 102.

[50] Ibidem.

For Bond's play the situation is similar: the text was rejected and more than 50 changes were required[55], including the cutting of a scene, considered the most violent, in which a group of young people kill with stones a baby. ″It was a revolting amateur play by one of those dramatists who write as it comes to them out of a heightened image of their experience″[56], was mentioned in the censor's report for the Lord Chamberlain. Bond refused any compromise, so this time again the show was played as club theatre. Gaskill and other members of the company's management were brought to trail for breaking the law, by putting on stage a play without license, and more precisely because a person (in fact an official observer) was allowed to have access to the club without being a member of the club. The case ended with a penalty, but it turned out to be an important moral victory for the Royal Court and at the same time the beginning of an intense campaign in media and also in the parliament to amend the law of the theatres.

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51. Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre 1965-72*, 103.
52. Shellard, *British Theatre Since the War*, 139.
53. David Thomas, David Carlton, and Anne Etienne, *Theatre Censorship: From Walpole to Wilson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 183.
54. Thomas, Carlton, and Etienne, 183.
55. Thomas, Carlton, and Etienne, 144.
56. Ibidem.

Bond's next play, *Early Morning*, was rejected without any further observation, the reason being however transparent and predictable: Queen Victoria was presented as being in a relationship with another woman. At that time, the legislative initiative was blocked in Parliament, and the Arts Council threatened to withdraw funding if Lord Chamberlain's requests were violated, so some of the leading members of the company did not agree with performing the show as club theatre, as there was the risk of new sanctions. Gaskill refused to give up, and eventually the play would be performed twice in the presence of a restricted audience and of the media. They were called "dress rehearsals with audience", that is why police investigations failed. *Early Morning* was the last play to be banned, because after six months, in September 28th, 1968, the new law that eliminates censorship was approved.

The effects of this liberalization are seen very soon through a significant increase of theatrical initiatives, stimulated by far more consistent funding provided by the Arts Council. It "looks like a golden age: an equivalent to the first Elizabethan era in which a wealth of new writing was accompanied by a prodigious amount of theatre building and a quest for new expressive forms"[57]. The independent theatre (*fringe*) gains a more and more visible position and becomes a counter-culture and Royal Court seeks to connect to this phenomenon, primarily through the small studio called Theatre Upstaires, a space for young writers and experiments. The *fringe* spirit of the collective writing is found in eclectic performances created by juxtapositions of various style, as *The Enoch Show* (1969), based on a text created by nine writers, directors and journalists or the productions made together with Portable Theatre, *Lay By* (1971) and *England's Ireland* (1972), both written by seven authors. This place attracts young playwrights who often come from the alternative theatre and it will be the meeting point with the experimental American theatre represented by Open Theatre and Bread and Puppet Theatre.

A much more difficult period will be in the 1980s when due to a substantial cuts in funding, Royal Court dramatically adjusts its programme to avoid bankruptcy: if in the previous decade there were eight or nine shows in each studio, now their number is reduced to half. In 1989, for financial reasons, the Theatre Upstairs will stop its activity for a six-month period, although somewhat ironically, the report of that year published by the Arts Council stated that the Royal Court is "the major new writing theatre in the country."[58] To partially counterbalance the closure of the studio, the artistic director Max Stafford-Clark will adopt a lecture-shows strategy and will also work with the Methuen Publishing House to edit a series of new texts. Even under these circumstances, Royal Court succeeded in promoting an entire generation of playwrights, including Jim Cartwright, Caryl Churchill, Sarah Daniels, Timberlake Wertenbaker and "it was the first theatre to realize that there were women out there who could write and that there was an audience for those women."[59]

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[57] Billington, *State of the Nation. British Theatre Since 1945*, 162.

In the mid-90s, a new wave of radical playwrights revive the energy of "angry young men", proposing powerful, uncomfortable plays and innovative dramatic formulas: Martin Crimp, Sarah Kane, Anthony Neilson, Mark Ravenhill, Martin McDonagh and Jez Butterworth are just a few of them. For Royal Court begins a new era, a dinamic and complex one, an era of expansion unapproached in the previous decades. In a relatively short term, between 1992 and 1998, the artistic director Stephen Daldry manages to produce an impressive number of new plays, he grows considerably the offer of residences for native and foreign playwrights, he relaunches the idea of international repertoire and having a considerable financial support from Arts Council[60], fully reconstructs the infrastructure of the theatre.

The success of the company is the direct result of an active involvement in searching, training and promoting the new authors, a consistent approach that has always been a priority: "The Royal Court has always understood that writers are born *and* made"[61]. The plays that come to the stage are most

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58. D. Keith Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre: British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 188.
59. Peacock, 189.
60. The Arts Council grant of £ 18.8 million was conditioned by obtaining a £ 7 million in co-financing from other sources.
61. Kate Kellaway, "Royal Court Theatre Prepares to Bid Farewell to King Dominic," *The Guardian*, 2013.

often created in the theatre laboratory - *Writers' Group* - and extremely rarely they are chosen from those that the theatre receives from outside[62]. Future playwrights are attracted through the programme *Young Court* for young people, under 21 and promoted during some events like *Young Writers' Festival* or *Open Court*, "a six-week festival of drama, ideas and events chosen and suggested by a group of more than 140 writers"[63], including performances, lectures, discussions and dramatic writing workshops such as "Six New Plays in Six Weeks".

No other company has so much influenced contemporary British theatre, as the Royal Court has done since its set-up until today: the "revolution" in 1956, the "war" with the censorship in the 1960s or the "revival" at the end of twentieth century, are key moments to which it has contributed decisively. In more than six decades of activity it has confirmed that it is the most important producer of new drama, moreover it has transformed it into an industry where artistic and economic criteria are not always irreconcilable. Even though it has gone through difficult times, the Royal Court has remained essentially the theatre of George Devine, a theatre that takes risks and protects the artist's "the right to fail."[64]

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[62] According to the company's website, the literary secretariat receives more than 3,500 unsolicited texts each year, http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/playwriting/

[63] http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/season/open-court-festival

[64] Roberts, *The Royal Court Theatre 1965-72*, 10.

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The Socio-Political Implications of the 20th Century Narratives on Indian Dances

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Abstract: From mentions of dance in treatises as old as 2nd century to regional variations around 13th century to the 20th century - dance has travelled, traversed and evolved. When the agenda of Nationalism was in vogue during pre and post-independence periods, there was a necessity to produce something unique to the nation and make a point about its rich heritage. Dance was one effective medium that served as a cultural symbol. This very notion modified the course of dance, its form and structure. The ancient practices were modified and tailor-made to suit agendas of the time and popular choices. This paper attempts to understand this phenomenon of how the socio-political ideologies have affected the Indian classical dances. The focus would be on the political affiliations specific to the Kūcipūḍi form of dance.

Key Words: Classical, Kūcipūḍi, Nationalism, Culture, Tradition, Identity

Introduction

There are mentions of dancing traditions in India in texts, treatises and epics as old as 4th century, especially in Sanskrit. Around the 13th century manuscripts and manuals were available in regional languages. Later foreign invasions on the nation have had a major impact on arts. Important amongst those is the Colonial chapter. One of the oft-repeated yet crucial in the history of Indian arts is the Nationalist period, wherein arts were revived or re-structured.

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As Kapila Vatsyayan expresses about the British rule- that had the most profound and complex implications on the ecosystem of nation "The generation which went to the schools and colleges founded by the British in India in the 19th century, was thus isolated from the art traditions of the country."[2]

Ahistorical perceptions due to colonization was prevalent and Indian arts were portrayed as being esoteric or in a precarious position[3]. Are we still dwelling in the colonial or post-colonial sensibilities in looking at an art that is rooted in a different cultural entity? Arts are but products of contemporary circumstances, they reflect the societal tastes, accumulated palates and collective experiences. While there are many faces and facets for the Colonial-Nationalist debate, select aspects are considered for the study on dance. Major revolutions in arts sphere came up during the Nationalist period (late 1800s to post independence). It is important to understand few standpoints of that time[4]:

- To project Indian-ness in terms of culture, something unique, ancient and continuous.
- Appealing to Western sensibilities yet rooted in Indian culture – A conscious attempt to redefine and receive a global recognition.
- Religious and Political affiliations.
- Growth of a dominant elite section of people who exerted influence on different spheres of life.

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[2] Kapila Vatsyayan, *Indian Classical Dance*, Revised ed (New Delhi: Publications Division, 2015), 7.

[3] Idea substantiated in: Nandikesvara, *The Mirror of Gesture. Being the Abhinaya Darpana of Nandikesvara*, trans. Ananda Coomaraswamy and Gopala Krishnayya Duggirala (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 12.

[4] See John Zavos, *Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000); John McLead, *Beginning Postcolonialism.* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2010).

Dance as cultural symbol:

> *National identity is a form of identification with representations of shared experiences and history. These are told through stories, literature, popular culture and media.*[5]

During the Nationalist period, a necessity to produce something unique of the nation and make a point about its rich heritage sprung up. An Indian identity had to be established. There are two ways of showcasing, one being the materialistic – as in the fabric, food, etc., and the other being the visible yet intangible heritage.

Dance acted as one those- an imaginative credential marker of a state. Nationalist ideologies were spread by taking religious oriented forms like dance. The whole concept of Nationalism is itself based on religion- Hinduism in this case and dance certainly being religious based was thus a natural preference for propaganda[6]. The history is shrouded by the nationalist narrative be it the case of Sadir transforming to Bharatanāṭyaṁ or the Classical status aspired by all forms of dances. Scholars like Davesh Soneji comment that the "social history" is sidelined and all that remains widespread is the fabricated history[7]. "…Nationalism arose by laying its claim on revived traditions, by appropriating classical texts and traditions of science as the heritage of the nation."[8]

Sanskritisation was another fragment of the Nationalist agenda[9]. Everything had to be associated with a pan Indian, Sanskrit connotation - Sanskrit being the bandwagon of the elite. Davesh opines cultural nationalism is about the upper class and upper caste[10]. The subaltern voices were pushed down. The whole notion of classical itself is a nationalist project. While there is no exact translation for "Classical" in Indian languages, *śāstrīya* comes close - it means adherence to *śāstra* - treatises. Earlier while *mārgi* and *deśi* were mentioned in treatises there was nothing called classical[11]. The hereditary arts were slanted to become founded on Sanskrit treatises.

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[5] Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 253.

[6] Zavos, *Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India*, 213.

[7] Davesh Soneji (Scholar), in discussion with the author, February 2019.

[8] Matthew Harp Allen, "Standardize, Classicize, and Nationalize: The Scientific Work of the Music Academy of Madras, 1930-53," in *Performing Pasts*, ed. Indira Viswanathan Peterson and Davesh Soneji (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 90.

[9] On Sanskritization, see Milton Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 261.

The first argument or the case for 'Classical' arose when the states of India were divided on linguistic basis post- independence. The separation of states itself is perceptibly due to political reasons. A broad definition in this case suggests that the dance styles following Natyasastra are identified as classical. While the nation as a whole sought for an identity- the states pursued at the subsequent level. So, on one hand the state is built on nation and at the other end of the spectrum it is grounded on the international realigning of thoughts occurring at that period.

"Inspired by the enlightenment project of modernism, the revivalists looking for cultural roots or heritage were involved in the fundamental project of nation-building."[12]

The concepts of Hinduism, Nationalism and the whole gamut of being was as per the Orientalist perceptions[13]. While the western model or specifically British model of education altered the ethos and understanding of Indian culture, it is the same education that stirred and modelled the thought processes. A need to systemize everything and a spiritual association was evident. This is best demonstrated in the case of Sadir where the authentic *śṛṇgāra* (the sentiment of erotic/love) based content is majorly replaced with *bhakti* (devotion) dominant matter in its later day rechristened version- Bharatanāṭyaṁ.

As Tapati Guha Thakurta (1992) asserts the colonial intrusion in arts sphere transformed the training and patronage patterns; Colonialism imposed and Nationalism appropriated and resulted in emergence of a legitimate National art. While she writes that about art, the same can be adapted to dances.

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[10] Davesh Soneji (Scholar), in discussion with the author, February 2019.

[11] *mārgi* could be understood as the high and idealized path, with a definite structure whereas *deśi* is the provincial, probably adapting the *mārga* procedures into established regional practices.

[12] Chandreyee Niyogi, *Reorienting Orientalism* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2006), 91.

[13] Zavos, *Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India.*

"The revivalist and reconstructive movement of Indian classical dance cannot be viewed outside the context of the formation of national ideology in India."[14]

The first jolt to the Indian dances was removing its identity from the actual torchbearers of the form- the *devadāsi*s and alienating the social history[15]. This phase of re-scripting history resulted in attaining at what are accepted as Dialogical truths[16].

Kūcipūḍi and Politics:

> *Kuchipudi dance form, both in its origins and its transformation over the last 100 years, is embedded in the socio-cultural milieu of the Andhra region and in the larger politico-cultural context of the Indian performing arts.* [17]

While the nationalist ideological implications are more pronounced, articulate and oft-spoken about in the legend of Bharatanāṭyaṁ[18], it is at another level and sort in the case of Kūcipūḍi. Kūcipūḍi, a now recognized Classical dance of India, shares the name from the village it hails- Kuchipudi located in the present-day Andhra Pradesh. It was practiced by itinerant Brahmin troupes who staged theatrical plays called the *kalāpam*s and *yakṣagāna*s from the acknowledged history.

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14. Pallabi Chakravorty, "From Interculturalism to Historicism: Reflections on Classical Indian Dance," *Dance Research Journal* 32, no. 2 (2000): 110, https://doi.org/10.2307/1477983.
15. *devadāsi* literally means god's servant. The *devadāsi*s were in service of God, dedicated to temples.
16. Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction - Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2002), 76.
17. Rajyalakshmi Seth, "Development of Kuchipudi Dance in the Context of 20th Century Dance Renaissance in India," *Research Process 2*, no. 1 (2014): 62.
18. Janet O'Shea, "'Traditional' Indian Dance and the Making of Interpretive Communities," *Asian Theatre Journal* 15, no. 1 (1998): 45, https://doi.org/10.2307/1124098.

Kūcipūḍi practitioners are alleged be socially motivated and included nuggets from the society and current affairs, intelligently weaving into their dialogue and dance in either *kalāpam*s/*yakṣagāna*s that they performed. A popular recorded incident of this is that of the "Machupalli Kaifiyath"[19]. During the 16th century, it was the Vijayanagara rule that prevailed upon the present Andhra region. A local chieftain Sammeta Guruvaraju humiliated women and the ruler was unaware of this. So, the *Bhāgavatar*s danced his atrocities in front of the ruler resulting in the chieftain being punished and thus putting an end to the atrocities. Other than that, during the freedom struggle there are evidences for special productions that came up[20]. Instances of *Bhāgavatar*s staging "Shimla Bhagavatam" about the partition of India and Pakistan and artists involved in the freedom struggle are recorded[21].

The rulers- kings or later day zamindar were the patrons for arts. In fact, the political conditions impacted the art and practitioners so much that post the fall of Vijayanagara empire, few families from Kuchipudi have migrated to Tamil Nadu and the Bhāgavata Mela Nāṭakaṁ is an off-shoot of that tribe[22]. There is no much documented evidence about the circumstances of Kūcipūḍi during British rule, however there are references to the form and its substance in the early 20th century. Post-independence, the newly formed Indian Government has initiated Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) to support and patronize the music and dance. The SNA has organized national seminar in 1958 on dance by when Kūcipūḍi was not recognized as classical.

Many believed, and as a matter of fact Kūcipūḍi was called Kūcipūḍi Bharataṁ[23], that the form was prevalent as a category of Bharatanāṭyaṁ, albeit with differences. However, when Sadir became Bharatanāṭyaṁ and spread wide becoming synonymous as the dance of India, the Kūcipūḍi or Telugu counterparts would've wanted a form to depict them as well. And Kuchipudi being situated in the hotbed of Andhra and the practitioners being learned men as well as from the Brahmin caste, this particular form was given preference as opposed to the many other dance styles practiced by different sects.

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[19] Chinta Ramanatham, "Kuchipudi Natya Charitra Putalu," in *IKDF Special Issue*, ed. T. Udayavarlu (Hyderabad: AP Samskrutika Mandali, 2012), 16–17.

[20] The performers narrating the story of Lord Krishna from the epic *Bhagavatam* were called *Bhāgavatar*s. Kuchipudi Brahmins mostly performed these stories and hence called Kuchipudi *Bhāgavatar*s

[21] Jonnalagadda Anuradha, Kuchipudi (lecture, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India, October 25, 2011)

[22] Bhāgavata Mela Nāṭakaṁ is a theatrical performance based in Melattur, Tamil Nadu similar to Kūcipūḍi.

[23] Rumya S. Putcha, "Between History and Historiography: The Origins of Classical Kuchipudi Dance," *Dance Research Journal* 45, no. 3 (December 25, 2013): 91–110, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767713000260.

> in case of Kuchipudi, changes were partly a response to national pressure and agendas. This was the period when Andhra was slowly developing a separate political identity based on regional linguistic consideration. Kuchipudi became all important symbol of Telugu aspirations for a separate and distinct culture identity. [24]

An interesting anecdote that shows the power play occurred during 1958. Yamini Krishnamurty, a famed dancer was forbidden to perform Kūcipūḍi at the National Science Congress terming that the dance was folk in nature and thus, not eligible. Yamini in correspondence with the then Vice President of India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishna succeeded to perform at the said event in front of the Prime Minister and other dignitaries[25]. Incidents like this would have given exposure to Kūcipūḍi at variant degrees. The following year at another seminar organized by the Andhra Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi, specifically for the purpose of showcasing and getting recognition to Kūcipūḍi, the purpose was achieved.

> Though the stated purpose for the 1959 Seminar was to establish Kuchipudi's Classicism, at its core, this event was primarily an exercise in establishing the authority of Andhra Pradesh and its state-level government organizations.[26]

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24. Seth, "Development of Kuchipudi Dance in the Context of 20th Century Dance Renaissance in India," 68.
25. T. Udayavarlu, "Yamini- Kuchipudi Nrityabhamini, Visvamohini," in *Sujanaranjani-Natyamanjari*, ed. J. Chennaih (Milpitas, CA: University of Silicon Andhra, 2014), 13.
26. Putcha, "Between History and Historiography: The Origins of Classical Kuchipudi Dance."

The Telugu clan needed an image, rather than a genuine bidding for an art to make an impression. The arguments centering around the "classicity" for Kūcipūḍi reinstate the cause for a Telugu identity. Multiple references by regional writers refer to a lack of a special state and thus a distinct representation or identity[27].

What was the pressing need to achieve a classical status? Was it for visibility of a profile by the Telugus, or the benefits derived out of the recognition or probably the respect associated to anything 'classical' then and now! So, the prerequisite was acceptance of state-government and getting legitimized as a classical, upright style. Classical is synonymous to respectable having a history, a structure unlike folk. The truth here is debatable as various scholars have done extensive work on the history have contrasting ideas. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to note that the 'constructed history' of Kūcipūḍi was out of the need of the day- to suit the contemporary sensibilities and to make it legitimate and iconic as a mantle of Telugus[28]. However as late as 1969, there is a lament that Kūcipūḍi dances impact is not realized by government[29]! The form later has received credit and is now spread across the globe. Nevertheless, from being a male-dominated dramatic art it is more practiced as a solo performance by women, irrespective of caste and creed. The reasons for this are multi-dimensional and beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion

While that is about Kūcipūḍi in a specific approach, the *devadāsi* or *kalāvantula* dances - again belonging to the Telugu regions and having vast antiquity were revived by dancer -teachers Nataraja Ramakrishna (called it Āndhra nāṭyaṁ) and Swapna Sundari (named it Vilāsini nāṭyaṁ). Both lay a claim for theirs being authentic, however didn't succeed in attaining a classical status from government. Now that a new state is formed- Telangana after separation from Andhra Pradesh, the same debate appears to resurface with the Andhra's laying a claim for Kūcipūḍi as their dance and Telangana trying to promote Periṇi, a male oriented dance and rebuilt versions of Periṇi lāsyaṁ, a female equivalent of Periṇi[30]. Periṇi lāsyaṁ is under construction, if we may call it so, sewing into a rounded form with elements of classical, as guided by Nataraja Ramakrishna and spearheaded currently by dancer-teacher Kalakrishna. Periṇi is being showcased and promoted extensively as archetypal of Telangana state, though Kūcipūḍi and Bharatanāṭyaṁ lead in terms of practitioners in both the Telugu states. The future of the forms is unpredictable with so many elements being overlapped and borrowed from diverse arts. Ironically, Kūcipūḍi, Bharatanāṭyaṁ, Āndhra nāṭyaṁ, Vilāsini nāṭyaṁ and now Periṇi lāsyaṁ are all under the same canopy and often confused with one another owing to similarities in their origin, movement pattern and primarily being practiced by women of neighboring states-resulting in a shared culture and code. Yet, the overlying inkling to note is the continuous repetitive circle of identity, representation, and claim over a form which actually falls under the larger umbrella of political conjunctions.

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[27] This can be referred to in the multiple issues of Telugu magazine *Natyakala,* published by APSNA.

[28] Aarudhra, "Kuchipudi - the Abode of Dance," in *IKDF Special Issue*, ed. T. Udayavarlu (Hyderabad: AP Samskrutika Mandali, 2012), 16–17.

[29] Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao, "The Dance Tradition in Andhra," in *Kuchipudi Mahotsav '99*, ed. K. Subadra Murthy (Mumbay, 1999), 4.

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[30] A form of regional dance variation that has mentions in 13th century treatise Nritta Ratnavali (written by JayaSenapati), reconstructed by Nataraja Ramakrishna.

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What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?

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Abstract: Starting from the article by Leslie Forster Stevenson, professor at the Department of Philosophy and Anthropology at the University of St Andrews in the UK, entitled *Twelve Conception of Imagination*[2], which lists (without pretending to be exhaustive) twelve of the most used and influential conceptions on imagination, we have succeeded in identifying some of the most important characteristics of scenic talent. The actor or theatre pedagogue can thus use and work with the concept of talent, create creative strategies, develop different stratagems of practice and development, depending on the skills that will be trained.

Key words: creative imagination, intuition, inspiration, prediction, internal elaboration, transposition, invention, internal vision, adjustment, creative personality and individuality, innovation and originality, talent

> *O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I:*
> *Is it not monstrous that this player here,*
> *But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,*
> *Could force his soul so to his own conceit*
> *That from her working all his visage wann'd,*
> *Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,*
> *A broken voice, and his whole function suiting*
> *With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!*

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[2] Leslie Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 43, no. 3 (July 1, 2003): 238–59, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjaesthetics/43.3.238.

For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba
That he should weep for her?[3]

What's Hecuba to un actor? Inspiration or prediction? Internal elaboration, fusion and transposition? Internal vision, adjustment and belief? Emotional intelligence, affectivity and spontaneity? Affective memory? Creative thinking? Creativity? Originality? Scenic expression? Affectivity and transposition? Scenic transfiguration? Internal elaboration, intuition? Perception and sensation? Or maybe empathy? Analogy and fantasy? Emotion? Talent. But what's the talent? Imagination, the place where images and representations come to life. Imaginary. The sum of these processes. Basic tools in the creative process and important characteristics of scenic talent.

The imagination of an actor is a tool for artistic creation, but its impact goes beyond the mind and soul of the artist as it constantly engages the mind and soul of the audience; it becomes an instrument of seduction, stimulating the receptor through various analogies, similitudes and fantasies. The ways in which an actor manages to materialize and transpose the products of his/her imagination on stage and, equally important, the way in which he/she makes an invisible (imaginary) object present to the perception of the spectator should be at the core of any theatrical performance. An actor's extraordinary capacity to create images, to give life to representations, to transform them into real facts or beliefs, and to deform them with equal force (by ensuring and facilitating both the selection and combination of images stemming from a subjects previous experiences, as the production of new images, with no correspondent in the material reality), all come from imagination. The imagination of the actor allows him/her to create and project fictional realities or fantastic events that go beyond perceived reality, in front of the audience; it gives an actor the power to provide different versions of reality, to defy the limits of verisimilitude and to explore not only what seems possible but also the impossible. Therefore, one of the primary instruments the actor works with, the *thing* Hamlet is talking about is his imagination, a mechanism that connects with all the other mental processes necessary in the art of stage creation. Thus, imagination is not only an integral part of the scenic talent but is the element that makes the work to be expressive, which gives individuality and artistic originality.

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[3] William Shakespeare, "Hamlet," in *Shakespeare's Hamlet*, ed. Sidney Lamb (New York: Hungry Minds, 2000), 92.

Starting from the article by Leslie Forster Stevenson, professor at the Department of Philosophy and Anthropology at the University of St Andrews in the UK, entitled *Twelve Conception of Imagination*[4], which lists (without pretending to be exhaustive) twelve of the most used and influential conceptions on imagination, we have succeeded in identifying some of the most important characteristics of scenic talent. The actor or theatre pedagogue can thus use and work with the concept of talent, create creative strategies, develop different stratagems of practice and development, depending on the skills that will be trained.

Stevenson offers a broad philosophical view on some of the most common approaches of the concept of imagination. Very rich in examples and extensively preoccupied to show the theoretical productivity of the concept of imagination, her perspective makes reference to different fields of research, ranging from the philosophy of the mind to aesthetics, ethics or poetry to religion.

Being extremely diverse, these conceptions tend to vary a lot, and, at the same time, they shed a new light on the different capacities of the individual. Among these, as formulated by Stevenson, some of the most common are:

> the ability to think of something not presently perceived, but spatio-temporally real; the ability to think of whatever one acknowledges as possible in the spatio-temporal world; the liability to think of something that the subject believes to be real, but which is not; the ability to think of things that one conceives of as fictional; the ability to entertain mental images; the ability to think of anything at all; the non-rational operations of the mind, that is those explicable, in terms of causes rather than reasons; the ability to form perceptual beliefs about public objects in space and time; the ability to sensuously appreciate works of art or objects of natural beauty without classifying them under concepts or thinking of them as useful; the ability to create works of art that encourage such sensuous appreciation; the

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[4] Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination."

> ability to appreciate things that are revelatory or expressive of the meaning of human life ; the ability to create works of art that express something deep about the meaning of life[5].

In the lineage of Stevenson's philosophical perspective and conceptual classifications concerning imagination, which were a stepping-stone to our investigation, we illustrated the most important qualities of creative imagination and those of scenic talent. As a result, we have identified the following characteristics depending on each conception. We will start from the first definition that Stevenson gives to the concept of imagination:

The ability to think of something not presently perceived, but spatio-temporally real[6]

The absence of a thing in the playing area is for both the actor and the viewer, the magic of a dream waiting to be revealed to them in the mind and in the body; to bring to present an absent object. Through his/her imagination, the actor is able not only to reproduce his/her past, but to transform it, to point it, to signify it, to transform it into symbolic images, and last but not least, to bring it at present. Depending on a certain artistic approach, he/she evokes, completes, provokes and recreates some previously perceived material in pictorial, vivid and significant images. Reproductive, creative imagination has this feature to update the subject's experience based on a certain present and the extraordinary feature of creating new images without a correspondent in the previous experience of the subject. The actor will combine and transform, voluntarily and intuitively, the concrete, the image, the sensory impression with abstract evaluations, will associate some abstract concepts with the most interesting images, will build, develop and create original projects, will be able to design both in the future and in past, in the space of memory, but also in the space of unreal, the non-existent and the fantasy. Imagination, through its mechanisms of amalgamation or agglutination, can reorganize the lived memories, create them in the sense of the scenic situations, thus exploring unknown things and unknown events,

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5. Stevenson, 238.
6. Stevenson, 239.

but possible in the future. This reproductive imaging operation procedure provides the actor with the infinite possibilities of creating fantastic worlds, through amalgamation and sticking together real, objective elements consisting of invented imagery and fantasy. The actor uses logical operations in the process of creation through various methods: analogy, induction, deduction, and comparison of two objects or situations in order to establish a series of similarities and common traits. It creates fiction where his/her memory or reproductive imagination does not find support, includes, modifies and analyses. Conclusions, analogies, hypotheses, and inventions of imaginations will permanently drive the actor into his/her cognitive and affective analysis of the role. They are the ones who guide the imaginative process, guide the elements and details necessary for the scenic situations, create the fantastic and the fictional world.

Imagination, memory and affection, by deducting, understanding and mental shaping to the smallest details of the embodied model, through substituting and scenic prefiguration. The prefiguration consists in the elaboration of an expressive internal image in *which suppositional imagination*[7] takes place, i.e. the imaginative deduction of a behavior, its understanding and knowledge through a process of replication of the mental state of the other, *then enactment imagination*[8] involving substitution by adopting this behavior and act of self-projection by correlating the elaborated mental images and the elements of the scenic movement on which the character is born. The latter is a clear indicator of scenic prefiguration, where the actor, from the multitude of imaginable elements of movement, will only project those that serve the scenic task. A person's ability to think of a certain mental state of another person, whose existence is deducted, scenic becomes visible by prefiguring an expressive internal image of the model and correlating it by self-projection with the elements of the scenic movement on which it is made. The actor is himself/herself the instrument of his/her own creation, he/she carries out an act of self-projection. Expression of emotion is a form or a means of expressing attitudes, behavioral patterns, and relationships with real or imagined world. It is for the actor a form of expression of the entire imagined world.

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[7] Alvin Goldman, *Stimulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology and Neuroscience of Mindreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 47.

[8] Goldman, 47.

The ability to prefigure and translate the actor into scenic reality. Thus, drawing a parallel between Stevenson's first conception of imagination and scenic talent, we have determined the following qualities of the creative imagination and implicitly of the scenic talent: the capacity of imagination to illustrate a certain imaginative content or an absent object, which was previously perceived under the form of a concrete-intuitive image, of a symbolic image. The capacity of imagination to amplify or diminish a previous experience. The capacity of imagination to reproduce or reiterate an experience, to evoke and update an experience. In this case, the imaginative product is seen as an authentic perception. The capacity of imagination to evoke expressive and original representations with the help of memory. The capacity of imagination to create an indirect causal relation between an actor's previous experience(s) with an absent object and his/her present thoughts concerning it: accommodation. The capacity of imagination to anticipate and to attribute significance to a certain product, by creating an adaptive situation of correspondence between the products of imagination and present reality; the capacity of imagination to amalgamate and agglutinate segments from a single experience or from a number of situations in order to create a new image; the capacity of imagination to transform what is familiar into something that is unknown and its ability to create, transform and combine representations into new and original imagistic sequences; the capacity of imagination to mentally represent images from a part and from the imaginary world a part presupposes; the capacity of imagination to speculate with respect to the past and the future, to anticipate; the capacity of imagination to adapt to possible innovations; the capacity of imagination to participate in creating concepts and notions, its capacity to create mental representations: imagination as background for logical thinking; the capacity to detect and speculate on different imagined states or behaviors, to adopt them and project them under the form of a significant internal image.

Stevenson's next definition refers to the ***ability to think of whatever one acknowledges as possible in the spatio-temporal world***[9] or in our context, the actor's ability to think of anything and perceive that anything as being possible in the space-temporal world, that is, in the scenic reality. The actor constantly generates fictitious truths and beliefs, behaving according to the same principle *as if*. In order to be able to generate these fictitious truths and beliefs, the actor must first create the context that will cause such behavior.

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[9] Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination," 241.

If does not speak about an unrealistic fact, but about one that might be, about a possibility and a possible context. In this case the internal or external action will be generated without the involvement of the lie, and it brings with it an assumption that will become through imagination an authentic reality. The real possibility of a fact will make the actor move and act, excluding any kind of physical or physical effort, because it is an impulse and an excitative. Thus, the possibilities and the assumptions will bring about the faith and the feeling of truth, because the invention has become possible and realizable in reality. Therefore, the creation of the scenic context starts from an assumption, from an *if* that will give rise to a possible reality in which the actor will act *as if*, logically and consistently. The creation of the imaginary material of the character in the smallest detail, from formulating the assumptions with the help of *if*, until their invention, has the practical aim of creating *skillfulness* through which imagination will create possible, logical, consistent and truthful probabilities. Following this convention, we determined the following characteristic of the creative imagination and implicitly of the scenic talent:

The capacity of imaginative self-projection: the ability of imagination to create, develop and motivate a presupposition by using the *if* notion; to create possible realities in which the actor behaves *as if.*

The third definition underlined by Stevenson is ***The liability to think of something that the subject believes to be real, but which is not***[10].

This conception brings into discussion the existence of premises from which the fictional playing starts, that will determine the player (performer)'s belief in the subjective reality. Thus, the creation of a possible reality by the actor, the seriousness of the playing and the power of self-illusioning, the creation of analogies with the objective reality will implicitly attract the feeling of truth and faith in the truth of the supposed and claimed playing. The actor's reaction and behavior towards an imagined, fictional world is influenced by the righteousness and logicalness with which he/she builds the possible reality, his/her desire to replicate. The actor's interaction with this possible reality will lead to the emergence of justifications, scenic truth and belief. Imagination has the function of adapting the actor to an unreal and fictional hypostasis. This gives the actor the opportunity to fit into new, previously unknown and unrecognized contexts, not limiting his/her knowledge to a perceived experience. The actor will be able to experience a presumed and whenever possible reality, through the adaptive function and the ludic ability of imagination. Here we talk about the fluidity of imagination, of creative, productive imagination. The actor must permanently justify the inventions and assumptions of his/her fabrication. By creating logical conditions and circumstances, the belief and the feeling of truth will be born fair, sincere and authentic. Therefore, the next four abilities of creative imagination form the capacity of imagination to develop the initial premises: its elasticity and fluidity, the capacity of imagination to facilitate the production of a requested type of behaviour: the identification, the prefiguration and expressivity of imagination, the capacity of imagination to induce a process of quarantine: the double power of imagination and the ludic capacity of imagination are part of the scenic talent.

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[10] Stevenson, 242.

The ability to think of things that one conceives of as fictional[11] is the next definition given to the concept of imagination in a broad sense. As for the scenic world, imagining and building the fictional world of the role implies the originality and creativity of imagination and thought. The two instruments provide the actor throughout the complex creative process of internal and external elaboration, actions and solutions of symbol value, structured, projected, transposed and materialized in an expressive form until, as Gheorghe Neacșu states, the mental image is identified with expressive realization of the actor as an instrument and his/her emotional attitudes will correspond to the imagined and projected scenic situations[12]. The internal and external elaboration of the fictional world of the character and their exteriorization in an expressive scenic way are part of the originality of creative imagination of realizing and communicating organically and originally a product of great value to all those involved in the transposition act, partners and audience. The relationship between the imaginary, fictional, actor's inner world and its external elaboration, expressed in a symbolic and expressive way, emphasizes the originality of imagination and, implicitly, the actor's talent. We therefore have the capacity of imagination to think up and represent the unreal or even the absurd, without any rejection or any loss of its value and aesthetic function, the capacity and expressivity of imagination and reason to assume and develop a purely fictional material, be it internal or external, and to impersonate it in a composition, in an artistic form and the capacity of imagination to communicate a product, in an original and organic, way by merging two elements: the internal elaboration of the scenic message and its scenic, original expression.

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[11] Stevenson, 243.

[12] Gheorghe Neacșu, *Transpunere și expresivitate scenică* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1971), 94.

The ability to entertain mental images[13] is the fourth conception being analyzed. The actor's ability to have mental images and representations on stage is the primary condition of talent and expressiveness of imagination. The actor needs to know how to develop this capacity, to work with imagination and with his/her own creative visions. He/she must allow them to enter into his/her subconscious, to transform them and let them return to the surface in a new, powerful, living and original form. He/she must be in the search for active images, he/she must know how to transform, evoke and create them. In this respect, we can highlight the following characteristics of imagination: the capacity of imagination to develop internal visions, strong images, visual and auditory sensations, to generate and attract similar emotions that concur with an imaginary object and which will further reflect other visions that are related to the visions of the character, the capacity of imagination to play an internal film made of images which is in conformity with *if* or with different inventions of imagination and with other suggested situations, and the ability to generate internal and external actions.

The fifth conception brought into discussion is ***the ability to think of anything at all***[14], in our case, not only the actor's ability to generate mental images, but especially his/her power to conceive, create and represent them on scene. The actor's ability to create mental images and representations, to find original solutions, to develop new ideas and to represent them scenically is part of the actor's power to materialize, concretize and incorporate the unseen, imaginary world of the character. Intensity and veracity of representation, as well as the actor's belief in his/her own image. Thus, as an image to be expressive, it must first of all have a great intensity, be strong, pregnant, alive, fresh and very clear.

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[13] Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination," 243.

[14] Stevenson, 245.

The intensity of representation can be determined by many conditions. It must be well fixed; the subject must have a large number of perceptual or imaginative contacts with the object and be constantly updated. Given that in our case we are talking about representations that have as their generative source memory and imagination, their creation on a scenic plane underlines the actor's capacity of imaginative transposition, the degree of involvement or the belief in the evoked image. Also, the stability of the image, that is to say, the duration of maintaining in the clear field of consciousness of updated or generated representations at the moment of imagination[15] shows the significance of the representation. The expressive power of imagination: the organic relationship between representations evoked by memory and reproductive imagination, physical expression, scenic embodiment. In conclusion, scenic talent also means the capacity of imagination to develop an internal model and to translate it into a certain expression (the expressive power of imagination: an organic relationship between representations evoked by both memory and the reproductive imagination and the physical expression, the scenic transposition), the uniqueness of imagination: the blending of imagination, of an internal vision, of the image that arises from this process (the relationship between the body, the voice and the psychological level).

The non-rational operations of the mind, that is those explicable, in terms of causes rather than reasons[16] is the seventh definition given by Stevenson to the concept of imagination.

In the scenic context, Stevenson's sixth definition refers to the non-rational operations used by the actor to construct his/her work, operations closely related to imagination, thinking, feeling and sensation. They are the ones that contribute to perceiving the invisible, either through perceptual, cognitive and sensory knowledge, or through extrasensory knowledge, by an understanding, assumption or intuitive anticipation of things, events, emotional states or behaviors. Through unpredictable elements, the actor creates an intuitive,

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15. Mihai Golu, *Fundamentele Psihologiei*, 5th ed. (Bucharest: Editura Fundației România de Mâine, 2007), 418.
16. Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination," 247.

visual, auditory, kinesthetic model. An intuitive acting image that has, through its originality and its artistic suggestive power, the ability to be communicatively-scenically exteriorized, as Neacşu said[17]. In this case, the feeling, sensation or intuition of things gives the conduct a purpose (the development of the intuitive model requires a "functional conduct"), guides it and delivers the energies necessary for the action. Therefore, the characteristics of scenic talent in this case refer to: the intuitive capacity as a fundamental trait of creative imagination and creativity: the ability to predict stage tasks in a non-rational, plastic and symbolic, to create live and flexible images concerning the partners on stage and any other stage signals. The capacity of imagination to generate and then operate with representations and images: the flexibility of imagination to interpret and reflect purely intuitive traits of an experience, the capacity to restructure and to reproduce a representation or a previous situation in an intuitive way, the capacity to develop and intuitively anticipate, to invent original images, to predict and to intuitively transform emotions and an imagined model.

The eighth conception on imagination is ***the ability to form perceptual beliefs about public objects in space and time.***[18]

If, in the case of inspiration and intuitions, the actor or artist continuously relates and combines the reflexive and methodical work of thinking and imagination with a certain spontaneous ecstasy, in the case of convictions through synthesis, in the most general sense, imagination is the necessary ingredient for perception itself. Imagination is the one that involuntarily interferes with the understanding and sensitive knowledge of things, it is the one that forms beliefs without the subject being aware of its action on its senses, it is the one that in the case of the scenic creation manifests itself originally. The ability of imagination to create beliefs based on perception, but which are not justifiable, understandable and motivated in a certain way. They are irrational, just as fictions created unconsciously by the individual points out not only the capacity of imagination to form and create convictions and beliefs based on impressions and spontaneous previous perceptions that are involuntary and irrational: the natural tendency of an actor to illusion, a fundamental trait of artistic personality and talent but also the capacity of imagination to trigger emotions and irrational or negative affective states.

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[17] Neacșu, *Transpunere Şi Expresivitate Scenică*, 64.

[18] Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination," 249.

The ninth definition given by Stevenson refers to ***the ability to sensuously appreciate works of art or objects of natural beauty without classifying them under concepts or thinking of them as useful.***[19]

In the case of the empathy of reception, the actor's imagination should have the capacity to insight and facilitate communication and empathic exchange through the two forms of conduct proposed by Jeanine Maucorps. These two forms refer both to self-empathy as signaling an inverse direction from the other toward me, determined by the way we believe we are seen by another[20] (in our case the partner and the audience) and the allo-empathy in which the direction of the relationship is from the other to the other, that is, the way in which we believe that a person stands in the place of another person[21] (i.e. the ability of the actor to choose, create and communicate expressive forms that will strike a chord by transposing into the reference system of the other).

The actor's ability to appreciate with the help of senses the works of art, without classifying them in terms of use, or finding them useful in the context being analyzed, emphasizes the ability of the imagination to build, rebuild, and play with analogies and associations, with representations of memory and to anticipate, visualize and mentally test different possibilities. This conception also highlights the productive function of imagination to create forms and to put them in original contexts and the affective-empathic side through which the subject manages to understand, transpose or prefigure a certain imagined model.

Some other characteristics of scenic talent can be so the capacity of imagination to adapt and to communicate a stage reality that will influence both one's own perception and the receptor's perception, the capacity of imagination to play with ideas, images and forms, to create them and to transpose them on stage; the capacity of imagination to associate information, representations and perceptions by using the following processes: analogy, omission, appropriation, amalgamation, association, prediction, invocation, substitution and emphatic fusion.

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[19] Stevenson, 253.

[20] Stroe Marcus, *Empatie Și Personalitate* (Bucharest: Editura Atos, 1997), 169.

[21] Ibidem.

The tenth conception, ***the ability to create works of art that encourage such sensuous appreciation,***[22] refers to a special kind of imagination, as Stevenson says, which is involved in performing works or works of art, that creative or genius imagination that produces something truly original, something that has no definite rule. The actor's visions are controlled and integrated into a general anticipatory plan, in a guiding plan outlined according to the criteria of conventionality and the plausibility that the actor will cover in relation to the theme or product he/she wishes to obtain. In this case, the product can embody not only the unreal but also the absurd, without losing its value and aesthetic function or without being rejected. The creative imagination is synonymous with the invention, with the permanent creation of new hypotheses and hypostases of the man of genius, being the power with which the spirit brings, revives and gives life to missing objects, situations and events, or those that have never existed. Innovation and invention consists not only in the recombination of the already existing elements into a new form, into a product with new look and properties, non-existent to the original object, into changing a point of view about a certain object and putting it in various hypostases and relationships, but also in the action of imagining things in a new, special way, resorting to a fake thing as if it was true. The power of imagination to create, develop and conceive of complex projects and virtual worlds, to generate images without correspondence in reality or in the previous experience of the subject, and the imaginative product is mirrored in various expressive, symbolic, plastic and original forms.

In this case, we will highlight some other predispositions of the acting talent that relate to the capacity of imagination to combine scattered elements and transform them into meaningful, plastic and organic images; these images are at the basis of a new, original and revelatory product; the flexibility, mobility and adaptability of imagination that make it able to complete, restructure and invent images, to generate ideas and solutions, to evoke representations of memory or to create and think up illusions - the resolving power of imagination. The capacity of imagination to adapt to an imaginary model, substitution and expressive transfiguration.

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[22] Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination," 253.

The last two concepts analyzed refer to ***the ability to appreciate things that are revelatory or expressive of the meaning of human life***[23] and ***the ability to create works of art that express something deep about the meaning of life.***[24]

The visionary side of the creative imagination that reveals the sensitive and profound expression of human life and universal truth through the aesthetic form of the artist's feelings and ability *to appreciate things that are revelatory or expressive of the meaning of human life***.** In this case, the creative imagination has the function of expressing the real or the unreal and revealing some hidden truths. When the actor manages to penetrate into the hearts of his/her letters, his/her words, his/her phrases, his/her thoughts and his/her pictures, as Stanislavski says, and when he/she succeeds in transfiguring them scenically through his/her creative imagination, he/she brings the spectator closer to his/her poetic work and his/her own soul. So we will uncover the new elements necessary for the actor in his/her artistic approach and implicitly some new characteristics of the scenic talent: the capacity of imagination to create revealing images or to find legitimate analogies between an actor's inner life and the life of the author, of the playwright: the capacity of the actor to find or create inner, individual, correspondences between the themes suggested by the author and his/hers own creative personality (idea, image, super-theme) that will guide him/her throughout the duration of a stage work; the capacity of imagination to create plausible and veridical realities and worlds that will act upon the receptor in a revealing way generating emotions; the capacity of imagination to stimulate, to indicate or to evoke and reveal hidden contents; the capacity of imagination to project, anticipate, explore and substitute.

The ability to create works of art that express something deep about the meaning of life[25] highlights the extraordinary power of the creative fantasy of an artist through which he/she creates fabulous, fantastic and original worlds. It refers to his/her ability to complete an artistic product with a great aesthetic value and its cathartic function.

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[23] Stevenson, 254.

[24] Stevenson, 258.

[25] Ibidem.

In this case, the ability to create works of art expressing the depth of the meaning of life, as opposed to the products of simple fantasy, complements and completes through the following characteristics the global and full image of the actor's creative imagination: the capacity of imagination to compensate, to create emotional discharges *(catharsis)* and a feeling of purification. The capacity of imagination to adjust the moral standard of humanity through aesthetic emotions.

The actor creates live images of his/her imagination, which will create powerful sensations, and imaginative products can become the object of perception, of imaginary as a product. The artistic imaginary is a return of the artist in the past, in the privacy of his/her inner space, from which he/she will extract his/her seemingly forgotten objects, in which his/her fancies, phantasms and fantasies are hidden, in which memory and imagination create oneiric realities. It is all about the artist's context of creating and inventing, it is subconscious, creativity, memory, pulse, desire, dream and imagination. The imaginary of each artist is in a permanent connection with his/her past or his/her future, with the fantasies, dreams and desires that will shape his/her personality and being.

In the case of scenic art, the imaginary has a double meaning. The first refers to the individual and personal world of each actor (from which he/she will extract the elements necessary for the future creation), and the second refers to the material the actor creates, namely his/her work or his/her stage representation. Therefore, the actor's imaginary is the material through which imagination will project elements of the past or will create a possible future, will structure or restructure strategies by multiplying, amplifying or diminishing mental experiences, will creating or solve possible situations, will bring into reality images and representations, will work independently both in dream and in reality, will easily grasp the suggested things and will develop, transform and recreate them (through a "imaginative initiative"[26]). The actor's imagination will also encompass the outcome of these processes, a new creation, a virtual, fictional, imaginary and new world, a concrete, present and possible world, the work of art itself, represented in a scenic way.

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[26] v. Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work*, ed. Jean Benedetti (London: Routledge, 2008).

In conclusion, the imaginary, in a scenic context, allows the actor to close himself/herself, to live, experiment and extract the material with which to build his/her artistic work, but will also become the product of his/her imagination by creating a world that is parallel and competing with the real world, because, in the words of psychologist Mielu Zlate, it does not appear to be the equivalent of objective reality, but as an illusion, a separate world, a fiction[27]. How will he/she make the impossible, possible, how will he/she make the invisible visible? Through his/her talent.

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[27] Mielu Zlate, *Psihologia mecanismelor cognitive* (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 492.

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Political Configuration in the Dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Adeoye

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Abstract: Colonial and postcolonial African dramaturgy was influenced by the politics of the society in which they were created. They reflected the political upheavals, corruption, socio-political decadence and laxity portrayed by political leaders. In fact, these dramas such as the works of the radical Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Sam Ukala, and Benedict Binebai amongst others were/are political constructs. However, one postmodern dramaturge who has fully explored the social and the political in his works in theory and praxis, is AbdulRasheed Adeoye. The authenticity of his theatre does not only stem from the political consciousness of his creative works, but also, his crystallization of a dramatic theory, he termed Neoalienation theory. How unique is this theory, and how relevant are the themes and content of his works to the political situation of present-day Nigeria? To this end, this study critically investigates the poetics of politics in the dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Adeoye. It further examines Adeoye's neoalienation theory, in consonance with Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre, and the political configurations of Adeoye's dramaturgy.

Key Words: Dramaturgy, Neo-alienation, Political Configuration, Aesthetics.

Introduction

The most political of all African dramatists are Wole Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'O. Perhaps, this is because of their romance with the four walls of the prison which is as a result of their radical approach to criticism of political injustice and oppression by colonialists, neo-colonialists and internal colonialism by the emergent political elements in Kenya, Nigeria and other postcolonial African states. Thus, they placed their art (Drama, prose and poetry) in the service of politics. The theatre of these two literary giants shows that "literature and writers cannot be exempted from the battlefield"[2]. To this end, politics forms the core of their literary territory. The Fugardian experiments in apartheid South Africa are also paradigms of theatre in politics. With the creative import of John Kani and Winston Tshona, Athol Fugard was able to produce plays such as *The Islands* (Hodoshe), *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* and *Hello and Goodbye*. Most of these plays were products of improvisation.

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Wa Thiong'O[3] cites Chinua Achebe's statement in 1969 which posits that "it is clear to me that an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of the contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant-like that absurd man his house burning to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames". Chinua Achebe implies that every creative writer is a politician. All ideological standpoints are political. In fact, "artistically, drama communicates ideologies to the people through appropriate socio-political, cultural, moral and economic themes, music, dance, song and dramatic action"[4]. In the same vein, Wa Thiong'O[5] also notes that "literature and politics are about living men, actual men and women and women and children, breathing, eating, crying, laughing, crying, dying, growing, men in history of which they are its products and makers". Plays such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *I Will Marry when I Want* and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O' and Micere Mugo's *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi*, Wole Soyinka's *King Baabu, A Play of Giants, The Beatification of Area Boy* and *Kongi Harvest,* reflect the misnomer in the political situations in colonial and postcolonial societies. Ola Rotimi's *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi,* Ahmed Yerima's *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen*, and *Break a Boil*, written by the cultural giant, Sam Ukala, are also testaments on politics.

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2. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 73.
3. Wa Thiong'o, 75.
4. Solomon Ejeke, "Drama and Political Emancipation in Africa," in *Music Scholarship, Culture and Performance Challenges in 21st Century Africa: A Critical Resource Book in Honour of Emurobome Idolor*, ed. Emurobome Idolor et al. (Lagos: Bahiti and Balila Publishers, 2016), 469.
5. Wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, 72.

From the foregoing, it is pertinent to note that drama has always been in the service of humanity. "A writer's imaginative leap to grasp reality is aimed at helping in the community's struggle from a certain quality of life free from all parasitic exploitative relations"[6]. Nigerian drama thus exposes the frailties, the foibles and the flaws and weaknesses of the Nigerian political system. "Not merely has drama reflected and reinforced our attitude in values, it has also attempted to change them, to shape the culture in which it exists: it has been used to suggest alternatives to the present systems"[7].

One postmodern dramaturge who has fully captured the social and the political in his works in theory and praxis, is AbdulRasheed Adeoye. The authenticity of his theatre does not only stem from the political consciousness of his creative works, but also, his crystallization of a dramatic theory, he named Neoalienation theory. How unique is this theory, and how relevant are the themes and content of his works to the political situation of present-day Nigeria? To this end, this chapter critically investigates the poetics of politics in the dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Adeoye. It further examines Adeoye's neoalienation theory, in consonance with Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre, vis-a-vis political configurations of Adeoye's dramaturgy.

Political Theatre in Nigeria

> *All theatre is necessarily political because all the activities of man are political, and theatre is one of them. Those who try to separate theatre from politics try to lead a political attitude.*[8]

In the preface to their classic, titled *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Wa Thiong'O and Mugo articulate that "we believe that good theatre is that which is on the side of the people; that which, without masking mistakes and weaknesses, gives people courage and urges them to higher resolve in their struggle for total liberation"[9]. Political theatre is the theatre of critical consciousness as critical consciousness is political. Adeniyi[10] elucidates the words of Omafume Onoge, of the first generation of Nigerian Marxist Critics that "politics is the soul of African literature". In a country such as Nigeria, politics is the major subject matter of art. Ejeke also observes that "the art of drama helps to forge a social vision for the people. It also indulges the people in the mainstream of contemporary political debate"[11].

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[6] Wa Thiong'o, 75.

[7] Gordon Vallins, "Drama and Theatre in Education," in *Drama and the Theatre with Radio, Film and Television. An Outline for the Student* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 167–78.

[8] Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Opressed* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), iv.

The commitment of Nigerian theatre to politics could be traced back to the Nigerian theatre of the colonial era. The doyen of the Nigerian theatre, who was also the pioneer of the popular Yoruba travelling theatre, Hubert Ogunde placed his creative ability to play in this perspective. In fact, Adesina posits that "Ogunde wrote overtly political plays between 1945 and 1950. He used his theatre in the political arena"[12]. Beyond his anti-colonial works such as *Strike and Bullet, Africa and God*, and *Worse than Crime*, Hubert Ogunde also explored themes of political upheavals in postcolonial Nigeria, thereby, using his dramaturgy to instill political consciousness in his audience. In his play, titled *Yoruba Ronu* (or Yoruba Think), he does a critique of the Awolowo versus Akintola political tussle of the first republic in Western Nigeria. This play was so critical of the incumbent premier of Western region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, who was a member of the audience, that he left before the end of the play.

This was the impetus that led to banning his plays in the Western region of Nigeria. As a politically conscious dramatist, this did not deter him from his political commitment, as he performed another play, titled *Otito Koro* (truth is bitter), which is a political statement on his ban from performing his plays in Western Nigeria. Other political plays by Hubert Ogunde include "*Israel in Egypt, Nebuchanezzer's reign, Darkness and light, Worse than Crime, Strike*

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[9] Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo, *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi* (London: Heinemann, 1977), iv–v.

[10] Tola Adeniyi, "Theatre and Politics in Nigeria," in *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*, ed. Jide Malomo and Saint Gbilekaa (Ibadan: Caltop Publications, 1993), iv.

[11] Ejeke, "Drama and Political Emancipation in Africa," 469.

[12] Foluke Adesina, "Theatre and Media in Nigerian Politics," in *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*, ed. Jide Malomo and Saint Gbilekaa (Ibadan: Caltop Publications, 1993), 117.

and Hunger, Tiger's Empire, Towards Liberty, Bread and Bullet, and *Herbert Macaulay*"[13]. Layeni, and Adunni Oluwole, other theatre artists, also placed their theatres in the service of politics. Adesina states further that "Layeni took his political themes from actual events that happened within the society. An example is his play titled *Enugu Miners* which told the story of the shooting of the miners by the police"[14].

Adeniyi contends that from inception, Nigerian plays have been in the service of Nigerian politics. He notes that "the repertoire of veterans like James Ene Henshaw, Soyinka, Rotimi, Clark, Osofisan, Sunny Oti, Kole Omotosho, Akinwumi Isola, Zulu Sofola, Kola Ogunmola, Ekiye, Neville Ukoli and Rasheed Gbadamosi will confirm this trend"[15]. Wole Soyinka's animist plays which were among the first among his repertoire, had political undertone. His pseudo political play, *A Dance of the Forest,* the fully political *Kongi's Harvest,* and his later plays, *King Baabu, The Beatification of Area Boy,* and *A Play of Giants*, shows his commitment to the Nigerian political landscape as Gbilekaa avers that:

> This growing sense of political commitment manifested itself in Soyinka's satirical sketches and revues, J.P. Clark's *The Raft* is also regarded as a political metaphor of Nigeria adrift in those tumultuous time. Consequently, the theatre of this epoch was dominated by tyrant and megalomaniacs.[16]

The second generation of Nigerian dramatists made the subject of politics, their thematic preoccupation. Their works are revolutionary discourses. Rooted in Marxist ideology, they explore the polemic of class struggle between the rich and the poor or what Karl Marx appropriated as the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat. Their art "is one that is committed to the cause of the proletariat"[17]. "Femi Osofisan is unquestionably the most articulate in terms of ideological commitment and political aesthetics of the second generation of Nigerian writers … Osofisan's creative works like those of others of his predecessors"[18], navigates the corruption and ill characteristic of the socio-political system in Nigeria. Bode Sowande is also in this category of playwrights. One of the numerous disparities between the ideological import of these playwrights and the first-generation playwrights, is the subject of heroism. While the first-generation playwrights created individual heroes (scapegoats), the second-generation playwrights created collective heroes. In other words, they deconstruct and discard the Zifa of J. P. Clark and the Olunde and Eman of Wole Soyinka and create characters of collective and radical bent. Their theatres "push against elitist forces… their theatre, prioritizes cocreation of meaningful theatrical work for and with oppressed peoples—or the proletariat, as Marx might have said… to resist superfluous consumption in favor of liberation"[19].

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[13] Adesina, 118.

[14] Adesina, 118.

[15] Adeniyi, "Theatr. Polit. Niger.," v.

[16] Saint Gbilekaa, "Theatre and Political Change in Nigeria since Independence," in *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria1*, ed. Jide Malomo and Saint Gbilekaa (Ibadan: Caltop Publications, 1993), 5.

A Study on AbdulRasheed Adeoye's *Neoalienation* Theory

Adeoye's neo-alienation theory, can be located in western and traditional African theatre modes. In fact, AbdulRasheed Adeoye gives credit to Bertolt Brecht, a core exponent of the theatre of revolt, as a salient influence on his neo-alienation theory. He notes that "Brecht is, to us, a radical phenomenon and an unrepentant theatre revolutionary"[20]. Thus, he (Adeoye) experiments on the theory of neo-alienation with his play, *The Smart Game*. This play, in style and technique, is a radical deviation from the conventional theatre. He provides twelve laws in neo-alienation theatrical performance. These poetics in Adeoye's dramaturgy are a codification of the twelve principles of his theatre (neo-alienation). They are:

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[17] Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1976), 37.

[18] Olu Obafemi, *Public Mediation and Society: Cultural/Creative Industries, Literature, Theatre and the National Economy* (Lagos: Concept Publications Limited, 2017), 36.

[19] Stephen Ogheneruro Okpadah, "Theatre for Development as a Model for Transformative Change in Nigeria," *Teaching Artist Journal* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 3, https://doi.org/10.1080/15411796.2017.1297620.

[20] AbdulRashid Adeoye, *The Killers: A Social Drama* (Ilorin: Dept. of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, 2009), iv.

1. The Aesthetics of Theme Song of Audience/Players' Systemic Fraternization
2. Multiple Role-Playing Aesthetics
3. The Aesthetics of Artistic Deconstruction
4. The Aesthetics of Human Props and Demystification
5. The Multiple Narrators' Aesthetics
6. The Aesthetics of De-technicalization
7. On-the-Stage Make-up and Costuming Aesthetics
8. The Aesthetics of Complete Instrumentation on Stage
9. Photoramic/Captions' Aesthetics
10. The Modern Operatic Aesthetics
11. Trado-Modern Dance Aesthetics
12. The Critical Recalling Curtain Call Aesthetics[21].

Beyond the embodiment of the aesthetics of Bertolt Brecht's theatre in the above tenets of neoalienation, it is worthy of note that Jerzy Grotowski's Theatre of the poor, also hold sway in the above codes of neoalienation theory. Like Jerzy Grotowski, the Polish theatre director, Adeoye deconstructs the use of elaborate costumes on stage. He further advocates that the actor could wear his costumes on stage, in the full glare of the spectators. In his play titled, *The Killers*, 'Narrator Two' brings two bags of costumes on stage and give them to 'Emeka', to play the role of Major General, 'Lanwa', to play the role of an Executive Messenger, and 'Ahmed' to play the role of Director, and the 'two drummers' to play the roles of Deputy Director and General Manager respectively. 'Narrator Two' give the costumes to them in the presence of the audience.

Adeoye incorporates the use of subtitles or subheadings such as *Those who have ears*, *Unionism as gangsterism*, and so on, to delineate the various episodes inherent in *The Killers*. Furthermore, in the light of Brecht's Epic theatre, Adeoye uses Songs to pass his message across to the audience. In Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children,* Brecht uses the song of *The Great Capitulation*. In *The Killers,* Adeoye uses the song of *We Match on* in the prologue. The Song goes thus:

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[21] Adeoye, vii.

With the fullness of joy
And the wonderful gift of nature,
We match on in unity
Not minding our tribulations
To building a giant nation…[22].

Audience inclusivity is also a major feature of Adeoye's neoalienation theatre. Like Femi Osofisan's Fabulous theatre which is rooted in the tradition of the actor-performer rapport and Sam Ukala's Folkism and Neo-Folkism (Neo-Folkism as appropriated by this researcher), neoalienation calls for a communion between the performers and the spectators. This is one of the basic features and thrust of Bertolt Brecht's Epic theatre. This inclusivity is what Adeoye termed Audience and actor fraternization. The audience's "responses are maximized by strategic participation throughout the process—marking this particular theatre as wholly dialogic with songs, dances, and other aesthetic and/or cultural elements" (Okpadah, 2017, p.6). The foregoing gives credence to Uka's (2000, p.53) assertion that "we are in a postmodernist period of theatre practice. Postmodernist principles reject modernism's emphasis on high art and take cognizance of deconstruction and popular culture, here, we emphasize a plurality of forms and genres a pluralizing aesthetic criterion where forms and genres are not static and separate". By deconstruction, Kalu Uka means a deviation from Aristotlean and Western theatre conventions, traditions and configurations.

Political Configuration in Adeoye's Dramaturgy

> My theatre is first and foremost political because the major problems in Africa are political. I would like to revitalise black culture in order to assure its permanence, so that it can assure its permanence, so that it can become a culture which will contribute to the establishment of a new order, a revolutionary would be able to develop its full potentials.[23]

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[22] Adeoye, 1.

[23] Bakary Traoré, *The Black African Theatre and Its Social Functions* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), 123.

AbdulRasheed Adeoye's plays are a reflection of the society. They are not only social constructs, they are also politically configured, as they reflect the political situation in postcolonial societies, especially Nigeria. His two plays, *The Killers* and *The Smart Game,* are socio-political constructs. His theatre is rooted in the social and the political situations of his time. They are set in the same tradition of politics as Wole Soyinka's *King Baabu* and *A Play of Giants*. Their construction is sympathetic of the subaltern and brings to the fore, the ideology of revolt. The subaltern is the downtrodden and the marginalized in the society. They are the female gender who are placed at the margin by a male structured society, the black race that have for long been decentered by the white colonial masters, smaller ethnic nationalities that are tagged by larger tribes as 'minorities', and the environment that have been subdued by anthropocentric man. Binebai notes that "the subaltern post-colonial theory responds to the question of subjugation and silencing of the oppressed and marginalized people in post-colonial societies"[24]. The subaltern according to Antonio Gramsci, Benita Perry, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Boaventura De Sousa Sonta Chakrabarty, Dipesh and Guha are those whose voices have been suppressed by certain hegemonic forces. The subaltern earn their voice in *The Smart Game* and *The Killers*. In *The Killers,* the Student Union Government (S.U.G.), hijacks the leadership of Wazobia University.

S.U.G. President: *The time has come*
The moment is today
We have to decide today
Change our destiny today and
Continue to live happily today
Everything must be done today[25].

Constructed in episodic plot structure, in the play, in *The Killers,* the Niger Delta militants also take to arms. They kidnap oil expatriates in return for huge ransoms, vandalize pipelines and carry out other nefarious acts. Azomo, Omare, Alaibe, Ekpebide and Tarila who are major militants in the Niger Delta region, criticize the leadership of Wazobia nation and that of the Niger Delta.

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[24] Benedict Binebai, "Voice Construction in the Postcolonial Text: Spivakian Subaltern Theory in Nigerian Drama," *African Research Review* 9, no. 4 (October 27, 2015): 206, https://doi.org/10.4314/afrrev.v9i4.16.

[25] Adeoye, *The Killers: A Social Drama*, 7.

> **Alaibe:** (Shouting and screaming) *They have turned our plights into political rhetoric. All rulers now and then usually promise heaven on earth and when they ascend the throne, we easily forgotten like unripe paw-paw…*
> **Azome**: (Sarcastic) They know that we are the third-class citizens in the Wazobian project, the natural owners of their main source of income…
> **Alaibe:** …We are the forgotten souls from the Niger Delta
> **Ekpabide:** … We only demanded for the control of our resources
> **Alaibe:** After years of environmental degradation and…
> **Azome:** Political suppression that has rubbished Machiavelli's expanse of deceptions in his monarchical splendor…[26]
> **Azome:** Everybody is crying out for peace, no one is crying out for justice. I don't want peace, I mind equal right and justice[27]

The above dialogue attests to the multi dialectical ideology portrayed by the playwright. The first ideology is the import of revolution. "All great revolutions are…radical attempts to resolve class contradictions"[28]. Revolutions are a response to the unfavorable human condition, and a quest for positive transformation. This change is sought for, "not among individuals, or between individuals and the community, but among social classes or forces"[29]. In this regard, Karl Marx also sees revolutions as "the locomotives of history while Lenin saw them as popular true festivals"[30]. Revolution is a process that leads to the liberation of the oppressed "who will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest of it, through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it"[31].

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[26] Adeoye, 9–10.

[27] Adeoye, 11.

[28] Adolfo Sánchez Vásquez, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 121.

[29] Sánchez Vásquez, 123.

[30] Sánchez Vásquez, 121.

[31] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Opressed* (New York: Continuum, 1982), 29.

The Nigerian political structure places minor ethnic groups in the margin. They are neither allowed to express themselves, nor speak for themselves. They are voiceless and submerged under the dominance and influence of the three ethnic nationalities, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. The Egbira, the Kabba, the Urhobo, the Isoko, the Berom, the Igala, the Ikwerre, the Efik, the Ibibio, the Tiv, the Izon, the Itsekiri, the Nupe, the Esan, the Bini and other ethnic nationalities suffer from the politics of power asserted by the three other dominant ethnic groups. In fact, the concept of the 'minor' itself is suppression of some sort.

Thus, the playwright-theorist, Adeoye, though an indigene of one of the major ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, uses the play, titled *The Killers* as a manifesto in the call for the protection of minority right. In fact, in his toga of objectivity, he uses the theatrical element of Song to achieve this. Of course, of the fifty-seven years of Nigerian independence from British Colonial rule, perhaps, only two leaders are of minor ethnic group extract. Yakubu Gowon, who emerged Head of State after the countercoup in 1966, is from Berom ethnic nationality while Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of Izon extract managed to become president after the death of Umaru Musa Yaradua. The extreme fear of the minority and their struggle for political power hold sway in Adeoye's plays, especially *The Killers*. This play is a warning to Nigeria that if the Nigerian project is to succeed, then the politics of ethnicity must be discarded.

In the same vein, the play *The killers* is also a metaphor for corrupt leaders who suppress the growth and development of the state with their mode of leadership which is characterized with appropriation of public funds for their private use, injustice, corruption and other conspicuous consumption and life style at the expense of the nation's treasury. Furthermore, Adeoye's theatre is also critical of corrupt societies such as Nigeria. Every facet of Nigeria is characterized with politics of distrust. Major General requests a Diviner to give him a bullet proof charm. The Diviner gives him the charm. However, Major General tricks the giver of the charm by using the charm on him so as to validate its potency. Major General's action shows that as a military man who is illegally involved in politics, he trusts nobody. He knows that the political landscape of Wazobia is replete with backstabbing, betrayal, assassination, power play, distrust and so on. He does not want to take chances of falling a victim of betrayal. In the Nigerian situation, Politicians seek selfish and personal satisfaction, even to the detriment of the masses. Politicians betray those who voted them into various political offices, and pit tent with the enemies, nay the elites, for their personal gains. They even go as far as decamping from the political parties they belong to, for that of their opponents, immediately they see the prospects of financial gains and profits for them. Major General warns Director that he must deposit specific sums of money into the coffers of the military of Wazobia.

As a socio-political construct, *The Killers* also deliberates on Ethnic Conflict, Conflict of resource control, religious conflict and so on. Although the play portrays revolution, its causes and attendant effects on humanity, it further advocates peace. The playwright proffers a change from the incessant conflicts in Nigeria which he mystifies with the name, Wazobia. The characters in the play such as the Narrator One and Two, feel the pain and agony of crises. This is typified in the statement below:

> **Narrator One:** Why, why must you dance in the face of agonies and crises? Yet you are already!
>
> Bleating like castrated animals. Why must you laugh and hiss when the nation is on fire? Are you people not aware that the avengers are on the loose?
>
> **Narrator Two:** … Let me sound a note of warning to the agents of violence.
>
> **Narrator One:** What are you waiting for then? Talk to my people? Talk to my people about the evil called violence. Let them know that peace radiates progress and prosperity while violence is a noxious stench of destruction, the last call to death.[32]

As a pacifist, Adeoye knows the potency of the theatre in development and political transformation. Boal (1979, p.28) in his seminal research titled *Theatre of the Oppressed*, articulates that "theatre is change and not simple presentation of what exists: It is becoming and not being". Adeoye also uses the concept of Multiculturalism. By this, he portrays characters that encompass various tribes in Nigeria, irrespective of their region. This is exemplified in the characters of Efik Lead Dancer, Nupe Lead Dancer and Edo Lead Dancer. They all agitate for minority right.

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[32] Adeoye, *The Killers: A Social Drama*, 4–5.

> **Efik Lead Dancer**: (Mimicking) Yoruba…Igbo, Igbo…Yoruba. Hausa… Yoruba. Hausa…Igbo…Yoruba, this cultural conspiracy against the minority must stop (Dancing). Minority rights must be guaranteed.

Adeoye further captures the subject of unemployment which is a national crisis. Nigerian Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Educations, churn out thousands of graduates on annual basis, but unfortunately, up to ninety percent of these graduates are unemployed and restive. In present Nigerian society, to get employed, one needs to be politically connected. A university graduate who is not connected would search for a job he is qualified for, for fifteen years or more, without getting one. However, a less qualified but well-connected candidate who is in his final year in the university, has a job he is not qualified for, waiting for him. In *The Killers*, Director employs General Manager because of their close affinity in school many years ago, as the conversation below posit:

> **General Manager:** Thank you my Director. Then I was the President, now, you are my Director how time changes!
> **Deputy Director:** (Curious) You mean that you and the General Manager schooled together?
> **Director:** Yes. That is to tell you why I exercised my discretion during the interview.[33]

The implication of the above statement is that Director gave General Manager the job, not because, he was perhaps the most qualified candidate, but because, he (General Manager) was someone known to him (Director) before the interview. This is reflective of the socio-political system in Nigeria where parlance such as "Na man when know man dey get job, show me connection" are the slogan of the day.

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[33] Adeoye, 18.

Conclusion

The social and the political are the major thematic preoccupations in the dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Adeoye. As a pacifist, he uses his plays to sensitize the populace on the need for unity, harmony and peaceful co-existence among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, Adeoye is not the last of the Mohicans as other postmodern playwrights such as Ben Binebai, Stephen Kekeghe among others continue the search for a more authentic Nigerian theatre. This study concludes that beyond the socio-political construction of Adeoye's dramas, his theatre is rooted in the search for a sane society and that Neo-alienation theory is appropriate for the Nigerian theatre in theory and praxis. To this end, this research advocates that for an elegant dramaturgy, Nigerian dramaturges should write plays that conform to neo-alienation theory as it sets the pace for a new postmodern and experimental theatre in Nigeria.

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Intimate Dialogue with *The Bee Inside the Head*

RALUCA BLAGA[1]

Abstract: This paper is structured as an analytical dialogue, challenged by the performance *The Bee Inside the Head* by Roland Schimmelpfennig, directed by Theodor-Cristian Popescu (produced by the National Theatre of Târgu-Mures, the *Liviu Rebreanu* Company). Starting from the definitions proposed by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his book, *Postdramatic Theatre*, this analysis frames the above-mentioned theatrical performance into the realm of scenic poetry, following all the stage mechanisms that avoid the classical construction of a theatrical event.

Keywords: Theodor-Cristian Popescu, *The Bee Inside the Head,* Roland Schimmelpfennig, dialogue, postdramatic theatre, scenic poem.

The invariable feature of theatre can be revealed by disclosing all the layers of an adverb: together. In an overall communication context, the adverb defines itself by means of its very inflexibility. Regardless of the linguistic frame within which it is used, the adverb remains on the same position, always intransigent and firm, in front of all other parts of speech that allow themselves to be molded by the communication process. From the point of view of meaning, the adverb may indicate the place where something happens, the time when something occurs, as well as the manner and purpose of an activity, of something taking place. Each and every time, the adverb uncovers the meaning of an action or of a feature. The meaning of the adverb "together", associated to the noun "theatre", may lead to the discovery of aesthetic beauty by the very capacity of placing us in the departure point of four semantic directions (place, time, manner, purpose). The noun "theatre" and the adverb

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"together" may generate the semantic direction of a space that requires to be inhabited at the same time, in the same manner and for the same purpose by a number which sums up two distinct entities: performance and viewer. The relationship between the two entities is a causal one, but the beauty of this connection resides in the very impossibility of irrevocably establishing (either by scientific methods, or by phenomenological or aesthetic ones etc.) which of the two entities (the performance or the viewer) is the cause and which is the effect. This previously mentioned difficulty may be put in relation to an overall communication frame, to the dialogue that theatrical art presupposes. By its very aim and nature, theatre pulls away the band that isolates the lonely encounter between receiver and artistic product, as it happens, for instance, with other results of some artistic hands, like a painting, a novel or a film. All these can happen as the place, time, manner and purpose of the theatrical event are provided by the star-adverb: together. Furthermore, the above-mentioned lexical unit needs, feeds on and exists only in the presence of the fulfillment of the communication process, i.e. of the prime meaning that the word dialogue brings.

Dialogue, typically associated to theatre, might be defined by means of the semantic touches of Hans-Thies Lehmnann: "The theatre performance turns the behavior onstage and in the auditorium into a *joint text*, a 'text' even if there is no spoken dialogue on stage or between actors and audience"[2]. The syntagm "joint text" makes us look back onto the same adverb, from whose layers the invariable feature of theatre, "togetherness", is revealed. At the same time, the combination of words proposed by Hans-Thies Lehmann may also open the door to the professional gaze, which observes, assesses and carefully studies the theatrical product. The ways in which a theatrical event can be examined are subject to the principle of variety. But if we do not want to exclude the syntagm "joint text" from the examination field of an artistic product, we are forced to focus the professional gaze on the inside of the semantic shell of the locution "reflection of a theatrical experience"[3]. When corroborated, the two entities, "joint text" and "reflection of a theatrical

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2. Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2006), 17.
3. Lehmann, 8.

experience" actually express a continuation of a communication process initiated by the theatrical performance. Objective or subjective perspectives may waltz between the two entities. As a rule, the joint text, which is born in the space between spectacle and spectator, aims at ideatic sensations or processes that aim, in their turn, at objectivity. The reflection of a theatrical experience, which is a process that depends on the specific tools of reasoning, aims at subjectivity. To carry out and really fulfill the meaning of the adverb "together", but mainly to develop all the possible nuances of the dialogue (understood here as a reflection on a joint text), the theatrical performance has to build bridges for communication, using a variety of mechanisms that are available to it. One possible way would be that, as the director Theodor-Cristian Popescu says, "artists (…) build experiences that carry the audience within themselves"[4].

The "joint text" that Hans-Thies Lehmann had his stakes on, generated by a communication bridge shaped as an experience like the one defined by Theodor-Cristian Popescu, may be translated and exemplified in this research paper. The principle that this analysis starts from is generated by the idea that Andy Horowitz has brought into theatre criticism. In his essay, *Culturebot and The New Criticism*, Horowitz proposes the concept of "critical horizontalism"[5] as a behavior guideline for the web page he is managing, explaining his options thus: „criticism is a creative practice unto itself and the writer exists in subjective relation to the work of the artist"[6]. Therefore, taking Andy Horowitz's thesis as a departure point, this paper intends to present its ideatic background starting from the incentive that it will be no more than an extension of the dialogue initiated by the artists who brought the show *The Bee in the Head* to the Romanian space.

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[4] Raul Coldea, "Despre Artişti, Public, Şi Învăţarea Continuă. Interviu Cu Simona Deaconescu, Alina Nelega, Theodor-Cristian Popescu, Ferenc Sinkó," *Liternet*, December 7, 2018, https://atelier.liternet.ro/articol/19932/Raul-Coldea-Simona-Deaconescu-Alina-Nelega-Theodor-Cristian-Popescu-Ferenc-Sinko/Despre-artisti-public-si-invatarea-continua.html.

[5] Andy Horwitz, "Culturebot and The New Criticism," Culturebot. Maximum Performance, 2012, https://www.culturebot.org/2012/03/12883/culturebot-and-the-new-criticism/.

[6] Ibidem.

I shall return for a moment to the statement made by the director Theodor-Cristian Popescu – "artists (…) build experiences that carry the audience within themselves"[7] – positioning it into a space where it can start a dialogue with one of Amos Oz's confessions from his book *A Tale of Love and Darkness*: "I now believe that all journeys are ridiculous: the only journey from which you don't always come back empty-handed is the journey inside yourself"[8].

Taking a journey means taking action – going towards something, but it also means a great distance from the departure point of the undertaken journey. The leaving, the moving, the already travelled distance show distinct shades of the noun "meeting" – the discovery of somebody or of something. The journey towards oneself requires the previously mentioned attributes, but I believe that the presence of something or of somebody is in fact the ground zero of the beginning of this journey, as "it is because we are through and through compounded of relationships with the world"[9]. Thus, the connection between a person and an object, a phenomenon or another person, leads to the appearance of an ideatic or conversational exchange, in the same primal form of dialogue. "Three guides will lead you towards the child that you could have been, and from that point onwards…"[10] – these are the words printed on the complimentary cards distributed upon entering the Small Hall of the National Theatre of Târgu Mureș, when attending a performance of *The Bee Inside the Head* by Roland Schimmelpfennig, directed by Theodor-Cristian Popescu. The words that make up the sentence quoted above come together in the form of a promise of a journey towards oneself. The punctuation marks that break the explanations regarding the possible effects generated by the above-mentioned theatre event act as a perfectly clear invitation to a dialogue with the spectator, to the conversation that *The Bee Inside the Head* wishes to initiate with each and every member of the audience.

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[7] Coldea, "Despre Artişti, Public, Şi Învăţarea Continuă. Interviu Cu Simona Deaconescu, Alina Nelega, Theodor-Cristian Popescu, Ferenc Sinkó."

[8] Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (Orlando: Harvest Books, 2005), 200.

[9] Maurice Merleau Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2005), XIV.

[10] "Albina Din Capul Meu [The Bee Inside My Head]," Teatrul Național Târgu-Mureș, 2018, http://www.teatrunational.ro/spectacole/premiere/spect/albina-din-capul-meu/numar-spectacol/1724.html.

According to the information provided by the translator of the text (the playwright Elise Wilk), *The Bee Inside the Head*, Roland Schimmelpfennig's play, appeared for the first time in November 2016 in the German environment, as it had been commissioned by Consol Theater Gelsenkirchen. Moreover, it was the first children play ever written by the German playwright. The action itself is centered around an ordinary day in the life of a child. To be able to manage by himself in the everyday jungle, the child has to think over his every step and every action as if they were a web game and he is forced to use his own power of imagination to get to the next level of his existential game: waking up in the morning, going to school, the mean behavior of his classmates, the meeting with his sailor neighbor who frightens him out of his wits, avoiding a physical conflict prepared by the older boys, who would like to steal his MP3 player and his phone, the heating of a can of peas in the microwave and falling asleep alone. Apart from his dysfunctional family environment – an alcoholic father and a mother who "looks through you as if you were a piece of glass or something"[11] – the child is saved from each new obstacle that he has to conquer by his own power of imagination, which generates an alter-ego: that of a bee.

Well-known for the "special (…) construction"[12] of his texts, Schimmelpfennig sometimes makes use of construction devices like magical realism and fantasy. For instance, he uses such dramaturgical tools in several of his plays, e.g. *The Arabian Night* or *The Golden Dragon*, as the playwright himself is of the opinion that "It often helps to sketch the real world and observe it in a sharper way"[13]. In this case, as the play *The Bee Inside the*

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[11] Roland Schimmelpfenning, "The Bee Inside the Head. Manuscript. Courtesy of National Theatre of Târgu-Mureș Archives," n.d., 39.

[12] Andreea Dumitru, "Sunt Atras de Dramaturgia Contemporană - Femeia Din Trecut [I Have a Linking for Contemporary Dramaturgy - The Woman from the Past] Interview with Theodor Cristian Popescu," Liternet, 2018, https://agenda.liternet.ro/articol/7552/Andreea-Dumitru-Theodor-Cristian-Popescu/Sunt-atras-de-dramaturgia-contemporana-Femeia-din-trecut.html.

[13] Randy Gener, "'That Point in the Drama Where It Starts to Hurt, That's Where the Work Gets Interesting' - Interview with Roland Schimmelpfenning, German Playwright and Director," Critical Stages, 2011, http://www.critical-stages.org/5/that-point-in-the-drama-where-it-starts-to-hurt-thats-where-the-work-gets-interesting-interview-with-roland-schimmelpfenning-german-playwright-and-director/.

Head is categorized as children's theatre, the main dramaturgic ingredient that Roland Schimmelpfennig uses is fantasy. In her book, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, Farah Mendlesohn proposes four different ways to integrate fantasy into the "real" world that a story brings: portal-quest fiction, immersive fiction, intrusive fiction and liminal fiction[14]. I belive that in his play *The Bee Inside the Head,* Roland Schimmelpfennig uses the tools of immersive fiction, a fantasy-revealing footprint which "invites us to share not merely a world, but a set of assumptions. At its best, it presents the fantastic without comment as the norm both for the protagonist and for the reader: we sit on the protagonist's shoulder and while we have access to his eyes and ears, we are not provided with an explanatory narrative"[15]. In a dramaturgic manner that is similar to the one that he also opted for in his play *The Arabian Night*, Schimmelpfennig chooses to use a technique that is based on distancing oneself from the presented fact in shaping the universe in *The Bee Inside the Head*: the main character is revealed by making use of the second person singular: "And you, you're still lying on the bed."[16] If in the dramaturgic universe of the *Arabian Night*, the feelings of the characters are derived from the observational reflection of the people around, in *The Bee Inside the Head* each action is delivered from behind the protective wall of three voices, each with its own perspective. This detached representation is enhanced by the surrounding environment – the town or the living space – which allows itself to be flooded by the effects of the climatic conditions, with an implicit backdrop on the existential journeys of the characters: heat, drizzle, rain in *The Bee Inside the Head* or the suffocating atmosphere of a summer day and the lack of water in the *Arabian Night*. In *The Bee Inside the Head,* in such a landscape, where "everything starts in a totally harmless manner"[17] with the presence of the alter-ego of the main character, the mundane is suddenly infused with fantasy.

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[14] Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), XIX–XXIII.

[15] Mendlesohn, XX.

[16] Schimmelpfenning, "The Bee Inside the Head. Manuscript. Courtesy of National Theatre of Târgu-Mureș Archives," 3.

[17] Schimmelpfenning, 1.

By choosing the play *The Bee Inside the Head*, the director Theodor-Cristian Popescu has his fourth theatrical encounter with the dramaturgic worlds of Roland Schimmelpfennig.[18] In the interview that Andreea Dumitru took back in 2008, the Romanian director spoke about some of the reasons of this affinity: "What I like best about Schimmelpfennig is that his texts always start from a very clear impulse, from a very concrete fear (…) or from a very intense sensation (…)"[19]. This creatively attractive transparency, disclosed after the encounter with Schimmelpfennig's plays, provided the director Theodor-Cristian Popescu with the incentive from which, I believe, this performance starts: the intimate confrontation with the meaning behind Sigmund Freud's statement: "even what for a long time we believed forgotten may suddenly return to consciousness"[20]. That particular long-forgotten something, related to the story of *The Bee Inside the Head* alongside with the short presentation provided to the spectator upon entering the stall – "the child you could have been"[21] – actually reveal the benchmarks of the journey proposed by this theatre event. Thus, the performance *The Bee Inside the Head*, by means of its intimate undertaking to which we are also made part of, challenges us, by taking this theatrical product as its conversational impulse, to a dialogue with the forces within us, with our own psychic transformations.

Analyzing the way in which he thought out the stage environment for the performance of *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, Jacques Copeau says: "we endeavor to create no stage apparatus unless under de pressure of the performance itself, out of the obedience to deeply felt dramatic necessities"[22]. The stage apparatus of *The Bee Inside the Head* bears the mark of the stage designer Mihai Păcurar and of the light designer Lucian Moga. We are handed out the key to understand this performance from the very moment we enter the stall, through the semi-obscurity that allows us to see the bodies of the three actresses and the blurred contours of the stage design. Our attention is drawn to the rectangular positioning of the stage apparatus. A screen is installed at the back of the acting space, accompanied frontally by a stage device in the shape of a long wooden table, full of the many pieces of a miniature universe: blocks of flats, parks, streets, toys, pieces of clothing, two overhead projectors and many other things. The dim lighting filling the audience space and the stage is turned off slowly and, for a few minutes, words are the only ones filling the stage. By temporarily excluding light and, implicitly, visibility onstage, by exclusively betting solely on the voices of the three actresses, the performance *The Bee Inside the Head* proposes, from the very beginning, the connection to a personal theatre experience. Schimmelpfennig's text, which makes use of the above-mentioned distancing techniques, is brought to the stage as is, stripped for a few moments of the visual component, and thus, by means of appealing to the voices that tell a story in the second person singular, the audience is included, from the very beginning, in the theatrical event.

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[18] Theodor-Cristian Popescu directed three other texts by the German playwright: *Push Up 1-3*, *The Woman Before*, *The Arabian Night*, both in Romania and in Canada.

[19] Dumitru, "Sunt Atras de Dramaturgia Contemporană - Femeia Din Trecut [I Have a Linking for Contemporary Dramaturgy - The Woman from the Past] Interview with Theodor Cristian Popescu."

[20] Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), 77.

[21] "Albina Din Capul Meu [The Bee Inside My Head]."

[22] Apud Patrice Pavis, *The Routledge Dictionary of Performance and Contemporary Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 8–9.

Once the six minutes during which the lights are only blinking, thus offering short visual sequences, are over, the jungle of the mundane, that the main character is crossing, is literally revealed to us, everything is illustrated on the stage. With the input of the whole stage apparatus, consisting of the theatrical installation and the bodies of the three actresses, who manipulate and process, in real time, images that are edifying for the actions of the main character of the story, the audience sees, on the screen in front, the visual representation of the words behind the action. The theatre installation devised by the stage designer Mihai Păcurar, whose images and shades are revealed by the light design operated by Lucian Moga, enhances the immersive feature of the fantasy world contained in the dramatic text. Through such a construction, the stage environment manages to "heighten the viewer's awareness of how objects are positioned (installed) in a space, and of our bodily response to this"[23]. This is how the spectator is invited to get "into his personal corridor of memory"[24], the access being also mediated and screened by the layers of events that the main character of *The Bee Inside the Head* is going through.

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[23] Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), 6.

[24] Bishop, 16.

The function of the many objects integrated into the stage environment and manipulated by the three actresses is to illustrate the actions that the main character of the story, as well as to build sensations generated by the town or the living space, the home where these actions take place. By decidedly betting on the visual component, the connecting bridge with the inner self of the onlooker was scenically built as if keeping in mind Sigmund Freud's statement from his book, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*: "Only my earliest childhood memories are of a visual character; they represent plastically depicted scenes, comparable only to stage settings"[25]. In fact, the picturality of the stage setting invites the audience to make up its own performance journey by choosing from among the many simultaneous sequences, in the same manner in which, as part of an artistic installation, the person watching is required to acknowledge his or her own presence in space, in relation to the elements that make up the actual installation corpus. This is, I believe, the very reason for which music or any other possible auditive background have been left out of the equation: from the very desire to avoid the emotional guidance of the spectator during this journey towards him/herself, the only companion on the journey being the stage apparatus of the performance *The Bee Inside the Head*.

The body of the performer also takes part in the shaping of the theatrical space, by merging with the stage landscape, adding itself to it in the form of a detail, but first and foremost as object. By means of their bodily presence within the theatrical space, by the fact that they manipulate video cameras, overhead projectors, but also other parts of the theatrical installation as well, the three actresses – Roxana Marian, Loredana Dascălu, Georgiana Ghergu – engage and use their whole anatomic apparatus as means of generation of the stage landscape. According to the moment of the story, in agreement with the scenically illustrated actions of the character, several body parts of the performer (physiognomy, limbs, gaze) are caught on the media and projected onto the screen, to be then submerged into the whole theatrical landscape. By using neutral stage costumes, the body of each of the three actresses gets to be scenically "hidden from view", allowing the manipulation of the stage devices to bask in the spotlight. Nevertheless, when the story requires it and the environment affects the existential journey of the character, the whole body of the performer is used to render the efforts the character makes to actually break down all obstacles in his way. Apart from all these above-mentioned bodily mechanisms, the voice of the performer – in fact, the bearer of the whole narration of facts – is freed from any intense shades and it is only used as a means of connection between the visual frame and the actions in the story. As stage time passes, by objectifying the body of the performer, the stage landscape allows itself to be contained by word and gesture.

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[25] Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 36.

The German playwright gives the following stage directions in the opening of his text: "There are three actors onstage: #1, #2 and #3. They all look at the audience, they talk and play with each other"[26]. The gender of the actors is not specified. Theodor-Cristian Popescu, nevertheless, chooses three actresses for his stage version. Thus, within the stage environment, the bodily presence becomes a clear sign, as the gender or the sex of the performer brings with it a preexisting cultural code. In this way, the bodies of the three actresses become the bearers of differentiation. With the director choosing three actresses of three different ages, this cultural code is further enhanced. Keeping in mind the nature of Schimmelpfennig's story (we are dealing with a childen's play), the whole fantasy-infused set of initiatic events that the character of this dramaturgic concoction goes through, alongside with the whole stage environment of the performance *The Bee Inside the Head*, I believe that the director's choice of the female gender shifts into the conventional sphere constructed by the symbol. The bodies of the actresses are added to the stage apparatus and cross the theatrical space either as sign, or as object or image. By choosing three actresses of three different ages, the director's choice frames the feminine presence from within the performance into the possibility to reveal what Jung used to call an archetype, thus disclosing, according to stage time, several shades of these feminine presences: "the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants (...) anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate"[27]. As a consequence, the previously mentioned choice, scenically organized by the director of the performance, transfer the children theatre story imagined by Roland Schimmelpfennig from the fairy tale world, shifting its weight center towards the individual existential experience of each member of the audience in the Small Hall of the National Theatre of Târgu Mureș. The performance *The Bee Inside the Head* makes use of complex affective reactions, "for emotion is the chief source of consciousness"[28], but, given the above-mentioned choices and especially by using three performers of the same gender – the archetypally female one – transforms the fantasy-infused narrative, either by seducing it, or by devouring it, "along this path of conscious realization adds that much to the world"[29].

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[26] Schimmelpfenning, "The Bee Inside the Head. Manuscript. Courtesy of National Theatre of Târgu-Mureș Archives," 1.

The performance *The Bee Inside the Head* recommends itself as a "theatrical experience that is difficult to classify"[30] The resistance against classic theatre practice may easily be observed by recording the previously mentioned stage devices. The difficulty of framing or placing this theatre event into a certain area of contemporary theatre space becomes redundant if this theatrical product is placed under the umbrella of postdramatic theatre, more exactly of that what Hans-Thies Lehmann names by using the syntagm of "scenic poem": "The human being, the physical gesture, (...) matter and space form a purely scenic figuration, the spectator taking on the role of a reader who gathers the human, spatial, tonal signifiers scattered across the stage. Such formations/processes situated in between poetry, theatre and installation are best characterized as a *scenic poem*. Like a poet, the director composes fields of association between words, sounds, bodies, movements, light and objects”[31]. The main tool of poetry is the word. Irrespective of the rhythm and rhyme also used from its chest of treasures, poetry confers much more power of expression to the word by enhancing the image within it. At the same time, the word has been cleared of all impurities and it is served in a concentrated form. Betting it all on imagination, poetry operates with the tensions that emerge among words. The differences of potential between the basic units of the vocabulary give birth to meaning, by association. Nichita Stănescu believed that the “poetic stage is reached only once the word can be imagined, once the word becomes one with imagination”[32]. Such a poetic stage is also employed all through the performance of *The Bee Inside the Head*. Imaginative tensions are born between the bodies of the performers, the scenic word, the theatrical image, light and the objects that are part of the installation. Each of the elements mentioned in the previous sentence is shown in its concentrated form, as its materiality should not be for the audience anything else than the force leading it towards associative image-fields. In this way, the audience is shown a theatrical white sheet containing conventional signs and symbols stripped of their actual meaning and of their primary features, its mission being then equivalent to the mission of a poetry reader.

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[27] Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (London: Routledge, 1991), 82.

[28] Jung, 96.

[29] Ibidem.

[30] "Albina Din Capul Meu [The Bee Inside My Head]."

Such an organization of the stage material is obviously subscribed to a theatrical experience that is difficult to classify. Nevertheless, the stage experiments that Theodor-Cristian Popescu chose to make provide several anchors to the audience, anchors which retain their traditional functionality. The stage action consists of both the story of Schimmelpfennig’s dramatic text and the manner in which this story is translated onto the stage. The events that the main character goes through, as well as their narrative recounting, are substituted to the traditional manner of telling a story onstage. There is no illusion of a stage character, but this absence is compensated by the three actresses gazing into the audience, thus integrating it into the onstage sequences. The stage environment, although invaded by the totally untraditional stage setting, maintains some of the traditional ingredients:

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[31] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 111.

[32] Nichita Stănescu, *Fiziologia Poeziei* (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1990), 11.

the clear separation line between performance and audience space, the intimate darkness from the stall hiding the audience, the positioning of the performance space in front of the audience. The stage time is imprinted the duration that is necessary for the unfolding of the theatrical event, without compressing or dilating it.

The fact that the director Theodor-Cristian Popescu used, even for this experimental theatrical event, several tools that are specific to traditional theatrical art falls under the syntagm of "joint text" used by Hans-Thies Lehmann, i.e. it is in compliance with the mission of the theatrical object of not existing or not being given meaning in the absence of an audience. Keeping in mind the very fact that the audience as such, as a group, is an eclectic one, but also anticipating the fact that the Small Hall of the National Theatre of Târgu Mureș will hide, among the many spectators gathering there with a shared purpose, several theatrical horizons of expectation, the performance comes with the proposal of "a purely scenic figuration"[33], constructed around a scaffolding of a few traditional fragments, so as not to hinder the capacity of the scenic poem to melt away into the imaginary of each member of the audience. Having as a declared purpose the taking of the audience into a journey towards the inner self, only in the form that the director Theodor-Cristian Popescu has chosen, i.e. that of a "scenic poem", the performance *The Bee Inside the Head* offers the audience a reading of its interior space, a revisiting of a past existential moment, where lines like: "You don't know yet? You will, some day"[34] have not yet been covered by the acknowledgment of the passing of time.

When asked by Randy Gener why he had become a playwright, Roland Schimmelpfennig answered: "I think in dialogue"[35]. Furthermore, the German playwright affirms that the plays he writes always resonate with the world that we live in, as he sees theatre as being something "about me and the other"[36]. I shall thus associate the echo of Schimmelpfennig's words with the desire of the director Theodor-Cristian Popescu to build possible worlds in his shows, worlds that should take us inside ourselves. The result of this ideatic association sends us to the same star-adverb that has opened this essay: together. By embarking the audience onto this journey of an intimate dialogue about and towards itself, not only via this performance, *The Bee Inside the Head*, but also via the performance *Aventura* by Alfredo Sanzol, at the Piatra Neamt Youth Theatre, Theodor Cristian Popescu provides the aesthetic objects from which this conversation can start. When one starts such a journey, the theatre event *The Bee Inside the Head* turns into the contemplative distance from which we look inside ourselves and watch our own transformations. In time, at the moment when one thinks one's theatre experience through, the performance turns into the remembrance of an image of one's self, as "(…) living memory, like ripples in water or the nervous quivering of a gazelle's skin in the moment before it takes flight, comes suddenly and trembles in a single instant in several rhythms or various focuses, before being frozen and immobilized into the memory of a memory."[37]

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[33] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 111.

[34] Schimmelpfenning, "The Bee Inside the Head. Manuscript. Courtesy of National Theatre of Târgu-Mureș Archives," 50.

[35] Gener, "'That Point in the Drama Where It Starts to Hurt, That's Where the Work Gets Interesting' - Interview with Roland Schimmelpfenning, German Playwright and Director."

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[36] Ibidem.

[37] Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, 68.

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How to „Read" a Dance Theatre Performance?

ALEXANDRA FELSEGHI[1]

Abstract: The following article treats the subject of a dance theatre performance, by giving an inside and an outside perspective of the creative process. It also attempts to define the concept of dance dramaturgy and to explain the dramaturg's function in the rehearsal room. On a level of perception, the audience's function is a very important one, because the spectator becomes a co-author of the performer's message. Therefore, the relationship between the stage and hall is a communication on different levels.

Keywords: Audience, cultural approach, dance theatre, devised process, dramaturg, dramaturgy, dramaturgical thinking, imagination, images, interpretation, space, theatre.

In his essay from 1917, *Art as a Technique*[2], the Russian critic Viktor Schlovsky starts with a statement: "Art is thinking in images". Every form of art is a result of a process that creates and (re)arranges images in such matter to create a meaning or a story. As performing arts practitioners, we can consider this as a starting point for us, to ask a series of questions about the ways in which these stories are delivered to an audience and about how they are perceived. In the context of a dance theatre performance, the body in space is the raw material of creating and transmitting these images in front of an audience. This matter can be interpreted as liberating and extremely encoded for uninformed spectators. The way in which we witness an artistic product in highly influenced by a group of identity factors, as: culture, history, sociology, personal history or even momentary disposition. Therefore, the image in the creative process, as Schlovsky puts it, is being distorted, we might say, improved or complemented by the "outside eye" of the spectators. Thus, art is thinking in the performer's images or in the spectators' images: each of these two perspectives has, in this context, a creative function.

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[2] Victor Shklovsky, "Art As Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism. Four Essays*, ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion Reis (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 3–57.

The way in which the story of a body in motion is represented on stage is closely related to the physical elements of the limited space of the performance. The French dancer and choreographer, Hubert Godard points out a very clear disctinction between space and topos, as if follows:

> Space is a word that we use constantly in our work as dancers and bodyworkers, but it is an ambiguous term. I will use the term *space* when I talk about the imaginary building of our relationship to the world, and I will use *topos* when I am talking about real, geographical, measurable space. When people meet or interact, it is a mix of the two. What I am calling space, the imaginary building of the phenomenon, is linked to our personal story.[3]

For Godard, performance is a meeting between dancer and spectator at a congruence between space and time.

A performance becomes a place of continuous negotiation and the dramaturg a kind of referee or a facilitator between two sides. Throughout the present article I will present the dramaturg's function within the creative process of a dance theatre performance and also the function and the ideal way of perception that the spectators must have while attending a representation in a specific time and space.

What is dance dramaturgy?

Dance dramaturgy is considered to be a relatively new term in the performing arts sector. Belgian artist Myriam van Imschoot states the fact that the term was created out of a form of anxiety:

> The general discourse on the new dramaturgy (be it theatre or dance related) is mostly structured around a couple of tropes, or to put it another way, anxieties: the generic anxiety (where does the dramaturg come from?), the definition of anxiety (what is a dramaturg?)[4]

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[3] Caryn McHose, "Phenomenological Space: 'I'm in the Space and the Space Is in Me.,'" *Contact Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2006): 33.

[4] Synne K. Behrndt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 20, no. 2 (May 2010): 186, https://doi.org/10.1080/10486801003682393.

We must understand the clear distinction between "playwright" and "dramaturg". The first is considered to be the author of a text created with the purpose to be staged; the second has different responsibilities during the rehearsals, such as researching a specific subject, being an advisor for the director of the performance, adapting a play/script or other texts to be staged. The *Oxford Encyclopedia to Theatre and the Performing Arts*[5] explains the fact that a dramaturg is a very trained person with a special knowledge in theatre practice, history and theory who can help the director or other members of a theatre group with their intentions in a specific production. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was the first to use the term "dramaturg" in *Hamburgische Dramaturgie/Hamburg Dramaturgy* (1767). Since then, the dramaturg is an indispensable collaborator in a classical theatre production or in experimental and independent theatre companies.

In the case of a dance theatre performance, the dramaturg's role is also becoming a necessity and its function is extended on different levels. On one hand, the dramaturg is an interlocutor to the choreographer, helping him to elaborate the concept of the show. In this dialogue, the dramaturg offers a theoretical basis for the possible interpretative meanings of the performance. This approach is applicable for a devised performance – created strictly for that particular act. Also, the dramaturg is the one that creates correspondences and cultural, social, historical, psychological or other required references for the entire group. Another perspective concerning the dramaturg's tasks is offered by artist Hildegard de Vuyst, during a discussion on this matter published by *Dance Theatre Journal* in 2000:

> I consider myself the first audience, I ask myself – "what does the work do to me?" I do not go and get my information in the libraries, because it's not going to be used. But it is as André (*Lepecki*) also says about the process – at first, it's very open with a lot of improvisations and assignments, people are asked to make solos and after that the construction of the whole thing takes place, which we very much do together. I've worked with different choreographers and directors and I feel that it works best when I'm not really needed somehow, when

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[5] Dennis Kennedy, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780198601746.001.0001.

> I'm not the embodiment of something that is missing. Because if feels like if I'm not necessary in fact then I have a sort of freedom and a playground to stand on.[6]

Therefore, the dramaturg is also a consultant for the entire time spent in the rehearsal room.

On the other hand, he also has the function of a documentarist and acts like a living memory for the whole material produced by the team. There is a very important difference between dramaturg and dramaturgical thinking. Sometimes, the dramaturg is not needed in a production, but the choreographer along with other dancers must have a dramaturgical thinking, which concerns with taking distance and experiencing an objective perception of the process. This option is vital for the construction of a solid concept and represents a shared responsibility of the entire creative team.

Raimund Hoghe was the first dramaturg to work with a choreographer in the '80s. Him and Pina Bausch created the most meaningful performances at Tanztheater Wüppertal in that period of time. Pina Bausch proposed another approach to the creative process: she started by asking personal questions to her dancers as a ground for improvisation. This amount of material was revised and organized with Hoghe in original dance theatre productions. Since then, an increasing number of choreographers have chosen this formula. During the discussion I've already mentioned, Myriam van Imschoot offers an explanation for this option, as it follows:

> I am thinking about this relationship between a choreographer and a dramaturge and about something we were discussing yesterday, about feeling lonely in the process of making. I can imagine that someone making a work, even though there are plenty of dancers or a set designer or whoever just feels the need to have someone to talk to, whatever this function may be. I would think of this as a social need. Another need might be on the level of skills, that apparently there is a need for some kind of skill, and I think of the traditional dramaturgy that is still linked with some kind of intellectual skill, or intellectual capacity. But this also suggests that there is a skill that exists outside of the body of the choreographer and a division of labor is taking place.[7]

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[6] Scott DeLahunta, "Dance Dramaturgy: Speculations and Reflections," *Dance Theatre Journal* 16, no. 1 (2000): 20–25.

[7] DeLahunta.

This can be a very plausible explanation, due to the fact that the dramaturg doesn't necessarily need to have choreographic or dancing training. Thus, all he needs to have is the availability to react as a real safety net for the artists that are involved in creation and to bring an intellectual approach to the story.

By adding to dance some specific theatre elements, the performers must have another approach of their work. First and foremost, they must be aware that they are creating a new and undiscovered character entirely inspired from their own emotions and history. And this is a great responsibility they are receiving throughout the spectacle. Secondly, they need to master the multitude of layers for the relationships on stage. The performer's choreography is created on the following: (1) the relationship with his own body, (2) the relationship with his/her partner, (3) the relationship with the space, (4) the relationship with the object, (5) the relationship with the audience. All these five relationships have their own dramaturgy.

In conclusion, the tasks of the dramaturg involve: observing, recording, discussing, researching, organizing/ordering/structuring, writing. But, the most important of all these is his obligation to create the possible strategies for interpretation offered to the future audience.

The audience's function

In his book, *Engaging Audiences*, professor Bruce McConachie describe the audience by its biological function:

> We are social animals. Because evolution has equipped our species with more sensitivity to the needs and emotions of others than is evident in other mammals, we carry these cognitive capabilities with us into theatrical viewing. (…) This mode of engagement, also known as empathy, extends to our understanding of actors' use of props and even their gestures and spoken language. Empathy is not an emotion, but it readily leads viewers to emotional engagement.[8]

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[8] Bruce McConachie, *Engaging Audiences. A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 65.

Therefore, the main instrument for the spectators is their nature of human beings and their way of perception by mirroring their experiences with the actions they see onstage. It is a well-known fact that we tend to be interested only by the information and the material we can relate in one way or another. When we encounter something new or maybe original our human nature will push us to create correspondences with our own experiences in the past. A choreography was always an abstract domain and the audience will receive a multitude of images and situations that they will have the freedom to organize as they prefer.

Interpreting a performance is almost like a neuroscience experiment: it engages all our senses and our subconscious mind. We might not classify what we see as the real world, but a possible universe in the convention we are about to accept. Even so, our brain will continue to search for connections and to create a logic for what is happening in front of our eyes. Even the perception of time is a subjective fact, which depends on the milliseconds needed for the brain to create a content from the auditive and visual information received from the outside world. I believe that a dance theatre performance is highly experiential both for dancers and performers.

At the present moment, I do not consider that the Romanian audience is properly educated concerning the perception of a dance theatre performance. Dancing, like performance art, doesn't have to be analyzed by using the same rules as we use for theatre. Most of all, watching a dance theatre performance is an organic experience, and everything starts from the audience's expectation. In the previously cited interview, Godard names this „the dance of my expectation". Thus, the space is never empty, because since the beginning if filled with the audience's personal needs. The spectators become co-authors of the message. Professor Royd Climenhaga gives an example of this matter in his book about Pina Bausch:

> When I saw *Bandoneon* (1984), I saw the aura of dislocation (...) Having just moved and being in a transitional time in my life, I felt the piece as a desire for connection (...) to those I care about. While milling about at intermission, I overheard a woman remark to her friend: *I just started chemotherapy last week; that's how it feels.*[9]

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[9] Royd Climenhaga, *Pina Bausch* (London: Routledge, 2009), 63–64.

This (let's call it) "studied ambiguity" is the most important element of a dance theatre performance. The precarity of the moment is its strength and the meaning becomes a perceptual challenge, as Einav Katan-Schmid puts it: "The philosophical challenge of understanding dance is to elaborate implicit embodied knowledge within explicit argumentation. Thus, before dealing with the logic of linguistic argumentation, philosophy becomes a perceptual challenge."[10] Hence, the spectator absorbs the meaning of a dance theatre performance in „two acts": instinctual and intellectual. At a conference during International Theatre Festival of Sibiu (FITS), choreographer and director of Batsheva Dance Company from Tel Aviv, Ohad Naharin stated that, as a choreographer he has the privilege of not having to explain his creative options. Imagination, he said, is much bigger than our vocabulary and it means the freedom to fantasize about every human value or feeling we are experiencing in this lifetime. In this matter, our option as spectators should be very opened to receive every stimulus from the performers without framing them into known patterns. As co-authors we can filter the images through our personal experiences and create a new piece that is solely addressed to us. There are as many performances as people in the audience in one night and every story it tells is perfectly valid.

Another argument for not having to explain your options as an artist in front of an audience comes from Walter Benjamin who has the belief that art was never created for a public – and this is its power. The audience's attraction for the artistic act can come from a feeling of voyeurism. Having a glimpse of something that was not initially created specifically for one individual, but in the same time, being addressed to each of the individuals gathered at a specific time and space is the paradox of the performance.

In conclusion, we "read" a dance theatre performance by using our way of thinking in images, which is neither more nor less than other possible perceptions to the respective act.

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[10] Einav Katan-Schmid, *Embodied Philosophy in Dance: Gaga and Ohad Naharin's Movement Research* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 7.

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Rencountering Oneself.
Reshaping the Body-Mind Unity in the Acting Classroom

RALUCA LUPAN[1]

Abstract: The following article treats the subject of first year pedagogy in the acting classroom: body-mind concept, the use of space-time in a theatrical approach, the understanding of the performer-student's own body. In the borders of the classroom a profound research on the body and its performative actions is required alongside a personal tackle in the physical patterns of the performer-student and the constructive use of the creative process. The article is a short graphical inside of how an acting technique like Viewpoints can provide a large range of possibilities from which a student can begin to understand the relationship between one own's body and space-time cuantum, body-mind-presence.

Keywords: body-mind, space, time, distance, image-schema, Viewpoints, theatrical space-time concept, readiness, presence, attention.

In an disfunctional understanding of the body-mind concept, one of the most problematic discourses begins in the artist's own admission of this imperfect unity that he operates with. As a performative artist, this unity can be a source of endless creative energy or a source of great discomfort in the case of a misapprehension.

In a professional career, the artist's first creative adreess is his own bodily expericence in relation to space-time. In the aesthetic of the body-mind concept we try to overcome our most intimate, personal and professional questions regarding the artistic process and how art is made in a high quality manner. For me as a performer artist, the most intractable puzzle was, and

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remains still a recurrent question up until this day, is: how do you define the presence of the body in space? "What was presence?" I have been asking myself for the past ten years. Another question that has been hauting my last four years as a teacher is: How can I teach my students in a practical experience the concept of presence? What can I say to them about this concept and how can I clarify it even to myself?

After a futher research into this concept of body-mind, a material that is a unique bodily experience through space and time, I came to realize that as an artist, space was the first technique that I was taught by my professors and that, while moving in a certain located area my body constructs a plastique metaphor using the temporal flow. Mark Johnson is stating in *The Meaning of the Body-Aesthetics of Human Understanding* that: "we adults conceptualize time via deep systematic spatial movement metaphors in which the passage of time is understood as relative motion in space"[2]

The temporal flow and the body as a metaphor in space has been one of my long and most delicate creative persuits in my acting path, as a performer and also as a teacher. Temporal flow can only provide a restricted amout of data for a complete bodily experience if it is not regarded in a deep connection with space and imagination as a stimulating energy. Time, as Johnson explains, is also an experience in itself because us, as humans we can adjudge the passing of time through the "motion of objects and through the movement of our bodies"[3]. In this regard, time can become in one own's mind a metaphorical conceptualization that can be operated and mapped by this simple division in relation to the body of the performer:

a) moving objects: the performer is static/stationary
   objects moving toward the performer
   objects found in the front of the performer
   objects passing the perfomer
   moving further and futher away behind the performer

The first and most essential conceptual temporal change or temporal flow that the performer can survey and bodily experience can be seen in

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2. Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body-Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 28.
3. Johnson, 29.

Johnson's explanation of the "moving time metaphor" in its addition with the spatial motions:

Static location of the performer – The Present
Space *in front* of the performer – The Future
Space *behind* the performer – The Past
Moving objects surrounding the performer – "Time"
Motion of objects passing the performer – The "passing" of time[4]

As a starting point, I believe that this schema of the body in relation with time and space that Mark Johnson is talking about can be viewed as concrete and practical mechanism of the performer which questions the concept of presence on stage. Johnson also utters that the moving body, in the case of a human being (observer), not being in a static position, is able to move from one location to another and therupon "determine the character of temporal change"[5]. In this case of the "moving body" in space, the temporal metaphor will suddenly shift the performers (observer's) point of view, as seen here:

Location of the performer – The Present
Space *in front* of the performer- The Future
Space *behind* of the performer- The past
Locations on the performer's *path of motion*- "Times"
Distance moved by the performer- Amount of time "Passed".

Just as in the case of the human being, the performer divides time into units and defines it with the proper expression: long versus short, extended versus streched. The performer can also see time as a way of *getting closer* to something (objects, other stage parteners), *approaching* objects and other bodies, *passing, leaving* or *reaching* other bodies on stage and so on.

The time metaphor presented by Johnson in his inquiry of the human body is a valuable asset in an artist's investigation of movement linked to time, space and imaginative energy. This analysis has assisted me in clarifying the stages of the 'qualitative dimension of movement' that I can or will engage on stage. In the classroom, while I try to teach the *Viewpoints technique* the basic training is related to the spatial movements that incorporate time and imaginative energy. This type of practice takes a long time in the classroom, because every concept discussed earlier has to assimilated by the student, digest in this own time in the process of experiencing while doing.

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[4] Johnson, 29–30.

[5] Johnson, 30.

In my own professional trials and quests implicating the concept of 'movement on stage' I can submit that, for me, the most important outlines that movement on stage implies is a very personal qualitative experience of space and forceful extertion. *Movement* on stage (and by this I mean body-mind presence in space and time conjunctively adding imaginative energy) is a tool that serves the artist and also a student in developing a different world with the support of his acting technique. We can support this allegation with the words of Johnson: "movement is the principal way by which we learn the meanig of things"[6]. Taking this contention into consideration, involing any human body, we can rely on it in our own persuit of cleaving the concept of *moving (movement)* on stage and in real life. Segregateing the body-mind from the space and time unit is in my opionion a evident denial of the human being's micro and macrocosm.

The body of the performer will experience space and time by moving and in this manner will be leaving peculiar pattern of its motions in the area that it moves in. This distinctive motion expericence and process can be observed from the outside as:

a) liniar versus non liniar path or patterns of motion

b) degrees of extertion and force

The "liniar versus the non-liniar pattern" heads to the development of creating awareness in spatial trajectories and directions and "the degrees of extertion and force" used by the body can reveal the level of extertion that is needed by the body to move from point A to B and moving objects of different weights. So my first trail, while in the classroom is to make in the beginning a simple practical study with my students: they have to normal walk one by one, following each other, from one corner of the room to the other point keeping the diagonal line of the space. The simple diagonally walk from point A to B will provides the following information about the body of the performer-student: the degree of use of his own center of gravity, personal internal pace, rhythm and cadence, position of the spine, proprioception level and type of connection with his own body. My personal and professional view on this matter regarding the movement on stage has to start with the deep understanding of one's body and how the body in relation with the binomial space-time can provide enough datum about our own motion patterns that we have aquired in our early stages of growing up. In the practical discourse in the classroom the attention focuses on making the performer-student become aware of his own mental and physical forms, patterns and features. I encourage the performer-student to examine the way he walks, stands and the locomotion patterns in close partenership with these two concepts: space and time. We then decompose the notion of body movement and after that the logical step is to underline the importance and relevance of seeing the body as a moving image in the accompaniment of space-time. This type of allocution creates awareness on the four qualities[7] of movement that Johnson classifies in his attempt of understanding the \`flesh\` and the movement of flesh in a deep physical and metaphysical way: tension, liniarity, amplitude and projection. In this work conditions we are trying to find out what amount of effort is required for a movement and what is the level of tension in the musculature is needed to perform any stage movement. After discovering the complete effort and energy used by the body, the next step is to let the body make its own unconscious adjustments and recalibrate the extertion prerequisited in the performance of a organic movement.

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[6] Johnson, 22.

After trying in the classroom levels of tension, we proceed to the next qualitative state of movement-*liniarity* that gives the performer-student the following information: every move made on stage creates a path or a pattern of motion and this path or pattern can be actual or projected in space, liniar or curved, jogged or smoth and up or down. The *amplitude* of movement can be performed with various swing impulses depending on whether our body fills and uses a compacted space. Involving the body in time and space the performer-student can come to the same conlusions as Johnson's definitions[8] of the quality of movement:

1. *Tension* can be view as giving 'grounded meaning in the bodily extertion and its felt in the muscular tension'.

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[7] Johnson, 22–25.

[8] Johnson, 21–26.

2. *Liniarity* is in close connection with the peri-personal space and 'spatial directional qualities of bodily motion'.

3. *Amplitude* can be regarded as a 'bodily phemomenon of expansion and contraction in the range of motion'.

4. *Projection* inured as a 'vectoral quality of certain bodily'.

In the theater pedagogy structure that I promote and embolden in the first year when I meet my performer-students consists in making a group effort in creating awareness about the one's relation with his own body. After being linked-up with their own 'flesh' and mind, the involvement of imaginative energy is indispensable and vital, in the trials that students make in the classroom. Creating and recognizing one own's body (and mind) as a projected image in space and time in a stage manner becames an almost absolute need that takes a lot of time for the performer-student to aknowledge and to assume as a part of the acting technique.

In the second part of teaching movement techniques we try step a little bit forward and grow more and more aware of the differences between us as entities and the entities surrounding us, because we are residents of physical envoriment that is always recasting our physical and mental movements and actions. We are born in this physical world and we interact in multiple enviroments and this "involves both the structure of the organism and the structure of its enviroments inextricably woven together". In the basic outlines of actions and movements made on stage the next logical step is to test the ensuing: "movements manifest a broad range of reccuring structures and patterns called *image-schemas"*[9]. In the practical cases that we operate in classroom along side the performer-student I attempt to take into consideration the definition given by Mark Johnson and George Lakoff to the concept of image-schemas. Both of this two philosophical figures with an extensive background in cognitive linguistics and embodied sciences exhibit a very specific definition of the notion mentioned before: "*image-schema* is a dynamic, reccuring pattern of the organism and a basic sensorimotor experience (body-mind) by which a person encounters an enviroment or what we call the world around us"[10].

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[9] Johnson, 21.

[10] Johnson, 136.

In addition to this mental clue that they leave us, both continue with a wider range of the notion, and in this situation we can look at the *image-schema* as:

- a reccurent, stable patterns of sensorimotor experience
- "image"-like, in that they preserve tge topological structure of the perceptual whole
- operating dynamically *in* and *across* time
- at once "bodily" and "mental"
- predicated on interaction with a wider environment
- realized as activation patterns in topologic neural maps
- structures that link sensorimotor experiences to conceptualization and language and having internal structures that give rise to constrained inferences.

In this encounter of bringing into consciousness our own *image-schema,* in the first year performer-students are advised to enquire in their own bodies for the verticality of the bones and muscle structure, balance of the body and movement behaviour and patterns. The proper way to start this type of bodily investigation comes from a personal need of a better understanding of our own mechanism and also from a professional belief that the actor's apparatus is the main tool in which the fictional word can manifest. The exhibition of the fictional world of a character is linked to the actor's training and his bodily experiences combined with the imaginative stimulus. In the labour of what I believe to be a safe way of incorporating a fictional character or a role, the student has to be aware of his body and mental patterns. The journey of getting to know our bodies in a deeper sense is a lifetime perambulation.

The main lesson's that the students have to learn in the work done in an acting classroom is, in my oppinion, the rencouter with the body and finding our *motor schemas.* As we try to "carve" into our own body, we must take into account the six main transition paths of a *sensorimotor schema*: readiness, starting phase transition, main process (central phase transition), postcentral state, ending phase transition and final phase. With the help of the research of M. Johnson we are now able to define and explain more broadly this six transition of a *motor schema*.

The six phase identified by Johnson can be regarded and interpreted as:

a) readiness: in any particular body action or movement there can be found a prior kinetic and sensimotor that has to satisfed by the body in a state of preparatory conditions;

b) starting phase transition: the begging of a certain bodily movement is regarded as a separate and distinctive process done in a proper and organic manner;

c) main process or central phase transition can be viewed as the specific performance of the action you undertake and the typical motor sequences that constitute that particular movement;

d) postcentral state: in the case of interrupting the movement sequence a breach is created that can be continued and then the interrupted sequence can be reasumed and monitored up until the final stage of the completed process that involves that particular movement;

e) final phase: includes the stop of the movement and the final adjustments take can be performed in our attempt in finishing and completing the action or movement sequence.

Time and space in the dramatic or performative actions is clearly linked with the motor schemas and, another emphasis is given to the importance that one gives to these two basic concepts used in most of the theatre techinques that have been revealed to us up until this day. Space and time consciousness in the dramatic area is very dissimilar from natural or organic time and space. In the performative space of action these concepts can be seen as visual entities and there is a very significant lesson that the perfomer-student has to learn: "the fully develoved relationship with space is not a `skill` that can be simply copied stylistically. Hours of standing in *Space* is required to truly occupy the stilness, to hold the ACTION OF SPACE"[11].

Understanding space in Marie Overlie visions and practical discoveries, begins with regarding the notion of space as a theatrical or performative technique. Marie Overlie, in her book (Standing in Space-The Six Viewpoints

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[11] Marie Overlie, *Standing in Space-The Six Viewpoints Theory and Practice* (Billings, MT: Fallon Press, 2016), 11.

Theory and Practice) dedicated to uncover the subtle depths of this notion says that everyone of us posses this inmate ability to a certain degree, but "when you add observation of distances between yourself and fellow performers, and pay attention to the spatial patters (…) you will develop an awareness of space as a unifying effect"[12]. This complete awareness of personal and professional spatial patterns can lead to a better "listening of the space" that Overlie sees as a high sense of cooperation of the performer. The author of the book that regards space as a tool in the acting class, states that this intentional spatial pattern can not be separated from the concept of *Time*. In our professional teaching opinion we agree with her next written allegation: "in front of an audience, facing *Time* you are performing a deeply emotional and courageous act of surrender and integration with a natural force that is both inside and outside of your own existence"[13].

Making these concepts a conscious material in our body-mind construct can become a life time research and can become a interogative principale that can emerge in every single moment our professional choices. The decision of working on understanding and listening to space and time can be seen as a mile stone in the development of any artist or acting student. Taking into consideration the relation of the body and the movements it make in time and space has not only a personal foundation, but a concrete physical one. We create our physical identity in time and spce and every action seen as movement can be percieved by others as a kinetic sensation that the body-mind releases in a specific situation.

In her search for a system that sustains and employs the body-mind unity in relation with Space-Shape-Time-Emotion-Movement-Story (SSTEMS), Marie Overlie with the help of a deconstructing process tries to improve the act of creation and make the performe turn off the impulse to control his working materials. In her approach and in her professional interrogations regarding the core of a performance and the job of a performer, Overlie, allows this Six Viewpoints to develop along side the performer's needs. She boards into a journey of a profund reasearch of the functions of the body-mind without making the performer follow a strict formula or directions. Marie

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[12] Ibidem.

[13] Overlie, *Standing in Space-The Six Viewpoints Theory and Practice*, 25.

Overlie's statement regarding the act of creation starts from her professional inqueries and sets a liberating view over the process created by a performer: the Six Viewpoints employs this double process of acting/reacting and the realisation that description is prose and expression is poetry revealed by the relation of the body with time and space.

Taking into consideration the primal points from this technique, in the classroom or in the creative extent, Marie Overlie believes that the concept of *Space* encompasses the following: the action of blocking, placement of furniture, placement of walls, doors, windows, angle of gaze, distance of profection, spatial alignment of the actors to the proscenium, to each other, to the audience, etc. In these context we can also look at *Space* as a sensory based material "unique to each person, and time dependent. (…) There is no distinction first between space and time since what vectoralizes (shapes) the space is already temporalized, specific to the moment. When you percieve a vector, perception accelerates (it builds on itself). Space is not empty. It is a space of action."[14]

The next concept that we abide upon is *Shape* it is link to geometry and it can be found in the costumes of the performer, his gestures, in the posture of the other actors bodies and it you will discover it in all objects seated on the stage. The third point of view, *Time* can be displayed as duration, rhythm, punctuation, pattern, impulse, repetition, legato, pizzicato, lyrical and a myriad of unnamed qualities of movement and it is in close relationship with space. Moving forward in our own investigation of the Viewpoints, the next that we encounter is *Emotion* and has a great deal to do with stage presence. We can also name a few like: anger, dissapointment, fury, pity, alienation, fear, wonder, happiness, sadness in order to make the concept clearer. The fifth material that should have a big role in the classroom is Movement and its particular links: falling, suspension, contraction, impact, running, blood pumping, breath, body weight, center of gravity, etc. The last sphere that has to be dissected is *Story* that has contain an organic logic, order and progression of information, memory, conclusions, allusions, reification and un-reification, construction and deconstruction.

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[14] Caryn McHose, "Phenomenological Space: 'I'm in the Space and the Space Is in Me.' Interview with Hubert Godard," *Contact Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2006): 33.

The materials presented by Overlie in the SSTEMS will have a visual impact on the observer and also on the performer and its meant to shape our creative options and choises. It also can improve our perceptive ability of space in and outside our own bodies and this non-formal approach can teach us that we as humans and as performers are space-time commorants that contain a particular potential of action.

In my daily lessons in the acting clasroom or in a rehearsal group or area I try to always come back to this Viewpoints exercise that I have learned in a workshop guided by Brownyn Tweddle that has been teaching her own personal approach of this techique: 'Walk. Stop. Run. Jump. Lay down'. The set of rules that this exercise infers can be regarded in this manner: a group of people situated in a the stage area are restricted to perform the following actions: walk, stop, run, jump and lay on the floor. The second rule states that this performed actions can only be executed as a group unity. If a member of the group initiates any actions from the five mentioned before, the entire group members have to pursue and accomplish in the shortest time possible that action. Having determined this set of rules, the performer-students will aknowledged in their own mind-body unity the concepts of space-time, image and motor-schemas of their own and of the others, the six main transitions of a sensimotor schema, the four qualities of movement (provided by M. Johnson): tension, liniarity, amplitude, projection. Also, this exercise can provide a wide information about the response time of our kinesthetic reactions, the use of peri-personal space, distance, proximity, energy and effort dosage. As well, as an outside observer we can notice the listening abilities of our bodies and the attitude toward an event. This attitude that the perfomer-student has while performing and engaging his body-mind unity in the exercise can contribute to what that performed action becomes. One of the main purposes of this exercise that I repeat in the classroom is to emprove the process of listening to our own bodies and to the bodies we come into a relationship with and also, to enhance the quality of our attention. Envamping the quality of attention will allow the performer-student's body-mind unity to change and to create a change in the other partener, whether we regard it as another human being, or we as a simple time-space material.

There is also a very idealistic pedagogue that hides behind this technique (Viewpoints) in which I have been specialized in the last four years, and this utopian entity wants to go into the classroom and find sensitivity, a wakefulness of the body-mind unity, fervour, a violently conscious and reactive professionals, attentive and responsive people that are driven by the belief that "attention is an *action* and it can be learned and practiced. It is a way of touching the world"[15].

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Research in Film and Video: Artists Using Their Bodies in Cinematic Experiments

LIGIA SMARANDACHE[1]

Abstract: The aim of this article is to study the relationship between author and camera, the different aspects of this subtle relationship with technology. From the whole cinema history, many artists and film directors played different roles in front of the camera. Whether they interpret a scenario character, in case of fiction films, or use their body in search of cinematic effects, for video art, they choose to be in both parts of the camcorder at the same time. Why does this "video eye" sometimes turns towards the artist? Is it only meant to explore the outside world of the artist? Or is it a mirror which is sometimes inviting you to take a glance at yourself? The term used was first introduced by Gene Youngblood "The video eye" as it is a subtle metaphor for the main function of the camera.

Why do so many artists use the camera with the purpose of showing themselves or their bodies into video experiments? Is it an expression of narcissism or is it a self-exploring tool? To find the answers for all these questions, the research looks into the playful role that the "video eye" has in experimental films and videos. This role was revealed by examining different kinds of esthetic results in comparison with the artist's intention. For example, the body mirrored or reflected, seen in its choreography or as a performer in non-narrative films, are aspects which could draw a conclusion about the self-representation aesthetics.

Keywords: Artists' bodies, camera, reflected bodies, video art.

Artists exploring the medium

Between the mainstream cinema, that depends too much on public responses and the video installation, that is rather seen as a sculptural object,

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one can find the experimental films or video art somewhere in-between. The grey area between what we call the "black box" and the "white cube"[2] is combining artists with different backgrounds. Some of them are searching for aesthetics, others may be performers or could be involved into conceptual art. What is their relationship with the camera? The famous adage of Marshall McLuhan *"the medium is the message"* makes the focus of this article shift from artists themselves to the actual significance of the medium in a reverse perspective. From this new perspective we can identify three features of the camera which engage the author in performing in front of it: *Camera as pen, camera as mirror, camera as a soul keeper*.

Creation as a research method in the use of audiovisual technology has been present since the beginning of cinema, but it flourished when equipment has become available. The image of the "termite artist" seen as an effervescent, non-conventional, heretic person, not demanding any recognition or proud ideal is revealed by the film critique Manny Farber in 1962. In his article "White Elephant Art vs. Termite Art", Farber compares the two types of films: the mainstream cinema, compared to a white elephant and the author films, blossoming once the 16 mm cameras appeared, compared to termites. In Farber's view, the termite-like films, made with no budget, are not meant to become famous because they don't have a commercial interest. They appear out of the pure desire of expression, within the spirit of creative adventure and artistic knowledge, digging secret galleries like termites. The termite keeps digging with small steps into *the walls of the particular* without experiencing the illusion of capturing the truth in a coherent formula.

> A peculiar fact about termite-tapeworm-fungus-moss art is that it goes always forward eating its own boundaries, and likely as not, leaves nothing in its path other than the signs of eager, industrious unkempt activity.[3]

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2. Gregor Stemmrich, "White Cube, Black Box and Grey Areas: Venues and Values," in *Art and The Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tanya Leighton (New York: Tate Publishing, 2008), 430–43.
3. Manny Farber, *Negative Space: Manny Farber on the Movies, The New Wave* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 135.

The introspective, self-reflexive attitude of experimental artists has its roots in that kind of termite behavior mentioned before. Instead of being inspired by a story or a subject, they find inspiration within the medium itself. By playing with the camera they reveal its character, its expressiveness, finding all the possibilities of transmitting their ideas, their moods and thoughts. Experimental and video artists are as genuine as babies playing with their own hands and fingers. They discover themselves reflected by the monitor. Some of these artists participate to their own work of art only once (generally at the first contact with the medium) while others repeatedly turn to their bodies as means of expression.

Camera as stiló (pen) – artists exploring their minds and dreams.

When Alexandre Astruc published his essay *Du Stylo à la caméra et de la caméra au stylo* in 1948, the emergence of the portable camera was to open a new era in the field of cinematography. The New American Avant-garde film announced the first generation of independent filmmakers, who were not coming from the traditional art background. The 16 mm equipment was affordable and the rise of cine-clubs opened a network of exploratory and experimental film consumption.

The advantages of these new cameras enable filmmakers to communicate their thoughts and feelings, being far away from the practices of entertainment cinema. Artists can link images using the most abstract logic of the mind, thus being able to communicate philosophically. In his essay, Astruc introduces the notion of camera-stilo to express the relationship between the non-narrative film language and the written language. Astruc was a visionary of his time, taking into the consideration that the theorists of the structural cinematic semiotics were to appear only twenty years later. He writes:

> By language, I mean a form in which and by which an artist can express his thoughts, however abstract they may be, or translate his obsessions exactly as he does in the contemporary essay or novel. That is why I would like to call this new age of cinema the age of camera-stylo (camera-pen).[4]

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[4] Alexandre Astruc, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Stylo," in *The New Wave : Critical Landmarks*, ed. Peter Graham (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), 20.

On this rich ground of ideas about the perspectives of film language, artists would focus especially on montage. One of the most important figures of the New Narrative Avant-garde in America was Maya Deren. In her short but intense life and career she made films about the world of dreams in which she explored the continuity and the discontinuity of montage. In many of her poetic films, the human body moved continuously from one cut to another while the background was changing. What is coming out of this kind of montage? It is poetry of symbols or a strange feeling of a dream-like world. The choreography of the body in frame is very precise, therefore she works with choreographers not with actors. Nevertheless, she plays in many of her films using her gestures and her body movement in a very symbolic way. The films *At Land* and *Meshes of the Afternoon* are examples in which her presence is linked to the revelation of her introspective mind and unleashed fantasies. Thus, the viewer becomes the reader of the artist's mind and obsessions. In other words, she succeeds to write with the camera-pen.

Cameras are mirrors - artists exploring immediacy

Immediate playback is the essential characteristic of video. Starting with the first recorded video tape experiment of Nam June Paik, this medium was soon further explored by artists like Andy Warhol, Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci and many others.

The performance artists started by using video to document their actions but gradually they came to use it as a medium structuring their actions. Joan Jonas and Vito Acconci are only two examples of performance artists who embraced video as a working tool. Focusing on the body movement they perform in front of the camera which becomes the unique silent witness of their actions. When Vito Acconci describes his first video work, he underlines the essential characteristic of the video which is the **immediate playback** "The immediacy of video was the most startling thing. The first video I made tried to make use of that…. I could use video as a mirror"[5].

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[5] Apud William Kaizen, "Live on Tape: Video Liveness and the Immediate," in *Art and The Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tanya Leighton (New York: Tate Publishing, 2008), 259.

It is not only Vito Acconci who discovers the mirror-like quality of the video monitor. In 1972, Joan Jonas and Bill Viola both speculate the reflected image using real mirrors in their works. *Tape "I"* was the first piece of work of Bill Viola while he was still at university. The letter "I" from the title comes from the word "me" or "myself". This experiment speculates the multiplied realities by positioning the author between the mirror and the monitor.

The same means of expression are used by Joan Jonas in her *Left Side Right Side*. She reveals the esthetics of distortion by using the immediacy of the video both as a mirror and a mask at the same time. She splits her identity into pieces of virtual images which, when put together, are reconstructing her face in a strange, distorted manner.

Another example would be a Romanian artist Ion Grigorescu who activated within a group of artists who were struggling to stay connected to the contemporary art world in a communist country. Despite all the pressures made by the communists for propagandistic art, Ion Grigorescu borrows the video concept of mirroring from Jonas and translates it into his works.

The list of the authors who use the immediacy feature of the mirror-like camera is immense, therefore is worth taking into consideration a well-known article written by Rosalind Krauss named: *Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism.* She noticed this main function of the camera, which was embraced by many video artists and generalized it to the entire genre of video-art. Referring to Acconci's work *Center* she states:

> In that image of self-regard is configured a narcissism so endemic to work of video that I find myself wanting to generalize it as the condition of entire genre. Yet, what would it mean to say: 'The medium of video is narcissism?'.[6]

It is Rosalind Kraus' statement which intrigued and triggered the writing of this paper. Furthermore, she noticed the center position of the artist's body related to the camera. Artists are situated always in the middle. But this is only one view, as in many cases artists are situated always in between.

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[6] Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October* 1 (1976): 208, https://doi.org/10.2307/778507.

The works just mentioned define the *reflected image* videos placing the artist's body between the mirror and the camera. The next example is *Horror Film* from 1971, a performance of Malcom Le Grice in which he explores the *projected image* that places the artist's body between the projector and the screen. He performed in front of three colored projectors offering a colorful dynamic show of a superimposing body with shadows. The relationship between film and real-time or real-space is one theme of the artist's research as a theorist. For this reason, he will choose the real event projection, ignoring the option of processed image. While the narrative films were focused on a time-space illusion, eliminating all the activities behind the sets, video would be more interested in showing the real time. From this perspective *Horror Film* belongs to those performances which connect the physical presence with the projected image in a manner launched by Andy Warhol.

"Camera as soul keeper"- the awareness and the retrospective

This instance of the camera was revealed by Bill Viola, one of the most representative figures of video art, when he describes his work *Nantes Triptych* conceived in 1992. He didn't record himself, but he recorded the most intimate moments of his life: the first breath of his son and the last breath of his mother. The spiritual experience that he had, in a moment as short as the blink of an eye, when the beginning and the end were one, was shared with generosity by exhibiting privacy.

In one of his interviews he pointed the fact that the camera which can hold the ephemeral moments is giving us a sort of awareness about our feelings. Most of his works are short moments of body movements, seen in slow-motion, as he would want to catch the moment and hold it as long as possible in order to reveal the mystery of life. Viola explains the impetus behind his belief that cameras are *keepers of the soul* "This medium has a life and it holds lives, and it is not the actual person but it holds it well enough to understand that, like in a photograph, we have some feeling, so the feelings don't die."[7]

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[7] Christian Lund, *Bill Viola: Cameras Are Keeprs of the Soul* (Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2011), https://channel.louisiana.dk/video/bill-viola-cameras-are-keepers-souls.

The relation between the modern society and the recording machine was analyzed by Gene Youngblood the author of an important theory on video and television. He had noticed a similar feature of the camera since the ‘70s when he wrote his book *Expanded Cinema*.

“We become aware of our individual behavior by observing the collective behavior as manifested in the global videosphere.”[8] He uses, the term Noosphere to define the sum of global information systems that carries the messages to the social organism. In his opinion this so called “the third eye” (the recording machine) has the role of increasing our consciousness being aware of our past and our future. Youngblood labeled this phenomenon *the mood of retrospective man*.

> The information explosion is not an open window to the future as much as a mirror of the past catching up with the present. The intermedia network, or global communications grid, taps knowledge resources that always have existed in discrete social enclaves around the planet and saturates them into the collective consciousness.[9]

Research in the contemporary film language: blending perspectives on Romanian film scene

Most of the mentioned artists in this article used the new technology in its infancy. When video was first explored it had no editing possibilities. When film was first explored it didn’t have the image control and the immediacy of the video. So, it is evident that these two different tools have been exploited in different ways. Now, in the digital era, film and video have merged, being characterized by both features and also more evolved capacities.

The first era of the” laboratory for moving images”, was as simple as the Modernism. Artists used their bodies to communicate ideas, or to find new aesthetics for dynamic images. Before using the medium as a tool for precise purposes or effects, artists inquired the medium in a more playful way. In their works there is a strong relationship with the medium, functioning in both directions. By these introspective representations, artists were to open a path for the multitudes of ways a camera could be used. Today and from now on the film and video are to emphasize the usage well beyond the narcissism.

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[8] Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: P Dutton & Co. Inc., 1970), 78.

[9] Youngblood, 66.

In order to draw the conclusions of the self-exploring relation between the author and the camera and the way they are integrated in the language of the film, the focus should be moved from the edge of cinematic experiments to the cinema industry. We will keep focus on the young Romanian filmmakers who lately grabbed the attention of the European film critiques. The youngest director on the field of Romanian documentary film, Cristina Haneș, won the Pardino d'Oro prize at Locarno Film Festival in 2017 with her debut short documentary António e Catarina. Her film is based on an intimate dialogue between the author when 26, behind the camera, and the protagonist in his 70's, apparently having nothing in common with each other. All at once, she leaves the camera on the tripod entering the film scene, thus, breaking the rule of the screenplay setup. Her engaged presence switched the balance from a confessional portrait to a close relation, near but not too intimate, between two different people sharing the same room and camera. In this case the storyline was made by the camera, passively active towards the subject and the author.

The winner of the Golden Bear at Berlinale 2018 is the most recent and sophisticated film from the perspective of the relationship between camera and the artist. It is not an experimental film, although it pushes the boundaries of its genre and rises controversy about intimacy. It uses elements of experimental film with a very clear purpose and awareness. Adina Pintilie's film, Touch Me Not, is situated in-between fiction and documentary, called by the author a research upon intimacy. There could be spotted mixed perspectives of the three camera features mentioned above in the article.

The first perspective, the camera as a mirror is capturing the opening scene when Adina Pintilie, the author, becomes a part of the film. She reflects herself on a recording device in a superimposition aesthetics between the person and the camera. Construction and deconstruction of the recording device at the beginning and at the end of the film, has a symbolical meaning of a game played between reality and illusion. Those two worlds are challenging the cinema conventions. The world behind the camera is seen as a fake comfort zone, whereas, opposed to what we are used to see, the world in front of the camera is more authentic. Its heroes face whole heartedly their deepest desires that is close to fear and anxiety.

The camcorder is a symbolic borderline between those two worlds that are crossed not only by the author of the film, but also by the main character Laura Benson. Adina Pintilie switches the role for a short period of time with her confessional partner, leaving Laura to watch her behind the camera. By exposing herself, the director of the film becomes part of the same psychological experiment. There is no distinction between the crew, the actors and the story. Everything that happened in front of the audience as a documented research upon the human intimacy is leaving the camera to become a *soul keeper* thus becoming the second perspective of the three features.

Camera as pen is the third perspective in Adina Pintilie's film and maybe the most innovative, experimental aspect that deserves to be discussed. Going back to Astruc's visionary article where he considered the language of the film not only a medium of expression but also a tool for research, his words are meant to become reality nowadays: "Decartes of today would already have shut himself up in his bedroom with a 16mm camera and some film and would be writing his philosophy on film: for his *Discours de la Méthode* would today be of such a kind that only the cinema could express satisfactory."[10]

The film medium in hands of Adina Pintilie becomes a research tool. The screenings of *Touch me not* are followed by a series of discussion between the crew of the film and the audience. This program of debates, entitled *The body politics,* is initiated by the author to engage the audience in this anthropological quest upon intimacy. Her new concept linked to the practice of cinema, is reframing not only the feature film, taking it out of the meaning of entertainment, but also enlarging the boundaries of documentary filmmaking. Thus the author is not only reflecting a reality, but also an enquiry of hypothesis that are meant to be discovered together with the audience. This research is not aiming to conclude but to start raising questions.

The second era, the digital networking videos, is as complex as the Postmodernism. How will artists express themselves within this new medium which is strongly connected to the internet? I think it is premature to categorize while we are still in the middle of the transformational process and the whole picture is characterized by a rapid innovation, change and adaptation. This technology is now in the hands of everyone like a pen or a pencil. The video environment was generated by the so called 'social media' network which was coined as Web2.0. Social media platforms give users unlimited space for storage and a plenty of tools to organize, promote, and broadcast their thoughts, opinions and behaviors to others. The democratization of the media distribution system allows users with no professional education in the field of art to enter "this laboratory for moving images which they generated from materials of everyday media and pop culture."[11]. The Internet is used mainly as a mirror. YouTube's slogan, "Broadcast Yourself" has unleashed a video sharing universe. How artists will use and play with this Agora of media is another quest for a continuous search from now on.

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[10] Astruc, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Stylo," 20.

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The Experiential Turn: Ways of Exploring the Past Through Enhanced Senses in Digital Performance Arts

RODICA MOCAN[1]

Abstract: Digital technology research and artistic practice influence each other regarding user sensory experience. On the one hand, research on new technology brings a different dimension to performing and cinematic arts offering the user the possibility of exploring the past through enhanced senses. On the other, in the field of human-computer interaction, there is an increased interest in the aestheticization of experience, a special attention being given to performance and theatricality, considered to be the basis for new paradigms in design and operating systems. I refer to the cross-disciplinary encounters as being "experiential turns", a series of innovations that could be the basis of new paradigms of design and operating systems, with applicability in both technology and creative industry. The paper will explore some art works that are representative for the experiential dimension of technologically mediated performance art.

Keywords: digital interactive performance, digital technology, human-machine interaction

In digital interactive performance, digital technology is more than the sum of the technical elements – be them digital or analog – that contribute to building the performance, and is behaving like a partner that interacts with the human performer, in ways that are more and more akin to interactions between human subjects. This way, technology is becoming - as Dixon described in his definition - one of the characters: actor, or performer. In the

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absence of this technology, the show loses an important dimension, turning itself into something else, at best another kind of show, with another message.

In this sense, in digital interactive performance, it is true that "media is the message". In order to better understand this "message", we sought to identify areas, theories or perspectives specific to digital media, and technologies that intersect with domains or theories specific to digital performance. In the field of human computer interaction there is an increased interest for aspects related to performance and theatricality, considering that these define the new paradigms of designing and operating digital systems, both in pragmatic and artistic applications.

The "aesthetic turn" in human-machine interaction

Human Machine Interaction (IOM) is the academic study field that incorporates a number of areas directly related to the development of communications systems and their applications in real life: computers and information science are dealing with design and human interface engineering issues; sociology and anthropology address the way of interaction, collaboration and organization between technological and human systems; ergonomics is concerned with the safety of systems and the limits of human cognition; psychology analyzes human cognitive processes and user behavior while linguistics contributes to the development of languages used in the human-machine relationship.

Since the 1980s, human computer interaction and usability studies have laid the foundations for some theories, concepts, methods and practices in the design of digital product interfaces, being rooted in the perspectives of cognitive psychology, ergonomics, sociology, or anthropology[2]. The contribution of these domains to the development of digital products and platforms has been marked by the concern for the improvement of the functional features of the projected systems, ignoring other significant contributions that these sciences may have had in the context of digital technology development. Today, the computer has overcome the status of working tool, permeating the most profound areas of private, social or cultural life. The research into human-machine interaction reflects this by addressing more complex issues and more subtle qualities of technology than those related to the functionality of the interface. Udsen and Jorgensen are calling this "the aesthetic turn" in human machine interaction studies, identifying four main areas that characterize the creative approach to exploration and innovation in human-machine interaction.

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[2] Lars Erik Udsen and Anker Helms Jørgensen, "The Aesthetic Turn: Unravelling Recent Aesthetic Approaches to Human-Computer Interaction," *Digital Creativity* 16, no. 4 (January 2005): 205–16, https://doi.org/10.1080/14626260500476564.

The cultural approach, promoted by scientists coming from the humanities and the media, is trying to provide new cultural perspectives to digital interfaces. Brenda Laure compared the computer interface with a theater show, stressing that the experience of using it must offer a "pleasurable engagement", similar to the viewing experience of a theater piece[3]. Studies related to web functionality and the aesthetic aspect of the interfaces have developed since the '90s, when the cultural product began to be increasingly perceived in a postmodern vision, as a result of re-mediation and manipulation of symbols. In this context, the interface itself becomes a culturally mediated interface.

A similar concern is identified at Lev Manovich who analyzes the cultural interfaces of different software, animations, 3D images, sound, and considers that, as art and culture have adapted new media and the computer interface becomes an aesthetic object, it transcends neutral screen status by influencing user experience[4]. In essence, the cultural approach provides a literary or artistic foundation for understanding the interface as a cultural artifact, capable of evoking human emotions, experiences and reflections.

The functionalist approach represents another perspective in the study of human-machine interfaces. Dominant in the beginning, this approach emphasizes theories, concepts and methods designed to improve the interface design functionality, concluding that an aesthetically appreciated interface contributes to the overall functionality.

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3. Udsen and Jørgensen, 207.
4. Udsen and Jørgensen, 208.

The experience-based approach looks beyond the basic criteria of user functionality and experience, towards the more subtle aesthetic qualities of the interface. "The recurrent theme is the aesthetic interaction that promotes technologies that inform, provoke, delight, stimulate"[5]. Several researchers, including Mark Blythe, Kees Overbeeke, Tom Djajadiningrat, and Caroline Hummels, call for the abandonment of the functionality criterion and the discovery of aesthetic interaction, the exploration of playful aspects, and the study of unique socio-cultural contexts in the design approach.

The fourth approach identified by Udsen and Jorgensen *is the techno-futuristic* approach, in which aesthetics is viewed from the philosophical perspective, prevalent in the design of user experience in "ubiquitous computational environments". Basically, this philosophical approach to design reflects on how people experience environments as they become more and more technologically advanced.

Reflecting on how digital technology manifests itself in everyday life, Johan Redström and Hallnäs support the search for approaches that provide technology with "significant presence" rather than looking at it as being a tool for different uses. The techno-futuristic approach addresses the issue of alternative digital technologies, that are increasingly part of our lives and addresses their implications, even if the integration of these visionary theories into the practice of technology design has remained problematic[6].

Performative experience design

Both man-machine interaction and performance have as main topic the interaction with one or more people within a system. In the first case, it is about the interaction between man and the technological device, or the digital platform. In the case of performance, the focus is on how *"individuals engage with a specific combination of physical, social, temporal and, sometimes, technological factors that contribute to the mediality of a performance."*[7]

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[5] Udsen and Jørgensen, 209.

[6] Udsen and Jørgensen, 211.

[7] Fischer-Lichte, apud Jocelyn Spence, David Frohlich, and Stuart Andrews, "Performative Experience Design: Where Autobiographical Performance and Human–Computer Interaction Meet," *Digital Creativity* 24, no. 2 (June 2013): 99, https://doi.org/10.1080/14626268.2013.808964.

Thus, a common place is defined, subsumed by the space where overlapping theories and practice involve the interaction between one or more people and a digital system, naming it "performative experience design". That common place seeks to develop, understand and explore the interaction in response to a system that includes digital technologies. Based on this perspective,[8] the authors describe three categories of performance which comprise the performative experience: *mixed reality performance, Digital Live Art,* and *digitally augmented autobiographical performance*.

Blast Theory. Rider Spoke and the experiential performance

Mixed reality Performance is a type of emergent theater that includes "*the creation of experiences that mix real and virtual worlds in complex and rich ways.*"[9]. The work of the Blast Theory company are representative for this type and – in the volume *Performing Mixed Reality*[10] set the stage for a "dramaturgy of *performance*" to express the different modalities in which digital technology can be integrated in the performative experience. One of the works of Blast Theory company, which is representative for mixed reality performance, is Raider Spoke. This work can also be included in the concept of experiential performance, which is another type of mixed reality performance.

Blast Theory, a British company from Brighton, England, led by Matt Adams, Ju Row Farr and Nick Tandavanitj, brings together a group of world-renowned intermedia artists, famous for their innovation in the field of digital interactive media. Through their knowledge of digital communication, the participating public from all over the world get to interact in the most unexpected ways. The experiences built as a result of this approach, challenged us to rethink the categories discussed above, and their works, built based on the model of games or popular culture films, make the distinction between real and fictional go away.

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[8] Spence, Frohlich, and Andrews, "Performative Experience Design: Where Autobiographical Performance and Human–Computer Interaction Meet."

[9] Benford and Giannachi, apud Jocelyn Spence, Stuart Andrews, and David M. Frohlich, "Now, Where Was I? Negotiating Time in Digitally Augmented Autobiographical Performance," *Journal of Media Practice* 13, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 269–84, https://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.13.3.269_1.

[10] Steve Benford and Gabriella Giannachi, *Performing Mixed Reality* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011).

Their first works were made in nonconventional spaces, starting in the 1990's, and took the shape of multimedia performances inspired by the culture of clubs. These were followed by transmedia projects, often inspired from games or films, which created complex experiences on different levels. Such an example is Kidnap (1998), during which, as part of a lottery, certain members of the public were kidnaped, and the results of the lottery were broadcasted live, online. The themes approached by Blast Theory have to do with violence, pornography and politics, and the interdisciplinary, innovative work involves developing projects that sometimes take place over long periods of time or in specific contexts.

One of the most well-known projects made by the Blast Theory is Rider Spoke (2007). In this performance, which had the whole city as a scene, the public is an active participant, being at the same time both audience and participant, who write the text. The participants may use their own bicycles or may borrow ones from the headquarters of the project. The bicycles have a digital device installed, with a map which functions as a geolocation machine. Then, the participants receive a question and are guided to a secret location to record an answer. In this journey, through the geolocation system, they will have the opportunity to discover places where other participants recorded and stored their answers. Once they get to the physical location where other answers were recorded and stored, the participants can access this content, but this is possible solely with the equipment they received. In this project, the participants fulfill both the role of the public, and that of creators of the content of this project.

Because the results are now available online on a webpage, even though the content is built based on the model of classical mixed reality performance, the performance can be experienced also as a digital artefact.

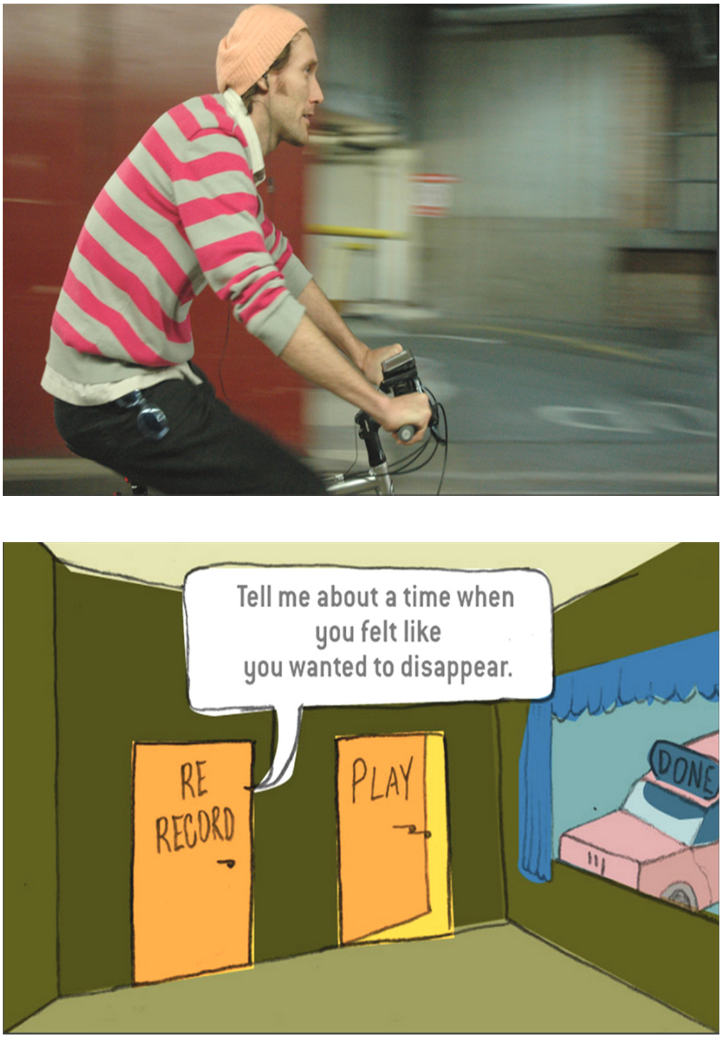
Tell me about a time when you felt like you wanted to disappear.
RE RECORD
PLAY
DONE

Figure 1. Blast Theory – *Rider Spoke (2007)*[11].

In 2011, Blast Theory extended the initial project, launching Riders Have Spoken. This project contains an archive of a few thousands of recordings taken so far during the tours of the project around the world. By accessing the points marked on a series of maps of cities in which the project took place, the public can be a witness to the stories recorded, this time through the computer, regardless of location. Therefore, we are no longer dealing with an experiential performance, but an experience of watching multimedia specifically tailored to digital media.

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[11] Source: capture http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/rider-spoke/

Blast Theory realized numerous other interactive projects, mainly mixed reality performances, which are difficult to categorize in classical media genres, therefore becoming one of the most well-known active companies in interactive digital media. One of the projects is My One Demand, an interactive film about love, realized in 2015 in Toronto in collaboration with The Patching Zone (Netherlands), Translocal (Finland) and Ontario College of Art and Design University (Canada), with the support of the European Union Cultural Program.

Sara Heitlinger and the Talking Quilt

Digital Live Art – "intersection between Live Art, computing and human–computer interaction" – investigates the way in which we design and develop the experimental, improvisational and the transient interaction, as defined by Sheridan[12]. The theories and the practices that comprise this approach include not only Goffman's theory, but also the works of artists such as Goldberg or Heathfield. They also create the space for the design of tangible, performative interactive contexts, in order to transform the spectators in participants or even performers. Even more, Sheridan asserts that the methods and the theories used in performative arts can be used to assess and measure the human-machine interaction. The example of *live* digital art given by Sheridan is the work *The Talking Quilt,* a collaborative work of Sarah Heitlinger in London. In an intergenerational project, the artist explored the links between the concepts of community and food/eating.

The project resulted in a workshop in which a quilt was made (a textile work made up of small pieces assembled together in a unifying project) as a result of the contribution of several people in the community, in a sort of community gathering. During the workshop, the participants were recorded while recounting the habits specific to their culture, especially habits around preparing food. "The quilt presents a snapshot of the farm at a point in time and engages different communities, including hard to reach groups such as a local Somali community, as well as youth and elderly people."[13]. In the final artifact, through technologies integrated in the fabric, several fabric areas were created that could be activated through a technology integrated into a glove, so that a visitor could turn into participant and could activate the recordings.

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[12] Apud Sara Heitlinger and Nick Bryan-Kinns, "Understanding Performative Behaviour within Content-Rich Digital Live Art," *Digital Creativity* 24, no. 2 (June 2013): 112, https://doi.org/10.1080/14626268.2013.808962.

Next to the exhibited artwork, a context was created to access this performative experience, by including a narration recorded and played on the basis of certain rules of interaction with the object. Viewing such a work surpasses the framework circumscribed by viewing an artwork exhibited in a certain space, because the work itself is more than the object itself.

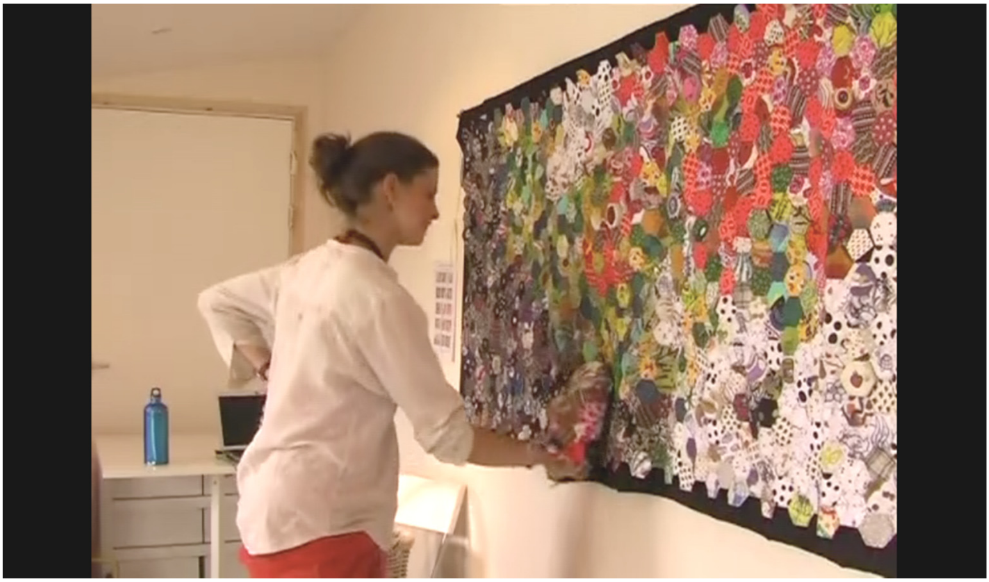

Figure 2. Sara Heitlinger – The Talking Quilt (2011). [14]

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[13] Heitlinger and Bryan-Kinns, 113.

[14] Source: video capture http://www.saraheitlinger.net/quilt.html, accessed September 2015.

The performative dimension – portrayed by the recordings made in the context that was built, staged toward a certain ending – is available to the visitor only as much as he/she exercises his/her right to involvement through picking up the glove. This interface, which reminds of a household item, used in the kitchen, enables the exploration of the surface of the quilt, that is also an object pertaining to the household space and pertains to the notion of recycling, reinventing, remediation.

Third Angel and The Epic Journeyin a Stationary Minibus

The third category of performative experiences described by Spence et al. refers to **digitally augumented autobiographical performance** (or digital autobiographical performance). This represents the relationship between the individual, experimental performative behavior and the interactive systems in the context of autobiographical performance and digital media sharing. Simply put, this is the performance in which the story integrates performative aspects – in Goffman's terms, representing the self in daily life – built through personal photographs and other interventions in social media which are freely shared in cyberspace.

Spence illustrates the concept of digital autobiographical performance with the performance proposed by Third Angel company, entitled *Cape Wrath – An Epic Journey in a Stationary Minibus.* Directed by Rachel Walton, the performer (Alexander Kelly) choses to build the story of his grandfather's journey toward the most Northern point of Scotland by using the personal memories he has, as well as his mother's memories, and the memories he has of a similar road he had made two decades ago.

This journey was documented by images, videos and posts on his personal page of the social network. "*The performer reaches through his memories to create for himself and for his audience a visceral and empathetic link to a series of past moments he cannot fully know or precisely re-experience, creating a personal identity that he claims for the duration of the performance.*"[15] Third Angel is presenting the story of this experience that includes "whisky and chocolate" to an audience of just 14, fellow travelers to Cape Wrath, on a journey "to the edge of the world".

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[15] Spence, Andrews, and Frohlich, "Now, Where Was I? Negotiating Time in Digitally Augmented Autobiographical Performance," 270.

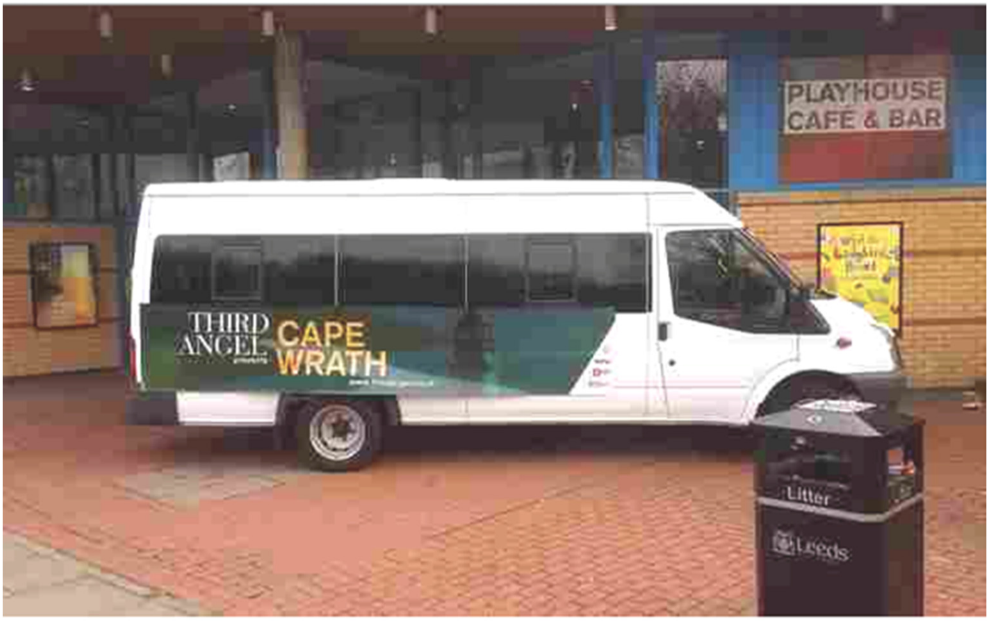

Figure 3. Third Angel – Cape Wrath. An Epic Journey in a Stationary Minibus.[16]

We identified in Romania a similar theme in the show *"My Friend"*, produced by the PunctArt Company, in partnership with Labirint Theater Company. The work was promoted as an "experimental performative installation".

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[16] Source: photo capture http://i.embed.ly/1/display/resize?key=1e6a1a1efdb011df84894040444cdc60&url=%2F%2Ffarm4.static.flickr.com%2F3708%2F13581018005_fa62329822_z.jpg&width=810, accessed September, 2015

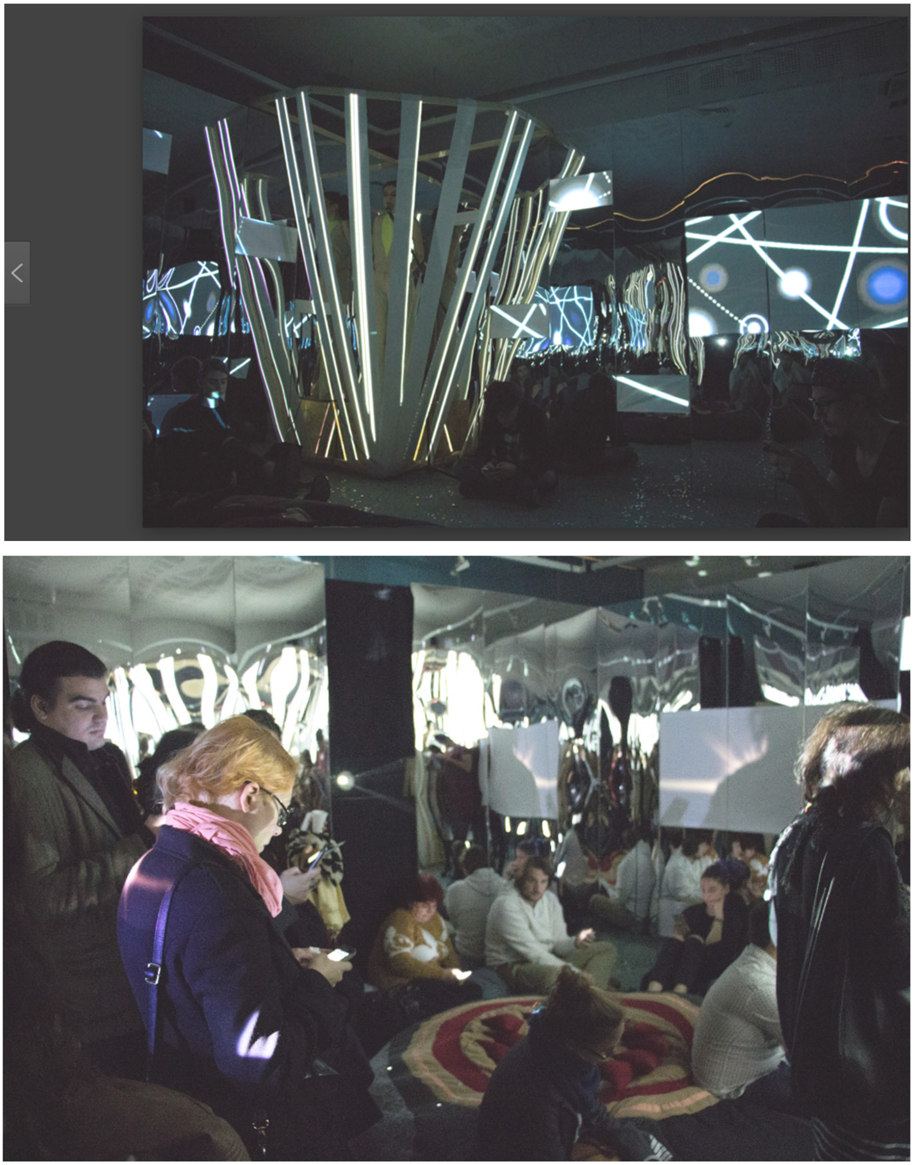

Figure 4. PunctArt and Labirint Theatre – *My Friend. (2015).*[17]

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[17] Source: photo capture http://artactmagazine.ro/my-friend-instalatie-performativa-experimentala-4-reprezentatii-live-reactor-2324-octombrie-2015/, and https://www.facebook.com/1495684200753672/photos/a.1509069826081776.1073741831.1495684200753672/1509069866081772/?type=3&theater, accessed September, 2015

> „My Friend" is more than a show, is a mechanism through which viewers are invited to actively participate through their own Facebook account.
> „My Friend" starts from a story of search and recapture, with and about those who asked themselves at least once who they are and where they want to go, of those who want to discover new perspectives, those who believe that one person out of seven billion can make a difference, those who are ready to start a journey-experiment toward new horizons.[18]

Using personal Facebook accounts during the show introduces the digital autobiographical dimension and allows for the construction of a type of interaction mediated by the digital *persona* in social media, an identity controlled by the individual and ready to be performed in the media context built by that performance.

Photographic techniques developed a lot in the latest decades, leading to an almost complete transition from analogous to digital. The emergence of social media that allow for the sharing of photos and digital recordings from one's personal archives determined the development and the spreading in the online environment in a record time of this type of autobiographical performance. The interest for the sharing of photos shown by the field of human-machine interaction is the more relevant as social media offers a relevant platform of sharing, through something that can today be conceptualized as a mass phenomenon.

> Digitally augmented autobiographical performance gives participants (performers and spectators) a live experience of dwelling with their memories and with others in the unique constellation of time, space and social dynamics provided by each performance. The live performative encounter can unearth hidden stories, details, tangents and contexts that were never mediatized and are, for the most part, not represented in digital form.[19]

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[18] "MY FRIEND – Instalație Performativ Experimentală," Teatru Fix, n.d., http://teatrufix.ro/my-friend-instalatie-performativ-experimentala.

[19] Spence, Frohlich, and Andrews, "Performative Experience Design: Where Autobiographical Performance and Human–Computer Interaction Meet," 102.

In the analysis of autobiographical performance, Spence et al. offer certain research directions based on the human-machine interaction. These directions are essential in the context of the latest technological developments and bring aspects specific to the field of drama and performance.

The first direction has to do with *the roles* an individual plays while engaged in a performative experience. Generically named “user”, an individual can fulfill more than one role. Sometimes an individual can take the role of the one who enacts a certain event, yet at other times he becomes the one who takes an active role in the performative experience, or he can be a mere spectator. The fact that a user can change multiple roles and can become a performer, a spectator of even a subject, is specific to this genre of performance, and the individual will be reflected in the images that will be shared.

The second research direction has to do with play. The existence of multiple roles involves the existence of multiple rules that will govern the ways in which individuals interact, similar to the rules of games, that allow a member of the audience to negotiate the transition to the status of becoming a performer. This performative perspective of the play is pursued in depth in Schechner and Goldberg’s studies; they reinforce the aspects that have to do with play in the context of performance. The existence of interaction rules, as part of the design of performative experiences, allows for what can be perceived as a show/performance from one perspective to be viewed as a game of mixed reality from a different perspective. This is the explanation for the multiple awards won by companies such as The Blast Theory, which are considered to be games. We need to keep in mind that not only the necessity of having rules determined the structure of the interaction between the entities involved, but also the game itself. “In terms more relevant to technologists, play is strongly allied to performance in that both are enjoyed for their own sake, in stark contrast to the goal or task orientation of much of the foundational work in HCI.”[20] In this sense, the analysis of the interaction between the individual and the technology is often done through systems built only for playful engagement, which is a form of playful exploration, having no precise rules or points to be won.

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[20] Spence, Frohlich, and Andrews, 104.

Thirdly, Spence emphasizes that autobiographical performance is an event taking place in time, not an object, which brings into discussion both the temporality and the research, as essential elements. Just as devised theater, this type of performance does not follow a predetermined script, and the identity of the character/user is built in the context of the autobiographical performance. This type of research will have an essential role in articulating the identity at a certain point, and the following views will create their own moments of interpretation.

* * *

Performative arts and theatrical theories are considered to occupy an increasingly important role in the design of human-machine/technology interaction, as well as in the research of this field, although definitely not covering all aspects involved in the design of digital technology.

Beyond the functional approaches which dominated the beginning stages of developing digital technologies and the design of the interaction of the individual and the technology, the cultural approach emphasized the role of esthetics in elaborating strategies and principles which govern the design of interfaces, but also the users recognizing the machines as cultural artefacts, as well as seeing them as identity objects. In this approach, the technical-futuristic approaches are giving technology philosophical significance while the experiential approach promotes the esthetic interaction that generates pleasure, enjoyment and stimulation, sometimes to the expense of the functionality criterion.

In other words, if the first wave of attention was focused on the functionality of technology, a second wave was directed towards the professional context, productive, in which technology is going to be used, while the third wave approaches the technologies that are non-productive and non-rational, which dominate the development directions lately.

In the context of the second, but mostly the third wave of human-machine interaction, certain research emerged on different theories pertaining to performative arts, and also certain practices which can contribute to the development of digital products and superior performative experiences.

Among the types of performative experiences discussed here, we presented mixed reality performance (theater/performance which combines several types of media which bring together virtual reality and the real world), live digital art (a hybrid form of art which combines several types of media built in the context of certain performative experiences contextualized and coordinated) and autobiographical augmented digital performance (a performative experience augmented through digital images and social media interaction).

These types of performance provide the context for the development of research directions in man-machine interaction, that are claimed by the field of performing arts. The analysis of the roles taken by the user in performative experiences, as well as the alternance of these roles, benefits from theories specific to spectatorship studies in performing arts, as well as from the principles of digital games design, which recognize the value of certain approaches of the 'game'. These approaches are supported by theorists from the field of performative studies, as well as well-known practitioners, such as Schechner or RosaLee Goldberg. Also, in the context of the studies of the esthetics of human-computer interaction, it is appreciated that we can no longer ignore theories pertaining to aspects of the body, temporality or presence, aspects which are specific to the domain of performing arts.

In conclusion, we believe that - in the context of the development of digital technologies and their omni-presence through mobile technologies in all areas of social life, including art – the field of performing arts and the respective performance theories are of interest not only to the artistic cultural context or to certain subjects in the social sciences but also for certain areas of technical sciences.

Particularly the field which studies the human-computer interaction is in a stage of development when it is looking towards theories specific to the arts and performative studies, in an attempt to understand the individual's behavior while interacting with the digital systems, as well as the way in which the informational society adopts, uses and assimilates artefacts which incorporate digital technologies. In the same way, performing arts can no longer be studied without taking into account aspects pertaining to the integration of digital technologies, the nature of human-technology interaction, as well as the way in which cultural artefacts realized in the context of new media are integrated and assimilated by the public of the digital age.

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About the Actor's Reality and the Things We See. Can an Actor Create Reality Through Fiction, or Does He Merely Imitate It?

ANDRÁS HATHÁZI[1]

Abstract: In this article, award-winning stage and film actor András Hatházi challenges, from the viewpoint of his prestigious career as an artist and pedagogue, the relationship between actor, role, reality, and fiction. Can the actor create reality through fiction? In order to answer this question, the author turns towards the way children are playing, finding therein both truth, and inspiration.

Keywords: actor and role, reality and fiction, training, to play

I know more about two acting schools: the one in Cluj Napoca (where I work) and the one in Târgu Mureș (where I work sometimes, and where I graduated thirty years ago). At the same time, I see the actors in Romania and in Hungary, who – in terms of their working methods – are likely to have received the same training as the students of the schools mentioned earlier. I also have the opportunity to gain insight into the training of actors in the former Yugoslav Republics through the annual Dioniz Festival organized by the acting school in Osijek, Croatia. And from the point of view of the question I asked at the beginning of my writing, it makes absolutely no difference which of the aforementioned schools the actors graduate from. They (apart from a few, rather random than consciously sought-after moments) do not create reality, but merely imitate it. They can't do otherwise. As due to their persistence and diligence, they learn in three, four or five years of training what their teachers, audience and they themselves expect from them: how to sing, dance, articulate and form a character.

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And the latter is one of the obstacles that make them unable to create reality.

Because there may not be a character.

At least not in the sense in which it is used.

Not only is the actor the one, who – given his profession and the expectations towards him – consciously defines himself as someone else (role, character) for the time of the theater performance, but we all play different roles (characters) in different situations. Whatever we think of ourselves, however we define ourselves. We always play the role of the child around our parents. The role of the subordinate in front of our boss. Or, in a reverse situation, we will be the bosses for our subordinates.

This is not the problem, but the way we think about these roles.

We believe these roles are *real*.

We create expectations towards them, we create an idea, a perfect character, compared to which the roles that appear are better or not so good, authentic or false. In fact, there are cases, when we say something that varies from our usual schemes and we simply say, this cannot be!

But we are the only ones who think – based on our previous experiences – how these roles *should* be.

Of course, we do not study these characters in everyday life the way the students of these schools, later actors do, but in any case, we follow a pattern. We learn how to be parents from our parents, how to behave as bosses from our superiors. We grow into our everyday roles almost automatically. But being parents, bosses or subordinates, lovers, murderers or contemplators doesn't mean that being a parent or a boss, a lover or a meditator is a real role. There is no such thing as the Parent. The Boss. The Lover doesn't exist. There is no Romeo. No Hamlet.

But there are situations when we become lovers, and we may listen to witches when we are preparing to attack the Scottish army at war with us.

So, it seems that in all probability the environment determines our role. Our character. Because if we do not behave according to the situation and the occasion (we get confused about our role) our environment recognizably points it out to us that there is no such thing, this cannot be. (And it only depends on us, on our ability whether we consider these signs or not.)

And if the environment determines us, who is the actor on the stage? Is he not – quite simply! – just an actor? Whatever he might declare about himself and however he might be considered by the others (viewers and partners)?

Because during the theater performance – whether they pay attention to this or not – the environment (and obviously he himself) knows that the actor who determines himself as someone else is in fact not the person he says he is. He's just an actor that we can sometimes see in another situation. In the street, in the shop, in the office, in the bar – wherever we have the chance to meet him. And in the theater, only the goodwill of his observers (I repeat, spectators and partners) makes the actor's "character" believable. (The history of the ephemeral works of actors also preserves the *actor's name*, not his character. XY what a great Vershinin so-and-so was! And at the end of the performance, the actors might get the applause and not their roles. Although this may not be the case… The actor is always the one who receives criticism.)

In addition, he is an actor only in the theater. He is not an actor in the market. When he is sitting in the dental chair, he is primarily a patient. Not a *bon vivant*.

And then why are the actors struggling so desperately to be the character, the role? Maybe this effort is superfluous? Or maybe they should try differently. Maybe they should care less about the manipulation of the environment.

The actor creates the role, the character to influence his environment. Normally, he is not trying to be Lucifer because he feels a great urge to become Satan, but because he wants to show it to the audience. And if he is lucky and maybe loved, then his environment – as I mentioned before – tries benevolently to please the actor and fulfills the invitation. They accept the actor's suggestion and watch as if the actor were Lucifer. Or the one he declares to be. While, I repeat, they all know exactly that it's just an actor who declares something about himself.

Because Lucifer, the role, the character, is made up of fictitious conventions that are consciously or unconsciously created in our minds by our thought patterns.

In fact, we as personalities – we are fiction. We've made a lot of (pleasant or uncomfortable) decisions until we've turned out this way, and we try to consolidate ourselves in vain, we're just a process, and we'll stay that way until we die. A constantly changing set of conventions and customs. A change in our environment can occur at any time, turning us into a completely different person, different personality. (On the never-ending self-searching path, maybe the first, most significant milestone is the recognition: I am what cannot be taken away from me. But my personality – as an "artificial" construction – can be taken away. It can be changed. Either by my environment or through my personal decision.)

And if I look from this point of view, then the actor doesn't have to struggle to be Lucifer or any other character. Because he's just an actor who can create reality through fiction.

But how?

I can hardly change the image of my environment about me. And I'm not free from this process either. Our opinion about the others (most often after the first, superficial impression!) turns into such a strong belief that it is very difficult to do away with it or perhaps we can never completely get rid of it. If we are able to form a somewhat different opinion of our fellow human beings, a little signal that strengthens our old, previous convictions is enough for us to declare, well-well, the cat is out of the bag! Still our former conviction is true! And we are surprised that – perhaps people close to us – have a radically different view of the same phenomenon.

Well, this general opinion creating process will be the first step in the search for reality.

If I enter a room and declare that I'm a pilot, there is no real reason for anyone to believe anything else about me. Because I have no real reason to lie about myself. This is a normal process of getting acquainted with someone. (And this is being used successfully by frauds, impostors.)

So, from the point of view of an actor, I don't have to be an imaginary character as I am *someone* anyway. The people around me, as well, form an immediate opinion of me either way based on the first moment and the preliminary images they already have of similar situations and people. Not because they want to do that, but because they *can't* do otherwise. One of the essential functions of our mind is to keep us safe. Thus, it is irrelevant in what kind of situation we find ourselves: our brain tries to identify – previously experienced - similar situations based on previously known patterns, keeping almost all the escape routes "alive." In case of any danger. Be it physical or spiritual. This is an automatic process that we cannot influence in any way. There is no point in presenting our kindest self, if this kind of kindness and the situation in which we appear to be occur as a negative experience in the preliminary experiences of our viewers. We have no chance of influencing this first encounter because the audience's response does not come from this moment, but from a previous experience that has long been ensconced in their subconscious. What we can do is to shade this view through *personal contact* with the viewer. And that depends largely on us.

This is the most important step in the "creation of reality through fiction." This connection is really taking place now and is valid only for this moment. In this case, people are really speaking here and now, even when they present a (real or fictional) story from the past. Viewers do not visit a museum, but – possibly - they feel that they are really taking part in the events. They are privileged because this is all for them. To put it more precisely, the actor forms an *actual* connection with the viewer. He greets him. Looks at him. If he asks something from him, he waits for an answer. And he won't continue the performance until the viewer answers. And if he has to (because perhaps the answer he receives does not help him to continue the events), he stops, discusses the options and then continues unfolding the events.

Because the viewer is also a partner, a playfellow. Perhaps the most important one. For the creation of reality proposed by me, the other actor on stage is not enough. In this case, the basis of "authenticity" is only the well-known fellowship between the actors. I pretend to believe that you are the one you declare yourself to be, you pretend to believe me that I am the one I declare myself to be and we both do as if it were okay.

However, the viewer must be convinced. Even if he watches the events unfolding in front of him with the utmost benevolence and he really wants to *believe* what he sees.

But self-deception also has its limits. Differently for everybody.

Because this reality must be established *emotionally*.

I mentioned that at the first encounter the viewer forms an opinion based on a set of (conscious or subconscious) previous experiences. And it happens involuntarily. He creates it without wanting to and unable to avoid its influence. His mind *knows* in vain what is happening in front of his eyes, if he doesn't *feel* that deep inside. Remaining at the already mentioned example of kindness, the viewer knows in vain that the figure before him is kind – if he doesn't feel the same, then the reality suggested by the actor will not be created.

But there's a good chance that it can be created – at least during the performance – through personal connection. If we spend enough time with our fellow human beings, there is a risk that we grow fond of them. We have a chance to get to know them. And this experience is only enhanced if they want to get to know us. If they are curious about our opinion. If we see that our presence affects them. If we feel that we can influence them. Because then we also let ourselves be influenced. A kind of *trust* begins to develop.

The first exercise of the clown studies applied by me is linked with this. In this, the clown comes in, stops in front of the audience, and stands in front of them for at least two minutes and does nothing. But nothing.

He just watches them.

Experience shows that the greater the interest the clown shows towards the audience, the more curiously they turn to him. The more he opens up to the audience, they will show at least the same degree to him.

They strengthen each other.

And finally, a very strong *emotional* link appears between the artist and his audience. Even in such circumstances when the artist has *actually* done nothing.

And this whole thing is based on a lie.

A comes in, declares that he is *B*, and together with the audience they pretend to believe all this. Even though they know exactly that *A* is not *B*, not even for a moment. He is an actor, *A*, who is now playing *B*.

And this is the other important element in the search for reality: the play.

We say this very often, and apparently everyone agrees: the actor is playing.

But does he really do that?

Watching children I find that actors do not play. They are really trying to *achieve*. They want to seem real, even though they are just a *possibility*. (I'm not even going to go into the fact that not only the role is a possibility, but the actor as well. In other circumstances, he could have been a completely different person with the same genetic material!) I see that in this process, the actors are desperately trying to watch out for their role. But what is the role of the actors?

While playing, children fluctuate without interruption between their real identity and their identity in the play. They often warn their playfellows and their surroundings that "we're just playing games." It's not for real. And yet it is so real! Maybe because it's just playing!

Because what happens now? *A* is a man, an actor who says he is now *B*. And that's it. Nothing more. *A* doesn't want to be *B*. *A* knows he is *A*. Because if we call him by his name, he reacts! He wears the costume as a costume and not like his own clothes! He knows exactly that the prop master is behind the set door, who quickly puts the sword into his hands. And what a nonsense: fighting with a sword in the 21st century!

But if all this is just playing, then it seems that the situation is different. We accept it. We shape it together. We introduce new rules for the moment if we have to. We improvise.

Here, not only the actors but also the spectators will be allies.

Because in the end the performance is born within the viewer.

So (to make the above discussion infinitely simpler) I consider these three elements to be important in creating reality through fiction:

1. It doesn't matter who I want to be, my surroundings will look at me the way they want to;
2. A real connection has to be maintained with the audience;
3. Acting has to be done the way children are acting – by playing.

ANDRÁS HATHÁZI *is an actor, director, writer, university professor. He has acted in over 100 theater and film roles and has directed several theater and puppet shows. He has published articles on the actor's art, plays and scenarios in various journals and magazines. Own volumes:* Daniló *(2004),* A hetérák tudománya *(2006),* Improvizáció és személyiségfejlesztés *(2007). He had translated into Hungarian David Zinder's book: Body-Voice-Imagination under the title:* Test-Hang-Képzelet *(2009). He has over 50 individual and collective national and international awards and nominations including: Jászai Mari Prize (Hungary, 2011), Gábor Miklós Prize (Hungary, 2011), UNITER Prize (2008, 2014), Best Actor Award ex aequo at the International Film Festival, Thessaloniki, Greece (2011), the Debut Prize at the Romanian Writers Union (2005), the Látó Prize for Excellence (2004), the Best International Film Festival (2002), Prize for artistic and pedagogical excellence awarded by "Babes-Bolyai" University (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010).*

STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 1, 2019, p. 217 - 229
(Recommended Citation)

The Bed Project

TRENT M. SANDERS[1]

A Brief Note

The Bed Project: Set within the solitary confinement cell at Pitesti Prison, it is a short film which captures the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of temptation Romanian Baptist pastor Ion Curare experiences his last night in prison June 24, 1953. He has been in prison since January 1951. It is a blend of non-verbal theatre and film, following Franz Kroetz's *Request Concert*. *The Bed Project* captures a man facing his demons.

The following production notes constitute some of the written material used in the conception and production of *The Bed Project*. This presentation is intended to give a "behind-the-scenes" look at production through the written documents.

The Bed Project is both a stand-alone film as well as one piece of a play still in the writing phase. In line with the presentation of human suffering and divine intercession (both good and evil), the larger play examines torture through the dramatic arc of one man participating (consciously and unconsciously) in satanic liturgy and over the course of the drama, finding redemption through holy liturgy. The satanic liturgy poetically expresses the horrors at Pitesti Prison in the early 1950s. The holy liturgy is based upon a service held at Pitesti Prison on Saturday mornings from 3:00-5:00 in honor of the political prisoners who suffered there and elsewhere and for those who died.

William and I started discussion about *The Bed Project* in late November while attending the Interferences Theatre Festival at the Hungarian Theatre in Cluj-Napoca.

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These notes are divided into two section: (1) the production notes and script; (2) the production process. These notes are a starting place for future site-specific reproduction. Political prisoners, human torture, religious persecution are still creatures living today in plainer sight than is easy to admit.

THE PRODUCTION NOTES & SCRIPT

Friday afternoon, 15:00 – 19:30

Satanic Liturgy

ORDER	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	CAMERA
0	Security footage	Constant surveillance from terrace.	1. observational footage, constantly streaming until shoot for Satanic Liturgies ends.
A.1	Balloon rising into heaven	Satan's fingers releasing it.	1. w/ backdrop of terrace wall and sky, from below frames balloon's ascent. 2.from terrace or higher/ faculty second-story walkway downward, framing balloon's ascent.
A.2	Balloons falling from terrace to patio	The balloon, begins fall, facing the camera.	1. slow motion, at wall's base, pointed vertical 2. slow motion, on terrace, pointed outward-horizontal at Satan's heel and balloon, Satan's big toe pushes over terrace edge
A.3	Balloon bouncing from grass to patio	The fall from pride.	1. from the terrace, like a man looking over a cliff's edge.
A.4	Balloon coming to rest by steaming soup bowl	The necessity of pride to feed.	1. at bowl level, the balloon's journey in the background.
B.1	Satan lifting steaming soup bowl up to sky	Prisoner sits "Indian style" at back end of patio facing the bed. Satan knees at front end facing Prisoner.	1. from low to high, in front of Prisoner, framing his chest to a few clicks above the bowl. 2. horizontal and side-on, panning from Satan to bed.

ORDER	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	CAMERA
B.2	Satan waving the soup bowl in front of Prisoner's nose	Prisoner remains seated. Satan rounds patio to Prisoner's back and returns to knees.	1. from directly in front of Prisoner, showing Satan's sweet embrace of him. 2. from opposite side, as if peering over Satan's shoulder at the bowl. (e.g. waving with right hand, shoot over S's left shoulder.
C.1	Satan's Dance	Just as dogs walk a circle before sleep. So, Satan encircles the patio, revolting and resisting God, while casting a spell over Prisoner.	1. follows Satan's feet's circular motion, especial eyes to toe, arch, and heel. 2. close-up tracking Satan's shoulders, neck, hair. 3. security-camera perspective from terrace.
C.2	Satan pouring soup into Prisoner's mouth	Satan tips Prisoner's chin.	1. from above, see Prisoner's face come full into view 2. sideways-down view of soup sloshing in bowl with bed in view. 3. the bowl tipping, nearly spilling over. 4. the excess drops splashing onto the patio.
C.3	Satan letting slip the bowl to shatter on patio	Satan rises and drops the bowl in between the space of the Prisoner's legs.	1. the fingers one-by-one releasing. 2. from behind the bedsprings, angled downwards, captures the bowl fall and crash.
D.1	Prisoner is leaving the church he constructed in his imagination.	At the Calvin Reformed Church, Str. Mihail Kogalniceanu 21. Movement from the side-entrance to the central-entrance.	1. close to Prisoner's face off-set by aged wooden door. 2. from in front as the prisoner lifts the bed and carries to central-door, showing a journey.
D.2	Statue standing center, in front of central doors.	Bedframe lying down, central, in the background.	1. bottom third of frame, statue and above, the limestone walls of the church rising.
D.3	Prisoner standing bed against the back wall	The end of the journey from the church of his imagination to the cell.	1. ground at a diagonal, with emphasis on feet and metal 2. eye level and downward, from behind bed-springs as if imprisoned, then viewing Prisoner's fingers release the bed.

ORDER	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	CAMERA
E.1	Satan releases the balloon.	Satan struts in round-about, wavy motion, supply releasing balloon as if w/out effort.	1. from above to below, focusing on Satan's aloof fingers.
E.2 E.2. cntd.	Prisoner puts on Bluetooth headphones.		1. traces headphones from his pocket to his head. 2. fixates on his adjustment of the headphones to his ear. 3. Still, from behind, the black wire across the back of the neck, pan up to bedframe.
F.1	Prisoner urinates on top of the mess he's made.	Statue lies on prison floor in pieces. His feet are bleeding. Satan has taken control.	1. pans from low to high, capturing daughter shards and his back. 2. tracks the prisoner from behind in a waving motion, following urine stream.

Saturday afternoon, 14:00 - 19:30

Scene Design:

Satan is responsible for ending the Bed Project. To end the project, Satan must gain control over the prisoner. To do this, Satan speaks to the prisoner through a telephone.

The prisoner listens in on Satan's commands through Bluetooth headphones inside of his ear.

Satan communicates the entire text twice in order to gain absolute control over the prisoner, thus diverting the prisoner from his own liturgy into Satan's liturgy.

Ultimately, Satan achieves control through leading the prisoner in prayer, which leads the prisoner to bed, thus ending the Bed Project.

SCRIPT

SATAN

[Speaking through the prisoner’s ear-piece]

Two-by-four meters,
And only the bread, only the mash, only the soup;
Just two-by-four meters,
And your 42 kilos.

Better to have hell in you and heaven around, eh?
Up at 5 and down at 10. Again.
You’re half blanket and half man.
You eat your teeth.
Then, do-do in a can.
Water can.
Do what you can!

How’s the weather.
Cold?
I’ll feed you twice
And walk you, just do what I say:
come with me.

The light’s going off.
Sun’s going down, see?
Stumble, stumble, slop.

Dinner’s here!
You don’t get bread. No mash. Only soup.
Eat your soup, or I’ll come in there!

You, half-man, half-blanket.
All in time.
You pass for living:
I can change that.

Set you free!
And give you mash and then bread!
And tell you how good you've been.
And give you your teeth back.
And a toilet seat.

Do you like to read?
Or listen to the birds?
How bout a window, eh?

Roll over.
Again.
Stop.

Pant.
Bark.
Circle! Circles! Circle!
Curl up, you dog.
Now, rock.
Back and forth.

You look drunk.
Say, "Angel."
Louder.
Louder!
Now, whisper, "Angel."
Softer!
Softer.

Do you love her?
Say, "I love her."
Forceful.
More of it!

To your knees.
Fold your hands.

Pray, “I hate her,”
Or, I’ll take away your soup.
Pray it, “I-Hate-Her.”
To me!
Pray it to me.

Shut up.

I said, shut up.

Two-by-four meters.
Go on and eat your soup.
It’s getting cold.

You’re going to eat it without first eying it?
Alright, if you won’t try the soup, try the door.
It’s gray.
Isn’t gray nice:
Gray walls, gray floors, gray pants.
Maneuver the door.
Manure on the floor!
No handle, eh?

Your soup is cold by now.
Find it,
Feel for it,
Listen to it,
Stir it,
Smell it out,
It’s right under your nose.
Stop!

[Repeat 2-3 times depending on the 30-minute time frame, then]

Go to bed.
No bed, eh?
Oh well, then pray with me:

Dead in Heaven:

I soil your name;
Your kingdom burns
and your will is undone in heaven as I am on earth;
I starve these worms of their bread;
I condemn them to death as they condemn their daughters;
I lead them to temptation and deliver them over to evil:

This is my solemn wish for them –

In death.

[Motherly] Hush child. Now, you can sleep.

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

SET

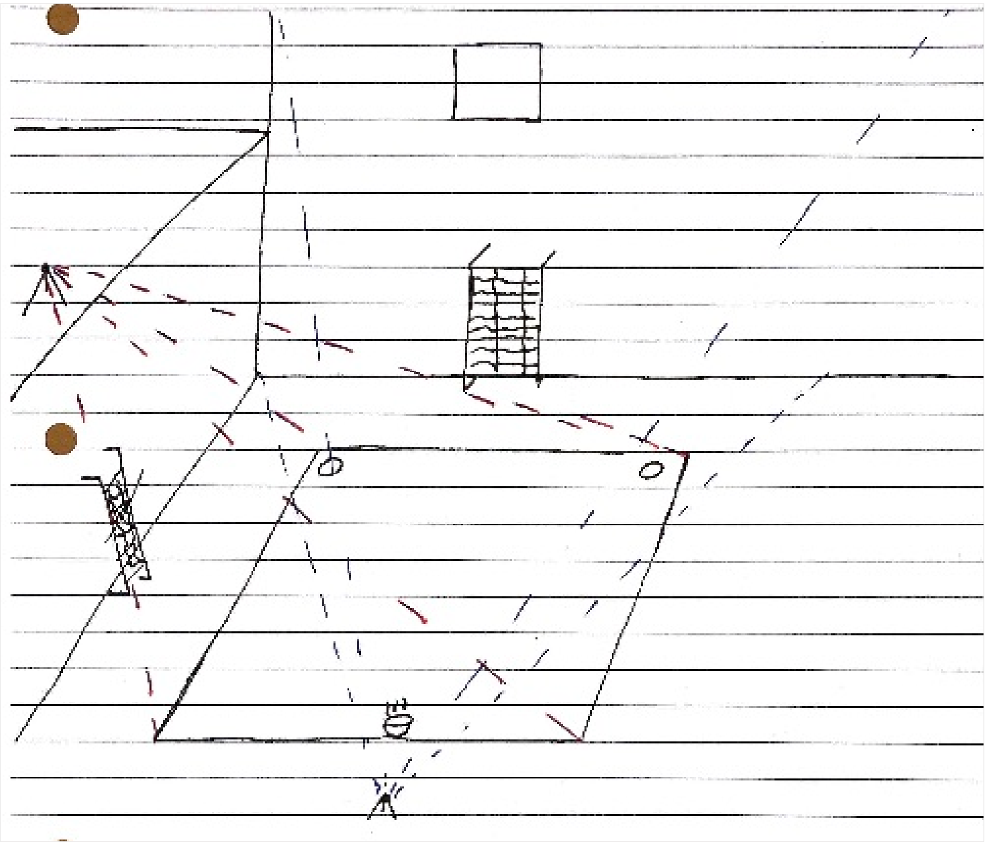


Fig. 1. The above image is a sketch of the Faculty of Theatre and Film courtyard. It is a concept drawing which explores the field of vision available to the camera in any one shot. It is the artist processing a historically based prison cell model from Sighet Prison, and imaginatively repurposing the cell's articles in order to amplify the prisoner's experience of physical, psychological, and spiritual temptation.

NARRATIVE DIAGRAM

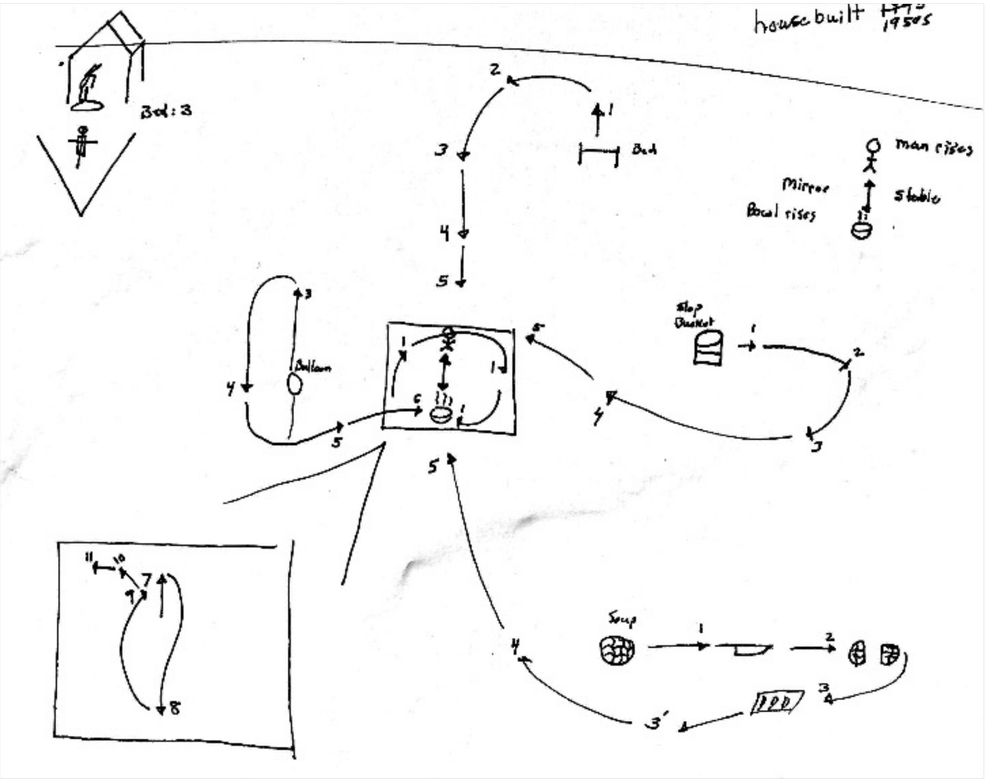


Fig. 2. The above figure, most simply, is fascinated with the center square (where the prisoner has been this whole time). The narrative diagram shows four consecutive stories (processes) step-by-step converging onto the central square. They are the stories of how: how the bed come to be in the cell, how the cabbage soup gets into the bowl, how the balloon rises then falls to the soup, how the slop bucket arrives. These objects are in their own ways, the story of the prisoner's physical, psychological, and spiritual state. The vortex of arrows around the central stick figure is the temptation at work. From the central square, you will notice a "V" and a further square. This square is the movement of Satan within the cell. You will also notice an architectural structure in the upper-left-hand corner. This is a prospective shot of the prisoner on his bed in Piata Unirii in front of St. Michael's Church. The shot was not taken. Some say temptation is like spinning out of control. The diagram shows this much.

PRODUCTION PHOTOS

FILM PRODUCTION DIAGRAM

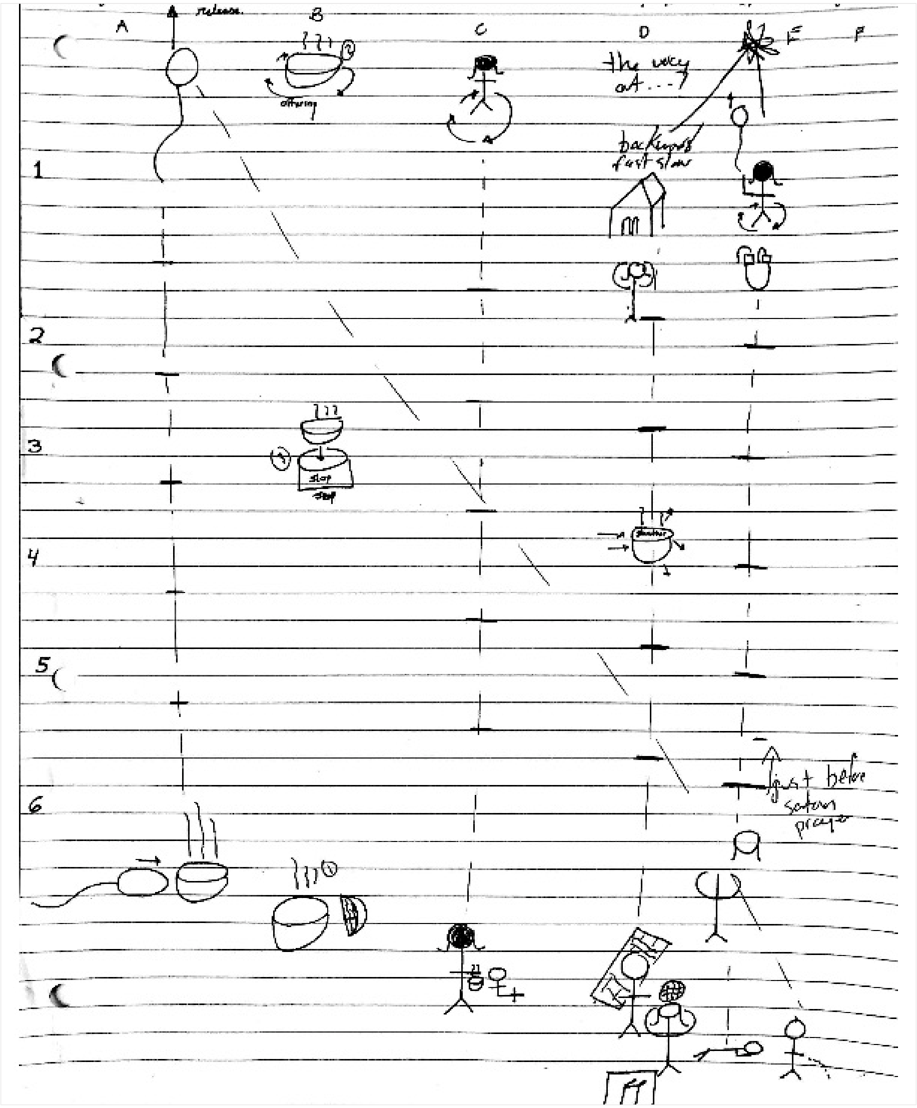

A
release.
B
offering
C
D
the very act...?
backwards
fast slow
F
F
1
2
3
slop
4
5
6
just before satan prays

Fig. 3. The above figure diagrams the images from the *Bed Project* film shoot into rows (A-F) and columns (1-6) in order to create a coding schema for ease of scene integration and redistribution. The story begins with the rise of the red balloon (pride) and ends with the prisoner urinating on all he's done (destruction). The diagram moves from top to bottom (e.g. A.1 – A.6), then back to top (e.g. B.1 – B.6). The idea is to easily create distinguishable units from which human psychology can more easily be broken down, reshuffled, become less linear and thus, more real.

EQUIPMENT

Props: a bowl with cabbage soup steaming; short, thin, white, skinny, blanket; torn, beige, baggy pants; two gray slop buckets; an iron bed frame; Bluetooth Dr. Dre Beats headphones; 6 inflated red balloons, with and without helium; clay statue of a little girl

Camera: Canon C300 MK II w/ Canon 35mm 1.4 lens

CREDITS

The Bed Project was first produced by Trent Sanders, William Tyner, Eva Morgenstern, and Rachel Sanders in the courtyard of the Faculty of Theatre and Television, Babeș-Bolyai University on the 12th & 13th of April 2019.

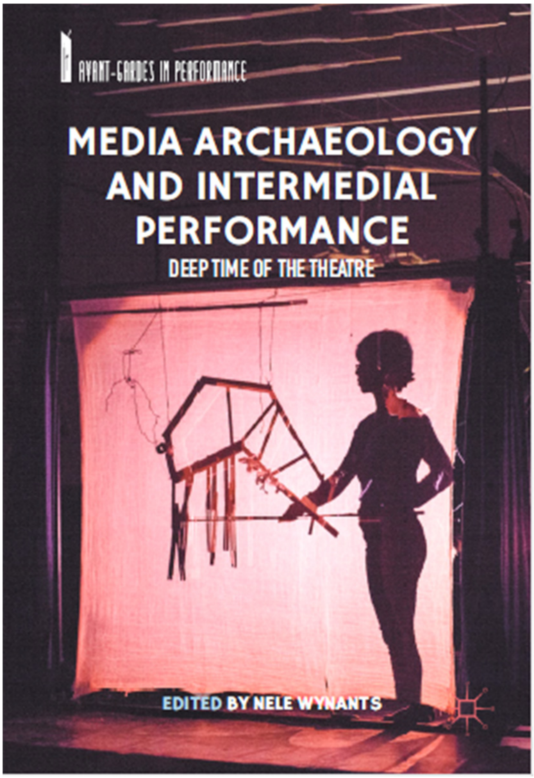
Concept: Trent Sanders & William Tyner
Director & Writer: Trent Sanders
Cinematography: William Tyner and Trent Sanders
Set Design: Trent Sanders
Choreography: Eva Morgenstern & Trent Sanders
Performers: *Prisoner*, Trent Sanders; *Satan Dancing*, Eva Morgenstern;
Satan's Voice, Rachel Sanders

PERFORMANCE AND BOOK REVIEWS

STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 1, 2019, p. 233 - 236
(Recommended Citation)

Layers behind the moment

Book review: Nele Wynants, ed., *Media Archaeology and Intermedial Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)


AVANT-GARDES IN PERFORMANCE
MEDIA ARCHAEOLOGY AND INTERMEDIAL PERFORMANCE
DEEP TIME OF THE THEATRE
EDITED BY NELE WYNANTS

Stating that theatre is an evanescent art, the production “living” only for the brief interim between the audience’s entry and its departure, is a shibboleth commonly employed as an excuse for a certain lack of analytical rigor or objectivity in theatre criticism and history, both often approaching the phenomenon from either a literary or an anecdotal angle.

While the myth of capturing a theatrical event in its entirety has fascinated artists and theorists alike, from Keir Elam's dramatological analysis to Peter Brook's remediations of his own productions or even Grotowski's attempts at fixating and reproducing the "total act", such "capture" has never been entirely successful. After all, it is the undeniable impossibility to revisit a performance that, while defining the art's very nature, makes any attempt of analysis focus not on the actual analysandum, but on the analyst's subjective memory thereof.

In this context, *Media Archaeology and Intermedial Performance*, a collective volume edited by the young Belgian scholar Nele Wynants, aims to present multiple applied methodologies of looking at contemporary theatre and performance through the lens of the strata of traces of the interplay between art and technology they rest upon. Inspired by Siegfried Zielinski's[1] anarchic, or "anarchaeological" approach to media history, itself a metaphorical extrapolation of the geological concept of "deep time", Wynants' book attempts, to challenge and question both established historical narratives, and the boundaries of what we call theatre, performing arts or public spectacle.

In geology, the concept of "deep time" refers to a model for the formation of earth's structures through a continuous dynamic of sedimentations and erosions. Likewise, the editor posits in her introduction, we can investigate the present of theatre (and its elusive presence) by studying the traces its "sedimentations and erosions" have left behind. In her own words, "a media-archaeological approach can therefore open new directions for theatre historiography, particularly when it starts with material traces and records"[2].

Starting with the assumption that, paradoxically, theatre, a conservative art form, has always been, from its beginnings, eager to embrace new technological innovations, from ancient machines to modern special effects, the book is a collection of studies by fourteen researchers and artists attempting to trace the present in light of the material remains of the past.

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[1] Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006).

[2] Wynants, *Media Archaeology and Intermedial Performance*, 7.

The volume is structured in three parts, "Stage Scenery and Technology", that concerns itself with old stage machinery, with their functioning and performativity, "Embodied Technics", dealing with the body-technology interface, and "Expanded Theatre" dealing with borderline and unconventional forms of public spectacle. prefaced by an ample introduction by the editor.

In an ample essay, *Mechanisms in the Mist: A Media Archaeological Excavation of the Mechanical*, Theater American professor and media archaeologist Erkki Huhtamo attempts to approach an often-forgotten theatre form from the early 19th century, the mechanical theatre. Noting the scarcity of historical records, the author appeals to old tourist guidebooks, leaflets, engravings, posters, tour programs and snippets of information from newspapers in order to reconstruct the development and operation of French and German mechanical theatres of the late 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, which offers us "glimpses of the cultural logic"[3] behind the modern obsession for virtual or augmented reality. Other studies in this first part deal with the intermediality of the stagecraft construction of illusions in 19th century French féeries (Frank Kessler and Sabine Lenk) and with the technologies employed for creating the vanishing effect in stage magic performances (Katharina Rein).

In part II, starting from a 2013 performance by Violaine de Carné, *Parfums de l'âme*, Érika Wicky, a French art historian, attempts to trace more than a century of olfactory theatre history by analyzing technologies employed (from flowers to scent synthesizers), their reception by the audience and their evolution. Kara Reilly, in her essay *Robots and Anthropomorphism in Science-Fiction Theatre: From Rebellion to Domesticity and Back Again* explores the cultural and theatrical implications and representations of robots and anthropomorphic creations from RoboThespian, the famous android actor, to automatons, Čapek's *RUR*, Frankenstein's monster, the golem of Prague, going as far back as the Book of Genesis, highlighting the uneasy and anxiety-generating relationship between creators and things/beings created in their image.

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[3] Erkki Huhtamo, "Mechanisms in the Mist: A Media Archaeological Excavation of the Mechanical Theater," in *Media Archaeology and Intermedial Performance*, ed. Nele Wynants (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 66.

The final part comprises three studies focused on three technologies seemingly unrelated to live performance: the movie projector, the distorting mirrors and the microscope. The most thought-provoking is the one signed by the editor herself, Mediated Visions of Life: *An Archaeology of Microscopic Theatre*, in which Nele Wynants, starting from the dissection videos of Belgian artist Sarah Vanagt, discusses anatomical and scientific public spectacles from the early 19th century and the microscope as a medium for exciting audiences' imagination.

Theatre historians tend to capitalize on the glamour of glorious successes or the shock of catastrophic failures, leaving the in-betweens aside. By looking at the traces, in a media archaeology way, a new history of the theatre emerges: one of obscure experiments, enthusiastic illusionists, macabre anatomists, stench-masking chemical perfumes, automatons and grandiose machines, all building layers upon layers under today's performances, discretely influencing them and their audiences. While geological strata rest locked inside the earth, waiting for their geologist to appear, now or in a thousand years, time takes its toll on the theatrical traces. Posters fade, old machines rot and buildings collapse. This makes Nele Wynants proposal to explore theatre form an archaeological (or rather anarchaeological) perspective an urgent one, worthy of ample consideration by all scholars in the field.

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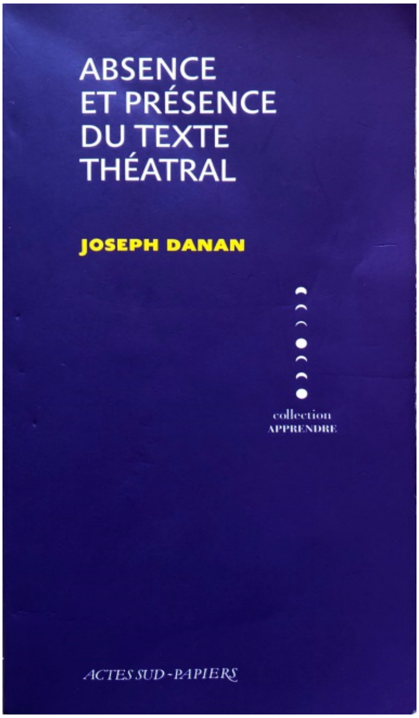
STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 1, 2019, p. 237 - 241
(Recommended Citation)

Le dilemme du texte en scène

Book Review: Joseph Danan, *Absence et Présence du texte théâtral,* (Arles: Actes Sud-Papiers, 2018)


ABSENCE
ET PRÉSENCE
DU TEXTE
THÉATRAL
JOSEPH DANAN
collection
APPRENDRE
ACTES SUD-PAPIERS

Après deux études consistantes sur la question du texte au théâtre, *Qu'est-ce que la dramaturgie ?* et *Entre théâtre et performance : la question du texte*, parus chez Actes Sud-Papiers ces dernières années, Joseph Danan, professeur à l'Institut de Etudes Théâtrales, Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3, revient avec un troisième livre dédié à l'*Absence et Présence du texte théâtral*, chez le même éditeur, dans la collection « Apprendre ». Fruit de sa préoccupation continuelle pour l'évolution de la scène et de l'écriture contemporaine – Joseph Danan étant lui-même auteur dramatique –, ce petit livre confirme au lecteur le rythme accéléré avec lequel se modifient les rapports du traditionnel *texte écrit* à la *parole scénique* proprement-dite et la difficulté de se positionner devant ces changements, non seulement en tant que chercheur et historien du théâtre mais aussi en tant que simple spectateur et lecteur.

Le problème du texte de théâtre sur les planches de nos jours, n'est pas près d'être résolu. À une époque « où l'on fait du théâtre de tout » et où, en dépit du grand nombre de pièces de théâtre publiés, on en rencontre de moins en moins sur scène au profit de dramatisations de romans, d'adaptations de textes de toutes sortes et de scénarios dramatiques pour qui l'intertextualité est le mot d'ordre, la question du passage du texte écrit au texte proféré sur scène et la légitimité des multiples transformations qu'on lui impose est de plus en plus pressante.

Depuis que Hans-Thies Lehmann a lancé pour la première fois sa théorie sur le théâtre post-dramatique, maintes fois discutée et remise en question par de grands spécialistes du théâtre moderne et contemporain français, comme Jean-Pierre Sarrazac, Jean-Pierre Ryngaert et bien d'autres encore, la circonscription du « dramatique », son dépassement et ses métamorphoses ne cessent de rester au cœur des interrogations qui hantent les nouvelles voies de la création théâtrale européenne. Pourtant, dans une noble lignée qui manifeste encore sa confiance dans les forces souterraines d'un texte dramatique écrit, dont l'histoire n'est pas près de s'arrêter au début du troisième millénaire et dans l'ère de la digitalisation et du numérique, Joseph Danan approche ce phénomène complexe avec une lucidité savante et fraîche en même temps. Il prend ainsi acte des transformations sensibles, observées dans quelques spectacles représentatifs pour la question, comme *La Mouette* de Tchekhov mise en scène par Thibault Perrenoud au Théâtre de la Bastille ; *La Mouette* mise en scène par Ostermeier ; *Vania*, d'après *L'Oncle Vania*, par Julie Deliquet, à la Comédie Françiase ; *Inferno* de Romeo Castelucci, et dans la pratique d'auteurs et metteurs en scène comme Joël Pommerat, Rodrigo García, Claude Régy et bien d'autres. Spectacles et approches qui montrent bien les tendances devenues pratique courante chez des metteurs en scène consacrés, qui, bien loin du texto-centrisme du siècle passé, récupèrent l'héritage théorique d'Edward Gordon Craig et d'Antonin Artaud et prennent ces libertés d'auteur « à part entière », pour qui le texte n'est que *prétexte* et pour qui le théâtre est un art « à part entière », affranchi de la littérature dramatique où le texte est en jeu, où l'on joue avec le texte, où l'on se joue du texte qui fuse en paroles et images.

La question de l'essence du théâtre est posée en ses rapports avec le texte antérieur au spectacle qui ne fait donc plus la règle de nos jours. L'hétérogénéité des approches scéniques contemporaines n'est que l'image des réverbérations « pour le meilleur comme pour le pire » des démarches singulières de grands hommes de théâtres, novateurs du XXe siècle. Ainsi, comme il est bien souligné par Joseph Danan, on assiste à une déclinaison de différentes nuances et degrés d'absence du texte tel que le spectateur pourrait l'attendre (*id est* le texte dramatique littéraire auquel il était habitué) remplacé par un autre qui « vacille », qui « se dérobe », qui est « défiguré, mutilé, atomisé », voire « inexistant ».

Comme l'auteur l'annonce dès les premières pages de son livre, son intérêt va vers les « singuliers états de présence » du texte mais ses réflexions traversent surtout « différentes strates (ou hypostases) de l'absence » qui s'interpénètrent : « de l'absence avérée de texte, quelque détour qu'elle prenne, à l'absence du texte dramatique, en passant par une présence-absence d'allure anamorphique (dans quel miroir déformant le texte s'est-il regardé ?) et par une dimension plus métaphysique de l'absence (le Texte caché, à jamais dérobé). »[1]

En effet, à travers les exemples discutés et hommes de théâtre – penseurs et praticiens – cités, le *texte* se dévoile comme un réseau de potentialités créatrices, comme une matière-contenu qui n'attend son conteneur scénique que pour mieux se modeler, se transformer ou s'évaporer en n'y laissant que des traces. Plusieurs constats, que l'auteur appelle « leçons » sont à retenir et traversent le livre au-delà du petit chapitre où elles sont citées explicitement :

1. Le texte dramatique n'a en fait jamais eu de « vérité intangible » car de nombreux exemples, bien avant les auteurs des créations modernes et contemporaines, parmi lesquels Shakespeare, Molière et tant d'autres, nous montrent que les pièces imprimés n'ont été que des variantes d'un texte qui changeait à l'épreuve de la scène.

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[1] Joseph Danan, *op. cit.*, p. 10

2. Il y a toujours eu des tensions, plus ou moins prononcées et visibles, entre le mot écrit-imprimé et la parole proférée sur scène, que ce soit pendant les répétitions ou les représentations, qu'il s'agisse d'un texte d'auteur unique ou d'un travail collectif.

3. Le statut d'*auteur* reste problématique au théâtre : qu'il s'agisse de l'auteur dramatique qui doit toujours « faire un pas de côté » devant la scène, des auteurs de spectacles collectifs et de scénarios de théâtre, ou des metteurs en scène qui deviennent auteurs ou aspirent à le devenir. L'auteur du texte comme le texte lui-même devront souvent se « retirer », s'effacer devant l'acte théâtral, devant le jeu des acteurs qui, paradoxalement, leur garantira une présence indéniable – à décliner entre les deux pôles de l'effet de présence, présence silencieuse, méta-présence ou souvenir d'un côté, et la présence explicite, assumée, l'hyperprésence, qui peut être amplifiée par les nouvelles technologies, d'un autre côte.

Le « texte-matériau » reste le syntagme central de ce livre : le texte dont on fait usage sur scène, qui est là pour être modelé et non pour être respecté, matériau de départ, mais aussi possible matériau d'arrivée, ou matériau latent. Le retour à Barthes est ici inévitable, car la matière « tissu », dans le sens barthésien du terme, auquel Joseph Danan renvoie, en parlant de la « polyphonie constitutive du théâtre » est là, mais il s'agit surtout d'un dépassement considérable de ce tissage, de l'œuvre « tissu », présents dans *Le plaisir du texte*, pour la *perception œcuménique* qu'il place si adroitement au centre de l'essence du théâtre. Rappelons-nous la définition de la théâtralité proposée par Barthes en 1954 :

> « Qu'est-ce que la théâtralité ? C'est le théâtre moins le texte, c'est une épaisseur de signes et de sensations qui s'édifie sur la scène à partir de l'argument écrit, c'est cette sorte de perception œcuménique des artifices sensuels, gestes, tons, distances, substances, lumières, qui submerge le texte sous la plénitude de son langage extérieur […] Il n'y a pas de grand théâtre sans théâtralité dévorante […] le texte écrit est d'avance emporté par l'extériorité des corps, des objets, des situations ; la parole fuse aussitôt en substances. »[2]

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[2] Barthes Roland, « Le théâtre de Baudelaire », in *Œuvres Complètes*, tome I, 1942-1965, Édition établie et présentée par Eric Marty, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1993, p. 1194-1195.

Cette définition garde toute sa force et sa validité devant les métamorphoses du théâtre contemporain et devant les visages changeants de ce qu'on peut comprendre aujourd'hui par « argument écrit ». Essentiel nous semble le fait qu'elle montre – et ici Barthes a eu une intuition fabuleuse – ce retour permanent, en spirale, du texte à la scène et de la scène au texte, comme la structure d'un ADN théâtral qui contiendrait en lui-même toutes les potentialités de manifestation d'une matière infinie, dont l'histoire n'a encore révélé qu'une partie, et qui attend l'activation de ces épaisseurs latentes.

Pour conclure, nous dirions que *Absence et Présence du texte théâtral* est un livre à avoir dans sa poche ou à l'esprit quand on est préoccupé par les directions des pratiques d'écriture scénique contemporaines. Un livre qui trahit le plaisir de l'analyse et de l'exercice de penser le théâtre en tant qu'art vivant, en tant que création protéiforme qui n'aura jamais fini de nous surprendre.

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On the Character of Time: At the Crease of Theology and Drama in Cheek by Jowl's 2016 Bam Harvey Theater Production of The Winter's Tale

Theater review of William Shakespeare's The Winter Tale. Directed by Declan Donnellan, performance by Orlando James, Edward Sayer, Natalie Radmall-Quirke, Eleanor McCloughlin, Joy Richardson, Grace Andrews, David Carr, Ryan Donaldson, Sam Woolf, Peter Moreton, Sam McArdle, Joseph Black, Guy Hughes, and Tom Cawte, BAM Harvey Theater, Brooklyn, New York, 10 Dec. 2016.

> [Shakespeare's] last plays attend primarily to mortality's consequences for the human community. – Cynthia Marshall
>
> The final plays are concerned with restoration rather than loss, with rebirth and new beginning rather than with endings and the finality of death. – John Spencer Hill

The character Time is omnipresent in Cheek by Jowl's December 2016 BAM Harvey Theater production of William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Cheek by Jowl is an acting company based in London that specializes in Shakespeare. As part of the 2016 Next Wave Festival, Cheek by Jowl director, Declan Donnellan, and set designer, Nick Ormerod, produced *The Winter's Tale* from December 6th-11th, 2016 at the BAM Harvey Theater, an off-Broadway theatre located in Brooklyn, New York. The specific performance this paper talks about happened December 10th, 2016.

This paper examines how Donnellan reimagines Time's nature and purpose by setting Time within the context of a history of literary criticism and offers a few closing remarks about how Time in Donnellan's production explores who God is, who humans are, and how we know God, and if that is even a possibility. In its most simple form, this paper is a close reading of one ephemeral production, and it is my hope that in writing about the play, that which is fleeting might live on, if only for a little while longer.[1] Donnellan has shown literary scholars, theatre scholars, play critics, and play attendees alike how the character Time is a hermeneutic for *The Winter's Tale*. Although we can think of Time as immutable, Donnellan has not let Time remain the same. Many theatre reviews of Donnellan's newest rendition of *The Winter's Tale*, however, do not speak about Time.[2] Time is one of Shakespeare's most forgotten characters. But, because of Donnellan's work with *The Winter's Tale* throughout the past twenty years, Time has become a Shakespearean character of anthropological and theological weight.

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[1] I would like to thank Mary Judith Dunbar for her great archival work done specifically on the past hundred years or so of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Your book was a great source for me to continue the work you started in writing about Declan Donnellan's Maly production of *The Winter's Tale*.

[2] Molly Grogan reviews the BAM Harvey Theater production of The Winter's Tale, but does so through a racial critique: she argues that the play avows its subtext of "white supremacism." She critiques Donnellan's actor-driven physically nuanced acting "technique," relating it to "whole cans of paint thrown in heavy arcs that splatter on impact." She calls Cheek by Jowl's set design "scenographic minimalism," and discusses how Leontes' torment fills the sparse stage. She summarizes the final seconds of the play: "the dying stage lights linger in an almost mystical mood; they frame Leontes' joyful – or crazy – gaze as he repossesses his miraculously resurrected queen." Time escapes her critical attention.

Erik Abbott reviews the Luxembourg production of The Winter's Tale performed in early March of 2016. He summarizes the play's plot, and at the most in depth point of his review, he analyzes Leontes' "deranged" character in the first three acts, and "grief and regret" in the final act. The other actors and the play's setting receive a brief gloss. Time makes no appearance in his review.

Peter Kirwan reviews the dress rehearsals of The Winter's Tale from December of 2015 on into early January of 2016. His review hones in on Cheek by Jowl's decision to "foreground" the first three acts around "Leontes' experience." He highlights Cheek by Jowl's decision to not lead the audience on with tangible reasons for Leontes' jealousy. Instead, the audience witnesses Leontes' "fantasies of control" over his wife's and his friend's physical bodies. Time avoids his review, although "an isolated and ghostly Mamillius" who walks on stage at the play's end receives critical attention. For Kirwan, Cheek by Jowl's formula of The Winter's Tale is about "loss," but Time is not a factor for the death and human search for God that matures from act to act in Cheek by Jowl's production.

Time's appearance at the beginning of *The Winter's Tale*, in what Mary Dunbar calls a "directorial invention"[3], is not new to Cheek by Jowl director Declan Donnellan. Cheek by Jowl produced *The Winter's Tale* in St. Petersburg, Russia at the Maly Drama Theatre in the late 1990s, only, Time in the prologue of those performances, instead of dressing in a winter coat, dressed in the shawls of an old Russian grandmother. "[T]he production's beginning," writes Dunbar, "presented a freeze-frame tableau of Leontes' court…One figure was in motion, a kind of Grandmother Time – the babushka, with head covering, shawl, and… broom…sweeping the stage"[4]. The Maly production framed Russian cultural idiosyncrasies, while at the same time, it avoided heavy handed "didactic comments on Russia" (*Financial Times*, 25 April 1999).

Ben Brantley reviews the New York based production of The Winter's Tale performed at the BAM Harvey Theater. His review focuses on the "viscerally charged" displays of lustful affection and violent romping. With the mention of a brief critique aimed at the ruling classes in contemporary society, and with a few short notes on Polixenes, Hermione, Autolycus, Perdita, Mamillius, and Folorizel, the review comes to a close. Time escapes Brantley's pen.

Helen Shaw writes a sharp review of the BAM Harvey production of The Winter's Tale: a sharp review in terms of her keen insight and cutting commentary. Her review's most perceptive moment delivers the observation that the script of The Winter's Tale did not align with the actors' actions: when Leontes looks upon Hermione and speaks, "O thus she stood," Hermione is "sitting down." She bashes Donnellan's critical interpretation of The Winter's Tale because Leontes errs too much on the side of insanity, and leaves no room for redemption. Her review passed over any work Time performed in the production.

JK Clark's review of the BAM Harvey production of The Winter's Tale touches on the second opening scene – not traditionally scripted. After the lights come up and go out on Time, sitting as if cold on a bench, Leontes and Polixenes roughhouse on stage; they have no dialogue and only their guttural laughs and scuffling feet create sound. Clark's reviews borders sentimentalism at certain points: Mamillius is "innocent," the play's ending is "happy," and Leontes experiences "bursts of enthusiasm." The end of Clark's review covers Mamillius' return, but does not mention Time's role in his return.

[3] Mary Judith Dunbar, *The Winter's Tale: Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 199.

[4] Dunbar, 199.

In the BAM Harvey production, Ormerod sets up his minimalist stage with a white crate the size of a shipping container and a three-part white bench resting in front of the crate. Unlike Donnellan's Maly production of *The Winter's Tale*, the setting is not at once associated with Leontes' palace. With the stage set, now we turn to the prologue. A character we later come to know as Time sits alone on Ormerod's white bench. Her head hangs low as if she is sad or defeated, and her red winter coat attracts the audience's eyes, while the white stage lights accentuate not only her coat, but also her baggy, mossy green pants. Time's clothes resist the imagined cold that surrounds her body, conveying the idea that her eternal reality is a physically, emotionally, and spiritually cold place. Her clothing, stage location, isolated presentation on stage, and Ormerod's haunting white set all build on one another, raising the questions of who Time is, where she is, and why she is cold. The questions are theological and anthropological because Time is the author and thief of life, the human's guide into an eternal country, and is how human's understand their experience of life and death. Time appears once again in Act IV scene i, and we discover that Time is both a beautiful young woman and is wearing a long and white summer dress. Even though Time in Shakespeare's script is a man, the exchange of Father Time for Mother Time is not too shocking, especially when considering Donnellan's 1990s production in which he interpreted Act IV scene i in a similar way. Time's final physical appearance comes at the end of Act V scene iii. With the production's final line spoken by Leontes, "Good Paulina, / Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely / Each one demand an answer to his part / Perform'd in this wide gap of time since first / We were dissever'd: hastily lead away," the stage pulses dense silence out to the audience. The same red winter coat dresses and the white light captures Time as she enters the stage's silence and leads the deceased Mamillius to Leontes. Mamillius has a moment with his father, and then walks off stage with Time into what appears to be a bleak afterlife. Time bookends Donnellan's BAM Harvey production of *The Winter's Tale*.

From the Maly production to the BAM Harvey production, Donnellan reimagines Time's tasks, demeanor, and stage presence. At the end of Act III sence iii, and after the clown and shepherd end their conversation to go and see if the bear has finished eating Antigonus, the babushka Time enters the stage to sweep, as if cleaning up the mess Leontes made in the first three acts: or more to the point, sweeping away Antigonus' remains. Her presence gestures towards dark, innocent humor; humor because the petty task of sweeping away human remains is outlandish and the lighthearted conversation between the shepherd and the clown, unexpected. Their blithe commentary and actions create a humorous synergy. Whereas Donnellan gives the babushka, Time, stage direction at the end of Act III in the Maly production, he cuts this invented scene in the BAM Harvey production. Because of his excision, he has done away with a small part of the humor from his earlier directorial choices; and rather, he has emphasized the character split between laughing Time in a summer dress and mourning Time in a winter coat.

While Donnellan shows artistic originality in light of a long history of *The Winter's Tale* performances, in Act IV scene i, as far as we concern Time's cued stage directions, he changes very little from the Maly production to the BAM Harvey production. Dunbar summarizes Act IV scene i of the Maly production in saying, "Time reentered, sweeping, she was at first bent as if old; then, having reached centre stage, she removed her head covering and appeared transformed, as a young woman with golden hair [sic.]"[5]. Likewise, Time's hair in the BAM Harvey production is long and blond. She slowly confronts center stage, her head hung low, while the red hood of her coat covers her head. White, yellow, and blue lights reminiscent of summer's midday come up and frame her as she lifts her head, removes the coat hood, and takes off her winter clothing, unveiling her white summer dress. Perhaps Donnellan seems to have spent less creative effort on Time in this scene for the fact that Shakespeare has written Time into this scene. Time speaks sixteen couplets that both characterize herself and sets forth the following scene. Emitting brilliant blue, yellow, and white lights onto the stage, the stage lights exhibited the life and livelihood in the scene as Bohemians danced around Time the poet. With the Bohemians coming onto the stage in droves, Donnellan made possible the illusion that Time in some way creates a joyous and raucous world and a happy and rambunctious human, as opposed to the blank white and jealous green lights that construed the straightjacketed, volatile world and human of Sicilia. Less time is spent here conveying Act IV scene i because it seems to be a scene that Donnellan himself did not emphasize revising.

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[5] Dunbar, 199.

Where Donnellan's interpretation of Act IV scene i maintains a thread of constancy from the 1990s to the 2010s, his imaginative reworking of Act V scene iii is a tour de force of theatric adaptation and development. The BAM Harvey production evidenced Donnellan's masterful work in bending and filling silence with theological and anthropological precedents through the character Time. In other words, the actor embodies silence in such a way that silence and Time meet and become one character. If Time is silent in Act V scene iii, what is her role, who is she, and why has Donnellan not only focused his 1990s and 2010s production on Leontes, but surprisingly, also on Time? Raymond Rundus reads through the literary criticism on the character of Time in *The Winter's Tale* from as early as 1892 and as late as 1968. He concludes that literary scholars in the late nineteenth and on into the mid-twentieth century criticized Time. For instance, W. J. Rolfe calls Shakespeare's inclusion of Time an "uninspired moment," and Erwin Panofsky undercuts Time as a "mere device"[6]. Rolfe's and Panofsky's observations, however, derive from their years studying the textual tradition of Shakespeare, most specifically of *The Winter's Tale*, and no director had yet incorporated Time as Donnellan has done since the 1990s. Literary scholars from the late 1900s into the mid-1960s could not accept Time because Shakespeare's text did not clearly warrant Time's acceptance. Panofsky wrote his critique in 1962, and by comparison, theater directors were still innovating methods of portraying Leontes' consciousness in the first three acts, essentially, directors were thinking through symbolic ways to convey Leontes' jealous delusions. Their answer: to freeze every actor on stage apart from Leontes. This mode of representing Leontes is now commonplace in modern productions of *The Winter's Tale*, but in the late 1960s, Trevor Nunn's directorial invention was cutting edge. Dunbar compares how effectively Donnellan in his 1990s production used Nunn's invention: "Selected actors freezing as Leontes delivers his asides has become common in productions of *The Winter's Tale* since Nunn's daring (and partially different) use of the technique in 1969; but, as Charles Spencer observed, though at times 'overused', the 'device is highly effective’”[7]. Although Donnellan does not write new lines, he writes in old characters – new.

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[6] Raymond J. Rundus, "Time and His 'Glass' in the Winter's Tale," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1974): 123, https://doi.org/10.2307/2868889.

The transformations of Declan Donnellan’s directorial choices in Act V scene iii from the Maly production to BAM Harvey production change the theological and anthropological trajectory of the conclusion of *The Winter’s Tale*. Cynthia Marshall suggests that Hermione’s return to Leontes shows “the danger of an earthly image of heaven.” She continues to argue that, “The image offers a kind of imaginative fulfillment but offers nothing to believe in but the power of theatre”[8]. Her explanation draws upon both the theological and anthropological images because she reads Hermione as a merger of heaven and human, similar to the archetypal Christ figure. For her, Hermione’s return falls short of any true sense of redemption. It leaves the reader with only an impression, or to go even further, a fallacy of a restored human community with one another and with God. Declan Donnellan in May of 1999, however, as he reflects on his motives for choosing *The Winter’s Tale*, says, “I chose a play I wanted to do anyway, but which is about people looking back – it’s about *forgiveness* and *redemption* after a long period of estrangement [emphasis added]”[9]. John Hill Spencer, likewise in his book *Infinity, Faith, and Time* (1997), argues that “the final plays are concerned with restoration rather than loss, with rebirth and new beginnings rather than with ending and the finality of death”[10].

Each critic’s and director’s arguments hinge on Time’s identity, and her identity is somewhat bound within Act IV scene I of *The Winter’s Tale* the textual form originally written down by Shakespeare, given that eighteen of the thirty-two lines are about her, and fourteen of the thirty-two lines set the oncoming scene. We can also consider Shakespeare’s sonnets in which he wrote on Time so that we can have a clearer sense for who she is. Time rides through the entirety of Shakespeare’s sonnets as a “never-resting Time

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7. Dunbar, *The Winter’s Tale: Shakespeare in Performance*, 201.
8. Cynthia Marshall, *Last Things and Last Plays: Shakespearean Eschatology* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 59.
9. Dunbar, *The Winter’s Tale: Shakespeare in Performance*, 195–96.
10. John Spencer Hill, *Infinity, Faith, and Time: Christian Humanism and Renaissance Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 119.

[who] leads summer on to hideous winter," as the "bloody tyrant, Time," as "Devouring Time," as one who "decays [his friend's beauty]," and as one "whose millioned accidents / Creep in twixt vows"[11]. Shakespeare does not shy away from personifying Time in the same way as he does death: "So shalt thou [soul] feed on *Death, that feeds on men*" (sonnet 146). Sonnet 146 images Death, like Time in sonnet 19, as a devourer of human mortality. Only live theater can turn around Time's threat to human mortality, and it can do this through the actress's physical body, her costume, and her actions. Spencer seems to have had a sense for live theater's potential for miracles. "*The Winter's Tale*," he writes, "tests the limits of criticism because it must be experienced rather than comprehended, because, in order to succeed, it must become a miracle in the full effect of which we, whether readers *or spectators*, willingly and actively participate [emphasis added]"[12]. Where Marshall concludes her argument with the idea that Hermione's return leaves Shakespeare's reader with nothing more to believe in than the power of theater, Spencer begins his argument, and finishes with his idea that a theatrical presentation of *The Winter's Tale*, most especially its conclusion, has the power to illuminate both the human and the divine: human errs, human loss, and human suffering, and divine grace.

While Time at the end of Act V scene iii in the Maly production realized Hill's and Donnellan's interpretations of redemption and forgiveness, Time in the BAM Harvey production identifies with the human experiences of lust, loss, and, death. Donnellan enmeshed the BAM Harvey's theatrical space with Time through his use of pauses, or asides. Leontes' sadness from saying goodbye to Polixenes in Act I, manifests as jealousy. His sadness manipulates his sense of reality, and Time then comes to aid him in his "fantasies of control" over his wife, Hermione, and his childhood friend, Polixenes (Kirwan). Green lights cast an envious tinge onto three white objects: Orlando James' white button up shirt, Nick Ormerod's white crate placed upstage of James, and the white benches on which James plays out his sexual nightmare. Because of Time, the white shirt, crate, and benches are blank theatrical and costume spaces with which Leontes can manifest his obscured impressions of reality. Time allows him to exit Hermione's and Polixenes' dramatic space and to reign over his newfound territory. New York Times reviewer, Ben Brantley, describes how "viscerally charged" the stark shift from the conversation Leontes, Hermione, and Polixenes are having to Leontes' dreamscape, which displays Leontes' sexual anxiety (Brantley). Leontes moves Hermione's and Polixenes' bodies in such a way that Hermione, on her hands and knees like a dog, extends her rear towards Polixenes' crotch. Polixenes fixes his hands onto Hermione's hips. Leontes stands behind Polixenes, and he then thrusts into Polixenes, who thrusts into Hermione, her head throttling up and down in accordance with each of Leontes' pumps. Time is not the innocent babushka of the 1990s, sweeping the palace floors. She is Leontes' conspirator, helping him to realize in the flesh of Natalie Radmall-Quirke (Hermione) and Edward Sayer (Polixenes) his lustful machinations.

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[11] David Bevington, ed., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 7th ed. (London: Pearson, 2014). Quoted from sonnets 5, 16, 19, 65, 115.

[12] Hill, *Infinity, Faith, and Time: Christian Humanism and Renaissance Literature*, 126.

In the BAM Harvey production, Time does not come on stage at the end of Act III; instead, she enters the conclusion of Act III through a sound scape. Donnellan's reformation of Time in the BAM Harvey production tends to underemphasize the "transformative magic" that Michael Billington saw in the Maly production in general, and Time in particular (Billington). Billington's redemptive analysis of the character Time becomes evident as he links Time's unveiling of herself from the end of Act III to the beginning of Act IV to the Hermione statue scene, a scene in which some critics and audiences view as a miracle.

> It…contained one breathtaking moment when an old woman who swept the stage between scenes turned into the symbolic figure of Time and threw back her cloak to reveal herself as young and beautiful. That was as potent as the always-moving image of Hermione's statue coming to life and reminded us this is a play about transformative magic.[13]

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[13] Michael Billington, "Best Shakespeare Productions: The Winter's Tale," *The Guardian*, May 8, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/may/08/best-shakespeare-productions-the-winters-tale.

If the BAM Harvey production has transformative magic at the end of Act III, its theology is of a different nature. Antigonus boards a Sicilian ship with Hermione's daughter, as of yet – unnamed, and sets sail for Bohemia, while Hermione's dead body remains behind in Sicilia. White flashes of lightning streak across the black stage, while the sound designer plays sounds of tumultuous seafaring rain, which crash against Antigonus and his ship. He arrives at Bohemia, and departing from the ship, he speaks, "I do believe / Hermione hath suffered death, and that / Apollo would, this being indeed the issue / of King Polixenes, it should here be laid, / Either for life or death, upon the earth / Of its right father" (3.3.40-45). Over the rainfall, the stage speakers emit one word that perhaps comes from Hermione's voice, but Time's voice is also a possibility: "Perdita, Perdita, Perdita…" echoes, soft, as if in a cave, beginning with loudness and declining to silence. Antigonus hears the voice which raises questions about whether or not Antigonus' conscience conceived the voice, especially when considering his torment over Hermione's death and his own task to leave her child alone "Either for life or death" in the wilderness (3.3.44). Although Time returns Hermione's voice from the grace in this scene, Time does not reconstitute Hermione's body. Hermione exists only in Time's sound space, which could exist within Antigonus' psyche, or be Hermione's actual words from her residence in death. In any case, the return of her voice sharpens her absence, and forces the BAM Harvey audience to grapple with her death in ways that the Maly production did not: for it is easy enough to forget that the mother, Hermione, can neither hold nor name her second child. To carry the voice of the supposed dead Hermione up from the grave and to the island of Bohemia could be termed magic, and maybe even transformative because her dead desire to name her child reawakens.

Act V scene iii of the BAM Harvey production stages the human's experience with the end of things in order to act out the collision of theology and anthropology. The play seeks to understand the infinitude of human death and the eternal resting place of humans once they die and does so through human community on stage. On the one hand, Cynthia Marshall in her reflection on Shakespeare's last plays, argues that Shakespeare focuses more so on death and human bonds, rather than on death and eternity.

"[T]he last plays," she writes, "attend primarily to mortality's consequences for the human community"[14]. On the other hand, Sean Benson argues that Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies explore the pagan and Christian origins of the resurrection. "Shakespeare," Benson explains, "delves into the resurrection of the dead with a seriousness that manifests his interest in the human desire to transcend death and *live reunited and reconciled with others* [emphasis added]"[15]. While Marshall does not explore the theological implications of death, and while Benson affirms the theological reading of reconciliation, the BAM Harvey production underscores how the presence of death's eternity presses down on top of and enters into human community. The supernatural conjoins with the natural, or the eternal enmeshes with the mortal. Time is responsible for this harsh commingling in the BAM Harvey production.

Donnellan made Hermione's state of existence less complicated in the Maly production: she clearly was not a statue, but pretended to be one. Natalia Kolotova, the Assistant Director of the Maly production, explains Hermione's stage direction, "When they all stand with their backs to the audience and to the plinth in the center, *Hermione enters* and sits in a chair on the plinth [emphasis added]". A large group of characters – among them: Leontes, Paulina, Polixenes, Perdita, Florizel, and others, stand up stage with their backs to Hermione's white plinth, which is downstage, closer to the audience. With their backs to the plinth, Donnellan manifests a theatrical space of illusion where Hermione can enter without them seeing her. Donnellan's choice to depict her entrance tells Hermione's story, which Shakespeare otherwise leaves up for interpretation. According to Donnellan's directorial choices, we can deduce that Hermione has lived somewhere, likely in Sicilia because of the quick rate at which Florizel and Perdita return to Sicilia, and soon to follow their return, a monument to Hermione is resurrected. Hermione can thus be none other than human, and her contact with the eternity of death is not possible. The Maly production does not have the theological and anthropological stakes of the BAM Harvey production. What's more, Kenneth

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[14] Marshall, *Last Things and Last Plays: Shakespearean Eschatology*, 8.

[15] Sean Benson, "The Resurrection of the Dead in The Winter's Tale and The Tempest," *Renascence* 61, no. 1 (2008): 21.

Gross's reading of Hermione's awakening does not explain Donnellan's rendition of Hermione in the Maly production because we know that she has not died. Gross writes, "[Paulina's] urging of the statue to make a 'bequest' to death suggests that Hermione must *die* (*as a statue*) into life, to give up the security of the statue's solitude and solidity, even in the face of the acknowledgement that she will 'die again'"[16]. Gross brilliantly reads Paulina's exchange about Hermione's statue, but Donnellan's theatrical text of *The Winter's Tale* has made Gross' reading implausible.

The BAM Harvey production, however, leaves open the possibility that Hermione has died, and that her return to Leontes and the others is not a miracle, but a vision. She does not enter the stage; rather, before any light illuminates the stage, the statue of Hermione awaits the group's visitation. Literary critics in the 1950s and 1960s tended toward generous and hopeful readings of Shakespeare's later plays. Derek Traversi estimates that "it is the essence of love, in [these] plays, to produce a transforming vision of value," and Tom Driver writes that "the future is…full of beneficent promise and tending toward a final culmination which robs the past of its terror and gives significance to the choices of the present"[17]. Donnellan skews past, present, and future on the character of Hermione through the character Time in such a way that the audience is not sure if they see a hint of Hermione as she was, is, or will be, or if they watch Leontes fantasize the resurrection of his wife, or something else altogether. What Time is up to in the life of Leontes and Hermione becomes more complicated as she arises from the plinth and steps down towards Leontes. While Paulina carries forth her lines which signal her observations of Hermione, and while Hermione speaks to Perdita – and these could evidence the claim that Hermione is not a vision of Leontes, Leontes' nuanced physical actions with Hermione and Mamillius' return from the dead suggests that Hermione is dead, and that through Leontes, Hermione, Mamillius, and Time, the play drives forward the marriage of theology and anthropology. The marriage, however, uses death in the human community as a means to understand theology in light of the human experience.

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16. Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 105.

17. Derek Traversi, *Shakespeare: The Last Phase* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1953), 257; Tom F. Driver, *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 204.

In the 1990s production, we have no doubt that Leontes reached out to Hermione and touched her hand. Dunbar recounts this moment: "When Leontes touched Hermione's hand, amazed it was warm, she turned toward him, looking deeply at him for the first time; she took his hand, rather than embracing him"[18]. In the BAM Harvey production, however, the audience is not sure if Leontes makes contact with Hermione's hand. Hermione peers down at Leontes' face, while Leontes looks to her hand. But Time separates Leontes from Hermione: she does not speak to Leontes in the text, and does not embrace Leontes on the stage. As Perdita stands before Hermione, Leontes, with extreme precision and fragility, places his hand on Hermione's arm and seems to embrace not the flesh and blood human of Hermione, but an apparition, or possibly a memory of her. Gross comments on the meaning of Leontes' physical touching of Hermione's hand, writing, "It is a public speech as well as a silent touch that the gathered witnesses demand at the end of *The Winter's Tale*…[in the touch,] is the idea that physical touch might offer some 'moment of truth'"[19]. The moment of truth is the reality of Hermione's human body restored back to its human community; whether she revives from the grave, or returns from exile, or something else entirely is less important to Gross' point. If Hermione is there in the flesh, Donnellan creates the possibility for what Benson calls a "quasi-resurrection"[20]. But, because the existence of Leontes' touch of Hermione is tenuous, so too is Hermione's physical presence, and something other than a resurrection has taken place.

Hermione's age adds another layer to the theological and anthropological precedents set forth in the BAM Harvey production. Leontes' wrinkled forehead and long facial hair reflect Time's passing over sixteen years, but Hermione, dressed in a long violet dress which accentuates her youthful beauty, has not aged. We can quickly observe that Donnellan has imagined Hermione's reality against the textual grain of Shakespeare as Leontes speaks, "But yet, Paulina / Hermione was not as much wrinkled, nothing / So aged as this seems" (5.3.27-29). For Hermione to have made a return to Leontes, she must also have aged. But Time's "slide / O'er sixteen years" and her request of her audience to "leave the growth untried," when mapped onto Hermione in the concluding moments of the BAM Harvey production, reveals one main artery of the play, which runs thick with questions of where is it we go when we die, what that place is like, who will I be when I'm there, will I miss my family, and will I like it there? David Bevington glosses Time's phrase, "growth untried," to mean "developments unexplored"[21]. Hermione's physical, emotional, and spiritual developments have dropped away from Shakespeare's and our own line of sight. All Shakespeare gives us of Hermione is her one line, which in the BAM Harvey production, she speaks while facing Perdita: "I…have preserved / Myself to see the issue" (5.3.126-129). Does she speak the truth; has she preserved herself over these sixteen years for the singular, resolute reason to see her child? Donnellan's answer: in the Maly production, yes, but in the BAM Harvey production, no. The BAM Harvey production sets Hermione's testimony within the context of Time, who stands behind her as if the presence of Death itself. Whether or not Donnellan intended to convey an old human tradition of imagining Death standing behind a human's back, he does. Rundus incorporates several readings of the character Time, and specifically expounds three possibilities for what kind of glass Time might have held in Shakespeare's original productions of *The Winter's Tale*. One option is that Time held an actual looking glass, or mirror. If Donnellan had placed a mirror in Time's hand, or Hermione's hand to see Time, audience members and theatre critics alike would have called such a choice distasteful, unartistic, or any other such adjective because the reflection would have been too obvious. A note from Rundus' article elaborates on a painting of Time's collaboration with Death (Time as an iconic figure and not the character Time in *The Winter's Tale*): "In a painting described by Guy de Tervarent in *Attributs et symbols dans l'art profane, 1450-1600*...Time holds a mirror before a nude couple, so that they can see death behind them"[22]. The nakedness of the couple and Time's reflecting Death for them to see illustrates the idea of leaving the world in the same way as one enters the world: naked. In the painting, death has taken the couple, and Time shows them their captor, but only in the mirror's reflection.

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[18] Dunbar, *The Winter's Tale: Shakespeare in Performance*, 209.

[19] Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue*, 84–85.

[20] Benson, "The Resurrection of the Dead in The Winter's Tale and The Tempest," 3.

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[21] Bevington, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 1549.

[22] Rundus, "Time and His 'Glass' in the Winter's Tale," 125.

Consider also how the BAM Harvey production groups Hermione and Leontes together, a husband and a wife, as Leontes lays the nude body of his distress from the past sixteen years before Hermione. On stage, we can discern from Hermione's posture when set against the foil of Leontes' posture that her relationship with Time is not the same as Leontes', Time has already claimed her as her own. What's more, Donnellan aligns the angle of Hermione's body with the stance of her deceased son. Mamillius walks alongside Time, step for step, their coordination conveying a sense of two journeymen who have gotten to know one another. But every good story has a dark side. Perhaps what Mamillius learns of Time during his sixteen years dead in this "wide gap" with Time frightens or unnerves him, for Time allows him to come home, but only briefly lets him stay (4.1.7). The agreement of Hermione's and Mamillius' body positions suggests their shared spiritual reality: they are both dead.

The question which circulates around the play is why Donnellan has made death certain on uncertain terms. For example, Hermione is dead, but the degree in which she is dead is not clear. The BAM Harvey productions walks along a knife's edge, showing its persistence to embrace the mortality and the immortality of human community. The production scrutinizes the human being and conceives of God through the human being, most especially in moments of what we could consider eternal loss – without a sure knowledge of a human's afterlife into eternity, what more is death than loss? The BAM Harvey production seems unwilling to commit to a lucid idea of who God is, but in its stricture, it arrives at a revelation of the human's relation to God. The play amplifies, through the character Time, the desperation a friend feels when they lose a friend, or a father or mother feels when their child dies, and how in that desperation, the friend, the father, or the mother seek with all their might to know what death means: to know what eternity is. The human body, both alive and then dead, is the meeting ground for their theological and anthropological questions. In its avoidance of crystal clear theological or anthropological answers, the BAM Harvey production lets the audience weigh their human life as it was, is, and will be, in the light of this life and the world to come. But that's for Donnellan's audience to decide.

Eternity written on man's heart.

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